



love hotel

A National Gallery of Australia Travelling Exhibition

Please note Geoff Kleem's work was not exhibited at ACCA



(above) A love hotel, Chiba City
Photo courtesy of Yoshitaka Uchida

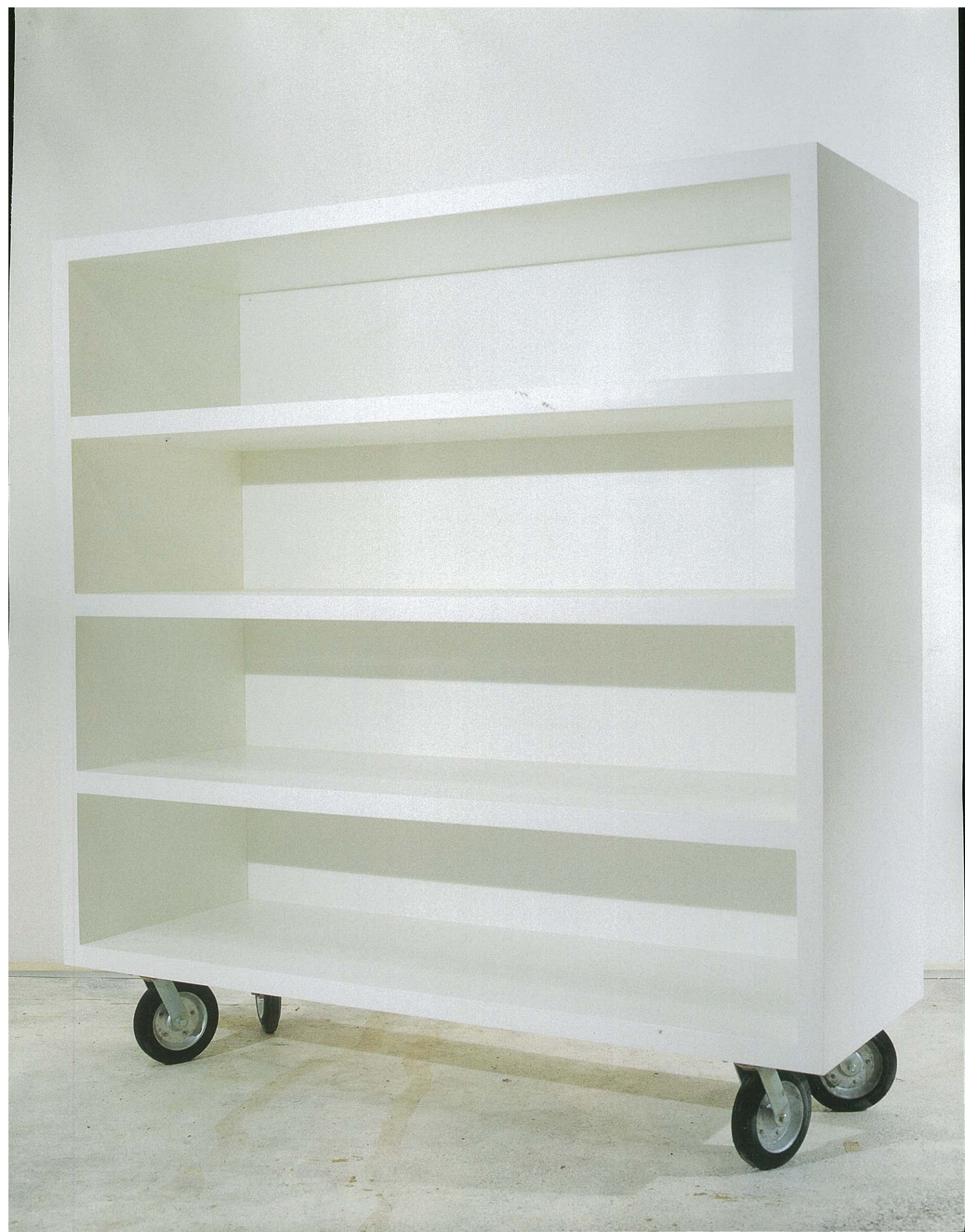
(right) Geoff Kleem
Untitled. 1995
painted wood, metal and rubber
228.5 x 220.0 x 75.0 cm
Photo courtesy of the artist

(cover) Nobuyoshi Araki
(Wilted flower). 1991
49.2 x 38.8 cm
direct positive colour photograph
from the *Colourscapes* series

Chiba City — a port city and dormitory suburb that feeds the Tokyo metropolis — is dominated by modern buildings and a new monorail. Within the urban grid is a peculiar building that startles the eye of local and tourist alike. This edifice is shaped like a small ocean liner, complete with masts, funnels and lifeboats. On asking about the structure, I was told it was a love hotel — a place where courting couples go for a 'dirty weekend', or parents can escape for some privacy in a society where space is at a premium and crowded accommodation is the norm. With its *Love Boat* facade, this short-stay hotel promises deliverance from everyday domesticity. It is not unusual for such establishments to have heart-shaped beds and fur-covered furniture or theme rooms designed to imitate the appearance of a medieval dungeon, a Louis Quinze boudoir, or a chamber as futuristic as a setting from *The Jetsons*, replete with techno-gadgets such as motorised beds and mobile video screens.

This love hotel, with its bizarre confusion of form and function, has an arresting appearance. It is neither great architecture, nor an efficient sign to broadcast its purpose; but it is, nevertheless, a powerfully charged site. It is intriguing to consider this building as a convenient trope for discussing contemporary art, for the cocktail of displaced narrative and kitsch metaphor in much of today's art is ambivalent yet somehow satisfying. The elements of voyeurism, of dressing up in disguises, the fetish, the perversion of 'good taste' and the defiance of parental rules are all here. The analogy of the love hotel, with its conflicting themes of belonging and estrangement, seems to fit art with an identity crisis.

