

TRANSFORMATIVE

Eleanor Avery
James Avery
Matthys Gerber
Lisa Jones
Giles Ryder
Koji Ryui

Peloton



Giles Ryder *SPECTRALS 05, (04/05): Dazed and Blazed*



Matthys Gerber *Klompen* 2006



Koji Ryui *Untitled* 2005



Eleanor Avery *Satellite 1+2* 2005

TRANSFORMATIVE

Transformative brings together six artists who explore the translation of materials into conceptual possibilities, and vice versa. A common approach builds on certain historic functions of the readymade, for instance to find a passage between art and its others and to reaffirm the artist as a catalyst for identifying art-like effects. However compared to the volatile consequences of the first ready-mades, such as the response to Duchamp's *Fountain* for example, the works in *Transformative* are more understated both in intention and effect. This is partly because methods for commenting on and transforming non-art into Art have been thoroughly explored throughout the mid and late 20th century by Duchamp and many others, and partly because it is that much more difficult to shock when all manner of art techniques, including the use of shock value itself, have become staples of popular culture.

In *Transformative* the legacy of the readymade has become atmospheric, a life-sustaining essential in the manner of water, air, food rather than an intellectual exercise. These third generation conceptualists use the readymade and readymade materials as second nature. Works are made from 'poor', found, and selectively managed items, including cardboard and vinyl (Koji Ryui and Eleanor Avery); besser bricks and readymade imagery (James Avery); re-decorated mass-produced wooden clogs (Matthys Gerber); poured polyurethane plastic (Lisa Jones); and aluminium combined with mass-produced lamps (Giles Ryder).

The works in *Transformative* cross over the boundaries of sculpture, installation and painting utilizing readymade and common things to percolate between genres. In some works the aura of transformation disconcertingly hovers on a continuum between banal daily experience and that of the changed object. For example, James Avery's *Ludmilla* and Eleanor Avery's *Satellite 1+2* evoke a moment of doubt when the object becomes more than an object and provokes ambivalent emotions. *Ludmilla* is a combination of plywood, cardboard, dripping paint, electrical tape and puzzling flaps, converting what might have been a potentially functional model into a mysterious imitation. The effect is not unlike an unsuccessful school project where a lack of design and poor construction skills conspire to create a baffling support, a 'gantry', but for what? There is a similarly enigmatic air in *Satellite 1+2* where the transformed model teeters on the edge of non-representational being, a thing whose skinny supports threaten to change into legs and take the whole entity tottering out of the gallery space.

The materials employed in *Transformative* are the very stuff of everyday life but in the



Lisa Jones *Butterfly Wings* 2005

case of Matthys Gerber's *Klompen* they have been selectively managed, with a twist. *Klompen* consists of a souvenir, a pair of store-bought wooden Dutch clogs that have been decorated with abstract patterns created by Gerber in the style of a minor psychedelic artist, Gernot Bubenik, who worked in Berlin throughout the 1960s and 70s. In 2005 Gerber bestowed a similarly labour intensive treatment on a made-to-measure coffin, and taken together the re-adorned clogs and the painted coffin suggest elements from a more complete haute couture wardrobe. This collection would be a compendium of ready made and re-decorated body receptacles, an empty but highly embellished space, a home-in-parts waiting to be filled by an as yet absent occupant.

The everyday materials found in Lisa Jones' work, silicone and felt, have also been through processes of labour intensive invention to release new possibilities, including the surface itself. *Butterfly Wings* is crafted from silicone rubber and felt with each wing being cast from an original wooden cut-out based on Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of a dissected liver. "The process of casting", Jones writes, "allowed the transfer of texture and surface giving rise to the contradiction of the texture of wood on the surface of the rubber. The silicone rubber holds the memory of the wood while the material is free to act out of its own limitations."

Koji Ryui's *Untitled* uses everyday materials to reveal the possibilities of 3D forms. Detached from usual meanings

and identities the work combines simple elements into a shape with a powerful meditative sensibility. The new object unlocks the aesthetic potential of neglected substances, including polystyrene and other industrial detritus, and provides space for a restrained commentary on environmental concerns.

Industrial culture is also the starting point for Giles Ryder's *SPECTRALS 05, (04/05): Dazed and Blazed*, which at first glance seems to have been manufactured in a factory by technicians. But like other works in this exhibition the readymade surface of the aluminium has been extensively re-managed by the artist. For example, the aluminium base has been prepared to achieve a balance between dim and vivid creating a subtle shift in optical focal points as the eye moves across the surface. This work generates its own glow like the IKEA lamps placed nearby, and like Koji Ryui's *Untitled* the resulting phenomena is delayed, contemplative and composed rather than manufactured for quick and easy consumption.

All the works in *Transformative* craft unexpected perceptive challenges through reinvention and recycling, by releasing the aesthetic potential of overlooked media and techniques, or by exposing the hitherto unrecognised boundaries of and between things. The work of revealing and re-defining boundaries is one of the primary legacies of the historic readymade but the ritual fascination with boundary marking is much older. For example, in Roman mythology Terminus was the god of



James Avery *Ludmilla* 2005

boundaries and stones were used to mark the borders sacred to him. Each year in February a festival was celebrated in his honor at which time the stone boundary-markers were drenched in sacrificial blood and flowers placed to renew their protective powers. In *Transformative* the ritual of boundary marking is reclaimed for contemporary art and manipulated into surreal, lyrical, meditative and humorous manifestations within the gallery space.

Pam Hansford
2006

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2 - 18 June 2005

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25 May - 10 June 2006

Blindside

Nicholas Building Level 7 Room 14
37 Swanston St Melbourne Vic 3000
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designed by Eleanor Avery and Giles Ryder 2006
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ISBN 0-646-46077-3

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This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body