

1974 **33** 2007  
**THE EAF FILES**  
 no.2. October 2007



Urbi et Orbi!  
 To the City and to the World!

### Director's report

The last few months have continued to be very busy at the EAF. The time had come to submit to the Australia Council and Arts SA, the EAF's Business Plan 2008-2010. The process became somewhat more complex because for this application we were also required to develop a Marketing Plan. As the acceptance of the Business Plan is a pre-requisite for the signing of the tripartite agreement between the EAF and the two funding agencies, we deem it is very important for the organization. Needless to say, once accepted, this also means secure funding for the EAF for the next three years! Back in March, the Australia Council organized a meeting in Hobart of Visual Arts and Craft Strategy clients to kick-start the process and detail the expectations of Strategic Planning for the triennium. Duncan Peppercorn (Consultant in Business Strategy) who guided us through the first Business Plan 2004-2007 was again present to provide advice, under the watchful eye of Billy Crawford, Program Manager, VACS. On Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August, myself, Board member Linda Marie Walker, and EAF Administrator, Julie Lawton attended a meeting with the Arts SA's Industry Development Peer Assessment Panel to discuss the EAF's Business Plan and Triennial Application, the results of which should be known shortly.

Now, back to art!

EAF continues to have a leadership role in organising, producing and exhibiting the most radical and experimental contemporary art practice by embracing the significance of the experiment in a multitude of cultural and visual art forms.

### STELARC

In June we presented a selection of current and past work by Stelarc, consisting of *Extra Ear, Blender, Walking Head Robot, Prosthetic Head, and Alternate Interfaces*, an edited compilation documenting other projects. The exhibition was a resounding success, and the opening was one of the biggest we've had. Channel 7 TV interviewed Stelarc, as did The AGE and The Advertiser newspapers. The exhibition was launched by Donald Brook, co-founder and first Chair of the EAF, who delivered a brilliant talk referring to Stelarc's history with the EAF, including the infamous cancellation of what could have been his first suspension performance in 1975. Donald Brook elaborates on the situation around this in his forthcoming autobiography, *Founding the Foundation*, an excerpt of which can be viewed at [www.artschool.utas.edu.au/pulse/brooktext.html](http://www.artschool.utas.edu.au/pulse/brooktext.html).

Stelarc's artist's talk took place in the upstairs EAF office, and was enthusiastically received and extremely well attended by almost 100 people.

### More...

About the exhibition [www.eaf.asn.au/2007/stelarc.html](http://www.eaf.asn.au/2007/stelarc.html)  
 Images from the opening night [www.eaf.asn.au/news\\_june07.html](http://www.eaf.asn.au/news_june07.html)

### JAMES DODD and UBERMORGEN.COM

13 July-19 August we presented the Austrian/Swiss group UBERMORGEN.COM, and South Australian artist James Dodd. UBERMORGEN.COM was created in Vienna by Hans Bernhard (founder of *etoy*) and Lizvix. Since 1999 they have focused on exploring contemporary legal issues, in particular those of security, privacy and copyright in relation to the Internet. "Behind UBERMORGEN.COM we can find one of the most uncatchable identities—controversial and iconoclastic—of the contemporary European techno-fineart avantgarde. Ubermorgen is a German word for 'the day after tomorrow' or 'super-tomorrow'. The permanent amalgamation of fact and fiction points toward an extremely expanded concept of one's working materials, which for UBERMORGEN.COM also include international rights [Legal Art], democracy and global communication networks" (from UBERMORGEN.COM media release). UBERMORGEN.COM was assisted by Pro Helvetia, the Swiss Arts Council.

James Dodd (with top gallery assistance) installed *Speakeasy*, a playful work that included painted, sculptural, video and audio elements. *Speakeasy* was 'saturated' with allusions to the prohibition era in the US, and subsequent illicit alcohol businesses. James informs us that the work explores this concept as an analogy to the political concept of 'Sedition' that we currently experience in Australia. In his Triple J interview about the exhibition James sent out a call for more street art: "The greatest thing about the culture of street art is seeing the different ways in which people approach putting their ideas on the street ... so I like it all. I like a good tag, I like a good stencil, I like a good poster sticker, whatever. I just think more people should find the way they want to put their word out there and you know, go and stick it on the street!"

