mixed-up childhood

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mixed-up childhood

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Janita Craw and Robert Leonard

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Director's Foreword

Theme exhibitions draw together works of art so as to delineate and amplify their common concerns. In the process, they productively transform the meanings of those works through re-alignment and exchange. Exploring complex and subtle connections, they endeavour to make considered propositions about the works and the artists they include, making us more attentive to their origins and purposes along the way. Filled with questions, *Mixed-Up Childhood* is the kind of theme exhibition that asks more than it answers.

Including some of the most important artists of our time, *Mixed-Up Childhood* addresses one of its most difficult dilemmas – childhood. It has been said that childhood is something that we as adults invent in hindsight. And that is essentially what the artists in this exhibition are doing. Some remember childhood as an age of endless innocence and play; others re-encounter it through their own children or children at large; and for others still it's a disquieting memory best repressed or channelled into fantasy.

Childhood as we know it is a relatively recent invention and it is certainly not a universal condition. Contemporary childhood is becoming increasingly complex and accelerated. Particularly in our major urban centres childhood happens faster and seems more filled with actual and perceived dangers. A childhood at the time of the industrial revolution, by contrast, seems impossibly remote from childhood in New Zealand today. Of course there are also radical differences between the experiences of New Zealand children and those of children in other cultures, and even between children living in different circumstances within New Zealand. Childhood is not an automatic privilege afforded by every culture at every time.

Our universal hope, however, is surely that children flourish under the love and nurture of their parents, family and friends, caregivers and teachers. And where they do not, where risks unacceptable to the wider community are present, the basic well-being of children can otherwise be borne aloft on a raft of health, welfare and other legislative protections. But if things were so straightforward, we wouldn't see so many sad stories about children in our news media: stories of an often fatal failure to provide the most basic duty of care, and of catastrophic betrayals of trust destined to effect the child throughout their life. These things are alarming because we hold life to be precious and a child's life to be more precious still. If that weren't so we

wouldn't need a Children's Commissioner or to ever refer to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child except as a kind of gold standard.

Our understanding of how children develop – and what influences that development for good or ill – is elementally tempered by our own childhood memories. And that's a central part of what this exhibition is saying about "the state or time of being a child". The artists in *Mixed-Up Childhood* recall or restage their own perceptions of childhood, sometimes through the filters of history and art history, psychoanalysis, psychology or politics, and sometimes through cathartic playing-out. They are represented here because their work is consistently thoughtful and persuasive in both its statement and effect, and because they make us think harder about what childhood means today.

Telecom's current T3G advertising campaign features "Fast Eddie", the media-savvy and web-connected slip of a kid who is master of his digital mobile universe. He's a long way from the cherubic children that splashed and frolicked through the Pears Soap campaigns of just over a century ago. The T3G campaign plays into complex concerns around contemporary childhood. These concerns are framed by people's nostalgia about their own childhood, or the childhood they never had. They fear that today childhood is over too fast. They are concerned that children spend endless hours in front of computers at digital play and don't enjoy an old-fashioned outdoor adventure-filled childhood. I'm all too aware of the perils of such nostalgia, and I'm grateful that *Mixed-Up Childhood* succeeds in avoiding it.

That it does so is a tribute to its co-curators, Robert Leonard, the Gallery's curator of contemporary art, and Janita Craw, an educator in early childhood. It has been a lively and clarifying partnership, leveraging off a body of work and writing that opens up powerful if sometimes confronting ideas, but leavening its enquiry with good humour and a sense of irony. I thank them for their well thought-out approach and for their success in drawing such a significant group of contemporary artists into their project, many of them exhibiting in New Zealand for the first time. Thanks also must go to project manager Louise Pether, co-ordinator Sonya Korohina, registrar Julie Koke, and the wider Gallery team who supported their efforts. And to volunteer intern researcher Serena Bentley, who has assisted the project for over a year.

Most importantly, I wish to very warmly thank the participating artists and their gallerists, and those cultural agencies that have so vitally and generously supported this project. Among the latter, my thanks go to Creative New Zealand, the British

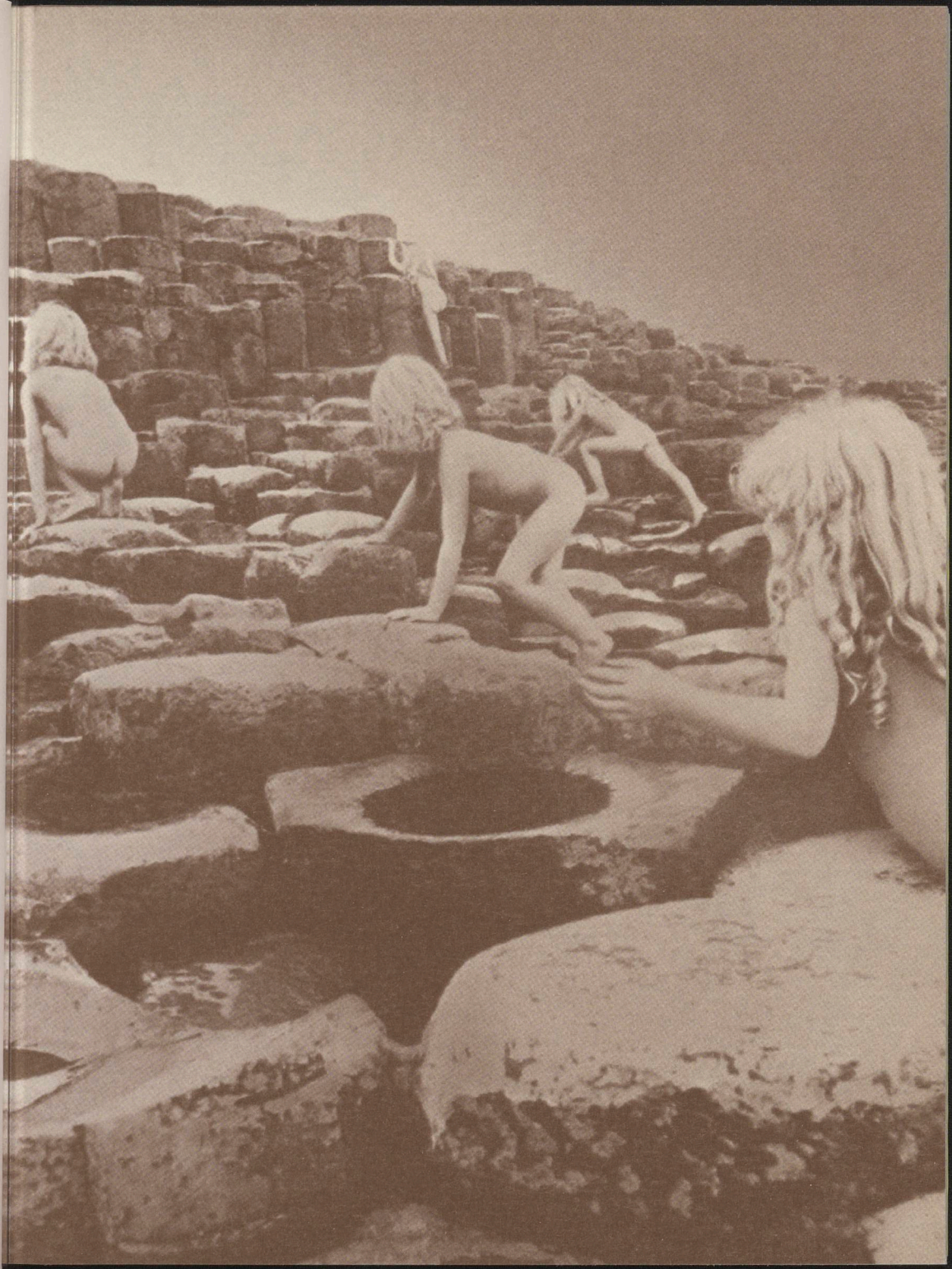
Council, Asia 2000 and the Mondriaan Foundation. I also wish to thank David Malacari and Melanie Smith of the Auckland Festival AK05 for including us in their programme, and Richard Waddel and his board for powering-up this year's extravaganza. We're proud to be a part of it! And finally, my thanks go to Rob Fisher and Glenda MacDonald of principal sponsor Simpson Grierson for their enduring faith in this Gallery's presentation of major contemporary art exhibitions. We are enormously indebted to them and have been much encouraged by their support.

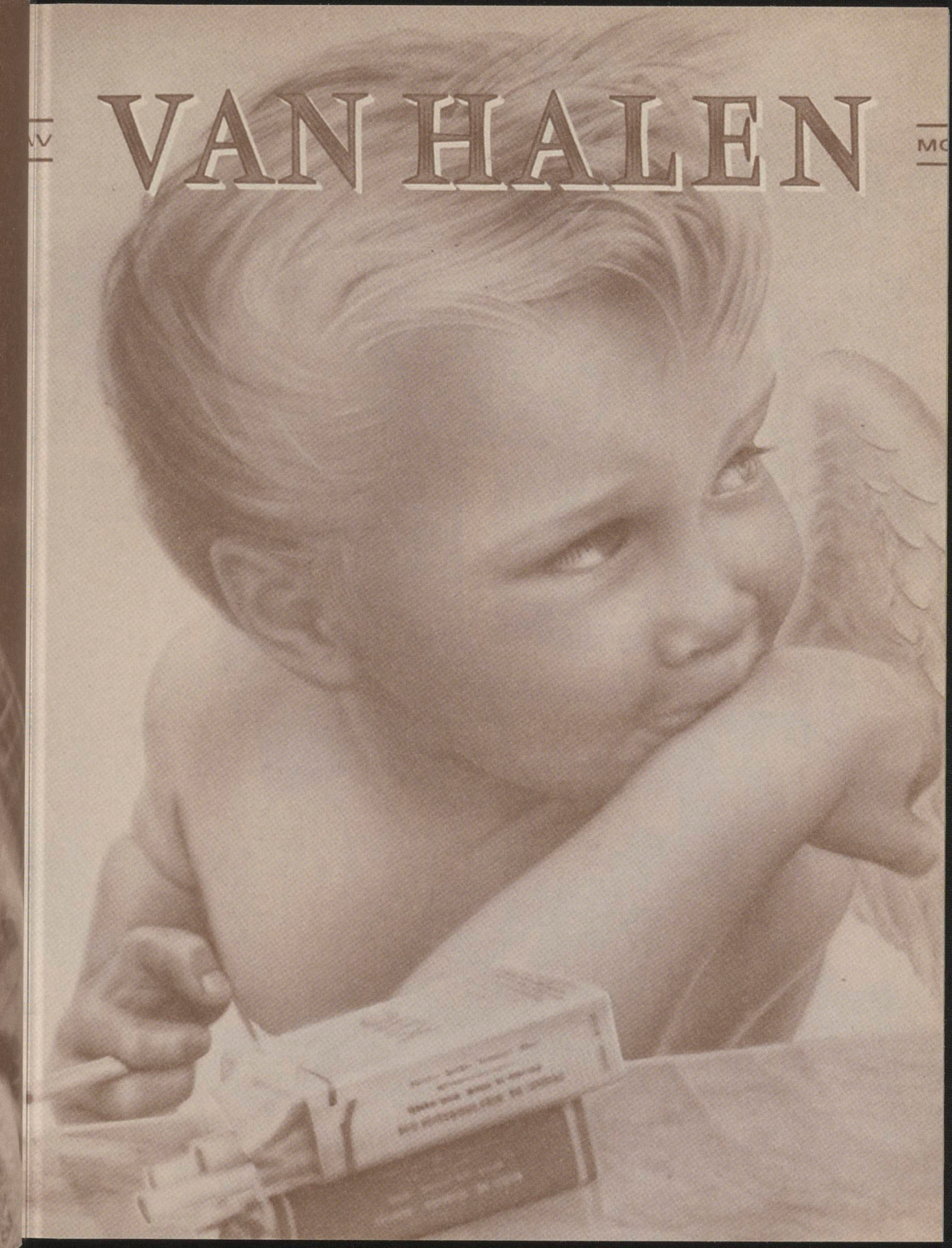
Chris Saines
Director
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

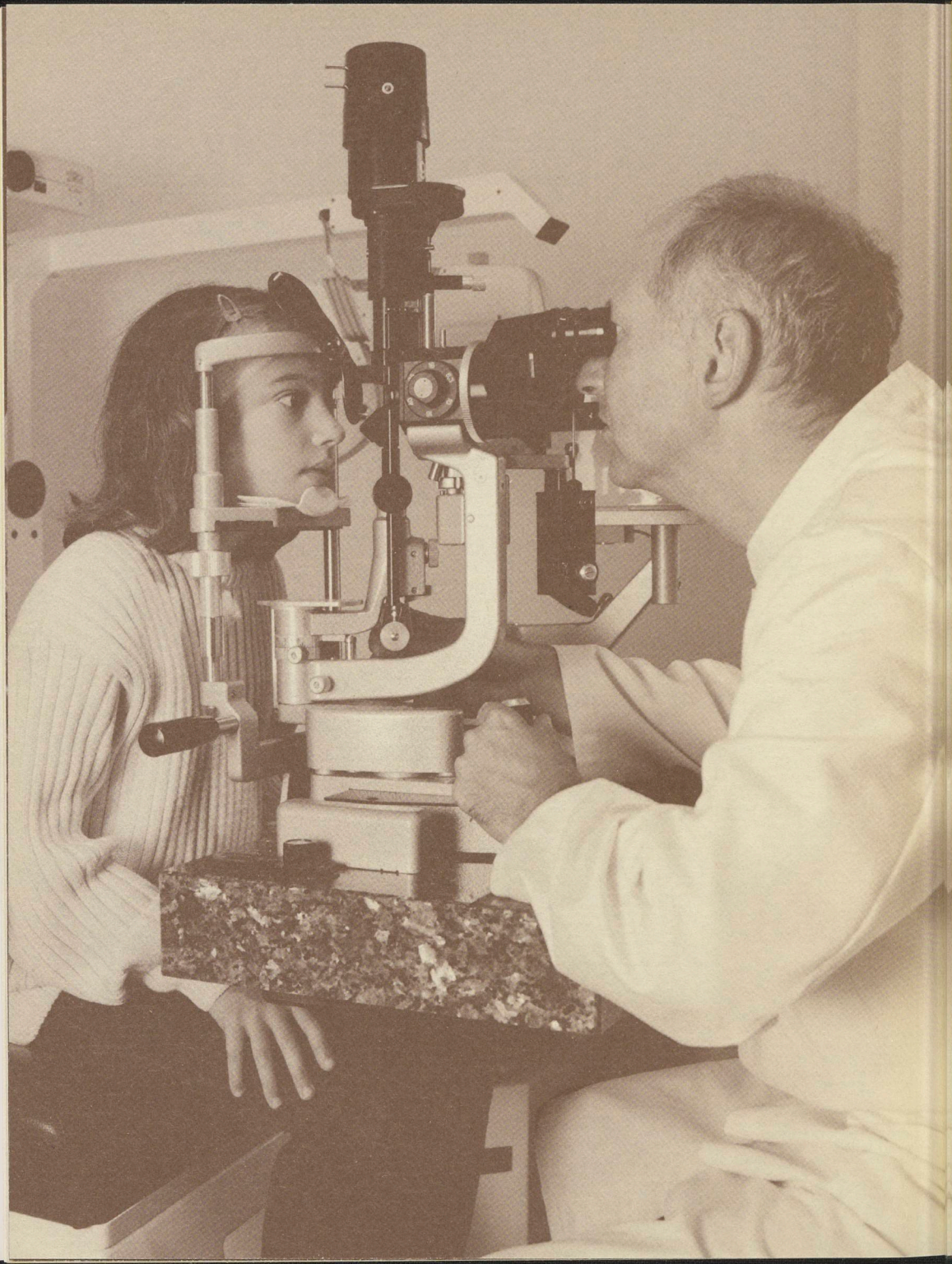
LED ZEPPELIN *Houses of the Holy* 1973 >

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST HARRY HARLOW was intrigued by love. In the 1960s in his primate lab at the University of Wisconsin he demonstrated that baby rhesus monkeys deprived of their mothers will attach to a cloth surrogate, showing that the need for emotional bonding motivates attachment rather than what the primate attaches to. A little later British psychiatrist John Bowlby suggested that human infants attach similarly. >>

VAN HALEN's 1983 album *MCMLXXXIV* / 1984 featured their hit "Hot For Teacher" >>>




VAN HALEN



James Kincaid

Looking at You Kid

< AURA ROSENBERG *Praxis Dr. Kössendrup* 1999 (detail)

What do we see when we look at a child? Certainly we allocate great gobs of time and cultural energy to finding ways to put the bodies of children on display and then gape at them. We feature kids and their bodies in popular entertainment: Shirley Temple provided the most alluring face and figure of the 1930s, a service rendered by Macaulay Culkin in the 1980s and "boy bands" in the 1990s. It was the Victorians who began, on a massive scale, to use children decoratively: on calling cards, in arty photographs, on stage, in advertisements, in pornography. And there's the rub: these children we love to look at are also being looked at by others, whose looking, we like to say, is not as pure and disinterested as ours; whose looking is downright criminal, sick.

So, again, what do we see when we look at a child? Among other things, we see someone who needs protecting, especially from monsters. But what are we really protecting kids from and whose interests are we safeguarding? I think kids would ask us to exercise our vigilance on enemies more real, closer to home. They might even say that the greatest threat to their well-being these days is our sense that our main and only duty is to protect them from the enemies *we* take pleasure in designating.

We energise ourselves so happily over pedophiles, one wonders what we would do if they were eradicated. It's as if we need them and need them to be rapacious, secretive and very wily – everywhere and nowhere. But these shadow characters are also shadow enemies. Kids in our culture really do not fare very well, but strangers are not the problem. Though America stands first, all First World countries share the practice of creating more or less phantom problems for kids – stranger-abductors, internet predators, kiddie-porn-ring operators – when, in fact, abuse on a massive scale begins and ends at home. Pedophiles are so highly energised in our discourse, I think, because they serve classic scapegoating functions. They contain energies that are otherwise unmanageable and allow us to keep those energies alive while disowning them, planting them squarely onto these unspeakable monsters we cannot speak about often enough.

Only sickos want to look at kids, we say, as we position ourselves like the kindly optometrist in Aura Rosenberg's exemplary picture. Thus we become fixated on images. In America, we run endless photolab stings, putting people in jail for snapping classically banal pictures of toddlers in tubs or on bearskin rugs. Virtually all successful prosecutions in this area hinge on the location of images on computers or video tapes. We pretend that we are salting away people for assault, rape, abduc-

tion; but the truth is that it is for looking; the same looking we make central to our main-line cultural entertainment.

