

Kate Bernauer
Kathleen Winder
Gerwyn Davies
Yavuz Erkan
Nicolette Johnson
Paula Mahoney
Annamarie Dzendrowskyj

**Queensland
Centre for
Photography**

Kate Bernauer

I need a compass not an anchor

Kate Bernauer's large-scale colour photographs breathe allegory, and in that sense share a strong linkage to the familiar, cinematic language of the Yale school generation, fashioned by Gregory Crewdson and Philip-Lorca diCorcia.

However, her framed narrative is not just paused, but at odds, caught within an infinite loop, like the character Phil Connors (Bill Murray) in the film *Groundhog Day*.¹

Yet here, bodies capitulate amid vast yet restrictive scapes, which strike me as the kind of pastures where duty-bound individuals gather to stare or simply sit for a moment.

The series title, *I need a compass not an anchor*, is notional of an after effect, of a kind of hegemony, of feeling anchored - projecting a desire to navigate, explore, and possibly escape entwined morality.

Of significance, *The Airport* (2010-11) is strengthened by the highly contrived yet pleasing choreography of figures, which demonstrate puzzling agency, as they endure the anchor of Earth's gravitational forces. They idly subsist as travellers fly away.

¹ While covering the annual Groundhog Day event in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, weatherman Phil Connors wakes up every morning to repeat the same day over and over again, a cycle which ceases when he rediscovers the importance of life and living. *Groundhog Day*, 1993, USA, Columbia Pictures Corporation.

Kate Bernauer *The Underpass* (detail) 2011, Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.



Kathleen Winder

Columba Livia



Kathleen Winder's photographs formalise her subject - pigeons - and as she terms, the 'art form' of pigeon breeding.¹ Her approach to documenting the mutation of a species could be seen as smooth scientific.

We're not really looking at the species in a methodical way, but there is that impression. Winder presents the minor features, like the individual feathers of a particular subspecies, which make up a whole entity, alongside left, right and front projections.

A number of specimens' are positioned on plinths, in front of neutral toned, spot lit backdrops. Which suggests the morphed bodies of each subspecies as being somewhat sculptural, in respect to their shape and form.

Hence, we're looking at them objectively, no longer living but anthropomorphised. And there is something uncanny about that.

Their shape is interesting, because it is atypical and rather magnificent, yet ultimately sad. Winder says, "These birds have been in-bred and over-bred to such a monstrous extent that they are barely functional without the aid of human care".²

Possibly, in their idealised, genetically modified, manufactured form, the contrast is such failure, due to an infliction of the hand, as an indicator of success.

¹ K. Winder, *Artist Statement*, 2012.

² *Ibid.*

Kathleen Winder *Bokhara Trumpeter* (detail) 2011, Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.



Gerwyn Davies

Steel Town Disciples

Gerwyn Davies serial still lives display a range of spot lit props on a kind-of reflective black surface, in front of reddish-brown bricks. Noticeably clean blue-denim textiles have been crafted to cover an array of somewhat formulaic masculine bits and pieces; amongst halved, squashed, sometimes pulverised fruit: a combination of fleshy, juicy fluids, dripping, thick, cum-like.