Many of the works in this exhibition are self-contained objects, at home neither in the museum nor outside it. They seem to exist in a curious hyper-state, in which objects are patently fictions, but somehow more real than real. The familiarity of the works is reassuring: they have the appearance of functional objects, expected and banal. Geoff Kleem's *Untitled* 1995 or Richard Artschwager's *Mantle* 1990 for example, have the normality of domestic furniture, yet are somehow alienated from their environment. Like many of the works in *Love Hotel*, each is a deceptively 'bland' sculpture, laden with intense personal and psychological meanings. The love hotel is the place where reality and fantasy meet.





These works share a common parentage of Pop and Minimal art. Pop art is here in the transformation of domestic items into new images – often achieved with considerable wit. Minimal artists favoured severely formal relationships, striving to empty their abstract works of all pictorial content. Their language of straight lines and simple geometric forms was intended to be a self-sufficient aesthetic – a counter to illusionism and the emotive rhetoric of previous art – best summed up by the credo, 'what you see is what you get'. Minimal art's respect for materials remains important in contemporary practice, but in most other ways the child is very different from its parents.

Minimalism epitomised the idea of 'art for art's sake'. Today, the notion of a purely aesthetic work of art seems naive, and it is assumed that there is no such thing as a truly innocent object: everything carries a cargo of meanings and contradictory references. Geoff Kleem, like many of his contemporaries, refers to Minimal art in his work, particularly in the obdurate surfaces and clean lines of the mobile shelf, *Untitled* 1995. This minimal 'look', signifying order, is used ironically in contemporary art. It is doubly effective, as it describes the art of a period of apparent social harmony and technological confidence, and refers to the youth (during the 1960s) of many of the artists. The oppressive scale of *Untitled* makes us feel child-sized, but in a childhood of anxieties and nightmares. In its coolly functional shape and form, reminiscent of shelves bought from Ikea – here engorged beyond the parameters of good taste – lurk adult insecurities.

In many cultures the removal of facial or body hair is considered essential to achieve a perfect, if slightly sanitised, feminine beauty; there is a disorder, however – Trichotilomania – in which the sufferer, usually female, pulls out the hair on her head. It is generally thought to be a response to the stress of puberty, childbirth or change of life. The stainless steel pedestal that makes up half of Jana Sterbak's sculpture *Trichotilomania* 1993–96 refers to domestic tables or the hospital surgery, but also relies on the severe geometry of cold, minimal forms to signify logic and intellect. Materials are important to Sterbak, and are chosen for physical properties that can trigger association. The fetish object resting on the tabletop, ready for use, is the second part of the sculpture. It is a whip made from human hair, with a phallic-shaped glass handle, symbolising the subconscious and complementing the table's rational structure. This work relies on dualities: soft against hard, organic and mechanical, cold and hot. Sterbak couples the sting of the whip with the pleasure of a caress or the comforting sensuality of the hair and the confronting responsibilities of maturity. *Trichotilomania* addresses the boundaries between the normal and the bizarre. The play of opposites leads to disorientation and agitation, here invested with a disturbing sexuality.

Writer and critic Walter Benjamin has described 'the sex appeal of the inorganic', referring to the desire brought on by looking at clothing.¹ Clothes, shoes and various fittings



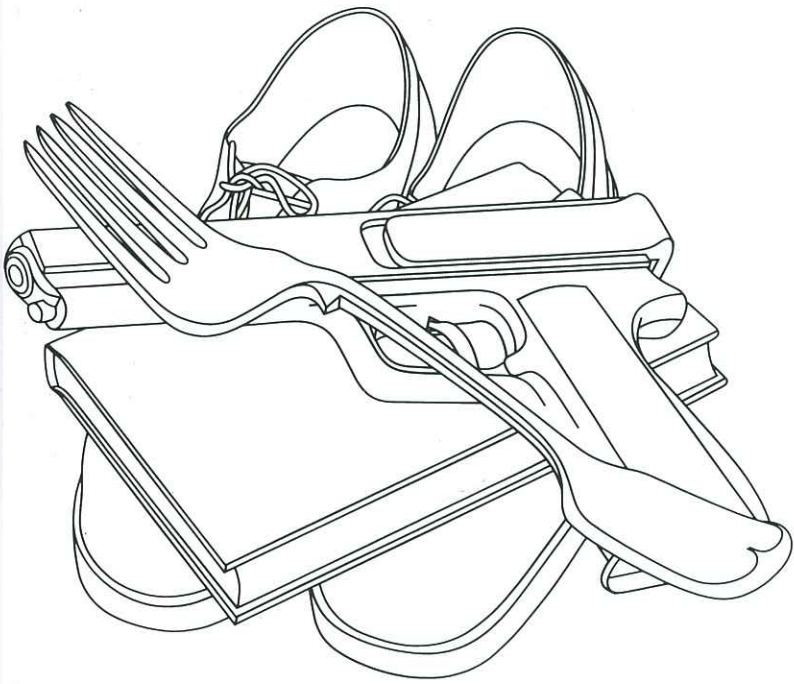
(above) Jana Sterbak
Trichotilomania I. 1993–96
glass and human hair, stainless
steel table 127.0 x 57.2 x 77.5 cm
edition 2/3 Photo by Eduardo
Calderón, courtesy Donald Young
Gallery, Seattle

(left) Ronald Jones
Untitled (DNA fragment from
human chromosome 13 carrying
mutant Rb genes also known as
Malignant Oncogenes which trigger
rapid Cancer Tumorigenesis). 1989
bronze 200.0 x 22.8 cm edition 2/3

made to house the body – including chairs, tables and other accoutrements – are also extensions of the body, prostheses that can become the subject of narcissistic obsession. They are the fetishes of a consumer culture. A work of art, too, can be an alluring super-commodity, a fetish as beguiling as the body and all its parts. Sigmund Freud once flippantly suggested that 'in shopping, all women are fetishists'.² Both Sylvie Fleury's *Vital Perfection* 1993 (a fur-lined shoe box) and Rosemary Trockel's *Balaklava* 1986 comment on Freud's theory that repressed subconscious desire might be triggered by apparently unrelated or inappropriate objects. Such objects of displaced desire can evoke powerful responses, but ultimately fail to gratify. Consumer lust is without consummation: it is a state of perpetual arousal and unfulfilled desire. By summoning up the body while operating in its absence, these works blur the boundaries between the living and the inanimate.

