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With the Basil Sellers Art Prize over half way through its ten-year cycle, some forty-six artists will have exhibited their work in this series of exhibitions at the Ian Potter Museum of Art. I am pleased that in such a short period of time the exhibition and prize have been so enthusiastically received by artists and the general public and that it now features so strongly in the Australian art scene. I am delighted that the exhibition is to tour for the first time. In 2013 this Basil Sellers Art Prize will be on show at the Gold Coast City Gallery. In combining my two passions of art and sport, shared by many Australians, I hope to bring new audiences throughout Australia to art and to encourage production of art that responds to sport in its many guises.

I am also pleased to support the National Sports Museum Basil Sellers Creative Arts Fellowship, awarded to one of the artists in each exhibition. The 2011–12 fellowship recipient, Ponch Hawkes, has certainly made the most of this rewarding opportunity. Her report, along with that of previous recipients, Kate Daw and Stewart Russell, is included in this catalogue.

I thank all the artists who submitted entries for the exhibition and congratulate the selected artists. Nearly all of them have created entirely new work for the exhibition, works of art that engage directly with the sporting theme. I also wish to thank the Ian Potter Museum of Art and the University of Melbourne for their ongoing commitment to the exhibition and for presenting it in such an arresting manner.

I hope you enjoy the exhibition and the rich and diverse work presented by fifteen of Australia’s most talented artists.

BASIL SELLERS AM

The Ian Potter Museum of Art is proud to be hosting the third Basil Sellers Art Prize. In only a few years the exhibition has become a regular part of the Potter’s program, increasingly gaining national profile as an important survey of Australian contemporary art. This exhibition highlights the role the Potter plays at the University of Melbourne in developing new knowledge through art and engaging with the wider community to encourage learning through dedicated public and education programs.

The third Basil Sellers Art Prize celebrates the theme of art and sport through the work of an outstanding group of fifteen artists: Brook Andrew, Richard Bell, Lauren Brincat, Jon Campbell, Eugene Carchesio, Greg Creek, Louise Hearman, Pat Macan, Gabriella Mangano and Silvana Mangano, Simon Perry, Kerrie Poliness, Patrick Pound, Sangeeta Sandrasegar and Christian Thompson. This year’s artists were selected from a wide range of entries. I thank them for making their work available for exhibition and congratulate them on producing such compelling responses to the theme. The artists’ representative galleries have also provided support and information for the exhibition and catalogue.

The shortlist of artists for inclusion in the exhibition was made in August 2011, with the judging panel comprising Basil Sellers AM; former rugby union champion Nick Ron Jones AM; Erica Green, director of the Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art; Lisa Havilah, CEO of Carriageworks; and Chris McAuliffe, director of the Potter. I thank the judges for their time and expertise in making the selection of finalists for the exhibition and the $100,000 prize. This exhibition involves many people at the Potter and I would like to thank all Potter staff who have worked on the project.

We are most grateful to Basil Sellers AM, who most generously supports the exhibition and the prize. The outcome of his largesse is this major exhibition of contemporary art for all to enjoy as well as considerable support for the artists. The Potter is also pleased to be able to award the Yarra Trams People’s Choice award of $5,000 with our media partners, Yarra Trams. Other organisations including the City of Melbourne, Inlink Media, Sherrardine Wines, Coopers and Hardy Brothers Jewellers support the exhibition and we are most grateful for their generous assistance.

I join Basil Sellers in welcoming you to the Basil Sellers Art Prize 2012 and hope you enjoy a stimulating and rewarding experience.

JULIE ANN COX
CHAIRMAN
THE IAN POTTER MUSEUM OF ART
ARTISTS

BROOK ANDREW
RICHARD BELL
LAUREN BRINCAT
JON CAMPBELL
EUGENE CARCHESIO
GREG CREEK
LOUISE HEARMAN
PAT MACAN
GABRIELLA MANGANO
AND SILVANA MANGANO
SIMON PERRY
KERRIE POLINESS
PATRICK POUND
SANGEETA SANDRASEGAR
CHRISTIAN THOMPSON
Brook Andrew has been working with ethnographic material from museums for over fifteen years. Australia 1 (2012) is based on an image from William Blandowski’s nineteenth-century album of sketches, titled Australia in 142 photographic illustrations from 10 years’ experience. Prussian-born Blandowski led a government expedition to the Murray and Darling river junctions in 1856–57, amassing a large collection of natural specimens and, aided by the expedition artist, documenting the traditions of the local Nyeri Nyeri people. Blandowski was a controversial figure in mid-nineteenth century Melbourne, and in 2007 his work was the subject of contention once more when an image from his expedition was used as proof of the origin of Australian rules football in Aboriginal culture.

In the years since European contact, the successes of high-profile Australian Aboriginal sportspeople across the breadth of codes have contributed inestimably to a sense of empowerment and positive esteem within Aboriginal communities. Andrew is interested in sport as an avenue for promoting cultural pride and aspiration. Australia 1 is one of a series of works in which Andrew reanimates Blandowski’s archive through reproduction in large scale on a reflective surface of gold foil. The printed canvas evokes the romance and beauty of the classical landscape tradition. Andrew’s research has uncovered an intriguing aspect of the social life of one particular Aboriginal group. In notes attached to the original sketch on which Andrew’s Australia 1 is based, Blandowski wrote the following account:

When the Aborigines hold big meetings, they often pass the time with athletic games. The capturing of the emu feather is a popular game. One team gets a bundle of these feathers and one or two men from the other team try to take it off them. In the end both teams get help from all able men and the game develops into a big scuffle.

