

## **Art Overboard 2007**

David Broker was the presiding judge for the Art Overboard Awards 2007. He is an arts writer, commentator and curator. Over a period of 15 years his articles and reviews have been published in journals such as Art Monthly, Broadsheet, Photofile and Eycline.

His exhibitions include *Primavera 2002* at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney and QPACifika at Griffith University, Brisbane in 2005. David was the project coordinator for the Institute of Modern Art/Ssamzie Space International Residency Exchange in Brisbane and Seoul in 2004 and his most recent exhibition *Streetworks*, which opened two weeks ago at the Art Centre in Bangkok, will tour to Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Formerly the Deputy Director of the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane, David is currently Director of Canberra Contemporary Art Space.

### **Judge's comment**

Historically the visual arts have played a significant role in the democratic process and Art Overboard is an opportunity for artists to express their views on a range of social and political issues affecting Australia today. While I have been impressed by the technical skills of participating artists I was disappointed to find that the social and political content of many works is insubstantial and at times, obscure.

The works I have selected from this group are by artists who have not only demonstrated a mastery of their medium but who made unambiguous comments that reflect the state of the nation.

### **First Place 2D**

Bernie Slater *Resurgent Islam and Target*

I am not able to choose between Bernie's two entries and therefore first place might be considered a draw.

Using the format of newspapers Bernie has produced a multilayered critique that attacks media, government and current social attitudes. The works are filled with irony, as the vehicle for much social satire, political debate and exposé – is itself exposed. Bernie's works compel us to consider how our attitudes are shaped by media that tread a fine line between information and distraction.

He has drawn upon tools of persuasion that are very familiar to us, as well as imagery from China's Cultural Revolution to produce his own distinctive brand propaganda.

Satire, is an engaging and effective way for artists to make potent statements that are revealing, edifying and importantly, entertaining. Bernie's works

represent a wry sense of humor that is very Australian and interestingly, one of the few effective ways of being critical in this country.

### **Highly Commended 2D**

Adrienne Conway *The Division*

While the significance of the structure of Adrienne's work is not immediately obvious it doesn't take long to realize that this work is a rather unusual representation of the Australian Parliament with its distinctive plan. Vibrant colour, symmetry and bold patterning make an immediate impression as she frames the modern in a way that seems to the design of Indigenous South Americans such as the Incas and the Aztecs. I was very impressed by Adrienne's innovative use of materials and struck by the way that she has provided new ways of looking at an object we know so well.

### **First Place 3D**

Tim Spellman *The Welcome Committee*

For me, the brilliantly smooth surfaces of Tim's work evoke the ever more sophisticated spin doctoring in politics. His use of the skin-like Australian flag painted over a bust gives the work a heroic aspect that at first hides its true meaning. The face reveals an unpleasant expression that represents an unsympathetic attitude towards refugees that has become increasingly pronounced over the last 10 years or so. The perpetrators of these views also hide behind the flag claiming their nationalistic intentions are for the common good. Tim's work is an effective way of presenting these ideas in three dimensional visual form.

### **Highly Commended 3D**

Garry Rogers *Senator Amanda Vanstone*

Transforming the political cartoon into a three dimensional object, Garry pokes gentle fun at some of the major players in Australian politics stripping them of the power they wield in everyday life. It is impossible to select a winner among his three works so, out of sympathy, I have chosen Amanda Vanstone who recently lost her ministry. I should add that while I don't really care about Vanstone's fate there are others even more deserving. The Prime Minister might consider the dubious "achievements" of Phillip Ruddock for example.