How can cultures which don't see themselves as either brutal or stupid become so attached to a horrific monster story that hinges on vision and display? What if we said that it is this very story we so badly need, that it is a story designed to work for adults, not kids? It might follow, then, that we generate our hysteria about images precisely because such furore does nothing but keep the problem going. We love the problem; we love the fuss – and we don't want it to go away.

How come? First, I think we have inherited from the 19th century a vision of a Romantic child that is, in itself, strangely eroticised. The idea of innocence has been packed with sexual allure for at least 300 years; and our present youth culture places the burden of that ambivalent innocence onto younger and younger citizens. We can demonise our adolescents all we like, so long as we purify our pre-adolescents. In this compensatory move, we make these youngsters more and more unreal, cutesy, deserted and curiously erotic. We live inside a lousy contradiction. The child, defined officially as a creature outside sexuality – it doesn't know sexual thoughts or impulses and cannot attract them – is loaded with qualities the culture designates as erotic: purity, naïvete, freshness, smooth skin, big eyes and narrow chins.

We handle this inheritance by pretending we don't have it, substituting for it a gratifying story and a pleasant role for ourselves. Fulminating against a vastly inflated danger, we generate a warm inner glow with a decided pornographic tinge (any amount of talk about children's bodies is licensed) and we do nothing. The way we now address the problem insures we can both nurse and disavow our addiction to the very problem we pretend to be addressing.

It is common among historians of childhood to assert that childhood was a late 18th century invention, most familiar to us in its Romantic form:

And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy…
At length the man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day.[x]

Wordsworth's child, the child of the Romantics, is something altogether new, not simply different from but superior to the adult. Prior to this, little people were probably thought of and seen simply as incomplete mini-adults. Of course there was childhood but, some scholars argue, it was marked not by biology (puberty) but by the labour market and dependence. As soon as a being could work, often as early as 5 years old, childhood ended. Lots of things change: the triumph of humanism, the larger triumphs of capitalism, the development of a whole new class and the idea of the nuclear family, advances in medicine that allowed children to live long enough so that affection could be invested in them. That is, massive social and economic reorganisations made the child necessary by making the modern family seem necessary.

But what kind of child was this new thing? Clearly Wordsworth's child is not a deficient adult but a totally coherent being that becomes deficient as it ages. This child doesn't grow but declines into adulthood. European Romanticism celebrated the child as divine, not the rude beginning of human life but its apex. This Romantic child was important in lots of ways; mainly it provided a tool with which to beat up on Enlightenment ideas about seasoned rationalism – but it also brought with it immense problems. The child's completeness was due to its active qualities, its determined and fused spirituality. Its divinity however was identified with qualities like innocence and purity. For the Romantics, these were substantive and active agencies; however, as time wore on, innocence and purity became more and more negative and empty, equated more and more with powerlessness and incompetence. Innocence became no longer an active primal sympathy and divine power but simply ignorance, particularly sexual ignorance. Notice how far we have come from pre-Romantic days: the idea of a pure child would have been ridiculous to Chaucer or Shakespeare, as would the notion of an incompetent child.

This late 18th century cultural move solved some problems and introduced a host of others. One was and is that the child's main qualities, innocence and purity, were also defined in the 19th century as erotic qualities – the qualities a male was to look for in a female. We are still paying a heavy price for this mix-up; this ambiguous way in which our culture, not just freaks, has mixed up kids and our ideals of attractiveness. Note how starlets and even stars strive to look very very young – even illegally young. One recent commercial for wrinkle cream has a woman lamenting, "It's not easy to look 15!" We maintain a standard for sexual allure that we also declare to be unthinkable, criminal.

The child is also centred to cement the new idea of the nuclear family. The child's powerlessness creates the image of the family as a kind of ecology of protection, a fortress which the woman nurtures and the man guards. Obviously this model requires a passive woman, a dominant male, idiotic children, and a world filled with dangers. Arguably, we populate the world with these dangers and become hysterical largely in order to maintain what we need.

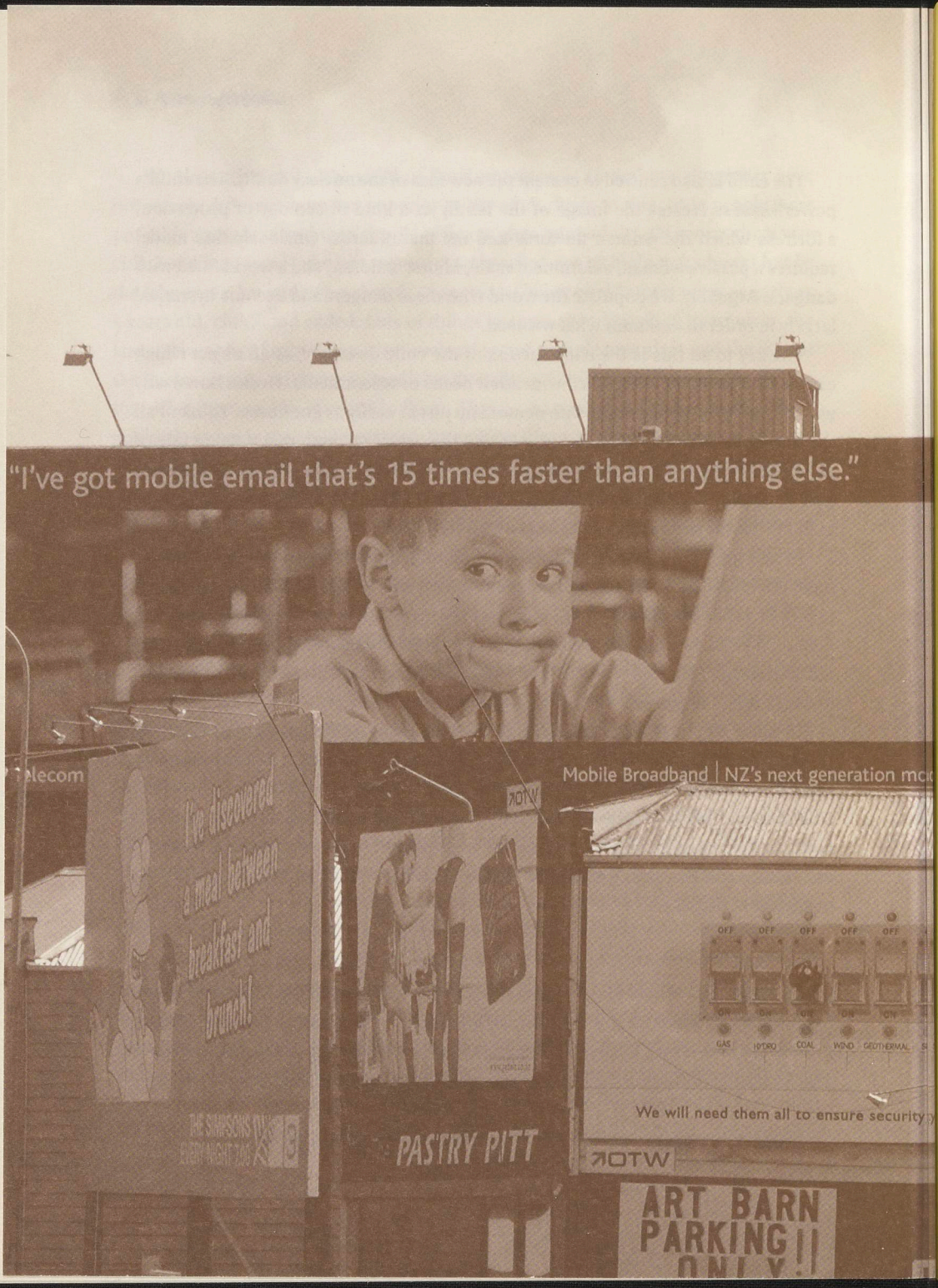
The key to all this is the construction of the child as empty, as an object which can easily be manipulated, filled with adult needs or resentments. Notice how easily we manipulate this emptiness into demonism just as easily as godliness. Think of all the movies about killer kids, not to mention the pervasive myth that a rising tide of child super-predators is threatening adults. (The truth is kids are not a danger to kids or to adults: kids pose less danger to adults than rabid woodchucks, and adults kill kids ten times as often as kids kill kids.)

In addition, we relentlessly idealise childhood, appropriate it for our own longings! We invest enormous nostalgia in childhood and we can be very deeply stirred to pity, anger or affection by images of children, especially cute, mistreated or abandoned ones. But we also keep saying that childhood is vanishing, that things aren't like they used to be. And why have they changed? Modern media, we are likely to say. But kids didn't invent television, video games or the internet.

In short, we have constructed kids to fulfil many adult (or general cultural) needs: supporting the myth of the family, providing an outlet for erotic projection and hypocritical self-righteous denial. Children have become objects for our voyeuristic pleasure, blank screens on which to write our mistold fables of our own childhood, demons responsible for all our woes. Think of it as if you were a kid entering our culture and examining the set of stories allowed for your identity. I think you'd turn away in disgust.

James R. Kincaid, Aerol Arnold Professor of English at the University of Southern California, is the author of eight books on aspects of Victorian literature and culture, cultural and literary theory, and constructions of childhood. His most recent study is Erotic Innocence: The Culture of Child-Molesting. He is also co-author of a comic novel, A History of the African American People by Storm Thurmond as Told to Percival Everett and James Kincaid.

* William Wordsworth *Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* (1802-4).


"I've got mobile email that's 15 times faster than anything else."
Telecom
Mobile Broadband | NZ's next generation mo
I've discovered a meal between breakfast and brunch!
THE SIMPSONS
PASTRY PITT
We will need them all to ensure security
ART BARN PARKING!!

Helen May

Governing Childhood

< Telecom's Fast Eddie 2005

Childhood is a mix of realities increasingly defined by government interests. The physical child is a living and growing entity, with a family or not; at home, on the streets, in the park; at kindergarten, school and even university; who plays, performs and protests at the daily tasks of being a child; and who is variously wanted and unwanted, loveable and unlovable, treasured and abused, cared for and neglected, praised and scolded, protected and cast-off, dependent and independent.

The daily life of being a child is governed and constrained by the mix of social, cultural, economic and political beliefs defining childhood at a point in time and place. A child is born, lives, grows and sometimes dies. Childhood, however, is a construct that will variously differentiate childhood from adulthood, normal from abnormal, able from disabled, order from disorder, boyhood from girlhood, good from bad, clever from dull, pretty from plain, work from play, citizen from non-citizen, and good behaviour from misbehaviour.

Over the past two centuries, the Western state has become increasingly active in constructing childhood and in establishing institutions for it. This has diminished the role and responsibility of families and the older economic and religious institutions that once claimed an interest in the bodies and souls of children. The state has cloaked its gaze in precise ways. State interest in the survival, protection and education of very young children had its roots in the Enlightenment, in 18th century Europe. Thereafter, an increasingly "enlightened" state was continually cajoled by advocacy groups to combat a widening arena of "unenlightened" childrearing practice.

Art images reassure us that the physical child of the present is recognisable from the physical child of the past, although statistics reveal that the 21st century Western child has much improved health and survival chances. There have also been considerable changes in child rearing practices, family structures, childhood institutions, government legislation and other interventions. A consequence has been the emergence of a professional and commercial industry surrounding childhood.

In *Governing the Soul*, Nikolas Rose claimed that childhood is the most intensively governed sector of personal existence.* The modern child has become the focus of innumerable projects that purport to safeguard it from physical, sexual and moral danger, to ensure its "normal" development and to actively promote certain attributes such as intelligence, educability and emotional stability.*

Rose describes a psychological "gaze" shaping political interest and investment in children, and thereby, he claimed, "governing the soul" of the late 20th century

child. The rationale and rhetoric of political interest in childhood has also been framed by other gazes. Early state interest began with improving the survival chances of abandoned infants, then, during the 19th century, grew to include the inculcation of moral habits and order amongst the poor. By the 20th century, there was increasing political interest in the possibilities of improving the physical and psychological health of children. Later, various protest movements caused consideration of the rights of children. Most recently, some costs of childhood have come to be justified as a prudent economic investment. Such gazes are not mutually exclusive, but their phasing reflects shifts in political, educational and social opinion.

The state's interest in governing childhood has been directed towards realising a vision of a future society. The state periodically refocuses on particular childhood ills as unacceptable impediments to its realisation:

For the SURVIVAL gaze:	death
For the MORAL gaze:	depravity
For the PHYSICAL gaze:	disorder
For the PSYCHOLOGICAL gaze:	deprivation
For the EQUITY gaze:	disadvantage
For the ECONOMIC gaze	risk

Each gaze has created or reshaped the institutions of childhood with a view to curing such ills. Some political rhetoric concerning institutions for very young children illustrates this:

SURVIVAL:

It is open to question whether the cause of public morality is really helped by the concealment of illegitimate births and the provision of facilities for covering up the consequences of vice.

– Richard Seddon, Prime Minister, 1898.

MORAL:

May the children be destined to go forth as well-ordered and worthy citizens of the land – the ripened fruit of the free kindergarten.

– John Logan Campbell, Minister of Education, 1910.

PHYSICAL:
To save a child-life is an axiom of State preservation; to remedy defect is an axiom of State economy.
– J. A. Hanan, Minister of Education, 1916.

PSYCHOLOGICAL:
What is of supreme importance is that the young child should be healthy and happy ... and that he should lay the basis of good habits and attitudes from which all healthy growth in later life might spring.
– H.G.R. Mason, Minister of Education, 1944.

EQUITY:
The ultimate object of Te Kohanga Reo is nothing less than the rebirth of the Maori nation as an equal but separate element contributing to the common goal of good New Zealand society.
– Koro Wetere, Minister of Maori Affairs, 1987.

ECONOMIC:
The benefit to kids will benefit the economy by having employed, educated and better-adjusted kids.
– Trevor Mallard, Minister of Education, 2000.

The child of the 21st century is growing up amid political and economic anxiety that the future citizens of Aotearoa-New Zealand be successful competitors in the global knowledge economy. The risks of failing in this quest – from in-utero to young adulthood – have been identified step by step. This has necessitated importing the culture and tools of audit and surveillance from the world of business. The foetus is screened, the infant is observed, the preschooler is programmed and the young child's mind is measured. Performance is assessed, tested and examined.

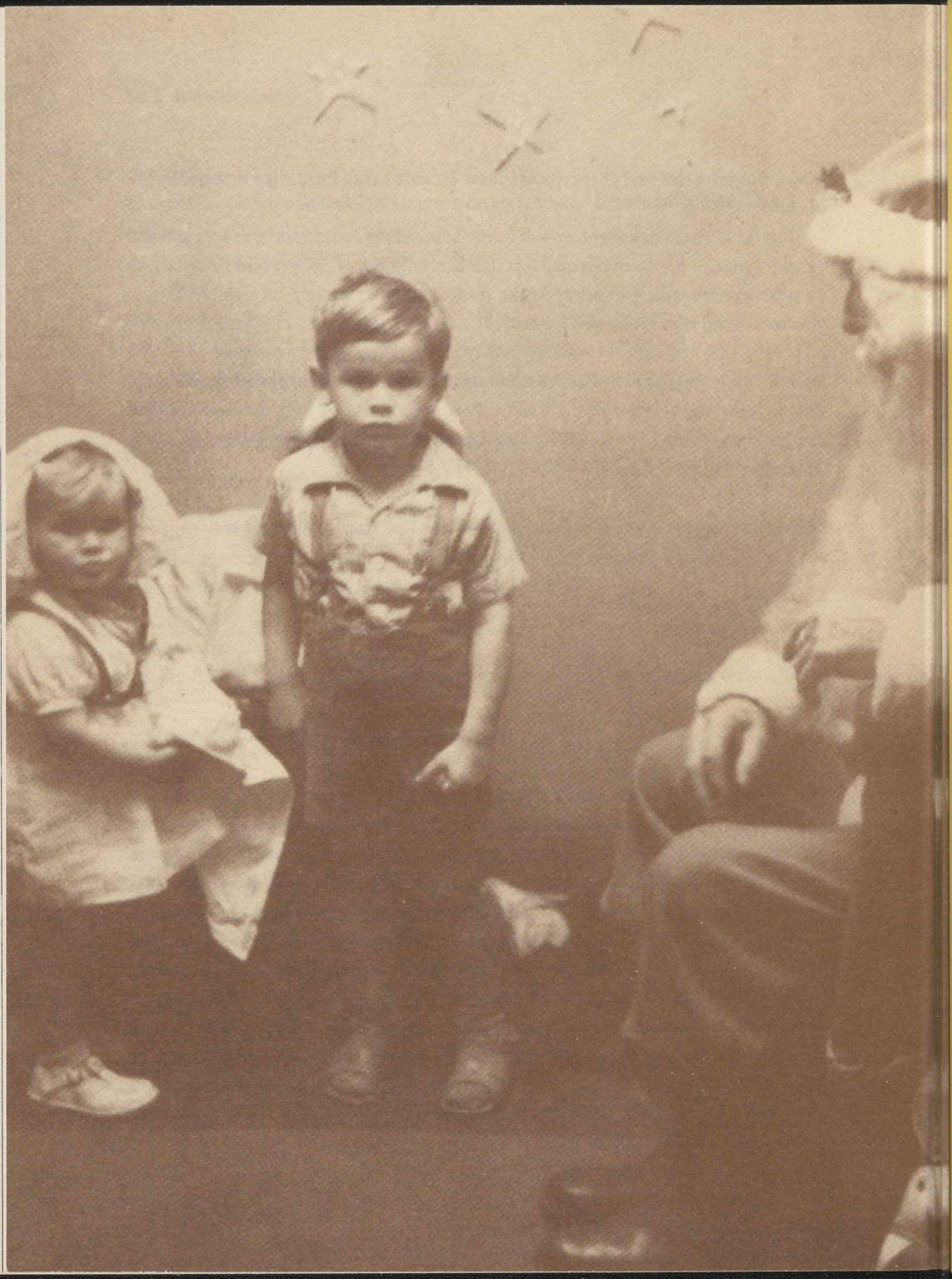
National curricula have been promulgated with nationally defined "learning outcomes" and "essential skills" required to participate in an "enterprise society". The urgency of this up-skilling has caused the gaze to include most of the waking hours of childhood. Audit trails require evidence of measurable outcomes of learning through surveillance of the minutiae of the child's daily life. What can't be measured,

timed, programmed and chaperoned is now excluded as of little value in the daily life of children.

Playful idleness or adventure – at home or at school, outdoors or indoors, alone or with others – has been deemed too risky for children of the present because it is an unacceptable risk for society in the future. But isn't society "at risk" from this governed child who is allowed no risk?

Helen May is Professor of Early Childhood Education at the Institute for Early Childhood Studies, Victoria University of Wellington. She has written several books on early childhood, children and education in New Zealand including Mind that Child, Minding Children Managing Men, Discovery of Early Childhood and Politics in the Playground.

