

*woolloongabba art gallery*



# Fish·Die·Mouth

Peggy Rae Allen, Kazumi Daido,  
Penelope Grills & Grace Herrmann

Fish.Die.Mouth sees four female artists come together to exchange stories, ideas and creative process. Sharing personal and professional connections to Woolloongabba Art Gallery, the exhibition serves as a platform for meaningful and authentic collaboration between the artists – Peggy-Rae Allen, Kazumi Daido, Penelope Grills and Grace Herrmann. The artists have each brought their own unique style and influences to the show; indeed, each bringing their own personal histories and sense of self.

A focus on feminist discourse is apt when discussing a show which is so clearly autobiographical in its approach. Rich in personal iconography, the works retain a sense of ambiguity and subtlety, skirting recognised signs of femininity and operating in the realm of reinvented 'women's stories'. The reflection, retelling and reinterpretation of these personal narratives and symbology act as an affirmation of agency while demonstrating the importance of authorship.

Through the creative process of image-making, these artists are engaged in the construction and reconstruction of selfhood, a poetic act in itself, that "narrativises, makes meaningful, and fills with passion what would otherwise be a mere string of disconnected events and meaningless words" (Tampere Conference on Narrative 2005, Mark Freeman). Identity is never a static thing, the fluidity and constant flux of 'self' shows how our memories can swim, resurface, float and be raised up before forming new shapes and connections.

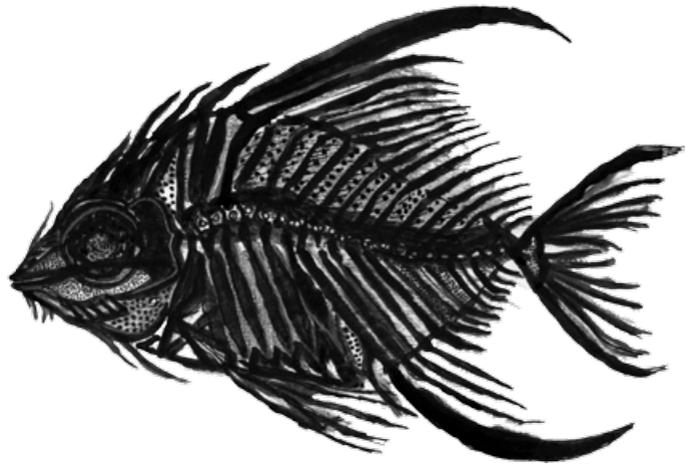
*Francisca Vanderwoude, 30/04/2013*

Sources:

*The Second Tampere Conference on Narrative, Narrative, Ideology, and Myth. Keynote Speakers, Mark Freeman, 2005.*

[www.uta.fi/conference/narrative/speakers.html](http://www.uta.fi/conference/narrative/speakers.html). Accessed 29/04/13

PEGGY RAE ALLEN



This series of work encompasses the habits, hobbies and treasured environments that have been shared and passed on between my extended family and close family friends. I find myself acting similarly to these people that are so important to me, even those I didn't see often due to distance, and the warmth I gain from these intangible ties is everything family and remembrance should be.

I have portrayed this in a visual sense through creating compilations of images from old photographs of family and of myself, doing similar things in like locations. The only real distinctions within the pieces are the separation of time and of place. This method has also given me a chance, as I enter adulthood and start fondly remembering childhood, to quietly grieve over those no longer with me.

My use of a monochromatic colour palette (grey paper, charcoal, white conte, black ink) was intended to both merge the images from the diversely aged photographs into a single cohesive artwork, and to instil a sense of timelessness through the lack of era-identifying colours.

KAZUMI DAIDO



This series of images is a story of a child's journey.

In the images, there are few memorable objects of Australia and Japan that I have used. (I was born in Japan, and moved to Australia in 2003).

I remember seeing a mule in a farm at Cairns when we did a short family trip during a school summer holiday. Jacaranda has been my replacement for cherry blossoms (the Japanese symbol for spring) for the last 10 years. The Gong is at a temple of my father's home in Japan, it is rung 6 o'clock in the morning and afternoon (to let the rest of village know morning and night time).

The series of works are reconstructions of my memories, and I wanted to turn them into a story. My child-like illustration style is influenced by the pictures of a book series called *Moomins*, written and illustrated by Finnish author, Tove Jansson. The *Moomins* series has been translated to Japanese, and has been one of the most popular fictions in Japan for over 50 years. I loved the series and even brought some books with me to Australia.

