the academy

Academy of the Arts, University of Tasmania and TAFE Tasmania
Inveresk Cultural Precinct, Launceston • Australia

www.acadarts.utas.edu.au
An artist residency is a gift of quiet time. This one has allowed me to return to Tasmania, where I first came in the early 1990s to work at the Pilot Art Foundry with David Hamilton, casting monumental entrance gates, Nets of Makali’i – Nets of the Pleiades, for the Maui Arts and Cultural Centre in Hawaii. I call this exhibition Ripples, to suggest the series of pieces and collaborations that, for more than 15 years, has grown out of that first encounter with this place.

Ripples is also the name of a specific work that will be on exhibit as a digital print. It, along with Hunger, and a video of the making of the Gates, represent some of what I brought with me to this quiet time, previous ideas that continue to inform my practice. But I came with no idea of what I would do here; I wanted the work to grow out of being in residency.

The first day I was in Launceston, I read Prime Minister Kevin Rudd’s “Sorry Speech,” which he had delivered just a week before. I knew immediately that the speech and what it represents would shape what I would do. I had brought with me a piece, “The Beginning of the Beginning,” and it didn’t take me long to see how my response to the Sorry Speech was related to it. In this piece, and in five additional panels I have made here, I make use of throw away notes, inexhaustible lists of things to be done, items crossed off when accomplished. To hold the mark-making on these scraps together, I draw with thread; individual words disappear into a larger design, and finally, a new image emerges. I call these five new panels Eye Chart.

My residency in Launceston is, of course, temporary. I leave having received the gift of quiet time here in Tasmania, a gift that also includes an inevitable, necessary disquiet.

Photography: Ellissa Nolan

An extract from the Ripples Exhibition Catalogue, 2008

Quiet time is essential to my work; my excessive, obsessive labour is a slowing down of time, a stepping out of the urgent pace of daily life. Out of seemingly nothing – a thin thread, a scrap of paper, a rusty nail – something emerges, makes a statement, holds briefly what cannot be captured: light, breath, time, impermanence, mortality.

PROFESSOR PATRICIA HICKMAN

Artist-in-residence:

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Premium: 
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