

KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR #1

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A new series of Perth-based temporary context-responsive art projects presented by International Art Space.





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KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR

Know Thy Neighbour is a new series of Perth-based temporary public art projects produced and presented by International Art Space [IAS]. The program arose in response to two key factors. The first, a shift in IAS' core funding, tipping our previously joint national and state funded organisation to a predominately West Australian supported operation; the second, an extension in our curatorial focus, which in a period of increased economic instability and political uncertainty saw us look to our own doorstep, asking how we could enable and facilitate Perth artists to respond directly to local issues and realities.

Know Thy Neighbour complements IAS' core *spaced* program and is based on the same curatorial principles, encompassing artistic practices that are context-responsive, socially-engaged and intervene in the fabric of everyday life. However, while *spaced*' focus is international in scope, taking artists to remote, regional and overseas locations for prolonged periods, *Know Thy Neighbour* is positioned as a short-term series of interventions, focussed not across vast distances, but to a small and very localised urban microcosm.

Over 18 years of programming, IAS has long foregrounded an emphasis on the commissioning of new works created by artists through an engagement with the social, environmental and historical contexts of a given place. Most often involving national and international artists alongside regional and remote communities, IAS' activities seek to explore the local/global nexus, promoting an active dialogue between regional, metropolitan and international perspectives.

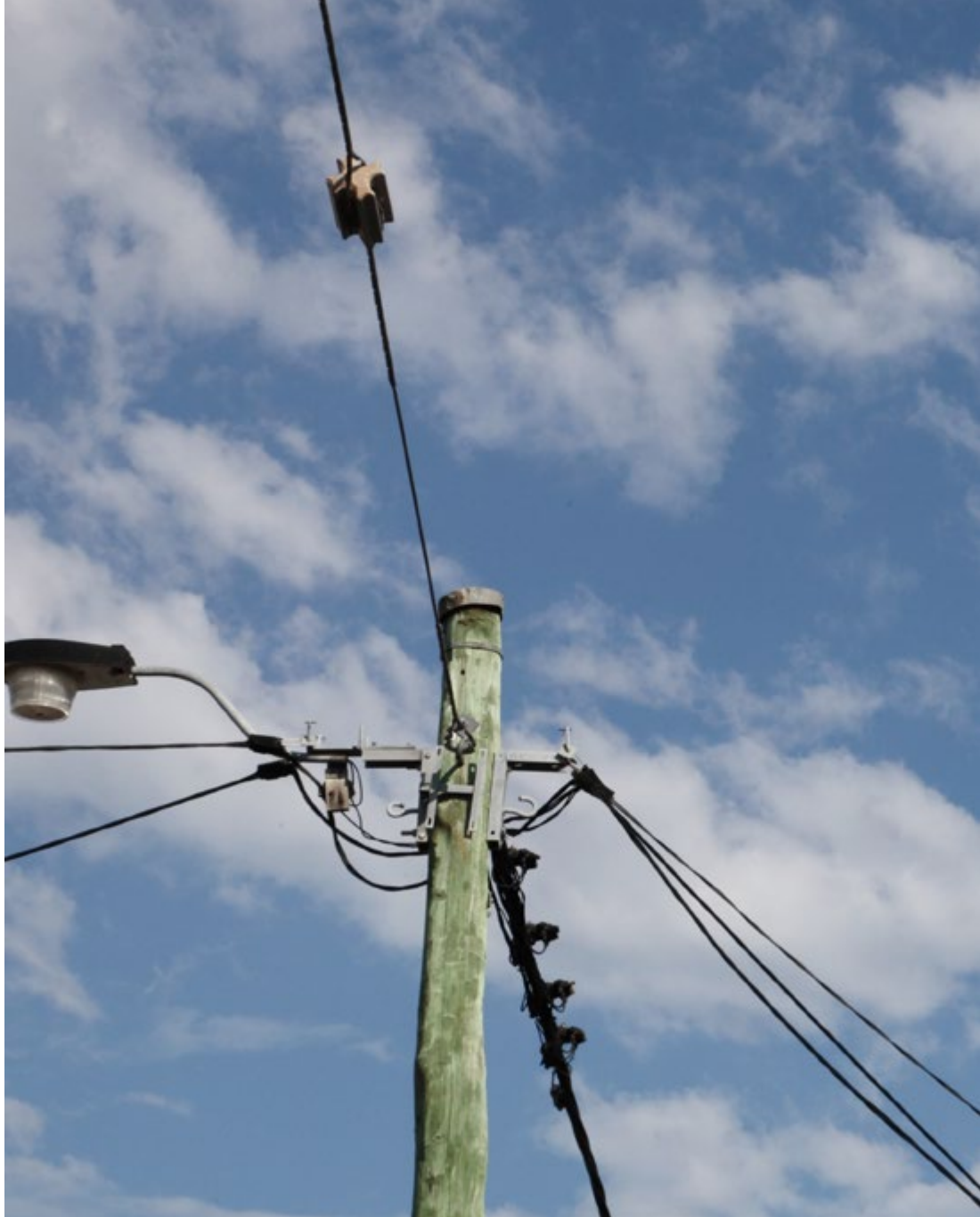
Know Thy Neighbour flips this model inward, beginning with the premise that those neighbourhoods in close proximity to the IAS office, located at the time on the fringe of inner city and suburban Perth, constitute myriad social realities as diverse and varied as the many communities participating in the *spaced* program. Moreover, *Know Thy Neighbour* sees a shift away from the artist-as-outsider residency model, with Perth-based artists directly commissioned to engage with their own locales.

Commencing in late 2015 artists Janet Carter and Elizabeth Pedler, Simone Johnston and Tanya Lee [the ST Team], Loren Kronemyer and Mike Bianco, Dan McCabe, and Perdita Phillips were commissioned to create new projects that involved and engaged a variety of micro-communities in the suburbs surrounding metropolitan Perth namely, Highgate, Claisebrook and East Perth. What emerged through this process was a network of inter-related projects - some pre-determined, others developing organically - which subtly infiltrated the surrounding suburbs and communities of inner city Perth across an 18 month period. Taking the diverse social make-up of Perth as a starting point, artists employed interventionist strategies and collaborative measures to stimulate conversations around shared issues, reveal hidden communities, explore urban living systems and create new forms of social interaction. The following pages act to expand on the process, interactions and contexts to the development of each project and their varied outcomes.

As always, I am very grateful to each of the artists whose resourcefulness, generosity and creative voices are at the centre of our program. To each of the individuals and communities who participated and contributed to this program, a resounding thank you for your knowledge, energy and taking a leap of faith. A special thank you to Gemma Weston for her insightful essay, tackling the complex task of drawing out the connecting threads between each project. My thanks goes to the wonderful IAS' Board of Directors, staff, Soula Veyradier and Eric Sankey, and finally to IAS' Artistic Director Marco Marcon, whose ambitious and unapologetic vision continues to guide IAS.

1 [PREVIOUS SPREAD] GUERILLA
GARDEN WATERING, 2015. PHOTO:
JULIAN FRICHOT.

2 PHOTO: PERDITA PHILLIPS





CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME: REFLECTIONS ON *KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR*

Socially engaged projects might also produce connection and cohesion amid diversity and find meaningful ways to explore, and perhaps manage, antagonisms produced by diversity.

International Art Space (IAS) describes its regional residency program as 'context responsive', but the framework owes much to a more familiar genre of contemporary art: site-specific practice. 'Context-responsive', like 'site-specific', implies a consideration of not just physical place but also the interrelated networks of communities and industries supported by it: site-specific becomes context-responsive becomes *socially engaged*.

The socially engaged projects facilitated by IAS function as exchanges between artists and communities, creating 'open dialogue' between them.¹ The broader social benefit of such open dialogue is implicit. Beyond concrete (or ephemeral) artistic outcomes, socially engaged projects might also produce connection and cohesion amid diversity and find meaningful ways to explore, and perhaps manage, antagonisms produced by diversity. Socially engaged projects might also generate innovative responses to social problems, with already multi-disciplinary artistic practice expanding to include aspects of other 'socially engaged' professions, such as social or mental-health work, technological and scientific research and development, political organisation or investigative journalism. Art engaged socially, therefore, might produce a politics of relations, with the capacity to educate, empower and reorganise those involved.²

In Australia, as in other Western countries with a history of public funding for the arts, the ‘emancipatory’ project of socially engaged art has in its DNA not only 1990s’ hot-topic relational aesthetics and institutional critique, but also the community arts movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Well supported in Australia by both city councils and federal governments,³ artists informed by a Marxist zeal for empowering the working disadvantaged and inspired by social movements for civil rights, conceptualised themselves as ‘arts-workers’ rather than as artists, directing their energies towards democratising culture.⁴ Such arts work usually took ‘remedial’ or educational forms – ‘drawing classes in factory lunchtimes, drama workshops in prisons, craft activities in old peoples homes’ – and was often focused, like IAS’s residency program, outside metropolitan centres, in areas identified as socially disadvantaged, with minimal arts access, or both.

The remedial potential of contemporary art has since been subject to sustained critique and socially engaged practice has been absorbed, globally, into arts institutions and ‘placemaking’ initiatives alike. But what the community artist-in-residence is now thought to offer [at the very least] is the service of *legibility*, identifying narratives, histories, sites and groups that

Art engaged socially, therefore, might produce a politics of relations, with the capacity to educate, empower and reorganise those involved.

may have been overlooked, perhaps due to familiarity, indifference or marginality. In part, it is the dislocation of the artist from their usual context that allows this to occur; the socially engaged artist-in-residence usually arrives as an ‘outsider’, their unfamiliar surroundings serving to clarify aspects of either their own practice or the location in which they find themselves.⁶ However, IAS’s *Know Thy Neighbour* initiative, run in tandem with its regional residency activities, complicates this by asking artists to respond to contexts *with which they are intimately familiar* and, in many cases, call home. The intensive, project-based format of the socially engaged residency remains, but the dissonance of residency and the relationships formed with communities take on a different politics.

Janet Carter and Elizabeth Pedler; Simone Johnston and Tanya Lee [as ST Team]; Loren Kronemyer, Perdita Phillips, and Dan McCabe were engaged to focus on the inner-city Perth suburbs of East Perth, Claisebrook and Highgate, in proximity to the IAS offices, although some projects have since moved beyond these suburbs. As residents of Perth and its sprawl for a minimum six years [and for many much longer], the *Know Thy Neighbour* artists arrived at their projects with a well-formed understanding of the city’s politics, environments, histories and anxieties. The call to know thy neighbour thus offers a provocation to such familiarity, implying that one *doesn’t* know thy neighbour, that proximity does not automatically translate to understanding, and that engagements with familiar locations can be defined by habit, comfort and privilege.

If the social benefits of context-responsive artistic practice are implied, so too are the risks in leaving such contexts unexplored. Each artist has sought out scenarios or contexts that defamiliarise or recontextualise 'the local' for audiences, communities or the artists themselves. Carter and Pedler engaged a number of collaborators, including foraging and edible-weed expert Brooke 'Sparkles' Murphy, patrons of Tranby Day Centre Malcolm and Len, and Noongar elder Dale Tilbrook while conducting research on food scarcity and native foods. Johnston and Lee sought the assistance of micro-communities determined by the distribution area and content of the community newspaper *The Perth Voice*, conducting eight separate actions that used the newspaper as a vehicle. Kronemyer enlisted botanist Ryonen Butcher, Northern Suburbs Wildflower Association member Hazel Dempster and fellow artist, expat and Kwinana Desalination Plant obsessive Mike Bianco to educate her on 'halophilic' plants that thrive in saline soil. With conservation groups and interested locals, Phillips traced East Perth's wetlands through catchment areas back to Yokine and Herdsman Lake, staging a series of actions based on the wetland's care and maintenance. Presented previously at arts and music festivals, McCabe's tent in the shape of a late-1980s station wagon, which he uses to initiate conversations on housing affordability and sustainable lifestyles was set up in proximity to St Bartholomew's House, a homelessness service provider in East Perth.

Each artist has sought out scenarios or contexts that defamiliarise or recontextualise 'the local' for audiences, communities or the artists themselves.

The sense of social responsibility that characterises these projects strongly recalls their community arts predecessors. Many have been conceptualised as functionally remedial, actionable responses to issues of economic and environmental precarity and neoliberal prioritisation of the individual over the community. Where they differ, however, is in an emphasis on discovery rather than education; rather than skills-transference from artist to community, the artists are 'collaborators' or pseudo-anthropologists, compiling or facilitating access to a community's existing knowledge. Carter and Pedler used their research as the foundation of a wiki documenting places in which local foods can be foraged safely and responsibly, augmented and expanded through crowd-sourced updates. This resource speaks, for the artists, not to the growing trend in 'food ethics' or the fetishisation of bespoke eating experiences, but to a sense of looming environmental and social catastrophe. They have war-gamed a breakdown of global food-supply chains and see the wiki as a strategy for potential survival.

Kronemyer has set the ultimate goal of *Salt the Earth* – and its offshoot, *Brackish Rising*, a collaboration with Bianco based in Kwinana for the 2017 Perth International Arts Festival, being performed as I write – as behavioural change. Destructive and unsustainable relationships with water use and native ecologies are countered by intimate encounters with halophilic gardens and the rituals of dining. McCabe, too, describes the transformative power of one-on-one conversation, acting as a human library for opinions and experiences gathered during his project's run. Such desire to see real and lasting impact is perhaps a result of the enduring locality of *Know Thy Neighbour*. Artists-in-residence, no matter how generous their development time, remain aware of their impending exit from a place or community, an exit that the *Know Thy Neighbour* at-home focus does not permit. Artists, who continue to work and live in proximity to their projects, can remain invested, aware and responsible.