By implication, Andrew’s work points to a history of sport that was silenced as a strategy and legacy of colonisation. The diverse sports developed by, for example, various south-east Australian Aboriginal groups, were integrated into their respective social customs but largely erased in the wake of European settlement. This refers not only to the athletic prowess, competition and pride engendered by traditional hunting methods, but also to games played for the purposes of social bonding, and for camaraderie.

Collectively, Hunter Monument 4 and Australia 1 reflect Brook Andrew’s ongoing interest in traditions and stereotypes as well as the mass media and communication between cultures. They are stylistically diverse, but conceptually unified by Andrew’s interest in celebrating traditions of Australian Aboriginal athleticism.


Richard Bell powerfully communicates the capacity of sport to reach audiences about fundamental rules of the game that reflect fair play. History shows us that sport has the power to arouse strong feelings in audiences everywhere. So, too, have human rights issues been the cause of widespread global movements that indicate the human drive to strive towards equity and a better world.

Bell is a creative provocateur who arouses audience sensibilities and consciousness by acknowledging human histories that are pivotal to the development of human rights. He speaks through art with a political voice that often communicates justice issues, sometimes with overt confrontational imagery and at other times with Australian Aboriginal humour that reflects the ability to laugh in the face of adversity.

In the collaborative painting A white hero for black Australia (2011) Bell and Emory Douglas, an artist and former Minister of Culture for the Black Panther Party from 1967 until its closure in the early 1980s, celebrate the bravery of three young athletes: a white Australian, Peter Norman, and two black Americans, Tommie Smith and John Carlos. The athletes stood together in solidarity at their 1968 Olympic Games award ceremony. Smith won the 200-metre race in a world record time and was awarded the gold medal, with Norman second place winning silver and Carlos in third place winning bronze. On the podium, Smith and Carlos raised their fists in a ‘black power salute’ while Norman wore an Olympic Project for Human Rights badge to communicate his support. Smith and Carlos had asked Norman’s permission to symbolically protest. The athletes were criticised harshly and there were grave repercussions. In America, the Olympic committee stripped Smith and Carlos of their medals and the media reacted negatively. In Australia, Norman was ostracised. He qualified for the next Olympic Games, but was not sent to Munich in 1972. Norman is celebrated as a hero by Aboriginal Australia because he was one of the rare individuals who offered his support for black rights at a time when civil rights violations in the United States had led to widespread protests. That year, Martin Luther King Jnr and Robert Kennedy were assassinated.

In his new painting Foley vs the Springboks (lone protester) (2012) Bell depicts Aboriginal activist Gary Foley holding a placard with the words ‘Pardon me for being born into a nation of racists’ to protest against the South African Springboks rugby tour of Australia in 1971. The gesture was part of anti-apartheid demonstrations where the Springboks (a white South African team) were protested against internationally as a symbol of apartheid. Political demonstrations, countered by an intense police presence in Queensland in particular, publicly brought to light not only the need for the abandonment of apartheid in South Africa, but that of the White Australia Policy in 1973.

DONNA LESLIE
Lauren Brincat's practice is guided by the formative influence of early performance artists working in the 1970s. Her artworks mark out her own physical and mental limits and push her instincts to the edge. As an artist, she wills herself to reach out of bounds. Brincat’s practice spans a variety of media including video and sculpture. It often involves documentation of personal 'actions' undertaken anonymously and in relative solitude.

During May and June 2012, Brincat was based in Mexico City researching and producing her new performance video, titled **10 metre platform**. Brincat had planned to lower herself over the ledge of the high diving board at the Alberca Olímpica Francisco Márquez indoor swimming pool, and hang there for as long as possible until, unable to hold on any longer, she let go and fell into the pool. During the performance, watched by her film crew, she discovered that she was unable to go through with the task. She hit a wall. After some contemplation and review of the ‘failure’ of the performance, she writes:

> It wasn’t a happy ending. At first I was devastated that I didn't fall from the platform, but I’ve since realised the success of the piece. The one performance that depicted competitiveness and required success, resulted in failure. It truly tested my limits. My necessity to be in control.

The Alberca Olímpica Francisco Márquez pool, with a capacity of 10,000, was used for the Mexico Olympics in 1968, a year when political power relations and popular aspirations changed fundamentally. In Mexico City during the Olympic Games, this became especially plain, with radical social upheaval and harsh retaliation against student activism that saw dozens killed by the military and police.

Brincat’s **10 metre platform** catches some of these conflicts of time and energy. The majesty and idealism of the Olympic Games, represented in the architecture, modernism and nostalgia of the 10-metre platform, are cut against the fraught casualness and fragility of an individual out of step. In this performance video, Brincat uses the scale and durability of her own body and temperament to register something of the mystery, grandeur and complexity of momentous times.

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1. Lauren Brincat, email, 18 June 2012.
In his original entry for the Basil Sellers Art Prize, Jon Campbell states: ‘there are two great Aussie pastimes, watching sport and looking at Jon Campbell paintings’. Equating his own popularity with that of sport in the hearts of Australians is a classic tongue-in-cheek Campbell gesture.

For close to three decades, Jon Campbell has produced works of art that celebrate the particular character of his ‘leftie, westie, working class’ view of Australia. His work centres on Australian suburban life and culture; drawing on rock music, car culture, and local references such as neighbourhood signs and motifs. Campbell is sincere and honest in his approach, and viewers find a comforting humour in his paintings of suburban backyards, neon signs, and placard-like text works that cite phrases such as ‘schnitz & tits’, ‘maate’, ‘pure bewdy’ and ‘bowled shaane’. His use of the common vernacular isn’t designed to mock or deride; rather, it speaks of a genuine desire to articulate and share the character of a community.