The artists in *Love Hotel* use ordinary domestic objects as the subjects of their work, drawing out implicit meanings and associations. A palpable human presence is implied by the scale and anthropomorphic form of each entity: a mantelpiece, shelving, a chair, a shoe box, a table, clothing. Many of the works in this exhibition celebrate the body, as much through its absence as its presence. Clothing and furniture are parts of the socially-projected self – they can be a symbol of identity or a stand-in for the owner. There is a teasing element of disguise here: many works wear the look of earlier art styles (such as Pop or Minimalism) in order to claim the status of art for themselves. Things are not always as they appear to be in the love hotel, and surface appearance can be as deceptive as the imitation wood-grain veneer of Artschwager's *Mantle*.

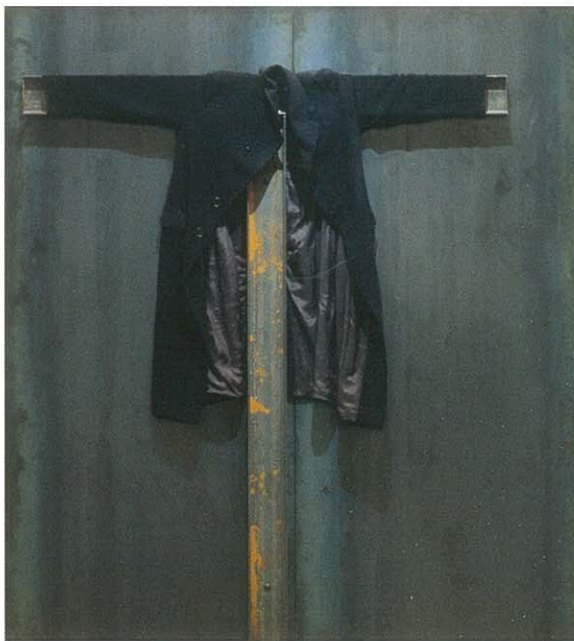
Ronald Jones' *Untitled (DNA fragment from human chromosome 13 carrying mutant Rb genes also known as Malignant Oncogenes which trigger rapid Cancer Tumorigenesis)* 1989 is a cool, black-patinated bronze sculpture. It is roughly 'life' size, and composed of biomorphic forms strongly reminiscent of the work of Jean Arp or Constantin Brancusi. The meanings in Jones' work are not immediately apparent, although they are drawn from common cultural lore. This sculpture looks very much like the expected furniture of an art gallery – an object which, by its appearance, advertises itself as a work of art. Viewers already know the rules in an art gallery – abstract works such as this are usually a tribute to the human spirit, often expressing an uplifting emotion. *Untitled* 1989 relies on the information given in the title of the work, as much as the appearance of the work itself. Those who read the title will learn the truth about this work: this is not an abstraction at all, but a realistic portrait of a molecule of human genetic material. What abstraction is supposed to mean, Jones tells us, and what it actually does mean, depends on context. He constructs his work with cultural signifiers – the 'sign' for modern art (the biomorphic bronze sculpture) is combined with a symbol of science (the enlarged, deadly molecule) –





(above) Nan Goldin
*Nan and Brian in bed, New York
City.* 1983 39.0 x 59.9 cm
artist's proof, No. 2 from *The Ballad
of Sexual Dependency* series 1981-96
Courtesy of Mathew Marks Gallery, N.Y.C.

(left) Michael Craig-Martin
Reading with shoes. 1980
black pressure-sensitive tape
dimensions variable



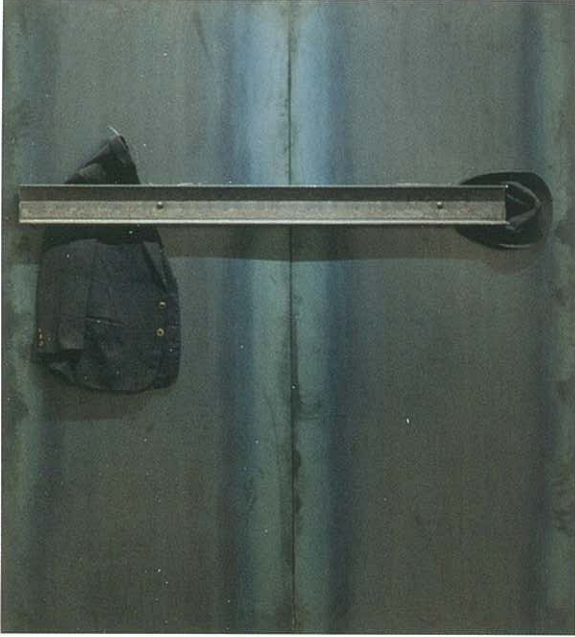
Jannis Kounellis

Untitled, 1990

three steel panels, clothes
and beams

200.0 x 574.0 x 25.0 cm (installation);

200.0 x 181.0 x 25.0 cm (each panel)

