

Drawn by T. Boock.

Bodily metaphors abound in the processes and materiality of Campbell's work. The imagery is brought to life by a kiss or by spitting, the use of the dinner plates and napkins, the red lipstick and the black pigment of the jellybeans are all redolent of the real physical and psychic implications of images, portraiture and politics. Similarly Fiona Hall's *Incontinent* also plays heavily on bodily and material metaphor. Inspired by the table upon which Queen Victoria signed the documents for the Australian colonies to Federate in 1901,¹³ Hall's work is an extended play of material metaphors about Queen Victoria, the Victorian era and the crumbling of the British Empire. In the place of the opulent wooden, three-drawer table with leather top and gilded metal mouldings, Hall has substituted a Formica kitchen table. Instead of an inkwell she has drilled thirteen drains into the table top, to which she has connected PVC tubing drilled with Victorian lace patterns. Expanding the original chrome legs are small mahogany ones. The dark wood of the new legs standing in stark contrast to the modern surfaces implied by the rest of the table and plumbing. Each play of material shuttles back and forth between its implied original use and its dysfunctional transformation, creating an ambivalent analogue for the end of empire.

John Citizen/Gordon Bennett's installation trains its sights on sites of colonial power. Into a room at Old Parliament House, Bennett installs a video work *Performance with Object for the Expiation of Guilt: Violence and Grief Remix* flanked by two surveillance monitors. The video shows a shadowy figure whipping a black box about the size of his own body. Digital manipulation creates swirling fields of colour and text floating over and across the whipping boy. Historically racist imagery from advertising film spins through the air along with racist epithets. On the either side of this frenetic work are two surveillance monitors: one trained up the axis towards the New Parliament House and the other down the axis and across the lake towards the Australian War Memorial. On most occasions that visitors would view the work they would see very little activity in either direction: perhaps a few people wandering through the hall or hanging out at the Tent Embassy. Scanning back and forth between the silence of the surveillance monitors and the sound and fury of *Performance with Object for the Expiation of Guilt: Violence and Grief Remix* it is possible to feel how the political struggle symbolised by the David and Goliath contest of Old Parliament House and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy is mirrored and structured by an internal psychological battle of identification and guilt in which nobody stands unscathed.



13 This table is held by the Parliament House Art Collection



noticed or taken for granted. Jolly writes that, “the people in [the photographs] are slightly embarrassed, they have combed their hair and straightened their ties. They just want the photographer to finish his job and leave. But such is the power of the photograph that despite the awkwardness of the encounter some trace element of their personality and their time can still be distilled from the emulsion. The people photographed by Australian News and Information Bureau photographers were caught not ‘just being themselves’, as in the snapshot, but ‘being themselves vainly attempting to be a national cipher’.”¹¹

Like Jolly, Barbara Campbell is concerned with photographic reproduction; however, where he deliberately selected images which were, at first glance mute, Campbell’s point of departure is an immediately loaded one: the white artists in the 19th century who sought to capture the likeness of Trukanini, the so-called ‘Last Tasmanian Aboriginal’. If Jolly’s photographs are driven by images and iconography, Campbell has chosen not to work with Trukanini’s image at all, in part out of respect to those who would be hurt by yet another reproduction of her image. Instead, she has taken the artists’ signatures and photographers marks, for her subject is not specifically Trukanini but the act of portraiture and how it might function socially.

Her work, *Fresh Glories*¹² is installed in the Verandah Gallery of the National Portrait Gallery at Old Parliament House. A long narrow room with an entrance at either end, one side of the room is glass, looking out onto the Aboriginal Tent Embassy and the sloping lawn down to the shores of Lake Burley Griffin and across to the Australian War Memorial nestled at the foot of Mount Ainslie. The middle of the room is squarely on the axis between Parliament House and the War Memorial.

Images of the artists’ signatures and marks are etched onto dinner plates. Over the course of the installation Campbell will kiss these plates, her lipstick pressing into the etched surfaces bringing these marks to life. A television is also in the room, used during Parliamentary Question Time to create portraits of politicians; portraits made etched into perspex and coloured by spitting black jellybean pigment onto the image and grinding it in. Each day, Campbell will make one plate image and one perspex portrait which will hang opposite each other until she has produced eight of each.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Fresh Glories* is borrowed from a quote of Julia Margaret Cameron, a 19th century British society portraitist who was active contemporaneously with the photographers who captured the likeness of Trukanini. “My husband from first to last has watched every picture with delight, and it is my daily habit to run to him with every glass upon which a fresh glory is newly stamped, and to listen to his enthusiastic applause.”