



local
colour



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Lucy Bleach
solo commissioned exhibition

Lucy Bleach is the fourth artist invited to participate in the Devonport Regional Gallery's solo commission program. Previous artists have included Richard Wastell, John Vella and Jamin (Benjamin Kluss). The program has given emerging Tasmanian artists a unique opportunity to experiment with ideas and create new work.

Lucy Bleach's solo exhibition has been brewing for some time. In more recent times, the artist has been in regular contact with the Gallery and this has resulted in an evolution of ideas culminating in the final exhibition, Local Colour. Bleach has worked with local artists on one of the exhibition installations and has also worked with a local pigeon fancier; the 'Spirit of Tasmania', 'St Vincent de Paul' and 7AD radio station. Varied contact with individuals, groups and organizations in Devonport and the North West region has informed a large element of the exhibition - from a video made by attaching a camera to a local pigeon - to the installation of local artist's works.

The 'cross-pollination' Lucy Bleach refers to in her work is a poignant element of this exhibition. Local Colour combines sentiments of what it means to be 'local' with elements of what it means to be a 'visitor' within a local climate. The individual installations provide readings that range from a sense of home to homelessness; of visitor and resident; movement and stasis; arrival and departure; absence and presence.

Yet the seemingly disparate objects, images and concepts strangely unite as an expression of the cycles that come and go in our lives. From the relative calm of the darkened, main exhibition space, to a confronting darkness at the far end of the gallery the presumed meaning of 'local colour' constantly shifts so that by the end of this journey it is our own color we begin to see reflected through the darkness.

On behalf of Gallery staff and the Devonport City Council I would like to congratulate Lucy Bleach on bringing the exhibition to fruition and giving locals and visitors the opportunity to experience the complexities of 'local colour'.

Dr Ellie Ray, 2011





4000 A.D.

When science and art are entirely melted together to something new when the people will have lost their remembrance and thus will have no past, only future when they will have to discover everything every moment again and again

when they will have lost their need for contact with others ...

when they will live in a world of only colour, light, space, time, sounds and movements

then colour light space time

sounds and movement will be free

no music

no theatre

no art

no

there will be sound

colour

light

space

time

movement

Stanley Brouwn,
A Short Manifesto (1964)¹

¹ Stanley B. (1964). "A Short Manifesto", Institute of Contemporary Arts Bulletin, London: 140 October, p. 7.

Brouwn's vision of the future is a realm of sensations where phenomena combine into an immersive atmosphere. It is a time reminiscent of a primal form of art, and freedom is the process of absorption in its universal experience.

In 2011, the art work of Lucy Bleach also demands intense immersion. Not in the unsullied light and movement of a Brechtian total art environment but in the conditions of contemporary life. Bleach envisions contemporary culture as starting from the meld of people's habits, values, symbols, traditions and behaviours in everyday life, embracing the existence that Brouwn eschewed. She is interested in how local colour forms place: the world that is made by people in their activities and interactions with an environment, its histories and each other. Bleach is curious to interact with and investigate the daily flux and flows of culture as it plays out in the world.

true colours

Hence, her work often provokes the senses to engage with materiality, including the embodied traces of other lives, and symbolism for the occasion. In exhibitions such as Local Colour sensual experience, planned actions and collaborations generated by people and place interweave with historical and imagined narratives.

The results are new contemporary myths that conjoin the familiar and the unexpected.

Bleach is no stranger to Devonport. The city was the threshold through which she and her family arrived in Tasmania en route to live in Hobart. However, her engagement with the town for this exhibition is not based in nostalgia, nor is she interested in documenting its sites. Rather she attempts the more risky strategy of acknowledging her own subjective perceptions, and seeing many facets of the locality and its activities through her eyes and those of its inhabitants and visitors. In contrast to Brouwn's abstraction of the world into primal essences, Bleach invites us to see Devonport as a mobile physical space characterised by the shifting traces of its occupants and the relational qualities between them that she, as an artist observes.

An inseparable part of Devonport's identity and the cause of much movement within the city is 'The Spirit of Tasmania', the interstate ferry service that docks at the edge of town. With its dominant scale, the ship has an overwhelming physical presence, and is the portal through which most people enter the city. Its role as a carrier is suggested in Bleach's *Cross Pollination*. The subterranean void of the ship's hold forms a symbolic womb or subconscious from where its passengers are propelled from land to sea and back again.

The video in *Cross Pollination* implies the circular journey of the 'Spirit' common to all ferries (think of the mythological Charon). Colour and light refracted by the mirror in water evokes the day that disappears into night anew with each voyage. However, the compulsive movement of the ship tells us nothing about her human freight, their places of origin around the globe and reasons for transiting at Devonport. The sense of passengers embedded in the lost property in Bleach's *Dead Letter Office* provides physical and imaginative evidence of the crossings between mainland and state. Accumulating in the work each week, the clothes hang limp attached to the artist's photographs of homing pigeons in their lofts - a metaphoric challenge to the human dream of finding a resting place.

