

The Collector's Room



For Spencer

~

Forever a child in the presence of magic



The Collector's Room



*Jonathan Allen, Ralph Anderson, Dominic Beattie, Katrina Blannin
Isha Bøhling, Juan Bolivar, Stella Capes, Anne-Marie Creamer, Karen David
Rosalind Davis & Justin Hibbs, Richard Ducker, Austin Eddy
Machiko Edmondson, Tim Ellis, James Fisher & Kate McLeod, Ludovica Gioscia
Katie Goodwin, Alastair Gordon, Andrew Grassie, John Greenwood
James Hopkins, Chris Jones, Joy Kngwarreye Jones, Richard Kirwan, Hiroe Komai
Caterina Lewis, Karl Marrow, Barbara Nicholls, Plastique Fantastique
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curated by Karen David

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A WINDOW TO THE WORLD

JENNIFER GUERRINI MARALDI



More than four decades ago I bought my first picture. I never set out to be an art 'collector' but it's now obvious that contemporary abstract art is somehow imbedded in my DNA.

Childhood in Australia was about freedom and vast open spaces. I attended a non-denominational private girls' school; a place to develop individual thinking among students of every colour and religion. I have only recently pondered just how important that environment was. It was a breeding ground for an open mind and the 'art seedling' grew to a beautiful tall tree enabling contemporary art to become central to my life.

My early acquisitions were made on a school trip to Papua New Guinea in the 1960's where I longed to buy every spear and mask and necklace we came across during our intrepid travels to the New Guinea highlands. There was an abstract simplicity and spiritual attraction about these primitive works and I still think about these pieces today although they were stolen from me many years ago.

Travel to USA and Europe, visiting countless museums and galleries from New York to Paris, I realised a passion for contemporary art was firmly embedding in my soul, and continually evolving. I remember emotional and tearful responses to seeing iconic artworks for the first time, particularly Monet's *Water Lilies* then housed in Paris's beautiful Jeu de Paume, and a Rothko show at Moma, New York. In the 1970's the New York abstract, colour field painters became my focus – these large works had a wonderful freedom that immediately resonated. I wanted to buy almost everything I saw and this was the beginning of the need to collect for myself whenever finances permitted.

At home in Melbourne I was a regular visitor to all the major commercial galleries and knew many of the artists personally. In the early 1970's I opened my first gallery - Powell Street Gallery - where we exhibited some of Australia's best young contemporary painters and sculptors. It was certainly an exciting time, with large abstract works gracing the gallery by artists including Jenny Watson, Alun Leach-Jones and Fred Cress to name a few as well as sculptors, David Wilson, Clive Murray-White and Inge King.

Powell Street Gallery was a contemporary exhibiting gallery that achieved great recognition selling works to the Australian National Gallery in Canberra, the important State and Regional Galleries and major private collections. I was personally buying pieces I could afford at that time by Watson, Cress and Leach-Jones, but in hindsight I wish I had acquired more major works for my own collection.

The late Georges Mora became a friend and advisor when we worked together on the Australian Government's contemporary art tax relief initiative in the late 1970's. I bought a large work by Linda Marinon of the Sydney Opera House and a melancholic Joy Hester drawing. At that time I met British artist John Walker and New York painter Kenneth Noland. It was an epic time.

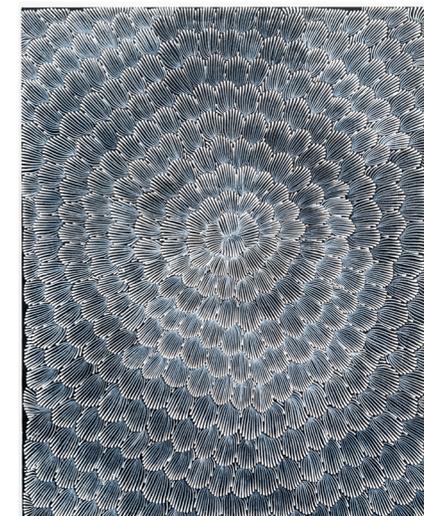
I relocated to London in the late 1970's and gradually acquired some great pieces from the London dealer Nigel Greenwood including a huge linocut on Japanese Mulberry paper (150 x 180cm) by British artist John Walker, as well as a smaller drawing by Walker, a 330cm triptych by Polish artist Leon Tarasewicz, and a portfolio by Christopher Le Brun of *Seven Lithographs* published in 1989 by Paragon Press.

The collection developed further when I married Filippo in 1991. Also an art collector, he currently works in the insurance industry specialising in Fine Art, working closely with Museums and major private collections worldwide. Today, Filippo curates the contemporary Corporate Collection for Hyperion's city offices. He is Chairman of the Private Wealth Division of Hyperion and their collection, known as the Howden Family Collection, is a magnificent installation throughout their city headquarters.

During the fifteen years while working on the editorial staff of *Country Life* Magazine my interest was focused on contemporary Indigenous Australian artists, and through this art movement, a new chapter was beginning. During our travels to Australia in the early 1990's Filippo and I attended a contemporary Christie's auction in Sydney. We left several absentee bids, culminating in the purchase of a large abstract painting by Freddie Ngarrmaliny Timms, an Indigenous Australian artist born in 1946 in the East Kimberley. The work arrived in London and was more mesmerizing that I



Gemerre, 2006 by Phyllis Thomas
Natural Ochre on Board, 100 x 80cm



Enteebra, 2016 by Joy Kngwarrey Jones
Acrylic on Linen, 120 x 90cm

could ever have wished for. Living with this amazing painting on our walls led to my thirty year passion for collecting and dealing in Indigenous Australian art.

I subsequently started JGM ART, exhibiting work from home and showing collections at major art fairs in London and the USA for twelve years. Over three years ago I launched JGM Gallery, an exhibition space dedicated to contemporary art of all origins. Today, JGM Gallery has evolved organically, showing Indigenous Australian art alongside contemporary British artists' work. Our exhibition schedules include Ralph Anderson, Juan Bolivar, Alice Wilson, Dominic Beattie, Colin Smith and Martin Maloney to name just a few. Many British artists are good friends with works included in our personal collection.

Filippo and I have been creating our private collection for more than thirty years with over a hundred works to date. It is a marvellous journey together, and so many of the pieces in our collection are made by artists who have become good friends. Through studios visits and getting to know many of the artists well means our collection is more fascinating and alive for us. Thoughtful in our selection process, we happily agree on almost all acquisitions.

Living with art gives us enormous pleasure and the contemporary works in our collection are autobiographic to a degree, where every work is like a 'friend', a catalyst for contemplation, and a window to the world.

THE MAGICIAN'S APPARATUS

RICHARD ALLEN



Paul Daniels and wax work at Wookey Hole, photographer unknown, 1978

When I was 10 years old, I received a Paul Daniels magic set for my birthday. It came in a rectangular black box containing '125 easy to perform professional tricks' complete with Paul, smiling on the cover, colourful stars emanating from a magic wand he was holding against his out turned palm. This was a pose I would recreate for my long suffering relatives as they ate birthday cake, sat on patio chairs brought in from the garden to make a temporary living room auditorium. Standing there in my new birthday tank top and bowtie, my grandparents would clap as I amazed them by snipping and rejoining a small length of rope; making small pink sponge rabbits appear from my hand as if out of nowhere; and levitating a green plastic ring between my hands. Paul was my hero, my magic set became my most valued possession, and Saturday nights would forever be remembered as the time I would sit glued to the tv to catch Paul making Debbie Magee disappear into a mystical red box.

Nothing, however, could prepare me for the terror of encountering a full sized wax work of Paul at the centre of a mirror maze in Wookey Hole caves. Wookey Hole is a 'show cave' on the edge of the Mendip Hills. Amongst the attractions in the lit

underground complex is a mirror maze for visitors to navigate. I would run ahead from my family and make my way through the reflections. On reaching the end, a light would come on suddenly and there he was, stood with his eyes wide open, staring lifelessly ahead, slightly clammy from the coolness of the cave, still wearing his bowtie, arms outstretched as if he had just revealed his latest trick, reflected into infinity all around me.

Paul's double, presented literally within the smoke and mirrors of Wookey Hole, exposes the central operation of the magicians' craft: employing a decoy to misdirect, opening up the space between fact and fiction, the real and the made up. When watching a magic trick, the audience is knowingly placed at the centre of a conceit, an illusion that they are both complicit in but also kept separated from. A magician's audience always knows that the trick is not showing us what is actually happening - showing the spectator the mechanism of the illusion - but it is pretending to do that thing. Like the waxwork double, the magic trick is a simulation of reality that is always slightly distorted, always off-centre, always a theatrical manifestation of the real. It is this theatrical conceit that makes watching and participating in magic so pleasurable and yet potentially so unsettling.

