

trouble



About Latest Issue Issues Listings Articles 潮波 Trouble Contact

To search type and hit enter...

Featured Articles

Patterns of Collecting



by Holly Barbaro

Stepping across popular memory, generations and continents, even our most humble of collected possessions can be imbued with great value. *Patterns of Collecting: From the Bower* at The Johnston Collection reveals the secret life of our collectibles and how we may unknowingly be collecting in collective parallel. Curated by artists Deborah Klein, Louise Saxton, Loris Button and Carole Wilson (the Bower artists), items from each of the artists' personal collections sit alongside the permanent collection of The Johnston Collection (TJC). Carole Wilson speaks about the exhibition and the ties between the artists' art practices and each other.

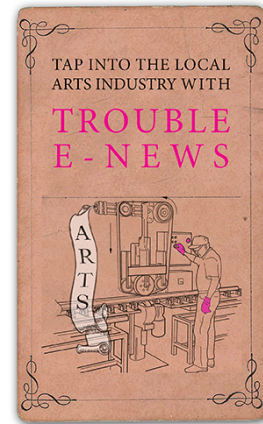
The Bower artists are all connected in various ways – as friends, from exhibition collaborations, and as academic colleagues. The exhibition's concept can be traced to Saxton's and Wilson's exhibition *Gardenesque* in 2004, that revealed their shared interest in garden and domestic architecture. In fact, all but one of the artists' studios are located in a garden. Klein and Button joined the conversation and Wilson says that after visiting each other's studios it "got us firing – we all had areas of (collecting) commonality. We all kept sewing paraphernalia from our mothers and grandmothers such as sewing boxes, buttons and knitting gear". Uncanny similarities were discovered such as Saxton keeping a cigarette tin of drawing tools from her grandfather, as did Button, passed down from her own father. The artists' residencies from overseas and from travel also formed strong shared patterns in each of their collections.



Detail from an artist-based installation on the table in The Green Drawing Room, WUNDERKAMMER. Image by Adam Luttick, Luts Photography, Melbourne, VIC.

The Exhibition

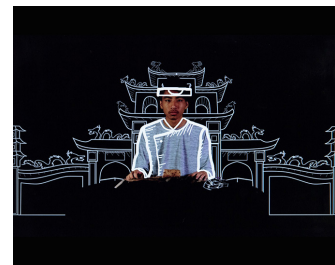
SPONSORED BY



Featured Articles Salon

SALON April-May 2019

April 27, 2019 | troublemag



APRIL/MAY 2019 COVER: Richard NGUYEN, All mixed up (detail) 2018, digital video, duration 1:57 min. Canning Vale College. *Pulse Perspectives*, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth Cultural Centre, Perth (WA), 6 April – 22 July 2019 – artgallery.wa.gov.au

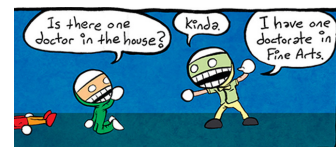
Yvette COPPERSMITH, ...

[Read More](#)

Comics Face Featured Articles

IVE

April 27, 2019 | troublemag



Ive Sorocuk – Comics Face Supreme

Trouble met Ive Sorocuk at the same comic con called Supanova in 2008 where they met Mandy Ord. We were immediately attracted to his weird sense of humour, his superheroes, *The Diggables*, and ...

[Read More](#)

The *Patterns of Collecting* range of exhibited objects are vast and eclectic, encompassing tea sets and cups and saucers, grandparents' salt and pepper shakers, vintage clothing, embroidered coat hangers, a toy sewing machine circa 1950, maps and atlases, a plate souvenir from the War Memorial in Canberra (Wilson hails from Canberra), a yellow serving ladle from Penang, and even an optometrist set meticulously maintained in its original blackwood box, gifted by an ex-boyfriend.

The touring exhibition won the artists popular praise having iterations in the Art Gallery of Ballarat and the Warrnambool Art Gallery. Wilson was approached by visitors telling her they relished seeing everyday collections honoured in the museum. They told her that after feeling chastised to trim down their collectibles, they now felt they had permission to enjoy them. Wilson notes that in an age where cluttering is admonished and pathologized, both older and younger generations felt vindicated and reinvigorated to collect.



Detail from *The Kitchen, MENAGERIE* from Loris Button 'an accumulation of items and objects associated with my families lives accumulated over time', courtesy of the artist © Image by Adam Luttick, Luts Photography, Melbourne, VIC.

The Johnston Collection

The house museum environment of The Johnston Collection is a departure from the white cube gallery spaces of the previous exhibitions. Founded by antiques collector William Johnston, the house museum in East Melbourne has a permanent collection of Regency and Georgian furniture and decorative art arranged in a domestic setting. Wilson muses that exhibiting in any space has its rewards and challenges. The Art Gallery of Ballarat offered voluminous wall and exhibition spaces providing great possibilities for display. It also came with ornate heritage skirting boards that had to share the exhibition space. TJC conversely has reduced wall hanging spaces, yet provides a rich domestic context for the Bower's collectables. Wilson says the artists aim for their pieces to appear vibrantly against TJC's spaces.