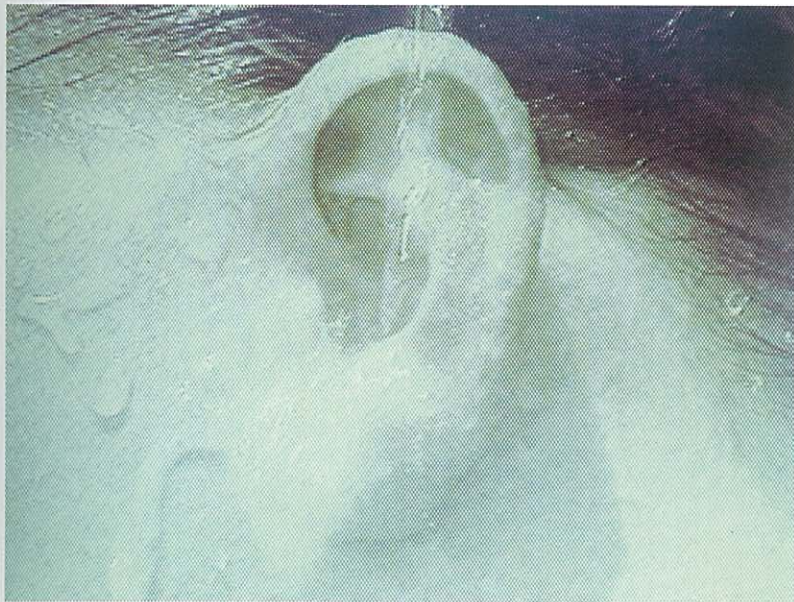


to engineer the clash and contradiction of their meanings. With the end of the Cold War, atomic annihilation is no longer perceived as imminent. Death by disease has become our greatest fear. Jones juxtaposes the wholesome qualities of art with the potential for evil to blossom within our bodies should our internal systems go wrong. The viewer is required to make sense of the conflicts in the work in much the same way as they make sense of the world.

Michael Craig-Martin also comments on ways of looking. His *Reading with shoes* 1980 describes a number of simple images – a book, a fork, shoes, a pistol – with flexible black adhesive tape on a gallery wall. We recognise the images even as they dissolve into a welter of tape lines before resolving to familiar shapes again. The relationship between the pictured and the means of picturing is continually questioned. (In reproduction, lacking the physical presence of the black tape, the pictured is favoured.) The objects depicted are like archetypes, too perfect to be typical. Like many of the objects in this exhibition, these are facsimiles of things that have never existed: they are replicas and duplicants. Craig-Martin's association of objects also creates an engaging narrative, at odds with the cool, aloof images.

In Nan Goldin's or Nobuyoshi Araki's works, the association of individual photographs leads to a sequence. Their images are mundane – familiar territory for all of us – but the implied narrative creates a fantasy. Goldin asks us to share a diary of suburban menace and loss of intimacy: *Nan and Brian in bed, New York City* 1983 becomes *Nan after being battered* 1984. Even the most innocuous of Araki's images are eroticised by their association with each other, and by their subjects 'posing' for the camera. The sexual ambiguity of the everyday is heightened by our voyeurism. Peter Cripps' *Public Projects (Fiction) Series 2, II* 1993 is a work of art that disconcertingly returns our gaze – the viewer becomes the view in the distorting surveillance mirror. There is a sense of macabre narcissism and a disquiet that comes from the subtle combination of discomfort and pleasure.

The videos *100 reasons* 1989 by Bob Flanagan, Mike Kelley and Sheree Rose, and the tapes *Gag* 1991, *Head* 1993 and *Craft* 1994 by Cheryl Donegan are recordings of performances. Made as art, they are intended to be seen, but there is also a frisson of complicit exhibitionism. 'This is hurting me more than it is hurting you!' exclaims Mike Kelley as the paddle wallops Bob Flanagan in the video performance *100 reasons*. This observation is almost amusing as parental cliché – clearly the pain is Flanagan's. But from sensation there is pleasure: Flanagan has lived with a life-threatening condition since his youth and each blow inflicted is an affirmation of life, of the complex pleasure of existence. Running through the works in this exhibition is an absurd, dark humour that combines provocation with seduction. The many ironies in *Love Hotel* make a wry and witty comment on the artificiality of contemporary life.



(above) Ann Hamilton
Untitled (the capacity of absorption)
[ear/water]. 1988–93 (video still)
 video disc, LCD screen
 and laser disc player
 24.2 x 43.2 x 33.0 cm
 one of an edition of nine
 Courtesy: Sean Kelly, New York
 1997

(right) Aziz + Cucher
(Still life # 7) 1996
 73.4 x 58.6 cm edition 3/5
 type C photographs from
 the *Plasmorphica* series
 © Aziz + Cucher 1997

Beautiful and repellent, Jannis Kounellis' *Untitled* 1990 contrasts the gunmetal sheen of industrial steel with the textured and comforting surfaces of wool, felt and leather. In the formal relationships between its elements, this work retains the elegant clarity and strength of Minimal art; but the symbolic junction of the materials provides the motor for creating a complex and poetic narrative. The coupling of brutally strong and fragile elements informs our reading of the composition, as does as our knowledge of their practical use. The physicality of these forms makes us think of the outside world and also, by contrast, of the inner self. The artist connects the rise of technology to the oppressiveness of urban existence and a loss of faith, but his *Untitled* also expresses a passionate joining with the world. Kounellis acknowledges the *eros* and *thanatos* of crucifixion iconography: there is tenderness and vulnerability in this identification.

Kounellis' *Untitled* highlights the shell – clothing, the city – surrounding the body, to invoke the intangible, that is, the spirit or soul that flows inside the machine. Aziz + Cucher meld body and machine in their eerie photographs of fleshy electronic couplings. Ann Hamilton's two videoworks, *Untitled (the capacity of absorption) [ear/water]* 1988–93 and *Untitled (dissections...they said it was an experiment) [neck/water]* 1988–93, are flush-mounted into the wall so that the almost life-sized images of ear or neck are part of the fabric of the display space. In these works, the sensual trickle and play of water across the body and its orifices is disturbingly sexual and spiritual.