James was also interviewed by Cath Kenneally on Arts Breakfast at Radio Adelaide (101.5 FM, every Saturday @ 9am ). Dodd's artist talk was well attended and much appreciated. He also spoke about his work to the WEAGWS. (The WEAGWS? Mariann McNamara—former EAF Council member—has initiated a series of West-end winter walks. The group is known as WEAGWS (we are good walkers) and consists of 40 people who step out on a fortnightly basis (Good on you Mariann!). The first presentation at the EAF was Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> July. Ken Bolton and myself also spoke about the EAF). *Speakeasy* was presented in association with the SA Living Artists Festival.

### More...

About the exhibition [www.eaf.asn.au/2007/uber-e-dodd.html](http://www.eaf.asn.au/2007/uber-e-dodd.html)  
 Images from the opening night [www.eaf.asn.au/news\\_july07.html](http://www.eaf.asn.au/news_july07.html)  
 James Dodd's Triple J interview [www.theprogram.net.au/featuresSub.asp?id=5085](http://www.theprogram.net.au/featuresSub.asp?id=5085)

### CALIN DAN

Most recently, (and the exhibition is open until 14 October), Amsterdam-based Romanian art critic, curator and artist Călin Dan was in Adelaide, together with Irina Cios, Director of the International Contemporary Art Center, Bucharest, for a ten day residency at the EAF from 22 August-1 September.

We set a very dynamic program that included exhibition, workshop and talks. The EAF was successful in securing assistance from the Mondriaan Foundation, Amsterdam, which meant we were able to realize a more comprehensive project than usual.

The exhibition *Memory Tags (A Lounge)* opened 30<sup>th</sup> August to an engaged crowd. From the catalogue essay: "Calin Dan's mode of art resists easy categorisation. Not quite cinema yet filmic in it's references and execution, the audio-visual narratives engage the viewer in stories embedded in an Eastern European, post-Soviet perspective. The stories are often culturally unfamiliar, yet entice the viewer to stay and watch a little longer with ordinary 'in-the-world' imagery and situations—a tendency the artist has tagged 'Emotional Architecture'. Dan writes that his videos "are tactically planned and brought into shape as film productions, but strategically they focus on the cracks that a film leaves open and unfilled, with uncertainties and vibrations of everyday life and its ambiguous poetic values" (Teri Hoskin, 'Migrating architectures', Calin Dan, *til here from now... an Emotional Architecture stopover*). The exhibition was assisted by the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, who loaned works from their collection and many thanks go to Mihai Oroveanu, Director.

### EAF FAST FACTS

Founded: 1974  
 Incorporated: 1975  
 First Chair: Donald Brook  
 First Director: Noel Sheridan  
 First Premises: Jam Factory Basement, St Peters  
 First Event: Art and Language Lecture by Terry Smith  
 First installation: A work using wool, fluoro tubes and skylights by Ian Hamilton



City Tags Workshop was held over a six-day period. It examined the city of Adelaide via tagging practices and cultures through video, still image, and audio explorations that considered things like ephemeral architecture, sub-cultures and zones of conflict. Thirteen South Australian and interstate artists took part in the workshop which was produced in association with the South Australian School of Art, University of South Australia, and assisted by the Helpmann Academy. Calin Dan worked closely with each of the artists in one-on-one engagements

and together as a group. The feedback we've received from the participants tells us the workshop was a great success: "...how inspiring and intense this week was ... suddenly video now offers quite a fresh point of departure..."; "The workshop gave me an opportunity to consider new ideas of art practice and critical theory that have proven to be illuminating and inspirational"; "...it made me notice the unnoticed, express topics that needed to be expressed, and expanded my way of conceptualising and contextualising". The workshop kicked-off with the *Greater Adelaide City Tour* organised and guided by Francesca da Rimini and Caron Ward. Peripheral sites of interest included the Adelaide Uni footbridge, Yatala Prison, St Kilda, and a place with a lot of pelicans. It was a great success both for the local artists ("It made me look again at our city.") and those from elsewhere.

The EAF also produced a substantial catalogue (*...til here from now ... an Emotional Architecture stopover*) documenting some of the artist's projects from the last 10 years. This is the most comprehensive documentation to date of the works Călin has produced independently. (Available for a song from Dark Horsey, the EAF's Bookshop.)

Talks were given at the SA School of Art's *Artistspeak* program, and at the EAF. Călin also held one-on-one sessions with the post-graduate visual arts students at the School. Irina Cios also gave a talk at the EAF on Eastern European contemporary art and spoke at the SA School of Art's *Artistspeak* program. Irina was assisted with travel support by the Mobility Fund of the Romanian Ministry of Culture.

