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Metis time:04

Science and the contemporary arts festival
May 2004

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On behalf of the metis 2004 reference group I extend our thanks to all of the artists who are involved in this festival. Their extraordinary professional commitment to their practice be it art or science, performance, dance, film, music, theatre, video, photography or writing has resulted in a festival that presents works of the highest integrity. Their work is truly inspirational, and will take you, the audience, on journeys of imagination, creativity and vision. To the speakers who are presenting talks at the symposium *Taking Time* our grateful appreciation to the furthering of dialogue between these two disciplines of art and science. Thanks also to the writers who have contributed to this catalogue. We especially acknowledge Paul Davies who graciously allowed us, with the kind permission of the original publisher *Scientific American*, to reprint his thought-provoking article 'How to Build a Time Machine'; our thanks to them both. Metis has enjoyed the encouragement and support of CSIRO since its inaugural festival in 1999. We have been able to present extensive programs of exhibitions by pooling resources and working as a coalition. We thank each of the arts organizations for their continued association. Metis 2004 has been able to build on this strong foundation with funding support from Festivals ACT and we acknowledge these our major sponsors.

Merryn Gates, Metis 2004 Project Manager, April 2004

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0

7

00:12

00:13:08

00:13:14

BARBARA CAMPBELL

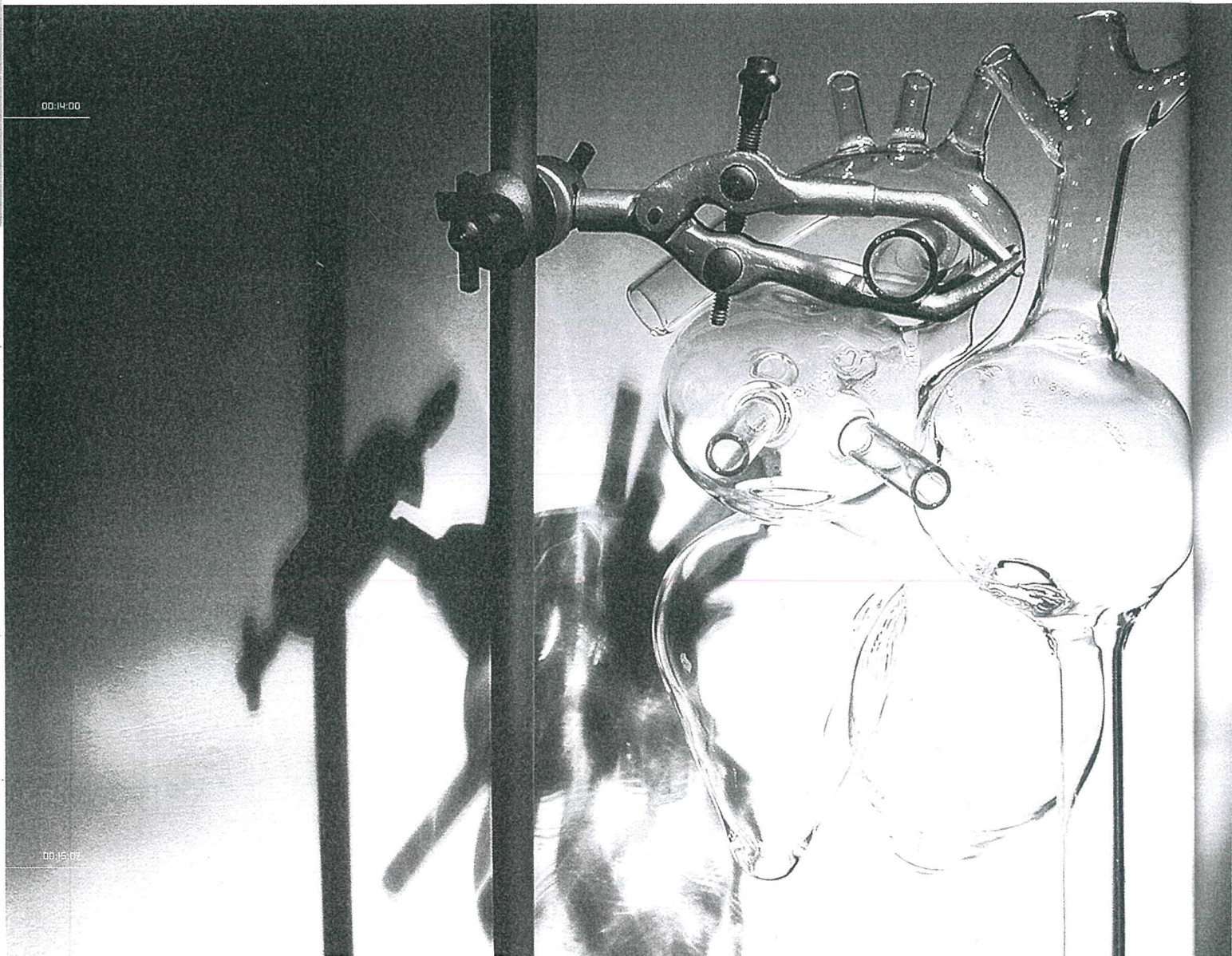
00:13:32

00:13:40

BARBARA CAMPBELL
HEART WITH BOSS-HEAD, RETORT CLAMP AND ROD 2003
GLASS, BRASS, ALUMINUM
HEART MADE BY LES GAMEL, LAMP-WORKER, CHEMISTRY
DEPARTMENT WORKSHOP, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
77 X 21.5 X 17.5 CM

00:14:00

00:15:07



THERE'S TIME :: 01

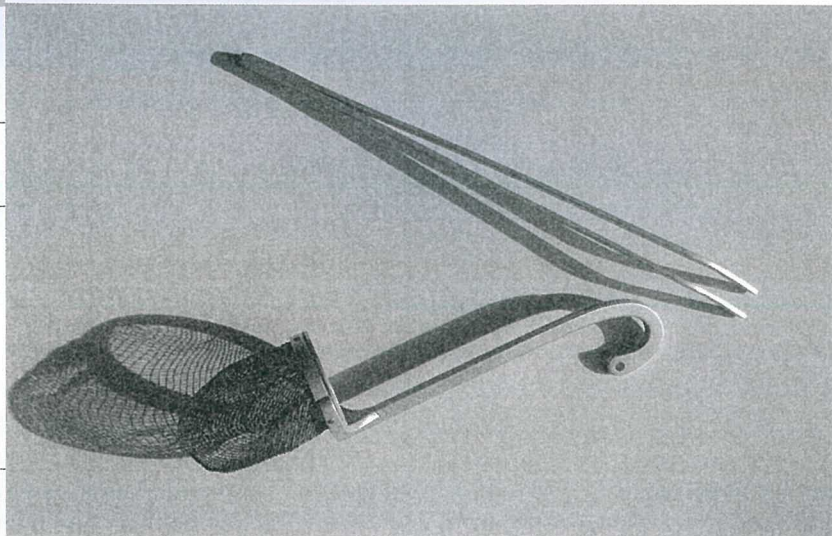