Since the mid-1990s, Campbell has regularly used typography in his work for its capacity to succinctly, if sometimes obliquely, convey the complexity of the relationships between art, design, advertising, and localised culture. In Dream Team, Campbell reflects on the agency of language to define the heavily fetishized threshold that distinguishes a true fan (or initiate) from a mere spectator.

For Australian rules football fans, the concept behind Campbell’s new multi-panel painting Dream Team (2012) hardly needs explanation. Selecting his subjects from across generations and teams, Campbell has chosen his top twenty-two players’ nicknames and rendered them on small-scale boards with the skill of a master signwriter. The hand-held scale is important, recalling the signs fans hold up at live games, as is the choice of colours and fonts for each name. Playing with anticipated associations is part of the fun: Campbell has given Captain Blood (Jack Dyer) a comical amusement park vibe; and the tough swagger one might expect of a player named Cowboy (Kevin Neale) dissolves into plump bubble-gum sweetness. The overall soft, pastel palette further dilutes the inherent masculinity of the subject matter.

In sport (as in life) a nickname indicates that a player has captured the hearts of fans; even a less-than-heroic moniker like Flea (Dale Weightman) or Spud (Danny Frawley), equates to legend status. Nicknames are for mates, and the use of colloquial names in sport brings players and fans closer, transposing a legend from the pedestal to the bar stool.

JOANNA BOSSE

Jon Campbell
Dream Team (detail) 2012
enamel paint on plywood
22 paintings, installation (variable): 300 x 300 cm
To be familiar with the sport of boxing is to be privy not only to its governing rules, and competitor styles and strategies, but also to the realm of pugilist psychology: each boxer’s emotional control and presentation, perceptiveness and analytic aptitude; capacity for tactical thought, discipline, concentration and maturity. Largely imperceptible to the casual observer, it is the boxer’s psychological stamina rather than physical resilience that determines their success or failure in the ring. Aficionados appreciate the layers beneath the violence, the sweet science of boxing, a sport which has unsurprisingly often served in film and art as an allegory for universal themes.

Eugene Carchesio’s interest in boxing was inspired by a photograph that was published alongside a newspaper report about a boxing match a couple of years ago. Carchesio was struck by the colour and lines of the image, by what he describes as the poetry of the competitors’ movements and by the distillation of shock in the frozen moment. Through his ongoing series of watercolours and drawings on the subject, he spends time in contemplation of less literal and more abstract aspects of boxing, such as the complex, contradictory emotional state of the boxer and the tightrope he treads in order to balance inner calm and outward energy.

In the twelve economically executed, delicate line drawings comprising his new Blood of Hercules (2012) series, Carchesio captures at once the sport’s brutality, its elegance, and its clumsiness. Each drawing registers a moment of impact, retaining movement and weight through Carchesio’s consideration of areas of energy and light.
In Australia, a nation known for its obsession with sport, successful athletes occupy a uniquely vulnerable social position. When victorious, they are venerated in ways that our political leaders can only imagine. They’re thrown ticker-tape parades, they receive glowing front-page reportage and commercial endorsements and are awarded Orders of Australia. Yet it takes only one off-field indiscretion to ignite an unresolved public debate on the legitimacy of our construction of the sportsperson as role model. Our tendency to quickly denounce Australian athletes whose behaviour transgresses our expectations seems as instinctive as our desire to make heroes of them, as was demonstrated most recently in scandals surrounding AFL stars Liam Jurrah and Ben Cousins, and Olympian Grant Hackett. Viewed cynically, our emotional investment in sport has a dark side: while athletes’ achievements are our achievements, in their disgrace we exact severe admonishment.

Greg Creek engages with the subject of sport philosophically. He uses sport to highlight the fluidity of social structures and notions of leadership and ambition. Each of his four large-scale works in mixed media on paper are based on a series of invented dialogues between eight politicians and sportspeople. In one, Prime Minister Julia Gillard is depicted opposite Keli Lane, the former water polo champion who, in 1996, was convicted of the murder of her newborn daughter. These four works do not suggest literal relationships between two subjects, but rather form part of Creek’s ongoing exploration of moral, religious and social allegory. He has said that the works ‘collectively examine the sense of desire, idealism and aspiration that is both fulfilled and at times let down by the reality of sports figures within the competitive structures of sports and society’.1

Creek’s 2nd opposition (Vladimir Putin and Ian Thorpe) (2012), depicts an imagined discussion between two unlikely interlocutors, the Russian president and the Australian champion swimmer, on the subject of loss. Their vividly rendered faces, described by Creek not as portraits but effigies, are painted on opposite sides of the composition. They converse via pop-art style speech bubbles, in a dialectical structure that encompasses a third voice. Putin quotes philosopher and writer Dante: ‘You shall leave everything you love most: this is the arrow the bow of exile shoots first’.

In 2nd opposition, Putin and Thorpe stand in for abstract ideas, because, as Creek observes, ‘Sport itself is allegorical. As spectators we experience it as a story with two meanings. A literal contest and a symbolic trial’.2 Creek’s thought-provoking allegories stimulate contemplation of themes no less significant than the conflict and humanity existing in our most scrutinised public figures, and in ourselves.