* *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* Routledge, New York and London, 1990.



Alison Jones

Hands Off!

< c. 1950

In this time of intensified anxiety about touching children, new training of men has become necessary. Two groups of men – male teachers and shopping mall Santa Clauses – are required in their professional work to have regular, intimate physical contact with children. But since the male body in proximity to children is now seen as dangerous, teachers and Santas are now required to undergo a particular sort of training. Before they can be with children they must learn how a man can properly, pleasurably and professionally "be" with children.

The irony is that masculinity is at the heart of the appeal both of male teachers (particularly primary and early childhood teachers) and of Santa Claus. Both offer young children a desirable male body: the male teacher is a source of fun, boisterous play and paternal comfort, and Santa a source of fatherly benevolence, generosity and joviality. And it works the other way. For both Santas and teachers, children (usually) represent pleasure. Those who work with kids know that the main thing about them is their physicality – they laugh, run, jump, shove, cry, grab, rub, screech, poke, wriggle, fall over ... So modern primary teachers and Santa Clauses must actively like children's bodies, and enjoy being close to them.

The current moral panic about the sexual abuse of children means that, as successful workers in their fields, both male teachers and Santas must learn to be desirable and desiring in prescribed ways. They must experience particular sorts of pleasures in children and likewise they must induce in children only particular sorts of pleasures.

The male teacher must learn that the pleasures to be had in cuddling children, or letting them hold his hand or lean against him or sit on his knee, or grab around his legs, or ride on his back, are essentially improper. Proper, and therefore pleasurable, interaction with children consists in maintaining distance from them. Teachers these days work hard at this. Male teachers in particular develop "professional practices" such as keeping their hands in their pockets while on playground duty or encouraging children to comfort each other if upset.

Barely a generation ago, models of masculinity in the school often entailed a measure of violence. Caring teachers strapped their students for their own good. While women teachers sometimes struck their pupils, male teachers were likely to be seen as doing their jobs as good men in the school when they took up the cane. The masculine pleasure once to be had in "touching" kids with the cane, the strap or

the chalk missile, or the slap on the back and mussed hair, has been replaced with "time out", counselling, the high five, or the handshake. These are generally seen as more progressive forms of engagement with children.

Teachers' new forms of interacting require that children themselves must learn new responses. Caring teachers know that they must train children in the right ways of getting pleasure or experiencing need: this may be the physical and emotional pleasures that might be had through grabbing, leaning against, jumping on or being attached to an energetic and admired male body; or the emotional need for comfort that might be satisfied when children are feeling sad or hurt. Boys and girls must be taught to take pleasure appropriately. That does not include experiencing sensual or emotional pleasure from spontaneous and intimate physical contact with non-family men.

For Santa, touch comes with the job. His work requires that he hold children who are complete strangers in the kind of embrace men usually only offer close kin. So Santa too must be trained in the art of proper (sanitised and distant) masculine touch. Every year before Christmas, intending mall Santas go to a training school, where they learn "the techniques of being a good Santa", including the ways of touching children correctly and safely. Santa photographs must clearly show Santa's correct and safe posture. Santas are instructed, "Have the child sitting on you, your body turned 45 degrees on to the camera. In photos your hands are visible. In all photos it is important that your hands are on the child's shoulder and elbow. White gloves visible at all times ... This is for your protection."

Some Santas, such as those in Mosgiel in 2003, have been encouraged to avoid any physical contact with children (and thus allegations of impropriety) by having them sit on a specially provided and safely distant "elf chair" rather than on Santa's dubious lap. One Santa told me, "You are aware of the parents watching you, so you think about being careful all the time, and how you touch the kids so no-one gets the wrong impression." The expert Santa gets his pleasure from following the rules.

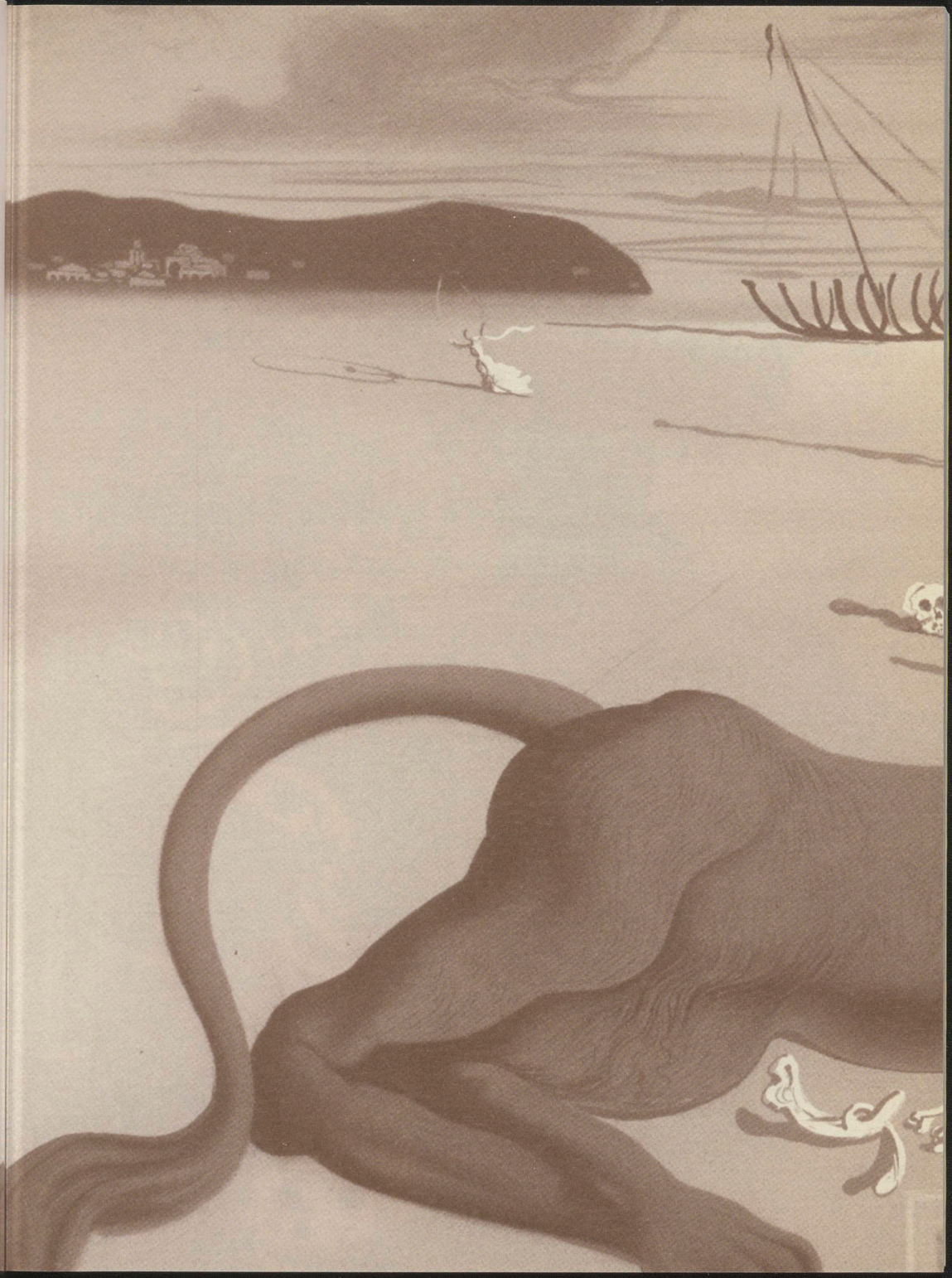
The idea of training people's pleasure seems peculiar, even obscene, because pleasure is usually seen as a spontaneous and natural sensation. But the experience of pleasure is a product of training within the rules for feeling pleasure. A good teacher or Santa will feel no enjoyment when a child clings, or leans closely, to him: his

training is such that child-touch is instinctively experienced as wrong and dangerous. Therefore, any pleasure that is to be had from cuddling a child is necessarily experienced as improper, and thus tinged with guilt and anxiety, or else enacted with a defiant pose. "Once," a young male teacher told me, "there was this kid sobbing outside my classroom. I knew all he wanted was a quick hug. His heart was broken about something. So I thought, 'to hell with these stupid rules, I'm going to hug this child!'" This teacher experienced his caring for the child as rebellion. He was both pleased and uneasy about his hug which, because he was a well-trained teacher, generated a spontaneous ambivalence. Another young teacher, a woman, confessed that she impulsively kissed a child on the top of his head, and then, as a good professional, she said, "I reported myself to the deputy principal".

With sadly increasing frequency, men in general report that being close to children induces feelings of anxiety or reticence. Paradoxically, one of the effects of the social anxiety about touching children is its affirmation of an old, despised, masculinity. Traditional patriarchal pleasure was to be had at an emotional and physical distance from children. Many Western fathers' physical interaction with the boys in the family was in the form of play fighting, ball games or handshakes; maybe the girls got a cuddle. Since the 1980s, in New Zealand and elsewhere, calls for a more caring and emotionally expressive masculinity have been in tension with an increasing hysteria about child abuse, as well as forms of homophobia. Men have been caught in a confused space, being accused of being both too close and not close enough to children. Now, in a sad reversal, the traditional distanced forms of showing affection have become a sign of the ethical male teacher and the good Santa.

The singular elf chair – a safe yet rather lonely space – exemplifies the effects of a social anxiety within which children find a new location. As powerful potential accusers, children become dangerous to adults; at the same time, all adults – even the benevolent and loved Santa – become dangerous to them; and we all become a bit more distant from each other.

Associate Professor Alison Jones is an education researcher at the University of Auckland. Her research on the effects of the social anxiety about touch included researching Santa training and interviewing teachers in Auckland primary schools and early childhood centres. She is editor of Touchy Subject: Teachers Touching Children.




Shirley! ... at last in
TECHNICOLOR

Barbara Creed

Baby Bitches From Hell: Monstrous Little Women in Film

Personally, Veda's convinced me
that alligators have the right idea.
They eat their young.

– Eve Arden in *Mildred Pierce*

< SALVADOR DALI *Shirley Temple, the Youngest, Most Sacred Monster of the Cinema in Her Time* 1939

The Surrealists were fascinated by what they perceived as the dual nature of the little girl, her propensity for innocence and evil. This theme has also proven an enduring one in the history of the cinema and provided the basis for many acclaimed films from *The Innocents* to *Lolita*. The view of the female child as particularly close to the non-material world of fantasy and the imagination was central to the beliefs of the Surrealists. They regarded childhood as "the privileged age in which imaginative faculties were still *à l'état sauvage* – sensitive to all kinds of impressions and associations which education would systematically 'correct'".[1] "Dissecting mystery is like violating a child", Bunuel was fond of saying.[2] In the 1924 *Manifesto*, Breton claimed, "The spirit which takes the plunge into Surrealism exultantly relives the best of its childhood."[3]

The Surrealists idealised the female child as the femme-enfant, and endowed her with a special ability to enter the realm of the marvellous. Through her, they hoped to return to a state of lost innocence and capture again that special state of childhood wonderment at the mysteries and magic of life. A famous Man Ray photograph shows a group of his colleagues listening in rapt attention to the young Gisele Prassinos reading her poetry, which to them, was truly marvellous. For the Surrealists the crucial aspect of the femme-enfant is her innocence. By virtue of her purity, she is able to make contact with the marvelous and enter the world of the surreal. Films like *Curse of the Cat People* (1944) and *The Innocents* (1961) explore the dark side of this experience. More recent films, such as *Poltergeist* (1982) take us – via special effects technology – right inside the surreal nightmarish world of the femme-enfant.

The Surrealists did not depict the femme-enfant only as an angel. Salvador Dali endowed her with a dark side. When Dali painted Shirley Temple, Hollywood's quintessential image of childhood innocence, he gave her a red, sphinx's body and long dangerous claws. Hans Bellmer's dolls – twisted into the seductive poses of the nymphet – also point to the girl's potential for corruption. Lolita, the deadly woman/child, was terrifying because her innocent demeanour concealed what the audience knew, that she was already corrupt. Innocence invites corruption – the more pure and irreproachable, the greater will be the child's fall from grace. Still not fully developed or formed, the girl child is malleable, capable of representing destructive archaic impulses as well as innocence and the potential for good.

The cinema is similarly fascinated by the concept of monstrous little women. Mad moppets, deadly dollies, deranged daughters, sinister sisters – call them what

you will, there is no doubt that multifarious images of the evil girl child haunt the celluloid corridors of popular cinema. A far cry from her innocent sisters, the monstrous little woman is capable of truly shocking crimes. Images of evil children, circulated in posters and film books, are predominantly of feminine furies: Regan from *The Exorcist* (1973), murdering clerics, spewing green bile and rotating her head full-circle on her neck; Carrie, an avenging monster, drenched in pig's blood, burning up the entire school; and Lolita, the child-woman, sunning herself in her bikini, supremely indifferent, yet fully aware of her devastating effect on the wretched professor.

In contrast to her male counterpart, the abject little woman flaunts herself with such wicked style she is perversely unforgettable. Her diabolical deeds include: matricide (*Carrie*, 1976), patricide (*The House That Dripped Blood*, 1970), cold-blooded murder (*The Exorcist*, 1973), cannibalism (*Night of the Living Dead*, 1968), genital exhibitionism (*The Exorcist*), pyromania (*Firestarter*, 1984), vampirism (*Interview with a Vampire*, 1994) and witchcraft (*A Stranger in Our House*, 1978). We also find sinister little women in other genres: in film noir (*Mildred Pierce*, 1949), adult drama (*The Bad Seed*, 1956; *Heavenly Creatures*, 1994; *Celia*, 1989), boarding-school films (*The Loudest Whisper*, 1961) and the baby-doll film (*Lolita*, 1962).

Films about children invariably tell us more about the adult world, in which the films were conceived, than about children themselves. In particular, such films explore adult dreams, desires and fears projected onto children who become the bearers of adult values and attitudes. Until the 1950s films that featured the female child star, such as Shirley Temple, focused generally on the theme of childhood as a state of lost innocence. Innocence was replaced by evil in the decades after World War II. The image of the child in *The Bad Seed* and *The Innocents* took on new meanings which suggested that the adult world no longer dreamt of a return to Paradise and lost Victorian innocence, but instead sought to understand its own dark impulses via the potent image of the child. By the late 1960s the appearance of films which portrayed the child as a monster far outweighed images of innocence. Robin Wood dates the popularisation of the child as monster from *Rosemary's Baby* (1968). He sees the child as a repressed "other", a symbol of all that the adult world represses in itself from one generation to the next.[4]

A central feature of many films about the young girl is the way in which innocence and evil are interconnected; it is as if the girl's innocence opens the way for the

entrance of evil, one feeding off the other in a complex relationship of interdependence. Two early and influential films – Jacques Tourneur's *Curse of the Cat People* (1944) and Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* – represent the female child, by virtue of her innocence and imagination, as particularly susceptible to communion with a shadowy spirit world. Whereas *Curse of the Cat People* emphasises the girl's openness to, and delight in, the supernatural, *The Innocents* depicts its small heroine as a sinister figure who is susceptible to hysterical attacks during which the spirit of a dead woman appears to take possession of her body.

What is specifically horrific about the monstrous little woman is that the potential of her body and mind to be corrupted is seemingly without limits or borders. The young girl of *Poltergeist* (1982) is swept into the "other side" via the family television set which sucks her into its uterine whirlpool; in *The Brood* (1979), blood ties initiate her transformation into a clone of the monstrous maternal figure; and in *The Exorcist*, a distant archaeological discovery of a pagan devil-statue leads to her immediate bodily possession and displays of hysteria. She is still a child, an innocent, but because she is female, and not yet fully developed, her evil potential – like her potential for innocence – is limitless.

Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject is particularly helpful in analysing the monstrous little woman.[5] The abject is that which threatens to cross the boundary which civilisation erects in order to define itself as civilised – the line between human and animal, male and female, living and dead, clean and unclean, natural and supernatural, innocence and evil, adult and child. Because the abject threatens such borders and highlights the fragility of the symbolic order, it is also immensely appealing. It seduces by offering a return to the pre-symbolic, the archaic domain of untrammelled pleasure and uninhibited play.[6]

The monstrous female child is a powerful agent of abjection. More rigidly socialised than the boy, in terms of external proprieties and proper "civilised" behaviour, she is also expected to epitomise worldly innocence and sexual purity. When she crosses the boundaries between innocence and corruption, proper and improper behaviour, the ensuing violation seems more profound. Considered less able to protect herself, the girl is more susceptible to corruption. When she falls, the hope of redemption is lost. And because she is regarded as weaker than the boy, there is a greater expectation that she will fall. This situation, of course, is not a consequence of anything "essential" in the nature of femininity and masculinity. If the monstrous

child of horror, tends to be more often female, it is because the culture constructs her image as more susceptible to corruption. Young and innocent, she attracts dark forces seeking a host.

The theme of sexual repression and hysteria is central to films about female possession. Again we see the fragile borders traversed; this time between sanity and hysteria. Once the impressionable young girl has been in contact with the dark, usually sexual, forces that lie pent-up in her youthful bosom, she is easy prey. The possessed girl has much in common with the mystical moppet – both dwell on the border between the real and imaginary. But whereas the girl with a vivid unnatural imagination has a special ability to enter into the mystical realm, the possessed child is taken over by a force from another world and transformed into a monster within the earthly realm. Films about possession by the devil constitute the largest grouping that star monstrous little women. One of the most commercially successful horror films of all time, *The Exorcist*, spawned a sub-genre of imitators whose titles emphasised her special relationship to evil in films such as: *The Devil Within Her* (1974), *Demon Witch Child* (1974), and *To The Devil – A Daughter* (1976).

Those of us who love horror films recognise there is also great pleasure in watching the monstrous little woman strut her stuff. The history of woman as witch, the association between possession and female hysteria, the cultural/religious fantasy of woman as sexually insatiable, and the popular myth of the girl as innocent and impressionable, help explain the greater number of girls – rather than boys – who star in horror films about possession. These factors may also explain the larger number of monstrous little women, overall, in the cinema.

The horror film permits a violation of boundaries, a return of the repressed, a carnivalesque breaking of taboos – these activities are its *raison d'être*. Although representations of monstrous little women no doubt stem from phallocentric bias, our daughters of darkness ironically have come to represent a fantasy, a potent symbol, of the way in which we, as adults, wish to remember what might have been. So much more the pleasure, then, for the female viewer, when the mad moppet is the one to lead the attack – to spew, curse and kill – to draw attention to the fragility of the symbolic order.