PENELOPE GRILLS



*“When nothing else subsists from the past, after people are dead, after things are broken and scattered the smell and taste of things remain poised a long time, like souls bearing resiliently, on tiny and almost impalpable drops of their essence, the immense edifice of memory”*

*-Marcel Proust “Remembrance of Things Past”*

I have chosen to investigate the strong link between smell and memory; the recollection of autobiographical events and their associated people, places, times and emotions.

Smell is the oldest sense responding to chemicals unlike our other senses of sight, sound and touch which rely on the perception of a wavelength. Smell travels directly to the brain, the Limbic System, an ancient part that has strong ties to memory and emotion unlike the other senses that pass through a ‘relay’ station, the Thalamus, before being directed to another part of the brain. Maybe the direct path to the brain of this sense is the reason that it is difficult to name a smell without referencing an object such as a rose or using a simile to describe a smell, for example “like the smell of a freshly mown lawn”?

Nearly eight years ago I lost my sense of smell permanently and I am investigating how remembering certain smells still evokes strong memories of certain places and people, in particular the female members of my family.

The memory of my sister and myself making Marigold ‘perfume’ in Mount Isa in the early 1970’s, a concoction of all the Marigold petals we could collect steeped in a bucket of water; a gardenia on my bedside table on my trips to Newcastle during the 1990’s and my memory of my Mother’s skilfully prepared menus for Christmas; the ‘new car’ smell, some of this smell caused by the toxic fumes of phthalates a plastic-softening chemical and a likely contributor to the constant battle with carsickness we had as we drove of our new Volvo from Mt Isa to Brisbane and back again in the late 1970’s and early 80’s. Throughout the 1970’s and 80’s our road trips to my Grandmother’s house at Shorncliffe, where the strong smell of Naphthalene was always present, alongside memories of camping on Moreton Island and the smell of fresh prawns at the kitchen table, straight from the trawler at the end of the street. These trips to Brisbane united my mother, sister and I with our family, my Nan, Aunties and Cousins.

I have enjoyed the journey through my memories, scanning of old slides, talking with family and delving into the history of place and time for each work. I look forward to continuing the investigation of these ideas in future works.

GRACE HERRMANN



My artwork explores how we connect with memories through physical objects. I have kept objects that, at the time, I felt were important to keep as a way of preserving the past. They are not of moneterial value but are incredibly sentimental.

Through them I am able to feel an emotional connection with my childhood and to certain events and people. It is in the same way someone might worship their god/gods by praying in a temple or to rosary beads; through it they are able to feel a connection to their religeon. It is not the object itself that is invaluable to me, but the memories attatched to it.

I have kept things of my deceased Grandparents because I can visualise memories of them more clearly with the aid of that object. I fear that if I lost an object I will forget the memory. For most of them I have only vague memories of where they came from and why I kept them and some objects have changed meaning over time. When I was little I placed far greater value on my little possessions compared to if I were presented with them today. Especially the possessions of my big sister; which I kept long after she was bored or had forgotten them.

I still feel it is important to keep them. Whereas before I wanted to possess things so that I might feel older, now I keep them as a connection to my younger self.

By exhibiting my objects, I have created a completely different connection to them again. What started as my small toys and tokens has now been turned into something that I would not have understood or even thought about as a child. I have given them a purpose that is important to me, and rather than being symbolic of the past they have become a part of my present being.

Even now I am inclined to hold onto objects that I consider hold sentimental value. I hope that one day I will be able to hold them and be reminded of how I feel in this present moment.

A note from the artists:

This is an exhibition that explores how memories are preserved through sound, smell, visual and tactile aids.

Indulging in feelings of nostalgia has become a daily ritual. We find connections to it through different objects, images and even smells. We take photos to preserve moments; keep tokens to remember loved ones.

This exhibition is not only a tribute to the past but also an opportunity to appreciate our present state and to create a memory for the future.

Thank you to...

Woolloongabba Art Gallery for its support, without it we would not have had this opportunity.

Erin Salguero (Artis Pura Custom Framing) who has facilitated us with much needed materials and ideas.

Robyn Grills

John Williams

Our friends and family, because they are why memories are so important.

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