

*The Swiss House* is the name given by the townspeople of Avoca, located in north-western Victoria, to a dilapidated European design house. Lyndal Jones, known nationally and abroad for her installation and video work, bought the property in 2005 for the purpose of a long-term art research project. *The Swiss House*, continually undergoing refitting and adjustment, now forms the central hub of *The Avoca Project Inc* and is associated with RMIT University through Jones, who is Director of Research in the School of Creative Media.

The Avoca Project Inc uses creative practice to promote dialogue, with a focus on climate change and adaptability, notions of place and the movement of people. Jones says that "all contributions are interesting" and she sees her role as "to get lots of people involved in it in different ways." Her position is "sometimes as an artist and sometimes as a director".

Jones has long held an interest in fictional elaborations on the self and the ability to imagine alternative lives. She has parlayed that theme into *The Avoca Project Inc* by giving artists and the wider community a place to experiment with. *The Swiss House* performs a role according to Jones, as "a proponent for change. Rather than seeing it as something stable, you can actually see that it is possible for something so historical to be adapted and open to change".

*The Swiss House* exhibition at RMIT Project Space, the fifth in the series *Propositions for an Uncertain Future*, brings together artists involved with *The Avoca Project Inc*, from various backgrounds and working across many mediums. *The Swiss House*, itself an immigrant, was shipped to Australia piece-by-piece during the nineteenth century. The exhibition features artists from the USA, Poland, Italy and Australia, and includes video (Antoni Jach, also from the School of Creative Media and Ben Speth), sound (Nigel Frayne), text (Longin Samecki), sculpture (Mel Ogden) and drawing (Aldo Iacobelli, Gosia Wlodarczyk). Jones says that such a culturally complex group "keeps the immigrant sense alive".

The Avoca Project Inc continues the interplay between spectator and participant, explored in Jones' previous work. The residents of Avoca have responded positively to the project and are planning to hold activities and events for a local Environment Week in 2009. Jones says she hopes the project will "assist in what we would call urban regeneration". In conjunction with ArtPlay (The City of Melbourne), The Avoca Project Inc will hold a *Big Drawing Day* on Saturday 15 November 2008. *The Swiss House* and grounds will be open to the public and visitors can offset any green-house gas emissions produced by transport to Avoca by purchasing trees and sponsoring plantation at the site.

[www.avocaproject.org](http://www.avocaproject.org)

## The Swiss House

RMIT Project Space, 10 - 31 October

by Max Steep with Lyndal Jones

Lyndal Jones, *Swiss House*, digital photograph, 2007