



Placing the Periphery

September
1st - 17th 2017
Zig Zag Gallery

PAUL SUTHERLAND
SOPHIE DURAND
JESS BOYCE
TESSA BEALE
JARRAD MARTYN
LYDIA TRETHERWEY
CARLY LUNCH
MATTHEW MCALPINE



Placing the Periphery

By Lydia Trethewey

When we talk about the periphery, usually what we mean is things just off to the side – the edge or limits of an area, an indistinct shape in the corner of your eye. To couple this with the more defined idea of “place”, or placing, seems strange. Can the periphery be a place, and if so, what does it mean to place the periphery, to try to put your finger on something marginal, shifting and indefinite? The eight emerging artists in this show, *Placing the Periphery*, explore place through the periphery, and the peripheral qualities of place. Each takes a different approach, examining the tensions between liminality and rootedness, engaging with familiar locations and remembered spaces, and evoking imagined topographies.

Yet for these artists, place is not merely a subject, but informs the act of making itself. Here “peripheral” is not intended as a description of how the work is situated within a larger context (that is to say, we’re not implying that these artworks are of marginal importance). Rather, the idea of the periphery and its relation to place hints at a broader sense of liminality that infuses the work, signalling the significance of Perth as a site for art-making. Perth, one of the remotest capitals in the world, might be considered marginal in a geographical sense – it sits on the edge of a vast continent, permeated to some degree by a sense of isolation.

Within Perth, Kalamunda (where the Zig Zag Gallery is located) is itself a fringing suburb – it is caught between suburbia and bushland, metro and country. The term “ecotonal” could be employed here to describe this liminal quality – an ecotone is an interstitial environment, situated in the push and pull between other, more well-defined spaces – for example, the tide pools along a shoreline. As a threshold between flat suburbs and undulating bushland, Kalamunda could be an ecotone, a continually regenerating place pregnant with possibility. It is the fluctuating quality of the periphery, here a threshold, which is important in forming such a unique sense of place. Perth and Kalamunda can perhaps be said to precipitate art which resonates with a sense of the periphery, as place here is suffused with the liminal.

In Paul Sutherland’s work, the periphery manifests as half-remembered, half-forgotten place. Playing with the relationship between photography and memory, Paul’s image reconstructs a scene rather than reproducing it. His *Interrupted Recollection XI* questions the indexicality of the photograph – that is, the idea that a photograph faithfully records what is “out there” – and engages instead in material rearranging. Here remembering, like photography, is a process of continual intervention.

Memory is also important in the work of Carly Lynch, but rather than personal recollections it is the role that museums, libraries and archives play in forming our memories of place. What happens when a piece of history is deemed to be no longer relevant? In *What Remains of Hermes?* Carly explores the fate of a boat (Hermes) that was removed from the WA Maritime Museum’s collection. In *Wharfie*, her experiences of Fremantle’s Boat harbour are printed onto a pair of found overalls, probing the thresholds between memory and memorialisation.

Jarrad Martyn's work *Maralinga Tjarutja* also draws its subject from an archive, the National Archives of Australia. It references the nuclear tests conducted in Maralinga, South Australia, in 1956, creating an image that is at once quiet and alive with foreboding. In *Thoth*, a group of Australian White Ibis scavenge around a bin, skulking in the margins. The behaviour of this bird, sometimes referred to as the "bin chicken", has adapted to an urban environment. Both of these works contemplate the relationships between people and place, and how nature has changed (and been changed) over time.

The margin comes to the fore in Matt McAlpine's *The colonial frame (deconstructing the James Stirling portrait frame)*, in which it is the frame itself that is brought to attention. This work is a replica of a frame that supported a painting of James Stirling, the first Governor of Western Australia. In removing Stirling, the supposed splendour of the gilt gold frame begins to peel and slump, lacking the support of the artwork and the colonial histories it represents. In *The colonial frame (crumbling the James Stirling portrait frame)* red earth is used, a direct reference to the lands Stirling invaded. Through the conflicting materials of paint, plaster and earth, the continuing conflicts of place in Australia are investigated.

The importance of materials in representing and evoking place is also central to Tessa Beale's work. Taking as her point of departure a series of photographs she took in Albany, Tessa focuses attention on the natural world. In *Penumbra #2* a miniature stage is erected for the play of shadows in a tree; in *Reflection #3* the textures and light of nature meet the materiality of graphite and paper. In both these works the peripheral aspects of place, the shadows that dance beneath a Summer sun, become the focus.

My own works, *Waiting* and *Where There are No Corners*, are likewise inspired by a particular place – the Perth hills, where I grew up. These works manifest my interest in transient places like bus stations, and peripheral spaces like those glimpsed between street signs. Coupled with my fascination for daydream as a peripheral zone in itself, these works utilise the materiality of photographs to evoke a sense of the in-between.

