

List of works

Andrew Hurtle
The Magic Half-Million 2012/13 2013 (#1-12 & #17 of 17)
 inkjet print on archival matte paper
 dimensions variable
Ephmera Abstraction Suite
 (#1.1, #1.2.2, #1.3, #2.1, #2.3, #2.4, #3.4, #4.1) 2013
 all 60 x 40cm or 40 x 60cm
 edition of 3
 courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Sadie Chandler
Collapsing Balance / Creative Accounting 2012
 Papier-mâché, acrylic paint
 dimensions variable
Numbers drawings 2012
 oil pastel on paper
 dimensions variable
 courtesy of the artist and Charles Nodrum Gallery

Peter Atkins
Monopoly Project - Complete Studies 2011
 acrylic on plywood
 33 x 33cm each (26 panels)
 courtesy of the artist and Tolarno Galleries

Elvis Richardson
Purchasing Power 2009
 screen print on paper
 85 x 53cm framed (7 panels)
 courtesy of the artist & Hugo Mitchell Gallery

Patrick Pound
Apartment block (ruin) 2011
 collage
 47 x 52.5cm

Ronnie van Hout
Timing That Flawed 2009
 painted resin
 3 pieces: 46 x 37 x 100cm
 courtesy of the artist and Kaliman Rawlins

Elvis Richardson
People in front of their houses 2007 -
 ongoing collection of found photographs
 dimensions variable
 courtesy of the artist and Fehily Contemporary

PLAY MONEY



PETER ATKINS • SADIE CHANDLER
 ANDREW HURLE • PATRICK POUND
 ELVIS RICHARDSON • RONNIE VAN HOUT

CURATED BY JANE O'NEILL

Exhibition Dates

2 - 25 August

Curator's Talk

Saturday 17 August 2.30 pm

Acknowledgements

Jane O'Neill would like to thank each of the artists for their contribution, Moreland City Council, Counihan Gallery staff, Fitzroy Stretches, Rae & Bennett, Pro-Colour Imaging and Danielle Hakim.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people as the traditional custodians of the land.



Image above: Ronnie van Hout, *Timing That Flawed 2009*. Painted resin, 3 pieces: 100 x 37 x 46cm. Image courtesy of the artist and Kaliman Rawlins

Cover image: Peter Atkins, *Monopoly Project - Complete Studies 2011*. Acrylic on plywood, 33 x 33 cm each (26 panels). Image courtesy of the artist and Tolarno Galleries

Counihan Gallery In Brunswick

233 Sydney Road, Brunswick VIC 3056 | 03 9389 8622
 Wednesday - Saturday 11 am - 5 pm | Sunday 1 - 5 pm
 counihangallery@moreland.vic.gov.au | moreland.vic.gov.au/gallery



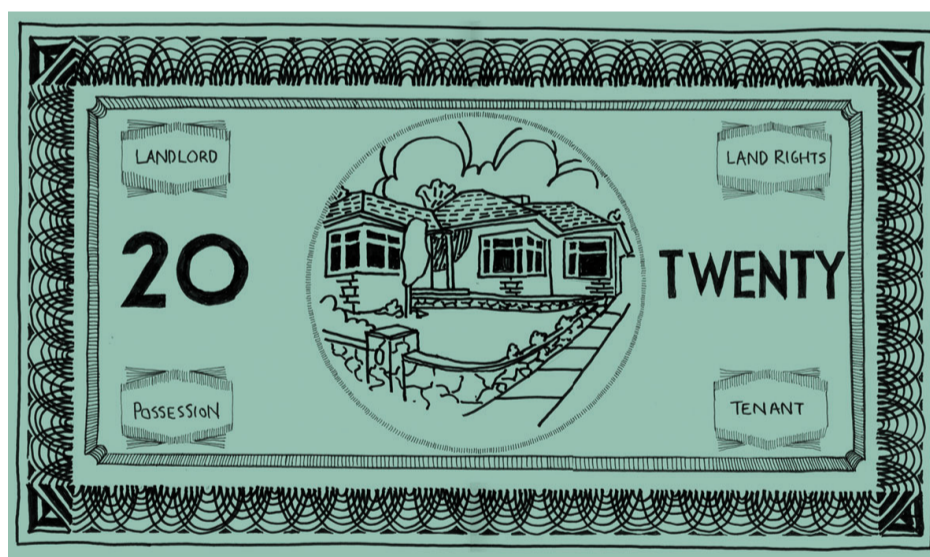
PLAY MONEY

JANE O'NEILL

There is a similarity between the way a bank loan makes possible the creation of a house and the way artists, as they produce works inspired by predecessors, take on a kind of indebtedness. If we were to nominate an artist as the 'bank' in the current exhibition, it would surely be Andy Warhol. The works are united by bold Pop tendencies — references to consumer culture, use of found objects, vivid screen prints. But Warhol is not the only lender here: as the cracks began to appear in the suburban dream in the 1960s, conceptual artists Ed Ruscha, Gordon Matta-Clark and Dan Graham embraced the more stifling repercussions of suburbia and real estate, and we see traces of these artists here too.

