

# HOLLY STORY THE GIFT

## GEOFF OVERHEU EVERYBODY KNOWS...

22 May – 20 June 2009  
opening 6 - 8pm Friday 22 May

Two new exhibitions of sculpture and installation at Turner Galleries are inspired by the land.

### **Holly Story**

Holly has been exploring her relationship to the land over several years. Her work is subtle, even romantic, as she negotiates the links between her life and the land that inspires her work: Deep River in the South West of WA. This land has slowly seeped into her everyday life, infusing its slow timelessness and subtle transformations into her artworks. There are several ongoing themes in her work, firstly that of the Deep River plant life. Holly makes dyes from these plants, harvests Banksia fluff, makes pressings of flowers and leaves and appreciates the geometric perfection of nature. Secondly, Holly's work has a deft feminine hand. Drawing inspiration and techniques from the traditional female realms of embroidery, stencilling, dress making, stitching, mending and folding.

These themes coalesce into striking and delicate artworks. Translucent book pages are flocked with spots of Banksia velvet, hand dyed blanket pieces are stitched together into garlands or rosettes, pattern cutting paper is flocked and cut into the strange organic shapes that plants inspire. Throughout all, the influence of the Banksia reigns.

Holly still sees us as settlers, unable to truly connect or understand the Australian landscape. She wonders why absence is such a palpable presence in the Australian bush, stating "I feel it most keenly in wild places where the skin of forgetting is still thin and echoes of a past life break through if you stop long enough to listen. It seems to me the land is hungry for recognition..." "But how do you really get to know a place, allowing it to seep into you and affect the way you are and the way you live? This is the question I return to over and over in my work."

Holly graduated from Curtin University in 1992 and since then has been exhibiting nationally. Her work can be found in many public collections including the Art Gallery of WA, Curtin University, University of WA, Artbank, BankWest, City of Fremantle, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, WA Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Museum of Arts Crafts Itami in Japan.

### **Geoff Overheu**

Like Holly, Geoff has a close affinity with the land, living and farming on a rural property in Gingin. His artworks explore various relationships between 'urban romantic' and 'rural' Australia, engaging with images associated with landscape. While the former may have images of vast landscapes with kangaroos, cockatoos and huge open skies, our rural iconography presents quite a contrast.

By combining a rural iconography with references to art history/theory, Geoff's works synthesize new ideas regarding our attitudes towards the Australian landscape. For example, the notion of 'Pop Ecology', which is a humorous homage to Andy Warhol's parody of consumer desire and is underpinned by an irony that emphasizes our continued over-use and consumption of the land and our absurd illusion that things will be okay.

Geoff uses a wide range of materials to create his sculptures, from plaster to bronze. Some works draw directly from art history, such as the plaster inflatable kangaroo that sadly holds a deflating companion, echoing the famous pieta by Michelangelo. Tragic and humorous, this combination of unusual objects and materials is an exploration of specific themes that entices a response from the viewer. Presenting such images in a popular culture format will encourage his audience to draw new meanings and perhaps have a new perspective on the Australian landscape.

Geoff studied at Central TAFE, went on to do a BA at Curtin University and followed this with an Honours Degree from the VCA in Melbourne in 2004. His works can be found in the collections of Central TAFE, ARM Architects, Glick International and many private collections across Australia.

Please do not hesitate to contact staff on 08 9227 1077 or email [info@turnergalleries.com.au](mailto:info@turnergalleries.com.au) should you require more information or images from these exhibitions. Exhibition works will be available to view on line: [www.turnergalleries.com.au](http://www.turnergalleries.com.au) and both artists are available for interviews.