For Sophie Durand, the art gallery itself becomes a place to be examined. Bringing together interests in art installation and theatre, Sophie considers the way her works are situated within the existing system of the gallery. In *Hungarian Vignettes* a series of art zines, including stories of her experiences in Hungary, suggest the impossibility of repeating past moments and seem to comment upon the gallery as a place in which experience seems to be, but can't be, manifested again.

A similar tone is perhaps felt in Jess Boyce's *Browsing*, which imitates the glossy pages of a magazine and yet is blank, images removed to leave holes in the paper. It may be that the pictures, perhaps of far-off places, have been collected, carefully snipped out and kept. *Under the same Moon*, but not the right one represents a different kind of collection, that of postcards and the impossible. Here the moon has been superimposed into places it shouldn't be, creating views that will never be seen, like those cut from a travel magazine.

The works in *Placing the Periphery* investigate place through the margins, as histories, memories and experiences. They deal with place as remembering, as archives, and as re-imaginings, engaging with a diverse array of materials and methods; in a distinctly Perth context, these artists explore the way we place the periphery, or are placed within it.

Carly Lynch



Wharfie

2015

Monotype on found overalls

770 x 800mm

\$250



What remains of Hermes (Detail)

2016

Screenprint, glue and graphite

1200 x 830mm

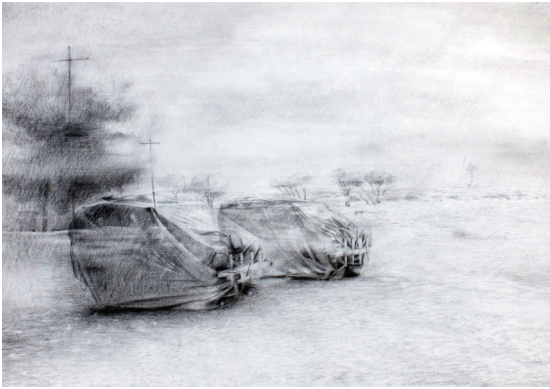
\$700

Both artworks by Carly Lynch foreground objects related to local, maritime environments and highlight her ongoing interest in shifting object hierarchies.

'*What remains of Hermes?*' is a screen print using glue and graphite, which reveals an inverted plan of a boat that was deaccessioned by the WA Maritime Museum's collection as it was deemed no longer relevant to the collection. '*Wharfie*' is a monotype on found overalls, based on her experience of watching commercial fishing vessels in Fremantle's Fishing Boat harbour.

With a focus on discarded items and observed moments, these works serve as a way for Carly to memorialise and record her chance encounters with these shifting objects.

Jarrad Martyn



Maralinga Tjarutja
2017
Graphite on Paper
620 x 740mm
\$750



Thoth (Detail)
2017
Oil on canvas
900 x 600mm
\$1200

The works *Thoth* and *Maralinga Tjarutja* continue the recent focus of my practice in exploring how Australia's engagement with the landscape has been framed over time.

The drawing *Maralinga Tjarutja* is based on a photograph from the National Archives of Australia which depicts a car covered with sheets of canvas in preparation for the nuclear tests conducted at Maralinga, South Australia in 1956. The original photographic image was defined by a sense of distance and quietness. An array of marks have been used to suggest a sense of motion and erasure encouraging associations to the physicality and trauma which defined the actual blasts and how they should be archived.

Contemporary representations of the Australian White Ibis depict it as being a scavenger, commonly referred to as a 'bin chicken'. Situated behind the birds is a stone wall which features a carving of Thoth, the sacred Ancient Egyptian god of wisdom that has the head of an Ibis. The bin features a crudely drawn outline of a t-rex and the shadow of a pterodactyls hovers over the birds. This is used to encourage associations to how the bird has evolved from dinosaurs, further reflecting on how its behaviour has changed to match an ever changing natural environment.

Jess Boyce



Browsing
2016
Papercut magazine
Dimensions variable
\$275



Under the wrong Moon
2017
Found postcards and stamp on painted cork board and pins
500 x 700mm
\$120

You browse through the magazine, cutting and tearing out images of beautiful, far off places. Maybe you collect them in a pile, a shoebox, or pin them on the wall. You dream to go to all of them, and once you're there you'll spend time taking your own photos. They mimic the ones you collected; but there's other tourists in your photos, or it's a gloomy, overcast day. The thousands of photos taken by others don't suffice, the event needs to be recorded for those back home, or probably never looked at again.

Browsing mimics the format of a glossy magazine, the empty spaces represent cut out and collected images. The remaining shapes and their shadows create a new terrain to be explored.