1. Greg Creek, email, 8 June 2012.
2. Greg Creek, email, 8 June 2012.
Louise Hearman
Untitled (detail) 2012
oil on composition board
9 paintings, installation variable

LOUISE HEARMAN

Hearman’s choice of subjects, but the way she paints light and shape in the rich sensual medium of oil paint that makes her imagery unique. Hearman’s paintings are also characterised by a singular focus on a particular subject. She chooses to leave her works untitled which allows for open interpretation.

In the paintings created for this exhibition Hearman transports the viewer into the world of Australian rules football, a sport she contends is the best football game ever invented. Hearman is proud of the fact that Aussie rules originated in the 1850s in Melbourne, her home town.

Louise Hearman’s work conveys an absorption in life and all its details, no matter how transient. In this exhibition, Hearman focuses on moments in the game which have captured her attention. While light is a primary inspiration, a particular physical gesture, movement or expression becomes a meaningful way to visually communicate the game as both a participatory and spectator sport. Hearman is known for her open spacious dreamlike landscapes, but when she transfers her attention to Australian rules football she captures the raw physicality of the exceptionally fit, virile men who inhabit the ‘landscape’ of the football field. Their masculinity is celebrated as an integral part of the game and they become heroic figures who are prepared to risk all and to put everything into their game to win.

Hearman has long been fascinated by recurring motifs, and the oval shape of the ball is of special interest to her. Her engagement with the oval subject implies also that any attempt to deconstruct or decode her visual language would seem to contradict the felt quality of her work. It is as if Hearman as ‘seer’ conveys secrets that only the initiated may discover.

Her own initiation into Australian rules football is demonstrated by her attention and delight in the game. Hearman’s paintings evoke the primal energy of movement on the field, the handballing and running with the ball, the kicking and flight of the ball, the children playing on the field at half-time, and the exhilaration and shared emotions of the roaring crowd. The game as sheer spectacle stimulates the imagination and is simultaneously grounded in physical reality; universal qualities shared with art.

DONNA LESLIE
In sporting parlance Pat Macan would be described as a cricket tragic. As well as being a fan, he has played cricket and has a deep understanding of the game in all its nuances. Macan’s propositions on the subject are made by each frame, by each ball, by each mark on the score sheet. Macan looks to cricket for its existential complexity. In a series of minimalist works first exhibited in full at Sydney gallery Yuill/Crowley in 2011, he brings the notational passages of cricket together with an account of making and viewing art.

Presented on a boxy monitor at the centre of the group, The life and death and life of Ewen Chatfield comprises digital footage taken from Television New Zealand film shot in Auckland in the summer of 1975. (By no coincidence 1975 is also the year Macan was born.) The footage shows nearly three-and-a-half minutes of the last hours of a five-day test between New Zealand and England. Number 11 batsman Ewen Chatfield, then a young cricketer in his test debut, is hit in the head by a ‘bouncer’ and falls unconscious. Chatfield stops breathing and the television screen goes black except for a large white dot approximately the size of a cricket ball at its centre. Minutes later, the TVNZ footage is resumed, showing Chatfield being revived and stretchered off the field after his momentary death.

Accompanying the video is a series of drawings in black oil stick titled None for none (8 ball maiden) 1–8. Like the pair Diagram for a left-handed batsman and Diagram for a right-handed batsman, these works, framed in clear acrylic box frames, function as objects. Macan documents on-field technicalities and transforms cricket equipment into sculptural objects. The result is a serial account of incidental and philosophical truths.

Ewen Chatfield’s accident is a notorious moment in cricket as well as New Zealand history although of course Macan himself has no direct recollection of the event. Nonetheless with The life and death and life of Ewen Chatfield and its companion works he recreates the reductive force of the incident as a meditation on moments between life and death and the relationship between cause and effect.

Bala Starr
At first glance, audiences might perceive that Gabriella and Silvana Mangano’s new video work Rewind (2012) marks the very distinction between art and sport. Its austere mise-en-scène, revealing the influence of the Italian neo-realist films the sisters have admired from an early age, is diametrically opposed to the hyper-stimulation that contemporary audiences expect of a televised sports broadcast. Gabriella and Silvana strip away the background sponsorship slogans, logo-saturated costumes, spotlights, scores and commentary. They extinguish the ‘rules of the game’ and its structure, and the element of contest considered fundamental to most sports. They substitute the public stadium with the private realm of their own studio, removing sport from the social arena.

In Rewind Gabriella and Silvana share the performance of a solitary athlete clad in plain black clothing. Wielding a sculptural cardboard prop, the figure repeatedly executes a single, controlled movement to the sound of the syncopated beat of an analogue flip clock. Following from their research into performance-enhancing music, Gabriella and Silvana have manipulated tempo in accordance with ‘ideal’ beats per minute for warm-up (108), stretching (98), strength training (118), endurance (153) and warm-down (88).

Gabriella and Silvana have previously used video to articulate ideas about the medium of drawing, such as its immediacy and its capacity to explore and articulate spatial relationships. Key to their conception of Rewind was a shared fascination with the abstraction of form that occurs in the replayed or frozen movement of athletes in telecast. In art, it’s relatively unchartered terrain. How might the viewer respond to an athletic act that is presented as an abstracted sequence of shapes? Gabriella and Silvana’s athlete appears to be either rotating or filmed by a circling camera, enhancing our consciousness of the act of watching and raising questions about how we process and contemplate the spectacle of sport.

