

archaeologists scavenging for historical straw, which they transform into documentary gold. Julie Gough seeks to reclaim lost Tasmanian Indigenous truths through a critical reconsideration of Australian colonial pictorial history. And Patrick Pound, in his inventive and playful way, assembles a fascinating narrative, *The Point of Everything*, where his archival discoveries become invested with new meanings when grouped inspirationally with other objects, collected by the artist.

The artist-led collective – Frances Barrett, Kate Blackmore, Kelly Doley and Diana Baker Smith – bring a wholly original approach to their 'inventive' research project, recovering the life and works of mythic feminist performance artist, Barbara Cleveland. The collective here reprise their 2016 video work, *Bodies in Time* (featuring Angela Goh reinterpreting performances by Cleveland), on this occasion supplemented with new archival discoveries.

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro are ahead of the curve in identifying looming obsolescence and its wider implications for civilisation. They have built their enduring collaboration around the reclamation of human detritus, transforming found objects by deconstructing them physically, and packing (and repacking) the elements in an elegant manner. The process can be ambitious. Recently, in Kamiyama, Japan, they took an old Honda 'Today' vehicle apart, reducing it to 121 components, which were then 'bagged' using a traditional Japanese method for packaging. The result, *We Hunt Mammoth*, offers a cold satire on human consumption and, it seems suggested, our possible drift to the end of days.

An adjunct work prepared by Healy and Cordeiro exclusively for the Adelaide Biennial involves a found, late-1950s Mercedes Benz sedan, which they have modified to operate with a non-petroleum gasifier engine, powered by woodchips. This will be driven around the streets of Adelaide, perhaps playfully anticipating our reversion to the methods of a hunter-gatherer society.

The calling to art is instinctive, a mysterious compulsion to communicate and express, but also – for many artists – the source of an uncompromising desire to celebrate order, aesthetics and beauty. In *the world of harmony, spirit and love*, there is a discipline and predilection that guides mind and hand unerringly to form, balance and colour, but there is also a quiet underlying search for the song of heaven.

That quest absorbs Christian Thompson, a Bidjara man for

whom home is in southwest Queensland, although he grew up in South Australia and travels the modern world, exploring. Thompson's Aboriginal heritage is claimed, and with great affection reclaimed, using his body and melodious voice to express kaleidoscopic splendour, commentary and forgotten presence.

In similar spirit, Lindy Lee is interested in the individual's place in the cosmos, and with ideas of being and nothingness. A practising Buddhist, her major sculptural work, *The Life of Stars*, is a symbolic representation of the beginning of life, birth and renewal. Lee is inspired by Zen and its precursor, Taoism, where all that is held inside oneself may be released, and lead to a state of wholeness.

Douglas Watkin makes film animations that honour his Aboriginal parents. His 2011 film, *The Queen & I*, was his mother Palima's love story. Now, in his virtual reality animation, *A Thin Black Line*, he tells of his family's struggle to stay together in the face of war. It is Palima's traumatic childhood story, when – as a five-year-old, after the bombing of Darwin during the Second World War – she was evacuated by boat to Cairns, along with half the civilian population, and resettled.

Love can surely also be found in the brilliant porcelain vessels of Kirsten Coelho, who draws on a deep well of nostalgia for the everyday utensils of Australia's pioneering past; their elegant, restrained forms and tantalising edges of minimal colour are richly informed by a stream of other cultures. Tim Edwards makes similarly alluring objects, except they are glass vessels that play with optics. In their treatment of line and volume, they are eloquent and deceptively beguiling.

So too are Nike Savvas's marvellous inventions, which have been placed high above a pedestrian thoroughfare to dramatic effect, delivering a wondrous and immersive interactive experience. Savvas has long been recognised for her spectacular kinetic installations, made inventively from diverse synthetic materials, including cleverly manipulated pieces of plastic, massed in grids to form mighty fields of sensually moving colour.