Under the wrong Moon, is a collection of found postcards from around the world. The Moons are big, bright, superimposed, sometimes flipped, or from the wrong hemisphere. The views of these places the postcards depict are impossible. Jess Boyce's practice questions how the reproduction of images influence preconceptions of place. Boyce plays, manipulates, and deconstructs familiar found imagery, and investigates the ways in which images are able enter a collective memory of place or an event.

Lydia Trethewey



Waiting

2017

solvent wash

400 x 600mm

Edition 1/3

(only 2 of the 3 editions are for sale)

\$250



Where There are no Corners

2017

solvent wash

400 x 600mm

Edition 1/3

(only 2 of the 3 editions are for sale)

\$250

Where There are no Corners and *Waiting* form part of a body of work in which I explore daydream and sensations of immensity that arise during everyday travel. Utilising a process of solvent wash the photographic images are dispersed, objects in the landscape spilling beyond their bounds in a slipstream of movement. These particular works focus on experiences of liminality; daydream constitutes an interstitial space between alertness and distraction, a paradox of wakeful dreaming. Through daydream familiar places are unfixed, sliding towards the periphery.

The sites explored in these works can also be considered zones of liminality; the transient space of the bus station, a glimpse of trees between power pole and fire warning sign. On a macro level, Perth can seem peripheral, as a city on the far edge of a vast continent – and Kalamunda within it is a kind of fringing place, caught between metro and country, suburbia and bush. Having grown up in the hills I find myself interested in the periphery, the importance of things just off to the side. Waiting too long for a bus that doesn't come, and staring into the depthless bush, is to be lost in a daydream.

Matthew McAlpine



The colonial frame (deconstructing the James Stirling portrait frame)

2017

Acrylic paint, binder and plaster

1200 x 1000 x 100mm

\$1000

The colonial frame (crumbling the James Stirling portrait frame) and The colonial frame (deconstructing the James Stirling portrait frame) aim to explore the intersection of materiality, place and colonialism in contemporary Australia. The works are replicas of the gilded frame that houses a portrait of Western Australia's first Governor, James Stirling. The frames aim to interrogate the privilege and celebration of the portrait that is displayed at Government House, Perth. The use of earth directly references the land in which Stirling invaded and the peeling and frayed gold skin reveals a plaster structure, symbolising the construction of history. The two conflicting materials of acrylic paint, plaster and red earth parallel the perpetuation of colonialism and the concealment of Indigenous experiences of history. Through the process of reproduction and in leaning it against the wall, the works attempt to subvert the original frame's function as a symbol of power, authority and colonial celebration.

Paul Sutherland



Interrupted Recollection XI

2015

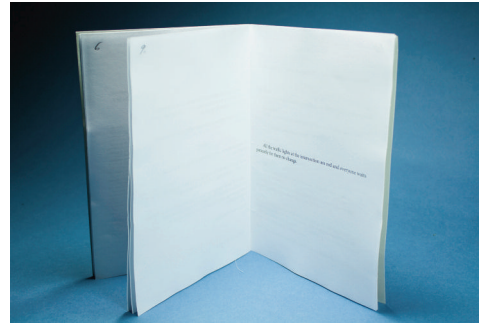
Digital Photographic Print

300 x 450mm

£350

Interrupted Recollection draws inspiration from the relationship between memory and reality—each time we recall an event or location in our mind, our idea of it becomes distorted over time. Some aspects are emphasised while others become hazy or lost, and it becomes impossible to remember something as it truly existed. Photographs are frequently relied upon as physical manifestations of memories, and yet, the capacity for a photograph to render reality realistically is limited by the media used to present it. *Interrupted Recollection* problematises the indexicality of photographs by reducing the distance between the photographic subject and the media used for photographic presentation and reproduction. Work from this series accentuates and celebrates the failures of digital and analogue displays, scanners and paper in rendering the subject as it is in life.

Sophie Durand



Hungarian Vignettes

2016

*11 x stories of experiences had in Hungary
between the 9th October and the 6th November
2016, open edition.*

A5 zine with 24 pages.

\$20 (20 available)

Photo: Graham Mathwin

*"It encapsulated that small town, knock about
family home that two surfers would have resided
in with their single mum Kat in WA's South West /
There is no surf in Flinders Bay. The water is so flat
there they call the beach the swimming pool."*

CRT TV Video,

1hr 53'30 variable

NFS

Sophie Durand's practice extends from the intersection of sculpture and performance art. Previous projects have explored the appropriation of archive and memory to form. Durand's artworks develop from and exist within pre-existing systems. She is interested in the potential for theatre to be used as a formal model for art installation, the merging of the two disciplines to make total works of art and the materiality and manipulation of manifested history (palimpsests of moments in time, the potential for emergent discussions and inherent futility of attempting to replay moments from the past). This work is informed by production methodologies observed by Nicholas Bourriaud and is theoretically and formally underpinned by ideas of place in relation to exhibition and installation practice.