Bleach contrasts the human disposition for touring with the pigeon's unerring instinct to return to base. Humans cannot replicate the pigeons' navigation system which is directed toward pursuit of the straightest route. The footage projected in 46a Middle Road shows the course of one such bird released ten kilometres from Devonport. The camera on its breast provides a distinctive durational view of the landscape. The fracturing of the image by the bird's movements is a further reminder of how biology creates different worlds.

If there were any pigeons or humans in Brouwn's utopia they would all experience it differently. Human eyes act as photoreceptors of light rays bounced off objects and transmitted through the cornea and pupil. With lenses that have over 100 million rods and cones as the keys to seeing shapes and identifying colours, and resulting in images that must be switched 'the right way up' by the brain, colour vision is a subjective and often deceptive process. Added to this is the complexity of historical and cultural encodings of colour preferences. Although some associations are universal or widely shared - such as red for danger - experiences are diversified by individual emotions and local associations.

Compared to the red, green and blue of the human eye, birds have superior four dimensional colour vision due to having four types of cones. In the glowing neon pigeon in Bleach's Habitat, our eyes and mind are prepared to see a dove of peace suspended in the Devonport Regional Gallery's decommissioned church. Visitors are invited to rest beneath the illuminated bird. Here they can explore other representations of local colour in the hundreds of hand painted watercolour miniatures contributed by collaborators from the North West Art Circle, Rubicon River Arts and individual local

artists. The artists wide ranging observations on life in Devonport and its surrounds reinforce the unique capabilities of the eye and mind.

Sotto Voce shifts attention to other local collaborations by playing on the visitor's expectations. A gold microphone, perfectly positioned in the Gallery's centre stage apse in front of red curtains draped on a riser, stands in wait for the diva's future swan song or a late night cabaret. Anticipations may be misleading however. On closer inspection the equipment is designed to 'broadcast' instead of 'receive' sound, subtly embodying the space with voices from the local Devonport radio station 7AD.

If Sotto Voce asked the brain to reprogram, a little like when it puts images together to see in three dimensions, a final work from Local Colour also requires the imagination to respond to ambiguity. DARK/LIGHT comprises a hydra of light cables, barely illuminating the space, and rising from or falling suggestively into an open space in the gallery floor from where mysterious sounds are emitted. This writhing network of cords simulates tentacles and intestines. It also provides a reminder of those darker spaces of the psyche and the mythological entrances to the underworld and spiritual alternatives, in a strange contradiction to the social interconnectivity felt elsewhere.

The circularity of DARK/LIGHT evokes the cycling of the sun that colours the day in our solar system and returns us to the continual movement of the Spirit of Tasmania. In Local Colour ideas of movement

between physical and intangible realms, between reality and imagination or the subconscious dismantle static ideas of place. Bleach engages with points of origin, transit, connection and their embedded values rather than subscribing to current theorising on travel and communications as the essence of geographic globalisation.² Bleach attempts to invite others into a range of experiences and creative propositions that required her to situate herself locally to connect with others. Defying Brouwn's expectations of a future where contact with others is redundant, Bleach looks beyond abstractions of light, colour, movement and space to the institutions, experiences and thoughts that make us human. In *Local Colour* these deliberately remain open-ended, inviting our subjective interweaving of singular and shared worlds.

Zara Stanhope, 2011

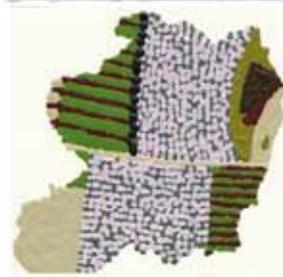
Zara Stanhope is a curator and a PhD candidate at the Australian National University.

2 As an example, Nicholas Bourriaud's idea of 'altermodern', art that reflects the question 'Where are you going to?' and his reflection that '... contemporary artists have recognized that it is just as possible to reside in a circuit as in a stable space, just as possible to construct an identity in motion through fertilization, and that geography is also psychogeography. Thus, it is possible to dwell in a movement of round trips between various spaces. Airports, cars, and railroad stations become the new metaphors for the house, just as walking and airplane travel become new modes of drawing.'

Bourriaud, N. (2009), *The Radicant*, New York: Lukas & Sternberg, p. 57.



