

Selected works

from the UniSA Samstag Collection



The University of South Australia's Samstag Collection consists of works by Samstag Scholars, recipients of the prestigious **Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarships**. The scholarships were established in 1992 through the generous bequest of Gordon Samstag, an American artist who taught at the South Australian School of Art between 1961 and 1970. They enable a small number of Australian artists, selected on their artistic merit and potential, to 'study and develop their artistic capacities, skills and talents outside Australia' at a place of their choice from among the world's great art schools and universities.

Since first established, over one hundred artists have been awarded scholarships. This exhibition presents but a small selection from the growing number of works held by the University in its Samstag Collection. It reveals the University as a confident and innovative supporter of the contemporary visual arts, and illustrates the diversity and imaginative strengths that characterise emerging Australian art practice and the Samstag alumni. Drawing richly from an expanded view of the world, the Samstag artists challenge and engage us with explorations of the unknown, or portrayals of everyday realities, intertwined with ambiguities.

Like so many of their alumni peers, the Samstag Scholars represented here each have had successful careers since studying at the world's great art schools, in London, Berlin, Los Angeles and Boston, among others. Their works are not only in art museums and private collections worldwide, but they also increasingly feature in national and international exhibitions.

The University of South Australia takes great pride in its continuing relationship with the Samstag Scholars, whose work exemplifies the imaginative intelligence and skill that is typical of today's best international art.



Simon TERRILL, *Swarm* 2005
type C print, 180 x 220cm

Ideas of spatiality and motion feature strongly in **Simon Terrill's** photographs. They are often taken from elevated positions, enabling him to show crowd dynamics in dramatic perspective. In *Swarm*, the context is Sydney's 2005 'Big Day Out' concert. Using a long exposure, the passage of individuals through the crowd is seen in an indistinct painterly 'stain', an illusion of movement, while stationary elements remain in focus. Among groups of people litter is seen, enhancing the idea of a crowd as an 'unorganised' group, careless and irresponsible, and at worst, its behaviour like that of a 'wild beast'.¹

Central to **Hayden Fowler's** practice are the increasingly isolating interrelationships between humans and nature. Animals and humans occupy the same space in his elaborately constructed scenarios. *Second Nature* v evokes a science fiction future where the sterile, sparse environment of a space colony reflects humanity's evolutionary ruin and break with Earth and first nature. It shows an elemental man on the same level as two deer, which appear uninterested in him. Fowler's scene evokes both a sense of wonderment and unease at the troubling realities of cultural and ecological disintegration.

A different kind of futuristic vision occupies the work of **Callum Morton**. His focus is the relationship between people and the built environment. Morton grew up with a photograph of the Swiss architect Le Corbusier's Palace of Assembly in his room. The Palace is at the heart of Le Corbusier's iconic designs for the modern Indian city of Chandigarh, built between 1950 and 1963, and the only one of his urban planning schemes to be realised. Morton transformed these designs into a futurist virtual theme park in his series of works *Tomorrow Land*. In the digital print of the same name, bones lie scattered beneath the welcoming Open Hand monument, which points to a bleak and deserted Tomorrow Land, a symbol of failed utopianism.

¹ William McDougall, *The Group Mind: a sketch of the principles of collective psychology with some attempt to apply them to the interpretation of national life and character* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 45.



Kristian BURFORD, *Kathryn...* 2004
documentary cibachrome print
47 x 57.5cm (oval)

Kristian Burford has gained an international reputation for his realistic and conceptually sophisticated sculptural installations. The titles of his works are long narratives which explain the detailed, complex stories behind the scenes he depicts. In Burford's *Kathryn*, the scene is viewed covertly through a curtain, where Kathryn (who 'has escaped the company of her grandparents to play with her grandmother's cat') is seen lying on a couch wearing only underwear and make up, self-absorbed. Originally an installation featuring a life-sized human sculpture of a young woman in a domestic environment, for this series Burford has photographed the setting from five different viewpoints. In each, *Kathryn* is an exploration of the boundaries that exist between trauma and response, interior and exterior, seeing and the seen.



Callum MORTON, *Tomorrow Land* 2004
digital print on paper, mounted on
aluminium, 94.5 x 170cm
© the artist
courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery

Anne WALLACE, *Writer's Block* 2000
oil on canvas, 111.5 x 136.5cm



Less explicable are the representational oil paintings of **Anne Wallace**. Her carefully staged scenes provoke questions regarding the depicted characters and events, yet the mysterious frozen images have no clear relationships or narrative. Wallace fabricates scenes to explore anomalies of everyday life and people's obsessions, and imbues them with an underlying sense of menace and foreboding. In *Writer's Block*, we recognise the vulture as symbolic of a writer's fear of failure, yet typical of her paintings, it is filled with possibilities.

Rebecca Ann Hobbs highlights the incongruities of everyday life. In her photographs the subject wears carefully styled clothes which seem out of place with the activities depicted. In *Handstand*, a woman is seen performing a handstand on the beach, her long red skirt has fallen over her face and exposed her lower body. *Burn* shows a demurely dressed woman igniting an aerosol spray with a blow torch, creating a flamethrower effect, an action at odds with both her appearance and the backdrop of timbered mountains. Humour comes from the discordant juxtapositions and bizarre interactions, between the fiction of the staged tableaux and their landscape settings.