By removing the theatrical conventions of contemporary sport and relocating a sporting performance to their studio space, Gabriella and Silvana are able to convey equivalences between artist and sportsperson: the demands of disciplined, repetitive practice; the coveted ‘zone’ of total mental focus; the psychological stamina required for success, and the aspiration, shared by the spectator, to excellence.
In the early 1970s a young Australian man reintroduced the nude to the world of sport. Michael O’Brien stripped off and ran onto the ground at Twickenham Stadium during a rugby union match between France and England, reportedly to win a bet. From that moment, ‘streaker’ became part of the lexicon of big sporting arenas and for a time gave form to a new kind of public expression.

Simon Perry’s sculptures take as their subject Ian Bradshaw’s well-known black and white photograph of a gesticulating O’Brien being escorted from the ground, naked except for a strategically placed policeman’s helmet. Michael O’Brien and the group of three policemen shepherding him are followed closely by a man with an overcoat hurrying to restore decorum to the scene. O’Brien, long-haired and bearded, arms outstretched, has been widely described in popular media as a ‘Jesus figure’. The facial expressions of those around him range from slightly amused to grim-faced. A field of spectators’ faces forms the background of the image.

Perry is interested in the broadest creative possibilities suggested by a captured event of individual bravura. His sentiments lie with the pioneer Australian streaker subverting the rules and codes of the British establishment. He is also interested in the panorama of the Twickenham photograph and the relationships between its subjects.

Using a traditional modelling medium of dark red matt wax, Perry has recreated two key figurative elements from the photograph of the event. O’Brien is there of course but also the policeman flanking the streaker, and the hurrying man. The sculptures are supported on a custom-designed aluminium conveyor track and small white shelf on the wall in the gallery space. In speaking about the work, Perry has suggested that time can be represented sculpturally in relation to each of past, present and future. Following the principles established in the sketch models of neoclassical sculptors like Canova, he applies the idea that through expressive and direct handling of figurative sculpture a fleeting moment becomes fixed in material form and a life force is transferred from the artist to the work. In this way, Perry’s Incident at Twickenham and Twickenham official simultaneously represent a historical sporting event and a sculptural event. The original sporting event was documented in the form of a photograph. By contrast, Perry’s three-dimensional representation evokes a classical contest of mythological and material transformation that has an urgency quite outside the normal realm of a rugby game.
In the art of Kerrie Poliness, drawing becomes the game of life and the artist the sportsperson. Art and life are intrinsically connected and the game is implicitly about nature. Geometric form is inextricably linked with the natural world and art is transformed into an expression of nature even though it begins as a conceptual idea and constructed form. Poliness communicates multilayered meanings. She questions symmetrical form and the cultural and aesthetic values that are attributed to concepts of beauty and perfection. Her works convey the message that material things are never exact, for when matter is investigated variations become apparent that may be interpreted as inherently unique. While the form has the potential to be mass-produced, what is revealed is that all things are differentiated.

The paradox of Poliness’s large-scale drawings is not only that they are created collaboratively, but that they can be made by virtually anyone who follows the rules of the game. The boundary line between artist and non-artist is dissolved and art may potentially be shared by all. Analogous to a sports field, with boundary lines that define how the game is to be played, Poliness’s drawings are defined by a specific set of rules that guide the participants. The perimeters of the game are set, but its creative and collaborative possibilities are endless. Participants are instructed to decide for themselves at which point certain measurements are to be made and it is this freedom to decide, coupled with the particular surface upon which a drawing is made and its location, that ultimately gives each artwork its uniqueness.

Poliness’s works for the exhibition comprise Marking the Field (2012), the filmed documentation of the artist producing a ‘field drawing’, and Field drawing #1 (2008), the instruction book and sports field line-marking machine that were used to create the drawing in the film. Her instructions may be interpreted as a map or guide about the nature of creativity itself. Poliness returns to qualities that are essential, including flow, movement, asymmetry, and differentiation. Like the umpire, Poliness is engaged in the game and is also the observer. She works with distinctive characteristics shared by art and sport, and the rules of the game convey the nature of creativity.

DONNA LESLIE
A blonde in a tennis dress stands squinting in the harsh sunlight, a racquet in each arm, one knee bent self-consciously towards the camera. A small shadow is visible just below the direction of her gaze. In another image, with a distinctively American suburban sprawl in the middle distance, a boy in a gridiron helmet and jersey squats on a sports field, clutching a ball. The photographer’s head and camera lens are silhouetted at the bottom right corner. For artist and collector Patrick Pound, the shadow captured in these photographs is their punctum, a term used by Roland Barthes in *Camera lucida* for the small area or detail of a photograph, captured unintentionally, which penetrates the viewer’s consciousness. Sports photographers (shadows) (2012), a group of framed, enlarged found photographs of amateur sportspersons and their photographers’ shadows, is characteristic of the seriality of Pound’s practice. These apparently uncomplicated images expose mysteries surrounding identity, context and ambition.

Pound presents his interest in sportspersons humorously and obliquely. Some of his photographs are faintly sinister, but they’re wittily compiled and categorized. *Damaged* (2012) is a collection of found photographs of amateur sportspersons whose faces have been scratched or stabbed out by unknown people with unknown grievances. There is a sequence of photographs of people swinging a baseball bat at a ball, and missing. *Museum of lost causes* (2012) is a collection of the once-cherished sporting memorabilia of washed-up legends and failed campaigns including commemorative beer coasters, figurines, souvenirs of Melbourne Storm’s stripped premierships, deflated balls, a Sydney Olympics volunteer’s jacket, and a tennis ball and Wimbledon headband, both signed by Pat Cash. Pound’s collections are records of amateur athleticism, amateur photography, moderate success and suburban lives. A tone of ordinary-ness pervades. Pound gently philosophizes upon our valiant attempts as much as he does the collected residue of success.