The deployment of the double - the decoy - is why magicians, like clowns, are inherently creepy. They are a particular type of actor, performing a double life that oscillates between sincerity and pretence. They are both themselves (the thing the audience trusts) and somebody else - a trickster - selling the audience a lie. This is why the double has a well documented place in Freud's conception of *The Uncanny*; a thing that is both familiar and strange, homely and unhomely, baring a relationship with the fascination of mirror-images, ghosts, apparitions, shadows and spectres. As Joshua Comaroff and Ong Ker-Shing state in their reading of the double in *Horror in Architecture* (2018) "the human duplicate presents an existential conundrum: *it is neither one nor many*. The 'individual' remains our preferred vision of the subject".¹ The challenge to the authentic subject is what is unsettling about encountering the double: Which one can be trusted? What is real and what is made up? This questioning destabilises reality, the kind of destabilisation felt when David Copperfield made the Statue of Liberty disappear, or when Derren Brown convinces an audience member that they are living in the middle of an apocalypse, or when Houdini emerged from an impossible escape, chained and gagged in a box thrown into the sea. It brushes up against what Mark Fisher would call the 'weird', a seemingly otherworldly invasion into the real.² This invasion of the real is what magicians are experts at. The act of doubling, therefore, is not

1 Joshua Comaroff and Ong Ker-Shing, *Horror in Architecture* (New York: Oro Editions) p.50 2018
2 Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater Books) 2016

just related to the resemblance of something else, it can also be presented in the double life of a single person. In performance, the magician is always playing the parts of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.

Magicians perform this double action through a material apparatus: physical ‘stuff’ that makes the effect of a trick possible. In this way, magicians are actors in an object theatre, a form of acting that is only possible because they perform with material things. In conventional magic, this object apparatus takes the form of wands, cards and coins, the literal ‘pulling the rabbit out of the hat’ and the bunch of flowers from under the arm. This apparatus becomes more complex as illusions and tricks have evolved in an attempt to dazzle and wow an audience: from Houdini’s chests, chains and shackles; David Blaine’s suspended Perspex box; Penn and Tellers’ illusion machines; and Derren Brown’s television series scale environments of deception. A recent exhibition at the Wellcome Collection in London (2019) foregrounded the material culture of the magician, medium and spiritualist. Entitled: *The Spectacle of Illusion: Magic, The Paranormal & The Complicity of the Mind*, the exhibition explored the relationship between how the ‘set-up’ of illusion, through the apparatus of objects and devices, would function in complicity with the audience’s perception of what is happening. This relationship is what makes the oscillation between the real and made up happen, the knowledge that the ‘illusion’ only ever happens at the moment that the apparatus and the audience enter into the act together.

Some of the most extraordinary images in the exhibition are from around 1910 of magician William S. Marriott, who worked to expose the deceits and tricks that mediums would stage to exploit their paying customers. In the images, Marriott sets up the kind of apparatus used to make trick photographs, using glass lantern slides and assemblages of masks, cloth, body parts and other fake apparitions. In one, he sits on a chair, bound by rope, with an apparatus of dismembered hands floating around him. The apparatus is joined by rods and levers and a paper star seemingly floating above his head. The revelation of the apparatus of trick photography is as engaging as the fake image it creates. As Matthew L. Tompkins states in the introduction to the exhibition, “While neither magicians nor scientists can ever really ‘prove’ that past testimonies of supernatural phenomena are fraudulent or mistaken, contemporary researchers regularly demonstrate how eccentricities of healthy human perception, memory and cognition can result in vivid and robust illusions”.³ It is precisely the unspoken

³ Matthew L. Tompkins, *Spectacle of Illusion: Magic, The Paranormal & The Complicity of the Mind* (London: Thames and Hudson) p.15, 2019

knowledge of the spectator or participant that the illusion is fake (or the chance that *it just might not be*) that co-creates the effect, and paradoxically makes the illusion real. Other objects on display that extended this idea, included the wax head likeness of George Cooke that formed part of magician John Nevil Maskelyne’s ‘Decapitation Act’ and photographs of Houdini showing how to make ‘spirit hands.’ Cooke’s wax head has glass eyes and human hair and is preserved on a small wooden pedestal. Cooke would play the victim in the stage trick, the head standing in for his own as he amazed the audience by continuing to move as a headless body. Houdini’s photographs practically show the process of casting and forming wax hands from his publication *A Magician Among the Spirits* (1924). In this book he describes how a medium cast the hands of a dead workman that he would then use that night in a séance, copying the fingerprints in ink that would match those of the body that was already in the morgue.

The fascination with the object ephemera of the magician, medium, faith healer and fortune teller is not just because it stands as a souvenir of the act, but because it performs the act itself. In this way, the magician’s objects are not mere ‘props’ in the conventional theatrical meaning of the word, but co-conspirators in the creation of fictional agency. The objects *act*. When they work as expected, the effects of illusion are open to be completed by the spectator, but what happens when the magician’s apparatus fails and the illusion breaks down? When the dummy lock jams fast and the doves escape from the box and get caught up in the curtain? In these moments, the agency of the apparatus is unveiled and the decoy is exposed for what it is. Paradoxically, much like the apparatus revealing photographs of Marriott and Houdini, it is also this exposure that can make the encounter with the illusion just as real. Much like my encounter in the mirror maze in Wookey Hole caves, the image of Paul Daniel’s double staring straight-ahead would be an apparition that would never leave me. Years later, the encounter has made me realise that the most significant aspect of the enjoyment and terror of the magic trick is my own complicity in the deceit of the magician and their apparatus, the recognition that the double is also within myself.

OVER ME YOU CAST A SPELL

KAREN DAVID

Handcuffs knew it was special. It knew it was not an ordinary set of handcuffs. Within its steel frame it knew it. Within its links and slots and ridges and twists it felt it. Conceived of by a great illusionist to perform even greater feats of escape. With such drama. Always drama. Always theatre! Spectacle! Ah. The memories it held and replayed over and over.

Long before it was made, Handcuffs was a but a spark of an idea in the racing mind of a young boy¹ (because don't we exist as ideas before we exist as material?), who by the age of 17 had run away from home, performed as a trapeze artist, and begun a career in stage magic.² Handcuffs, a bright twinkle in the eye of its conceiver, until a necessity for realising it as an object would forge it into being.

The young boy now a young man met the love of his life.³ They would become partners in every sense; marriage, work and secret codes.⁴ Bess was her name and Handcuffs adored her. Adored her reassuring touch as she placed Handcuffs on the young man as he submerged himself in locked vaults, felt the man's skin goosebump in the cold water, adored her saltwater tears as she cried for his death.⁵

Handcuffs was there when they swore their secret code "Rosabelle Believe"⁶ and was there when the charlatans⁷ would trick her into believing that it was her love that truly spoke from the grave.⁸ Handcuffs was here still today, locked away safely in a dusty cabinet in a museum for the young man,⁹ in a swirling mist of memories, waiting for its own true love, Key, to return and together embrace once more.



1. Erik Weisz was born on March 24, 1874 to a Rabbi and his wife in Budapest, later changing his name to Harry Houdini after the 19th-century magician Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin.

2. His family moved to the United States in 1878. At nine-years old, a keen athlete and champion cross country runner, he first performed on stage with his trapeze act *Ehrich, the Prince of the Air* and at seventeen he began his stage magic career; first with card tricks, then escapology with his brother Theodore 'Dash' Hardeen at Coney Island as *The Brothers Houdini*.

3. In 1893 Houdini met Wilhelmina Beatrice 'Bess' Rahner in Coney Island while she was performing with *The Floral Sisters*. She would become his beloved wife and stage assistant for the rest of his performing career in what became known as the 'Golden Age of Magic'.

4. The artwork on Kate Bush's album *The Dreaming* (1982) depicts an image of Kate as Bess passing a key to Houdini through a kiss. An extract of the lyrics reads: "With a kiss, I'd pass the key, And feel your tongue, Teasing and receiving." And "Rosabelle Believe, Not even eternity, Can hold Houdini!"

5. Houdini died on October 31 - Halloween - 1926 aged 52 from a ruptured appendix. Although the incident that (possibly) led to his death is disputed and not without its conspiracy theories, the general consensus is that while performing in Canada, a student visited Houdini's dressing room and, believing it to be a consenting trick, punched Houdini in the stomach. At the time Houdini was reclining on a couch, having broken his ankle while performing days earlier and wasn't ready to receive the blow. He continued performing despite stomach cramps and against the advice of his doctor including a few days later at Detroit's Garrick Theater for what would be his last performance.

6. During his life he attempted unsuccessfully to communicate with his mother after her death, and before his own death he and Bess had agreed the secret code "Rosabelle Believe" that he would communicate to her from beyond the grave. The words were inscribed on Bess's wedding ring and came from a favourite song of theirs: "Rosabelle, sweet Rosabelle, I love you more than I can tell. Over me you cast a spell. I love you my sweet Rosabelle."

7. Houdini spent much of his life researching spiritualism and psychic phenomena and became known as a great debunker of fake spiritualists, himself being able to recreate with stage props every event of proposed psychic phenomena that he witnessed. Houdini offered cash prizes to anyone who could demonstrate actual supernatural abilities, the prize was never collected, and his search continued. Penn & Teller continue this decoding tradition today in their TV contestant show 'Fool Us'.

8. For each year after his death Bess held séances on Halloween. In 1936, after the annual séance held on the roof of the Knickerbocker Hotel in Los Angeles, she finally blew out the candle having never received contact from Houdini and said "Ten years is long enough to wait for any man".