Timothy Horn's ambitious sculpture shows the fine line between beauty and grotesque. *Discomedusae* refers to the etching of a jellyfish by nineteenth-century German zoologist Ernst Haeckel. Horn's own *Discomedusae* is a large, majestic and complex chandelier, created in translucent rubber so, when lit, it glows with a core of light that brings the creature to life. Horn's use of rubber mimics the transparency and hardness of glass, whilst remaining soft and flexible. *Discomedusae* brings together multiple contrasts, between the fine and decorative arts, the historical and contemporary, in a work that is both beautiful and ironic.

Sarah Wall
Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art



Timothy HORN, *Discomedusae* 2004
synair polyurethane rubber, light bulbs
150 x 190cm (diameter)

Rebecca Ann HOBBS, *Handstand* 2003
light jet print, 50 x 50cm

Rebecca Ann HOBBS, *Burn* 2003
light jet print, 50 x 50cm



The University of South Australia Art Collection is developed and managed through the Samstag Museum of Art, which also conducts a program in which artworks are commissioned for sites around the University's campuses. The Collection includes works by South Australian artists and Samstag alumni, the Max Hart Collection of Bark Paintings, and the Robert Lyons Collection of Ceramics.

The Collection is an important educational resource and is integral to the Museum's activities in the University and the wider community. The Museum regularly rotates art works around the University to ensure that the Collection is seen and accessible.

The Board of the Samstag Museum of Art encourages and welcomes the development of the Art Collection through gifts of works of art or bequests to the Samstag Museum. Culturally significant gifts of works of art are tax deductible through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. For further information please contact www.unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum

Kristian Burford

Kathryn is staying at her grandparents' house. It is nine o'clock on a November evening. She has escaped the company of her grandparents to play with her grandmother's cat, a queen named Lucy, by moving into the sunroom of the house. After some minutes of happily petting the cat it has turned on Kathryn, penetrating the skin of her left index finger with its fangs and raising three lines of skin on her left wrist with the claws of its left paw. In response to Lucy's attack, Kathryn has grabbed at the cat in an effort to disentangle herself from it. She has been fortunate enough to find the cat's collar with three fingers of her right hand. This has allowed her sufficient purchase on Lucy's slippery form to remove the cat to the carpeted floor of the sunroom. Kathryn has placed her injured finger in her mouth so as to contain the pain and her blood. She has then recognized that she has wet herself, and has, simultaneously, taken the finger from her mouth 2004

series of five documentary cibachrome (agfa superchrome) prints from the original installation one work 56 x 47.5cm; three oval works each 57.5 x 47cm; and one oval work 47 x 57.5cm

Hayden Fowler

Second Nature v 2008
chromogenic photograph on fuji flex
photo by Joy Lai
105 x 130cm

Rebecca Ann Hobbs

Burn 2003
light jet print
50 x 50cm
Handstand 2003
light jet print
50 x 50cm

Timothy Horn

Discomedusae 2004
synair polyurethane rubber, light bulbs
150 x 190cm (diameter)

Callum Morton

Tomorrow Land
(from the series *Tomorrow Land*) 2004
digital print on paper, mounted on aluminium
94.5 x 170cm
© the artist, courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery

Simon Terrill

Swarm 2005
type C print
180 x 220cm

Anne Wallace

Writer's Block 2000
oil on canvas
111.5 x 136.5cm



SAMSTAG
MUSEUM

This catalogue is published to accompany
Selected works from the UniSA Samstag Collection
An exhibition presented by the Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art
in the Kerry Packer Civic Gallery, University of South Australia
24 February–4 March 2010

Published by the Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art
University of South Australia
GPO Box 2471
Adelaide SA 5001

55 North Terrace, City West
Adelaide, South Australia

Telephone 08 8302 0870
samstagmuseum@unisa.edu.au
www.unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum

Exhibition Curator: Sarah Wall

Copyright © the artists, author and University of South Australia

All rights reserved. This publication is copyright. Except as permitted under the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced by any process, electronic or otherwise, without permission in writing from the publisher. Neither may information be stored electronically in any form whatsoever without such permission.

ISBN 928-0-9807175-0-1

Samstag Museum of Art Director: Erica Green
Curator, Exhibitions and Collection: Emma Epstein
Coordinator, Scholarships and Communications: Rachael Elliott
Samstag Administrator: Jane Wicks
Curatorial Assistant: Sarah Wall

Graphic Design: Buddle Design
Printing: Finsbury Green Printing

The Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art respectfully acknowledges US Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management, Naples, Florida, USA, trustee of the Samstag Fine Arts Trust. We express appreciation to Dr Anna Ciccarelli and Julian and Stephanie Grose as ongoing supporters of the Samstag Museum, and special gratitude to our valued sponsors and exhibition partners:



samstag



The Kerry Packer Civic Gallery is a project of the Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Centre, University of South Australia