The interplay between TJC and the artists have both resonances and dissonances. Wilson points out their collectible items do not have a monetary value or age comparative to TJC's objects. On the other hand, the artists have travelled to India and are drawn to TJC's objects with an Indian provenance. The artists all relate to the travel involved to accumulate TJC's collection.

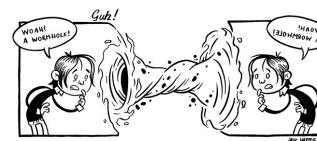
Most profoundly, TJC and its collection have spurred the creation of new work by the artists. Wilson is drawn to working with old, reclaimed floral carpets, often discarded in contemporary house renovations, and has refashioned pieces in response to the urns in TJC's collection. TJC's mirrors, bronze items and silhouettes have also inspired new works by the artists.



Comics Face Featured Articles

Happy Birthday Comics

April 27, 2019 | troublemag



Trouble turned 15 in April 2019, and for our birthday issue we wanted to thank by way of featuring some of our past comic contributors, who have been a highlight for us throughout the years. Many of these beautiful and ...

[Read More](#)

Featured Articles

Getting Personal with Vince Jones

April 27, 2019 | troublemag



interview by Steve Proposch

Vince Jones remembers playing in the Wollongong under 10s soccer team. "I was born in Paisley, just outside of Glasgow. My dad ran out of steam for Scotland at the time. He wanted to go somewhere ...

[Read More](#)

Featured Articles

The Prophet from Lebanon

March 13, 2019 | troublemag



Kahlil Gibran: *The Garden of the Prophet*, until 17 March, 2019

Immigration Museum, Melbourne

by Inga Walton

One of my dearest dreams is this – somewhere, a body of work, say fifty or seventy-five pictures will be hung together in ...

[Read More](#)

Deep Trouble Featured Articles

Julian Schnabel: At Eternity's Gate

March 13, 2019 | troublemag

Detail from an artist-based table and bookcase collective installations in The Green Drawing Room, WUNDERKAMMER. Image by Adam Luttick, Luts Photography, Melbourne, VIC.

Broader Patterns

The existence of ordinary or found objects in the art gallery has some history, such as Claes Oldenburg's Mouse Museum or Marcel Duchamp's ready-mades. The Bower artists venture beyond this countercultural and anti-commercial positioning into the personal and feminine – the bower – honouring family relationships, particularly the unsung efforts of mothers and grandmothers.

Artists as collectors is also a known phenomenon and psychiatrists maintain that playing and interacting with objects stimulates creativity. Artists' collections were examined in *Magnificent Obsessions: The Artist as Collector* at the Barbican Art Gallery, London, in 2015. Recognising historical artists' collections such as Rembrandt's compulsive collection of naturalia (such as shells, corals and other natural objects), Degas' and Monet's collection of Japanese prints, and Picasso's collection of African masks, exhibition visitors could inspect Andy Warhol's cookie jars, Sol LeWitt's shoes and Damien Hearst's collection of taxidermy. The examination offered fascinating insights into the artists' practices, yet only two of the fourteen artists in the exhibition were female. The Barbican explained that this was less than they wanted yet they found "the person who is more likely to focus in a very singular manner on a particular type of acquisition often tends to be male." Patterns of Collecting will show that women, too, are avid collectors, and challenges the imperceptibility of their collections.

As a young artist, Wilson was a founding member of Jillposters, a feminist, underground poster group. Decades later it seems the Bower artists' examination of gendered and delineated spaces is still as relevant and contemporary as it ever was.



Detail from an artist-based wall installation in The Green Drawing Room, WUNDERKAMMER. Image by Adam Luttick, Luts Photography, Melbourne, VIC.

Collective Work

Wilson describes working in the artist collective as an interesting experience, enriching and challenging, and one that has triggered ideas between them. She enjoys working in a group and alone, but points out that artists working together is common within the group exhibition genre. Within the collective, the Bower group's roles are democratic and shared. They are keen to present a mix of their practices throughout the house rather than individual silo presentations. They do allocate tasks according to their individual strengths. For example, Button is particularly skilled in spatial drawing so she often draws the exhibition designs, and Saxton has developed a greater familiarity with TJC's collection given that she previously exhibited at TJC for the Christmas display in 2016.

Musing on the idea of a bower, Wilson tells me that the name was Saxton's idea, yet all the women have their own connection to it. Bowers are places to create and collate, and are traditionally the preserve of women. For Wilson, bower birds have played a significant and early role in her life. She fondly recalls travelling to the coast of New South Wales as a child, and her dad's eagerness to see the satin bower birds there. Wilson recalls appreciating the nests with their assemblages of shiny, colourful ornaments. Stories of childhood, familial and personal connections, shared patterns and corresponding histories, are the Bower's materials at TJC.