### More...

About the exhibition and the workshop [www.eaf.asn.au/2007/dan.html](http://www.eaf.asn.au/2007/dan.html)  
 Images from the opening night [www.eaf.asn.au/news\\_sept07.html](http://www.eaf.asn.au/news_sept07.html)

### RESIDENTIAL STUDIO ART SPACE

The EAF's long held plan to develop a residential studio has been boosted by support from the Minister for the Arts, through Arts SA, for funds to conduct a feasibility study. We are currently discussing various models for approaching this. Needless to say, the topic is especially important, as Adelaide lacks a residential studio for the visual arts, and is a missing link in the national network of residential studios. In addition, this lack has repercussions on South Australian artists who have difficulty taking part in national and international studio exchange programs.

Et benedictio descendat super vos et maneat semper!  
 And may the blessing descend on you and remain with you always!

Melentie Pandilovski, EAF Director

### NEXT UP

Aldo Iacobelli *From time to time one talks to the moon*  
 Opening Thursday 15th Nov - 15 December

### STOP PRESS!

Calin Dan's exhibition has been extended to Sunday 14th October to co-incide with the launch of the tramline to North Terrace and a Lion Arts Centre Open Day 11am-4pm

### EXPERIMENTAL ART FOUNDATION

Lion ArtsCentre • North Toe [West End] • Adelaide • South Australia  
 Hours 11-5pm Tues-Fri. 2-5 Sat  
 +61-(0)8-82117505 • [info@eaf.asn.au](mailto:info@eaf.asn.au) • [www.eaf.asn.au](http://www.eaf.asn.au)



The EAF is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the South Australian Government through Arts SA. The EAF is also supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. The EAF is a member of Contemporary Arts Organisations of Australia [www.caos.org.au](http://www.caos.org.au)



Above from top Melentie Pandilovski with Orlan at BEAP, Perth, in September. Photo by Raphael Cuir; Stelarc shows his ear to the camera while Annie Newmarch prepares to touch; Donald Brook opens the exhibition with tall tales and Greek myths, Melentie Pandilovski looks on. Photos by Peter Thurmer  
 Centre from top Amongst the opening crowd blur at Calin Dan's launch were Louise Haselton (on the left), Francesca da Rimini who dropped in on her way to Ars Electronica, Calin Dan, Alan Cruickshank and possibly Linda Lou Murphy; *Ubermorgen.com* opening July 07; again at Calin Dan's opening from left, Susie graphic designer with Hassell, Mark Orel of Finsbury Green, and Aldo Iacobelli; Calin Dan *This is our city*, stencil 2007; James Dodd and Bianca Barling 'people' the bar element of James's exhibition *Speakeasy*, July. Photos Teri Hoskin & Nic Folland.



# interview with sarah crowEST

by Ken Bolton

**Ken Bolton** Sarah, you've produced a number of bodies of work. All of them employing a kitsch mode, or guise, to treat serious things. I remember sort of sugared-almond 'figures', each about the size & shape of a small bread loaf-climbing the walls of their cells or sitting sadly-which all seemed to be about detention centres, asylum. The EAF show featured a more shrill-ly Tokyo aesthetic that gave us a taxonomy of curious, benign alien beings, glamorously star-dusted & twinkled but also-& 'abjectly'-distressed, leaking a little (though almost discreetly, as if with embarrassment) bodily fluids & so on. I wonder if you've shown very different things interstate-or have they seen what we've seen in Adelaide?

**Sarah CrowEST** I've shown the video 'the joy of beauty' in Melbourne, Sydney, Perth, Canberra and Darwin with assorted groups of creatures crawling up the walls, so those exhibitions have been similar to my last EAF show. However Canberra is about to see something more recent and quite different. This has evolved out of my Masters project which investigates the function of the alter-ego in contemporary art practice.

**KB** A lot of your work over the last few years involves calls upon the viewer for 'empathy'-with 'creatures' that offer themselves as rather flakey (too cute, too disposable etc) & yet the works succeed because, self-consciously, we give it.

But I guess the earlier photographic series-the shots of your 'actual' guises, over years as a young party-goer, growing up, with moves towards various sub-group styles & 'looks' (Mod, punk, ganja queen & so on)-& that show where Adelaide art scene 'names' were represented by photos of others chosen because they had the same names: both shows dealt in Identity. Minus that empathy factor. So, this new work moves things along a bit?

**SC** Ah Ken! I find it touching that you 'give in' and respond to my creatures and their plight! My recent work draws on all the threads you mention, attempts to separate them out and examine them in different ways but perhaps ending up in a nasty knot...a scriggle! I decided recently that all my work is about anxiety in some way. I am also still deeply interested in those things that elicit tender heartedness within us.