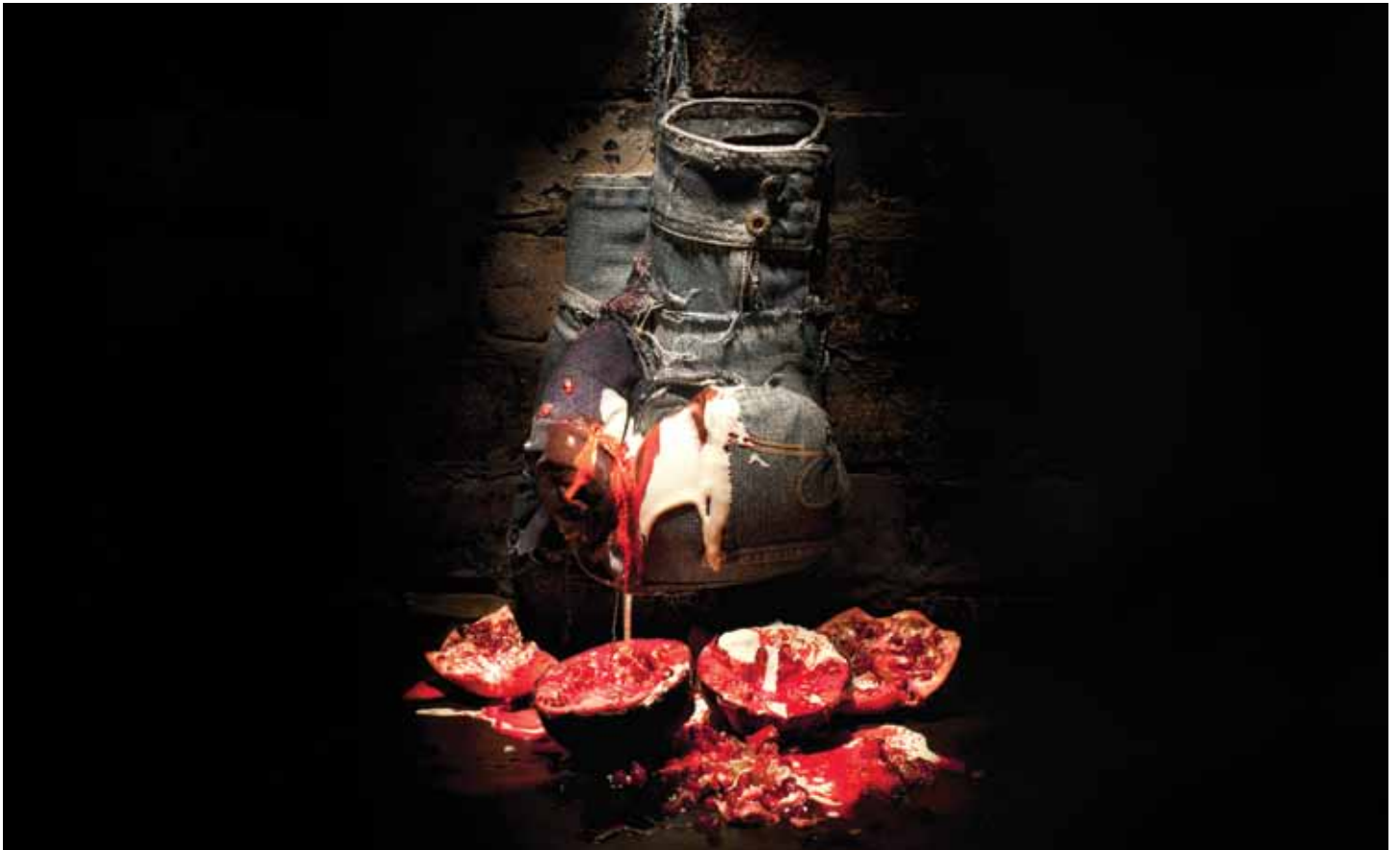
Davies says, “in essence, I was exploring some spaces and identities that had for all intents and purposes, dissolved before my time as a homo man”.¹

The images get me thinking about dichotomies within representation. Specifically, hermetic representations – which I relate here to the term ‘straight-acting’ – a term widely used by homosexual men to define being superficially *less* gay. The interest here, for me, and I believe for Davies, lies in the idea of positioning as a concept, and understanding such positioning of identities, past and present.

The fetishisation and eroticisation of what I consider a heteronormative representation of masculinity – highlights the still unclear position of the ‘homo man’ represented today.

¹ G. Davies, *Artist Statement*, 2011.

Gerwyn Davies *The Gloves* (detail) 2011, Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.



Yavuz Erkan

Unorthodox Aphorisms



Yavuz Erkan photographs his own body, undertaking somewhat slight, short-lived gestures in tandem with ephemera of the everyday.

His image production is inherently photographic, that is, the sharp points of focus and deepening soft blur emphasise the plurality Erkan aims to poeticise in “the power relationships between showing, looking and being looked at”.¹

While I don't see these relationships as a struggle (in a traditional sense), Erkan's installation strategy, a grid of framed photographs, highlights a kind of willful desire. The eye moves back and forth, through a range of hues that are highly sensual – broken by stark white frames – which further concentrates the act of looking, in such a way that it becomes quite reflective.

In a recent lecture, Andrew Benjamin gave an example of how our engagement with the world is filmic and how the photograph and the photographic dominate how we think about our own bodies.

He described what he saw as he looked through the window of a shop-front, around 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening:

“I see myself seeing, because I look through the glass and in the glass I see myself reflected back. Not only do I see myself seeing, I see myself desiring. I see myself desiring what I cannot have. I see a complex series of me's. I am always seeing more than one.”²

¹ Y. Erkan, *Artist Statement*, 2011.

