

## **PRACTICE Vol.1**

### **Sunday 25 October 2015**

**Panel:** Angela Coombs Matthews, Tony Curran, James Farley, Sarah McEwan, Jacob Raupach

**Attendees:** Kate Allman, Julie Briggs, Carlton Carter, James Formosa, Rebecca Gordon-Smith, Phil Henderson, Scott Howie, Joel Markham, Adele Packer, Therese Price

#### **Intros**

**Panel Intros/Interests:** Jacob- Practice Curator/Photographer/Bookmaker, Tony- Psychology/Drawing/Painting, Sarah- CAD Factory/DIY/Art for Social Change, Angela- Photography/Printmaking/Framing Business, James- PhD Student/Photographer/Environmentalist

**Attendees Intros/Interests:** Phil- Animation/Painting, Rebecca- Photography/Art Therapy, Therese- Painting/Aspiring Gallery Manager-Curator, Julie- Poet/Arts Worker, Carlton- "Am I an artist?", James- Photography Student, Joel- Photography

#### **Formal Education**

**Sarah:** Went to Sydney College of the Arts at age 17 and became aware of inequalities and methods that leaned toward the mainstream. Wondered, "Where is the space for difference?" Desire to make work that has emotional, social and intellectual value rather than monetary value.

**Tony:** Attended COFA and CSU. Received APA Scholarship and studio space during PhD studies.

**Jacob:** Learned to let practice do what it wants. Stressed importance of de-mystifying institutions and realizing that arts workers and leaders are generous.

#### **Applying for Exhibitions/Grants**

**Sarah:** Vital information to include when applying for grants- 1. STATS 2. Capacity to deliver 3. Vision 4. Partnerships 5. Ask for feedback on successful and unsuccessful applications. Surround yourself with an artist network and emphasize the effect of "growing community."

**Jacob:** Opened Fitzmaurice Street Gallery in 2012 with Wagga Wagga City Council grant. Importance of good support and breaking down barriers between artist and institution.

**Angela:** Shy person, but with help of good support can now talk more comfortably about practice. Importance of language when applying for exhibitions- contextualize for specific galleries and spaces.

## Talking Practice

**James:** Refining practice. Went on exchange to US and developed more experimental techniques and work that tells a community's story. Only lived in small towns and learned the importance of networks and working together. Practice recently changed due to viewers placing value on "pretty pictures" and not on broader themes of work.

## Regional vs. Metropolitan

**Sarah:** City is practical with so many galleries and spaces, but you can make your own space in a regional area. Regional NSW conservatism and stigma connected to regional artists. "Well done, you're a regional artist." <pat on the back> Not really taken seriously. Tends to make work that is more personal than universal. Important for regional artists to know the ecology of their area: artist – curator – RADO. It takes time and relentless programming.

**Tony:** No room in the city. Realization that contemporary art is audience based, maybe more difficult to get ideas out there in a regional area. Generally regional audiences are surprised by what can come out of their communities.

**Jacob:** Strong shift in regional arts toward work that affects a wider scale. Became aware of "city attitude" when exhibiting in Melbourne- felt undeserving of exhibition.

**James:** City never conducive to own practice. Arts festival, On Common Ground, shared more ideas and created artist network that would never happen in a city setting. Important to generate your own opportunities in a regional area.

## Taking Opportunities

**Angela:** Say yes! Hill End residency- strengthened painting, printmaking and photography skills.

**James:** Take or make opportunities and if you are in a position to pass on opportunities, pass them on to someone else who is good for the job. Made a conscious choice to take on Broken Hill residency- practice completely changed, built network and facilitated conversations instead of relying on work.

**Sarah:** The arts sector is small- what you say yes to has a ripple effect- you are your reputation. Focus on equality and importance of voice. 65% of art students are female, 35% are male. 35% of solo exhibitions are by female artists- building platforms for women.

**Tony:** There is a risk to saying yes, you have to maintain focus on what it is you are doing or trying to say. Think about where things could lead: went from a sketch artist on reality TV show (Dating in the Dark) to running an identikit program at Museum of the Riverina to developing an app based on identikit work.

**Jacob:** Visibility links to other opportunities. If it seems worthy of applying, go for it and see what happens. It could only lead elsewhere.

## **Funding**

**Angela:** Makes art to make art. Holds other various jobs.

**James:** Also holds various jobs. When applying for funding it is important to remember that your project is an investment. Think about what the cultural return will be.

**Tony:** You can produce art as research through uni and scholarships.

**Sarah:** Most work is funding-based. Important to manage practice and think about accessibility.

## **What do you want/need?**

Cultural hub

Tony's app- pitch to Adobe?

Sarah's California residency with Karen Barad

Artist group with shape and purpose

SPACE: flexible, diverse, accessible, developmental and experimental.

Outside gallery walls- challenging, caring and authentic

## **10 NUGGETS**

1. JUST DO IT!
2. Recognize inequalities and make a space for difference
3. Embrace all good support
4. De-mystify arts institutions. Most people in the arts are kind and generous.
5. Think about the growing community
6. Contextualize language / application for specific galleries, spaces and audiences
7. Say yes, but stay focused.
8. Invest in your art project and think about the cultural return.
9. Know the ecology of your area: artist- curator- RADO
10. In the art world, you are your reputation.