

ANALOGUE ART

IN A
DIGITAL
WORLD

MONIKA BEHRENS

SAM LEACH

NATASHA BIENIEK

TONY LLOYD

CHRIS BOND

AMANDA MARBURG

ANDREW BROWNE

VIV MILLER

MAGDA CEBOKLI

JAN NELSON

SIMON FINN

BECC ORSZÁG

JUAN FORD

DAVID RALPH

STEPHEN HALEY

DATSUNTRAN

MICHELLE HAMER

DARREN WARDLE

KATE JUST

ALICE WORMALD

FOREWORD

The accomplished artists in this exhibition celebrate all that is good about our sometimes problematic even jarring digitised lives.

Analogue Art in a Digital World illustrates how contemporary artists are using traditional techniques including painting, tapestry and knitting alongside technology to create art works that engage or are influenced by digital visual culture.

When asked, the artists in this exhibition readily admit to using digital tools in their defiantly analogue works of art. These include iPhones, iPads, tablets, projectors or a software program. For example, artist and co-curator, Tony Lloyd recently stated that Photoshop could be the most important tool of the contemporary painter and that all his preliminary sketches are done on computer. As a viewer of art, and one perhaps wary of the ways digital is impacting on culture, I find this revelation fascinating.

Painting was my gateway into art. Regular visits to major galleries were a part of my childhood. The reward was a postcard of an important painting to take home and decorate my bedroom. There is something deep about our connection to painting. My postcard selections still resonate in my mind. This exhibition celebrates the reinvigoration of art making and the new boundaries of representational genres.

RMIT Gallery maintains an active interest in artists who can provide new insights into the present and we thank all the

artists involved in this exhibition including high profile alumni from RMIT School of Art. RMIT Gallery is proud to celebrate their professional achievements.

We also warmly thank RMIT alumni Sam Leach and Tony Lloyd for working with us over several years to bring this project to fruition. We are appreciative of their dedication to contemporary art in Melbourne as both artists and curators. I would like to acknowledge the staff at RMIT Gallery whose ability to make our shows appear effortless are very much appreciated: Nick Devlin and his team of installers; Evelyn Tsitas, Senior Communications and Outreach; Jon Buckingham, Collections Coordinator; Maria Stolnik, Gallery Operations Coordinator; Meg Taylor, Exhibitions Assistant; Gallery Assistants: Sophie Ellis, Vidhi Vidhi and Thao Nguyen; and our core of volunteers: Celeste Astorino, Nicole Ganker and Veronica Pang.

Finally we thank: Professor Calum Drummond, DVC Research and Innovation and Vice-President; Professor Paul Gough, PVC and Vice President, College of Design and Social Context; Jane Holt, Executive Director, Research Office, Research and Innovation whose combined on-going support has enabled our program to flourish in 2018.

Helen Rayment
Acting Director

DIGITAL ACCENT

The invention of photography 180 years ago did not mark the beginning of the end for figurative painting and drawing, and none of the subsequent advances in mechanical and digital reproduction have dissuaded artists from picking up a pencil or a brush.

Despite the invention of easier and more accurate means of picture making, figurative painting and drawing persist as compelling forms of visual communication. The analogue artist in the age of digital reproduction has new tools and resources to draw on; high definition photography, image editing software, and the myriad of images provisioned by the internet are necessary studio utilities. These digital assets are a boon for painting and drawing but prolonged exposure to screens has changed the way we think about images and over the past twenty years, analogue art has acquired a digital accent.

Analogue artists are consciously and unconsciously incorporating digital aesthetics into their artworks; screen-like smoothness, pixilation, high resolution clarity, the depiction of artefacts and glitches are all emergent properties of contemporary representational art. Post-digital age artworks reveal to us in their construction many of the subtle influences that digital technology is having on our perception and interpretation of the world.

The artists in this exhibition work in a diverse range of styles and practices however they have key aspects in common.