Barthes, seeing the photograph’s technical complexity as immaterial to its emotional and mnemonic power, concluded that the amateur comes closer to a mastery of photography than the professional. Pound’s thought-provoking collections of photographs can be viewed as a sophisticated development of Barthes’s insights. They are a record of Pound himself, obsessively gathering and sorting images and objects in an attempt to piece together the shared experience of the athletic endeavor.

SUZETTE WEARNE
The ancient Greeks were zealous in their pursuit of healthy bodies and athletics, staging the first Olympic Games in the eighth century BCE as part of a religious festival in honour of Zeus, the king of the gods. Traditionally, young athletes competed naked, enabling artists to study the human form in action. Numerous black- and red-figure vases are decorated with scenes of competitions and athletic victories, trainers and athletics.

For Sangeeta Sandrasegar, the goals of the athlete and the artist are linked. Both are found at the metaphorical boundaries of society, and each seeks a ‘divine’ aspect within the fullest possible human experience. Like the Greek god Dionysus, who existed on the borderline between the human and the divine, the athlete and the artist harness a restless to and fro movement at the very edges of human achievement.

Dionysus, or Bacchus as he was known to the Romans, was the child of Zeus and a mortal mother. Dionysus’s duality, his capacity to represent one thing and its opposite simultaneously, and his status as ‘outsider’ god, provide the philosophical framework for Sandrasegar’s new videos and paper cut-out work.

Her first video Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss, Though winning near the goal, takes its title from Keats’s Ode to a Grecian urn. It features Sandrasegar, clothed anonymously in black, as a lone figure running through an Australian bush landscape, perhaps being chased or in search of escape. The silhouetted figure and pink-hued mise-en-scène echo the design of archaic black-figure vases, which often featured Dionysian iconography.

Sandrasegar’s second, related, video is titled enthusiasm, a word that comes from the Greek, meaning literally ‘possessed by God’. It was filmed early this year from the vantage point of an unseen runner looking backwards on a path in the lush Keralan countryside in South India. The video is saturated with colour and light, which has the effect of focusing our attention on the sky and the narrow, sun-dappled path.

Viewed together, the two videos present a circular course where the runner and meandering bush path in Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss, Though winning near the goal are mirrored by the shadowy path in enthusiasm. Sandrasegar quotes Socrates:

Then it seemed like falling into a labyrinth; we thought we were at the finish, but our way bent round and we found ourselves as it were back at the beginning, and just as far from that which we were seeking at first.

Bala Starr
When Christian Thompson was eleven years old, he finished in first place in a breaststroke heat at his primary school swimming carnival. Post-race, breathless and dripping, he watched confused as event officials distributed cards to three other competitors indicating their respective first, second and third places. Finally, a little yellow peg was placed into his hand, signifying disqualification on a point relating to one fleeting movement of his foot. Thompson disputes the validity of the disqualification to this day. And fragments of the event—his sheer physical depletion, the intensity of his brother’s poolside cheering, the elation of finishing first and the bitterness that accompanies a victory ‘robbed’—come to him with unmitigated clarity.

Thompson, an interdisciplinary artist of Bidjara (from the Kunja nation of central west Queensland) and European heritage, often acts as the subject of his own work. He poses in meticulously constructed portraits that play with the tensions within gender and cultural categories; between past and present, feminine and masculine, real and imagined, loss and regeneration. Thompson’s recent practice reflects a subtle shift from his earlier interest in the destabilisation of existing notions of cultural and sexual identity, towards asserting the presence of an essentially hybridised and ambiguous one.

The haunted figure of To make you feel this way is impossible to categorize. He is placeless, pictured against a pink but featureless background. Posed like a classical Greek sculpture, and wearing 1950s costume swimming cap and clashing hot pink lipstick, he cannot be circumscribed by era. He is androgynous. A slew of medals is pushed to one side of his neck, and his blacked-out eyes, as if observing the flag from a dais, gaze upward in a confounding blend of stoicism and regret, bitterness and pride.

Thompson, like many regular swimmers, uses the vast and isolating space offered in water for meditative, constructive thought. The head of the swimmer that he role-plays in To make you feel this way has been engraved into a series of gold medals in an accompanying work. Here the swimmer is symbolic of the stubborn wound that loss can inflict.

SUZETTE WEARNE
Brook Andrew was born in Sydney in 1970. He lives and works in Melbourne. Recent solo exhibitions include 18 lives in paradise, Art Asia Pacific, no. 74, 2011.<ref>Viewed 29 April 2012, <web.mac.com/tst_/iweb/gregcreek/0903gregcreek.html> Greg Creek was born in Melbourne in 1956. He completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (First Class) at the VCA in 1974 before completing his Master of Fine Art (First Class) at the VCA in 1976. He is currently undertaking his PhD at RMIT University where he is a senior lecturer in art and studio director of Expanded Studio 1. In 2007 Greg Creek exhibited regularly in many group exhibitions including 3rd party machine—Higgins Foundation, Adelaide (2010); Perilong, Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide (2010); 21:000:100, Gerard Street, Melbourne (2008); Ephemeral Acts: Annexe & Gorman Samstag Museum of Art, Adelaide (2010); the 4th Asia Pacific Triennial, Queensland Art Gallery/ GOMA, Brisbane, (2009); Cairns and the Australian Pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale. He was awarded the Doug Morcom National Portrait Prize in 1996. Greg Creek is represented by Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.</ref> Further reading:


Further reading:

- Carchesio, Eugene; Eugene Carchesio: heliochromic works, 2000–02, Curtin Media, St Lucia, Qld, 2002.