There is an undefined sense of loss at the heart of our existence, which we romanticise. Post-industrial, post-colonial, post-feminist, post-modern – if we measure every thing in terms of 'what was', by definition we seem to be at the end of a historical moment. In our *fin de siècle* mood we see the metaphorical cup as half empty, rather than half full. The past seems to loom larger than the present, and we are nostalgic for the sureties of our recent golden age. Paradise is lost. In the art in this exhibition nature is replaced by technology, the State is increasingly in control, money is all-important and image is everything – or so it seems. The objects present themselves as neutral and deadpan, but we sense their perversity as much as their realism. Below the skin a powerful vitality surges, indicating an essential humanity. In *Love Hotel* each work houses something of the artist and the culture that created it. We imbue all around us with our passions.

Michael Desmond

Curator of International Painting and Sculpture
 National Gallery of Australia

Notes

1. Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, Rolf Tiedmann (ed.), Frankfurt am Main: Edition Suhrkamp, 1983.
2. Sigmund Freud, quoted in Roger Malbert, 'Fetish and Form', in *Fetishism: Visualising power and desire*, London: South Bank Centre, 1995.





Nobuyoshi Araki
(Wilted flower). 1991
 49.2 x 38.8 cm
 direct positive colour photograph
 from the *Colourscapes* series

*Biographies and checklist details
 by Michael Desmond and Ahmad
 Mashadi, Department of
 International Art, National Gallery
 of Australia. Measurements of
 works are in centimetres, and given
 as height by width then depth
 (where applicable). All works are in
 the collection of the National Gallery
 of Australia.*

Nobuyoshi Araki

Japan born 1940
Colourscapes. 1991
 six direct positive colour photographs from this series
 Purchased 1997
(Cemetery). 38.8 x 49.2 cm
(Cityscape). 38.8 x 49.2 cm
(Girl at drinking fountain). 49.2 x 38.8 cm
(Hippopotamus). 38.8 x 49.2 cm
(Wilted flower). 49.2 x 38.8 cm
(Woman wearing kimono). 38.8 x 49.2 cm

Nobuyoshi Araki was born in Tokyo in 1940. His works can be described as site-specific installations consisting of photographs which are composed and arranged on given wall spaces. These pseudo-documentary photographs record Japanese urban social landscapes. Popularly known in Japan through his works published in adult magazines, Araki combines the erotic and fetishistic with other images that feature his friends in unremarkable and benign poses — an unstructured form of biography. Enhancing the documentary character of his works, Araki's pictures often appear to be casual snapshots devoid of formality, with little emphasis on technical virtuosity. They are fragments suggesting a series of disjointed, non-linear narratives, allowing the viewer abrupt entries and exits. Araki's photographs comment on society's treatment of women and on gender relations by pointing out the power of men and of the male gaze. This is complicated and contradicted by the complicity of artist and audience in this process.

Suggested Reading: Nobuyoshi Araki and Nan Goldin, *Tokyo Love*, Tokyo: Hon Hon Do, 1994; Robert Stearns, *Photography and Beyond in Japan: Space, Time and Memory*, Tokyo: Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995

Richard Artschwager

United States born 1923
Mantle. 1990
 formica, wood, synthetic polymer paint
 99.0 x 278.0 x 36.0 cm Purchased 1992

Richard Artschwager was born in 1923 in Washington D.C. He completed a science degree in 1948 but soon turned to art, studying under the French emigré artist Amédée Ozenfant. With no immediate success in art, Artschwager made furniture from 1953 onwards, returning to art in the early 1960s. His works took the form of simplified furniture shapes surfaced with formica and other laminates he had discovered through furniture-making. These works were simple and monochromatic wooden constructions of severe geometric forms which alluded to functional domestic objects. They had affinities with the emerging Minimal Art movement. Artschwager's art is open to a range of interpretations: it may represent familial bliss or domestic tyranny, the celebration or critique of technology, or even an aesthetic impasse at the edge of Modernism.

Suggested Reading: Richard Armstrong, *Artschwager, Richard*, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1988; Catherine Cord, *Artschwager*, Frankfurt: Gallery Neudorf, 1990 (exhibition catalogue)

Aziz + Cucher

Anthony Aziz United States born 1961
 Sammy Cucher Peru born 1958 works in the United States
Plasmorphica. 1996
 three type C photographs from this series
 Purchased 1997
(Still life # 6). 62.0 x 73.0 cm edition 2/5
(Still life # 7). 73.4 x 58.6 cm edition 3/5
(Still life # 8). 73.4 x 58.5 cm edition 2/5

San Francisco-based artists Sammy Cucher (born 1958, Lima, Peru) and Anthony Aziz (born 1961, Lunenburg, Massachusetts) have been working collaboratively since 1990. Aziz + Cucher use digital technology to manipulate photographs. In their portraits, facial and bodily features — eyes, lips, nostrils, genitalia — are often removed, replaced by simulated 'skin'. The characterising features of an individual are denied, creating a faceless and genderless identity in a state of crisis. They pursue the idea of the pervasiveness of technology in their latest series of photographs, which feature computer cords, connectors and other accessories, often paired with the same featureless figures. Aziz + Cucher reassess our relationship with technology, and declare the tenuous division between 'virtual reality' and reality — the human is digitised, and the machine anthropomorphised.

Suggested Reading: Aziz + Cucher: *Unnatural Selection*, with texts by Patrick Roegiers and Fabrizio Caleffi, Milan: Photology, 1996; *La Biennale di Venezia*, Venice: Marsilio Editori s.p.a., 1995 (exhibition catalogue); Stephen Todd, 'Photo Finished', *Black-White*, Sydney, October 1995

Michael Craig-Martin

Ireland born 1941 works in Great Britain
Reading with shoes. 1980
 black pressure-sensitive tape dimensions variable
 Purchased 1981

Born in Dublin in 1941, Michael Craig-Martin grew up in the United States before moving to London to teach art in 1966. Craig-Martin's early works travel between Minimalist and Conceptual influences. One of his best known works is *An oak tree*, 1973 (in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia), in which the artist claims to have turned a glass of water into an oak tree. It underlines his central focus on altering the mundane into objects of complex meanings. He often uses texts to complement the images and objects in his work. Rather than elucidating ideas, Craig-Martin includes these texts as philosophical entry points into meditations on the nature of art and its objects. In his later series of works, featuring massive 'still-life' wall-drawings rendered with adhesive tape, the features of common household objects are reduced to essential lines and their scale varied arbitrarily, so that expected functions and relationships are denied. Craig-Martin lives and works in London.

