BORN OBSELETE

Exhibition dates: 4 October – 15 October 2016 Woolloongabba Art Gallery

KAREN STEPHENS

(A solo exhibition of plein air paintings)

Born Obselete is a series of contemporary plein air paintings that investigate the displaced object in the urban landscape. My subjects are remnants caught in the cycle of consumption and disposal. Their position highlights changes and patterns within society that are most prominent in areas of dense population.

The works were produced at the same time I was reading articles about digital automation, post humanism and the end of work. In between these larger issues were advertisements that instructed me to 'buy' (at crazy prices) 'overstocked and discontinued' items 'now' or I will 'miss out'. I empathise with the items I paint that have been dedicated to efficiency. It's much harder to find a permanent job these days and the discarded objects force me to question my own worth and skill in the age of the intelligent machine.

My subjects form a commentary about a quiet revolution that is largely unnoticed on our streets. I use the incomplete jaw bone to comment on endless consumption. At the time of painting Skull and Coke (2015) I researched Coca-Cola Amatil's forever changing slogans. For example 'consume' (2015) and 'taste the feeling' (2016). The financial pages demonstrated yearly profits were dismal for *Coke* and that the soft drink King was slowly losing its crown to healthier beverages such as bottled water.

Painting in the urban environment is both challenging and exciting. People are suspicious of cameras but the medium of paint quietly slips though these boundaries. My method is not about the ability to capture light and atmosphere but to work directly to expose an invisible pattern and a larger contemporary issue. I only have a small window of time to work upon spotting a subject. My momentary visibility invites conversation from passers-by which usually starts with "Wadda ya paint'in that for?"

References:

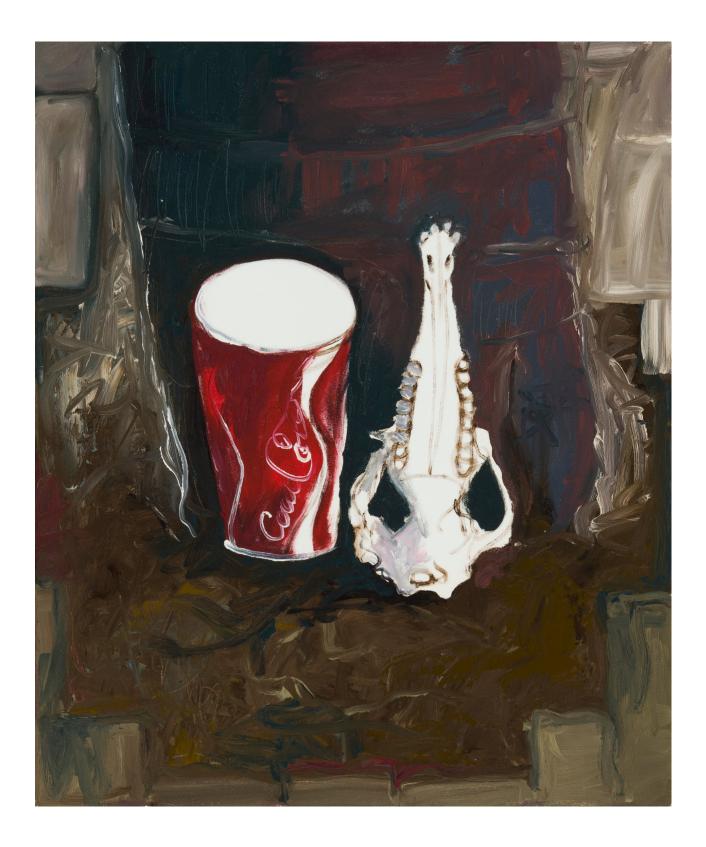
Müller, Christopher. 2015. "Critical Posthumanism. We are born obsolete: Günther Anders's (Post)humanism." Accessed 30 August. http://www.criticalposthumanism.net/?page_id=433

Thompson, Derek. 2015. "A World Without Work." Atlantic, July/August 2015, 51-61.