**KB** One main difference is that, in working with film, you will tend towards narrative maybe? And there are popular genres that might provide the models that you play off. True? I'm thinking of one you showed at the EAF that was about body-image anxiety: a big-headed alien (that was coded as 'female') tore at her complexion as her makeup was deemed to fail her. What structures underlie the recent work? Will they look very different in terms of film quality?

**SC** Yes, because film is time-based and something happens no matter how slight and the vignettes I make appear

to be little windows or insights into a much larger story. I think of my video work as being akin to portraiture with an emphasis on behaviours. The actions are often quite simple and straightforward but have an underlying suggestion of an emotionally charged state where perhaps some bad stuff on the inside seeps out or is enacted prosthetically on the outside of the body. The big bobbleheaded figures reference a range of popular cultural languages (the style of contemporary Japanese manga, scientific experiments, cooking demonstrations and extreme makeovers) but also art

historical works. I am currently making a film, *Caught in a Loop*, which plays off models from 1960s and 1970s-conceptual and performance art in it's aesthetic, but in filmic terms it is a constructed documentary. I'm using real life monologues with lip-synched performances by actors. It will be shot in black and white on 16 mm film and I anticipate the quality will look remarkably different from my low-fi video efforts. I may be dreaming here but I'm longing for a touch of Diane Arbus and Gillian Wearing in the mix! The Project is being supported by the Media Resource Centre as part of the Raw Nerve Initiative: so there's access to equipment, materials, crew and mentoring-which is going to make a remarkable difference to the quality. So...stand by....

**KB** Yes, I've heard a little about this project: a kind of Lives Of The Artists, isn't it: the expressionist do-good plodder, the over-confident rich-girl, & so on, pursuing their careers as artists-& you play all three, or all seven?

**SC** No, that's what I did for my Masters and just finished....

**KB** What a fast-moving artist. Are these changes of the last few years what you envisaged as a direction in which your work was obviously &, of course, interestingly, headed? Or have they been imposed by study requirements? (I know you're finishing a degree at the moment-which I suppose always means zeroing in on a topic that you figure you can explore but also figure will be (well) within your means.)

**SC** I didn't envisage the journey I eventually undertook during my masters in anyway whatsoever! I had a vague idea that I was going to immerse myself in an exploration of excess and make enormous uncontrolled, gloopy installations. Some 'supervision' (read 'input from supervisor'!) set me on a pathway of confronting my predisposition towards inhabiting various alter-egos. What was that all about? I had no idea so I set about trying to understand more about that activity. I had been doing it for years without even really noticing! The study careered terrifyingly towards art therapy.

**KB** So the film you spoke of-Arbus/Wearing in feel, 60s/70s Conceptualist-that's part of this same pursuit of the alter-ego compulsion, or is it an escape from that?

**SC** It follows on.... in the sense that one of the characters is a version of myself but the other subjects (being a combination of real life monologues lip-synched by actors) are developing into a way out for me. It is a move away from self examination, lurking alone in the studio and the beginning of looking at and working with others. I'm not so self-absorbed these days after suffering a surfeit during my masters research! The only problem is now I really have to make phone calls to strangers and interface with other human being to get things done. That's terrifying. Anxiety is still a core issue here but it's other people's as much as my own which inevitably seeps into all proceedings.

**KB** Hmm, becoming a movie mogul will toughen you up. You'll become a robust & bruising personality! Hell is other people, as I think Ivan Milat said. Or there's Ted Berrigan: "I like to beat people up!" Though I can't see that as quite you.

But do you think the alter-ego theme was really the whole story? I mean it seemed to me that a large part of what was good about some of your work 'this century' was that they were projected, imagined 'others'-a matter of empathy, rather than of guises hidden behind. That seemed to be the point for the viewer. The abject & embarrassed aliens weren't the-many-versions-of-Sarah CrowEST, but were offered for the viewer to consider. That was my take on the Downtown & EAF sequences. One of my favourite artists, Micky Allan, did a lot of 'friendly' space critters in the early 80s-drawing and paintings. You might have liked them. Weirdly benign as opposed to your creatures' discomfot.

## I'm just hungry for different approaches all the time-although I do try to make my creatures recur, like a white square, I fail.

renovated and re-cycled for different projects. The alter-ego tack was definitely not the whole story-but by isolating that aspect for study and using it for some (semi) controlled experiments in art making I gained insight into some of the forces at work. I can set the alter-egos to one side for the time being. As for those heads ... I'm soon taking them out to a school in central Australia to let the children make of them what they will, with paint, performing bodies and a video camera!