Suggested Reading: *Michael Craig-Martin: A Retrospective 1968-1989*, with texts by Catherine Lampert, Lynne Cooke, Robert Rosenblum and Michael Craig-Martin, London: Whitechapel, 1989

Peter Cripps

Australia born 1948

Public Projects (Fiction) Series 2, II. 1993

painted wood, steel, mirror 300.0 x 94.0 x 70.0 cm

Purchased 1993

Born in Melbourne in 1948, Peter Cripps' early pieces consist of a conglomeration of found and constructed objects which form sets of small, seemingly aged and salvaged contraptions and machines. They suggest an alchemist's workplace, where physical and spiritual transformations take place simultaneously — a collusion of the mystical and the technological. Cripps' recent works continue to employ forms related to technology. With Minimalist use and treatment of materials, these works allude to simplified architectural and industrial constructions, and explore the notion of empowerment through technology. Convex mirrors are often incorporated into awkward and imposing structures, proposing a state of perpetual surveillance and counter-surveillance. Cripps lives and works in Melbourne.

Suggested Reading: Peter Cripps, *Introduction to Masterpieces: Out of the Seventies*, Melbourne: Monash University, 1983

Cheryl Donegan

United States born 1962

Gag. 1991

colour videotape, 10 min. Purchased 1995

Head. 1993

colour videotape, 3 min. Purchased 1995

Craft. 1994

colour videotape, 13 min., 30 sec. Purchased 1995

Born in 1962 in New Haven, Connecticut, Cheryl Donegan has established herself as a major video artist whose works can be viewed in relation to the art of Bruce Nauman and Lynda Benglis. The dominant themes in her short length videos are the female body and sexuality. These videos consistently show the female body as corporeal yet detached from iconographical stereotypes, and present simulations of sexual acts recorded in real time accompanied by an erotic rock beat. While marked by sexual posturing, they are enacted with an iconoclastic sensibility. Bananas, plastic bottles and flowing milk are used metonymically, and delirium and exoticism are mocked and referenced against the pervasive mass culture of America.

Suggested Reading: 1995 Biennial Exhibition, with texts by John Ashbery, Gerald M. Edelman, John G. Hanhardt, Klaus Kertess, Lynne Tillman, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1995; 3e Biennale d'Art Contemporain de Lyon: *Installation, Cinéma, Vidéo, Informatique*, Lyon: Musée d'Art Contemporain, 1996; Terry R. Myers, 'Cheryl Donegan', *Flash Art*, 26, November–December 1993

Bob Flanagan, Mike Kelley and Sheree Rose

Bob Flanagan United States 1952–1996

Mike Kelley United States born 1954

Sheree Rose United States born 1945

100 reasons. 1989

colour videotape, 6 min. Purchased 1995

Bob Flanagan (born 1952, New York) worked collaboratively with Sheree Rose (born 1945, Los Angeles) from the early 1980s. They also collaborated in producing video works with other artists, including Mike Kelley (born 1954, Detroit), who works in an array of media combining Conceptual and performance elements. Flanagan's life predicament is often a central theme in these collaborative works. He was a writer, performance and installation artist whose works documented both his life-long battle with cystic fibrosis and its influence on his sexuality. Flanagan and Rose's works extend autobiography into metaphor, transforming life into art. Their best known performance is *Visiting Hours* 1992. Like their other performances, it demonstrates Flanagan's response to his debilitating ailment and its consequences on his physical being. Objects used in this performance include hospital beds, video monitors and scaffolding. It incorporates gestures from sadomasochistic rituals — such as Flanagan submitting himself to Rose's extreme physical treatment. Illness, suffering and sexuality converge into a cathartic experience. Flanagan died of his ailment in January 1996.

Suggested Reading: Mike Kelley: *Catholic Tastes*, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1993; Bob Flanagan, New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1995 (exhibition catalogue); 'Rack Talk: Deborah Drier interviews Bob Flanagan and Sheree Rose', *Artforum*, 34, April 1996

Sylvie Fleury

Switzerland born 1961

Vital perfection. 1993

synthetic fur, cardboard box 27.5 x 17.0 x 9.0 cm

one of an edition of 100 Purchased 1995

Born in Geneva in 1961, Sylvie Fleury's works are critiques of the representation of women in popular culture, particularly in advertisements and fashion magazines. In her installations, Fleury parodies the glitter and confection of the fashion media, while co-opting its visual techniques. She includes the imagery and artefacts found in boutiques and at cosmetic counters which flaunt 'the female', rendering her as an extension of man's fantasies and expectations. At times Fleury's works — ranging from piled shopping bags and boxes carrying the monograms of major brand names, to the constructed floor of a shoe boutique, — appear as the residues of the shopping experience, woman's 'opiate'. They suggest a sense of enslavement and women's susceptibility to the rhetoric of the male-centred media. Fleury works the artifice of femininity into her art, revealing beneath an apparent absence of will a sense of self-determination within a male dominated order.

Suggested Reading: Elizabeth Hayt-Atkins, 'Sylvie Fleury: The Woman of Fashion', *Art + Text*, 49, 1994



(above, from top)

Peter Cripps

Public Projects (Fiction) Series 2, II. 1993 painted wood, steel, mirror 300.0 x 94.0 x 70.0 cm

Cheryl Donegan

Head. 1993 (video still) colour videotape, 3 min.