Their works are all carefully planned in advance. The artists have an analytical approach to their source imagery which is reflected in their nuanced compositions and application of media. Hand-eye coordination is a key aspect of the work; the images are constructed from intentional and articulate marks. The art is simultaneously seductive and cerebral, cool yet emotionally engaging. The physical surfaces are generally smooth or regular and physically alluring. There is a critical concern with the optical effect of the art; the works are mostly high contrast and have an optical intensity which is engaging from a range of distances. The works all reproduce well attesting to the artist's awareness that the work of art in the age of digital reproduction is made to be digitally reproduced. These artists have an innate understanding that all art is fundamentally rhetorical, i.e. every image is in dialogue with every other image from Lascaux to Instagram.

It is important to note that many of these artists also make digital art in parallel to their analogue practice. They are not apologists for traditional media, nor are they uncritical of the new digital order. These artists construct sophisticated and intelligent images and they utilise technology astutely in the service of making their art.

Tony Lloyd

ATTENTION ECONOMICS

There is no digital divide, and this is a show about it.

Digital is a broad term, used interchangeably with the internet, or to mean information encoded in binary form, made with a computer or made with an electronic recording device. We live in a time suffused by the digital in all of its meanings. Whether something is made with a computer or not, the maker lives in a digital world and their output contains traces of the digital. Humans evolved using tools and our consciousness is shaped by them¹ and working with digital tools is shaping our consciousness. All paintings made now are part of the digital world.

The artists in this show are aware of the historical context in which they work, both in terms of shifts in culture towards the digital, and their location in art history. When a painter picks up a brush they lift a millennium of western art even though it weighs as little as a stick with some hairs attached.

Fetishizing the surface of a painting is a limited way to understand the significance of analogue work. The surfaces of the paintings in this show are generally smooth, traces of brushwork, stitching or mark making are present but are subtle rather than deployed as exaggerated flourish. But analogue works have many layers that function simultaneously and in relation to each other. The brush work interacts with the composition and the image. Colour choices are subtle and inflected by scale and context.

An analogue image is always perfectly sharp, to a molecular level, even when it is blurry. In the hands of a skilled

practitioner, these components of a work can provoke, engage and antagonise a viewer.

Whitney Davis observed that certain paintings could be done on a computer, and that whether or not a computer was used in the production of the work is a “circumstantial fact”². In principle, with a sufficiently complex robot or printing system, there need be no shade of nuance in the physical object that makes it definitively analogue. Being able to accurately render something isn’t nearly enough to make an artwork compelling. Nobody needs to paint a picture or use their hands to make any sort of image. Not in the way that we need to breathe or drink. Skill is a valuable commodity and there is a delight in the appreciation of a skillfully made work, but skill alone is boring. The salient point is that paintings made now, and the artworks in this show, could not have been made without the digital.

One of the significant cultural developments of the digital age is the emergence of attention economics. When a product is given free, attention becomes the commodity. In a museum, the time the artist has spent making the work is given like a gift to the viewer. It has long been observed that visitors to museums do not linger in front of a work. Painters are well attuned to the transient relationship between viewer and image. This may be why the artists in this show feel at home making and presenting work in the digital age.

Sam Leach

- 1 Lewis, J. (2006), *Cortical Networks Related to Human Use of Tools*, *The Neuroscientist*, Vol 12, Issue 3, pp. 211 – 231.
- 2 Davis, W. (2006), *How to Make Analogies in a Digital Age*, *October*, no. 117, (Massachusetts: MIT Press, Summer 2006).