Watkins, Alison. "Coke battles to get ahead of the curve as consumers' taste for soft drinks fizzles out." The Australian, Business, 27-28

August 2016, 25 and 30

(Obsolete intentionally spelled 'Obselete' by the artist to manually override the automatic spell checking system (9)



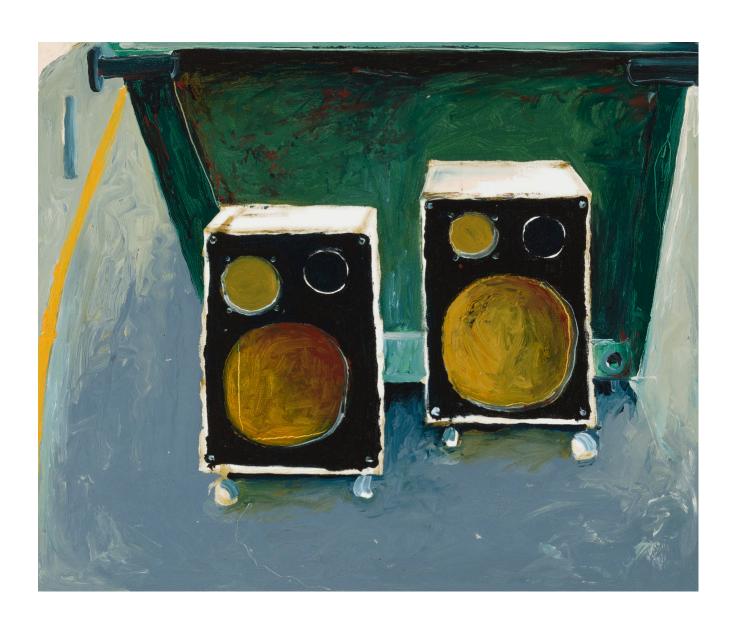
Skull and Coke 2015 Oil on Polyester 60 x 50cm



7301280X1 Payphone 2015 Oil on Polyester 60 x 50cm



Laundered 2015 Oil on Polyester 60 x 50cm



Stripped Speakers 2015 Oil on Polyester 50 x 60cm



Roadrunners 2015 Oil on Polyester 50 x 60cm



Open Jaw 2015 Oil on Polyester 50 x 60cm



The numbers are always changing 2015 Oil on Polyester 50 x 60cm



Kerbside Arrangement 2015 Oil on Polyester 50 x 60cm



Anxiety I can't see who is watching but I know they are 2015 Oil on Polyester 50 x 60cm



The Forceful's Propellor 2015 Oil on Polyester 50 x 60cm

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Karen Stephens (b. 1974) is an emerging Queensland artist who was born in Townsville and raised in Winton, remote Central Queensland. Karen investigates 'the self' through landscape and comments on contemporary debate and societal changes through the lens of landscape painting. Her Honours research investigates contemporary landscape painting in the digital era. Her works are both undertaken inside the studio and *en plein air*.

Karen has produced two solo exhibitions of paintings since her graduation from Griffith University Queensland College of Art in 2015. She has been the recipient of a number of awards and her work is represented by private and public collections within Queensland. Karen was awarded the *Art for Life Award* as part of the 2016 Queensland Regional Art Awards and Flying Arts Queensland. Her controversial landscape painting *Noogooraville* (2015) responds to the 'Colours of Queensland' and will tour at the Judith Wright Centre and Queensland Regional galleries throughout 2017.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Education

2016	Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours (current) (deferred)
2014 - 2015	Bachelor of Fine Arts Major (Painting) and Specialisation (Art Theory)
	Griffith University - Queensland College of Art (GPA 6.813 out of 7)
2012 - 2013	Diploma of Visual Arts and Contemporary Craft – (SBIT)

<u>Awards</u>

2016	Flying Arts Arts for Life Award Queensland Regional Art Awards
2016	Redland Art Prize - Finalist
2015	Bonnie English Memorial Art Theory Award – Griffith University
2015	Bruce Heiser Book Award for Highest Average Grade for Painting
2014 & 2015	Griffith Award for Academic Excellence - Bachelor of Fine Art
2013	Brian Tucker Highest Achievement Award – (SBIT)

Acquisitions

2016 QRAA Flying Arts Collection, Queensland

Solo Exhibitions

2016	Born Obselete (October) Woolloongabba Art Gallery – Brisbane
2016	I Used to Could (June) Woolloongabba Art Gallery - Brisbane
2014	Inherited Memories - Ipswich Community Gallery, D'Arcy Doyle Place

Group Exhibitions

2016	Colours of Queensland – Queensland Regional Art Awards State Touring
	Exhibition – Flying Arts Queensland.
2016	Something like this but not this - Laundry Art Space (Brisbane ARI)
2016	People - Place - Ipswich Regional Art Gallery
2015	Cream of the Crop - Queensland Regional Art Awards State Touring
	Exhibition - Flying Arts Queensland
2015	Griffith University Queensland College of Art Showcase Exhibition
	(Graduating Exhibition November 26 - 30)
2015	John Villiers Waltzing Matilda Art Prize – Winton Regional Gallery
2014	Drawing {a, b} The Hold Artspace - Brisbane

Residencies

2014 Artist Residency Award – Ipswich Art Awards