Malaysian-born Khai Liew shares a similar intimate connection to materials. Liew has forged a position as a leading Australian designer of exquisitely crafted objects made from fine timber, commissioned exclusively for many years as furniture. Such is the originality of his vision, however – and his unique blend of Asian aesthetics with

Claire Healy, born 1971, Melbourne and Sean Cordeiro, born 1974, Penrith, New South Wales, *We Hunt Mammoth*, 2015, 121 bagged components (entire Honda) in jute and bamboo using traditional Japanese method for packaging, dimensions variable; Courtesy the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
photo: Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro



SEAN CORDEIRO + CLAIRE HEALY

In Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro's *We Hunt Mammoth*, 2015, the entirety of a Honda car has been broken down to 121 individual components, each part tied in jute and bamboo, a traditional Japanese method of packaging. Hanging on the wall, the work evinces a distinctly votive quality, as if this deconstructed vehicle is offered up in an obscure religious ceremony.

The work conflates materials and modern and ancient traditions of making, from the car itself – a gleaming contemporary consumer object which arrives at the end of a sophisticated production line with the assistance of highly trained technicians and programmed robots – to the exacting hand that repackages the now disassembled automobile. The title is suggestive of a science fiction narrative, one in which man-made objects become a source of spiritual resonance similar to the kind of religious meanings that the hunt holds for traditional societies. Untangling these aspects of *We Hunt Mammoth* might well prompt a momentary sense of estrangement or bewilderment in the viewer.

This kind of conceptual play is typical of Healy and Cordeiro's practice. The duo have long been fascinated by the way in which objects can not only speak to what they are – furniture, lego, bottle tops, entire houses and earth-moving vehicles – but also to the way in which these objects and materials can be recontextualised to another kind of narrative, one that makes comment both on their function and their potential symbolic meanings.

Mondo Futuro, 2017, utilises a vintage retro-engineered Mercedes 220S, a car from the mid-1950s, which runs not on petrol or diesel but on a bio fuel derived from a process in which gas is extracted from heated wood. Although a bio fuel is perhaps more sustainable than petroleum, the car requires wood chips to run, negating whatever advantage this technology offers. To achieve the kind of comfort and

convenience a car offers, a sacrifice must be made. Marked with iconic motifs derived from the Swabian Alemannic Fasnacht and European *Wilder Mann* traditions, which eulogise the forest as a symbol of semi-mystical, pagan self-realisation, *Mondo Futuro* evokes ambivalence about technology and about the environment, at once a marvel, but also a profound liability, and what the artists have described as being symbolic of the complex relationship we have with technology and the environment.

The title of the work references the 'Mondo' films of the 1960s, pseudo documentaries that purported to depict the world in sensational terms, but were instead fictions derived from the activities of an array of complicit participants and unwitting subjects. In essence, this notion of the 'world' is entirely speculative, constructed from a deliberate, if entertaining, misreading that renders documentary reality as a kind of fiction. In *Mondo Futuro* and *We Hunt Mammoth*, Healy and Cordeiro offer a glimpse of a tomorrow, one that is already evident today – a world where fragments of reality are recombined into an alternative view of a connected contemporary world, glorious in its contradictions, yet persuasive in its truth.

Andrew Frost

detail: Claire Healy, born 1971, Melbourne and Sean Cordeiro, born 1974, Penrith, New South Wales, *Mondo Futuro*, 2017, performance still; Courtesy the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney photo: Jonah Cordeiro



SEAN CORDEIRO + CLAIRE HEALY

Sean Cordeiro born 1974, Penrith, New South Wales

Claire Healy, born 1971, Melbourne

live and work in Blackheath, New South Wales

represented by RoslynOxley9 Gallery, Sydney



We Hunt Mammoth, 2015, 121 bagged components (entire Honda) in jute and bamboo using traditional Japanese method for packaging, dimensions variable; Courtesy the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney
This project was realised at KAIR, Kamiyama Artist In Residence, Shikoku, Japan.
photo: Keizo Konishi



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

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TAMARA DEAN

born 1976, Sydney

lives and works in Cambewarra, New South Wales

represented by Martin Browne Contemporary



The artist acknowledges sound artist: David Kirkpatrick, scent designer: Ainslie Walker, Urban Art Projects for the work *Stream of Consciousness*

The artist also acknowledges Australian Dance Theatre and Genevieve Murray/Future Method Studio

Fallen Willow (Salix) in Autumn from the series *In our nature*, May 2017, Mount Lofty Botanic Garden, pure pigment print on cotton rag, 120 x 160 cm; Featuring dancers from Australian Dance Theatre, Courtesy the artist and Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney



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