Barbara Creed is an associate professor at the University of Melbourne, teaching in Cinema Studies. Her areas of research include contemporary film, Surrealism, and feminist and psychoanalytic theory. Her books include The Monstrous-Feminine, Media Matrix: Sexing the New Reality *and* Pandora's Box: Essays in Film Theory.

1. Peter Webb with Robert Short *Hans Bellmer* Quartet Books, London, 1985, p42.

2. Quoted in Jean-Claude Carriere *The Secret Language of* Film Faber and Faber, London, 1994, p92.

3. Peter Webb, op cit, p47.

4. Robin Wood *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan* Columbia University Press, New York, 1986.

5. Julia Kristeva *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (trans. Leon S. Roudiez) Columbia University Press, New York, 1982.

6. Barbara Creed *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* Routledge, London, 1993.

Plates

LORETTA LUX *The Rose Garden* 2001

At The Window 2004

Study of a Girl 1 2002

The Bride 2003

SALLY MANN *Popsicle Drips* 1985

Dog Scratches 1991

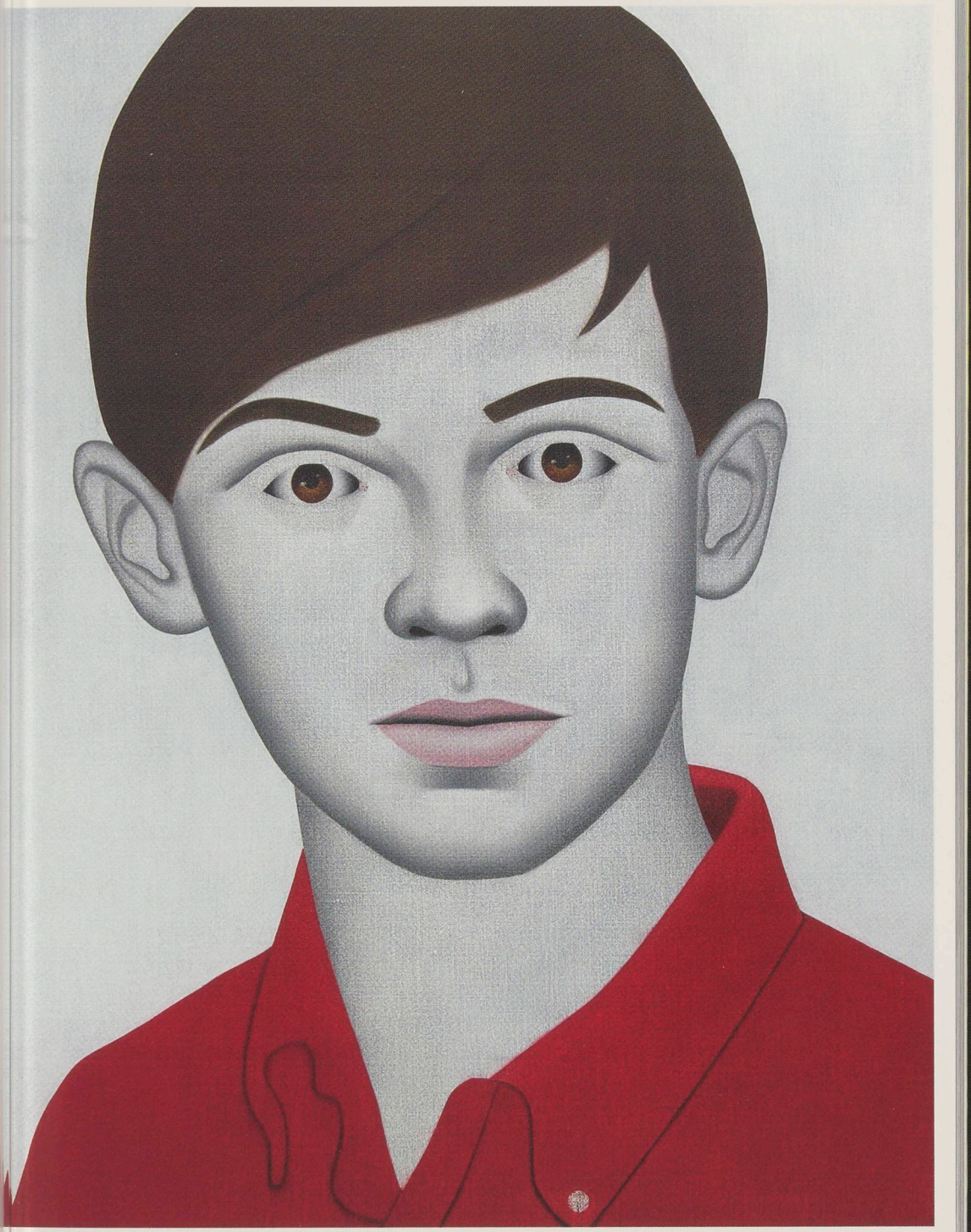
Candy Cigarette 1989

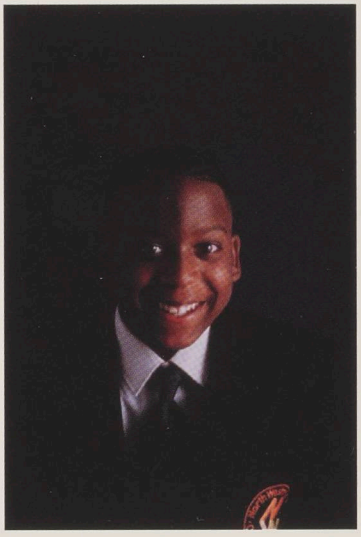
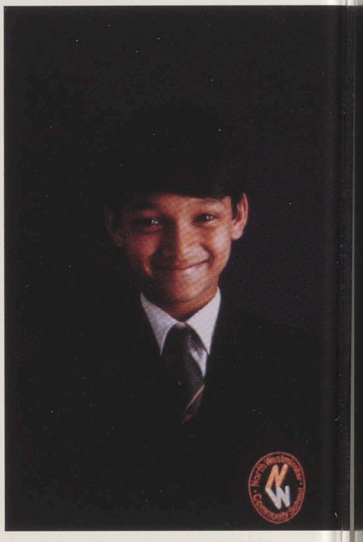
Hayhook 1989

Emmett's Bloody Nose 1985

The New Mothers 1989

GAVIN HURLEY *Young Donald Baechler* 2004



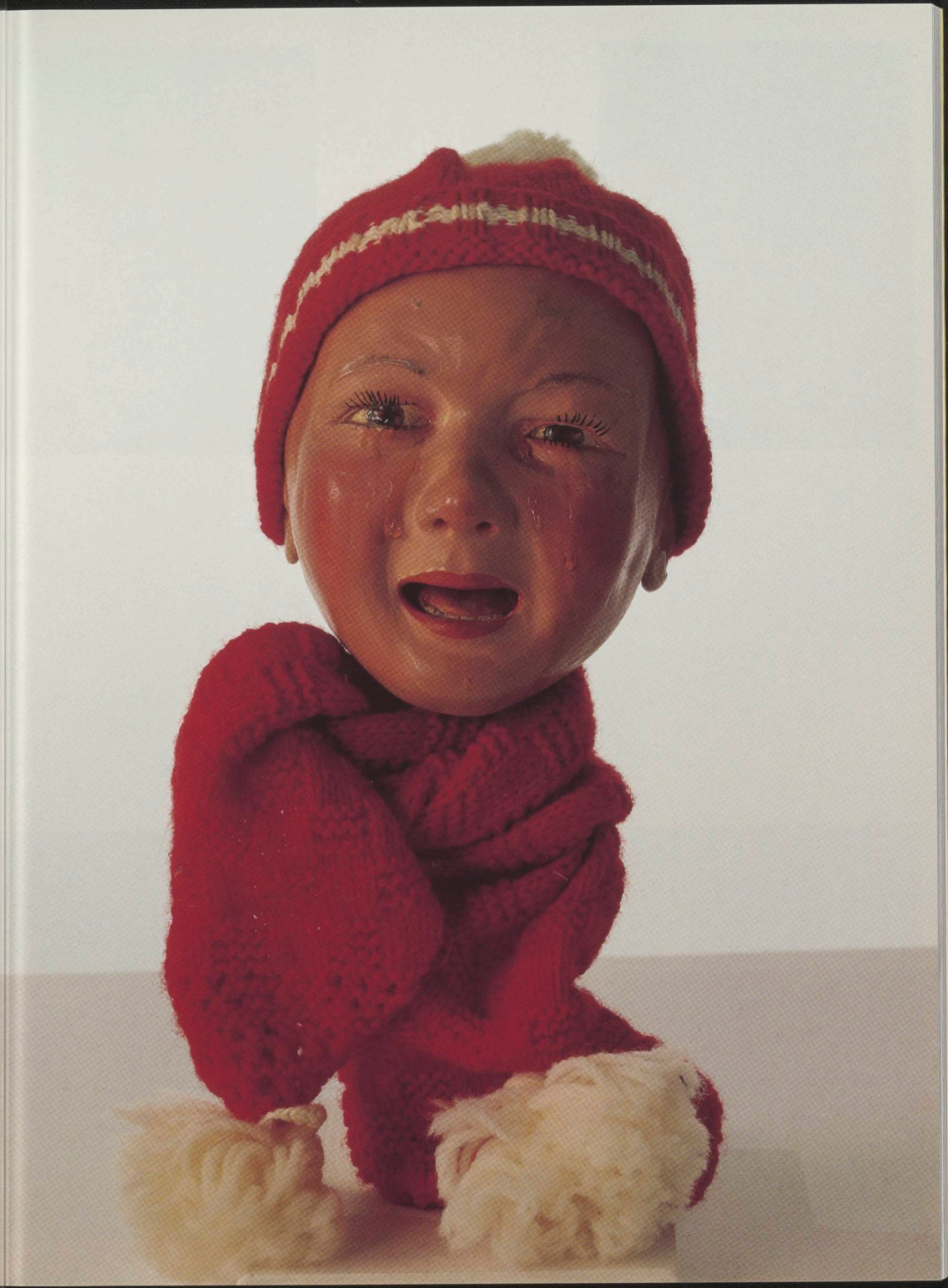




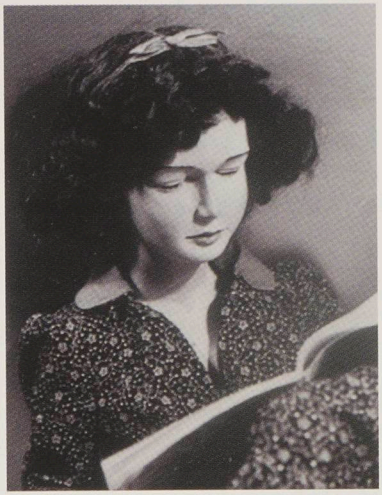
CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI *Children of Westminster Community School* 1992 (details)

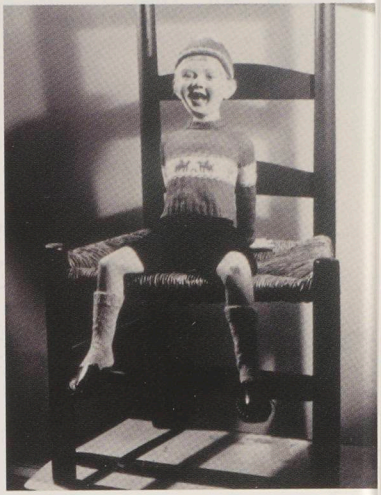

North Westminster
Community School

MORTON BARTLETT *Untitled*

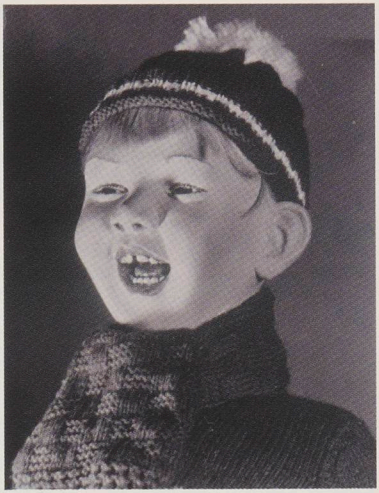
Untitled c.1950s

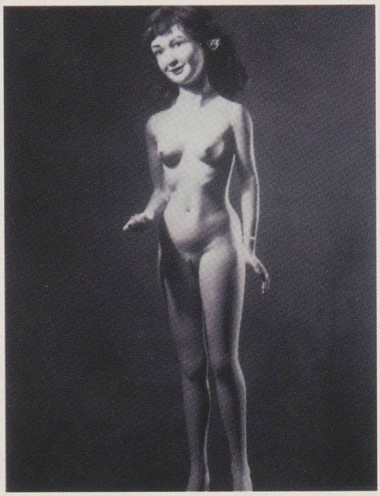






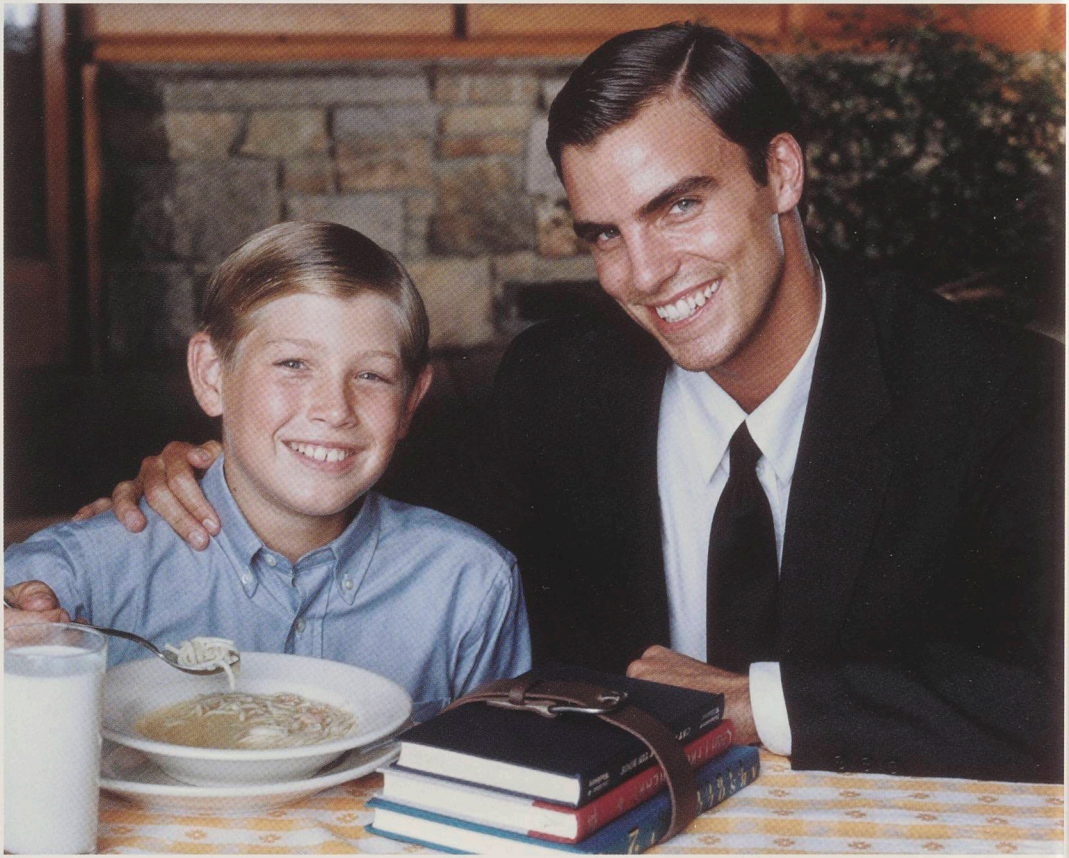
Untitled

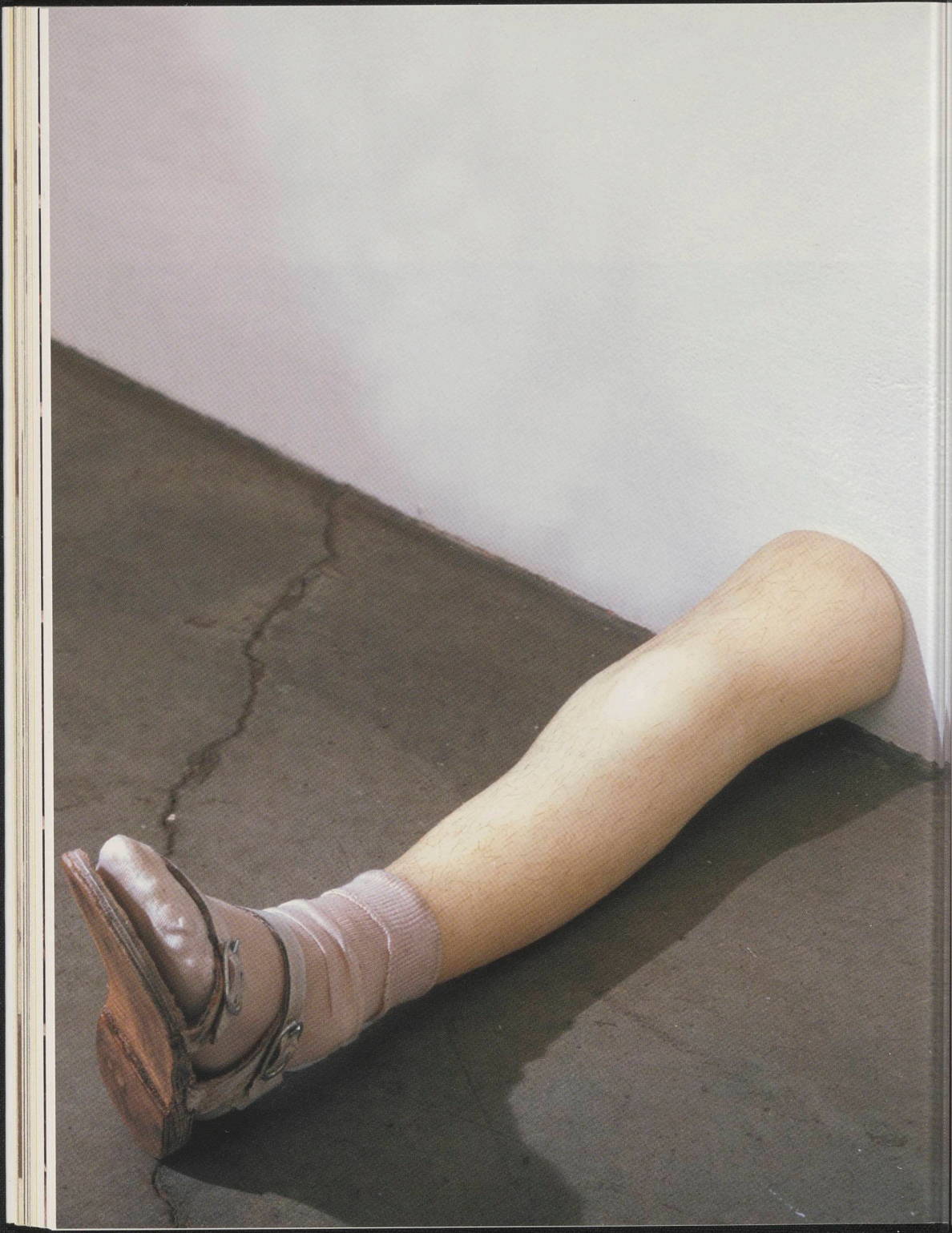




STEVEN MEISEL from *The Good Life* 1997


57





ROBERT GOBER *Untitled* 1992

Untitled 1990

Untitled 1991 (detail) >

Miss Rubinson, A Buyer, Marries

Heather Linn Rubinson, a daughter of Dr. Kalman Rubinson of New York and the late Irene Rowe Rubinson, was married yesterday to Michael Warren Schechter, the son of Ruth Canaan of Great Neck, L.I., and Marvin L. Schechter of Old Westbury, L.I. Rabbi Lawrence M. Colton performed the ceremony at the Tower Suite in New York.