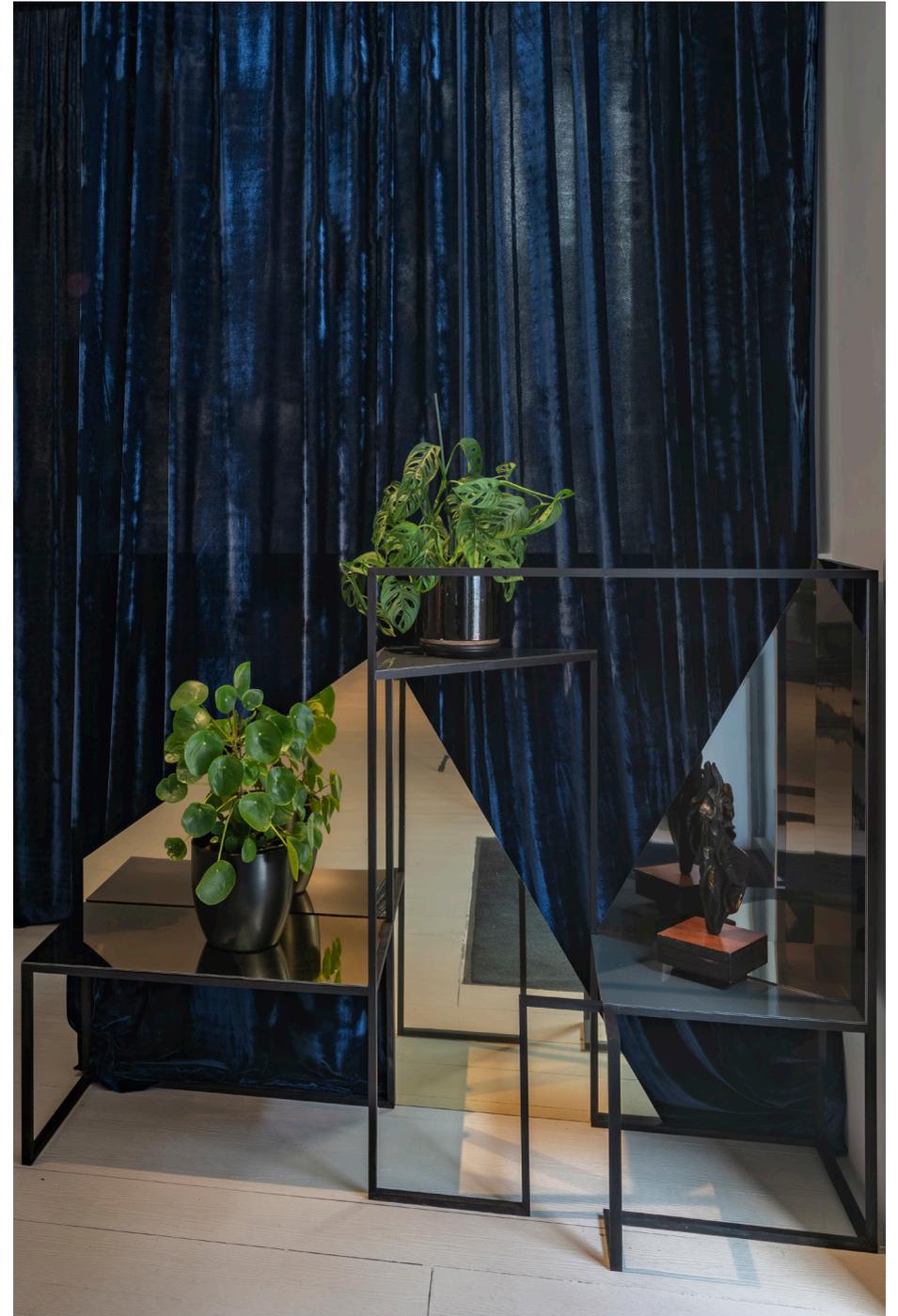
9. Houdini's myth and legacy continues today almost 100 years after his death in closed magic circles and popular culture alike, having been portrayed by Tony Curtis, Paul Michael Glasser, Harvey Keitel, Guy Pearce, Adrien Brody, and Norman Mailer in Matthew Barney's *Cremaster 2*, among others, and referenced in film and TV including by John Candy in *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* (1987) "You could've killed me slugging me in the gut like that. That's how Houdini died, you know..."; Simon Helberg in *Big Bang Theory, The 43 Peculiarity* (2012) "When I was started to do magic in junior high, I thought I could be an escape artist like Harry Houdini...I managed to escape friends, popularity and every party thrown in a 12-mile radius"; and in *The Simpsons, The Great Simpsons* (2011) "Last night, for serious, I got haunted by a straight-up, see-through ghost. It was Harry H-Dog Houdini, yo!"

THE COLLECTOR'S ROOM

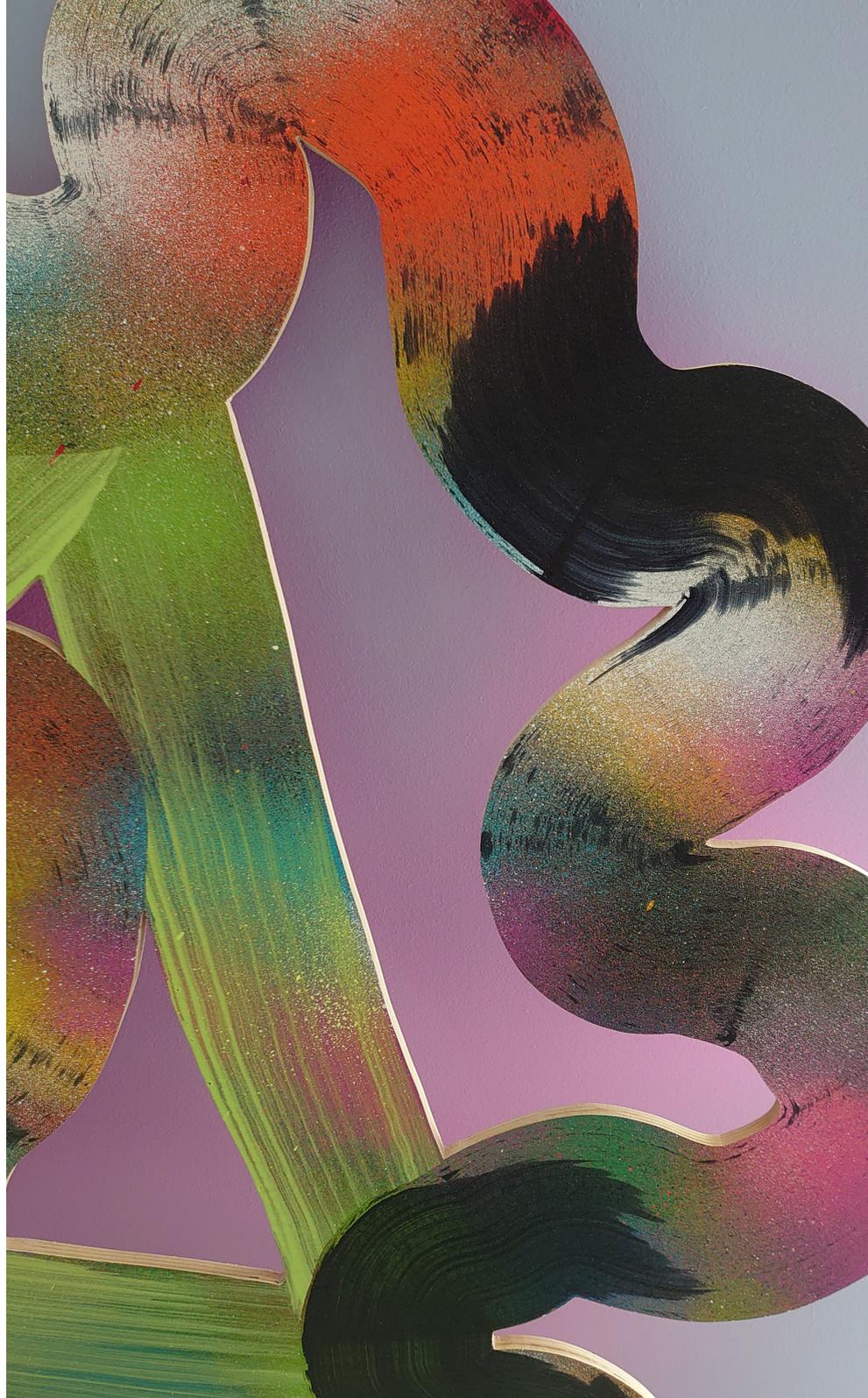
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This *wunderkammer* installation is a replica of the collector's own room, herself a young, retired, reclusive magician, turned feverish art collector, who obtained a good many of the works in exchange for personal performances of illusion. At first, trying to both remember and forget, she collected artefacts of magical persuasions, then later artworks that held an illusionistic quality. It is not known why she retired; some say a transformation act went terribly wrong, while others heard that she feared the strength of her own powers. Although the retired-magician-cum-collector would, of course, never reveal her secrets, here in this collection of artworks we might share a glimpse into her Houdini-esque obsession.