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- Carchesio, Eugene; Eugene Carchesio: heliochromic works, 2000–02, Curtin Media, St Lucia, Qld, 2002.
ARTISTS’ BIOGRAPHIES AND FURTHER READING

LOUISE HEARMAN


Further reading:
• Harrington, Katherine, Lesley Kreisler Simon Perry: Sculpture and the enemies, no. 3. 2010.
• McCullough, Chris, ACA Art Collection, ACAV Ltd, Melbourne, 2006.
• Williams, Linda, Art and the idea of the animal, RMIT University, Melbourne, 2006.
• Williams, Linda, Heat and climate change, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2006.

PATRICK POUND


Further reading:
• Beards, Geraldine, NEKUS, cats and kittens, Monash University Museum of Art, Clayton, Vic., 2011.
• Daniel, Jennifer, How do the animals see it, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2006.
• McCullough, Chris, ACA Art Collection, ACAV Ltd, Melbourne, 2006.
• Williams, Linda, Art and the idea of the animal, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2006.
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• Williams, Linda, Art and the idea of the animal, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne, 2006.
ARTISTS’ BIOGRAPHIES AND FURTHER READING

SANEEA SANDRASEGAR
Sangeeta Sandrasegar was born in Brisbane in 1973. She lives and works in Melbourne. In 2004 she completed her PhD at the VCA and the Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne. Recent solo exhibitions include The windlecked landscape of the Motherland’s petals in white grace, Murray, White Room, Melbourne (2012); and a solo exhibition at a silent head of Mr. Hunt’s silencing, Murray, White Room (2010). White peel tendril on the clear right of key and black lines, 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney (2006). On the Art of Truth, on the self-World of Me (V), West Spaces, Melbourne (2009) and The edge of our selves, Murray, White Room (2008). Group exhibitions include Dangerous and above the secret of the serpent, Africa, Museum, the Netherlands (2012); Kindness/Urdu, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi (2012); Volume one: MCA Collection, MCA, Sydney (2012); and The other other: Arthouse, Sydney (2010). Contemporary miniatures in context, Queensland Art Gallery/GOMA, Brisbane, and tour (2011–12); Veil/er culture and contemporary art from Australia, India and the Philippines, La Trobe University Museum of Art, Melbourne (2011). And the shadow passed through its neck, Latitude 28, New Delhi (2011); Slavic; paper under the fleece, Museum of Arts and Design, New York (2009–10); and Hau-Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery/GOMA (2008). Sandrasegar has been awarded international studio residencies by the Australia Council (Milan, 2005, and Barcelona, 2007) and AsiaArt (India, 2010). Sangeeta Sandrasegar is represented by Murray White Room, Melbourne. <sangeetasandrasegar.blogspot.com>

Further reading:


LAUREN BRINCAT
1. Australia 1 2012 mixed media on canvas 200 x 300 cm
2. The hunter 1066 neon 175 x 160 cm
3. Monument 4 2011 wood, lacquer 87 x 134.5 x 128 cm

All works courtesy the artist and Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne.

EUGENE CARCHESIO
9. Blood of Hercules 2012 pencil on paper 12 sheets, each 29.7 x 21 cm; installation (variable): 239 x 206 cm

All works courtesy the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON

Further reading:


GREG CREEK
10. 1st opposition (Zinedine Zidane and Nelson Mandela) 2012 mixed media on paper, cut paper installation: 165 x 300 cm
2. 2nd opposition (Malcolm Turnbull and Ian Thorpe) 2012 mixed media on paper, cut paper installation: 165 x 300 cm
4. 4th opposition (John Howard and Sally Pearson) 2012 mixed media on paper, cut paper installation: 165 x 300 cm

All works courtesy the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.
IN THE EXHIBITION

CATALOGUE OF WORKS

PAT MACAN

20. Diagram for a left-handed batsman 2011  oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 171.5 x 131.5 x 4.5 cm
21. Diagram for a right-handed batsman 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 171.5 x 131.5 x 4.5 cm
22. The life and death and life of Ewen Chatfield 2011 single-channel video, 4:3 ratio colour sound 5:44 minutes
23. None for none (8 ball maiden) 1 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 114.5 x 84.5 x 3.5 cm
24. None for none (8 ball maiden) 2 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 114.5 x 84.5 x 3.5 cm
25. None for none (8 ball maiden) 3 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 114.5 x 84.5 x 3.5 cm
26. None for none (8 ball maiden) 4 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 114.5 x 84.5 x 3.5 cm
27. None for none (8 ball maiden) 5 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 114.5 x 84.5 x 3.5 cm
28. None for none (8 ball maiden) 6 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 114.5 x 84.5 x 3.5 cm
29. None for none (8 ball maiden) 7 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 114.5 x 84.5 x 3.5 cm
30. None for none (8 ball maiden) 8 2011 oil stick on paper, acrylic, plywood 114.5 x 84.5 x 3.5 cm
31. The scoop (black) 2011 oil stick on paper 98.5 x 70.5 cm (sheet)
32. The scoop (white) 2011 oil stick on paper 98.5 x 70.5 cm (sheet)
33. The life and death and life of Ewen Chatfield 2011 single-channel video, 4:3 ratio colour sound 5:44 minutes