Bob Flanagan, Mike Kelley and Sheree Rose

100 reasons. 1989 (video still) colour videotape, 6 min.

Nan Goldin

United States born 1953

The Ballad of Sexual Dependency. 1981-96

three direct positive colour photographs from this series
Purchased 1994

Nan and Brian in bed, New York City. 1983

39.0 x 59.9 cm artist's proof, No. 2

Nan after being battered. 1984

39.0 x 60.0 cm edition 10/25

Siobhan in the shower, New York City. 1991

61.3 x 41.1 cm edition 4/25

Born in Washington D.C. in 1953, Nan Goldin's photographs constitute a visual diary made public. Her major work is *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, a presentation of over 700 slides accompanied by a soundtrack. It unfolds as a real-life, emotionally-charged theatrical experience which addresses the nature of relationships — a gamut and cycle of joy, tension and violence. Goldin's photographs visualise her constant struggle to nurture and secure meaningful emotional and sexual relationships, while at the same time coming to terms with her heterosexuality and her emotive compatibility with other women. She works as a photographer, teacher and curator in New York.

Suggested Reading: Nan Goldin and David Armstrong, *A Double Life*, New York: Scalo Publishers, 1994; Nan Goldin, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, New York: Aperture Foundation, 1986; Nan Goldin, *The Other Side*, New York: Scalo Publishers, 1993

Ann Hamilton

United States born 1956

Untitled (the capacity of absorption) [ear/water].

1988-93

video disc, LCD screen and laser disc player

24.2 x 43.2 x 33.0 cm, one of an edition of nine

Purchased 1997

Untitled (dissections...they said it was an experiment)

[neck/water]. 1988-93

video disc, LCD screen and laser disc player

24.2 x 43.2 x 33.0 cm, one of an edition of nine

Purchased 1997

Ann Hamilton was born in Lima, Ohio in 1956. A multi-media, site-specific installation artist, Hamilton uses an array of materials, including everyday objects, live animals and video elements. Her works are multi-sensory, relying on the evocative nature of her materials — their organic, tactile and even aromatic qualities — which are carefully and laboriously manipulated to evoke a sense of frailty or visual delicacy. The body is a central interest in Hamilton's works. Her art often suggests an incompleteness of the visual to convey the politics of sexuality and gender relations. Hamilton lives and works in Columbus, Ohio.

Suggested Reading: *Ann Hamilton: tropos*, with texts by Lynne Cooke, Dave Hickey, and Marina Warner, New York: Dia Center for the Arts, 1995 (exhibition catalogue)

Ronald Jones

United States born 1952

Untitled (DNA fragment from human chromosome 13

carrying mutant Rb genes also known as Malignant

Oncogenes which trigger rapid Cancer Tumorigenesis).

1989

bronze 200.0 x 22.8 cm edition 2/3 Purchased 1993

Ronald Jones was born in Falls Church, Virginia in 1952. His work may be described as seeking a re-engagement between art and humanistic concerns. Jones adopts the aesthetics of high-Modernism in his works, but uses this as a veneer for masking his interest in human tragedies, disasters and social history. Conceptual ideas are cloaked and camouflaged by a formalist sense of detachment and presentation. To assist the viewer's interpretation and readings, Jones accompanies his works with long and detailed captions and titles. Through these texts, the familiar and systematic interplay of materials is transformed into an unsettling display of artefacts and a forensic reconstruction of events and places. The otherwise unemotive materials (bits of wood, metal and cement) are transformed into charged works with specific references and meanings beyond their appearance. Ronald Jones lives and works in New York.

Suggested Reading: *Mind Over Matter: Concept and Object*, with an interview by Richard Armstrong, New York: Metro Pictures, 1991 (exhibition catalogue); *Ronald Jones*, with texts by I. Michael Danoff and Peter Halley, San Jose: The San Jose Museum of Art, 1990 (exhibition catalogue)

Geoff Kleem

Australia born 1953

Untitled. 1995

painted wood, metal and rubber 228.5 x 220.0 x 75.0 cm

Purchased 1996

Born in Young, Australia, in 1953, Geoff Kleem works primarily with photography. Abandoned industrial interiors are the central subject of his earlier works. These images allude to notions of urban decay within a context of industrial decline, while simultaneously connecting conceptually to art's infatuation with industry and its materials. As a strategy to enhance and extend his thematic interests, Kleem recently began incorporating into his works items which could be described as domestic objects with Minimalist tendencies. Large photographic prints, frequently with surfaces interceded by precisely rendered bands or dots, are often paired with constructed objects that look like dysfunctional domestic furnishings; at times these objects appear clumsy and obtrusive, with exaggerated proportions. Through his works Kleem offers a reappraisal of Modernistic values by examining relations between object, site and context. Geoff Kleem lives and works in Sydney.

Suggested Reading: *Location*, with text by Juliana Engberg, Melbourne: Australian Centre for Contemporary Art/Asialink, 1992 (exhibition catalogue); Frazer Ward, 'Geoff Kleem: Useless Things', *Art + Text*, 52, 1995



(above, from top)

Sylvie Fleury

Vital perfection. 1993

synthetic fur, cardboard box

27.5 x 17.0 x 9.0 cm

one of an edition of 100

Jana Sterbak

Trichotilomania III. (detail) 1993-96

Photo by Richard-Max Tremblay,

courtesy Galerie René Blouin,

Montréal

Jannis Kounellis

Greece born 1936 works in Italy
Untitled. 1990

three steel panels, clothes and beams
200.0 x 574.0 x 25.0 cm (installation);
200.0 x 181.0 x 25.0 cm (each panel) Purchased 1992

Born in 1936 in the Greek town of Piraeus, Jannis Kounellis migrated to Italy in 1956. By the early 1960s Kounellis had become associated with the Italian avant-garde, which was spearheaded by Lucio Fontana and Alberto Burri who championed transcendentalist and Duchampian approaches respectively. Kounellis' first works were a series of paintings of numbers and letters appropriated from signage around him. By the late 1960s Kounellis was merging sculpture and painting, taking a formal, even severe, approach to materials and integrating everyday objects — such as wool, burlap, fire, coal, living animals and plants — into works that exude a poetic sensibility. Although he is often associated with the Italian Arte Povera group, due to his interest in combining political and aesthetic ideals, his work extends beyond nationalist cultural and political issues. Kounellis addresses humanist and spiritual concerns, and reinvigorates the social role of art in society.