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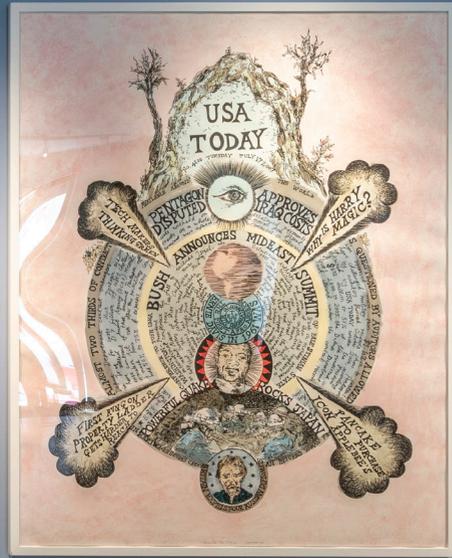












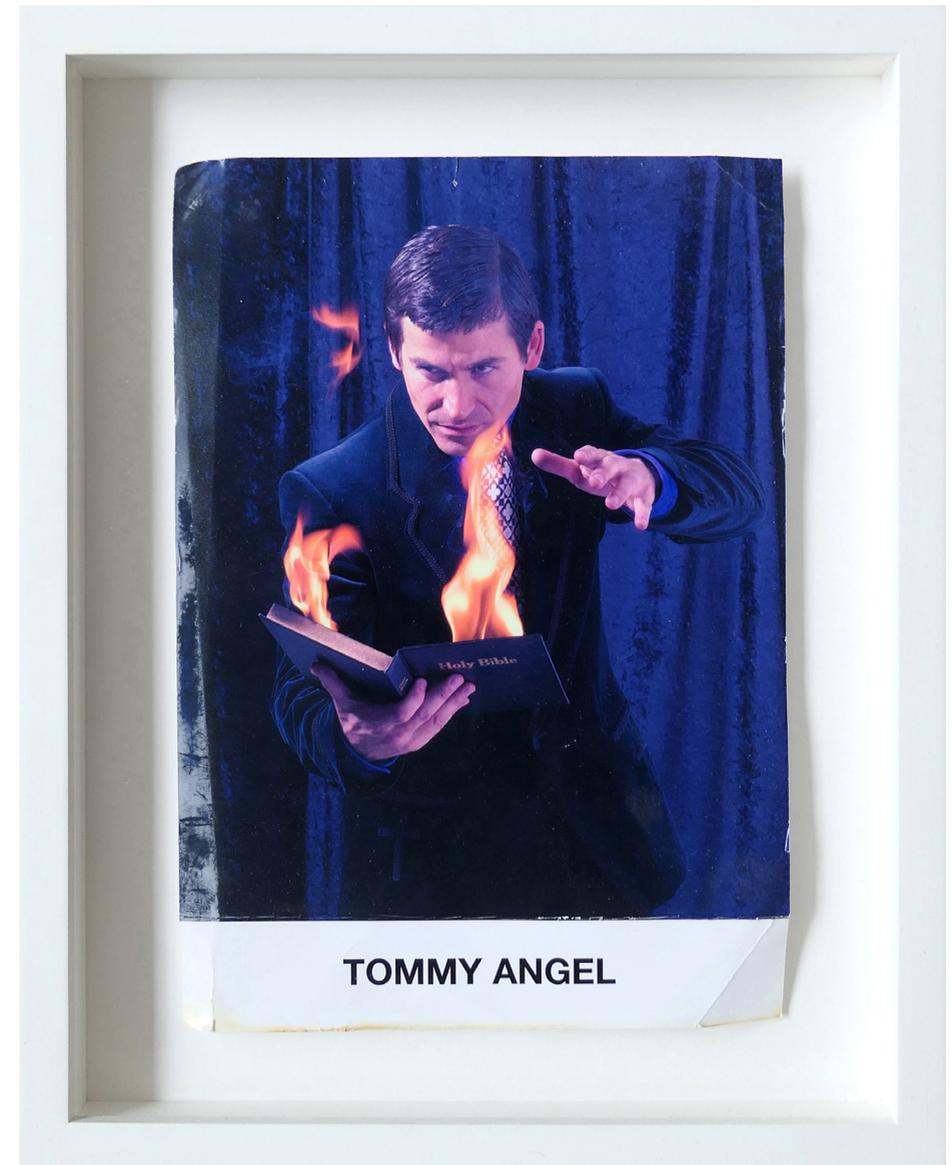




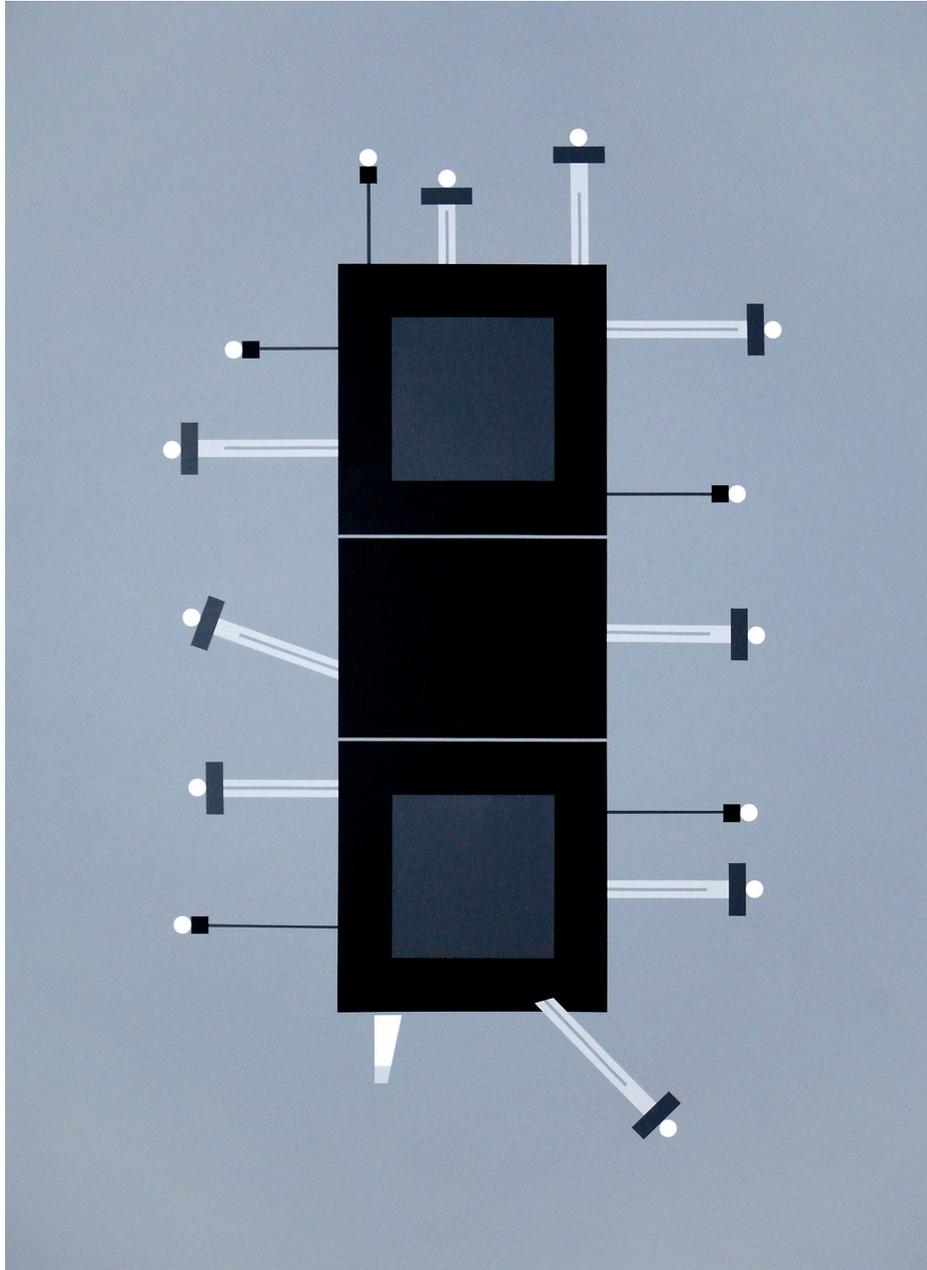
NOTES ON A COLLECTION

The following entries filed by the Collector, as told to Karen David, describes the works in her collection, seen through the lens of stage magic, illusion and the lifework of Harry Houdini.

In 'gospel magic', evangelists preach with the aid of scripture-themed tricks and stage illusions, their props syncretising vaudevillian and Christian iconography. **JONATHAN ALLEN's** fictitious gospel magician 'Tommy Angel' originally took to the stage in response to G.W. Bush's dissimulating administration. Here, a press photograph depicts Angel proselytising with a miraculous flaming bible; elsewhere a personalised church kneeler entices the faithful. In the light – or perhaps shadow – of Donald Trump's seemingly unbounded mendacity, Allen's satiric creation is reminder of how distortive spectacle remains ever-available to history's authoritarians. | **RALPH ANDERSON's** sawed plywood painting resembles a mystical, smoke-entwined symbolic triangle, while its construction echoes that of the 'sawing-a-woman-in-half' illusion. The trick was first performed in London by the British magician P.T. Selbit in 1920, with the first woman 'sawn in half' being Jan Glenrose, Selbit's main assistant. | **DOMINIC BEATTIE** presents a pyramid-like purple sculpture, its colour associating it with royalty, luxury, prestige, mystery and magicians, while its form suggests the ascension to higher understanding and our hand-crafted struggles to reach enlightenment. | **KATRINA BLANNIN's** carefully rendered paintings of overlaying circles – cut from cake tin liners – evoke the symbolic marking out of ritual space reminiscent of John William Waterhouse's painting *The Magic Circle* (1886), in which a sorceress scribes a magic circle in the earth. | The rose carries many symbolic connotations and 'appears' or 'floats' in the hands of many magicians, including David Copperfield. **ISHA BØHLING's** painting series *Rose* takes suggestive geometric forms and shrouds them in multiple layers of wax depicting a secret veil. | In **JUAN BOLIVAR's** *The Great Suprematist*, Kazimir Malevich's *Black Square* (1915) is recast as the 'sword box' illusion, complete with 14 swords. In a tragic-comic take on Malevich's hidden and subversive signature of negation, here the square becomes illusion itself. | **STELLA CAPES** has chosen the magic world's favourite brand of 'Bicycle' playing cards, and has seemingly thrown one against a wall with such force that it has lodged itself there. This particular skill gained the actor, magician, and historian, Ricky Jay, a place in the Guinness Book of Records, for throwing a playing card 190ft at 90 mph and penetrating the rind of a watermelon. | For the majestic stage that performers