Patterns of Collecting: From the Bower at The Johnston Collection is presented at The Johnston Collection until 18 September 2018 johnstoncollection.org

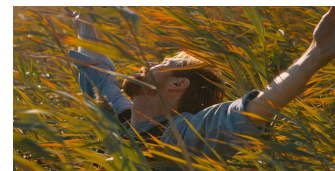
SELECTED FURTHER READING

See the essay on previous iterations of Patterns of Collecting at Dr Jennifer Jones-O'Neill, *From the bower: patterns of collecting*, Ballarat, Victoria, Art Gallery of Ballarat, 2017.

For a case study on collecting as furthering creativity and an extension of play see D. S. Macleod, 'Art Collecting As Play: Lady Charlotte Schreiber (1812-1895)', *Visual Resources*, Vol. 27 No. 1, 2011, pp.18-31.

For analysis on presenting everyday objects in the museum see Gabriel Levine, 'The Museum of Everyday Life: Objects and Affects of Glorious Obscurity', *Journal of curatorial studies*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 2015, pp. 365-390.

For the exhibition publication of *Magnificent obsessions: the artist as collector* see Lincoln Dexter, *Magnificent obsessions: the artist as collector*, London: Barbican Art Gallery; Munich: Prestel, 2015.



A DEEP TROUBLE INTERVIEW

with Dr Mark Halloran

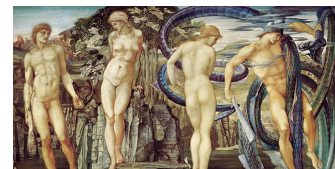
Can a movie speak to the intense swirl of feeling and aliveness that goes into painting? It was the seeming impossibility of this task which beckoned to Julian Schnabel as he created ...

[Read More](#)

[Featured Articles](#)

Love & Desire

February 11, 2019 | [troublemag](#)



Pre-Raphaelite Masterpieces from the Tate

NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA

Until 28 April 2019

Love & Desire explores the themes of love, desire, romance, betrayal, faith, nature, science, religion, society, rebellion, the *femme fatale* and the celebrity of the 'rock-star' artists ...

[Read More](#)

[Featured Articles](#)

The Queen Must Die!

February 10, 2019 | [troublemag](#)



An Australia Day Reflection (satire)

by Ben Laycock

I don't celebrate Australia Day, because I am a traditionalist. The blackfellas have a long tradition of not celebrating Australia Day, dating back many thousands of years. It is this ancient tradition ...

[Read More](#)

[Featured Articles](#)

Mr Todd Goes to Florence

February 10, 2019 | [troublemag](#)

For a review of Magnificent obsessions see Farah Nayeri, "Magnificent Obsessions" Show at the Barbican Explores Portraits of the Artist as Collector, *The New York Times*, February 21, 2015, p. C1. Accessible at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/19/arts/international/magnificent-obsessions-show-at-the-barbican-explores-portraits-of-the-artist-as-collector.html>(accessed May 20, 2018).

TAGS

Barbican Museum bower Carole Wilson collecting Deborah Klein house museum Loris Button
Louise Saxton Magnificent Obsessions The Johnston Collection

PREVIOUS STORY

Comics Face August
2018

NEXT STORY

Frogs but few Princes

Related Posts

SALON October 2018

October 14, 2018 | troublemag

SALON July 2015

July 5, 2015 | troublemag



by Inga Walton

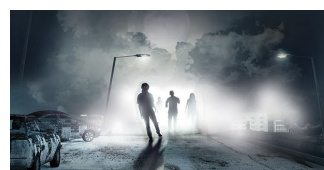
In the cavernous rooms of what was once the old Terminus Hotel in Ararat, renowned artist Geoff Todd has been completing three large-scale works in time for them to embark on a protracted and expensive journey to ...

[Read More](#)

[Featured Articles](#) [Social Work](#)

Highway Bodies: Alison Evans

February 9, 2019 | troublemag



A SOCIAL WORK interview

When Alison Evans was ten years old they deliberately ran through a puddle of mud to get dirty, and were told by their cousin: "Girls don't do that – boys don't even do that." "Yes, that's ...

[Read More](#)

Popular

Recent



Melburnin' November 2013

99132 Views



Brethren in Sincerity: The Pre-Raphaelites

75508 Views

Dressing the Movies Part One by Inga Walton

75009 Views



David Bowie: The Man Who Fell to Melbourne

74526 Views



Genius & Ambition: The Alternative Royal Tour

68747 Views



Greetings From Hindustan

65360 Views

trouble is grass roots arts publishing at its best. trouble is made by artists for artists, and is dedicated to reflecting the best of the contemporary Australian art scene and the creatives who make it.

[Privacy Policy](#) and [Disclaimer](#)

Face Courtney Symes Festival Film
Fremantle Arts Centre Geelong Gallery
indigenous Inga Walton
interview Ive Sorocuk Jim
Kempner Klare Lanson Madness of
Art Monash Gallery of Art music Naima
Morelli National Gallery of Victoria Neil
Boyack NGV painting performance
photography Phuket poetry
printmaking prize Salon sculpture social
work Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery The
Madness of Art travel
Videos