

SANDRA WINKWORTH
2014
Garden of Delight (detail)
watercolour, wire, found objects and printed matter
size variable



JANET PARKER-SMITH
2015
Aberrant One
collage framed in perspex box
27.5 x 27.5 cm



BILL MOSELEY
2015
Wanderer
tintype
20 x 25 cm



ABERRANT PLAY

collages, drawings and prints by
CLAUDE JONES • JENNY KITCHENER • LEONIE LANE
BILL MOSELY • JANET PARKER-SMITH
ROCHELLE SUMMERFIELD • SANDRA WINKWORTH

opening
5.30pm Friday 21 August
by AKKY VAN OGTROP

exhibition continues
19 AUGUST - 11 OCTOBER 2015

GRAFTON REGIONAL GALLERY
158 Fitzroy Street, Grafton NSW
Gallery open 10 - 4 Tuesday - Sunday
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Collage is a playful process. Printed matter is selected, cut up and reorganised, often to produce the exact opposite effect intended by the original. It is a powerful and subversive tool, in that it gives the artist the power to reconfigure and recontextualise images to expose the absurdity in, for example, advertising or lifestyle propaganda, using the advertisers' language to reflect their folly back to them.

Printmaking and collage share many elements, and are often used in tandem. They are both paper-based mediums, and both have a history of use for social commentary. Printmaking has long been used to produce satirical cartoons and public notices, whilst early 20th century Dada artists like Hannah Höch and Max Ernst used collage to re-present bourgeois propaganda, cut up and violated. Both collage and printmaking are constantly evolving and mutating as new technology allows for new ways to produce and combine images. Screenprinting and digital printing have created new possibilities in the printmaking realm, whilst photo-editing software has provided the possibility of digital cut-and-paste to be used alongside the traditional paper and scalpel method.

The artists in *Aberrant Play* push and break the rules of traditional printmaking. They use their backgrounds as experienced printmakers to combine old and new technologies, creating unusual, playful and striking results. These artists create their own hybrid processes; they re-insert offcuts from previous works into new works; in many cases their prints are not editioned, signed and framed, but cut, cropped, folded, hung and reinserted into other works. This represents a subversion of the neat, finished, commercial art object. It is also linked to an ethos of reuse that is inherent

to the collage process, and that reveals a strong social conscience across the artists in *Aberrant Play*.

Sandra Winkworth combines found objects collected from city streets – a hula-hoop, crocheted leaves, plastic moulds, poster fragments – with paper components of her own creation, including monoprints, drypoint prints and paintings. These pieces are assembled in loose configurations, hung like a collage in three dimensions. Winkworth's installations highlight the wastage that is so much a part of contemporary consumer culture, and suggest that humble objects have more life and potential than we usually ascribe them.

Leonie Lane employs a range of techniques, including stencilling, analogue and digital collage, and assemblage of three-dimensional materials, to examine the history of her newly reconstructed studio. A former barn, this historic structure has been through many iterations, and Lane weaves these stories into a semi-historical narrative. History and imagination are intertwined, as storybook-style imagery is displayed between circles – series of ellipses [...] to imply a gap or space – that incorporate real items salvaged from around the barn, testifying to the reality of its former lives.

In Rochelle Summerfield's digital prints, collaged elements – magazine cut outs, digital photographs, oil pastel drawings – are provided uniformity in the surface of photographic printing. The subversion and play here is in the content, and in the bringing together of disparate, at times jarring visual elements. Limbs are removed from their perfectly-proportioned models' bodies and made into stomping, prancing, exalting figures. They are removed from the unreality of studio backdrops and placed within landscape scenes from around the Northern Rivers, suggesting a reconnection

with nature for a sector that has long since removed itself from reality.

Claude Jones' use of collaged imagery is equally targeted. She splices animal heads – cropped from Victorian-era illustrations – onto painted human bodies. The use of quite simple and obvious collage techniques, along with pastel hued paints, lends Jones' images the feel of storybook fables. The stories, however, have a sinister edge: a bulldog-headed figure forces a tube down the mouth of a rabbit-headed child; creatures are held in cages; a gazelle-child gently squeezes a fish to death. By replacing human body parts with those of animals, Jones brings to the fore the duplicitousness of the human-animal relationship, where birds, rabbits and fish are at once our beloved pets and our evening meal.

Odd humanoid creatures also appear in the work of Janet Parker-Smith. Her collages on paper and three-dimensional works combine human figures, cropped from old books and magazines, with animal and insect parts and weapons to create quite uneasy characters. Parker-Smith also cuts copper plates used for etching, forming them into sculptures. These three-dimensional collages, or assemblages, flaunt the traditions of printmaking, which dictate that a plate is used to create a set number of prints, then scratched and discarded. In Parker-Smith's work, the bringing together of disparate elements is calculated to leave us unsettled. Things don't quite fit together, and perhaps they never did.

Jenny Kitchener's symmetrical, patterned linocuts appear decorative and benign at first glance. Strange juxtapositions, however, lurk close to the surface. At the centre of each print is an insect, surrounded by a floral wreath whose backbone is a DNA strand. Each of

the creatures themselves is patterned with an oddly unnatural camouflage: a circuit board, binary code, cogwheels, barcodes. Tensions between nature and technology, ecology and genetics are neatly compressed into these prints that are a collage of elements from natural history illustrations and contemporary consumer products.

The collage element is perhaps most elusive in Bill Moseley's work, where impossible Romantic scenes are made seamless and nostalgic. We tend to assume a reflection of reality when we look at a photograph, particularly in pre-digital techniques like photogravure. In Moseley's revival of this antiquated process, however, each image is composed digitally and collaged from several parts. Moseley's *Wanderer*, an homage to an iconic Romantic painting, is a collage of improbable elements: a ship from Moseley's past floats on a sea of mist in a valley where he now lives. Just as our broad life experiences coalesce in our current selves, here Moseley's past lives are collaged together to form a surprisingly cohesive and poetic scene.

In an age where we are presented with an immense volume of imagery, both in print and online, an important role of the artist is to filter this visual cacophony and siphon meaning from it. The artists in *Aberrant Play* select and reassemble elements from this morass of visual stimulus to comment on pertinent social, cultural, historical and environmental issues. Concerns about the effects of science, technology, factory farming, pollution and modern living on human nature and the natural world are explored and examined through art that is at once joyously playful and deadly serious.

Rebecca Gallo



ROCHELLE SUMMERFIELD

2015

Brazen

photocollage Lambda print on Kodak metallic photographic paper
56 x 76 cm



LEONIE LANE

2015

Shedding: Phase 1

digital collage on Somerset enhanced 100% cotton paper with horsehair
59.4 x 42 cm

CLAUDE JONES

2015

Beastly Breed

mixed media on
paper

15 x 15 cm



JENNY KITCHENER

2015

Beetle drone: Summer Relief

lino with hand coloured rice paper
57 x 38 cm