Monika Behrens

Pronk 1, 2017

oil on canvas

168 x 198 cm



Natasha Bieniek

Biophilia, 2015

oil on dibond

9 x 9 cm

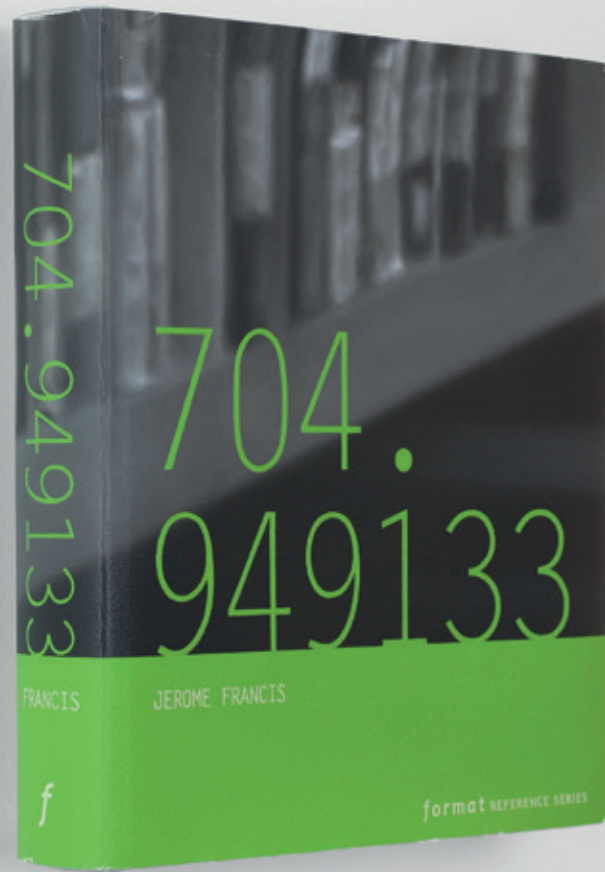


Chris Bond

704.949133, 2016

oil on canvas, fabric, paper, card

25 x 21 x 4 cm



Andrew Browne

Untitled #4 (In between days), 2016

oil on linen

191 x 127 cm

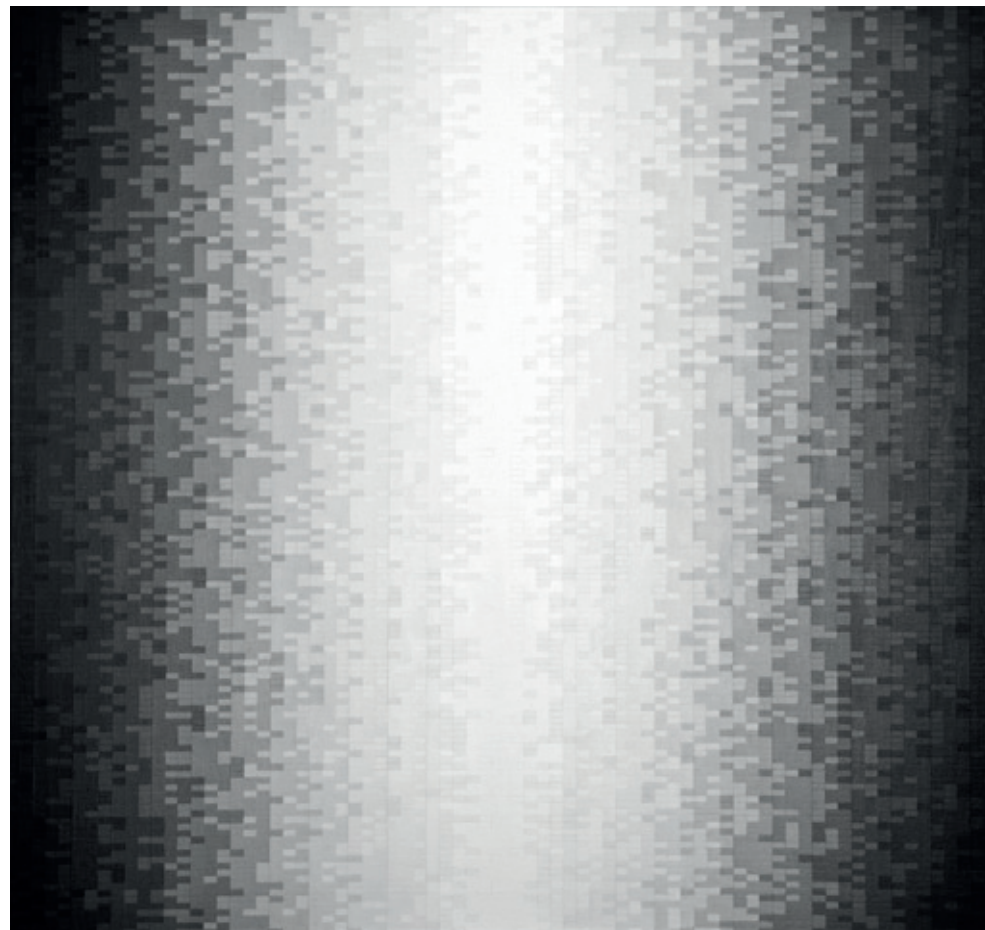


Magda Cebokli

Probability Monochrome #4, 2010

acrylic on canvas

91.5 x 85.5 cm

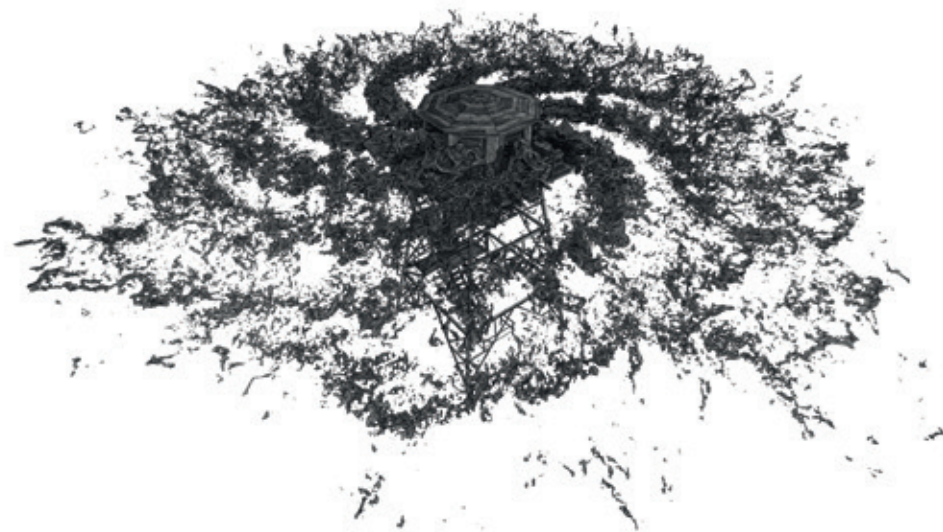


Simon Finn

Steady State Disruption, 2015

charcoal on paper

70 x 120 cm



Juan Ford

Rocket Surgery, 2010

oil on linen

76 x 61 cm



Stephen Haley

Worry World Town, 2017

oil on linen

120 x 120 cm



Michelle Hamer

Work what you got, 2011

mixed yarn on perforated plastic

51 x 68 cm



Kate Just

Feminist Fan #37 (Zanele Muholi, Somnyama Ngonyama Series:

Zinathi I, Johannesburg. 2015), 2017

hand knitted wool and acrylic yarns

50 x 36 cm



Sam Leach

Glove with Sectioned Finger, 2018

oil on linen

101 x 76 cm



Tony Lloyd

Mass Movement, 2018

oil on linen

61 x 121 cm



Amanda Marburg

Darcy, 2018

oil on board

38.5 x 49.5 cm



Viv Miller

Cave and moon, 2015

oil, enamel and pencil on canvas

140 x 130 cm



Jan Nelson

Black River Running #10, 2018

oil on linen

75 x 61 cm



Becc Ország

The Source of All Things (Birth of the Rivers), 2016

graphite pencil and 24kt gold leaf on 600gsm Fabriano watercolour paper

105 x 76 cm



David Ralph

Open Heart, 2018

oil on canvas

170 x 150 cm



Datsun Tran

Heroes on the Frontier, 2018

oil on board

75 x 300 cm



Darren Wardle

Monument, 2017

oil and acrylic on linen
220 x 170 cm



Alice Wormald

Hanging Moon, 2017
oil and acrylic on linen
104 x 83 cm



LIST OF WORKS

Monika Behrens

Echo II, 2016
oil on canvas
122 x 102 cm

Echo III, 2017
oil on canvas
122 x 102 cm

Pronk I, 2017
oil on canvas
168 x 198 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and Martin Browne
Contemporary, Sydney