Phillips describes an aspect of her project as a 'collaboration between eight humans and 22 waterbodies'. The definition of 'community' is expanded to include ecologies, places and things, in the hope of producing empathy for, rather than dominion over them. Postcards distributed locally after her *Weed-ing* event bear a crest with the inscription 'Endless Caring'. This motto might also summarise the ongoing, refractory nature of the *Know Thy Neighbour* projects as a whole. Work has been staggered in commencement and completion – the earliest project beginning in late 2015, with others still in the process of roll-out or consolidation. Without an exhibition to serve as denouement or the time sensitivities of the traditional residencies, projects have tended to productively meander and fractalise.

Outcomes are manifold, defined by the artists as variously as particular conversations or meetings with participants, dinners, workshops, podcasts, websites, documentation, journals and shifts in the artist's own perspectives.

Johnston and Lee deliberately pursued multiple, simultaneously unfolding projects, a format driven by the weekly news cycle of *The Perth Voice* newspaper, defined by the artists as an important local 'commons' through which they could determine 'live' issues. A call out placed in the paper sought 'shushers' to walk the streets with the ST team to try, absurdly, to combat noise complaints; an advertisement mimicking a local real-estate agency tackled the demolition of heritage houses and apartment-driven gentrification; seedlings planted along 'desire lines' in public spaces aimed to highlight how communities create their own terms of use and access; a 'Public Memory' notice solicited a locally grown historical archive; a free carwash offered a small generosity to residents grappling with climbing parking fees and regulations. Each action has created its own strata of photographs, reflections, further actions, ephemera and audience groups – sometimes individuals, sometimes unquantifiable. McCabe's *Shadows on the Hill* rolls onward, gathering information and complexity. After housing the project's drawing workshops, held at East Perth's City Farm, in which participants were asked to reconsider their perspectives on 'ideal' housing, the tent reappeared at Cottesloe's blockbuster summer art event, *Sculpture by the Sea*.

In 1989, Vivienne Binns conducted what has since become an archetypal community engagement project in Blacktown, New South Wales. *Mothers Memories, Others Memories* involved screen-printing workshops that encouraged local women to contribute compositions recording their experiences and histories. Reflecting on the project, Binns described one of her key difficulties had been convincing the women of Blacktown that their lives were interesting enough to warrant their participation. Once convinced, however, the women would unpack complex narratives of loss, fulfillment, migration, transformation and endurance.⁷ Binns' recollection describes an enduring idea in Australia, embodied too often in art: cultural cringe insists that stories and ideas of value must come from, or be validated by, somewhere more 'sophisticated' – somewhere else.⁸ IAS has long countered these tired notions of centre-periphery, highlighting both the global relevance and strange specificity of the rich and rare regional west. The focus of *Know Thy Neighbour* on the inner-city as a site of multifaceted *regional specificity*, articulated by its own populace, offers further challenge to those either/ors.

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In the two years since the *Know Thy Neighbour* projects were initiated, the political landscape, locally and globally, has shifted remarkably. As I write, protestors attempt to cease, or at worst case witness, the Barnett government's destruction of a significant ecological and Noongar heritage site, Beeliar Wetlands. They have been on site, daily, for roughly three months. A state election looms. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump has, in this last week, used Twitter to publically undermine a deal struck between Australia and the former US administration to resettle more than 1000 refugees that our country has detained offshore for, in many cases, upwards of three years. The luxury of global artistic nomadism becomes more – or at least more visibly – compromised and contrasted by a developing, inward-turning nationalism in the West. The local, the global, the tragic and absurd and urgent and trivial can no longer be clearly defined. Johnston and Lee have found that embedded in what might be dismissed as banal local dramas – dog-park politics or council parking disputes – are lessons on how we treat each other, how we live together, what we value. McCabe, Carter and Pedler know that what we presume to be local is contingent on a network of economic interests that have little to do with personal or community wellbeing. Kronemyer, Bianco and Phillip's projects remind those who have the privilege of forgetting that the urban landscape was once a populated wetland, that our waterways tell stories of dispossession and willful neglect, that our rose gardens and falsely green lawns are evidence of our denial.

The wide, messy world starts in our kitchens and lounge rooms, spills out over our doorsteps. There has never been a better time to ask what remedies can art truly offer.

Gemma Weston is Curator of the Cruthers Collection of Women's Art at The University of Western Australia and one third of Artist Run Initiative Pet Projects.

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- 1 International Art Space, three.spaced.org.au/about/; accessed 24 February 2017.
 - 2 For a critique and history of socially engaged practice – in the Northern Hemisphere at least – see Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso, London, 2012.
 - 3 In 1978, Community Arts was surpassed in funding from the recently established Australia Council for the Arts only by Theatre and Music, lauded specifically for their mainstream popularity.
 - 4 See Sandy Kirby, 'A Historical Perspective on the Community Arts Movement', in Vivienne Binns (ed.), *Community and the Arts: History, Theory, Practice: Australian Perspectives*, Pluto Press, Leichhardt, NSW, 1991.
 - 5 Gay Hawkins, 'Reading Community Arts Policy: from Nimbin to the Gay Mardi Gras', in Binns (ed.), p. 49. Kirby contrasts the democratisation of culture – empowering those 'outside' of mainstream Australian culture with the confidence and knowledge to create a new culture 'by all for all' – with the 'top down' efforts of 'cultural democracy', which focused on expanding access for those groups to existing institutional structures. Hawkins, however, notes that even democratisation of culture involves imposing 'top down' categorisation: 'access and participation could not be invoked without the concomitant identification of populations who were represented as socially disadvantaged', p. 51.
 - 6 Given the ongoing preoccupation with 'place' in Western Australian art, it could be argued that its landscapes and geographical 'isolation' engender among its settler-colonial and emigrant artists the kind of dislocation conducive to 'site-specific' investigation and that, following this, all Western Australian artists of this background already essentially behave as 'artists-in-residence' – on, albeit, a residency of a much longer time-frame than usual [i.e. indefinite]. This, however, is a purely speculative idea far beyond the scope of this essay.
 - 7 See Vivienne Binns, "'Mother's Memories, Other's Memories': A Project Combining Creative Expression, Memorabilia and Oral History", *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, no. 3, 1980–81, p. 54–61.
 - 8 Such provincialism is countered too often with an opposing but equal provincialism that insists on the policing and lionising of local borders and cultures to the detriment of influence and exchange. The sweet spot might be, as usual, somewhere 'in between'.

- 1 THE ST TEAM, *DESIRE LINES*, 2015, MAINTAINING A DESIRE LINE LEADING TO TRAIN STATION IN EAST PERTH. PHOTO: KATHERINE WILKINSON.
- 2 THE ST TEAM, DESIRE LINE ADVERTISEMENT, EXCERPT FROM THE PERTH VOICE NEWSPAPER, SATURDAY OCTOBER 31, 2015, P.20.



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PAINTING



1

COMMUNITY NEWS

West Australian artists Simone Johnston and Tanya Lee [the ST team] came together for an eight-week collaboration in November 2015 and March 2016. Their project, *Community News*, drew on their shared interests in urban politics, public and private space, and emotional responses to space. Over this time, the ST team collaborated directly with *The Perth Voice* newspaper, using the paper as a platform to record a series of small public interventions and short, playful performance works. Each weekly work took the form of an advertisement, public notice or short article, responding to recent local issues addressed in the newspaper. These playful escapades engaged the local community in conversations about place and memory, solved neighbourhood problems and explored the potential of selected sites in Perth's neighbouring communities.



- 1 THE ST TEAM, *FURRY FERRY SERVICE*, 2016, ST TEAM ESCORT AN OWNER AND HIS DOG INSIDE A PORTABLE POOCH EXCLUSION ZONE AT WOODVILLE RESERVE, NORTH PERTH. PHOTO: YVONNE DOHERTY.
- 2 THE ST TEAM, *FURRY FERRY SERVICE*, 2016, ADVERTISEMENT, MAILBOX DROP IN DOGGY BAG. PHOTO: THE ST TEAM.

**Excerpt from The Perth Voice newspaper.
January, 16, 2016
Pooch and shove – by David Bell**

They take their dogwalking seriously down at Woodville Reserve in North Perth, with word that a mafiosa-esque group is telling others to shove off from its patch of the park.

Voice reader “Anne” says she was walking her dog when assaulted by a member of the group, who was out walking their own pooch.

She says a woman told her to leave, then a man grabbed both her arms and frog-marched her off the reserve, causing her to fall.

Someone from the group later reported Anne’s dog to Vincent council for attacking one of their dogs, and claiming that had been the reason they wanted her gone.

Anne has posted flyers around North Perth, warning there is a group “who have taken it upon themselves to tell other dog users when and where they can use the park”. She describes the physical features of the woman she believes to be the ringleader.

She states in the poster she’d been told, “you can come, but after 6.30pm and use Namur Street side”.



Anne has reported the incident to police, and tells the Voice she’s since learned of others who’ve been told to scam.

When she got onto Vincent council a ranger told her to remove her flyers from council property or face a \$5000 fine. However, council CEO Len Kosova says she wouldn’t be fined.

The rangers later emailed her to say, “we spoke to different people on the reserve including the large group that seem to be causing the problem”.

“We have made it clear that they cannot be telling people when or how they can be utilising this park.

“They didn’t admit to doing this which we suspected would be the case.”

The rangers confirmed others had been made to feel unwelcome: “We did speak to independent parties who said although they had never been told to leave the park, they claim they had been made to feel uncomfortable.

“It is a council park and open to everyone. Dogs do need to be controlled at all times however.”

1

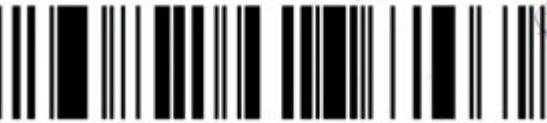


ST Team
Community solutions initiative 2015

RECOMPENSE NOTICE



*its outrageous that visiting 2 sick
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HAVE A NICE DAY!



- 1 THE ST TEAM, *PARKING FEES COMPETITION*, 2015, PARKING FEE RECOMPENSE NOTICE, LEFT ON FRESHLY WASHED WINDSCREENS.
- 2 THE ST TEAM, *PARKING FEES COMPETITION*, 2015, COMPETITION TO WASH CARS IF READERS SENT IN USED PARKING TICKETS, EAST PERTH. PHOTO: RIZZY.
- 3 BUILDER ASSISTING THE ST TEAM TO INSTALL RUTH'S MEMORY OF 45 COWLE ST. PHOTO: YVONNE DOHERTY.
- 4-5 THE ST TEAM INSTALLING *PUBLIC MEMORY NOTICES*. PHOTO: YVONNE DOHERTY.
- 6 THE ST TEAM, *PUBLIC MEMORY NOTICE*, 2016, CALL OUT, EXCERPT FROM THE PERTH VOICE NEWSPAPER, SATURDAY APRIL 9, 2016, PG. 9.

2

in to Zoe Atkinson's stark set. Wright brings elements of Hitchcock, or 1960s *The Twilight Zone* to Lindsay's tale of a day out gone wrong and the disappearance of three girls and a teacher. There's none of the gentleness of the Weir film: following the

the novel's opening. Harriet Gordon-Anderson, Arielle Gray, Amber McMahon, Elizabeth Nabben and Nicola Shiels play all the roles, including the blokes. The effect was at times confusing, and I'm still not sure why McMahon stripped c

3



4



5



ST TEAM

PUBLIC MEMORY NOTICE

CALL OUT FOR URBAN MEMORIES

Public Memories will be published by ST TEAM in relevant suburbs of The Perth Voice distribution.

An open call for Memories has begun.

Focusing on streets which have undergone significant change; nostalgic and anecdotal stories are encouraged.

TO SUBMIT MEMORIES

Any person wishing to submit a recollection of a changed street or property should do so in writing by the 15th of April 2016 to:

ST TEAM
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21/10/15 2

To whom it may concern,

I'm from Channel 7's Today Tonight. Recently I came across your advertisement seeking "Shushers" for paid employment. This unique job intrigued me and I think it would make a fun story for our show.

I am wondering if you could please make contact with me to discuss this idea further.

The concept would be for our crew to follow one of your "Shushers" around one night to document what they do and a range of people's responses.

If this is something you would like to look into doing with us, please give me a call on 0344 0746.

Kind Regards,

Cassandra

3

Ssh in the city

PERTH city council is keen to promote inner-city living and help Perth grow by building a higher density of CBD residents.

This is good for the council as it brings a lot more ratepayers to its zone, as well as atmosphere and activities. The only problem is that small businesses move into these now mainly residential areas and feel they have the right to run late-night events and disrupt the many for the profit of a few.

One local business claimed to have council permission when we approached it, however the council was not aware of what was going on and had not given permission when the business got its operating licence.

The council should be doing more to police businesses operating out of allowed hours and build the appeal of inner-city living or it will soon evaporate. Maybe our council fees need to be reduced to compensate for the loss of our living environment.

No-one argues with having things to do in the city, but late-night music parties on residential streets each weekend is a bit much.

Backward step, PCC.
Richard Aguilera
Boans Lane, East Perth

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CHANCE
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TWO AT

SEE COMPS PAGE FOR DETAILS

Residents go barking mad

by EMMIE DOWLING

BARKING dogs were behind 848 noise complaints to Stirling council last financial year.

