



Gosia Wlodarczak, *Process Capsule Situations Sofitel*, 2014, digital photo-collage, archival inkjet print on Hahnemuhle Rag 300gsm, 101 x 241 cm. Documentation photographer Longin Sarnecki. Printer: Image Science.

Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award 2014

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The 2014 Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award

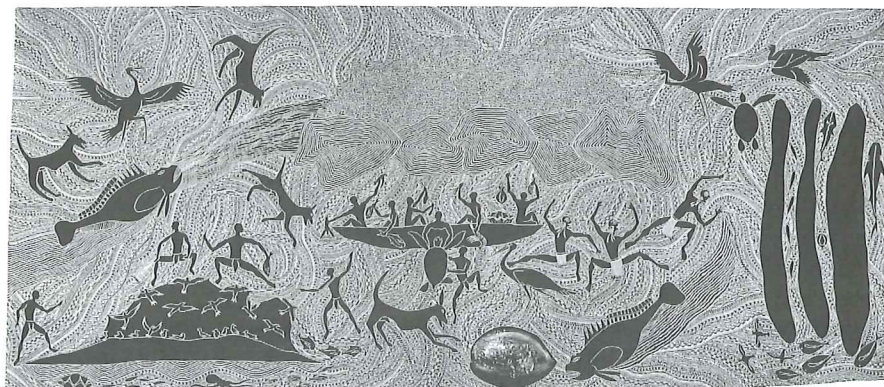
attracted 272 entries from which 55 finalists were selected. This annual award and exhibition has long been regarded as the most prestigious in Australia for prints and artists books and has often celebrated works that test the definition and conventions of printmaking.

Gosia Wlodarczak's *Process Capsule Situations Sofitel* was unanimously chosen as the winner of last year's Award. This digital collage of 714 elements is the result of two residencies undertaken by the artist at the Sofitel hotels in Melbourne and Sydney. Wlodarczak spent 30 minutes at a time drawing in the hotels' suites, kitchens, lobbies, workshops and offices whilst her partner, Longin Sarnecki, photographed her drawings and processes. These photographs are the source from which all the elements in the final work were digitally extracted. Images of dirty cups, lilies and what may have been meringues, as well as hundreds of other drawn and photographed forms, are scattered across the enormous print. Initially, the composition appears to be bilaterally symmetrical but closer inspection reveals subtle differences between the two halves so that the final work is a depiction, perhaps, of two similar but not identical sites.

Susanna Castleden was awarded second prize for her 30 metre scroll, *Round the World Print, (Rottneest to Bermuda)*. The work was produced as the artist circumnavigated the globe, from Rottneest Island in Western Australia to its furthest counterpart, Bermuda, via Singapore, Istanbul, Copenhagen and other destinations en route. At opportune moments,

Castleden completed a section of the scroll by a process she calls 'reverse frottage'. This involved positioning the black paper on footpaths, grates, car bonnets and other found surfaces, then sanding the first layer of the paper to reveal the white layer beneath. The resultant print is a continuous visual record of the textures she encountered on her three-week journey.

Daniel O'Shane was given the Award's first Special Commendation for his intricate vinyl-cut relief print called *Geb, Omai ene Sirr (Coconut Story)*. This is an image that pulsates with power. Ribbons of pattern radiate from the centre of the image, which features five sets of concentric rings. A group of people in and around a nearby boat harvest fish, turtle, shellfish and birds. A parade of dancing figures, dogs and sea creatures sweep from the upper left of the image, under the boat, to the upper right. The contrast between the silhouetted figures and the vibrant patterns is dazzling but the degree of realism in the coconut at the bottom of the image ensures its enduring prominence.



Daniel O'Shane, *Geb, Omai ene Sirr (Coconut Story)*, 2013, vinyl cut relief with hand-wiping, 95 x 204 cm. Printer: Theo Tremblay.

Works by Kynan Tan and Rew Hanks were highly commended by the judges. Tan first explored the nature of our unconscious thoughts in a work called *consciousness* (2012), a thirty-minute audiovisual piece developed from the recordings of brain activity during sleep. In 2010 he was selected as the most outstanding final year music composition student at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, and was awarded the Tura New Music Commission Prize to develop this work. Last year, Tan extended the project by 3D printing a number of small black shapes derived from the data. The material isn't obviously plastic; instead its fine threads and glittering surface suggest a synthetic textile or mesh; some appear almost pillowy. The tiny forms in *city constructed from sleeping brain activity data* (2013) are compelling, their faceted facades and ballooning roofs supported by skeletal uprights resemble micro-maquettes of ruins or architectural proposals.