Natasha Bieniek

Biopod 2, 2018
oil on dibond
14 x 9 cm

Biophilia, 2015
oil on dibond
9 x 9 cm

Courtesy of the
artist and THIS IS NO
FANTASY, Melbourne
and Jan Murphy
Gallery, Brisbane

Julien, 2014
oil on dibond
9 x 9 cm

The Seldon Robinson
Collection, Melbourne

Chris Bond

Welcome Stranger,
2016
oil on canvas, paper
and card
17 x 11 x 1 cm

704.949133, 2016
oil on canvas, paper
and card
25 x 21 x 4 cm

Gretel, 2016
oil on canvas and
calico
17 x 10 x 2 cm

LE VITT-FROM
ASHES, 2016
oil on canvas, fabric,
paper and card
31 x 27 x 3 cm

The Restless Dead,
2016
oil on canvas and
calico
18 x 10 x 1 cm

Courtesy of the artist,
THIS IS NO FANTASY,
Melbourne and Darren
Knight Gallery, Sydney

Andrew Browne

Fall #3, 2017
oil on linen
240 x 173 cm

Untitled #4
(In between days),
2016
oil on linen
191 x 127 cm

Ghostly, 2014
oil on linen
210 x 140 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and Tolarno Galleries,
Melbourne

Magda Cebokli

Probability
Monochrome:
A State of Certainty,
2013
acrylic on canvas
101.5 x 122 cm

Probability
Monochrome:
Eclipse, 2012
acrylic on canvas
101.5 x 122 cm

Probability
Monochrome #4,
2010
acrylic on canvas
91.5 x 85.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Simon Finn

Rotation Clockwise,
2016
charcoal on paper
85 x 150 cm

Steady State
Disruption, 2015
charcoal on paper
70 x 120 cm

Steady State
Expiration, 2015
charcoal on paper
70 x 120 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and MARS Gallery,
Melbourne

Juan Ford

Degenerator, 2013
oil on linen
180 x 240 cm

Purchased through the
RMIT Art Fund, 2014
RMIT University Art
Collection
Accession no:
RMIT.2014.1

Chlorophilia, 2010
oil on linen
91 x 74 cm

Courtesy of the
artist and THIS IS NO
FANTASY, Melbourne

Rocket Surgery, 2010
oil on linen
76 x 61 cm

The Seldon Robinson
Collection, Melbourne

Stephen Haley

Worry World Town,
2017
oil on linen
120 x 120 cm

Products and
Producers, 2018
acrylic on linen
81 x 81 cm

Windows and Walls,
2018
acrylic on linen
81 x 81 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and MARS Gallery,
Melbourne

Michelle Hamer

Give Up Your Day Job,
2009
hand stitching
and mixed yarn on
perforated plastic
55 x 136 cm

Is This Your New
Home, 2011
hand stitching
and mixed yarn on
perforated plastic
82 x 104.5 cm

Put Yourself In A
Better Place, 2011
mixed yarn on
perforated plastic
82 x 104.5 cm

Work What You Got,
2011
hand stitching
and mixed yarn on
perforated plastic
51 x 68 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Kate Just

Feminist Fan #10
(Cindy Sherman,
Untitled Film Still #6,
1977), 2015
hand knitted wool
and acrylic yarns
46 x 36 cm

Feminist Fan #13
(Valie Export, Action
Pants, Genital Panic,
1969), 2015
hand knitted wool
and acrylic yarns
50 x 36 cm

Feminist Fan #15
(Claude Cahun, Self
Portrait, 1927), 2015
hand knitted wool
and acrylic yarns
46 x 36 cm

Feminist Fan #18
(Yoko Ono, Cut Piece,
1965), 2016
hand knitted wool
and acrylic yarns
46 x 36 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Feminist Fan
#36 (Robert
Mapplethorpe's
photographic portrait
of Louise Bourgeois
1982, printed 1991),
2017
hand knitted wool
and acrylic yarns
46 x 36 cm

Collection of
Jo Christopoulos,
Melbourne

Feminist Fan #37
(Zanele Muholi,
Somnyama
Ngonyama
Series: Zinathi I,
Johannesburg. 2015),
2017
hand knitted wool
and acrylic yarns
46 x 36 cm