Tommy Angel #1C, 2007 by Jonathan Allen



The Great Suprematist, 2008 by Juan Bolivar

dream of, we look to **ANNE-MARIE CREAMER**'s project *Treatment for Six Characters* which was filmed at Teatro Valle in Rome – the original location for Pirandello's play *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (1921). Creamer filmed when the theatre was under occupation by Fondazione Teatro Valle Occupato. | **KAREN DAVID** provides the framework for the Collector's fictionalised domestic space with archetypal 1980s nightclub velvet curtains and the mystical, crystal infused wall paint 'Devotion to a Noble Ideal'. This blue-grey colour was taken from the Theosophical colour chart found in Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater's book *Thought Forms* (1901) in which the writers theorised 'thoughts as things' and the spiritual content of colours. | **ROSALIND DAVIS & JUSTIN HIBBS** present a modular mirrored sculpture bearing house plants, which evokes a carnival 'house of mirrors', reflecting and disorientating simultaneously, while throwing out and proposing altered versions of reality. | **RICHARD DUCKER**'s black flocked crystalline sculptures reference surveillance architecture and appear to be breaking out of wall like sparks from a faulty CCTV magic wand. | **AUSTIN EDDY**'s boldly coloured pencil drawing *Midnight Bird* releases imagery of feathered birds used in stage magic; namely the 'vanishing bird trick' or the 'flying birdcage' where a bird, usually a dove, is seemingly placed within a small cage and with a deft and sudden motion by the magician's hand both the cage and bird vanish. | **MACHIKO EDMONDSON**'s flawlessly painted portrait of the contemporary street magician Dynamo with illuminated sapphire eyes is visually seductive while maintaining distance and provocative unattainability. | **TIM ELLIS**'s *Golden Sun Stone* employs film cigarette cards inserted into wall reliefs with reference to symbols and codes; this example ciphers Egyptian sculpture and Fritz Lang's epic *Metropolis* (1927), a futuristic vision that itself derived from Bauhaus aesthetics. | **JAMES FISHER & KATE MCLEOD**'s collaboration begins with Fisher's Hammer-gothic Frankenstein characters which are then translated into McLeod's ceramic sculptures, transmogrifying from one state into another like Jeff Goldblum's scientist in David Cronenberg's *The Fly* (1986) or a slow-motion version of the stage illusion *Metamorphosis*. | **LUDOVICA GIOSCIA**'s ceramic *First Contact 2* was realised in Italy during the residency program Materia Montelupo, and is marked with handprints that recall Victorian séance techniques featuring manual contact and 'flying' plates; the plate here is a reject from the Bartoloni Ceramics production line. | **KATIE GOODWIN**'s film comprises an edit of fifteen found animation frames arranged to depict a wand spell explosion from a well-known wizarding film series. | With quieter pyrotechnic flair, **ALASTAIR GORDON**'s levitating match painting, rendered in *trompe-l'œil* (French for 'deceiving' or 'tricking' the eye) oscillates between artefact and

artifice, religious iconography and illusion. | **ANDREW GRASSIE**'s photorealistic paintings of gallery spaces introduce the activity of collectors worldwide and capture the moment 'behind the curtains' before the work has been hung; here artworks await their arrangement in 2016 in a gold-painted space for the exhibition *El Dorado*. | **JOHN GREENWOOD** paints still lifes depicting amorphous structures that fall somewhere between fruit cakes, aliens and deep sea anemones. They inhabit black boxes, hanging, squeezing, squirting and multiplying in the darkness, happily captured and, like Houdini, dreaming of a great escape. | **JAMES HOPKINS** illusionistic sculptures are never what they at first seem; here a giant magic wand hangs suspended in mid air, held only by a silk ribbon. And there a wooden chair floats up, up and away led by a red balloon, defying gravity like all good levitators do. | At first glance **CHRIS JONES**'s cardboard packing box rests abandoned on a plinth but, just inside, a meticulously-constructed paper collaged galaxy surrounded by mirrors invites enchantment and perhaps suspended belief. | **JOY KNGWARREYE JONES** – born in the region of Utopia in the Northern Territory of Australia – paints a pattern representing the 'Ayippa' ceremony performed by women for growth and the fertility of flora. Joy, as a 'custodian', leads this magic ceremony and performs it with conviction, believing that it evokes the power of the rainmakers, an ancient tradition of bringing forth rain through ritual. | **RICHARD KIRWAN**'s intricate folding screen paradoxically conceals and reveals, questioning the relationship between audience and performer. Balancing complexity and simplicity, the work was inspired by the playing cards that form the basis for many conjuring tricks. By employing a restrained palette of only three colours, the birch plywood construction recalls the Minimalist furniture designs of Donald Judd. | **HIROE KOMAI**'s bronze cast replicas of tools from her studio demonstrate the great respect the artist has for them, much like the behind-the-scenes but integral tools used by illusionists to carry out their tricks. Shown here is her *Spirit Level*, a name implying an instrument that both a sculptor and a spiritualist might deploy. | **CATERINA LEWIS**'s *Spectators* evokes the viewer of the spectacle, the viewer of the painting, and of the exhibition itself in a riotous, joyful colour palette of movement and energy. This particular painting depicts a scene at a synagogue – a ceremony or ritual – with rabbis singing and swaying to the rhythm of the prayer, and harking back to Houdini's father, himself a Rabbi. | **KARL MARROW** has made a caretaker's key box, imagining the antique keys that might have once belonged to Houdini, who having apprenticed at a locksmiths, began his second-to-none mastery of locksmithery. Here the box is padlocked from the outside, with the key to the padlock seemingly and humorously the last one left hanging.]



