

## The Printmaking Summer Residency 2007/2008

In the summer of 2007/2008 RMIT Project Space/Visual Arts commissioned artist/curator Deborah Williams to invite seven artists to participate in the RMIT School of Art Printmaking Summer Residency Program. The premise of this year's residency is that all the artists' practices are linked through their interests pertaining to the Visual Word. The invited Artists include Rosalind Atkins (Printmaker), Angela Cavalieri (Printmaking), Jason Cotter (Writer), Katherine Hattam (Painter), George Matoulas (Works on Paper/Sculptor), Alex Selenitsch (Poet/Architect), and RMIT University, School of Art graduate diploma of Visual Arts Deb Taylor (Printmaker). Each were given 24 hour access to studio spaces in the central city location, and extended access to the Visual Arts printmaking studio located in Building 94, Cardigan Street, Carlton.

Each artist created an original edition of 25 prints. These limited edition prints are available for purchase via donations of \$185 for each print, all donations assists in the continuation of Summer Residency Program and facility upgrades in Project Space/Spare Room and Visual Arts.

BUILDING 94, 23-27 CARDIGAN STREET CARLTON

Managed by the RMIT School of Art and the School of Creative Media

**ACTING CURATOR/COORDINATOR** Stephen Gallagher

**ADMINISTRATOR/WEB DESIGN** Andrew Tetzlaff **GRAPHIC DESIGN** Lily Feng

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**TELEPHONE** 03 9925 4971 **GALLERY OPENING HOURS** Monday - Friday 9.30am to 5.00pm

## Acknowledgements

Rosalind Atkins is represented by Australian Galleries, Melbourne and Sydney, work photographed by Tim Gresham. **Angela Cavalieri** is represented by Gallery 101, Melbourne. **Jason Cotter** would like to acknowledge Sophie Splatt and Yvonne Walton at Vision Australia. **Katherine Hattam** would like to acknowledge Andrew Sinclair for the printing of her works. **George Matoulas** would like to acknowledge Douglas Kirwan for assistance in the printing of his works. **Alex Selenitsch** is represented by grahame galleries + editions, Brisbane, and Place Gallery, Melbourne. **Deb Taylor's** print is in collaboration with Peter Lyssiotis. Curator **Deborah Williams** would like to thank Richard Harding, Course Coordinator Printmaking, and Omnus Framing and Bambra Press for there ongoing support.

## SPARE ROOM

Fundraising prints by Residency Artist available for purchase via donations of \$185 each print.

**BAMBRA PRESS**

**OMNUS framing**  
for every framing requirement

ISBN 978-1-921426-22-3



**Deb Taylor**  
*From My Bookshelf – Forgotten Texts*, 2008  
Screenprints, size variable



(Left to right)

**George Matoulas**  
*Untitled*, 2008  
Mixed media on paper

**Rosalind Atkins**  
*Secret Grief 2 (detail)*, 2008  
90 x 63.5 cm  
Photo by Tim Gresham



## PROJECT SPACE/SPARE ROOM

## Visual Word The Printmaking Summer Residency Exhibition

## CURATED BY DEBORAH WILLIAMS

ROSALIND ATKINS  
ANGELA CAVALIERI  
JASON COTTER (ESSAY)  
KATHERINE HATTAM

GEORGE MATOULAS  
ALEX SELENITSCH  
DEB TAYLOR

**FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER - FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER**  
**OPENING THURSDAY 4 DECEMBER 5-7PM**  
**FLOOR TALK THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 12-1PM**



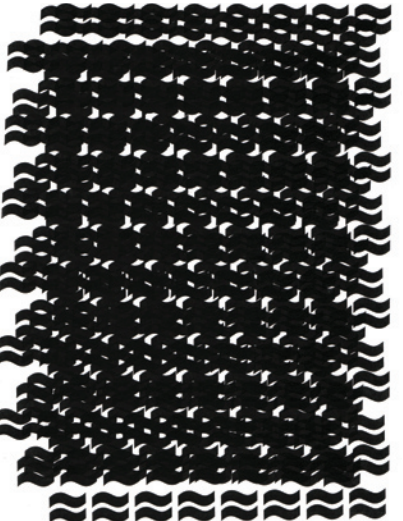




(Left to right)

**Angela Cavalieri**  
*Le città e la memoria*, 2008  
 (Hand-printed) linocut and oil paint  
 on canvas, 145 x 196 cm

**Alex Selenitsch**  
*Waves of approximation*, 2008  
 Multiple photocopy, 21 x 30 cm



## One Thousand Words

Text explains and interprets, obscures and exposes, confounds and inspires. Text incites change and is changed in turn, by writer and reader. It is not immutable. Text meanders off the margins, it lifts from the page, away from the time and space it inhabits and the ideas it first represents. Text's form can be tangible or intangible, it can have meaning and memory. Text has texture – it has interwoven threads of character. As do the following seven sections of text responding to each artist's work. The themes within each may play off and inform the next.