Private Collection,
Melbourne

Sam Leach

Leonov Sliced, 2018
oil on linen
101 x 76 cm

Glove with Sectioned
Finger, 2018
oil on linen
101 x 76 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and Sullivan+Strumpf,
Sydney

Tony Lloyd
K2 with jet and tracks,
2017
oil on linen
120 x 240 cm

Mass Movement,
2018
oil on linen
61 x 121 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and MARS Gallery,
Melbourne

Amanda Marburg

Audrey, 2018
oil on board
38.5 x 49.5 cm

Darcy, 2018
oil on board
38.5 x 49.5 cm

The Seldon Robinson
Collection, Melbourne

Viv Miller

Cave Entry, 2015
oil on canvas
120 x 100 cm

Cave and Moon, 2015
oil, enamel and pencil
on canvas
140 x 130 cm

Courtesy of the
artist and Neon Parc,
Melbourne

Jan Nelson

*Black River Running
#10*, 2018
oil on linen
75 x 61 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and Anna Schwartz
Gallery, Melbourne

Becc Ország

*Fragmentation
of mind (be still/
withdraw)*, 2017
graphite pencil and
24kt gold leaf on
600gsm Fabriano
watercolour paper
75 x 52 cm

*Hope (align yourself
with me)*, 2017
graphite pencil and
24kt gold leaf on
600gsm Fabriano
watercolour paper
75 x 52 cm

*The Source of All
Things (Birth of the
Rivers)*, 2016
graphite pencil and
24kt gold leaf on
600gsm Fabriano
watercolour paper
105 x 76 cm

Courtesy of the artist

David Ralph

Open Heart, 2018
oil on canvas
170 x 150 cm

Eclipse, 2018
oil on canvas
72 x 63 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and Gallery 9, Sydney

Datsun Tran

*Heroes on the
Frontier*, 2018
oil on board
75 x 300 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Darren Wardle

Monument, 2017
oil and acrylic on
linen
220 x 170 cm

Secrets Travel, 2017
oil and acrylic on
linen
137 x 244 cm

Courtesy of the
artist and THIS IS NO
FANTASY, Melbourne

Alice Wormald

Dry Garden, 2017
oil on linen
88 x 73 cm

Hanging Moon, 2017
oil and acrylic on
linen
104 x 83 cm

Courtesy of the artist
and Daine Singer,
Melbourne

ANALOGUE ART IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Curated by Sam Leach and Tony Lloyd

RMIT Gallery
December 7 2018 – January 19 2019

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the curators Sam Leach and Tony Lloyd for their insight and commitment to the exhibition. Warm thanks to the artists and their representatives for their ongoing support.

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Curators thanks: We'd like to thank Helen Rayment and Evelyn Tsitas for giving us the opportunity to develop this exhibition for RMIT Gallery and all the staff at RMIT Gallery in particular, Nick Devlin, for his installation expertise. We would also like to thank the artists who contributed to the concept of the show through conversation and correspondence, not all of whom could be included in this exhibition. Lastly our profound gratitude to the exhibiting artists. The idea of an exhibition that highlights the intelligence of painting and drawing is something we have been discussing for over 10 years and it is with great satisfaction that we are able to bring these artists together in this context.

Acting Director & Senior Exhibition Coordinator:
Helen Rayment

Senior Advisor Communications & Outreach:
Evelyn Tsitas

Exhibition Installation Coordinator: Nick Devlin

Installation Technicians : Fergus Binns,
Beau Emmett, Ford Larman, Simone Tops

Collections Coordinator: Jon Buckingham

Collections Assistant: Ellie Collins

Gallery Operations Coordinator: Maria Stolnik

Gallery Assistants: Sophie Ellis, Thao Nguyen,
Meg Taylor, Vidhi Vidhi

RMIT Gallery Interns & Volunteers: Celeste Astorino,
Nicole Ganker, Veronica Pang (Communications)

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Saturday 12–5.

Closed Sundays & public holidays. Free admission.
Lift access available.

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