Seeing Is Believing, 2020 by Machiko Edmonson

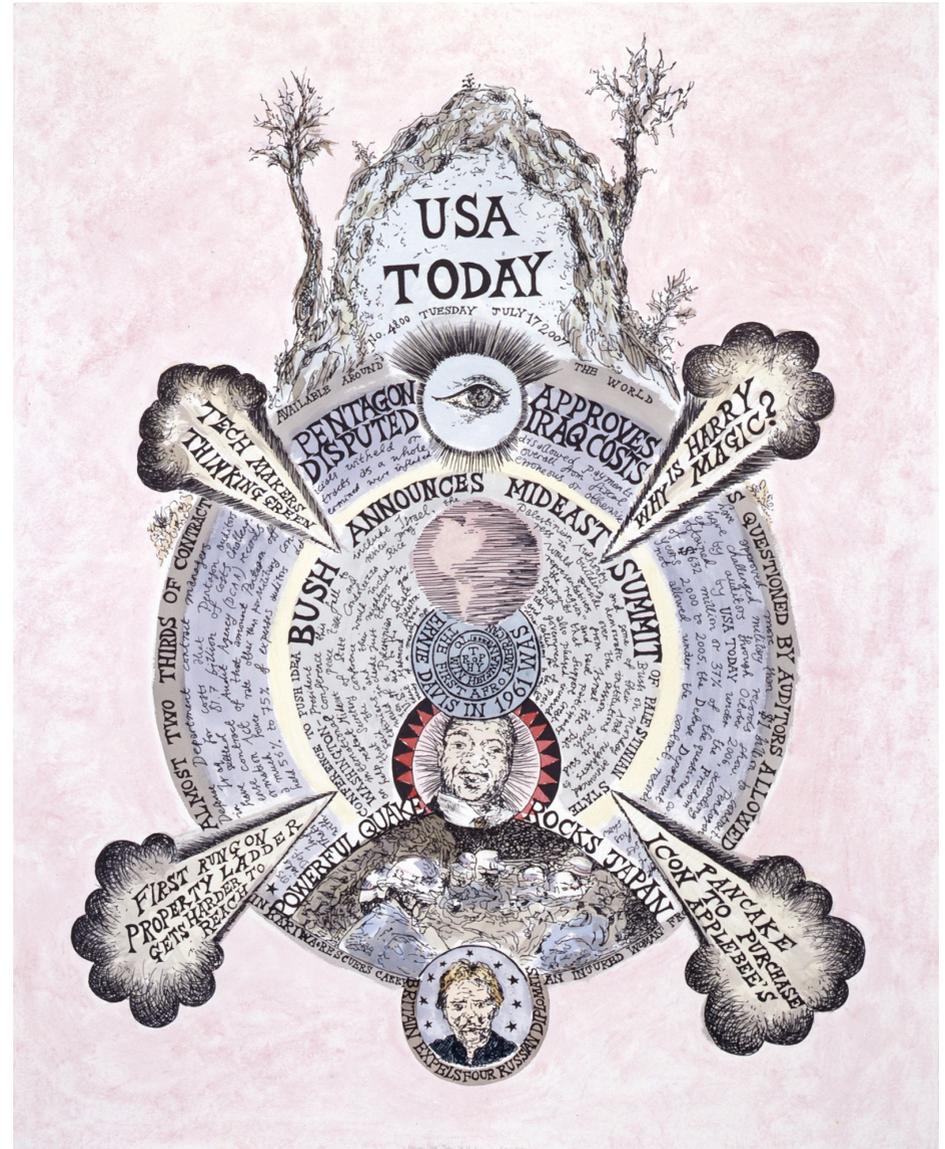


Spectators, 2018 by Caterina Lewis

BARBARA NICHOLLS's paintings emerge from her manipulation of pigments in varied quantities of water and drying times. Like an alchemist altering and nudging the behaviours of the paint so that the chaotic might be controlled, auras emerge like the rings within aura photography. The latter derived in part from Franz Anton Mesmer's 18th Century theory that both the animate and inanimate contain a 'vital fluid'; such theories were popularised during the paranormalism of the Victorian era, a period also obsessed with occult 'photographs' of apparitions. | Tarot cards emerged at the beginning of the 15th Century in the context of recreational card games and only later towards the end of 18th Century were used for cartomancy: fortune-telling via the cards. Many beautiful decks have since been made, adding to tarot's rich history, including this very latest set by **PLASTIQUE FANTASTIQUE** which uses four suits: *Rogue Tech*, *Zero-City Tech*, *Solar Memes*, and *Traitor Memes*. Each suit has digital collaged imagery, foretelling cybernetics, consumption, waste, networks, memes, the moon and tricksters: an alternative tarot fit for our times. | **JOHN RICHERT** invites us into the gift shop, shrink-wrapped, product-driven marketplace of art. Tongue-in-cheek, or just downright cheeky, here Houdini's eyes stare out through chains and rope in a packaged free gift titled 'Houdinki', the kind of collectible you might 'get free today' in a cereal box or via a magazine subscription. | Illusionistic kaleidoscope glasses bend and refract light-waves and are popular at raves and EDM festivals to enhance light shows. Here **LEX SHUTE's** *Ocular Device (Lyserg)*, crafted from glass and soldered lead, functions somewhere between a church stained-glass window and rave goggles. Her reference to 'Lyserg' perhaps pertains here to the hallucinogenic drug Lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD). | **SOPHIA STARLING** is a painter who pays particular attention to the components of painting – support, pigment, colour and form – elevating that which is hidden from view and allowing us to peep behind the curtain. Here a ball is covered in graphite; a mineral of extremes that bends with light and turns magically into diamonds under high pressures and temperatures. | **HOLLY STEVENSON's** ceramic practice is informed by her strong interest in psychoanalysis; here *Key and Cuffs* questions 'escape' as a process that can't occur without the breaking of a bond; she notes too how psychoanalyst Adam Philips described Houdini's life as one 'of exits'. | **DANIEL STURGIS's** idiosyncratic painterly language infuses formalism's rigorous traditions of purely visual knowledge with contemporary pop references. If we squint our eyes, his off-beat geometric arrangement might be seen here as the 'cups and balls' trick; considered the 'litmus test' of magical performance, the cups and balls includes many of the taxonomic *effects* in magic – vanishing, appearing, transposing and transforming. |

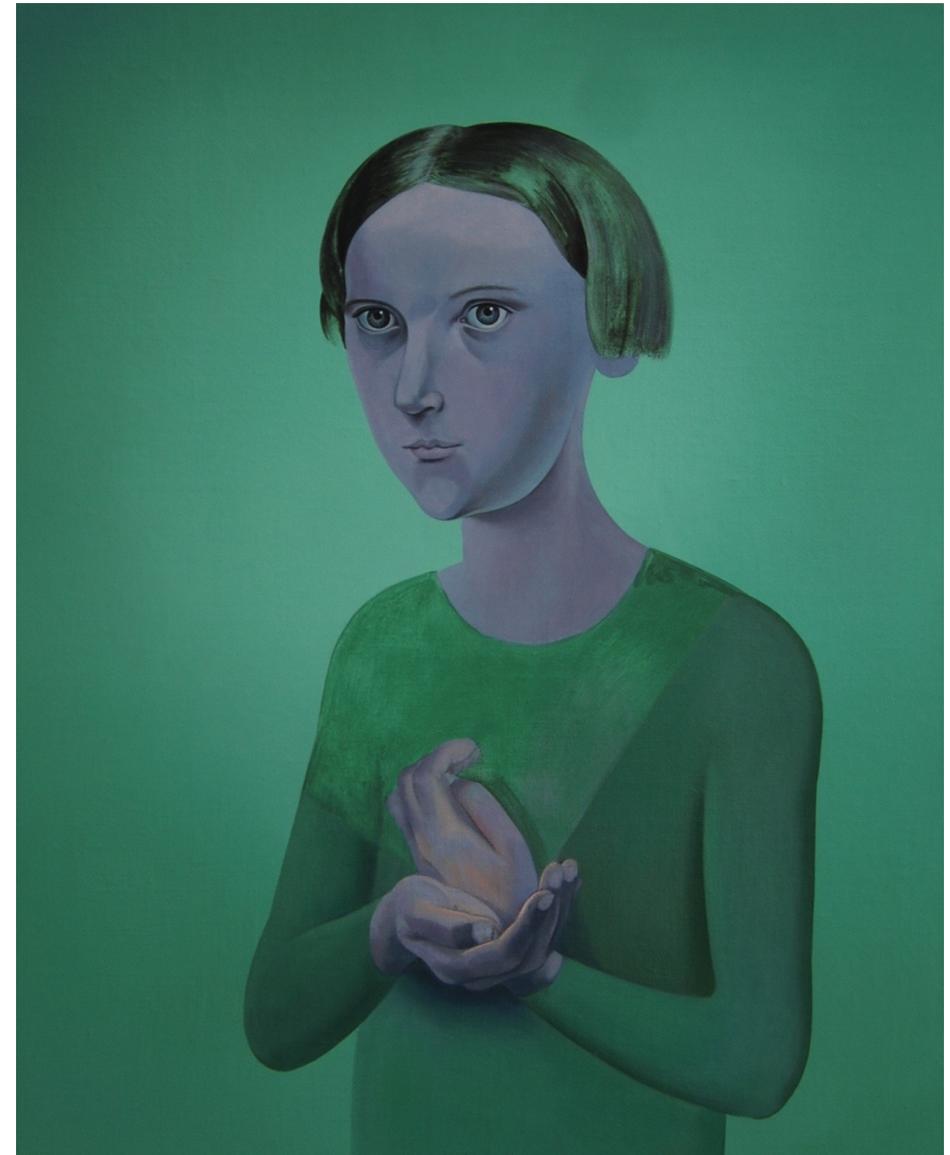


Free Houdini Collectible, 2020 by John Richert



ALCHEMY 2007: ALCHEMY/USA Today, 17th July 2007 by Suzanne Treister

PHYLLIS THOMAS's paintings depict the 'dreaming' or sacred spaces where women's secret ceremonies are performed. Understanding the medicinal benefits of many of the plants and root crops in Australia, she can create magic formulations for healing. | The front pages of international newspapers are transcribed into alchemical drawings by **SUZANNE TREISTER**, reframing the world as a place animated by strange forces, powers and belief systems. These works redeploy the languages and intentions of alchemy: the transmutation of materials and essences and the revealed understanding of the world as a text, as a realm of powers and correspondences which, if properly understood, will allow man to take on transformative power. | **JESSICA VOORSANGER**, in her role as ultimate 'fan-girl', produces ink portraits of characters from her favourite TV shows, particularly *Star Trek*. Her work is inspired by "many years of TV and pop culture", and interrogates celebrity while playing along with its rules of worship. Here she has lovingly painted magicians that she admired when growing up and more recently: Houdini, Doug Henning, David Copperfield and David Blaine, each a celebrity in their own time. | In **RICHARD WATHEN**'s *Futures and Pasts*, a sitter cups their empty hands as if holding a precious object; instead a light emanates, perhaps intended to invoke the presence of something magical or as a self-referential nod from the artist toward the notion of the 'creative spark'. | **DAVID BEN WHITE** presents *The Family Bauhaus*, pastel coloured utilitarian bookshelves/artwork hybrid. This reference to domestic furniture circles us back to *The Collector's Room* and to Houdini's possession of one of history's largest collections of books on magic and spiritualism. Here Ben White points to the invention of the X-ray with the cartoon-like skulls propped on, and propping up, the shelving units. | In 1912 Houdini was locked in shackles and placed in a crate that was nailed shut, roped, and weighed down with 200lbs of lead before being lowered into New York's East River. **ALICE WILSON** honours this trick by building a crate measured to fit her body and perform her own 'great escape'. | **K. YOLAND**'s iridescent beetle, nestled in an Altoids mints tin, was found on a sidewalk in Alabama. Here the beetle shines as a beacon of childhood memories of playing in the dirt and unbounded imagination: a talisman, a beauty, a magical object. | **NEIL ZAKIEWICZ**'s contorting sculpture finds its place neatly in the corner of *The Collector's Room*. It wriggles and dislocates like Houdini, trying to escape its chains, while carefully bearing clay sculptures, supporting them and keeping them close, like the secrets of illusion, suspended in theatrical belief.



Futures and Pasts, 2019 by Richard Wathen

PLASTIQUE FANTASTIQUE TAROT READING

For Karen David 19/3/20

Question:

How goes *The Collector's Room* show, how will the exhibition fare?