Tessa Beale

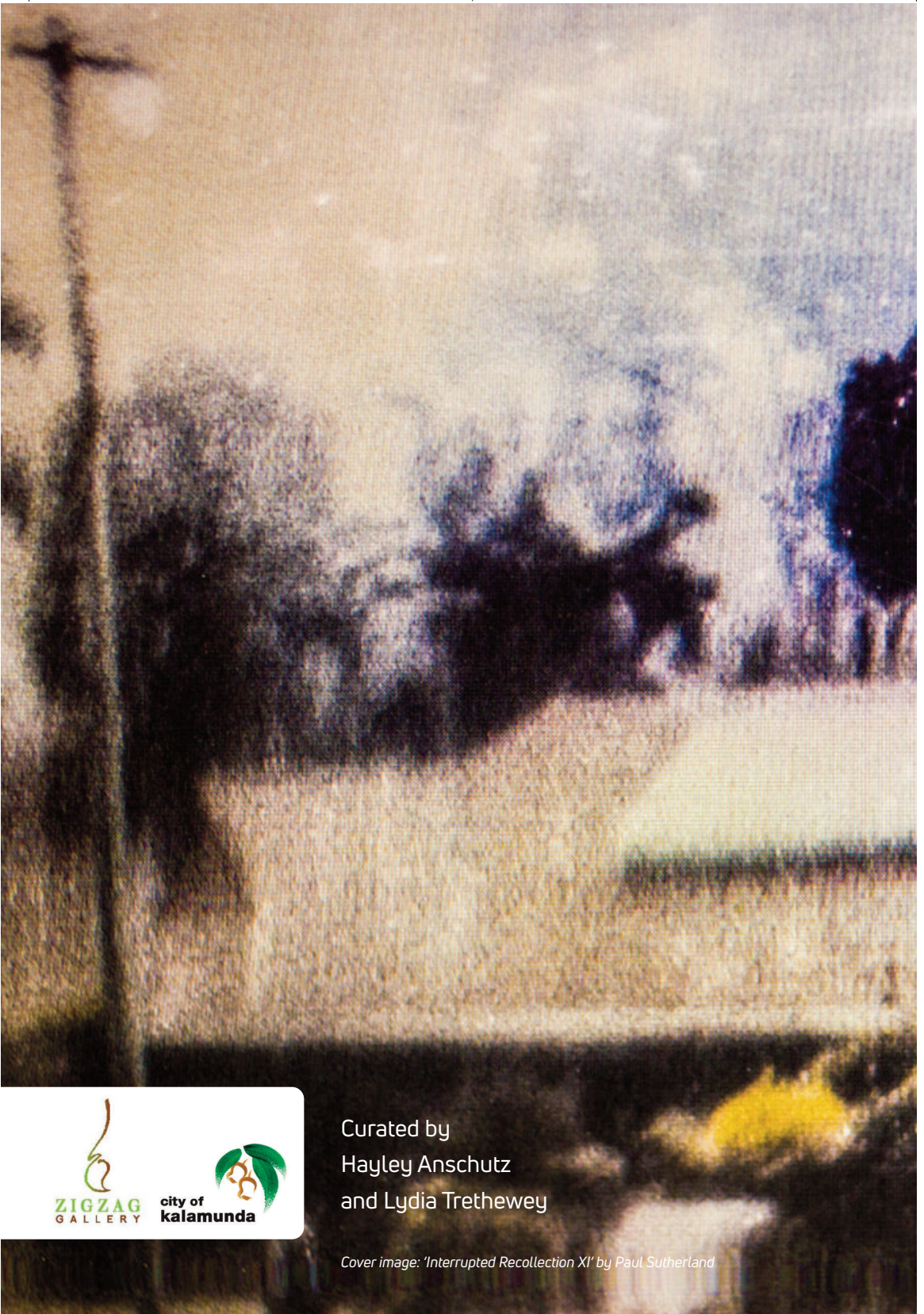


Reflection #3
2017
Graphite on Trace
420 x 297 x 5mm
\$300



Penumbra #2
2017
Digital Print on Hahnemuhle Paper
420 x 297 x 5mm
\$300

This series was created from photographs taken during the summer in Albany on the south coast of Western Australia. I was interested in contemplating and simplifying what is overlooked in the natural world. In doing this, I used a process of zooming in to select details focusing on light, form and texture. By creating a stage for the shadow of a single branch amongst dense foliage, I was able to use the sun to assist me in isolating the shape and distilling the structure. The drawings reduce the image to a skeletal version using line in one tone and density. An indistinct aspect of the image is being brought into focus in the penumbra.



Curated by
Hayley Anschutz
and Lydia Trethewey

Cover image: 'Interrupted Recollection XI' by Paul Sutherland

