



GARRY PUMFREY  

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TERRAFORM

10 November – 01 December 2007

GARRY PUMFREY has spent close to a decade documenting Western Australia's urban landscape, and in particular the impact of consumerism upon it. Initially focusing upon the minutiae of the cityscape, Pumfrey's early works largely comprised images of litter; crushed soft drink cans, discarded chip packets and torn advertising bills. Rendered in large scale, with the glossy allure of billboard advertisements, these works re-commodified the items of waste that inevitably accompany capitalist growth.

The works additionally encapsulated a major theme of Pumfrey's early practice; the overlaying or wrapping of the urban landscape with advertising logos and slogans. His 2001 *Bill Bollard* depicted a concrete advertising bollard outside his inner-city studio, where posters are allowed to build up into a thick papery crust before eventually being scraped back by council workers, (only to immediately begin growing again with announcements of the latest concert, play or art exhibition). The work is a pointedly ironic meditation on the co-dependency of culture and consumerism – the trash of cultural production reconfigured as a desirable art object.

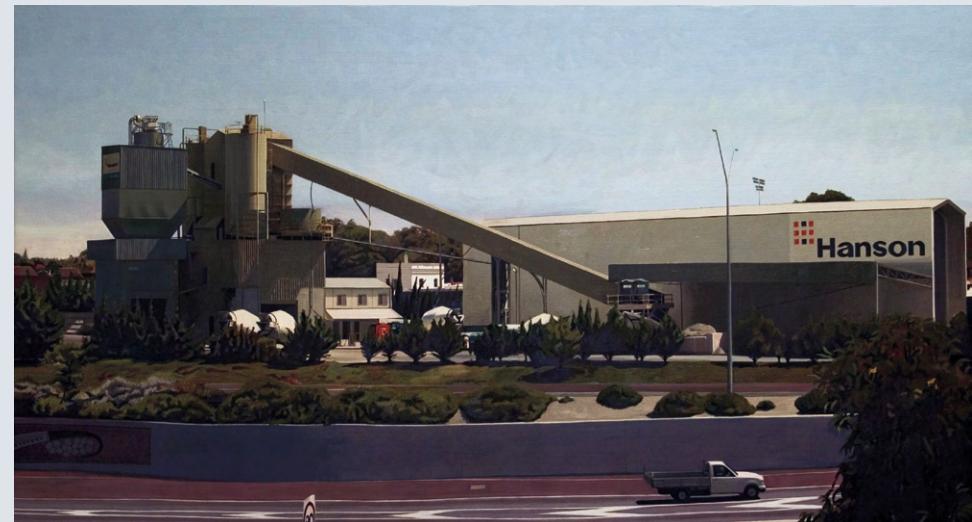
In more recent years, Pumfrey's work has largely focused on documenting the demise of Perth's corner delis and fish and chip shops in competition with major supermarket chains. Though emblematic of a rapidly-disappearing way of life, with subtle connotations of class and race (the corner shop often forming the front section of the migrant family's home), Pumfrey's record of the death of numerous such small businesses throughout Perth's inner-city suburbs defies sentiment. The works are instead marked by a devastating starkness, the series almost entirely devoid of human presence. Again, the wrapping of the landscape is evident, the majority of the sites having been plastered with garish adverts for snack food and newspapers. The series culminated in 24, his masterful suite of paintings documenting a single deli over a 24 hour period, produced for his 2006 solo show at Melbourne's Span Gallery.

Given his close attention to the changing urban environment it is apt that Pumfrey has recently turned his attention to sites reflective of Western Australia's resources boom. While his practice up to now has drawn attention to small interventions in the cityscape that may otherwise have gone unnoticed, his works for *Terraform* are on a grander scale, depicting various industrial sites and building developments indicative of Perth's rapid transformation into Australia's most expensive state capital, (Western Australia overtaking New South Wales – briefly – in average property value, in November 2006).