The labyrinth of foundations that underpin ancient cities are, like text, both physical and ethereal – qualities that resonate in the wavering arches and monumental hall of scripture in **Angela Cavalieri's** *Le Città e la Memoria*. Constructed from the Latin inscriptions of ancient architecture and Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, the layered, free-hand letters and symbolic, jigsaw planes seem to project into and shift on the surface of the canvas, much in the same way personal and collective heritage, history and memory alter through the passage of time. Written words act as concrete stores of successive eras, but our understanding is ever-changing and much remains mystery.

Approximation at first appears to contradict the precision in **Alex Selenitsch's** work, but therein lay the subjects he explores: paradox and the antithesis of perfection and error. With informed simplicity he creates poetic wholes of imperfect or opposing elements that resolve on different levels – literal, visual and metaphoric – and reveal comic wit in wordplay and form begetting function. Elements of architecture like pattern, texture and shape parallel textual composition. The minimalist repetition of words, letters and marks belie a complex set of relationships where the meaning of text and its arrangement converge, yet still manage to contradict. Mistake and oddity can be more complete, more pleasing, than 'perfect'.

Weighing the worth of past text appears at the heart of **George Matoulas'** mixed media. Old etchings of bibles flying upside down, held by dogs and doubled (one for you and another for me), sit alongside a shotgun and scales. The Greek text surrounding each floats in luminous clouds or lies adrift on unsettling rubble as if rearrangement at any moment is possible; the letters could reassemble and be reinterpreted in a multitude of ways, for a multitude of judgements and sins. Text is impermanent, unreliable and as malleable as we can be. How do we measure, or measure up against, such shifting words?

*Staying on message*, the contemporary mantra of election victory, is at once a unifying affirmation and a warning. **Katherine Hattam's** colourful singular slogan wheedles in the brain to dazzle and bewitch, and overlays the

plywood grain of a thousand different stories, desires and truths, all silenced, seething and waiting. From afar, it's a competing billboard; it tells you what you want to hear. The emblazoned text on the surface seeks to inhibit digression and elaboration, yet still drives home with building momentum, constant reminder and rehearsed polish that beyond the flash and face of politics, be it personal, social or state, there's plenty besides that's left hidden, unspoken and textless.

Not all pages removed of text are without voice; in blocking paragraphs, page numbers and titles, **Deb Taylor** reminds us of the importance of text in communication and memory. Like a swathe of regime-censored letters, the positive and negative spaces formed create keys of suggestion: a codified image, a new language, a poignant absence, a silhouette of something lost. The re-imagined text fades in series, in tones that mingle the type ink and paper, until the page is blank. The text is lost, and perhaps our memory with it. Taylor has used the pages of books on her shelf of which she has no memory, and at what was once there one can only guess, but in ending with a stark blank page, both daunting and inspiring to an artist, something fresh, something memorable, can be created.

The Braille and blind-typed letters in my haptic tribute boxes are at first glance obscuring and secret. But given that their subjects are often misunderstood or poorly expressed, it may be better to feel the intention of what is

said rather than eyeball the actual words. Letters of lost, unrequited or renewed love, or of grief over the estranged or untimely dead, are collected and transcribed as tactile objects for catharsis, memorial and gift. The abstraction of type and meaning is contained and given concrete form. Touch and be touched by text, both forget and affirm the physical word, and meld the writer with reader.

Of all the objects that remain after a loved one's passing, letters are often the most treasured. They are personal, symbolic texts and stores of memory for, and of, the writer, receiver and descendants. The script in **Rosalind Atkins'** *Secret Grief* is drawn from her mother Vida's hand in letters between Atkin's parents and grandparents – entire conversations written and winged across continents on fine aerogramme paper. The hunched, intimate process of the work's construction was a silent mourning balm, a lone way to deal with a loss of which no one wished to speak, and made use of mementos, such as the raw Huon Pine Vida collected in her native Tasmania from which the print blocks were carved. The blue colour and emblematic, postage stamp bird also resonate with the source, but it is the layered, repeated, oft obscured text that is the strongest affirmation of Atkins' connection to her mother: at once a memento mori and an affirmation of life.

Seven different perspectives on text inhabit the project space, yet many more can be perceived in each: as the artists have re-imagined the texts they draw upon, so too

can the viewer. The poetic effect, as defined by Umberto Eco, is 'the capacity a text displays for continuing to generate different readings, without ever being

completely consumed.' A picture may tell a thousand words, but a thousand words, they can portray a thousand pictures.

Essay by **Jason Cotter**



**Katherine Hattam**  
*Staying on Message*, 2008  
 Jigsaw print