Mrs. Schechter has a bachelor's degree in fine arts and an M. B. A. from New York University. She is an assistant buyer at Tiffany's in New York. Her father is an associate professor of physiology and biophysics at N.Y.U. Her grandfather, the late Dr. Irving Rowe, was a physicist and the chief scientist at the United States Office of Naval Research in New York.

The bridegroom, a magna cum laude graduate of N.Y.U., is an associate at Mentor Partners, an investment firm in New York. His mother is the vice president of corporate communications at U.S. Tele-Comm Inc., a private pay phone company in Great Neck. His father is the senior partner in the New York law firm of Tunstead, Schechter and Torre.

Bernardino police.

Her parents, Joseph and Sandra Sauceda, were charged Wednesday with felony child endangerment, and the father also was charged with felony child abuse, Ms. Kauffman said.

The police were tipped by a relative. When they asked the Saucedas to show them the girl, they took officers to the closet, Ms. Kauffman said.

Officers said the girl was lying in her own feces and wore a urine-stained sweatsuit.

miles east of Los Angeles in lieu $50,000 bail each.

The girl, whose name was not closed, and her six brothers and ters, ages 2 months to 15 years, turned over to the county Child Pr tive Services. There was no evid that the other children were ab Ms. Kauffman said.

Joseph Sauceda, 33, denied tha and his 31-year-old wife abused daughter. He said the closet was cell and that his family was a lo one.

Randy A. Gilman, Gemologist, Weds

Randy Allyn Gilman, a daughter of Mrs. Herbert Gilman of West Hartford, Conn., and the late Mr. Gilman, was married yesterday at the Pierre in New York to Henri Zvi Bolimovsky, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Moisha Bolimovsky of Tel Aviv. Rabbi Sol Roth and Cantor Joseph Malovany performed the ceremony.

Mrs. Bolimovsky, a graduate of Union College, is a gemologist in New York for Best Products, a retail holding company in Richmond. Her father was the founder and chairman of Ames Department Stores in Rocky Hill, Conn. Her mother, Evelyn Gilman, is a retired teacher.

The bridegroom, a graduate of the University of Toronto, is an architect and commercial planner in New York. His father, who is retired, was a jeweler in Tel Aviv.

Lottery Numbers

Oct. 5, 1960

New York Numbers — 061
New York Win 4 — 3441
New Jersey Pick-It — 199
New Jersey Pick 4 — 6607
Connecticut Daily — 827
Connecticut Play 4 — 2622
Connecticut Lotto — 9, 10, 14, 17, 2

Oct. 4, 1990

New York Pick 10 — 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 1 17, 19, 21, 28, 43, 45, 49, 50, 58, 5 68, 71

Your Money: Saturday, in Business Day

David Gould

...san and Robert Greenwood

...usan Fisher Weds R. A. Greenwood

...susan Grossman Fisher, the ...ghter of Mr. and Mrs. Bernard ...ssman of Scarsdale, N.Y., was ...rried yesterday at her home in ...v York to Robert Arthur Green... ...d, a son of William Greenwood of ...denton, Fla., and the late Mildred ...enwood. Rabbi Richard S. Chapin ...formed the ceremony.

...rs. Greenwood and her husband, ...44 years old, are principals in the ...skshire Bank, a private commer... ...bank in New York. The bride ...duated cum laude from the Uni... ...sity of Wisconsin and has a mas... ...s degree in personnel administra... tion and an M.B.A. from Columbia University. Her first marriage ended in divorce, as did her husband's. Her father, who is retired, was the president of Laurel Printing in New York.

Mrs. Greenwood is the president of the New York Women's Forum and is a member of the National Advisory Council of the United States Small Business Administration.

The bridegroom is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma with an M.B.A. from Bucknell University. His father retired as a vice president of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York.

...iane Dougherty Weds J. G. Chachas

...iane Young Dougherty, a televi... ...s sales executive, and John Greg... ...Chachas, an associate at the ...st Boston Corporation, both of ...v York, were married in Washing... ...y yesterday afternoon at St. So... ...'s Greek Orthodox Cathedral by ...Rev. John Tavlarides. The cere... ...ny was followed by another mar... ...e service last evening at the Met... ...liblitan Memorial United Methodist ...rch in Washington, conducted by ...Rev. William Holmes.

...rs. Chachas is a daughter of Mr. ... Mrs. Thomas J. Dougherty of ...nesda, Md. The bridegroom is the ...of Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Chachas ...lalt Lake City.

...ne bride, 27 years old, is a national ...unt sales executive with Capital ...es/ABC. She is a graduate of Bar... ...d College. Her father is a senior ... president of the Metromedia ...pany. Her mother, Anne D. Dou... ...rty, recently completed two terms ...ne president of Hospice Care of ...District of Columbia.

...ne bridegroom, 25, is an associate ...ergers and acquisitions at First ...on. He is a graduate of Columbia University and has an M.B.A. degree from Harvard University. His mother, Mary P. Chachas, is a community relations associate at the University of Utah Medical Center in Salt Lake City. His father is a lawyer and manages family mineral and other business interests in Salt Lake City.

Glogau Studjo

Diane Chachas

Azle, northwest of Fort Worth.

Tony McCarty, 15 years old, and his mother took their 2½-year-old dog, a pit bull and chow mix named Runt, to the clinic on Thursday, about the same time another similar dog, a female mix of pit bull and chow, was taken in for euthanasia, Dr. Sultemeier said.

The boy was with Runt when the dog got the lethal injection instead of the rabies shot. "The lady and her son came in with a dog for a fairly straightforward vaccination and walked out without the dog," Dr. Sultmeier said. "We are at fault."

The veterinarian bought the boy a full-blooded chow puppy. The mother, Pam Peyton, said she would not sue.

Ms. Froom Weds A Fellow Student

Mignon Froom and Brian Jeffrey Benjamin, both third-year medical students at the University of Rochester, were married yesterday at the Country House, a restaurant in Stony Brook, L.I. Rabbi Joseph Topek officiated. The bride, who is 29 years old, is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Jack Froom of Stony Brook. Her husband, who is 24, is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey P. Benjamin of Voorhees, N.J.

Mrs. Benjamin, who is known as Mimi, is a magna cum laude graduate of Brandeis University.

The New York Times

Boy Drowns in Pool

WALLINGFORD, CT Oct.3 (AP)- State officials are questioning a report by local authorities that the drowning of a small boy in a near-empty backyard pool was accidental. According to the initial police report the child's mother, Leah Gober, found her six year old son Robert late Monday evening face down in about three inches of water. State officials have refused to release details but are holding the child's mother for questioning. The family was draining the pool for winter.

Tracey Moffatt

The Wizard of Oz, 1956

He was playing Dorothy in the school's production of the *Wizard of Oz*.
His father got angry at him for getting dressed too early.

Birth Certificate, 1962 During the fight, her mother threw her birth certificate at her. This is how she found out her real father's name.

Tracey Moffatt

Tracey Moffatt

Heart Attack, 1970 She glimpsed her father belting the girl from down the street.
That day he died of a heart attack.

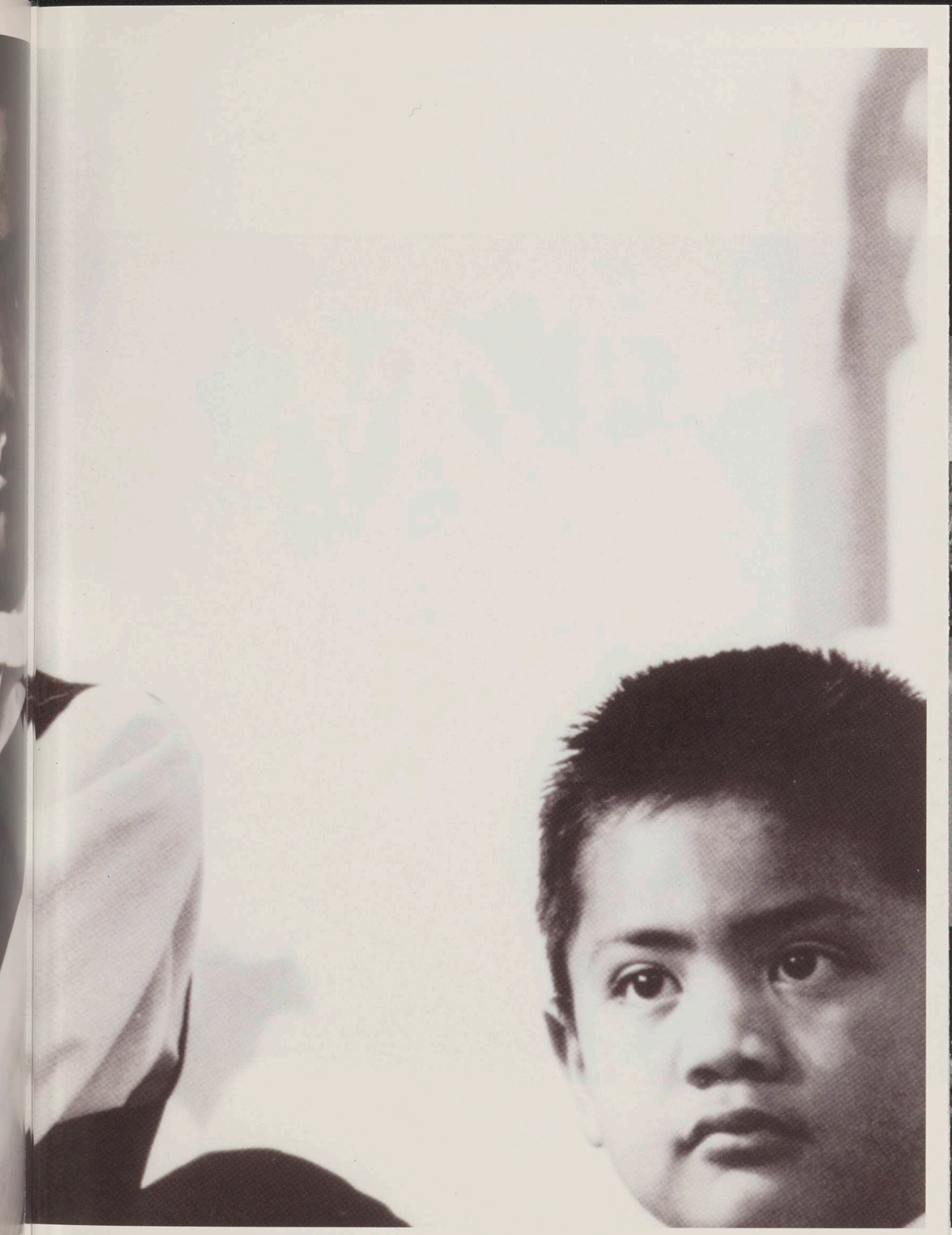
Tracey Moffatt

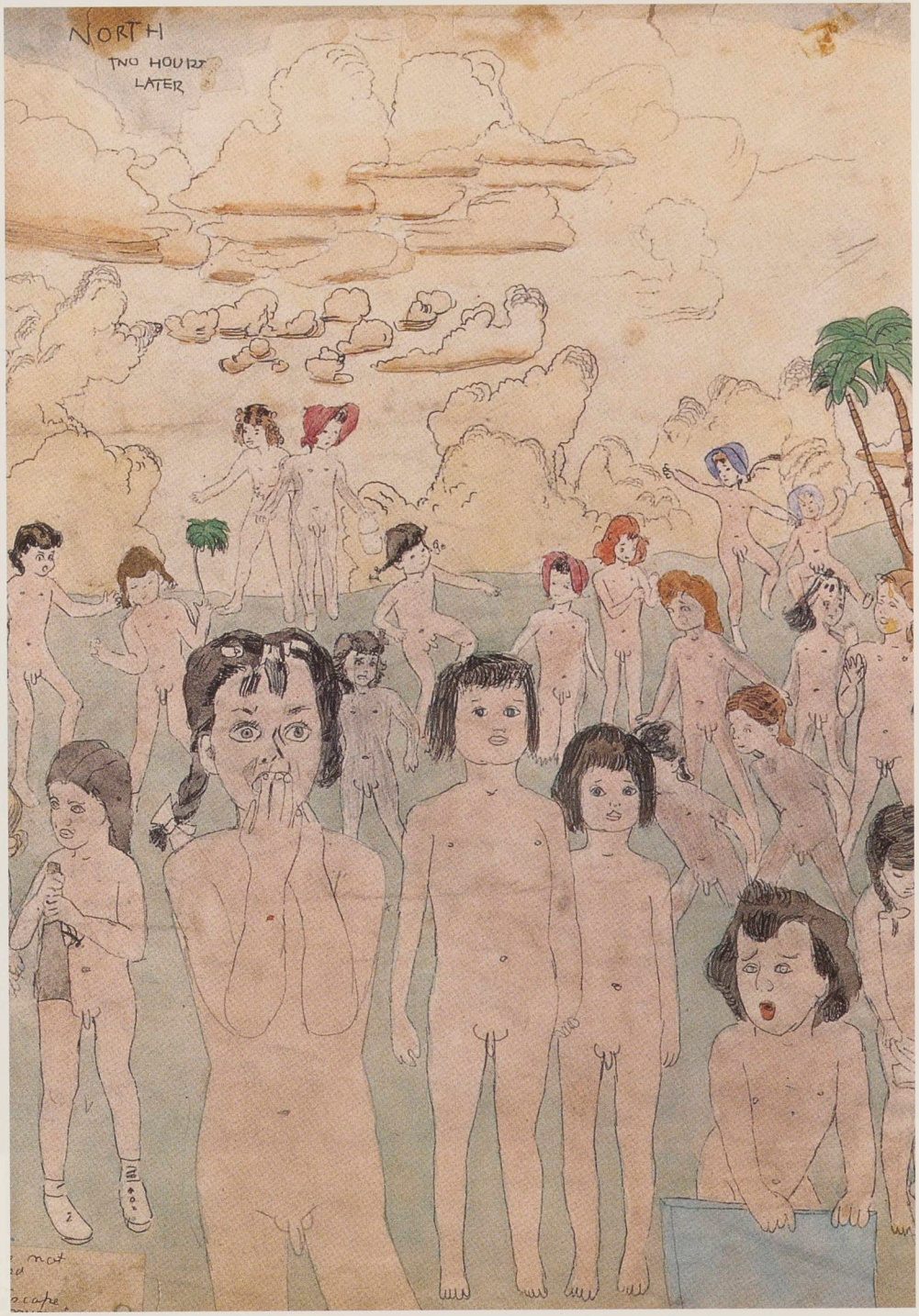
Doll Birth, 1972 His mother caught him giving birth to a doll. He was banned from playing with the boy next door again.

PAUL MCCARTHY *Family Tyranny (Modeling and Molding)* 1987

Cultural Soup 1987

SIMA URALE *O Tamaiti / The Children* 1996



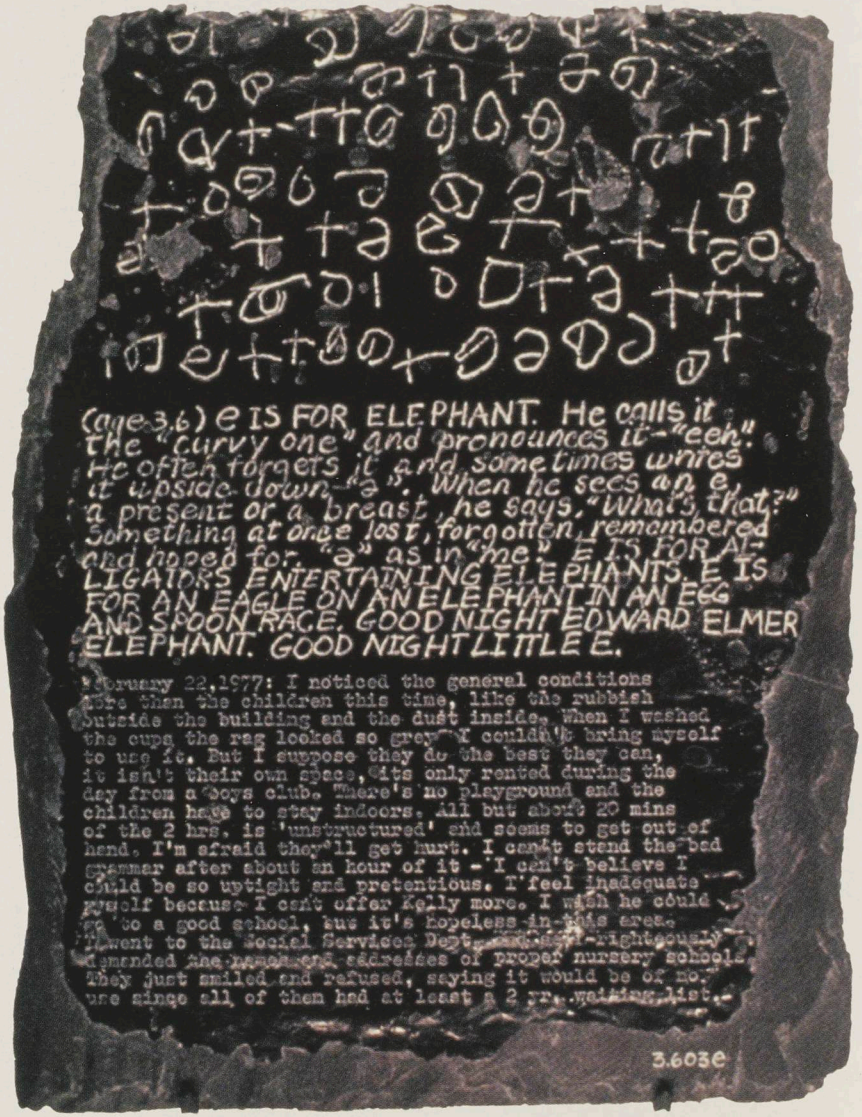


HENRY DARGER *3 Place not mentioned / Episode 3 2 Escape with great number of kids still fighting* (detail)