**KB** Ten or so years ago I knew you only as someone selling small pieces made for the Xmas period: a desperate attempt to cover the rent, probably. I thought it was just kitsch for the most part. I mean, it was cheeky & it had bite, so it was amusing. But your art seems to handle this dangerous material with a degree of unsentimental acceptance of the stuff's negligibility at one level-a knowledge that it has to be offered 'second-degree', at a remove. (A term I haven't heard much since the early days of *Art & Text*. Now 'second degree' probably registers as a further qualification, like a Master in Fine Arts!)

**SC** I've always been interested in the idea of art as commodity and actually selling work to make a living instead of doing some tedious job. I've worked variously across design, craft and visual arts and because I love to make things and I'm prolific it makes sense for me to sell art as product. However, perversely, I have mostly attempted to do this on my own terms-which has involved making objects that are not particularly commercially appealing. When they do verge on becoming acceptable and start to look like something people might really want to buy, I sabotage the proceedings and add some eccentric or revolting features. I can't help it. So the 'sales' I used to have in my house/shop/studio in Kensington were mostly quite tragic attempts to offload lots of really weird shit. Some lucky people did score some of my best art works at very cheap prices but often I saw it as an exercise in creating a shop that would arouse curiosity and somehow exist beyond commercial imperatives. It's like

playing shops. I've always done it. As a child I'd set up a table on the street to sell conkers (from a nearby tree) to the local children!

**KB** Like Claes Oldenburg in the early 60s-remember he set up a 'store'? as a performance or as a 'happening' even? When did you arrive in Australia & what was your art background at that point?

**SC** Yeah! I love those wonky goods Oldenburg made and I think too of David Hammons selling snowballs on a Brooklyn Street in midwinter. I have a recurring vision of myself as an old lady trying to sell my creatures on a blanket outside the Tate Modern or some Kunsthalle! It's a kind of fear of what my future might be but I like it so much I'm already beginning to act it out. I did it outside ACCA!

I came to Australia from England in 1987. I'd gone to art school straight from grammar school at 16 and studied fashion design. It's funny because I wanted to paint and I moved into the textile design area because it offered the freedom to use/juxtapose any kind of imagery without the imperative to explain myself as I might be expected to do in the painting department. I barely spoke a word. I was a mute punk rocker making screen prints of barbed wire and broken glass. This will sound odd but around that time a big Robert Ryman show at the Whitechapel really turned my head as far as painting goes. Although these days I make objects and videos I always manage to find a way to paint things. I think often of that work.

**KB** Ryman-yes, for me, the only minimalist painter! I guess there have been other influences?

**SC** I enjoy the work of Erwin Wurm and Callum Morton immensely. I was very moved by Gillian Wearing's show at ACCA... I mostly admire artists who make work quite unlike my own. I do get influenced by other artists in terms of process, materials, structure etc but then my intentions are quite divergent. Or the other way around: I'll find someone whose area of interest is similar in terms of ideas but where the form is utterly uninteresting to me. That happened throughout my research into how artist's have used the alter-ego in their practice. Beyond the mere fact of inhabiting another persona to enable certain behaviours, my work and that of, for example, Luke Roberts, Suzanne Treister, Marcel Duchamp, Claude Cahun, Kim Jones, has very few points of intersection. I wish I had one or two mentors that I could revere and follow but I'm all over the place. That's part of the reason Robert Ryman intrigues me. He has remained in his narrow field for decades and is nothing if not consistent! He's quite happy and boring. I'm just hungry for different approaches all the time-although I do try to make my creatures recur, like a white square. I fail.

**KB** Now you're off to Portugal courtesy of Samstag. Do you feel change in the air?

**SC** I anticipate making videos, short films and maybe photographs whilst I am in Europe. I don't want to be encumbered by lots of stuff and I will relish the discipline of resisting making lots of objects.

**KB** Will you be able to?

**SC** That's the thing: I don't know!

Sarah CrowEST's SAMSTAG Scholarship has taken her to Maumaus, Lisbon, Portugal. Images clockwise from top left, untitled, (2007), dimensions variable; *Blotchwoman* (2002-2007); untitled 1, *MENTOR MENTORED III*, Contemporary Art Centre South Australia (CACSA), 2007, various dimensions, mixed media; untitled 2, ibid