THERE'S NO TIME :: KELLY GELLATLY:: WHEN WATCHING A PERFORMANCE BY BARBARA CAMPBELL, ONE IS NEVER QUITE SURE JUST HOW THE DIFFERENT ELEMENTS OF THE WORK WILL LATER MANIFEST THEMSELVES, WASHING OVER YOU LIKE WAVES LONG AFTER THE PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE WORK HAS PASSED. THE OVERWHELMING POETRY OF THE *GRIMWADE EFFECT* FOR EXAMPLE, COATS YOUR MEMORY LIKE A WARM STICKY SUBSTANCE IN WHICH VARIOUS RECOLLECTIONS OF THE WORK GET STUCK AS THEY FALL INTO PLACE AT DISPARATE TIMES. THERE IS NO APPROPRIATE WAY OF 'FIXING' THIS WORK, OF BEING ABLE TO ADEQUATELY CONVEY BOTH THE FEELINGS IT EVOKES AND THE THOUGHT PROCESSES THAT ARE STIMULATED WHEN YOU 'LIVE' WITH THE PERFORMANCE OVER A PERIOD OF TIME. JUST AS CAMPBELL AND HER LEECH CO-PERFORMERS WORK ON AND WITH EACH OTHER ("THEY GO TO WORK ON ME," SHE SAYS, "AND I CONVERT THEIR WORK INTO A BODY MONITORING SYSTEM."), THE *GRIMWADE EFFECT* CONTINUES TO WORK ON ITS AUDIENCE THROUGH THE ONGOING AND OPEN-ENDED DIALOGUE IT ESTABLISHES BETWEEN ART AND CRAFT PRACTICE, AND THE DISCIPLINES OF HISTORY AND SCIENCE.

Barbara Campbell's performance work is informed by her impeccable and wide-ranging research, investigations that at times develop from her total immersion in the cultural institutions with which she has collaborated throughout her career. In the case of *The Grimwade Effect*, Campbell plumbed the depths of the University of Melbourne's Grimwade Collection while working as a Macgeorge Fellow at the University in 2002. The people, objects, history and stories (both tall and true tales) that together form an institution's 'soul' feed Campbell's work, and are in effect re-interpreted through her act of performance. *The Grimwade Effect* and the objects that accompany it developed from the artist's engagement with the University's archive relating to prominent Melbournian Russell Grimwade (1879-1955). The fine art, craft, scientific and personal material comprising the collection fleshed out Campbell's understanding of Grimwade as an individual of multifarious tastes and expertise—a man able to turn his hand equally from scientific investigation and economic development, to collecting and aesthetic pursuits. The picture of Grimwade that Campbell was able to piece together via her work with the University's collection serves as the inspiration for this performance.