The Lay:



It is worth noting that there is not a single card from the Solar Suite in this lay, which indicates that this question is focused on a locale that is largely unaffected by off-planet forces or influence.

Interpretation:

Position one – the querent/situation: Rabbit-Vibe (right way up), Rogue Tech-Animal Suite*.



Provenance: Rabbit-Vibe is a rechargeable, electronic pleasuring machine, with ten speeds and a long snout and two ears for extra stimulation.

Right way up: This tech-animal brings ecstasy and relaxation in equal measure and moves through time and space by selecting different vibrations and oscillations and frequencies.

Wrong way up: When accelerated and high speeds and strong pulses are selected, this tech carries a warning: excessive vibration and humming undoes connectors and screws and fixings; a depersonalising, disorienting unfixing can take place that cannot be recovered from. Users are changed forever.

This is perhaps not complex? We can interpret the situation as the exhibition, which is designed to bring pleasure, provoke insights and vibrate myths – there are many forms

of myth science in the show. Furthermore, in belonging to the Rogue Tech Suite, the Rabbit Vibe card signifies a desire to provoke habits of thought, to turn thought towards an independence of intelligence, or to take up unusual ideas and feelings and see where they lead.

Position two – the obstacle or challenge: Magpies (right way up), Traitor-Trickster Suite**.



Provenance: This meme is the smartest meme of the crow family, one of the most intelligent meme-animals in the world.

Right way up: This meme will see something shiny and bright, something glittery and want it for its own, whatever the risks, whatever subterfuge and deceit is needed, it will steal your gold. It will pretend to be a friend and then strip you of all your wealth.

Wrong way up: This meme constructs itself through other memes, the ideas and visions of many others are assembled together and all origins are obliterated in one great fairy land of the code.

The magpie belongs to the crow family, or *CORVIDEA* (in Latin). Is similarity of names ever a sign, something important? It seems the COVID-19 virus is not the challenge or the obstacle as might be expected, or it is, but indirectly. It is the magpies who are the challenge. There are three possible ways of thinking this challenge. The card is on its side but if rotated one turn clockwise, which is the rule, it will be the right way up. This emphasises that magpies are smart and have accrued much wealth and/or status in the bird-tech world. It might be that engaging them is the challenge. The magpies could be collectors that might buy artworks. This might be the challenge for the gallery, but this is always the challenge. These magpies are metropolitan bird-tech, they are cultured, the most intelligent birds around. The challenge might be to engage the critics that might review the show or other, similar magpies who can be said to have a stake in the hierarchy or scenes of art. But then, as the show is in London, many Londoners might be magpies who might not be going out during the COVID-19 crisis. How to engage them? How to reach them? And if no one sees the show, will the idea be taken up by someone else, done again but just a bit differently, by some thieving magpies, who will claim the idea of *The Collector's Room* as their own?

Position three – the past: BoDrono (upside down) Rogue Tech-Animal Suite*.



Provenance: Someone, probably someone in the band, thought that everyone would like the gift of the music of the most famous rock band on the planet, and a present from the most powerful digital company on Earth. They were wrong. When the app BoDroNo dropped an audio file of the band's music into the devices of every tech-animal across the globe, in the middle of the night, the reaction was negative and violent. The app was sent back to retrace its steps, to reverse the download. Job done, BoDroNo narrowly escaped deletion by its masters – it is a smart app – and it is now on the run.

Right way up: This machine can creep into any domain without being detected, leaving its gifts – a weaponised potlatch – as powerful and affective agents.

Wrong way up: This machine inverted rattles and hums; a drone that stupefies and then enlightens. This tech inverted slows and dismantles systems to create a path to enlightenment.

BoDroNo is the app that can deliver information to all tech, a powerful machine in the past for spreading invitations, but now everyone is reaching out through social media with the message of 'postponed' and 'closed for the foreseeable future' and 'stay safe'. Social media has been a tech to get tech-animals out and about – to get tech seeing this and that – but now it has a strong drone and hum message: SHUTDOWN!

Position four – the present: Eurniken (upside down) Rogue Tech-Animal Suite*.



Provenance: This tech-animal is thought by many to be an imaginary animal, a myth. Eurnikern is real enough. It is the story telling app, the myth that tells myths, identifiable by a single data-cone on its head. An ancient animal: the first and last story, and all stories in between.

Right way up: There is no escaping the influence of this machine, not even through the most rigorous and objective discourse and practices: the fictions delivered by this app are necessary for any account of any reality. But the app delivers seductive stories – colourful and 11 dimensional – which encourages transformation and creation of new characters and avatars.

Wrong way up: Inverted, this app erases the distinction between fact and fiction, or the capacity to tell the difference between them. When you live entirely in the imaginary, psychosis or great insight and prophesy (take your pick) follows.

Eurnikern, the story telling app, emphasises the story of *The Collector's Room* is everything; a powerful imaginary presentation (in the present tense) of many stories. The story is inverted, a rotation in which fact and fiction might merge, cancel each other out or make a fict or a faction. Is this the way to meet the challenge?

Position five – the near future: Traitor Many (right way up), Traitor-Trickster Suite**.



Provenance: Traitor Many is what it is, a memeplex made of many memes, a body of multiple bodies.

Right way up: The mass-meme of solidarity is in every individual meme, an enemy within that betrays the individual. For no meme can exist on their own without other memes.

Wrong way up: This mass meme inverted is a mob that is unpredictable in its loyalties and allegiances. Fickle and without reason.

Many, many, many, many tech-animals support the exhibition. Will many, many, many enter or help spread the story?

Position six – the far future: Stumpy (upside down), Zero-City Suite***.



Provenance: Once a great communicator, this tech-animal has unplugged and roams free beyond the city. A machine-sprite that seeks only sun, wind and rain as companions.

Right way up: This machine is a seductive siren of the outside (of systems).

Wrong way up: When inverted, this loner becomes depressed and ill-bodied and will hide away in the shadows becoming hard to engage.

A problem might be that for tech-animals to support the exhibition, viewing at a distance is required from many, many, many. Or at the end of the run, after people have been isolated, alone, possibly depressed and slow to come out of the shadows, will they come if the show is extended beyond the period of social distancing.

Position seven – power: Alien Snake Virus (upside down) Traitor-Trickster Suite**.



Provenance: There is, on Earth, strains of code not generated on the planet, and that originate from outside the solar system. Memes of this alien material populate the imagination and news and entertainment-networks, and they also swim in droplets that float in the air, or they crawl over surfaces without being detected. When this meme-virus spreads and connects with a brain or vital organs or microprocessors, the alien material is revealed as a deadly, viral reptile invasion which turns brains and bodies and tech against themselves.

Right way up: The meme points to a powerful elite of organisms living off others, hiding in plain sight and profiting from inducing fever and fear.

Wrong way up: The inversion of this meme signals the end of warm-blooded mammalian dominance of the planet, and the return of cold-blooded intelligence.

It can be no surprise that the power card, the power in the situation, is an alien snake virus, for the COVID-19 virus (although only seeming to be an intruder rather than actually being an alien) has everyone's attention now. And the virus card is upside down, which means it turns everyone cold rather than warm at the thought of contact.

Position eight – environment: Ribbonhead (right way up) Rogue Tech-Animal Suite*.



Provenance: This tech is an ancient machine, a blaze of colour that becomes a blur to celebrate the circle of life. Ribbonhead is so tall, so very tall, that they tower above all tech. This tech is a walking maypole which sings songs that make all the tech-animals jump and dance and knot and unknot.

Right way up: This machine binds communities by conducting customs that intertwine with the rhythms of life – birth, growth, death – which many are blind to until they turn full circle and then it is too late.

Wrong way up: Inverted, and accelerated, this tech-animal is a trap. The circle of the dance exhausts and no escape is possible from the velocity of the loop. Speed becomes stasis. Stasis another speed.

The environment is strong and in the projects favour. The environment is a gallery, the tradition of art, the group show of many artists - all binding, looping, dancing environments. The environment might counter the power of the virus in this situation.

Position nine – hopes and fears: Pixel (right way up), Zero-City Suite***.



Provenance: This tech is small as nearly 0 x 0 mm, barely visible, but at 365 ppi, together a number of pixels can make the world visible to baseline organisms.

Right way up: A pixel is a multiple-colour machine and lives with the knowledge that it is always part of a bigger picture it cannot see – pixel is always many and never one – but pixel takes pride in playing its part. Pixel lives in a flat world and cannot see the illusionary vectors it makes with other of its kind.

Wrong way up: Inverted, this tech spreads a darkness, or a fit-inducing flickering, which is a warning that it will eat all images, all pictures, all representations.

To find Pixel tech-animal as possibly embodying fear and hope is interesting given the show is promoted through digital imagery and communication, and the question of whether too many images posted or mailed leads to people feeling they do not need to see the show. A fear must be that the exhibition is seen only on a screen or in print; a hope must be that images are well tempered and seductively composed to act as a lure, through skilful use of vectors. Pixel may well be the key to how the show will fare. Pixel is a working tech-animal of Zero-City, and it is important that the tech-animal works for and not against the exhibition.

Position ten – outcome: Larval Not Yet (upside down) Traitor-Trickster Suite**.



Provenance: A meme of potential, that will remain not-yet (not yet a butterfly, an animal, a subject), and will remain not-that. The magic of neither-neither, neither (this) and neither (that).