There were 1666 noise complaints all up last financial year—more than the combined total of Bayswater, Vincent and Perth councils. Loud music and rowdy parties (481), industrial 'general noise' from homes and other main nuisance

parrots ruffled 23 feathers. Council CEO Stuart Jardine says a staffer addresses every complaint with a house visit and will only issue a fine if problems continue. "Nine times out of 10, the city is able to work with the parties concerned to come to a mutually beneficial outcome," he says. Staff issued 11 fines totalling \$3700—well down on the 21 that raked in \$6000

complained about rowdy parties, followed by early construction work. They also had a lot to say about loud pets, mostly roosters and dogs—with 233 animal complaints. Perth city council workers dealt with 323 complaints, mostly related to building noise and concerts/events. This was up from 234 in 2013/14. Spokesman Michael Holland says the rise was caused by more events and new developments.

'safe' CCC

over the past four years. He forwarded the results to the CCC in August and he's now waiting on direction from it. Meanwhile Ms Scaffidi had said she would release documents showing she hadn't deliberately hid the Beijing Olympics trip but then reneged on the commitment, citing CCC rules. CCC commissioner John McKechnie told her she was free to release any evidence. • cont. page 2

Dear S.T. Team,

I was intrigued by your ad. for 'Shushers' and would like to apply. There are a few questions I have about the role though. So is there an opportunity to discuss it with you? Looking forward to hearing from you. Kind regards,

residents.
y nights.
your r-down
Anthea Smepe.

0% OFF

2nd pair prescription

- 1 THE ST TEAM, "SHUSHERS" WANTED, 2015, ADVERTISEMENT, EXCERPT FROM THE PERTH VOICE NEWSPAPER, SATURDAY OCTOBER 17, 2015, PG. 1.
- 2 LETTER FROM CHANNEL 7'S TODAY TONIGHT RECEIVED BY THE ST TEAM, 21.10.2015. IMAGE COURTESY THE ST TEAM.
- 3 EXCERPT FROM THE PERTH VOICE NEWSPAPER, SATURDAY JULY 9, 2015, RESIDENTS GO BARKING MAD BY EMMIE DOWLING.
- 4 LETTER FROM ROSIE RECEIVED BY THE ST TEAM 20.10.2015. IMAGE COURTESY THE ST TEAM.
- 5 EXCERPT FROM THE PERTH VOICE NEWSPAPER, JULY 2015, SSH IN THE CITY BY RICHARD AGUILERA.
- 6-7 THE ST TEAM, SHUSHERS, 2015, PERFORMANCE WITH THE PERTH VOICE READER, ROSIE, MT HAWTHORN. PHOTO: YVONNE DOHERTY.



6



7

9-11 King William St, Bayswater

60-62A Cheriton St, Perth

45 Cowle St, West Perth



"Designing social problems"
"The cost is the community"



"No sense of where
"Wiping history

ST Team. Know Thy Neighbour. PO Box 8087 Perth, WA 6849

**PUBLIC MEETING
FOR BAYSWATER DESERVES BETTER**
SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER 10AM TO MIDDAY
 AT BERT WRIGHT PARK KING WILLIAM ST BAYSWATER
 DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT 9/11 KING WILLIAM ST
 AND THE FUTURE VISION FOR BAYSWATER.
 Yes, we want development but let's get it right

PROGRESS...NOT MINDLESS DEVELOPMENT

FREE FRUIT FOR THE KIDS!

SOLAR PANELS



aturday November 14, 2015 - Page 11

3

WHO ■ WHAT ■ WHERE



Surreptitious Exercise for Public Spaces

Noise complaints, Jacob's Ladder closed for maintenance and no more fitness or sporting activities on Bellevue Tce lawn areas.

Would you like to learn to exercise secretly, so that no one can tell?

ST Team are introducing a new class of surreptitious fitness that can barely be detected in these areas.

Surreptitious Exercise for Public Spaces is a Perth based Australian organization dedicated to the art of secretly working out. It offers specialist classes at all levels, including the Lycra Pariah, the Picnic Rug Shake Abs & Butt program, Picking Something off the Ground Grind, and the Selfie Arm Sequence. As well as our uniquely designed beginners program The World is Your Gym.

Guaranteed no 5am yelling, whistles, grunting, or pumping music. Find 30 in the best green spaces Perth has to offer, disguised from both rangers and residents.

Term 2 free demo class on Thursday the 21st of April.

To try out Surreptitious Exercise for Public Spaces please contact:

ST Team
PO Box 8087 Perth WA

- 1 THE ST TEAM, REAL ESTATE, 2015, ADVERTISEMENT, EXCERPT FROM THE PERTH VOICE NEWSPAPER, SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14, 2015, PG. 11.
- 2 BAYSWATER GODZILLA, LEAFLET GIVEN TO THE ST TEAM BY CONCERNED BAYSWATER RESIDENTS 2015.
- 3 THE ST TEAM, SURREPTITIOUS EXERCISE, 2016, ADVERTISEMENT, EXCERPT FROM THE PERTH VOICE NEWSPAPER, SATURDAY APRIL 16, 2016, PG. 11.
- 4 PHOTOGRAPH OF 'EXERCISE BANNED' NOTICE, NEAR PERFORMANCE SITE, KINGS PARK, 2016. PHOTO: YVONNE DOHERTY.





SALT THE EARTH

Loren Kronemyer's ongoing project *Salt the Earth* focuses on seawater desalination, a practice that sustains the lifestyle and population of Perth residents. The Perth Seawater Desalination Plant in Kwinana, which supplies the city with 20% or more of its water, turns seawater from Cockburn Sound into nearly 140 megalitres of drinking water per day. This is used to support the growing population of Perth and it fuels the culture of decorative gardening. Working with botanists and urban gardeners, Kronemyer developed *Salt the Earth* to replace and transform gardens in the City of Vincent with halophilic, or salt-loving, plants. These guerrilla gardens of salt-tolerant plants were watered with the brackish runoff from the desalination plant – both an absurd effort and a poetic gesture to absorb and offset the imbalance created by the population's demands.



1



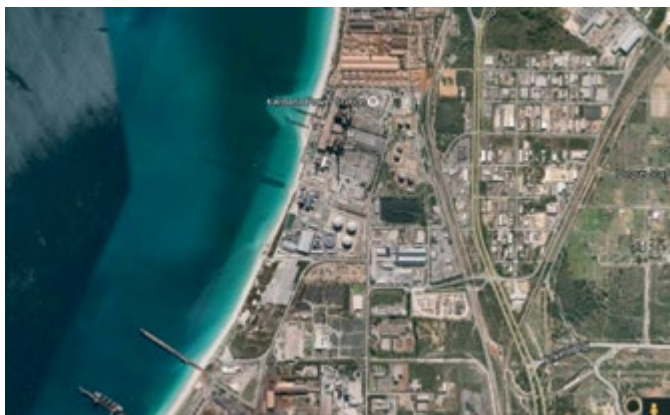
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'As you sit down and relax, you take a deep breath. Feel with every breath you take your body starting to relax and it becomes heavier and heavier ...'

'Imagine with every breath you take, as if we are strolling on the beach, deciding to walk slowly into the water of relaxation. It's the seas of consciousness, the seas of self-awareness ...'

NATALIE DEKEL, *SEAS OF CONSCIOUSNESS: GUIDED MEDITATION FOR RELAXATION*

1-2 (PREVIOUS SPREAD) GARDEN INVENTORY FROM THE WA WILDFLOWER ASSOCIATION, 2015. PHOTOS: LOREN KRONMYER.

3 KAYAK WITH MIKE BIANCO, PERTH SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT, KWINANA, 2015.

4 GUERRILLA GARDEN WATERING, 2015. PHOTO: JULIAN FRICHOT.

5 GOOGLE MAPS RECONNAISSANCE OF THE PERTH SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT, 2016.

6 SALINE BONSAI GARDEN INVENTORY, 2015. PHOTO: JULIAN FRICHOT.





Growing up in Los Angeles and now living in Perth, I have seen the dramatic effect human habitation has on the relationship between water, ecology and survival.

Both Perth and Los Angeles are cities carved out of dry landscapes, with populations that far exceed what natural water resources can accommodate. When I moved to Perth six years ago, California was at the beginning of a severe drought. I watched from afar as the state was pushed to adopt evermore surreal and absurd adaptations to support its population's lifestyles. Farmers were pitted against urbanites as the government rationed scarce fresh water. Signs declaring 'CONGRESS CREATED DUST BOWL' lined the major highway that cuts through the state's agricultural heartland. In 2015, 96 million black plastic balls were dumped in a Los Angeles reservoir in a desperate attempt to slow the loss of the water from evaporating. Public records naming chronic water wasters were released to the public, leading #droughtshaming to become a popular vigilante activity.

'And as we step, with every breath we take, with each wave of energy, we are going deeper and deeper into that which is the source of who we are ...

'Feel the sand under your feet and feel the water gently lapping against your legs, calling you in. Feel the water slowly reaching your waist, going higher and higher till you actually swim under the water in a beautiful wave.'

The human body is made up of about 60% water. Every time you drink water, you add more to your self. What happens to the self when there is no more water?

Engineering solution: Invent a way to separate freshwater from the ocean. Leave the ocean behind; add freshwater to your self.

Evolution solution: Invent a self that doesn't need freshwater. Prosper.

Artistic solution: Invent a self that can embrace the environment with or without water. Know your sources and know their consequences.

'You can still breathe deeply in that beautiful space. And as we take a deep breath, we feel the beautiful calmness enveloping us in that light, that azure-blue-green colour which washes off all the anxieties and worries, and calamities or negative thoughts, leaving you calm and centred ...

'You keep walking in, noticing beautiful corals and fish swimming around you, and the water changes to deeper blue, bringing with it lightness and a wonderful sensation of bodiless movement, as if you are no longer limited by your body.'

Here in Perth, one of the world's most ambitious desalination programs keeps the existential threat of drought at arm's length. The city's Water Corporation prints 'Water Forever' on promotional materials. Years ago, conservation was the top priority: three-minute showers, water recycling, native landscaping. Yet as the city's population booms, the infinite promise of desalination has normalised overconsumption once more. At present, around 40-50% of the city's water comes from seawater desalination, flowing from two coastal plants that operate at or above their maximum capacity. Most people in Perth think their water tastes funny, but few of them realise it's because it comes from one of the world's most advanced desalination programs.





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‘You continue to swim in even deeper and the water colour changes to indigo. You notice how you feel when it envelopes you in this deep, deep blue indigo colour.

‘And as we twirl inside that colour, it gives us radiance and ability to listen to nature and ourselves that we otherwise would not possess. It sharpens our intuition and our awareness. And with every deep breath you take, you become aware of more and more things happening around you in that space, perhaps sounds, voices, colours or even smells.’

I go to visit the Northern Suburbs Wildflower Association to look at halophilic plants. Hazel Dempster walks me through almost every table of plants, hundreds of small propagation tubes containing a labyrinth of diversity. For each plant, she told me stories about its naming, the people who found it or the poetry of its behaviour.

Set aside in a special area is a single, tiny tube containing a finger-sized stem covered in discreet leaves. A silky red orb decorates one of its spindles; it is a type of featherflower. My host says there are only a few hundred of these. You need a minister’s signature even to collect them.

The saline plants are characterised by good armour. Modest and tiny leaves and flowers are mathematically spaced along wiry branches. Sometimes the leaves are the branches – fleshy legs, sprouting legs.

Hazel says people don’t appreciate plants like these because they don’t know about them. People buy native species of plants that looks familiar, and so perpetuate the same species: pig face, kangaroo paw, the charismatic children of the Florabase. If they knew about the halophiles, maybe they would love them too.

I buy 100 seedlings and plant them all over. I create bonsai gardens with them and distribute them to my friends, neighbours and every plant person I can find. I quietly create and tend guerrilla gardens, using them throughout the City of Vincent. Some live, some die.

- 1-3 LOREN KRONEMYER, *SALT THE EARTH*, 2016, DINNER HELD IN COLLABORATION WITH MIKE BIANCO. PHOTOS: LOREN KRONEMYER.
- 4 LOREN KRONEMYER & RYONEN BUTCHER, 2015.
- 5 [NEXT SPREAD] LOREN KRONEMYER, *SALT THE EARTH*, 2016, DINNER HELD IN COLLABORATION WITH MIKE BIANCO. PHOTO: LOREN KRONEMYER.



'Just be aware that you are in a special place that invigorates you, fills you like a battery with new life, new energy.'

'We continue even deeper, entering the golden light, and this golden light envelops us like a cloud of golden dust. It's a beautiful light that makes every organ, every particle of our being shine and radiate light.'

'Feel how it affects your being, feel how much energy it gives you, how your eyes start to sparkle, how your hearing sharpens, how your taste buds become more aware of everything around you and how you become aware of your body in a new, beautiful way. Feeling the blood circulation running to and fro, making you feel alive like you've never been before.'

I go on a halophile-collecting mission with botanist Ryonen Butcher. We visit inland salt lakes and salty inlets of the river where seawater creeps upstream. We carefully collect small plants from the clay; I will make more gardens with them. The saline ecosystem is considered a no-man's land, treated like a de facto dump. Corpses of left-behind cars corrode into the ground, shelters for suburban nocturnal partiers. Piles of appliances crystallise in the salt. Patches of plants are bisected again and again by dirt bike tracks – each rider looking for a place they can be the first to carve up. The saline ecosystem survives degradation; it thrives in the margins. It absorbs everything.

'Notice which organs lay heavily, sinking into that sand. Feel the Earth giving its energy back ... massaging the body with every particle of sand ...

'Feel how your lungs breathe deeply this beautiful air, and you can smell the sea around you and the blue sky, and the wind and the cry of the seagulls.'