Suggested Reading: *Jannis Kounellis*, with text by R.H. Fuchs and Jannis Kounellis, Eindhoven: The Van Abbemuseum, 1981 (exhibition catalogue); *Jannis Kounellis*, with texts by Mary Jane Jacob and Thomas McEvilley, Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1986 (exhibition catalogue)

Jana Sterbak

Czechoslovakia born 1955 works in Canada
Trichotilomania I. 1993-96

glass and human hair, stainless steel table
127.0 x 57.2 x 77.5 cm edition 2/3 Purchased 1997

Born in Prague in 1955, Jana Sterbak emigrated to Canada in 1968. Her works combine the physical and psychological, utilising the human body to demonstrate collective desires and constraints. She has chosen the question of will as a central theme in her works — the human body is often placed within outer-garments constructed from a large range of materials including ready-mades, which, while constraining, are also mobile and invested with a sense of Minimalist detachment. As wry vehicles criticising gender relations, these 'dresses' and accessories act as metaphors for the body. They are also signs relating to the subjection of women into confining roles.

Suggested Reading: Diana Nemiroff, *Jana Sterbak: States of Being*, Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1991 (exhibition catalogue); Jeffrey Swartz, 'Jana Sterbak', *World Art*, 1, 1996; Nancy Spector, 'Flesh and bones', *Artforum*, March 1992.

Rosemarie Trockel

Germany born 1952
Balaklava. 1986

cardboard box, knitted wool
30.0 x 20.0 x 4.0 cm (box); 34.0 x 21.8 cm (balaklava)
edition 6/9 Purchased 1995

Rosemarie Trockel was born in Schwerte, West Germany in 1952. A consistent undercurrent in her work is the tension between craft and 'high-art', and the place of woman's creative energy and sensibility in art making. Her 'knitted paintings', a series initiated in 1985, underscore such interests. Texts, well-known symbols and logos are often used as patterns on these works, and are displayed with a Minimalist detachment. Trockel breaks down the divisional lines between the polarities of craft and fine art, ideas of the marginal and the canonical, and the domestic and institutional. Through the ironic use of patterns and texts, she transforms mundane objects and materials traditionally considered feminine into signifiers of male-female power relations and their arbitrariness. Trockel lives and works in Cologne.

Suggested Reading: *Projects: Rosemary Trockel*, with text by Jennifer Wells, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988 (exhibition catalogue); *Rosemarie Trockel*, with texts by Gregory Burke, Jutta Koether, and Robyn Gardner, Wellington: City Gallery, 1993 (exhibition catalogue); *Rosemarie Trockel*, Sidra Stich (ed.), with texts by Sidra Stich and Elizabeth Sussman, Munich: Prestel, 1991

Robert Wilson

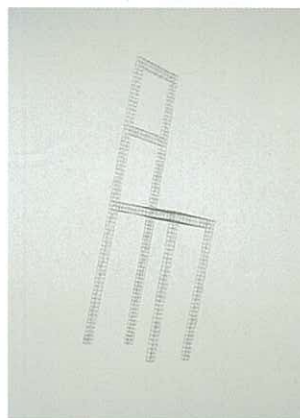
United States born 1941
Hanging chair. 1977

wire 90.4 x 24.4 cm Purchased 1979

Robert Wilson was born in Waco, Texas in 1941. He first came to prominence as a set designer and impresario. His works are continually informed by his involvement with the theatre, as well as by the Minimalist simplicity in the art of the early 1960s. Wilson employs installation strategies in displaying his work — objects and space are treated as a totality. Through lighting and wall colour, spaces are conditioned to accommodate and accentuate objects and their suggested meanings. The theatrical sensibility in his art negates the neutrality of gallery spaces, allowing intimations of an unscripted psychological play. Wilson lives and works in New York.

Suggested Reading: Graig Owens, *Robert Wilson: Tableaux*, *Art in America*, November, 1980; Robert Stearns, *Robert Wilson: From A Theatre of Images*, Cincinnati: The Contemporary Arts Centre, 1980

Acknowledgments: Thanks to Sumi Hayashi, Kawamura Memorial Museum of Art; Stewart Ramsden, Australian Centre for Art and Technology; and Kate Davidson, National Gallery of Australia



(above, from top)

Rosemarie Trockel
Balaklava. 1986
cardboard box, knitted wool
30.0 x 20.0 x 4.0 cm (box);
34.0 x 21.8 cm (balaklava)
edition 6/9
© Copyright VISCOPY Limited,
Sydney, 1997

Robert Wilson
Hanging chair. 1977
wire 90.4 x 244.0 x 24.4 cm

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Edited, designed and produced by
the Publications Department,
National Gallery of Australia
Printed in Australia by Goanna Print,
Canberra



Richard Artschwager

Mantle, 1990

formica, wood,

synthetic polymer paint

99.0 x 278.0 x 36.0 cm

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Sydney, 1997

Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tas 30 August – 28 September 1997

Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Vic 18 October – 30 November

Brisbane City Gallery, Brisbane, Qld 26 March – 10 May 1998

Auckland Art Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand 30 May – 2 August 1998

The John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University of Technology, Perth, WA 4 September – 4 October 1998

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*This exhibition has been made possible in part by the former Australian Exhibitions
Touring Agency (AETA) through the National Gallery of Australia Foundation.*

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