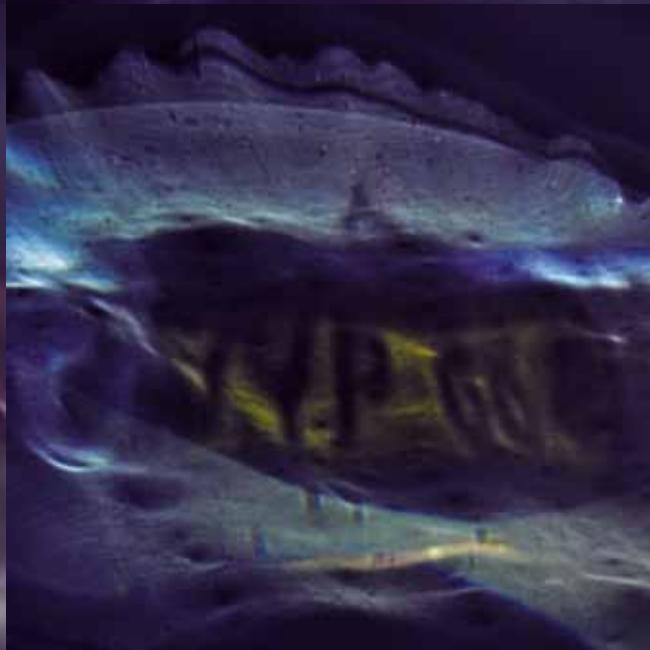














On receiving the invitation to create a solo exhibition for the Devonport Regional Gallery, I was intrigued by the possibilities of being an outsider, who, through making an artwork contributes in some way to the local community. I was also intrigued by what 'outsider' meant in relation to local: the potential of what inhabiting can mean in impermanent and long-term contexts, the frisson of public/private space, and the ways we attempt to belong within it and/or own it. I was fascinated by the spontaneous nature of 'mash-up' and cross-pollination. Amidst these various points of inspiration, significantly, I understood that to make the work translated into diverse opportunities to make connections.

This work has evolved in a 'slow burn' fashion; it has developed in material and approach -from initial responses - to final outcome, yet notably the ideas (and the title) have remained true to the original concept. Local Colour explores our instinct to find and describe home, and the possibilities of dislocation and drifting.

Local Colour draws on the experience and talent of many locals, whose willingness to contribute to the project provides an authenticity to the notion/ reality of being local to Devonport - something beyond my grasp.

It has been an insightful experience to work with local artists who have depicted miniature versions of their habitats, and equally with a local pigeon

fancier who has shared his knowledge of 'homing' to feed into the work. The outcome has also relied on the generous support from local charities to collect lost property from the 'Spirit of Tasmania' that accumulates within the installation.

local colour

Lucy Bleach

artist





LIST OF WORKS &
DOCUMENTATION

Dead Letter Office

2011

Black and white photocopies,
lost property from the 'Spirit of
Tasmania' Dimensions various
Cover image

Local Colour

2011

Installation View
Page 4 & 5

46a Middle Road

2011

Single channel Pigeon cam
video
Page 10 & 11

Splodge Cards

2011

Top row

L-R Yonne von Lichtan/
Katherine Tyson/ Dimity
Vanderpot/ Georgia Hyde

Second row

L-R Meg Collidge/ Angela
McDermott/ Sam Wisteria/
Angela McDermott

Third row

L-R Sandy Michell/ Geogia
Bell/ Nell Ledger/ Barbra
Simonsen Fischer

Fourth row

L-R Tanya Matthews/ Nita
Pountney/ Katherine Tyson/
Lesley Boulton
Page 12

Splodge Cards

2011

Various artists
Page 13

Documentation of Pigeon
with video camera attached
2011
Page 14

Documentation of Homing
Pigeons at 46a Middle Road
2011
Page 15

Cross Pollination (Detail)

2011

Two single channel YouTube
videos, acrylic, acrylic mirror
Dimensions various
Page 16

Dark/Light

2011

Light globe sockets, cabling,
sound
Dimensions various
Page 17

Cross Pollination (Detail)

2011

Page 19

Habitat

2011

Neon sign, locally sourced
new and second hand
bedding, miniature paintings
produced by local artists
Dimensions various.
Page 20

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Lucy Bleach would like to acknowledge the following locals for their time, energy and willingness to engage with the project:

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Thanks must go to Zara Stanhope for expanding the work in complex and surprising ways within the catalogue essay, and to Dr Maria Kunda for her illuminating and insightful speech at the exhibition opening.

The artist would like to thank Ellie Ray, Astrid Joyce, Kim Prunster, Andrew Worsley and Georgia Hyde at Devonport Regional Gallery for their incredible commitment to the project and to Devonport Regional Gallery for the opportunity to make new, meaningful work and connections.

The Devonport Regional Gallery would like to join Lucy Bleach in acknowledging and thanking the local artists who participated in Local Colour for their enthusiasm and commitment to the project. The examples of 'splodge cards' featured in this catalogue represent a small selection made from the hundreds of fascinating cards displayed in the exhibition.

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DEVONPORT
REGIONAL
GALLERY