Another way to be with plants is to eat them. Some of the saline plants are tasty: briny, savoury, self-pickling. Mike Bianco helps me to plan a saline dinner party. We invite the small group of people we've met through the project to a spot on the Derbal Yerrigan Swan River, the spot where the ocean water meets the freshwater in the Eric Singleton Bird Sanctuary. Some guests kayak in, some hike in. Now a bird sanctuary, this spot used to be market gardens tended by an enclave of Asian immigrants. We are close to the spot where, 15 years ago, groundwater wells were depleted enough to expose hidden quantities of arsenic, poisoning the drinking water supply. Across the river from us is a landfill terraformed into a bush park. Because of this, we are advised not to forage plants from the area. Mike invents the perfect dishes to suit the plants – steamed rice buns with samphire, small algae jellies with saltbush. We have a feast in the moonlight and share histories of fishing, rivers, gardens and waters.

'Enjoy the perfection of life and the radiance, health and vitality it gives you. Gradually become aware of your body and its fullness. And slowly open your eyes ... bringing the memories of the beautiful beach with you, remembering the gift that was given to you.

Thank you for coming on this journey with us.'

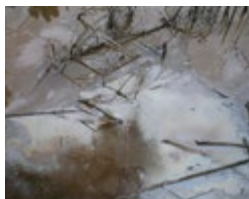
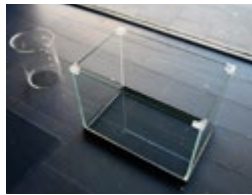
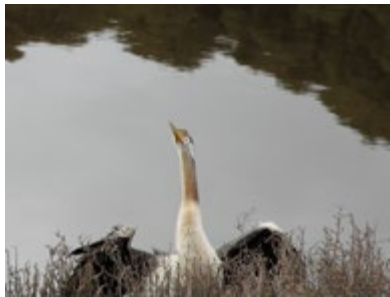




-ING

Perdita Phillips's project explored the overlap of two communities – humans and non-humans. She investigated efforts by local environmentalists to maintain and create new plant and animal habitats in the North Perth and Claisebrook area. Her project had an active focus on weeding and sustainment, on how perseverance can paradoxically furnish change in the face of ambiguity and uncertainty.

Concerned with visual expression of 'tipping points' in relation to social behaviours and environmental issues, Phillips asks at what point a series of small changes or incidents become significant enough to cause a larger, more important change.



PERDITA PHILLIPS,
 CARRY ME, JOIN ME,
 AS PART OF -ING, 2016,
 VARIOUS WETLANDS PERTH
 AND NORTH METROPOLITAN
 TAPE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE
 SPACE. PHOTOS: PERDITA
 PHILLIPS, MICHAEL RULE,
 TYLER THOMSON AND
 ELIZABETH ZAREBSKI



Spring 2016 and Perth is verdant. Perdita Phillips is seeking volunteers to assist with weeding Robertson Park wetland, a corner of an otherwise manicured inner-city park. Councils maintain public land, so why is Phillips inviting the public to participate in a group activity curiously titled *Weed-ing*, and why this emphasis on *-ing*?

In advance of the weeding workshop, Phillips requests that volunteers read *Weeding Worriers*, a booklet she's compiled to explain what is a weed, why the wetland will be weeded, how to identify weeds and how to effectively remove them. There's a lot to take on board. The term 'worrier' (which I initially misread as 'warrior') is contextualised on page two: 'know what you are about to kill'. I've never thought of myself as a killer before.

Weeding is deceptively simple. To know whether to kill (or not) requires knowledge that comes from personal experiences and understanding gained and shared through the actions and experiences of our ancestors. Weeding requires physical endurance, mobility and good eyesight. It requires cumulative experiences of analysing, comparing, listening, sharing and assessing – familiarising the mind and body with nuances that distinguish between desirable and undesirable plant characteristics. Furthermore, weeding requires understanding the local landscape through the lens of temporality: the seasonal cycles of seedling to seed. Learning to weed also includes making mistakes. In *Weed-ing*, the onus is clearly on volunteers being able to distinguish flora friend from flora foe. Can volunteers be trusted to kill the right plant? Is this the primary worry of the *-ing* project? In part, yes. But there's more.

Phillips is an interdisciplinary artist, environmental activist and scholar, who incorporates geography, ecology, science and community-based participatory actions into her work. So, her reference to killing should be considered in a broader context. For instance, the extinctions we are witnessing in our current epoch, the Anthropocene, are not results of natural catastrophes;

I HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED
MY ENVIRONMENT AS
THE SPACE BETWEEN
WATERS

HOW TO ENACT
VALUES TO PRACTICE
WISDOM AND
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The Conversation Air
Brook Street Swamp Water

Forever flowing, gifting, loving
connected

The Reply

I feel you with me.

I almost took a
great video of a
coot catching a
worm... but when
I pressed stop it
was actually start
and I had nothing.



Help Wetland
surrounded by the roar
of traffic. One frog
Banks and honeyeaters
call. It's morning and
life keeps going on.
As a swamp it hides
behind a swathe of
trees. Somewhere
people visit me but
the hedge of Japanese
peppers are very dense
and hard to get through.
My waters are still and
quietly. Pollution gets
dumped in an area
My Brother in herald
Rivers Gardens is (surrounded)
by wedding photography

Southwestern Island 2 (Near
Kakirumine)

darkness and darkness.

Pied oyster catchers pass me by.

I am small and almost
forgotten.

I live in the shadow of my big sister

I carried their message
It was flirtatious.

to

Love and
Greetings

from

2



our collective greed is killing life and reshaping Earth's future in almost every possible way. Living in the Anthropocene is increasingly deadly, and Phillips repeatedly poses the question: What can art do?

At Robertson Park wetland, Phillips issues her crew with white t-shirts bearing a novel coat of arms comprising gardening tools framed by an ouroboros and 'Endless Caring'. I sense we're being conscripted, physically, emotionally and philosophically, into environmental stewardship. But, as volunteers, are we not already converted? Yes, but I think it is a question of degree. Is living sustainably even possible in Australia?

We weed all morning for the volunteer Claise Brook Catchment Group. I've never weeded in the company of others, and I certainly have never before knowingly killed anything in a park. Knowledge of local cultural history and the ecology of this place is shared; we are weeding one of Perth's lost lakes in Wadjuk Noongar Boodjar [country]. We learn that Robertson Park wetland is man-made, occupying a fraction of the original string of wetlands across Perth, which is now all but destroyed. I try to imagine pre-colonial Perth, before the bitumen and the 'burbs arrived.

- 1 PERDITA PHILLIPS, *CARRY ME, JOIN ME*, 2016, MESSAGES FROM THE WETLANDS, VARIOUS WETLANDS OF PERTH. PHOTO: PERDITA PHILLIPS.
- 2 PERDITA PHILLIPS, *WEED-ING*, 2016, ROBERTSON PARK WETLAND, PERTH. PHOTO: PERDITA PHILLIPS.

1-2 PERDITA PHILLIPS, WEED-ING,
2016, ROBERTSON PARK
WETLAND, PERTH. PHOTO:
PERDITA PHILLIPS.





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For me, participating in Phillips's *Weed-ing* was akin to partaking in a living memorial – bonding people and place with the wetland's past and present, and provoking us to consider its future, beyond our lifetimes. This micro man-made wetland has minimal diversity, but it's better than nothing and surely 'out of little things big things grow'. It seems that Phillips is proposing that we continue to make life and death decisions, even though we live in compromised times.

On the heels of *Weed-ing* is *Carry me, join me*. For this *-ing* project, Phillips organised the collecting and carrying of water samples and individual air samples [miasmas] from 22 remnant wetlands and waterbodies in close proximity to Perth's CBD.

The 22 freshwater sites Phillips selected were once interconnected parts of a continuous ecosystem but are now geographically isolated from each other. They're small and sometimes difficult to locate, and occasionally fencing prohibits access. The sites are 'owned' and 'managed' by two local governments: Perth and Vincent. These surface expressions of groundwater once sustained myriad life, including human life. Now, council signs warn against entering and wildlife struggles to survive.

Phillips directed volunteers to release their air sample at a different wetland or waterbody from where it was collected. What does the transference of air between sites suggest? Go on, feel the wind flow through your hair. Even though we can't see it, air is unique to Earth. It connects all animate and inanimate things.

In contrast to the relocated air samples, the water samples were assembled centrally. Litre bottles of water were labelled and displayed, the range in colour and cloudiness most intriguing, and some of the remaining water from each source was pooled in a glass tank. Is this tank of hard-won, hand-collected water a reunion of associated wetland streams that once naturally followed the topography before entering the Swan River? Peering into the watery depths I spot new growth, suspended like enlarged spidery networks of neurons. I'm not the artist but I helped make it: Did we 'play God'? Is ecology in art useful? Is art useful?

I caress the murky surface, reflecting on what once was and now is. To me, the aquarium is a shrine, embodying local histories of place sourced from scattered ecologies. I am grateful for this work; it makes me feel – feel sad – it reminds me of the primary responsibility invested in being human: we have to learn to share.

All webs of life, regardless of scale, have purpose. Sadly, they are seldom respected by governments who control land use. Progress in the guise of economic growth continues to be prioritised. Progress in Australia is associated with land clearing. Living systems are being flogged.

Compounding habitat loss is a collective short memory and each generation being born into less. For this reason, Phillips's local *-ing* actions are necessary counterpoints to the fact that most Perth residents remain oblivious to the city's former freshwater diversity (so valuable in a Mediterranean climate). Similarly, they are oblivious to the fact Perth's remnant bush is exceptionally unique and part of the south-west's internationally lauded biodiversity. Perth is home to unique and endemic animals and plants, and some are seriously under threat.

As I write, the gross mismanagement of metropolitan Perth remnant bush and wetlands continues. The Environmental Protection Authority ignores its own guidelines and policies. Although federally recognised as endangered, *Banksia* woodlands are being felled. Even the deeply cherished Beeliar Park and wetlands, regarded the Kings Park south of the river¹, and the highly sacred Whadjuk Noongar country are being decimated just weeks before a state election. Nothing is sacred. Action is need.

However slowly, Phillips's *-ing* project deliberately cultivates a sense of belonging and caring. It inspires awareness of the natural networks and systems beneath our individual and collective ecological footprint, and interrogates what sustainability is by returning to the hard questions we face in our entangled times. The *-ing* project is equally about actions, states and occurrences of perception and movement – walking, wading, watching, wondering, weeding, worrying and wording. Small collective actions of community-based caring amount to environmental stewardship.

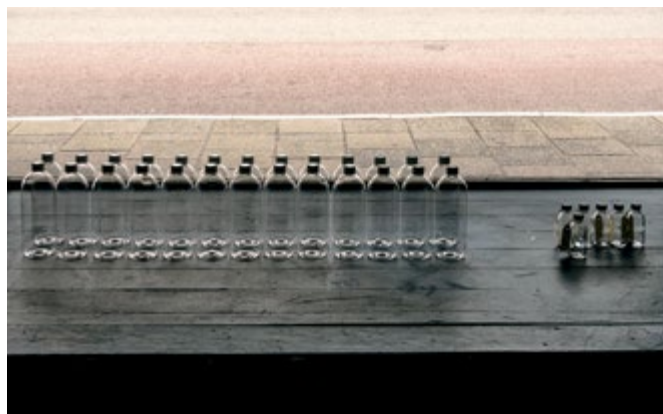
Dr Nien Schwarz is an interdisciplinary artist and senior lecturer in visual arts at Edith Cowan University.

1 Perth is separated north from south by the Swan River [Derbarl Yerrigan]. Kings Park is a 4.06-square-kilometre park north of the river overlooking the CBD.

1



1-3 PERDITA PHILLIPS, CARRY ME, JOIN ME, 2016, NORTH METROPOLITAN TAFE ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE SPACE. PHOTO: PERDITA PHILLIPS.



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EAT THE CITY

Imagine a world where urban food-supply chains have collapsed. Where and how will we find food in order to survive? *Eat the City* poses this dystopic hypothesis and explores the possibilities it raises for generating a community-activated artwork based in the Perth CBD.

Eat the City is an on-going social experiment based on the principles of food and knowledge sharing, theoretically underpinned by ideas around increased global precarity and building resilience. For *Know Thy Neighbour*, artists Janet Carter and Elizabeth Pedler undertook a research residency, working with a number of collaborators with expert knowledge of urban survival, native and foraged foodstuffs. Learning about food precarity from multiple viewpoints, the artists collected stories and mapped contemporary and historical free food resources in the CBD.

Carter and Pedler are continuing to use this data to build an interactive map and wiki, charting the wild and free food available in Perth. The research residency culminated in three participatory city walks; tracing, mapping and storytelling food and survival in the city. They were led by guides Brooke 'Sparkles' Murphy, Dale Tilbrook, Malcolm Kaui and Len, each with varying specialisations, from indigenous food cultivation to wild and foraged food.



Know Thy Neighbour was the first opportunity to test our dystopic narrative within the inner city of Perth. Our research focused on three key areas: found and foraged foods; homelessness and food precarity; and indigenous food cultivation prior to colonisation. Through this research, we connected with experts in each area, who collaborated with us to generate a series of food walks in and around Northbridge.

To wrap up the project, we brought together our collaborators and supporters and, in true *Eat the City* style, shared a meal and reflected on the project. This conversation was recorded on 11 January 2017. Present were *Eat the City* artists Janet Carter and Elizabeth Pedler, collaborators Dale Tilbrook, Malcolm Kauai and Len, IAS Director Marco Marcon, and IAS Producers Katherine Wilkinson and Soula Veyradier.

While food was the project's driving element, it was also a mechanism for connecting participants to deeper creative concerns. The following excerpt from the evening's conversations captures some of those concerns:

Janet Carter: The one thing we know is we're not experts on the kind of scenario that we set up. If urban food-supply chains do collapse, who is an expert? ... And we found our experts.