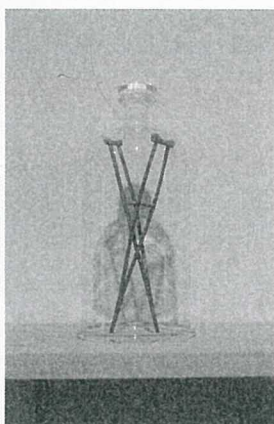
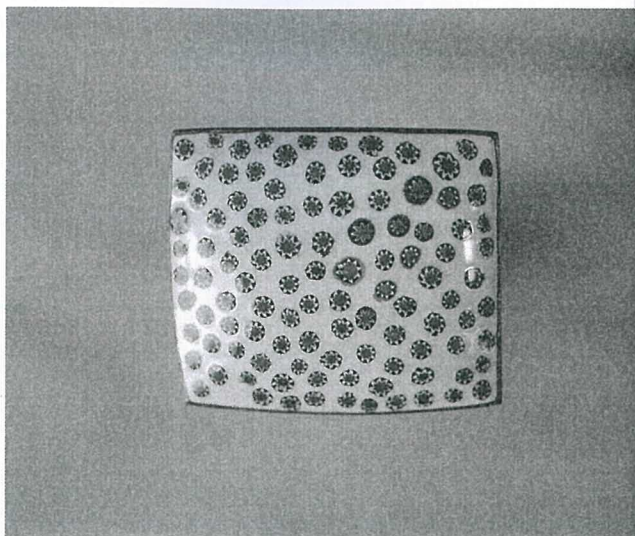
Campbell's practice is informed by her interest in the circulation of ideas throughout history and the accompanying re-evaluation and analysis of the past via its interaction with the present. This notion of circulation—the flow of ideas in the intellectual realm, as well as the flow of blood on a bodily level—resounds in *The Grimwade Effect*. While the exquisite blown-glass heart that is displayed in the gallery space references the circulatory system at its most fundamental, it is also impossible to disregard the historical and poetic associations of the heart as the centre of feelings and emotions. A heart of glass is easily broken. Just as the artist's monitored heartbeat reverberates throughout the gallery space, the cycle of pain, sickness, sadness and healing that mark the human condition reverberate in the piece as a whole. When Barbara Campbell attaches the leeches to her skin during the course of the performance, one cannot help but think of the leeching of emotions — of the need to draw pain, suffering, hurt, and anger to the surface in order to let them go. Similarly, while the miniature crutches made by Russell Grimwade reference Grimwade's championing of and work with the eucalypt, the 'emotional cripple' is also brought to mind. Traditional notions of care are rendered useless, just as the crepe bandages of the artist's costume cover her body, but can in no way fulfil their true function.

The Grimwade Effect is not easy to watch, and this is especially so of the artist's 'bloodletting' (another ancient surgical procedure) in preparation for the leeches. The tension established by the passing of time ('time heals all wounds'), is made all the more palpable during the performance by the leeches' resistance to 'take' (something which took me totally by surprise, my having assumed that these succubus-like creatures indiscriminately loved blood), by the regularity of Campbell's

BARBARA CAMPBELL
LEECH JEWELLERY 2003
 SCOOP: BRASS, COPPER, ALUMINIUM
 FORCEPS: ALUMINIUM
 SCOOP: MADE BY KATHARINE EDGHILL, CANBERRA
 FORCEPS: MADE BY JOHANNES KUHNEN, CANBERRA
 VARIOUS DIMENSIONS



HELEN AITKEN-KUHNEN
ENAMEL PIN 2004
 ENAMEL, MILLEFIORI, COPPER
 TOP: 3.5 X 4.2 X 0.7 (IRREG.)



02:01:14

← **RUSSELL GRIMWADE**
 BORN MELBOURNE 1879, DIED MELBOURNE 1955
MINIATURE CRUTCHES C.1941
 WOOD, BRASS, SILVER
 2 COMPONENTS: 25 X 3.7 X 0.8 CM
 THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES
 GIFT OF THE RUSSELL AND MAB GRIMWADE BEQUEST 1973
 86/97

← ← **BARBARA CAMPBELL**
LEECH AQUARIUM 2003
 GLASS RICHARDSONIANUS AUSTRALIS LEECHES
 AQUARIUM MADE BY LES GAMEL, LAMP-WORKER, CHEMISTRY
 DEPARTMENT WORKSHOP, THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
 24 CM (HEIGHT) X 19 CM (DIAM.)