Environmental concerns underpin Rew Hanks' linocut *'Banks, Which one is Mine?'*.

The 39th Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award was exhibited at the Fremantle Arts Centre from 25 September – 16 November 2014.



Susanna Castleden, *Round the world print (Rottneest to Bermuda)*, 2013, frottage on gesso on paper, cardboard box, pins, list, 30 x 3000 cm.

The artist has appropriated a famous golfing image based on *The Blackheath Golfer* (1790) by Lemuel Francis Abbott, then substituted or altered many of the elements to satirically critique colonisation and its environmental fallout. Captain Cook and Joseph Banks act as gentleman and man-servant, standing on a fairway, with the clubhouse of St Andrews Golf Club in the middle distance. The image is so densely detailed that Hank's wry commentary emerges slowly. Cook is about to dispense with the cane toads at their feet with a golf club, presumably selected from the assortment carried by Banks. A bottle of plonk peeps from a pocket in the botanist's coat. Our understanding of these heroic figures in Australian history shifts; they now seem like a pair of rednecks. The billowing and wind-whipped clouds seem ominous yet two cane toads happily engage in coitus, perhaps hinting at the futility of our eradication efforts to date.

Marion Manifold has been selected for inclusion in the exhibition five times since 1999, and won the Award in 2001. Her entry this year, *French Threads – For My Children's Children*, is comprised of nine large linocuts, embellished with hand embroidery, beadwork, silk appliqué and netting. Even if the headless female figure at the centre of each print doesn't immediately bring Marie Antoinette to mind, the imagery and text locate the work in her period and locale. Manifold's output

during and since her doctoral research has drawn upon her interests in the imaging of the female body as fragmented by the Surrealists, the personal experiences and clothing of Marie Antoinette (who was ultimately physically fragmented) and Manifold's own French ancestry. Each 'Marie' floats amongst appropriated images and scraps of text from what might have been old maps, diaries or letters, textile patterns, facades or tapestries. All seem to be trying to inform or warn us but their meanings are almost muted by geographical dislocation and the time that has passed. The artist's personal commitment to the conservation of our environment is sensed not only in the work's title, but also in the appearance of the animals and insects around the women. Manifold wonders if future extinction will mean that the generations to come will only know of some creatures through the images of our time and those gone by.

One could easily make the mistake of attributing Alex Spremberg's collaged record covers to a young or emerging artist, a retro-loving jokester. Neuschwanstein Castle and its Bavarian surrounds are now the setting for Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* and, on another cover, Nana Mouskouri's face is partly obscured by a goose's head. However, the freshness and vitality of the works belie their long development as part of Spremberg's ongoing investigation of new

and unconventional materials as grounds for poured enamel paint and varnishes. As testimony to the constant drive in his practice, his use of canvases and boards as print supports has given way, over the last decade, to paper maché and bronze objects, then to cardboard boxes and pages from the daily newspaper. In 2011, pooled paint upon the latter produced collages of colour, text and images that the artist then photographed and reproduced. The representational and non-representational elements conflict and confound each other's state. At first glance, the discord amongst the images or between images and text in *Cover to Cover* are amusing but some of the clashes become disturbing. A boys' choir appears to have produced an album of beer drinking songs, a group of Indigenous people are said to be *Marching with the Marines* and some grotesque partygoers promise to introduce us to *The World of Italian Opera*. As in all of Spremberg's work, an apparent spontaneity and lightheartedness is underpinned by thought-provoking questions about art and the world at large.

The aesthetic power and conceptual integrity of these works make them the highlights of this year's exhibition. Works of such a high standard are testimony to the award's reputation as one of Australia's most significant and exciting contemporary art awards. •



Kynan Tan, *city constructed from sleeping brain activity data*, 2013, 3D-printed PLA plastic, 20 x 60 x 60 cm.



right: Alex Spremberg, *Cover to Cover*, 2014, altered record covers, digital print on Hahnemuhle photo rag paper, records, 72 x 226 x 5 cm. Printer: Tony Nathan. Photographer: Jessica Wyld.