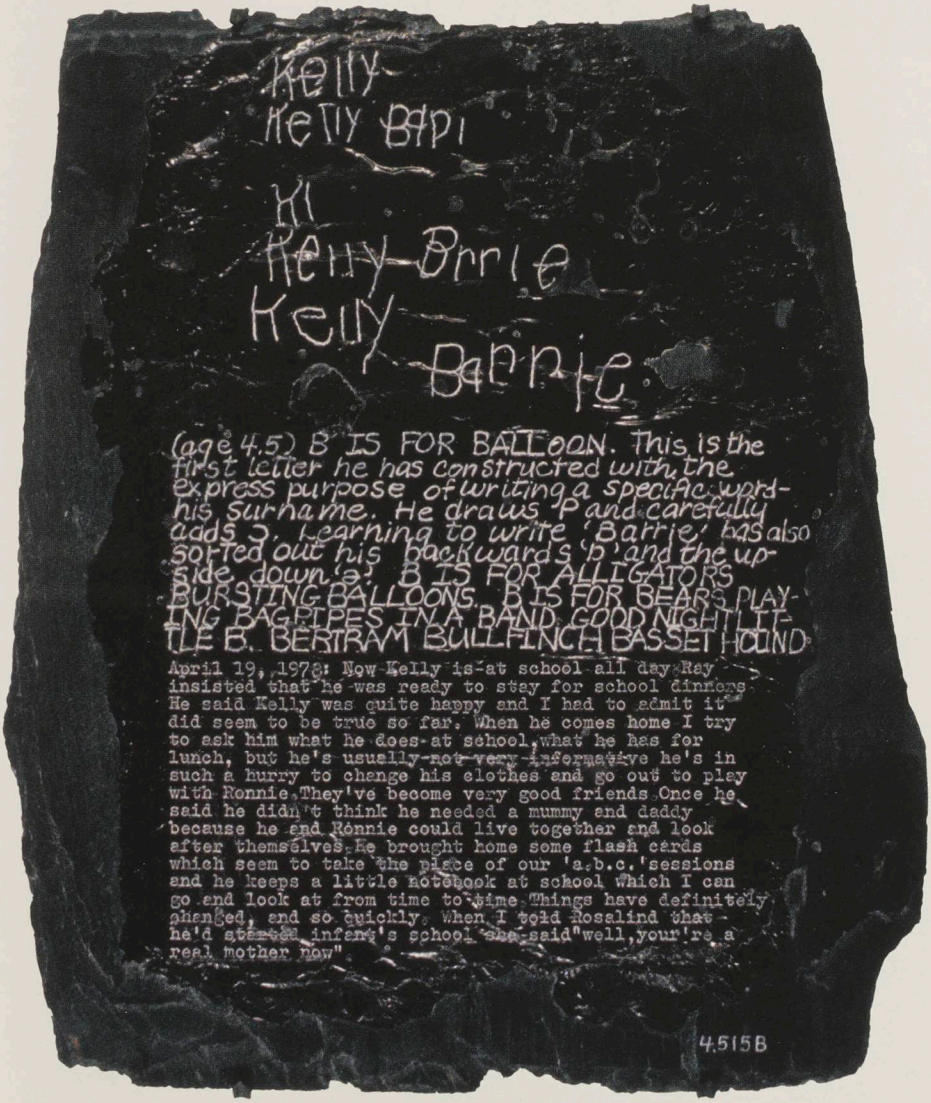
Picture One. This scene here shows the murderous massacre still going on before the winged blengins arrived from the sky. They came so quick how however that those fastened to the trees, or board, and those on the run escaped the murderist rascals or were rescued, and flown to permanent safty and security.

After M Whurther Run Glandelinians attack and blow up a train carrying children to refuge. (detail)

GREGOR NICHOLAS *Avondale Dogs* 1996



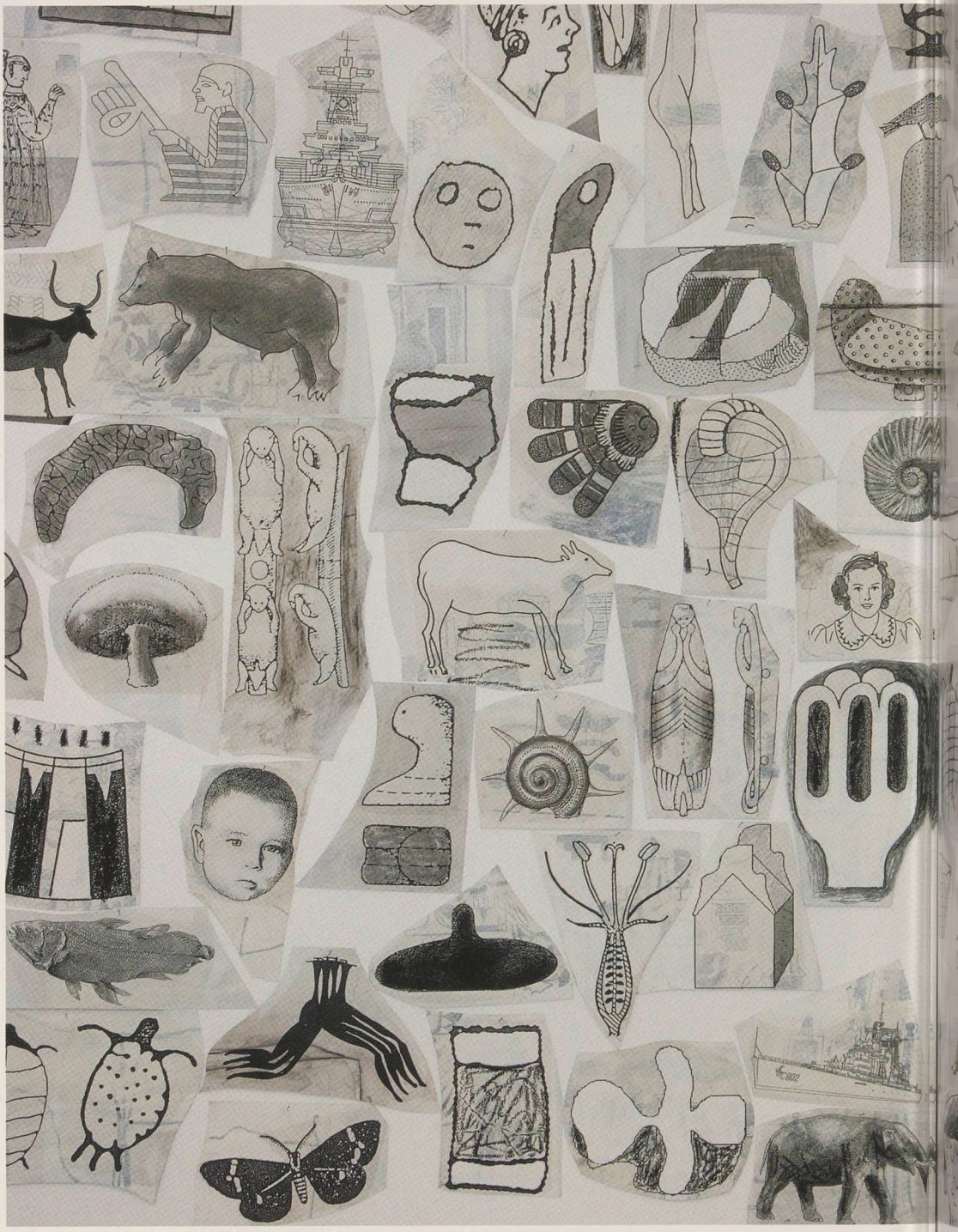
MARY KELLY *Documentation VI: Pre-writing Alphabet, Exergue and Diary* 1978 (details)



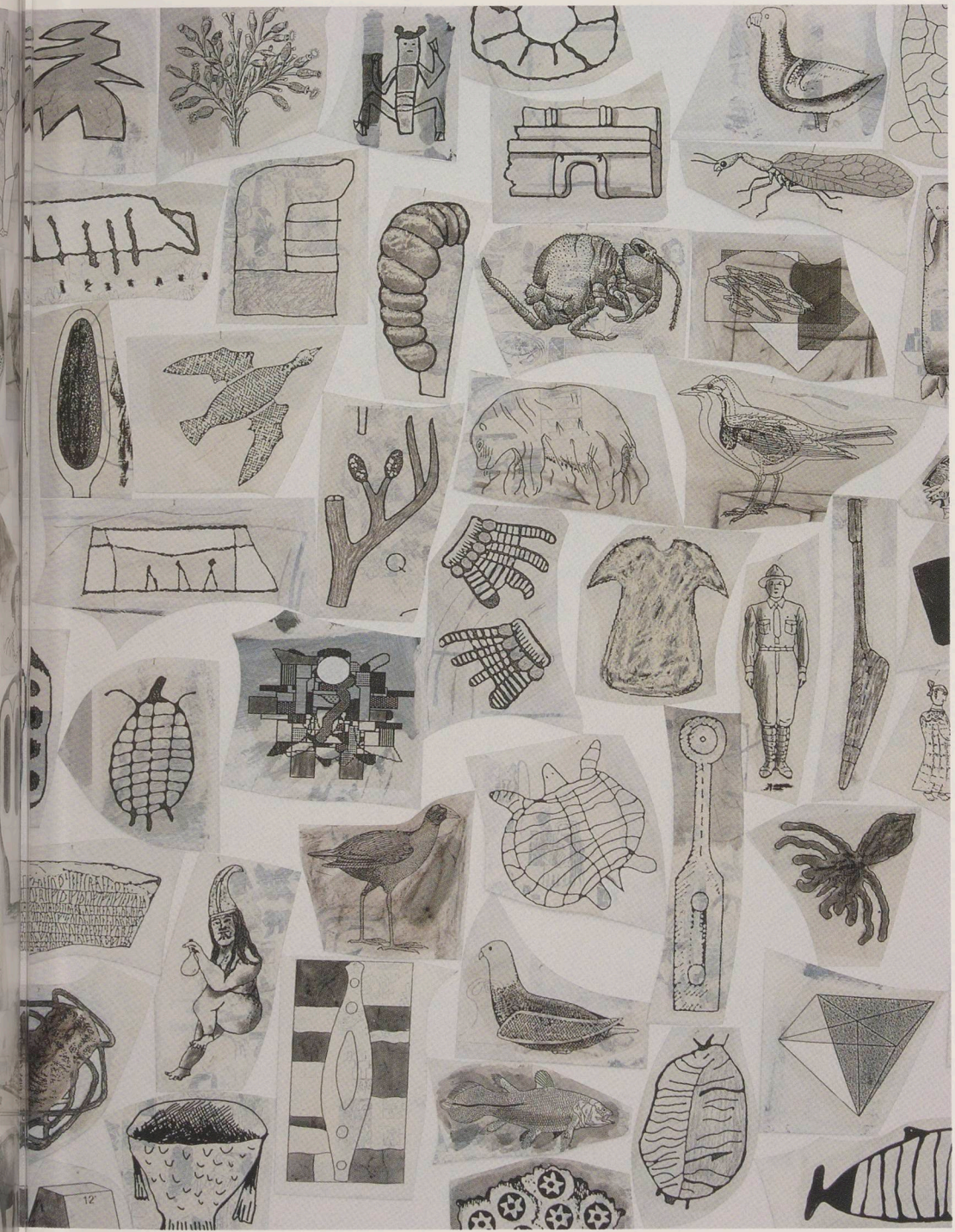
(age 4.5) B IS FOR BALLOON. This is the first letter he has constructed with the express purpose of writing a specific word- his surname. He draws 'B' and carefully adds 'a'. Learning to write 'Barrie' has also sorted out his 'backwards 'b' and the upside down 'e'. B IS FOR ALLIGATORS BURSTING BALLOONS. B IS FOR BEARS PLAYING BAGPIPES IN A BAND. GOOD NIGHT LITTLE B. BERTRAM BULLFINCH BASSET HOUND

April 19, 1978: Now Kelly is at school all day. Ray insisted that he was ready to stay for school dinners. He said Kelly was quite happy and I had to admit it did seem to be true so far. When he comes home I try to ask him what he does at school, what he has for lunch, but he's usually not very informative he's in such a hurry to change his clothes and go out to play with Ronnie. They've become very good friends. Once he said he didn't think he needed a mummy and daddy because he and Ronnie could live together and look after themselves. He brought home some flash cards which seem to take the place of our 'a.b.c.' sessions and he keeps a little notebook at school which I can go and look at from time to time. Things have definitely changed, and so quickly. When I told Rosalind that he'd started infant's school she said "well, you're a real mother now"

4.515B



RICHARD KILLEEN *Stories We Tell Each Other* 1987 (details)



MIKE KELLEY *We Communicate Only Through Our Shared Dismissal of the Pre-Linguistic* 1995 (details)

Alex

A very regressive painting, more typical of a child of a much younger age. A central "fecal" mess painted in fiery, emotional colors is surrounded by a circle of blue, an attempt to establish boundaries. A preponderance of circular and softly rounded shapes and a scarcity or absence of decisive straight lines are characteristic of the dependent personality seeking oral gratification. I believe this painting represents a regressive search for the comforting "proto-face," the murky infantile image of the mother's face that is linked to the oral gratification of breast-feeding. At this early stage, the circular image of the breast and mother's face are confused. Here, the paint spreads messily across the paper, producing a "jelly face" with only very loose boundaries. It lacks even the eyes, which are the first "human" attributes added to early diagrammatic drawings. This addition signals the beginning of socialized image production. The painting at hand is only a shifting nebular mass. Messy works such as this are often made specifically for the teacher. They are aggressive attacks on the orderly aesthetics of the adult, with which the child is quite familiar, but resents. The creator of such works has a compulsive need to handle and examine internal chaotic feelings where "good" and "bad" are indistinguishable. Hopefully, a child such as this can progress to the point where the "gift" can be relinquished, and the receiver allowed to throw the mess away. Only then can the child begin to use materials to represent and express fantasies that are more closely linked to their current relationships with external reality. For children like this, who can't let go of their infantile messy products, I believe it is advisable to provoke a more conscious connection between the true infantile sources of their production and their aesthetic output. The children should be asked to clear their bowels before the beginning of class, and if this proves to be a problem, I recommend stool-softening medicines.


Mark R.

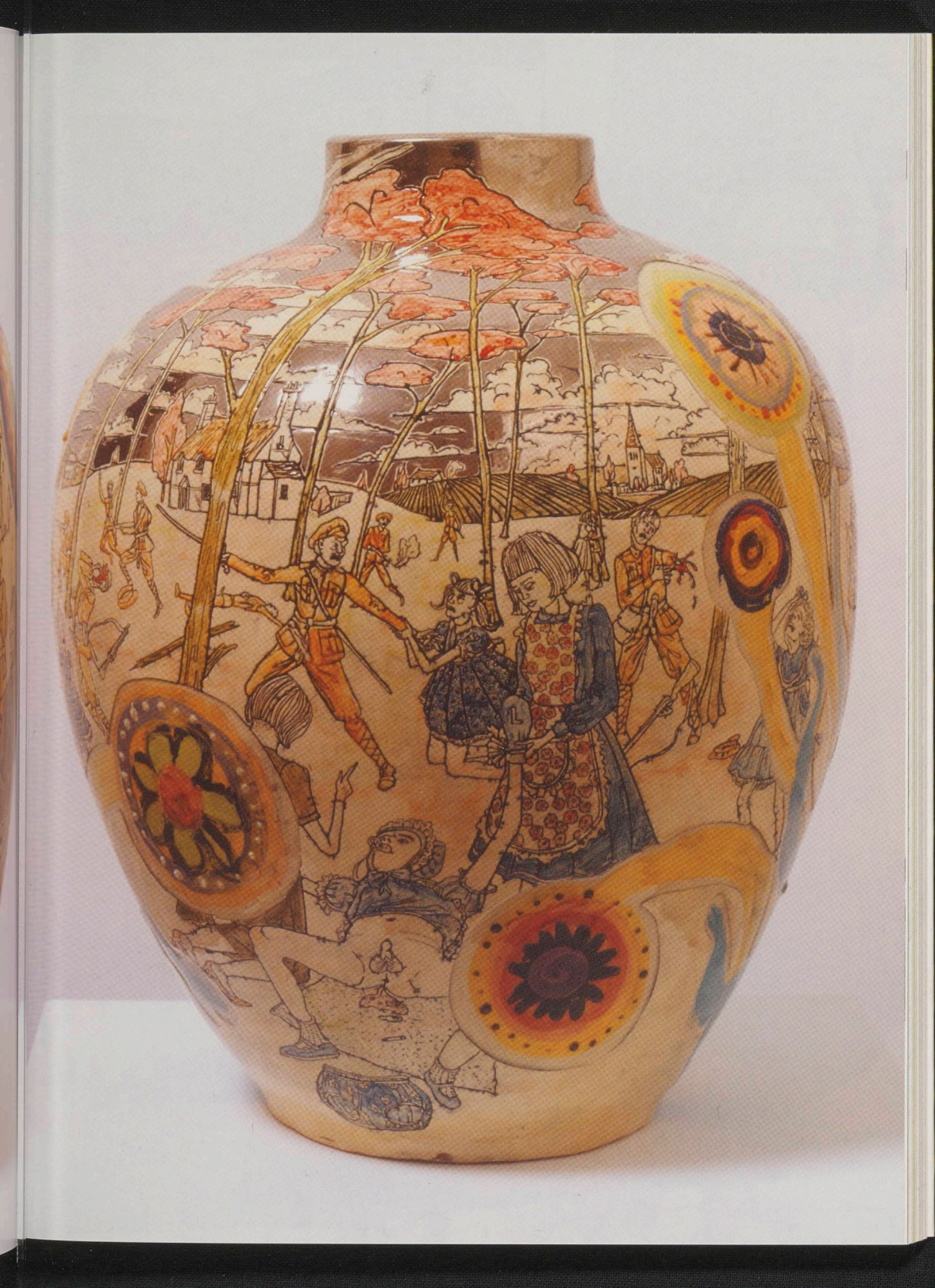
Mark R.