The starting point for the present project was a reflection on the pervasive anxiety that arises from the acquisition of real estate. 70% of Australians own their home¹ yet in order to realise the dream of a 'home of one's own' many incur a debt whose side-effect is to stultify all authentic activity, all 'ownness'. Perhaps the whole drive to own property is misguided. The segmentation and dismemberment of land has a violence to it. There is a sense in which our readiness to perform land subdivisions exposes our barbaric attitude to the natural environment; it is seriously at odds with indigenous attitudes to the land. In our yearnings for authentic dwellings, we become complicit in the process of forgetting that this is stolen land.

In childhood we prepare for home ownership through the use of 'play money' in games like Monopoly. Elvis Richardson presents screen prints based on Monopoly money, each print layered with social cues. Elvis walks us through a shameful catalogue of bungled priorities including suburban sprawl, aboriginal dispossession, the general indebtedness engendered by the first home owner's grant and the cancerous spread of gentrification through working class and artist-friendly areas. In this work, the Australian dream is left with pie squarely on its face.



Elvis Richardson
Purchasing Power 2009
screen print on paper
85 x 53 framed
Image courtesy of the artist & Hugo Michell Gallery

Where Richardson layers Monopoly money with peculiarly Australian signifiers, we see in Peter Atkins' Monopoly Project an erasure of extraneous text. Atkins, steadfastly democratic in his approach to abstraction, celebrates the raw aesthetics of commonly encountered items. In doing so, he creates not only an arena for our projections and associations but the opportunity to delight in an object on purely abstract terms. In the context of the theme of real estate, the property market is reduced to its inherent hierarchy of prestige; through abstraction these colours become the bare signifiers of wealth.

There is a palpable atmosphere here of hope and despair. Ronnie van Hout describes how sheds might be seen as small scale domestic versions of museums. These sheds are based on a version from the artist's familial home. We see protrusions of legs from these structures that are suggestive of the way that homes become an extension of the ego.¹¹ In *Timing that Flawed*, the weight of a dwelling has crushed an individual, or maybe it's just a tired shed. In the present context, the work reeks of individual possibilities flattened by pressing financial anxieties.



Sadie Chandler
Collapsing balance / *Creative Accounting* 2012
Papier-mâché, acrylic paint
dimensions variable
Image courtesy of the artist and Charles Nodrum Gallery

There is a sense of collapse also in the installation where large Papier-mâché numbers balance precariously atop each other. Sadie Chandler likens the handling of numbers as a balancing act which verges uneasily upon collapse.¹¹¹ In smaller drawings we see the familiar black and white palette used by Colin McCahon. Whilst McCahon's number paintings were imbued with religious references, Chandler's floating numbers recall a nightmarish vision of insistent financial worry.

Patrick Pound reveals a forensic tendency in his weaving of narratives from his vast archive of found photographs. Here he has chosen photographs of people standing in front of homes. We thereby encounter the emotional investment people place in their homes. The scale of the photographs creates an illusion of a miniature world where we traverse aesthetic traditions of photography, portraiture and architecture.^{11v} Each photo represents an isolated moment, revealing the physical and emotional ways we engage with houses.

The absurdity of land ownership was aptly demonstrated by the American artist Gordon Matta-Clark. In 1973, the artist bought fifteen pieces of land, each too awkwardly shaped to feasibly develop commercially. The artist then used the documents associated with his purchases to present a series of collages, collectively entitled *Fake Estates* that toyed with the idea of blocks of land as aesthetic forms and property transactions as conceptual moments.

There are formal similarities in Andrew Hurtle's series which documents the artist's entry in the \$500 000 Reader's Digest sweepstakes in 2012. We travel with Hurtle as he collects and carefully arranges the many talismans and tokens he received as he progressed through the labyrinthine stages of the lottery; hoping all the while that he may finally achieve that dream apartment and studio in Berlin. The underwhelming consolation prizes of a complimentary mug and book provide an allegory no doubt familiar to all those artists whose projects, though undertaken in expectation of financial support, are often completed against the backdrop of an increasingly dejected trudge from one grant rejection notice to the next.

The social conditions in '70s New York which informed Matta-Clark's *Fake Estates* are similar to those in present day Moreland. In the early seventies, Soho and Tribeca evolved from dilapidated industrial estates to thriving artistic communities. The public's later 'discovery' of the areas led to changes in real estate values that ultimately made it very difficult for artists to continue living there. That this exhibition is set in Brunswick, home to numerous artists in an atmosphere of rapidly rising housing costs, highlights the often overlooked role of the artist in the process of the gentrification of a suburb. It is a privilege to live in such an area not just for the cool factors of band venues and kooky street art, but for the way in which artists offer us perspectives on the world that can't be bought.

¹This is a high average compared to European figures, where only 46% of Germans own their own home, and only 58% of French.

¹¹We see affinities here between van Hout's work and the extensive series of legs by Robert Gober. In Gober's case, legs were most commonly seen to be protruding from walls.

¹¹¹Although Andy Warhol is cited as the major influence in this exhibition, Chandler's debt in this case is probably more to Pop artist Claes Oldenburg.

^{11v}Note the illusion of an inward curve that the artist has created through the placement of photos depending of where each house is centred from left to right.