KERRIE POLINESS

39. Field drawing #1 2008 single-channel video, ring binder with 16 instruction sheets in plastic sleeves, polyvinyl safety vest, can of line marking paint 100 x 33 x 100, ring binder (open) 45 x 76 cm
40. Marking the field 2012 single-channel SD video, 16:9 ratio colour sound 25 minutes edition of 3 with 2 artist’s proofs Both works courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery

SANGEETA SANDRASEGAR

49. Sports photographers (shadows) 2012 found photographs enlarged as giclée prints on rag paper 9 photographs, installation (variable) 50 x 290 cm
50. Rewind 2012 found photographs 4 photographs, frame: 33.3 x 22.7 cm Both works courtesy the artist

CHRISTIAN THOMPSON

51. Si make you feel this way 2012 type C photograph 100 x 150 cm edition of 10
52. Si make you feel this way 2012 metal alloy print 100 metal alloy components, each 6 cm (diameter), installation: 126 cm diameter Both works courtesy the artist, Gallery Gabrielle Pizzi, Melbourne and Chalk Horse, Sydney
While much of our previous artwork has been research-based, the major work we have developed directly out of the fellowship has grown from our physical engagement with the extraordinary spatial arena of the MCG.

In the early days of our fellowship, we spent many hours sitting in the empty arena discussing project ideas, and were struck by the unique peacefulness of the experience. Often the only sounds were bird-song and the working groundsmen crafting the pitch with deliberation and care. Over time we watched the striking patterning of the lawn develop methodically and were struck by the scale, monumentality and almost spiritual atmosphere that were generated by the combination of architecture, space and the cultural significance of the site.

We began to research the significance of the MCG site to Australian Aboriginal communities. Out of this grew the idea for what has now developed into a major art project involving two communities: the remote Aboriginal community of Yuendumu and the community associated with the MCG.

During the fellowship we tested a (deceptively) simple idea: to ‘transplant’ the MCG to Yuendumu through the act of drawing the AFL Grand Final playing surface onto the desert sand, producing in this remote area a full-scale reproduction of the lawn patterns mown into the MCG. This idea referenced ground painting traditions practised by central Australian Aboriginal communities who produce large-scale, complex compositions on the ground in preparation for ceremonies. We imagined that in response, the community of Yuendumu could develop drawings that would be transposed onto the manicured turf of the MCG, creating a type of exchange between two very different communities that have in common an all-consuming passion for Australian rules football.

In having unique access to the MCG, the National Sports Museum and the people who work there, we were able to connect with both the physical environment of the ‘G and its influence and status in the wider Australian community. As well, we used the fellowship experience to continue our investigations into how art can affect social justice and human rights issues.

The ties, friendships and exchanges of artistic practice we initiated during the period of the fellowship have continued to the present day and will extend, hopefully, well into the future.

Kate Daw and Stewart Russell
May 2012

Of course we all wanted to win the major prize, but being awarded the National Sports Museum Basil Sellers Creative Arts Fellowship in 2010 turned out to be a blessing indeed. It offered the time to contemplate, read, research, interview—slow art if you like.

Agape, Philia and Eros: the loves of sport. My journey began with an exploration of the various shapes of love that circulate within the pyramid of sport that has the elite athlete at its pinnacle. Through my reading I explored deliberate practice, nature versus nurture, motivation, the X factor of mental strength, and coaching as teaching love and independent thinking. I pursued the paradoxes between athletes and musicians and notions of relatedness, competence and autonomy, and the role of the family in all of these relationships.

As well as photographing at training sessions that began at 5:30 am and matches played on dirty days, I interviewed artistic directors, athletes and their siblings, music professors, coaches, high-performance psychologists, and parents.

The final work, which focuses on four young athletes, has arrived back at the underpinnings of love and sacrifice that have supported all the champions celebrated by the National Sports Museum and the MCG. The work will be on display at gate 3, inside the MCG, from the second week in August 2012.

Ponch Hawkes
May 2012
BASIL SELLERS ART PRIZE 2008 AND 2010
ARTISTS AND AWARD WINNERS

2008

SHORTLISTED ARTISTS:

BASIL SELLERS ART PRIZE WINNER:
Daniel Crooks for Study for ‘Static no. 17’ (man running), 2008, two-channel HD digital video, colour, sound

PEOPLE’S CHOICE AWARD:
Daniel Crooks

NATIONAL SPORTS MUSEUM BASIL SELLERS CREATIVE ARTS FELLOWSHIP 2009-10:
Kate Daw and Stewart Russell.

2010

SHORTLISTED ARTISTS:
Vernon Ah Kee, Eric Bridgeman, Juan Ford, Philip Georgas, Taryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont, Ponch Hawkes, Grant Hedson, David Jolly, Richard Lewer, Noel McKenna, Glenn Morgan, David Ray, Gareth Sansom and Tony Schwanssen.

BASIL SELLERS ART PRIZE WINNER:
Taryn Gill and Pilar Mata Dupont for Gymnasium, 2010, single-channel HD video, colour sound, 3:52 minutes

PEOPLE’S CHOICE AWARD:
Juan Ford

NATIONAL SPORTS MUSEUM BASIL SELLERS CREATIVE ARTS FELLOWSHIP 2011-12:
Ponch Hawkes.
BASIL SELLERS
ART PRIZE
2012

Published by the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne, on the occasion of the exhibition Basil Sellers Art Prize 2012, presented at the Potter from 3 August to 4 November 2012.

The exhibition will travel to Queensland for exhibition at the Gold Coast City Gallery, Surfers Paradise, from 9 February to 31 March 2013.

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