Malcolm Kauai: Yeah, that's ... well, thanks Janet, I've just been listening and the point for myself and possibly Len is survival. And around that is based everything that you people are talking about. First of all people have got to survive. Even before we had all this [food on the table] we had to go out and hunt it. Find it and cook it. Light a fire. And around that fire grew people. In my [Maori] culture, it's the table. Just like anywhere else. But namely around the fire. From our viewpoint, from what we were showing on our walk, it's about survival and that's what brings people together. Just eating. Full stop. Being able to eat anything. Let alone eating healthy. It's simply a matter of survival that brings people together.



2

- 1 [PREVIOUS SPREAD]
PHOTO: ELIZABETH PEDLER
- 2-5 JANET CARTER & ELIZABETH
PEDLER, *EAT THE CITY*, 2016,
WALK 1: EDIBLE WEEDS
AND FORAGED FOODS WITH
BROOKE 'SPARKLES' MURPHY.
PHOTOS: MARCO MARCON,
ELIZABETH PEDLER.



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1-3 JANET CARTER & ELIZABETH PEDLER, *EAT THE CITY*, 2016, WALK 2: URBAN HUNTING WITH THE HOMELESS - MAL AND LEN. PHOTOS: MARCO MARCON, KATHERINE WILKINSON.



3

JC: But I also think, Mal, that the kind of common picture of survival for homeless people is that you're victims, in a way, and you're utterly dependent on these service providers. And your walks demonstrated a different picture. It demonstrated a picture of resilience, of connection to community, of sharing of knowledge ...

MK: Establishment of a community too. The way those people hold themselves together, whether for a day, that they are in dire circumstances, or a month, a year. It develops. You develop a culture.

JC: And you develop the skills to survive. Whatever your circumstances are you adapt to make it work for you. And I think that a lot of what I was interested in was exposing those hidden stories. You know, there's a kind of common narrative that we all know about homeless people and about indigenous people that really is in some ways stereotyped, and it's meant to ... And this was a great way for us to go to you guys, 'look, you're

the experts, tell us what it's like to effectively shape your day around food and discover the city through food. And how you make it work for you. How you make it work for you in a really positive way.' And that, we were using food as a premise, but the stories that you gave us were much richer than that. Much richer and much more complex.

MK: It was centred around food, but it began with survival. Those people who have just lost everything, let alone food.

Elizabeth Pedler: One of the reasons that we collaborated with other people was that I really didn't know where to start even. In terms of, when it comes to food supply breaking down, how would you survive. But it was one of the things that I guess surprised me, and maybe it shouldn't have, that even when there wasn't the ability to make your own food, like when we went and had lunch at the Manna food truck [at Weld Square, Northbridge] one afternoon, that even when you couldn't express your own intent through food, or express your own culture ... food was simply being given to everyone, that there seemed to be, nonetheless, even more community around those tables, not less. That the aspect of need or of the fact that it was bringing people together geographically ...

MK: There was a table there in the park, that's what epitomised it.

EP: Even without the ability for people to express their own culture through food, there was nonetheless a culture that was developed just by proximity.

Dale Tilbrook: And listening to you I can see that there were lots of similarities to traditional Aboriginal culture around first, yes, you have to have food to survive, but also sharing, and so we have a tradition of sharing. And our kinship systems determined in the old days, where they still existed everywhere, a set of rules that you lived by. And so knowing your kinship group and somebody else's kinship group, you then had a set



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EAT THE CITY

1-2 JANET CARTER & ELIZABETH PEDLER, *EAT THE CITY*, 2016, WALK 3: INDIGENOUS FOOD CULTURE BEFORE COLONISATION, WITH ELDER DALE TILBROOK. PHOTOS: ELIZABETH PEDLER, KATHERINE WILKINSON.

3 JANET CARTER & ELIZABETH PEDLER, *EAT THE CITY*, 2016, WALK 2: URBAN HUNTING WITH THE HOMELESS - MAL AND LEN. PHOTOS: MARCO MARCON, KATHERINE WILKINSON.



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1-3 JANET CARTER & ELIZABETH PEDLER, *EAT THE CITY*, 2016, WALK 3: INDIGENOUS FOOD CULTURE BEFORE COLONISATION, WITH ELDER DALE TILBROOK. PHOTOS: ELIZABETH PEDLER, KATHERINE WILKINSON.



of rules, which contained all your rights and obligations in relation to that person. And we don't have words in our languages for 'please' and 'thank you'. So you don't have to beg for something. If you need something, it's a given that it will be provided. But it's reciprocal; you wouldn't get away with just take, take, take. Everybody's got to pitch in and provide something, on some level. And what you're describing with the community that comes up around homeless people, is that you band together and you look out for each other, you take care of community members. I don't know if I'm jumping to conclusions.

MK: No, you're fine. Like Janet says, there're many stories, everyone's got a story, we've all got a story here. And it starts around a table. It started in our art room [at Ruah] with myself and Len, just sharing what we knew together. And then what? I'm just using as an example, we're here now, we're in this community. That's exactly what happens on the street. Maybe in a different sort of way, but the same.

EDITED BY JANET CARTER & ELIZABETH PEDLER



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SHADOWS ON THE HILL

Shadows on the hill was originally developed for the 2016 Next Wave Festival in Melbourne, through their flagship Kickstart program. McCabe's new iteration of the work for *Know Thy Neighbour* saw him engage and workshop with staff and residents of St Bartholomew's House, an organisation dedicated to eradicating homelessness in Perth, along with the wider community through Perth City Farm. McCabe utilised his artist-designed tent, camouflaged as a late 80s station wagon, as a starting point to investigate the issues and possibilities of temporary shelters, long-term housing, environmentally conscious alternatives and future living structures. A sound-based documentary, *Culturally Peculiar – Suburban Aspirations in Modern Australia*, produced by Perth-based filmmakers Barking Wolf, Tom Allum and Mitchell Withers, acts as permanent record of these interactions, expanding on conversations and providing a snapshot into the vast realities and ideals of housing in inner city Perth.

Interested in interrogating and questioning set practices of construction, home improvement and gentrification, McCabe facilitated an opportunity to discuss, challenge, contemplate and re-evaluate the way we intend to live in the 21st century.



- 1 [PREVIOUS SPREAD] DAN MCCABE, *SHADOWS ON THE HILL* (GRAVEL TENT), 2015. PHOTO: DAN MCCABE.
- 2 DAN MCCABE, *SHADOWS ON THE HILL* (TESTING GROUNDS), 2016, NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL, MELBOURNE. PHOTO: DAN MCCABE.
- 3 DAN MCCABE, *SHADOWS ON THE HILL* (FREMANTLE), 2016, NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL, MELBOURNE. PHOTO: DAN MCCABE.

I originally approached St Bartholomew's House with the help of IAS in late 2015 to meet some of the residents and hear a perspective that is generally omitted from mainstream media and the current political debate around housing. St Barts is a multi-story living complex in East Perth which offers emergency and temporary accommodation for men aged 18 and above. Residents are often seeking support during their transition from relatively unstable living conditions or homelessness, towards something more permanent.

It took a while to work out how I could integrate my original proposal (building upon my car tent project) in a way that felt genuine and worthwhile for both parties involved. Initially the objective was to broaden the conversation about housing aspirations and realities, adding varied experiences about temporary/permanent living situations. For me, equal exchange was really important in this context. What skills could I offer? Meeting some of the residents and hearing their stories, I realised quickly that a hypothetical creative activity wasn't going to be particularly useful given the very real situations many were currently experiencing. During this time, I sat in on quite a few regular BBQs and morning tea information sessions run by different organisations. These appeared to be pretty successful, providing individuals with a platform to talk openly with other residents that gathered for a cuppa and some bickies. I'm all about a chat over a cuppa and some bickies!

With most of the *Know Thy Neighbour* projects wrapping up, no creative outcomes planned and still having conflicted feelings about where or if the car tent fitted into this place and community, I decided that the project should exist in two separate, parallel parts. I would facilitate a series of morning and afternoon tea events at St Bart's to meet more of the residents, with overlapping creative workshops involving the tent at Perth City Farm across the road.



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Over several weeks in January and February 2017 I invited residents of St Bart's to join me for something to eat and a chat. After showing a few photos and explaining what the car tent project was about, most of the conversations steered towards an account of someone's life and how they ended up accessing these resources. Some had been in and out of St Bart's before, while others had a spate of unfortunate incidents and found themselves on the street or living in their car. One thing that consistently came up was the importance and gratitude towards people who work and volunteer at organisations such as St Bart's. A familiar smiling face making a big difference in day-to-day life, building upon the stability of a place to stay and eat.

Communicating what I had learnt at St Bart's, I brought this additional perspective to the car tent project, which was across the road interacting with the regular market crowd. A community garden right next to Claisebrook train station, Perth City Farm is made up of a cafe, some chooks, and a few lovely individuals. Since conversations around housing affordability and council regulations are generally pretty real and dry, I instead asked market goers to push those limitations to one side, imagine themselves in the future and draw their ideal home. I asked about their preferences for proximity to the city, beach, bush, community, family, and prompted them to think about how they would get their power, food and water.

Responses varied, but somewhere close to trees, water, and nature, coupled with a short distance to the city or work was fairly consistent. There was a few tiny houses on wheels, container homes, castles with moats, tree dwellings, Japanese pole structures on shipping containers, and a shed. It was refreshing for me to think about my ideal home in this way as well, separating the practicalities of work, money, or regulations. To strip it back and reconsider what I really want or need.

During the second weekend, I met this kid called Rowan. It was his birthday [he was turning 11], a Wild Cats fan and pretty smart. After chatting for a while he noticed that nearly no one had included people in any of the drawings displayed inside the car tent. A simple observation, but I feel that it is telling to the mindset that we as a society still find ourselves consciously/subconsciously attached to. Housing is a thing we buy into and is sold to us as a product/lifestyle to consume. We obsess and dream about our own “castle”, yet it is something that exists outside of us. My time at St Bart’s ended up being more of a learning experience, broadening my understanding of home by talking to people who don’t currently find themselves within, or benefiting from, the current housing system. When you take it away [or lose it in some situations], it is stability, a quality of life, and the people we surround ourselves with that come to the forefront. What it looks like or how big it is doesn’t really matter, it’s just a shell. A thin layer wrapped around a frame. It is how we choose to live inside it that makes all the difference.

DAN MCCABE

shadowsonthehill.com.au



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- 1 WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS AT PERTH CITY FARM, EAST PERTH, 2017. PHOTO: DAN MCCABE.
- 2 DAN MCCABE, *SHADOWS ON THE HILL* (PERTH CITY FARM), 2017, KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR, PERTH. PHOTO: ROSIE JACK.
- 3 DAN MCCABE, *SHADOWS ON THE HILL* (PERTH CITY FARM), 2017, KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR, PERTH. PHOTO: MITCHELL WITHERS.



Dan McCabe chatted with Jeremy McLeod of Breathe Architecture about minimal living, community Gen Y and the ever-evolving urban landscape, in Melbourne on 6 May 2016.

Dan McCabe: Tell me a bit about your architectural practice, your philosophy towards creating and doing, and what inspired it – particularly the Nightingale Model?

Jeremy McLeod: The simple thing to note about Breathe Architecture is that it is a collective, so there are nine architects that work here and we gather together on design capability and ethical positioning. Our mantra is ethic before aesthetic, and it seems to be differentiating us from the market.

Historically, architects used to be an important part of society. Somewhere in the 1970s, as a profession, we got lost. We became overrun by project managers and property developers, got bogged down in capitalism and taken away from our core agenda, which is building cities for humans to occupy. For Breathe Architecture, our core work is sustainable urbanisation. And when we say sustainable urbanisation we don't just mean ecological sustainability; we mean cultural sustainability, we mean social sustainability. How do we make our city as an organism work better, and how do we make that organism a great place to be as well as a positive contribution back to the planet.

We embarked on what is now known as the Nightingale Model in 2007, with the goal being to take back the keys to the city from property developers, and put them in the hands of the designers and the people that will live there.

DM: As mentioned on your website, buildings designed using the Nightingale Model are geared towards supporting wellbeing, community and liveability. What has the response been to these objectives?

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- 1 DAN MCCABE, *SHADOWS ON THE HILL*, 2016, NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL, MELBOURNE. PHOTO: DAN MCCABE.
- 2 DAN MCCABE, *SHADOWS ON THE HILL (PERTH CITY FARM)*, 2017, KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR, PERTH. PHOTO: DAN MCCABE

JM: Designing for liveability is actually quite easy. The people that have come to live in a building like The Commons, with no air-conditioning, no car space, no individual laundry, when you ask them what they want, they ask for a little bit of space, a little bit of light, perhaps some fresh air. Their actual expectations or needs or desires are very small. They don't want much. If you put a group of these people together, people who don't consume much anyway, who have a general sense of civic duty or who are thinking about the greater good, and you give them places to gather like a rooftop garden or communal laundry, this sense of community grows and strengthens.

DM: As a Gen Y, I feel as though the aspiration of owning a house or apartment is pretty unrealistic. Is Breathe Architecture addressing this reality? What opportunities are out there for people who are unable to afford or commit to paying off a mortgage, but still want to live within an active community like The Commons?

JM: The whole idea of Nightingale is to change housing from a commodity to a home. I don't think that home ownership is the answer to everything; I believe you can live in a home whether you are renting or buying. This has been shown in places like Sweden, where you can secure an affordable ten-year rental and people go in there and adapt it because they have a sense of ownership ... The future might not be about ownership, it might be about long-term renting. It might be about drones hovering in the sky with people sleeping in them, who fucking knows.

...

DM: What are your thoughts on rejuvenating disused spaces? Have you renovated/refitted/refurbished any existing buildings recently as part of Breathe Architecture?