² A. Benjamin, *From Fear to Instability: On the Philosophy of Photography*, Federation Hall, Victorian College of the Arts, 24 April, 2012.

Yavuz Erkan *Bubble gum* 2011, Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.



Yavuz Erkan *Towel* 2011, Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.



Nicolette Johnson

A Real Winter

Nicolette Johnson charts the pilgrimage, she made with her father – late 2011, to visit her recently deceased Oma's house in New Mexico, USA.¹

Johnson teams portraits of herself, her father and her uncle alongside the landscape and vignettes from a journey – be it past or present. She records not only the memory of her childhood relationship, but her Oma's collected history – like points on a map, which trace and give significance to the breaks within a journey – that stretch well beyond the physical mileage she travelled to visit her father's childhood home.

She looks towards effects that are now somewhat unfamiliar to her, as she lives in Australia, to find substance, and shares her sentimentality – finding a beauty that is unequivocally universal.

A sublime reoccurrence within the series are images of trees, in winter. *Cherry Tree* and *Aspen Trees* are devoid of their leaves. Their growth stunted, possibly dead; yet *Oma's Tree*, a pine of some sort, is unaffected, and survives the seasonal change.

¹ N. Johnson, *Artist statement*, 2011.

Nicolette Johnson *State line* (detail) 2011, Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.



Paula Mahoney

Just a Touch of Death

Paula Mahoney's series *Just a Touch of Death* makes me think of the prominent anamorphic skull, like a kind of graphic perplexity, smack bang in the middle of Holbein's *The Ambassadors* (1533). Its clear presence in the Renaissance painting dialogues Mahoney's clear absence (by digital removal) of the common vanitas symbol, the skull, from her photographic portraits. Which perhaps also suggests an 'altered view' of such symbolism.

Photography has had a nice, well-rounded conversation with death and memento mori. In fact, Mahoney's series is a gentle reminder of these associations, which she notably refers to theorist Roland Barthes.¹

Barthes says, "Photography may correspond to the intrusion, in our modern society, of an asymbolic Death, outside of religion, outside of ritual, a kind of abrupt dive into literal Death [...] With the photograph, we enter into *flat Death*."²

Amongst a group of 'sitters' who are no longer 'propped' up by 'death', two of which (No.1 and No. 7) share the same heavy, fake-fur-like coat, suggesting further hidden notions underneath their theatricality.

¹ P. Mahoney, *Artist Statement*, 2012.

² R. Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1981, p. 92.

Annamarie Dzendrowskyj

Betwixt & Between

Annamarie Dzendrowskyj's video *Betwixt and Between* explores notions that are exactly as her title suggests, in-between, neither one thing nor the other – but possibly of a third, undisclosed order.

The 'haze' or 'fog' is present as primary material, which disrupts, but doesn't inhibit the pictorial. In fact, haze can be considered a tool that exemplifies depth and perspective, governing a distinction between foreground, middle-ground and background.

The second component, 'twilight', which she either captures or produces artificially (much like the haze), is articulated through a dark interior view of a window, from which light filters through from outside. The window is central to the stationary view of the camera. A frame within a frame. We don't exactly *see* anything, but this seems to be precisely the point – it's a framework.

"Whenever we are trying to recover a recollection, to call up some period of our history, we become conscious of an act *sui generis* by which we detach ourselves from the present in order to replace ourselves, first, in the past in general, then, in a certain region of the past – a work of adjustment, something like the focussing of a camera."¹

Henri Bergson's analogy of focussing a camera, as an adjustment, likened to the recollection of a memory – which he see as an act that is unique, is rather beautiful. It makes me think of the perpetual struggle the technology Dzendrowskyj used to shoot her video might have had as it tried to automatically focus the diminishing haze.

¹ H. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, New York, Zone Books, 1988, pp. 133-134. (Original work published Matière et Mémoire 1896).



Paula Mahoney *Just a Touch of Death #1* (detail) 2011, Archival Pigment Print, courtesy of the artist.



Annamarie Dzendrowskyj *Betwixt & Between I – III* 2011, video still detail, courtesy of the artist.

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Opening Night
Saturday 9 June 5.00 – 8.00 pm

Exhibition Dates
10 June – 8 July 2012

Gallery Hours
Wednesday - Saturday 10.00 am – 5.00 pm
Sunday 11.00 am – 3.00 pm



Queensland Centre for Photography

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P I M C O

