

OLGA CIRONIS
Today I am what you want me to be
&
THEO KONING
Paper products

16 April – 15 May 2010
opening 6 - 8pm Friday 16 April

Two exhibitions wrap it up for your viewing pleasure

Olga Cironis has been wrapping and stitching objects for several years, sometimes in velvet and in more recent years she has turned to blankets. Local art lovers will remember her impressive tree she covered in blanket at the Fremantle Arts Centre in 2007, and her herd of strange creatures based on her young daughter's drawings of animals held at Turner Galleries in 2008. Her new exhibition features blankets she has been collecting for many years, each one representing a different period of time by its colour or design. Olga's work addresses identity and memory and how we link it to notions of place, tradition, culture and customs. She has a personal history as a migrant and this informs her investigations of how people (and in this case women) are defined and labelled by local language and its hidden and double meanings.

In this exhibition of new work Olga has wrapped a lounge chair and footstool that can be sat upon to contemplate the impressive major work in the show: The wrapping of the 8.7meter long and 3 meter high dividing wall of the gallery in embroidered blankets. Accompanying these works are smaller wall mounted works in which she has framed sections of blankets, sometimes retaining some of the original contents of the second-hand frames. The frames, like the blankets, are infused with memory and the past. Olga mused that she feels "as if each blanket hides the past owner's desires, history and era. Somehow it can represent a culture and society depending on the weave, wool blend, brand or pattern... To cut up blankets into little pieces is like cutting into the flesh of the people who laid beneath the warmth of them... The nature of blankets keeps one warm and at the same time receives bodily fluids and hairs like a lover. Blankets smell of people, they are stained, torn, burned and pierced to reveal holes over time... The process of stitching and stretching the woollen blanket over domestic objects such as furniture is a cathartic experience. I imagine similar to that of embalming. The act of covering, hiding and stitching is like redefining the object's use, it can be both an act of protection and at the same time an act of suffocation."

Several of the blanketed objects and framed works have text embroidered onto their surface, words and statements such as 'bitch', 'cougar', 'slut', 'whore' or 'frigid'. Words, in general that are derogatory to women, labelling them in terms of male desire. The words fill the gallery space with voices of loss, fear, humiliation, anger and violation. Phrases, such as 'today I am what you want me to be' adorning the footstool, could be interpreted as submissive, provocative or even ironic. These blankets no longer comfort but confront. They make the viewer question how we label women, but they are not without a sense of humour and hopefully will allow us to laugh at ourselves.

Olga has work in several local collections including BankWest, Royal Perth Hospital, Bunbury Regional Art Gallery, Central Institute of Technology, Fremantle Hospital and many private collections.

On display in our entry room will be an exhibition of new work by **Theo Koning**. Theo has been wrapping domestic objects in brown paper, giving them new life and identities. A boxing glove is transformed into a 'paper punch', a pepper grinder into a 'paper mill', and a toy wooden plane becomes a 'paper plane'. The simplicity of the brown paper strips the objects of individuality, almost like home-brand objects, yet their distinctive shapes still place them from specific periods of time. Theo has grouped the pieces so that they form a narrative; relationships give rise to new interpretations. A classic shaped cup and saucer is placed with a 1960s handbag. The domestic suddenly becomes reminiscent of an outing to a nice café. A football and a radio combination brings memories of listening to the footy on the radio in dad's garage or in the car on a family outing. Memories are kindled in this shop presentation of Paper Products where you can even buy paper money.

Theo has been exhibiting in Perth since the early 1970s and has been included in many significant exhibitions featuring the work of outstanding Western Australian artists. His works can be found in many important collections including the National Australian Gallery, Art Gallery of SA, Art Gallery of WA, Artbank, BankWest, Parliament House Canberra, University of WA, Murdoch University, Curtin University and many more.

Please do not hesitate to contact staff on 08 9227 1077 or email 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 and both artists are available for interviews. Gallery located at 470 William Street Northbridge.