JM: Yeah, that is all we do, about 90%. We are a small practice and most of our work we try to keep within the city environment, so we try to stay away from the



natural environment as much as possible. We think that the best way to be environmentalists is not to build some pseudo-sustainable home in the middle of the forest, but to actually put people where the services are.

Most of our work is adaptive reuse. Sometimes I think, what the fuck are we going to do with all these car parks? I just came back from Adelaide, and it's called the 'City of Churches'; it should be called the 'City of Car Parks'. It is just multi-storey car park after multi-storey car park. It's interesting working within the planning scheme, designing buildings. So much of our time is spent focusing on car parks, where are our car parks going? And it is like no-one has been reading the news lately about autonomous vehicles, no-one seems to know about this thing called Uber or Car Share or Lift or UberPool – or the guys in China that have developed the human-carrying drone. Whatever is going to happen, it's not going to be around car parks under buildings or four levels of car parks above ground. That paradigm is on its last legs and we continue to see the change before our very eyes. I would love to spend the next 10 years of our practice adapting car parks to house people instead of cars. That would be awesome.

DM: Well maybe with some of my car-shaped tents you could fit it out and no-one would know.

JM: [Laughing] Yeah, that's right!

DM: What role does ecological and sustainable architecture have in our future, and how can we fast track that integration?

JM: It's hard to believe that we are still talking about it, isn't it. You know, again it just needs to be mandated. Part of everyday life. The same as how Volkswagen should put catalytic converters that work on their cars. If we are designing buildings, there is no reason why we shouldn't be making fossil-fuel-free buildings right now. The technology is such that you can build a poorly designed, poorly oriented, poorly insulated, massive, greedy house, but you can cover it with PV and put a

Tesla Power Wall in there and you should still be able to reduce your carbon emissions to zero. Don't get me wrong, I'm not advocating that. But what I am saying is that there has been a big resistance to ecological sustainability because people don't want to have any behavioural shift. They don't want to change the way they consume. If they can have everything that they want, but without polluting or having that guilt, wouldn't that be great.

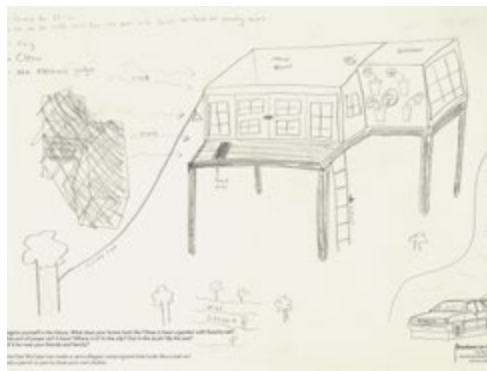
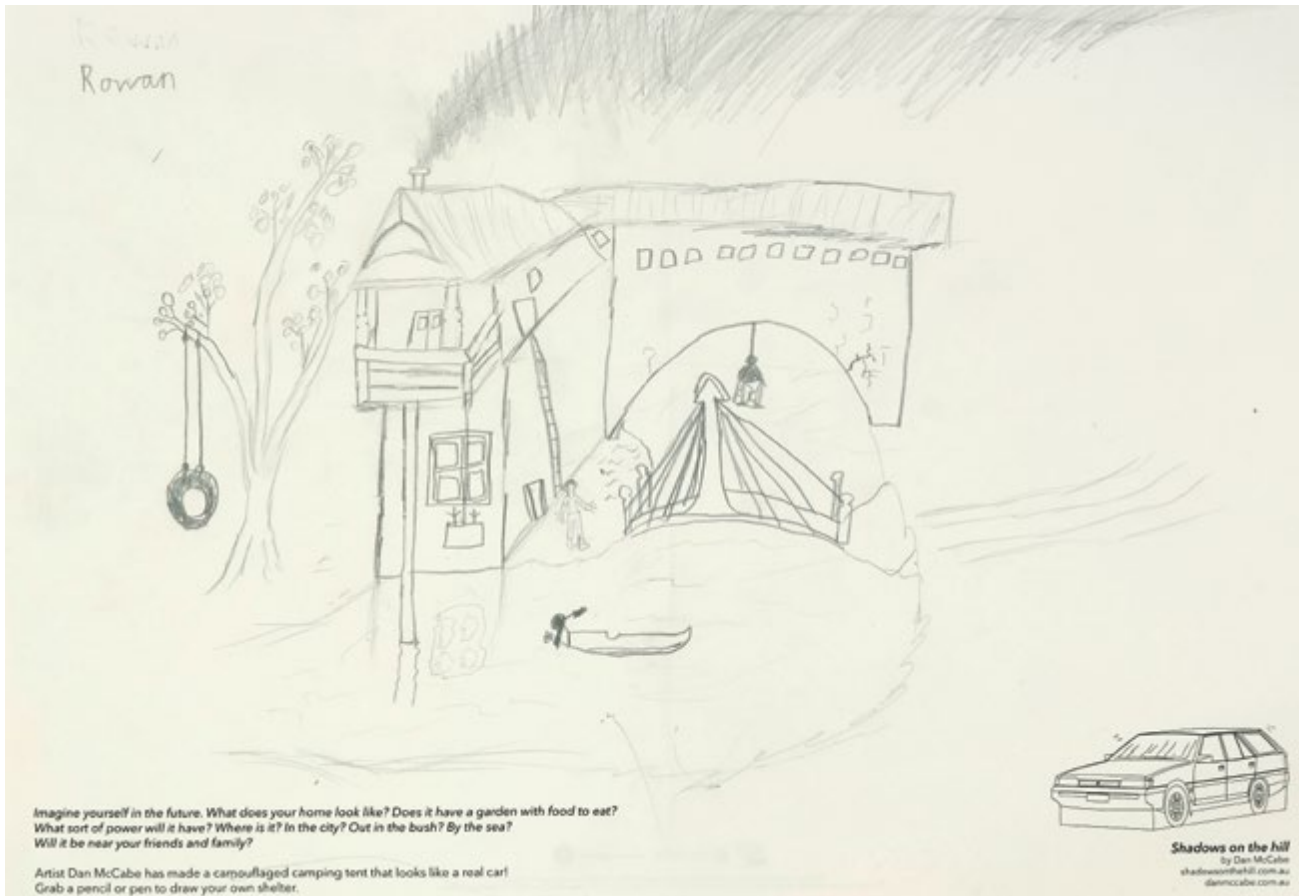
We do have a problem with super-sizing in Australia. Obviously, we can't continue to go beyond our urban-growth boundaries. The reason why we keep building farther out is because of the misnomer that it is cheaper, because the volume builders build cheaper houses on cheap land, farther out, but it actually costs our society so much more. The sewers to get there, the NBN, the powerlines, the infrastructure, the roads – none of that is factored in.

DM: I live about one kilometre away from Fremantle CBD. It's a small, two-bedroom apartment that I share with my girlfriend. For me, it is really important that I am right next to major public transport lines and get to use my bicycle whenever I can. At the moment, I am willing to pay more rent to have that freedom, to not be reliant on a car to get to work or the studio. With The Commons, I like how it is stripped back. There are other examples, whether a container home or a 'tiny house', that are getting closer to what I think my ideal is. The Commons is pretty close.

JM: The difference is Gen Y. You went through an education system that taught you about the reality of climate change. Baby boomers deny it, Gen X ignore it, but with Gen Y there is hope.

Jeremy McLeod is the founding Director of Breathe Architecture, a team of architects dedicated to making meaningful contributions to cities that are and environmentally sustainable.

breathe.com.au



1-3 DAN MCCABE, SHADOWS ON THE HILL, (PERTH CITY FARM), 2017, PARTICIPANT WORKSHEETS, KNOW THY NEIGHBOUR, PERTH. PHOTO: DAN MCCABE.





BRACKISH RISING

Brackish Rising was a multi-faceted project by artists Mike Bianco and Loren Kronemyer which engaged with issues of salt, water, desalination, ecology and water sovereignty around Kwinana. Presented as a part of the 2017 Perth International Arts Festival, the project called attention to the past, present and future of water in Southwest Australia, including the role of the Perth Seawater Desalination Plant – a facility that has provided over 20% of all potable water in the Perth metropolitan area for the past decade.

Through a process of interviews, community research and site-based explorations, *Brackish Rising* shed new light on Perth's water systems. Taking inspiration from the fluidity of water, Bianco and Kronemyer created the *Brackish Rising* Mobile Research Lab, engaging local stakeholders and festival audiences in a three-week long program of workshops, water tastings, public tours, food demonstrations and events. The project extended its reach to a global public through social media, a website, and a Brackish Radio podcast; all of these remain as a permanent internet-based archive of the unseen sights and sounds that define our relationship to water in the Perth metropolitan area.



2

“Perth is set to become the world’s first ‘Ghost City’ according to a long-term weather forecaster and a news anchor. The doomsday forecast for Western Australia’s capital was made on FOX News in the United States. During an interview a FOX News anchor interpreted a global climate forecast map with drastic consequences for Sandgropers. “It seems as though Perth, Australia, is a real cautionary story for us. Tell us what’s happening in Perth and how Perth could become what’s called a ghost city?” asked the news anchor. “I’m reading here that unless drastic action is taken, Perth could become the world’s first ghost city – a modern metropolis abandoned by the 1.7 million people there for lack of water”, she said.” [ABC NEWS, 21 JULY 2011, HTTP://WWW.ABC.NET.AU/LOCAL/STORIES/2011/07/21/3274886.HTM.](http://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2011/07/21/3274886.htm)

This is our recollection of our tour of the Perth Seawater Desalination Plant in Kwinana, Western Australia. This facility is rarely accessed by the public. It is responsible for producing 20% of the drinking water consumed in Perth. This plant and one other facility produce 47% of the city’s scheme water.

“When Premier Colin Barnett opened the plant in 2013, he declared Perth “basically drought proof.”” [AL JAZEERA, 9 JULY 2015, HTTP://WWW.ALJAZEERA.COM/INDEPTH/FEATURES/2015/07/DESALINATION-PLANTS-KEY-PERTH-WATER-SECURITY-150705074410141.HTML.](http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/07/desalination-plants-key-perth-water-security-150705074410141.html)

After months of negotiation, and multiple attempts to gain access [guised as tourists, academics and artist researchers], we had finally negotiated a tour of the Perth Seawater Desalination Plant as part of our project *Brackish Rising*, commissioned by IAS and the Perth International Arts Festival. *Brackish Rising* had intended to be an ethereal installation based on the sights and sounds of the desalination process; an ambient meditation contained within a desalination tent. Unfortunately, corporate resistance stifled our engagement with the facility, and our seemingly banal concept was being shut down for relatively unclear reasons. After months of emails, phone calls, and an official meeting at Water Corporation headquarters, we were finally being brought in for an official tour of the plant.

“The desalination plant is a climate-independent resource.” [WATER CORPORATION REPRESENTATIVE, 1 DECEMBER 2017.](#)

The Perth Seawater Desalination Plant is located on the Cockburn Sound, 40 kilometers south of Perth, and 260 kilometers south of the Emu Downs Wind Farm; 48 turbines built with the sole-purpose of offsetting the energy consumption of the Desalination Plant.

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“As part of Water Corporation and Western Australia’s very progressive stand of not producing additional greenhouse gases, electricity for the plant will be generated by a novel 80 MW wind farm located in WA’s Midwest region. The wind farm, already commissioned, is expected to contribute 270 GWh/year into the general electrical grid, offsetting the Perth SWRO Plant estimated electrical requirement of 180 GWh/year. Once in operation the Perth SWRO plant will have the distinction of being the world’s largest green-powered desalination plant.” SHAWN STEELE, *MODERN ALCHEMY: WIND TO WATER*, 21 AUGUST 2008, [HTTP://WWW.SELFGROWTH.COM/ARTICLES/MODERN_ALCHEMY_WIND_TO_WATER.HTML](http://www.selfgrowth.com/articles/modern_alchemy_wind_to_water.html).

- 1 (PREVIOUS SPREAD) MIKE BIANCO & LOREN KRONEMYER, *BRACKISH RISING*, 2017, WATER TASTING, WELLARD. PHOTO: LOREN KRONEMYER.
- 2 GOOGLE MAPS RECONNAISSANCE OF THE PERTH SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT, 2016.
- 3 PERTH SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT, KWINANA, 2017. PHOTO: MIKE BIANCO.
- 4 *BRACKISH RISING* MOBILE RESEARCH LAB AT THE PERTH SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT, 2017. PHOTO: LOREN KRONEMYER & MIKE BIANCO.

JONATHAN HARLEY: By contrast, NSW Premier Bob Carr and his ministers have repeatedly hosed down the idea of a desalination plant for Sydney on the grounds of cost and the greenhouse-contributing energy it would consume. This time last year, Utilities Minister Frank Sartor all but ruled out the idea.

FRANK SARTOR, NSW UTILITIES MINISTER: We want to avoid that. We believe we can secure the water supply for the next 30 to 40 years even with growth by the three strategies we are using.

JONATHAN HARLEY: Bob Carr had even called desalination “bottled electricity” because of its energy demands. So for the man dubbed the “Green Premier”, this turnaround was always going to be touchy.

JOHN BROGDEN, NSW OPPOSITION LEADER: It will cost an enormous amount... [and] force us into debt. It will see a massive increase in water pricing and... see environmental damage in terms of more greenhouse gas emissions. Bob Carr’s credentials as a green Premier are shot to pieces. [THE 7:30 REPORT, 12 JULY 2005, HTTP://WWW.ABC.NET.AU/7.30/CONTENT/2005/S1412876.HTM](http://www.abc.net.au/7.30/content/2005/s1412876.htm).