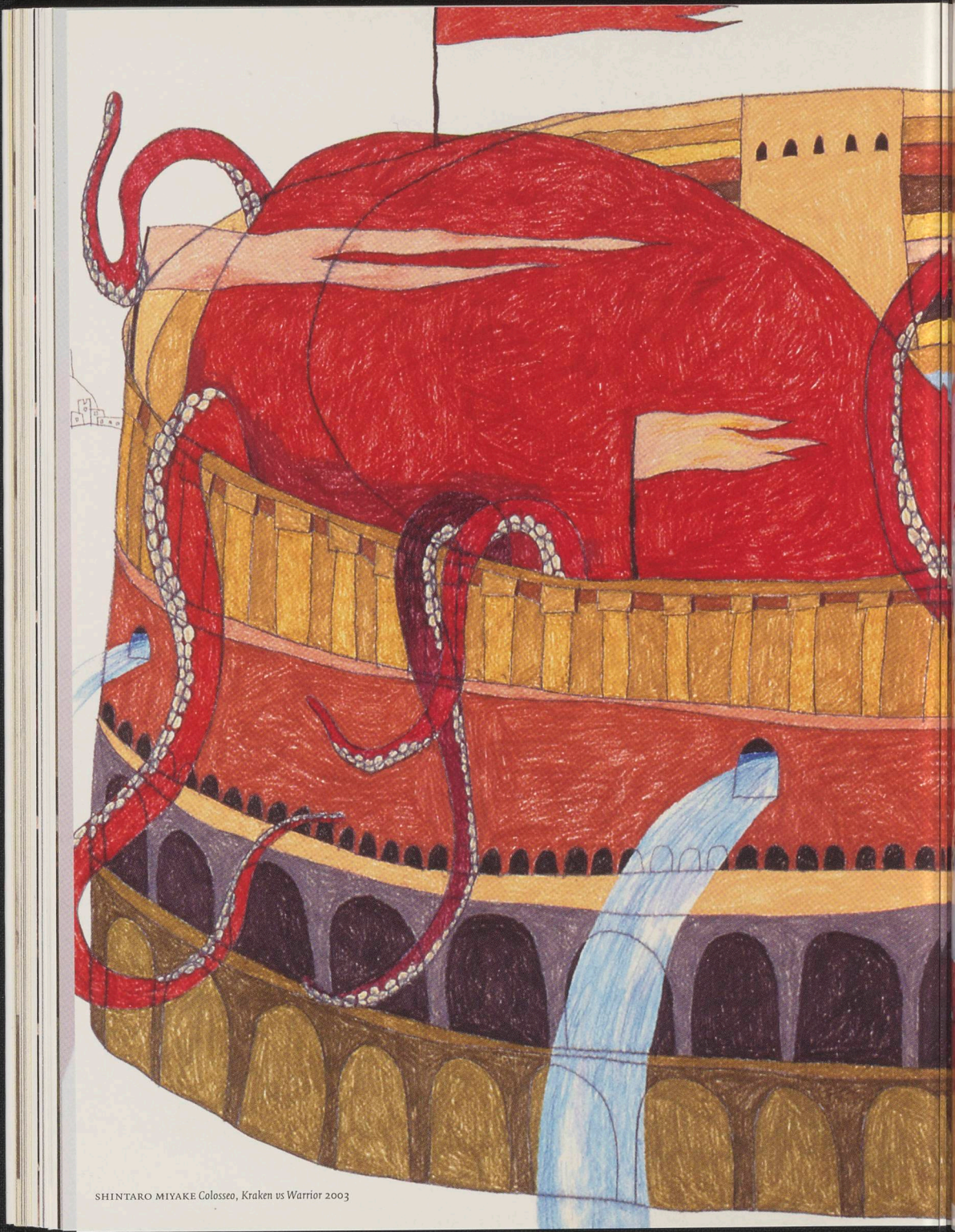
A teacher-influenced work, obviously. The stereotypical rendition of the skyscrapers is unnatural to a child of this age. Mark's choice of subject, the popular comic book character Spider-Man, reveals he has a withdrawn personality. He is unable to feel at one with living people, so he replaces them with synthetic heroes. He is cut off, and unable to show affection for human beings. His love of Spider-Man, a figure associated with darkness and lower evolutionary development, indicates that Mark is uncomfortable with adult males. Spider imagery is symbolic of negative feminine attributes. Mark has incorporated feelings of self-loathing from a dominant and unloving mother, and he hates his weak and submissive father. His attempts to mimic adult modes of drawing show that he seeks to please figures of authority, yet his choice of negative subject matter reveals a buried hatred and fear of authority figures. The orderly web designs of Spider-Man's costume are rendered as chaotic slashes, and the webs shooting out of his hands, which could be signs of stability, look more than anything like ropes binding the central figure in position. Spider-Man is the crucified Christ. Mark's attachment to such negative imagery shows that he has formed an identification with the aggressive family member who torments him. He has internalized, and seeks to act out, sadistic leanings, but is too repressed to do so. The shading that surrounds the Spider-Man figure is a common indicator of anxiety. He is enclosed in a "mess package", a projection of inner disorder. Also, the perfect symmetry of the painting is unusual in children's art. Irrational perfection, and a horror of asymmetry, is common among children whose inner balance is precarious.

LOUISE BOURGEOIS *Cell (Glass Spheres and Hands)* 1990-3

GRAYSON PERRY *Pattern of Cigarette Burns and Bruises* 2004

Interior Conflict 2004





SHINTARO MIYAKE *Colosseo, Kraken vs Warrior* 2003

ANTHONY GOICOLEA *Window Washers* 2001

Warriors 2001 (details)

MIKALA DWYER *Hanging Eyes* 1999

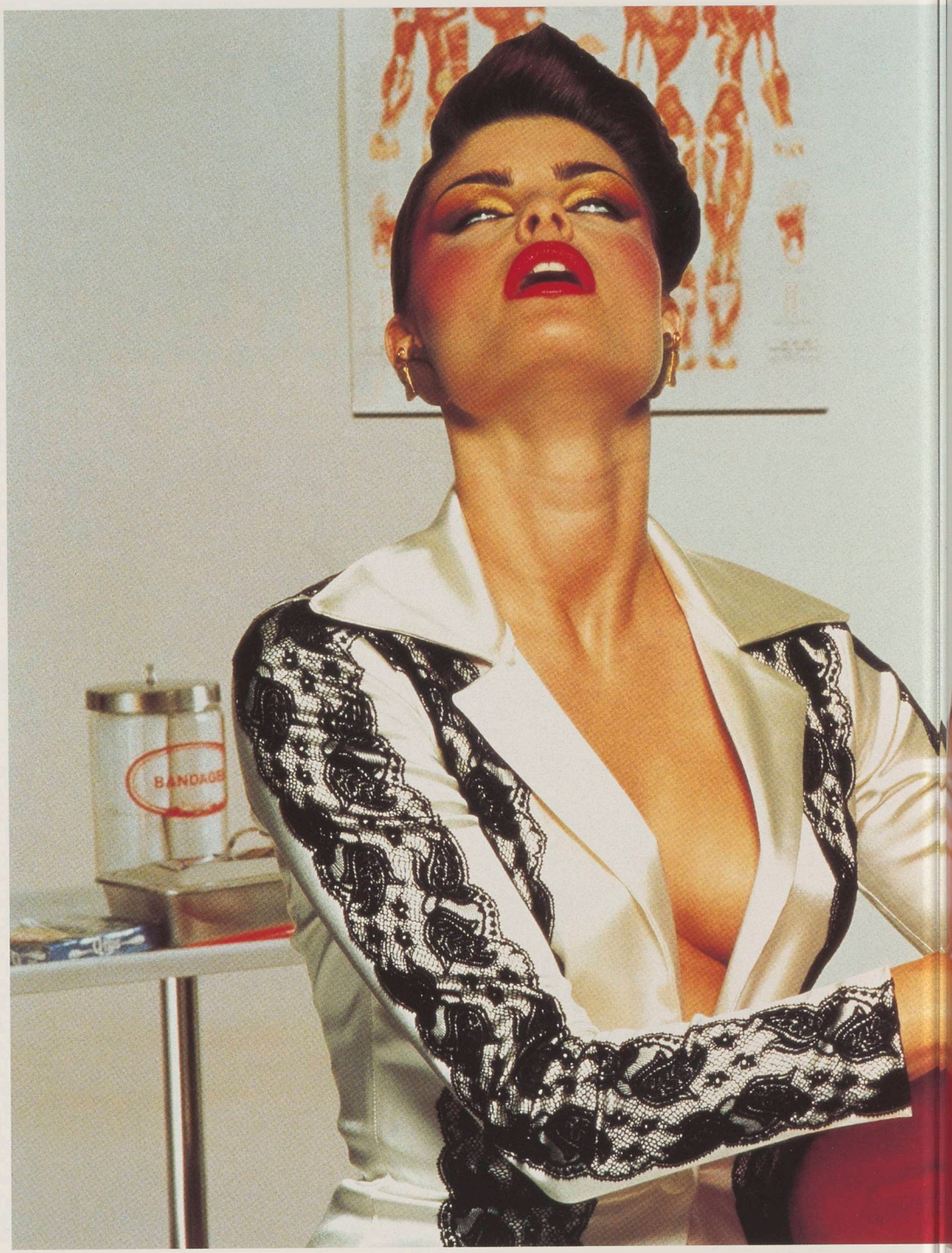
JAKE AND DINOS CHAPMAN *The Return of the Repressed* 1997 (detail)

YVONNE TODD *Envy Log* 2005

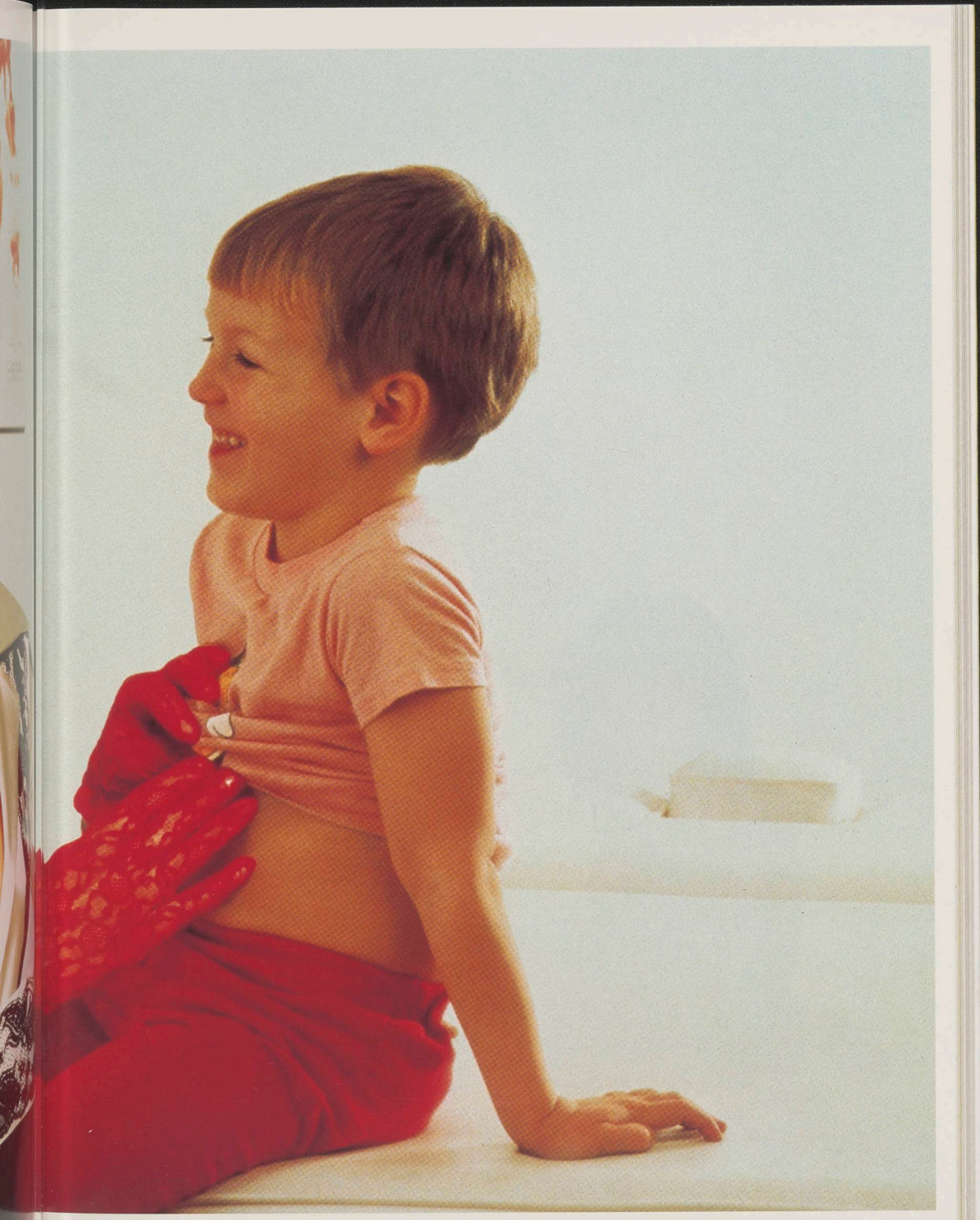
Pupators 2005

Kloteen® 2005

Empire 2005



INEZ VAN LAMSWEERDE & VINOODH MATADIN *Petra* 1994



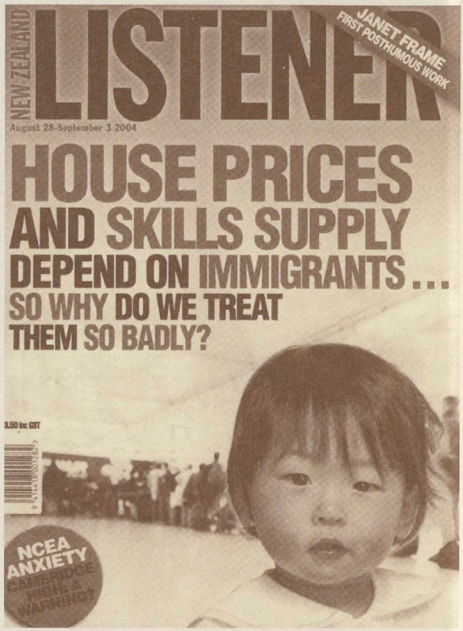
Ursula 1993

Topaze 1993

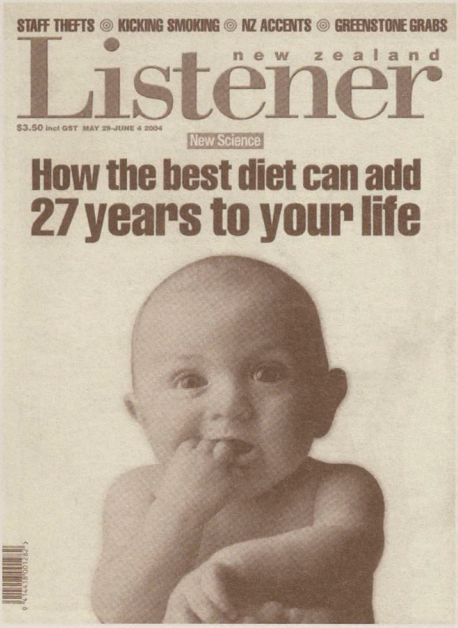
AES+F *More than Paradise 2* 2002

King of the Forest: New York | Assembled Heroes 5 2003

Le Roi des Aulnes 7 2001



New Zealand Listener covers. Most cover photographs feature paid models.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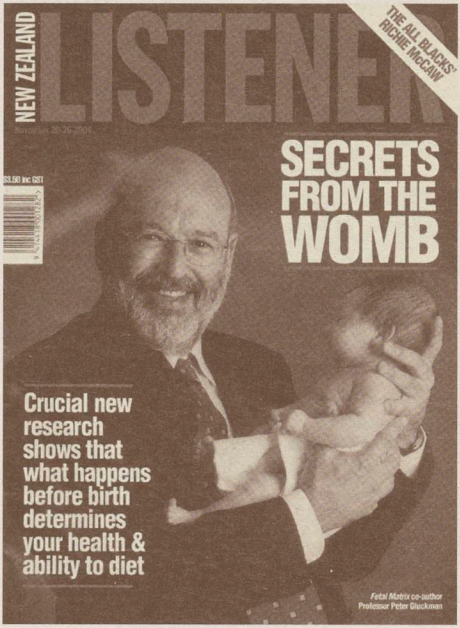
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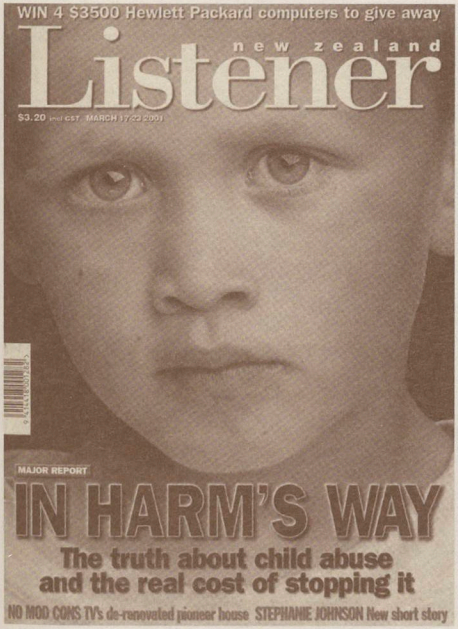
Crucial new research shows that what happens before birth determines your health & ability to diet
Fetal Matrix co-author Professor Peter Gluckman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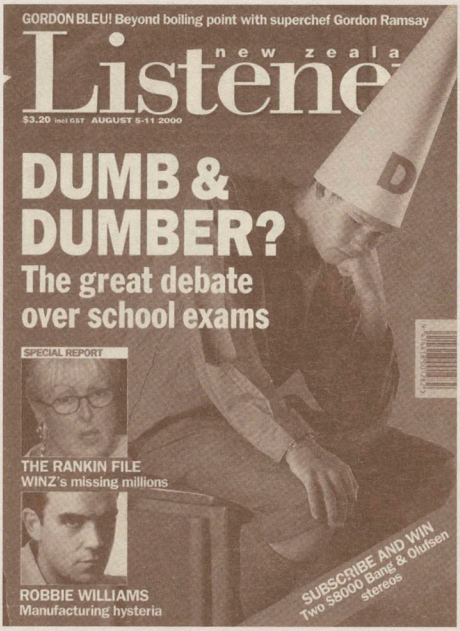
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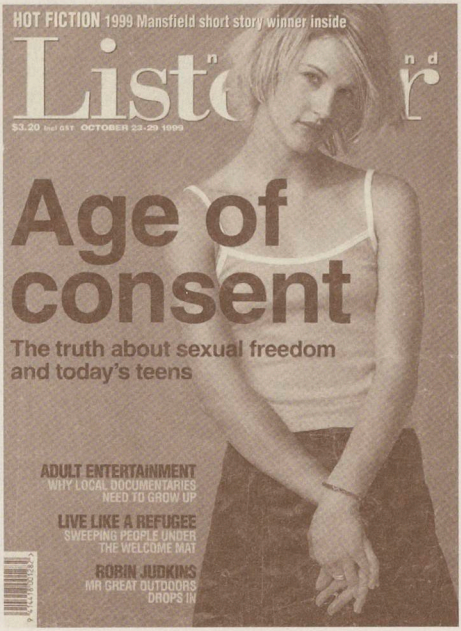
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KAREN WALKER ON MUFFINS & STILETTOS