→ 00:13 beating heart, and by the slow transformation of the leeches as they fill with her blood. While our role as observers is important, the performance is not executed for us. Campbell's slow, almost ritualistic actions—the artist's pricking of her thigh in order to draw blood, her determined attempts to withdraw the wriggling leeches from their hand-crafted glass aquarium (with its parallels to the historical precedent of the nineteenth-century watercolour of the Felton, Grimwade & Co. leech aquarium, which is also on display), and the placing of them upon her body—are totally self-possessed. Each onlooker takes away from the experience their own version of events, re-working via personal response and individual memory the artist's interpretation of the past as filtered through the history of the Grimwade family. Yet because of the inward-focus of Campbell's unfolding performance, there remains the rather unsettling sense that her behaviour takes place more for her than us (a 'working through' on the most solitary of levels) and that the performance would in fact occur regardless of whether or not an audience was present to witness it.

Prior to the act of performance, Barbara Campbell's own role is not unlike an archivist who draws together material for the future safekeeping of its purpose and significance. The knowledge garnered through her research makes her our key to the objects that accompany her performance; the performance itself providing yet another interpretative layer that encourages reflection and a different way of looking at the world into which she, as artist/archivist, leads us. Through the lightest and most poetic of touches, Campbell's selection of various glass objects emphasises the opportunities for learning and development that can emerge from (hind-)sight and (re-)looking at the past. The inclusion of Helen Aitken-Kuhnen's miniature worlds—tiny millefiori caught in fields of coloured enamel—may refer in the first instance, through their commissioning by Campbell, to Russell Grimwade's collection of Czechoslovakian glass paperweights, but they also serve to focus our vision, in effect making us contemplate the very act of looking in which we are involved.

The overlapping of personal and public interests is evoked in *The Grimwade Effect* through the presence of glass and wood, both of which have particular significance to the Grimwade story. The Grimwade family's employment of artisan-skilled labour through Melbourne Glass Bottle Works (a company established by Russell Grimwade's father, F.S. Grimwade with Alfred Felton, now known as ACI), is paralleled in Campbell's piece through her collaborations with various artists. Just as Melbourne Bottle Works used craftspeople to make the vessels essential to their business, Campbell uses the 'conversations' and objects that develop by working across disciplines to further overlay the work. The artist's collaboration with lampworker Les Gamel from the Chemistry Department of the University of Melbourne for example, results in beautiful objects that blur the boundaries between art, craft and utilitarianism. Not unlike the animation of history that emerges from Campbell's engagement with it outside of the traditional forms of academia, the display of Gamel's objects in the gallery environment allows them to perform in a different laboratory.



BARBARA CAMPBELL
PERFORMANCE STILL 2003
PHOTOGRAPH BY PATSY VIZENTS
FROM PERFORMANCE AT IAN POTTER MUSEUM OF ART,
MELBOURNE

Like the presence of glass, which alludes to the way in which the developments and innovations of glass practitioners informed the scientific and commercial outcomes of the Grimwade family's industrial ventures, the wood objects that both embellish and support Campbell's performance similarly evoke the disciplines of craft and science, as well as being the physical result of successful collaboration. Society's use (and perhaps abuse) of the

natural environment is elegantly figured through the legs of the timber bench (shaped to resemble crutches—in turn inviting a lovely dialogue with Grimwade's own miniature hand-crafted crutches) and the finely crafted 'branches' which hang below the shelf from which the enamel pins rise. The relationship between the body, and specifically Campbell's body, is borne out in these objects. Not only is the colour of the timber of the bench legs matched to the artist's skin, but the presence of the bench itself in the gallery space serves to shadow her prone figure long after the performance's end.

Just as Barbara Campbell's plundering of the University collections for *The Grimwade Effect* reflects her ability to engage with all manner of material and information with a willingness to allow it to take her where it will, her use of wood in the performance speaks of Russell Grimwade's very personal interest in the eucalypt—a wide-ranging knowledge that served to inform practices as diverse as the commercial extraction and marketing of eucalyptus oil, scientific writing and photography of eucalypt specimens, and at the other extreme, where passion is borne out via craft, the turning of wood in his home workshop. In many ways Campbell's research into the Grimwade collection mirrors Russell Grimwade's own eclectic interests which engaged with equal passion areas as diverse as science, industry, fine art and craft. By working across the material that bears witness to Grimwade's activities, Campbell has herself entered the University archive, leaving behind, through the documentation of her performance and the evocative objects of *The Grimwade Effect*, traces of her own multi-disciplinary practice and the emotional intensities of the human condition.