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We are let into the facility and presented with PPE [Personal Protection Equipment]. The lobby contains a scale-model of the Desalination Plant; a salt water aquarium; and a purified water tank with white plastic cups for employees and guests to drink out of. We help ourselves to a glass to be sure we are hydrated before we begin our tour.

Our guide swipes their access card and opens the glass door to let us in. We scuff our feet against the institutional carpet as we proceed towards the control room; the brains of the Desalination Plant. There, a single employee sits in front of a bank of screens that glow with multi-coloured mosaics of spreadsheets and live-feed data. The Desalination Plant has around 25 employees on site at any time, to produce 20% of the city’s drinking water. At night, a single employee looks over the facility from this control room, the only part of the plant which is staffed 24/7. When you go to bed at night, it’s likely the same employee will be sitting watching the screens in the darkness, making sure there will be cold water coming out of the tap to splash your face when you wake up in the morning.

We exit the control room to an exterior hallway, past a once-decorative water wall, now stained by mineral deposits and in a state of disrepair. We’re led to the far northwest corner of the grounds, around the back side of a small t-shaped building. There we witness the process of desalination beginning.



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1-3 MIKE BIANCO & LOREN KRONEMYER, *BRACKISH RISING*, 2017. LEFT TO RIGHT: SALINE FOOD DEMONSTRATION, WELLS PARK; BRACKISH TOUR OF KWINANA; OPENING OF BRACKISH RISING, PERTH SEAWATER DESALINATION PLANT. PHOTOS: MARCO MARCON, KATHERINE WILKINSON.

A metal spine of panels covers a giant mesh-paddled auger. The axel turns and bits of large debris are spit out into a commercial skip-bin as they are separated from the saline water. We look into the bin and see large piles of kelp and a small number of dead fish. This is the moment where we fully understand that we are, in fact, drinking the ocean.

On the west side of the building are six oversized skip-bins. This time the bins are lined up side-by-side, east to west, and filled with a rust coloured material that looks like freshly mixed clay. We're informed that the technical term for this material is 'sludge,' and that it is used as a coagulant to filter out particulate matter which may damage the sensitive filters that will be used later on in the process. Attempts to recycle the sludge for 'sustainable' purposes have yet to materialise. For now, the bins are dumped into the nearby landfill.

We keep walking south, past a large building to our left that emits an anxious, metallic whine. A pod of massive metal tanks lays before us. Each tank is painted a different colour, hues of blue without any utilitarian correlation. From a satellite view they have a certain whimsy, like megalodon eggs dyed for Easter. We approach the covered walkway between the tanks, which frames the azure waters of the Cockburn Sound like a cycloptic eye. We're told each tank is half-filled with a mixture of sand and anthracite; a kind of industrially-sized charcoal filter.

"Filtration occurs when the water flows down through two layers of media: anthracite and sand. Each medium has a function: the anthracite retains suspended solids, while the sand reduces the fouling index or SDI [Silt Density Index]." [DEGREMONT, HTTP://WWW.DEGREMONT.COM/EN/KNOW-HOW/MUNICIPAL-WATER-TREATMENT/DESALINATION/SEA-WATER-FILTRATION-SEACLEAN/](http://www.degremont.com/en/KNOW-HOW/MUNICIPAL-WATER-TREATMENT/DESALINATION/SEA-WATER-FILTRATION-SEACLEAN/).

"Coal of a hard, dense, non-bituminous variety that consists of relatively pure carbon and burns with little flame and smoke; [as a count noun] an example or form of such coal. Also called *glance-coal*, *blind-coal*, *stone-coal*." [OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY, 2017](#).

"The extraction and processing of anthracite coal caused an enormous environmental impact to nearly 100,000 acres of terrestrial and aquatic habitat throughout north-eastern and east-central Pennsylvania. Original terrestrial forests were destroyed by strip mining and the deposition of culm material. Due to those activities, thousands of acres are marred by steep slopes and coarse substrates characterised by low fertility, toxic levels of certain elements, extreme drought, and high summertime temperatures. Natural revegetation has proceeded slowly on mine-impacted sites, resulting in sparse communities of low-value scrubby species. Ecological productivity, biological diversity, and recreation values are substantially lower on mined sites than on forested unmined areas. Animal life is also impaired due to insufficient food and water, and to extreme physical conditions." Testimony of Kenneth M. Klemow, Ph.D. Certified Senior Ecologist and Botanist, Presented to the US House of Representatives Committee on Resources Oversight Hearing on the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Needs of the Pennsylvania Anthracite Fields, Scranton, Pennsylvania, 24 January 2000, [HTTP://WWW.WILKES.EDU/ACADEMICS/COLLEGES/SCIENCE-AND-ENGINEERING/THE-INSTITUTE-FOR-ENVIRONMENTAL-SCIENCE-AND-SUSTAINABILITY/ENVIRONMENTAL-SUSTAINABILITY/ENVIRONMENTAL-EFFECTS-OF-MINING/](http://www.wilkes.edu/academics/colleges/science-and-engineering/the-institute-for-environmental-science-and-sustainability/environmental-sustainability/environmental-effects-of-mining/).

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1-2 MIKE BIANCO & LOREN KRONEMYER, *BRACKISH RISING*, 2017. LEFT TO RIGHT: BRACKISH TOUR OF KWINANA; WATER TASTING, THE SPECTACLES WETLANDS. PHOTOS: MARCO MARCON, LOREN KRONEMYER.



1

This is the last filtration system which relies on naturally available materials, sifting down the finest particulates until there is only water and salt left in the brackish mixture.

“Coal mining is one of the core industries that contribute to the economic development of a country but deteriorate the environment. It is excavated by both opencast and underground mining methods and affects the environment, especially water resources, by discharging huge amounts of mine water. The mine water may be acidic or neutral depending upon the pyrite content in the coal as inorganic impurities. It degrades the water quality of the region in terms of lowering the pH of the surrounding water resources and increasing the level of total suspended solids, total dissolved solids and some heavy metals.” *TIWARY, R.K., WATER, AIR & SOIL POLLUTION, 2001, VOL. 132, NO. 1, P. 132.*

We turn 180 degrees around to face the corner of the large humming building again. We walk to its front and see a sign that says “Reverse Osmosis Building”. This is one of the only facilities at the Perth Seawater Desalination Plant visible from the public access on Barter Road. It’s also arguably the most important facility in the entire plant. If every other filtration system we’d seen so far constituted a network of smaller organs, then this room was the massive liver.

We entered the deafening sound of the room. In front of us were hundreds of cylinders stacked on top of each other on the far west and east sides of the building. Each cylinder contains numerous specialised reverse osmosis filters, manufactured by the DOW Chemical Company.



2

Brackish Rising: Who makes the membranes?

Water Corporation Representative: There's a few different membrane suppliers. The one that we use is from America. It's an American supplier. But of course with desalination, with the importance and reliance on desalination increasing, there's a lot of new suppliers popping up all the time, but of course we would have to go through a really rigorous testing regime if we did want to change membranes. It's quite an expensive part of the desalination process.

BR: It's like the heart of the process, right?

WCR: Yeah, and one membrane is \$700-\$800 dollars, so you've got seven membranes in a pressure vessel, 144 pressure vessels in a rack, 12 racks...it's quite an expense. So if anything was to happen to those membranes, if our pre-treatment process failed and the racks were impacted, it's quite an expensive process, so we've got to make sure that everything is working as designed, and that means regular checks, regular calibration.

BR: Wow, what a remarkable piece of infrastructure, and a pretty incredible technology. What company is producing that kind of material?

WCR: The Company?

BR: Yeah, do you happen to know?

WCR: Well...Dow, we use Dow membranes for this plant.

WATER CORPORATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE IN CONVERSATION WITH BRACKISH RISING, 1 DECEMBER 2017.

"Perth and Sydney: DOW FILMTECTM elements are installed at three of the largest desalination facilities in the Southern Hemisphere. The Perth Seawater Desalination Plant treats 144,000 m3 of seawater per day and at its inception became Perth's biggest single water source, providing some 17% of the city's supply needs. The Southern Seawater Desalination Plant (stage 1) outside of Perth uses DOW FILMTEC elements in a two-pass RO system for seawater and brackish water, producing 50 billion litres of drinking water annually. The Sydney Desalination Plant's capacity can provide up to 15% of Sydney's clean water supply." [DOW WATER & PROCESS SOLUTIONS FACT SHEET, MARCH 2011, HTTP://MSDSSEARCH.DOW.COM/PUBLISHEDLITERATUREDOWCOM/DH_08F8/0901B803808F8B0A.PDF?FILEPATH=LIQUIDSEPS/PDFS/NOREG/609-02233.PDF&FRMPAGE=GETDOC.](http://MSDSSEARCH.DOW.COM/PUBLISHEDLITERATUREDOWCOM/DH_08F8/0901B803808F8B0A.PDF?FILEPATH=LIQUIDSEPS/PDFS/NOREG/609-02233.PDF&FRMPAGE=GETDOC)

Each filter is built like a toilet paper roll – layer upon layer of highly specialised synthetic material wrapped around a central high-pressure tube. These filters are so refined that they can strip the smallest microns of salt, resulting in a post-natural form of pure H2O. These filters come at a high price: \$700 a piece, on top of the enormous environmental cost associated with industrial production.

"Once known for seemingly benign products such as Saran food wrap, Dow Chemical later found itself widely denounced as a war criminal for its role in producing napalm and Agent Orange for U.S. troops in Vietnam. Still later, it was at the center of controversies over dioxin, defective breast implants made by its Dow Corning joint venture, and its refusal, after acquiring Union Carbide in 2001, to assume any responsibility for the thousands of people killed or disabled by a massive toxic leak at a pesticide plant run by that company in India.

In late 2015 Dow and its long-time competitor DuPont announced plans to merge and then split into three companies." [DOW CHEMICAL: CORPORATE RAP SHEET, 7 JANUARY 2016, HTTP://WWW.CORP-RESEARCH.ORG/DOWCHEMICAL.](http://WWW.CORP-RESEARCH.ORG/DOWCHEMICAL)

“The International ethecon Black Planet Award 2015 was awarded to board members Andrew Liveris and James Ringler as well as the major stockholders of the Dow Chemical corporation. Axel Köhler-Schnura, founding member and chairperson of ethecon Foundation Ethics & Economics commented: “Dow Chemical is involved in countless crimes against humanity and the environment: funding political parties at election time, tax evasion, environmental destruction through genetic manipulation to radioactive contamination, falsification of measurements, warmongering, price manipulation, bribery, you name it. Chairman Andrew Liveris, board member James M. Ringler and the major stockholders are responsible for the decisions and actions of the corporation Dow Chemical. They are the owners of the corporation. They run the company. They act in the interest of their own power and personal enrichment. To this end they sacrifice morals and ethics and accept the destruction of planet earth.”” [THE ETHICS AND ECONOMICS FOUNDATION, 17 NOVEMBER 2015, HTTPS://BHOPAL.ORG/DOW-CHEMICAL-BLACK-PLANET-AWARD/.](https://bhopal.org/dow-chemical-black-planet-award/)



1

2



The stacks of filters line the cavity of the warehouse like columns in a great cathedral. The space groans with the high-pitch drone of a series of pressure exchangers evocative of Buddhist prayer wheels. Later we confirm that the space felt like a temple to the Anthropocene.

We are led out of the building to the final processing facility at the site – the remineralisation tanks. Our hosts explain to us that water ‘naturally’ likes to grab minerals to stabilise its PH levels. In the case of the Desalination Plant, the water produced is so pure that we’re told “If you drank the water it would kill you. It would make your insides explode”. To avoid this nightmarish reality, and to preserve the quality of the water delivery infrastructure, the Desalination Plant remineralises the water with CO2, Lime, Chlorine and Fluoride. If the plant fails to do this, then they will be pumping a product into the grid that will quickly corrode the pipes down to fragile shells of their former selves. Strip seawater; make it pure water; put chemicals back in it. A simple but curious process.

“For desalination of wastewaters and groundwaters, the energy required is significantly less and the cost is usually less than 50% of that for seawater desalination and maybe as low as \$A 0.20 per metre cubed for blended potable water from groundwater. This leads us to then consider using reverse osmosis for wastewater such as tertiary treated sewage. Perhaps as community attitudes and trust in our technologies improve we will be able to “close the loop” – that is fully recycle water directly.” [COLIN CREIGHTON, DIRECTOR, WATER FOR A HEALTHY COUNTRY, CSIRO, HTTP://WWW.ABC.NET.AU/SCIENCE/EXPERT/REALEXPERT/DESALINATION/02.HTM.](http://www.abc.net.au/science/expert/realexpert/desalination/02.htm)

1-4 MIKE BIANCO & LOREN KRONEMYER, *BRACKISH RISING*, 2017. LEFT TO RIGHT: DIY WATER STILL WORKSHOP, WELLARD; WATER TASTING, PROVIDENCE; BRACKISH TOUR OF KWINANA; WATER TASTING, THE SPECTACLES WETLANDS. PHOTOS: MIKE BIANCO.

“I’m not drinking piss water! I’ll never drink piss water!”

MAN AT THE DARIUS WELLS LIBRARY, KWINANA, 2 MARCH 2017.

We’re informed that at one point or another they had to taste test the final product to see if the water tasted right after chemical processing. We’re left daydreaming about a group of employees in white coats, sipping glass after glass, tinkering with the chemical recipe like a team of molecular gastronomists, tweaking the newly minted water until it tastes just right.

Just beyond the chemical tanks is the last piece of infrastructure on the site – the “2-hour tank”. The concrete bladder holds enough water to supply the Perth metropolitan area for an estimated two hours. Of course, the water system doesn’t work that way; the bladder is constantly drained into the larger grid, where it is consequently used to “improve” the quality of other water sources brought into the grid – each glass a hybrid of sea, ground, and dam water.