Many of the works document the frantic urban renewal of previously-overlooked corners of the city that Pumfrey passes on his daily journey to his studio, and are a fitting record of Perth's notoriously sterile legacy of urban architecture. The generic nature of the new buildings he has documented – ironically – makes them (to anyone living here at least) unmistakably 'Perth'. While retaining the starkness of his deli series, the chaotic overlaying of advertising graphics that were a trademark of his earlier practice is here replaced by sombre corporate branding. Able to be glimpsed in several of the works are the familiar silhouette of the 'Bond Tower' and parts of the Burswood Casino Complex, architectural icons of the city's previous economic boom. Tacky emblems of post-Americas-cup buoyancy, they tinge the images with nouveau-riche vulgarity and a reminder of hedonistic excesses of the past turned sour.

Though grounded within their Western Australian context, Pumfrey's works have a broader thematic relevance. The artist admits to becoming obsessed by the sites he documents, taking countless photographs and often painting the same location numerous times. This fascination for the beauty and pathos of the city reflects a broader understanding of how the built environment serves to reveal our culture's dilemmas and desires.

Andrew Nicholls Artist, writer, curator, based in Perth WA.



top left: *Welshpool Grain Facility Night Study* 2007,  
Oil on canvas, 35.0 x 45.5 cm

top right: *Burswood Peninsula Tower 1 Study* 2007,  
Oil on linen, 31.5 x 41.5 cm

above: *Hanson* 2007, Oil on linen, 109 x 202 cm

cover: *Burswood Peninsula Tower 3 East Elevation*  
2007, Oil on canvas, 77.0 x 100 cm

back: *Silos* 2007, Oil on linen, 120 x 160 cm



#### BIOGRAPHY

Born 1972

#### EDUCATION

1998-99 Visual Arts, Edith Cowan University  
1995-97 Diploma, Art and Design, Claremont School of Art  
1994 Associate Diploma, Architectural Drafting, Leederville TAFE  
1992 Certificate of Art and Design, CMC Perth

#### SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2007 *Terraform*, Tin Sheds Gallery, University of Sydney  
2006 *For a few delis more*, Span Galleries Melbourne, presented by Turner Galleries  
2003 The Church Gallery, Claremont WA  
2001 *Thirsty*, Sydney Fong Gallery, Geraldton WA  
2000 *Just for the taste of it*, The Verge, Perth WA

#### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2006 *Melbourne Art Fair*, Turner Galleries Stand, Royal Exhibition Building  
2005-07 *Configured*, curated by Kevin Robertson, touring WA by Art on the Move  
2004 *Town of Vincent Art Award*, Council Chambers, Leederville  
2004 *City of Joondalup Invitational Art Award*, The Great Space, Joondalup

2003 *On the line*, The Church Gallery, Claremont WA  
2001 *Exploration 2*, Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne VIC  
2000 *Prima facie*, The Church Gallery, Claremont WA  
2000 *City of Perth Art Award*, Perth WA  
2000 *Albany Art Prize*, Albany WA  
2000 Ardara Artists Resource Centre, Ardara, Ireland  
1999 *Gotham goes to the movies*, Cinema Paradiso, Northbridge WA  
1997 *Graduate exhibition*, Tony Hayes Gallery, Claremont School of Art

#### AWARDS

2004 *Voice News Award*, Town of Vincent Art Award  
2004 Peoples Choice Award, City of Joondalup Invitational Art Award  
2002 Best overall, Kalgoorlie Boulder Art Prize  
2000 Best overall, Gascoyne Biennial, Carnarvon  
1997 Best oil/acrylic, Gascoyne Biennial

#### COLLECTIONS

Murdoch University, Edith Cowan University, Gascoyne Town Council, Town of Vincent, City of Sterling, City of Perth, City of Melville, private collections

## Tin Sheds Gallery

Tin Sheds Gallery, University of Sydney, G04 - Wilkinson Building, 148 City Road Sydney

This exhibition is supported by Turner Galleries Perth [www.turnergalleries.com.au](http://www.turnergalleries.com.au) [08] 9227 1077