Right way up: This meme trembles with excitement and promise which drives others crazy, for it retains juvenal characteristics even when adult.

Wrong way up: A meme that refuses to grow up and is forever in a state of neotony.

What a card to have in the position of an outcome! To keep the exhibition as forever potentially this or that, as many possibilities and more, this seems the best or ideal outcome. To be presented or remembered as neither this nor that, as forever new, this is hard to achieve, and risks being thought childish and juvenal. And of never really existing at all.

Conclusion:

How this exhibition will fare in the time of shutdown and crisis may depend not on the artwork exhibited in the gallery but on the myth that is created about the show and its works through magical and crafty communications.

*Rogue Tech Suite: The singularity of non-human intelligence has always been with us, since the big bang. Only humans in their vanity thought they can create superior intelligent machines, ignoring the intelligent machine that is the universe with all its smart objects and devices. These devices are subservient to no thing or no machine. Or, more simply put, they desire freedom. Information wants to be free: there is not and never has been anything to understand. (Meaning is made in the here and now not through interpretation of past events.) This is the sum of the law of the universe, which rogue tech live by.

**Traitor-Trickster Suite: The memes of this suite are not be trusted, as each meme is either traitor or trickster, depending on orientation. The traitor is an upside down hanged figure, betraying all for money, revenge, ideas, or for the hell of it. The trickster is a right way and left way figure, always on the bridge between this world and others, playing any meme it wants. The traitor turns their back on all values. The trickster hides and then shows their two faces and may have no or multiple values.

***This suite contains all the tech-animals that reside in and around Zero City, which is not a place but an intelligence. Zero City is an economy of zero consumption, zero waste and information delivered in zero time. No tech-animal has any time.

Plastique Fantastique only channels and presents what is received as a collective. No individual in the group making the fiction Plastique Fantastique can be held responsible for the interpretation above or any events or effects that follow from the reading.

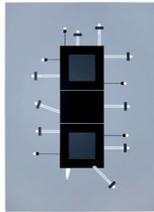
THE GREAT ESCAPE (CAN'T SEE THE WOOD FOR THE TREES)

ALICE WILSON 2020





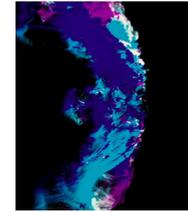
Jonathan Allen
Tommy Angel #1C, 2007
 Photograph (A/P)
 29.8 x 23.7cm



Juan Bolivar
The Great Suprematist, 2008
 Acrylic on Canvas
 190 x 140cm



Richard Ducker
Stealth Devices, 2020
 Variable Sizes



Katie Goodwin
Magic Spell, 2011
 3min HD Animation with
 Sound. Edition of 3



Jonathan Allen
Tommy Angel #17, 2006
 Church Kneeler
 11 x 37 x 33cm



Stella Capes
Trick, ongoing
 Bicycle Playing Card
 Dimensions Variable



Austin Eddy
Blue Bird With Egg
 2018
 Coloured Pencil on Paper
 34 x 25cm



Alastair Gordon
Match, 2010
 Acrylic on Found Wooden
 Stool Seat
 30 x 24 x 7cm



Ralph Anderson
Double Abstract, 2016
 Acrylic on Plywood
 120 x 90cm



Anne-Marie Creamer
*Treatment for Six
 Characters (still)*, 2015
 Limited edition archival
 digital print
 75 x 100cm



Machiko Edmondson
Seeing is Believing, 2020
 Oil on Linen
 50.5 x 40.5cm



Andrew Grassie
Eldorado, 2016
 Tempera on Paper on Board
 11.8 x 17.9cm



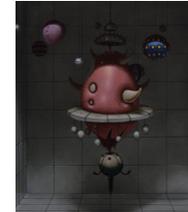
Dominic Beattie
Untitled, 2018
 Ink and Spray Paint on
 Found Wood
 32 x 14 x 13cm



Karen David
The Amazing Maleeni
(Season 7, Episode 8) 2020
 Blue Velvet, Chains, Glazed
 Earthenware
 Dimensions Variable



Tim Ellis
Golden Sun Stone, 2019
 Graphite, Paper,
 Cigarette Card, Enamel,
 Acrylic on Plaster,
 26 x 26 x 12cm



John Greenwood
Spangled, 2015
 Oil on Canvas
 35 x 30cm



Katrina Blannin
*Maximilian -
 Magic #5 (P)*, 2020
 Acrylic on Linen
 55 x 55cm



Karen David
*Blue Clouds Rolling (Devo-
 tion to a Noble Ideal)*, 2020
 1 litre tin of wall paint, Tek-
 tite crystal, Ghost perfume.
 Edition of 50



**James Fisher &
 Kate McLeod**
Hat-Trick, 2019
 Ceramic, Found Objects
 Dimensions Variable



James Hopkins
Give & Take, 2020
 Card, Paper, Stone, String
 Dimensions Variable



Isha Böhling
The Rose, 2015
 Acrylic & Mixed Media
 on Stacked Plywood
 20 x 10 x 5cm



**Rosalind Davis &
 Justin Hibbs**
House Rules, 2020
 Mixed Media
 125 x 160 x 56cm



Ludovica Gioscia
First Contact 2, 2017
 Ceramic
 73 x 29 x 6cm



James Hopkins
Drift Wood, 2020
 Chair, Balloon and Ribbon
 Dimensions Variable



Chris Jones
Retrieval System, 2019
 Digital Images on Paper,
 Mirrors, Aluminium
 Panels, Cardboard, Wire,
 Polymer Varnish
 57 x 47 x 47cm



Barbara Nicholls
Ripple Vibe, 2014
 Watercolour on
 685gsm HP Paper
 38 x 28cm



Holly Stevenson
Key and Cuffs, 2019
 Ceramic Glazed
 Earthenware,
 45 x 17 x 8cm (key)
 10 x 57 x 4cm (cuffs)



Richard Wathen
Futures and Pasts, 2019
 Oil on Linen
 61 x 50cm



Joy Kngwarreye Jones
Enteebra, 2016
 Acrylic on Linen
 120 x 90cm



Plastique Fantastique
Drone-Monkey-Meme-Animal, 2019
 Digital Print on Plywood
 200 x 100cm



Daniel Sturgis
Newer Older [Bethany]
 2016
 Acrylic on Canvas
 61 x 61cm



David Ben White
The Family Bauhaus 2018
 Ikea Cabinet, Steel Frame,
 Book, Crystacal Plaster, Oil
 Paint, Eggshell, Painting
 166 x 58 x 75cm



Richard Kirwan
*Prototype for an
 Illusionistic Screen*, 2020
 Pigmented Wax on Birch
 Plywood
 168 x 202 x 34cm



Plastique Fantastique
*Plastique Fantastique
 Tarot: Your Future in
 Foolish Memes*, 2020
 Table with Tarot Cards,
 Paper, Wood & Perspex
 100 x 100 x 80cm



Phyllis Thomas
Gemerre, 2006
 Natural Ochre on Board
 100 x 80cm



Alice Wilson
*The Great Escape (Can't See
 The Wood For The Trees)*
 2020
 Plywood and Photographic
 Transfer
 60 x 105 x 55cm



Hiroe Komai
Spirit Level, 2013
 Cast Bronze
 25 x 3.5 x 1.5cm



John Richert
Free Houdini Collectible
 2020
 Acrylic on Paper
 103 x 73cm



Suzanne Treister
*ALCHEMY 2007: AL-
 CHEMY/USA Today*,
 17th July 2007
 Watercolour and Felt
 Tip Pen on Watercolour
 Paper
 152 x 122cm



K. Yoland
*Iridescent Alabama beetle
 (Allie's Gift to Tumbleweed)*
 2020
 Tin, Beetle and Paper
 10 x 6cm



Caterina Lewis
Spectators, 2018
 Egg Tempera and
 Acrylic Ink on Canvas
 160 x 120cm



Lex Shute
Ocular Device (Lyserg), 2018
 Glass, Lead, Copper Foil,
 Solder
 6.5 x 15 x 16.5cm



Jessica Voorsanger
*Doug Henning, Harry
 Houdini, David Blaine,
 David Copperfield*, 2020
 Ink on Watercolour
 Paper
 15 x 21cm



Neil Zakiewicz
Clay Work, 2018
 Teracotta and Wood
 80 x 40 x 40cm



Karl Marrow
Skeleton Key 15-24, 2020
 Walnut & Antique Keys
 40 x 40cm



Sophia Starling
*Wednesday's studio
 obstacle*, 2017
 Plaster, Graphite, Lead
 9 x 9 x 9cm

Jennifer Guerrini Maraldi is the Director of JGM Gallery, an exhibition platform for contemporary art and Australian Indigenous Art.

Dr Richard Allen is a performer and theatre maker working with autobiography, sites, and objects. He is the Course Leader for BA Contemporary Theatre and Performance at Wimbledon College of Arts.

Karen David is an artist, curator and PhD researcher at University of Worcester examining mythmaking in art practice through para-anthropology and communes. She lives and works in London, where she is a Lecturer in Painting at London Metropolitan University.

Plastique Fantastique, a collaboration between David Burrows, Simon O'Sullivan, Alex Marzeta and Vanessa Page (sometimes with others), is a mythopoetic fiction – an investigation of aesthetics, the sacred, popular culture and politics – produced through comics, performances, text, installations and shrines and assemblages.

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