“47% desalination for 39% irrigation”. *Brackish Rising*, April 2017. See Water Corporation, *2008-2009 Perth Residential Water Use Study*, [HTTPS://WWW.WATER.WA.GOV.AU/_DATA/ASSETS/PDF_FILE/0016/5272/98576.PDF](https://www.water.wa.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/5272/98576.pdf).

Our gracious guide tells us “that’s it”, and we head back into the building. We briefly meet some other employees and peek into the plant’s glistening white water-testing lab. We’re asked to give the Water Corporation a request list of the photos, videos and audio recordings we would like to make during our next visit. Excitedly, we send through a draft list of the specific recordings we would like to make. Weeks pass; an email arrives with a simple “no.” We are never invited to come inside again.

brackishrising.com

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4

BIOGRAPHIES



MIKE BIANCO

Mike Bianco is an artist, curator, researcher, activist and beekeeper. Bianco's practice often manifests in socially engaged art, with an emphasis on issues of politics, environment, sustainability, community activism, energy decline and the 'century of crisis'. Bianco has exhibited his work internationally, including at the Kenpoku Art Festival in Ibaraki, Japan. Bianco received his Bachelor of Arts in interdisciplinary arts from Alfred University, New York state [2004], a Master of Arts in Curatorial Practice from the California College of the Arts [2007], a Master of Fine Art in Art and Design from the Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan [2015], and is currently a PhD candidate in SymbioticA at the University of Western Australia. Bianco is also an alumnus of the prestigious Dow Sustainability Fellowship, at the University of Michigan, and the only participant to have represented the fields of art and design.



JANET CARTER

Janet Carter completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts at Edith Cowan University in 2008, followed by honours in contemporary arts in 2010. She is currently a PhD candidate, researching contemporary performance practice, at the University of Western Australia.

Carter embraces a range of practices and forms, including performance, new media and installations. Her early work was concerned with investigating contemporary conceptions of gender, sexuality, desire and embodied identity and incorporated notions of immateriality, ephemerality and embodied mindfulness practice. Since establishing 'openkitchen' project in 2014, she has focused on creating collaborative, non-gallery-based, transient participatory works concerned with building resilience in an increasingly precarious world.

She has contributed to a number of group exhibitions, including *HATCHED*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts [2008]; *Video Killed The Radio Star*, Horus & Deloris Contemporary Art Space [2008]; and *Queer City Lane Dwellers*, Guildford Lane Gallery, Melbourne [Midsumma Festival 2009]. In 2011, she was nominated for the Qantas Encouragement of Emerging Australian Art Award and was a finalist in the Churchie Emerging Art Award. She has shown work in the Proximity Festival twice, and, with Elizabeth Pedler, was involved in International Art Space's inaugural *Know Thy Neighbour* program [2016]. She designed and built the craft at the centre of the RAFT ARI and has been an ongoing member of the RAFT curatorial team.



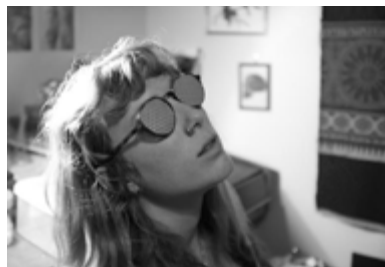
SIMONE JOHNSTON

Simone Johnston is a multi-disciplinary artist from Perth, Western Australia. Her practice is heavily process driven, often combining elements of drawing, photographic documentation, collage, soft and hard sculpture, print processes and recently video.

Simone's work focuses on the relationships between place, ownership and memory within urban and domestic settings. Her ongoing interest in social space, temporary architecture and wearable micro-structures has increasingly seen her practice shift out of conventional gallery sites and into public spaces.

Simone holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with First Class Honours from Curtin University, 2007. Recent projects include *RUMBLESTRIP*, a one-night art installation held on Pier Street, Northbridge, supported by City of Perth, 2016; and *Estates*, 55 Sydenham Rd, Marrickville, 2015. She was commissioned by City of Subiaco to make an augmented reality sculpture for *Subiaco pARK*, as part of the 2015 Perth International Arts Festival. She has held two solo exhibitions in Perth: *It feels as though we've always been here*, Paper Mountain, 2014; and *Society of Strangers*, Free Range Gallery, 2011.

PHOTO: YVONNE DOHERTY



LOREN KRONEMYER

Loren Kronemyer is an internationally exhibiting artist from Los Angeles, California. Kronemyer's work explores across disciplines to pursue ideas of interspecies communication, ecological agency and self-annihilation. She came to Perth in 2011 to work with the SymbioticA lab, and since then has worked with scientific institutions such as the Centre for Sleep Science, Centre for Integrative Bee Research, CELLcentral and the Western Australian Herbarium. Her artwork has been shown at the Fremantle Art Centre; Perth Institute of Contemporary Art; The Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Perth; Next Wave Festival, Melbourne; Proximity Festival, Perth; and Perth International Arts Festival.



DAN McCABE

Dan McCabe's artistic practice critically interrogates the logic of contemporary suburban and urban landscapes, and is concerned with our relationships and lived experiences in these environments.

His recent works question our relationship with the natural landscape, with the aim of understanding the contradiction between suburbia and a longing-for nature evident in pursuits such as swimming, camping and bushwalking. McCabe is interested in what drives our desire to control nature and experience it in codified forms [evident in owning and maintaining blocks of land and in luxury camping] and in exploring the resultant consequences of this controlled loss: what happens when it starts to unravel, or when a minority faction subverts the suburban ideal?

McCabe has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions at A-CH Gallery, Brisbane; Griffith University Art Gallery; John Paynter Gallery, Newcastle; Queensland Centre for Photography; Perth Centre for Photography; Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne; Metro Arts, Brisbane; Ryan Renshaw Gallery, Brisbane; Moana Project Space, Perth; and Perth Fashion Festival. He presented *Shadows on the hill*, an artist-designed portable shelter, at the 2016 Next Wave Festival in Melbourne.



TANYA LEE

Tanya Lee is a Western Australian artist based in Perth. Her work is multidisciplinary often taking the form of performances and tasks undertaken in public spaces, but her practice also includes drawing, sculpture and video.

Tanya's work looks at everyday tasks to create humorous, absurd and even futile narratives that subvert the protocols and politics of social environments. Through recent projects she has become increasingly interested in audience agency and participatory elements as having potential to shape and even drive an artwork.

Recently Tanya was commissioned to create new work for *NEW 16* at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. She also took part in the SITUATE Arts Lab at Salamanca Arts Centre in Hobart in 2016. Projects in Perth have included commissioned work for *Here&Now15*: an exhibition of sculpture in an ever-expanding field, held at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery; Proximity Festival 2014 with the work *Personal Trainer*; and her first solo exhibition *Personal Space*, which was shown at the Fremantle Arts Centre in 2013.

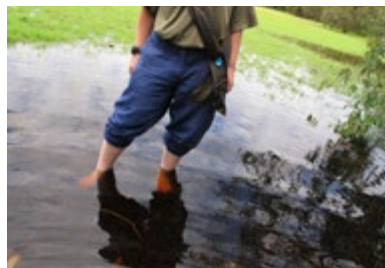
PHOTO: JACQUELINE BALL



ELIZABETH PEDLER

Elizabeth Pedler was born and raised in Perth, and attained a Bachelor of Fine Arts, with first-class honours, at the University of Western Australia. Her work has been shown at TarraWarra Museum of Art, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, The Jewish Museum of Australia, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Harvest Music Festival [Melbourne], Melbourne Fringe Festival and Gertrude Street Projection Festival. She has held solo or two-person exhibitions at galleries in Perth, Melbourne and Launceston. In 2012, Pedler was awarded an ArtStart grant from the Australia Council, and in 2015 was the recipient of a Young People and the Arts fellowship from the Western Australian Government.

In 2014, Elizabeth returned to Perth to undertake creative doctoral studies at Curtin University, focusing on participatory art forms and audience engagement. Interested in the range of participation possible in art, Elizabeth's practice spans playful and interactive installations to collaborative relational aesthetics. Exchange, food and community involvement are areas of particular focus, and have led to significant artistic development in her recent practice, engaging with audiences through the sharing of experiences.



PERDITA PHILLIPS

Dr Perdita Phillips is an Australian artist who is primarily interested in the environment and often refers to scientific understandings in her work. She uses diverse media, including walking, mapping, drawing, sculpture, digital art, installations, ephemeral outdoor works/ situations [eclogues], photographs, videos, book art, sound installations and spatial sound, found objects and collage. Her work expresses a continuing interest in the relationships between humans and non-humans [rocks, plants, animals, ecosystem processes]. Her 2016 exhibitions include *Enhancement: Carry me* [solo] 149 Beaufort St; *Radical Ecologies*, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art; *MAKING SENSE*, i3S Instituto de Investigação e Inovação em Saúde, Universidade do Porto, Portugal; *Field working slow making*, Spectrum Project Space, Edith Cowan University; *Direct Address*, Eastern Riverina Arts, Wagga Wagga [curated by artist]; and *Love Letters to other worlds*, part of *Hacking the Anthropocene*, IWCS Dickson Street Space, Sydney. In 2017, she will be Artsource Artspace Sydney Resident, supported by the Western Australian Department of Culture and the Arts.

PHOTO: HOLLY STORY

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Simone Johnston, Tanya Lee and International Art Space acknowledge and thank *The Perth Voice* for their generous support of this project, with particular thanks to Steve Grant, Natalie Hug and Andrew Smith for sharing your passion and humour for local news and love for your readers. Thanks also to Jenny D'Anger and David Bell.

Special thanks to *The Perth Voice* readers: Rosie of Mt Hawthorn and her beautiful family, thank you for stepping out on an adventure with us; Debbie of Inglewood and her friend who we hope is feeling better; the tight knit community of Woodville Reserve dog park and their furry friends, with a special mention to Brian; passionate campaigners Keith and Geraldine of Bayswater, keep fighting for what you want your city to be! Thanks also to Ruth of Cowle Street for sharing her memories with us.

A special and final thank you to Marco and Katherine, Yvonne Doherty, Rizzy, Gemma Weston, Mel Johnston, Richard Lee and of course Chocky and Killi.

SALT THE EARTH

Loren Kronemyer and International Art Space would like to acknowledge the support and contributions of Mike Bianco, Ryonen Butcher, Hazel Dempster, Dudley Lake and Sally Lake.

-ING

Perdita Phillips and International Art Space would like to acknowledge the support of the Claise Brook Catchment Group in hosting the *Weed-ing* event at the Robertson Park wetland and answering many questions about the lost wetlands of Northbridge, Claisebrook and North Perth. The one week exhibition of *Carry me, join me* was hosted by North Metropolitan TAFE at the artist-in-residence space at 149 Beaufort Street, Northbridge. With thanks to Thelma John at Gallery Central, the staff at Government House for giving permission to take a water sample, and participants including; Michael, Dalma, Tyler, Annika, Elizabeth, Jenny, Georgia, Katherine, Margaret and Sue. Finally a special thanks to Dr Nien Schwarz for participating in, then picking apart the project and writing an insightful and passionate essay in unsettled times.

EAT THE CITY

International Art Space and artists Janet Carter and Elizabeth Pedler would like to gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and organisations for their assistance and input on the project: Julie Broad and Food Rescue, Ruah, Sheila Purvis and the staff at Tranby Centre, Sally Dare, City Farm East Perth, Men of the Trees and CIA Studios.

Eat the City is in every sense a collaboration and we would like to send our special thanks and to recognise the vital contributions from our collaborators, co-conspirators and fellow artists; Brooke 'Sparkles' Murphy, Len, Malcolm Kau, Dale Tilbrook and Corey Galea.

Janet, Elizabeth and International Art Space would also like to thank each and every one of the participants who came to the dinners and the walks; who asked questions, shared their own knowledge and contributed to the gift economy of learning about food and food culture.

SHADOWS ON THE HILL

Dan McCabe and International Art Space would like to acknowledge the support of Mitch Hanson from St Bartholomew's House for his enthusiasm in facilitating the community engagement activities, as well as the team at Perth City Farm for warmly welcoming *Shadows on the hill* to their Saturday farmer's markets. Special thanks go to Katherine Wilkinson, Rosie Jack, Tom Allum, and Mitchell Withers. *Shadows on the hill* was originally commissioned for the 2016 Next Wave Festival in Melbourne through their flagship Kickstart program and received financial funding from the Department of Culture and the Arts.

BRACKISH RISING

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A special thank you goes to our project volunteers Ariel Turner, Nicole Andres and Eileen Mitchell. Finally, International Art Space, Mike and Loren would like to thank all participants and visitors to the *Brackish Rising* Mobile Research Lab, events, tours and water tastings – thank you for joining us on this water journey.

MIKE BIANCO & LOREN
KRONEMYER, *BRACKISH*
RISING, 2017, BRACKISH TOUR
OF KWINANA. PHOTO:
MARCO MARCON.





About International Art Space

International Art Space is a leading West Australian arts organisation presenting a program of ambitious and dynamic socially engaged and context-responsive art. We create diverse and challenging experiences for artists and communities through contemporary visual art.

International Art Space [formerly IASKA] was formed in 1998 by farmers and art professionals interested in exploring cultural identity through art. Since its inception, International Art Space has run over 100 residency-based projects by artists from over 20 countries and organised five national touring exhibitions.

spaced.org.au



Project partners



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Department of **Culture and the Arts**



Government of **Western Australia**
North Metropolitan **TAFE**



Know Thy Neighbour #1

International Art Space's Perth-based series of temporary and context-responsive art projects.

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