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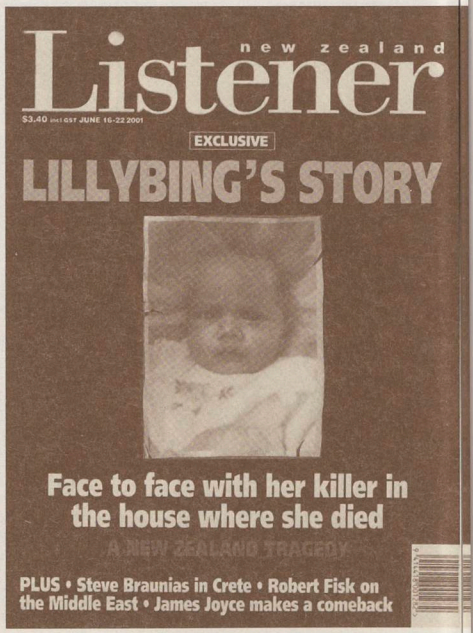
TWIN POWER
WHY TWINS HAVE AN EDGE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Thousands on CYF waiting list
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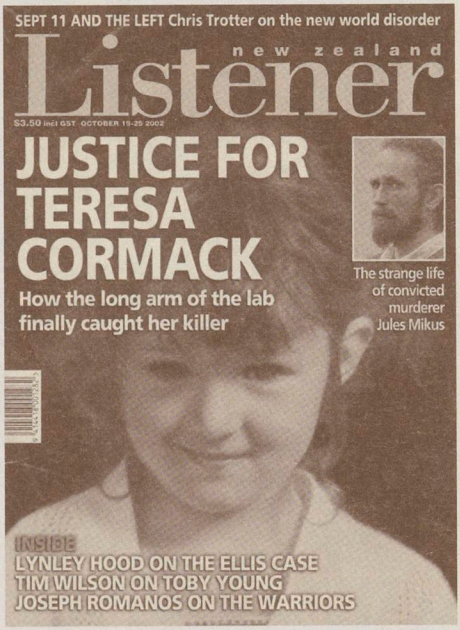
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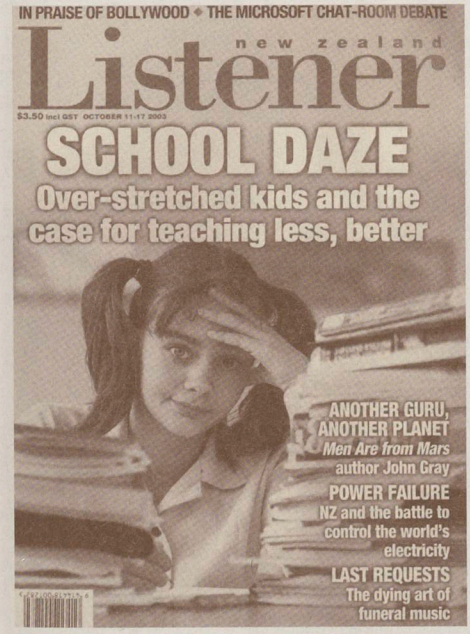
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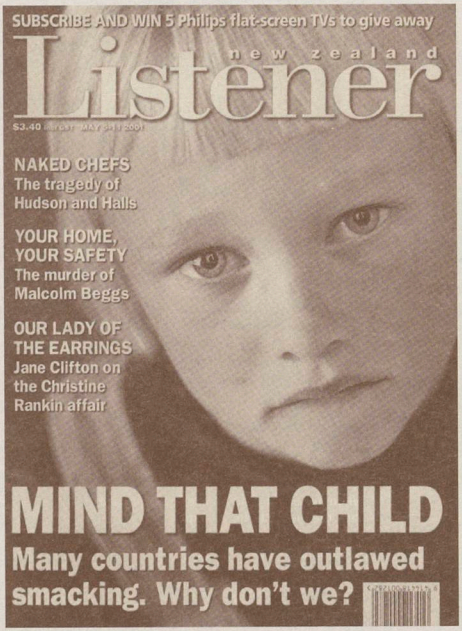
The dying art of funeral music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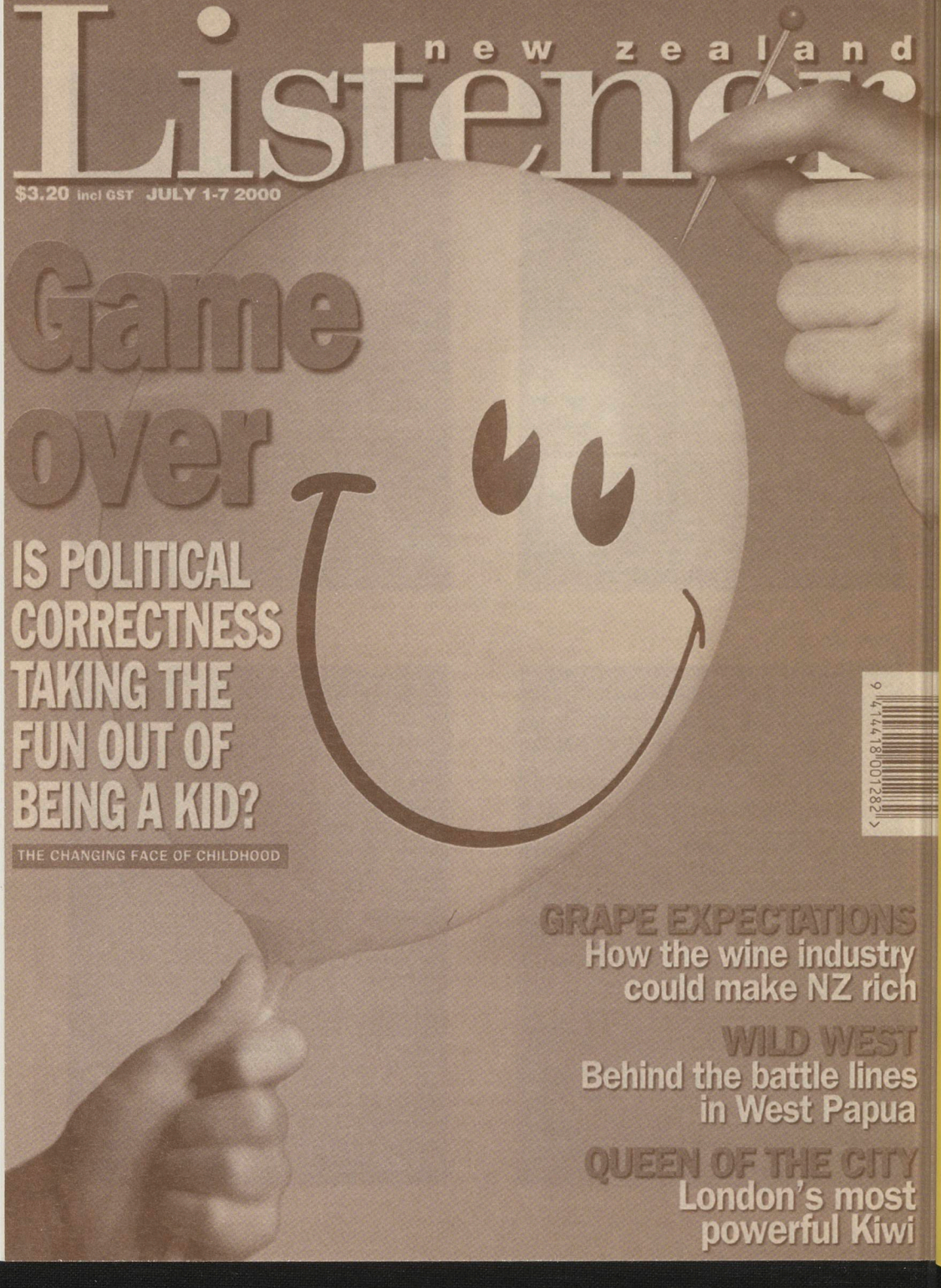


Game over

IS POLITICAL CORRECTNESS TAKING THE FUN OUT OF BEING A KID?

THE CHANGING FACE OF CHILDHOOD

GRAPE EXPECTATIONS
How the wine industry could make NZ rich

WILD WEST
Behind the battle lines in West Papua

QUEEN OF THE CITY
London's most powerful Kiwi

Janita Craw and Robert Leonard

Inventing Childhood

Today, in the West, we are more obsessed with children and more confused about childhood than ever before.

– Sarah Gibson[1]

New Zealand is often labelled an ideal place to bring up children. Monty Holcroft, in his 1964 essay *Islands of Innocence*, wrote that in this country childhood had become "a golden age in the memory, a time of protection, of recurring festivals which brought gifts, and above all, a time of unquestioning love."[2] In 1990 filmmaker Vincent Ward suggested childhood is a recurrent theme in New Zealand literature because of "the relative newness of the national identity and 'rite of passage' stories that reflect this coming of age."[3] He goes on to say, "New Zealand is so remote that when we venture into the world we do so as innocents."

These charming views of childhood are not reflected in our current health statistics or in our media. The news is full of shocking stories of neglect and abuse; church and creche sex scandals; P-smoking parents and bullying broomstick boys and pizza-delivery-man killers. Heavy images of childhood sit alongside idyllic ones, but we usually gloss over the contradictions. If childhood is routinely depicted as a warm nest, it could equally be characterised as harsh, impoverished, repressive and scary. It might be considered all pleasure and leisure, but it is equally boot camp for grown-ups-to-be, a hectic time of learning, of becoming-adult. It is promoted as a period of blissful ignorance, but it could be seen as one of knowledge gathering, as the locus of subsequently repressed knowledge, or as a time of sadistic urges, untrained and uncivil desires. Childhood is an amorphous, gnarly category.

Childhood may embody diverse notions, but, crucially, it is presumed radically distinct from the adult world. While it is impossible to draw a clear line between childhood and adulthood, and while phases of childhood are so different, the idea of childhood remains compelling because it speaks to us as adults.[4] We view childhood through a nostalgic lens of care and envy, seeing it as something we have lost. We cast children as sublime, radically other, with access to pleasures we are denied. We feel banished from their wonderful world. As beautiful outsiders, children become the objects of our desires, with their own desires elided in the process. Childhood is an idea we reverse-engineer from our adult memories and needs, and retrospectively apply to the young.

Childhood is something we tend to take for granted; we assume we know what it is; surely we all had one. It's taken as universal, biological fact. Actually, childhood is in large part a cultural phenomenon, and a comparatively recent one.[5] In his groundbreaking 1962 book *Centuries of Childhood* French social historian Philippe Aries traces

the origin and spread of the modern idea of childhood. For Aries childhood starts as an elite idea, in the European upper classes of the 16th and 17th centuries. But it really develops with the Romantics in the 18th century, spreads through the middle classes in the 19th; finally flourishing across the classes in the 20th century. As Ian McEwan surmises in his novel *The Child in Time*: " ... childhood is not a natural occurrence. There was a time when children were treated like small adults. Childhood is an invention, a social construct, made possible by society as it increased in sophistication and resource. Above all, childhood is a privilege."[6]

The 18th century was a turning point in the invention of childhood as the Romantics perfected their ideology of the natural child. In his best-selling 1762 parenting manual *Emile: or, On Education* French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that if children experience a "natural childhood" – interacting with nature while receiving protection and guidance – the goodness of their unique emotional selves will naturally unfold. For Rousseau, children are born with intrinsic virtues (innocence, freedom and a capacity for reason) and their minds should not be moulded, but allowed to grow like plants. Like noble savages, children exist in a state of nature and must be protected from social corruption. Though Rousseau is attributed with inventing the modern idea of childhood, others helped. William Wordsworth and William Blake wrote poems about childhood as a time of innocence and wonder, oneness with nature; and British philosopher John Locke promoted the child's mind as a tabula rasa, an empty vessel to be filled by society. As Romantic ideas gained purchase, the cultural conditions of childhood developed.

European civil liberties and human rights advocates of the 19th century promoted the idea that children should be protected from the harsh facts of adult reality, instead being cherished, enjoyed and educated. Working class children were freed from mills, mines and sweatshops, and care for children became an index of civilisation, a promise of the future good. This view prevailed for 100 years or more, as health advances brought a decline in infant mortality and a shift in emphasis from guaranteeing children's survival to their emotional wellbeing.

In the 20th century, the Romantic idea of childhood innocence was complicated by the emergence of psychoanalysis and developmental psychology. Sigmund Freud traces adult dysfunction back to traumatic childhood experiences, often seemingly trivial ones. He argues that what happens to children can affect them for the rest of their lives, that childhood trauma can explain how we turn out. Freud showed that

even a routine childhood isn't so innocent, that the child's interior life is full of primal drives, including violent and sexual urges. Freud challenged the Romantic ideology of childhood innocence, all the time enhancing the view of children as emotionally fragile and vulnerable.

If Freud focused on pathology, the father of developmental psychology Jean Piaget was concerned with normalcy, with the way children's minds evolve through a standard sequence of "ages and stages". Piaget's notion of phased cognitive development essentially updated Rousseau's idea of the naturally unfolding child, perfecting it as a science. Developmental psychology is now under attack for being dogmatic, linear, by the book, but Piaget's views remain enormously influential.

Freud and Piaget's discoveries created new responsibilities and stoked anxieties around childhood. Freud makes us vigilant, as even seemingly benign events may have traumatic effects on our children; while Piaget turns us into neurotic technicians, plotting children's progress against graphs and each other.

All these ideas really converged in the 1960s, when the Pill made family planning a reality. The late 1960s and 1970s were a time of widespread social liberation, with the civil rights movement, the sexual revolution, feminism and postcolonialism. They also put child liberation – the freeing of children from of all kinds of constraints – on the agenda. Children were encouraged to run wild, unsupervised. Childhood must be an adventure – every playground, an adventure playground.

The cultural pendulum began to swing back in the 1980s, fuelled by a widespread moral panic over child abuse, blown out of proportion by an apparently caring media. As Mike Kelley puts it: "The theatres and airwaves are flooded with dramas dealing with abuse and incest, which almost uniformly adopt the strictest of tones. In order to excuse the audience's morbid fascination with such themes, a clear moral message must be given. A lesson has to be learned."[7]

Today, thoughts of child liberation have been superceded by a preoccupation with protecting children. Dangers are everywhere. So children are institutionalised in kindergarten, school, after-school clubs and at home. But even there they are not safe. Anxiety about touching has fathers wary of enjoying a sensual relationship with their own children. They must be protected from evil influences: negligent nannies, processed food, politically incorrect toys, television, bad role models, internet predators, adult secrets. Children are watched more than ever before: today it's considered too risky to walk to school. We have become risk-focused. The new obsession with

protecting children is easily justified through appeals to an innocence so valuable and so vulnerable that drastic measures are called for. But our anxieties conflate the real risks to children with threats to the symbolic value society places on them.

Which brings us to this exhibition. Childhood is a big area for art. The representation of children in art, and in mass culture, mushroomed in the 19th century, spreading the ideal of the Romantic child. And, since the early 20th century, with Picasso, Klee and co., the idyllic notion of childhood innocence – viewing the world with fresh and unbiased eyes – has informed our very conception of art at a basic level. Today memories and metaphors of childhood infect artists' considerations of freedom, authority and identity. The childhood theme was also chosen because it is topical and contentious in the wider culture; audiences have big, conflicted feelings about it.

Mixed-Up Childhood looks at the way contemporary artists have exemplified, explored and critiqued prevailing attitudes to childhood. Works in the show address traditional commonsense representations of childhood: the natural child, the wild child, the child as monster, the embryo adult. They explore the lived experiences of childhood: its spaces, props, practices. They excavate childhood memories and invent fanciful pasts. They challenge the compartmentalisation of "childhood" and "adulthood", and insist on it. And more. The show is in no way systematic or conclusive. And while the contrary views presented might seem to cancel one another out, they also illuminate the complexity of our thinking about childhood; demonstrating that ideas of childhood are contrived, contested and conflicted – in short, "mixed-up".

The New Romantics

The idea of a Romantic childhood has become a cultural default setting, exemplified by the massive international success of New Zealand baby photographer Anne Geddes. LORETTA LUX's too-beautiful images of children, however, give us pause to wonder what is at stake today in the Romantic childhood. A painter turned photographer, Lux mixes painting, studio photography and photoshopping in her artful photographs. She scrupulously art-directs her little sitters, costuming them and

posing them against simple, often painted backgrounds. Her kids are easy on the eye and well turned out – in short, middle class. Their enlarged intensified eyes make them even more cute and babylike – in the manner of Japanese manga and the popular "big eyes" painter Margaret Keane – to better pull on our heart strings. Lux's kids combine a delicate beauty with an air of radiance, composure and entitlement. Her pastel images are timeless. Although they have a contemporary commercial sheen, they look back to Victorian pictorialist photography, and back further to the mystic atmospheres of Romantic painters like Runge and Friedrich, and the proto-kitsch of Raphael and Botticelli.

Lux's subjects often seem isolated, "strangely unmoored in place or time".[8] "They look lost because that is how I see life", she confesses.[9] Her images' push-pull, attract-repel quality has interpretations flipping, seeing the kids as angelic then alien, sweet then saccharine, precious then blighted. Lux describes her photographs as: "imaginary portraits dealing with the idea of childhood." She says, "Childhood has been idealized as a lost garden paradise to which we can never return. We are excluded from this world of carelessness, innocence and unity. But the imaginary kingdom is nothing more than a projection of adult ideas and concerns onto the image, an expression of our own yearnings."[10]

Paradoxically, it is the gulf between us and them that allows us to imaginatively appropriate children as containers for our selves. Our engagement is self-ish: it's all about us. Lux plays on this in *The Rose Garden* (2001), which suspends the contradiction between supposed childhood innocence and the adult knowingness that informs its idealisation. The girl, described by one critic as a "pouty little redhead"[11], is shot from a low angle on a path into a rose garden, recalling Eden, the ultimate site of lost innocence. Her hemmed-up miniskirt, its suggestive pleats and the viewpoint force our gaze to the girl's loins. There's a tension over whether to read the image as sexual or innocent, with both possibilities equally and emphatically present. It's like the girl looks forward to knowing, while not knowing what she's looking forward to.[12]

On the other hand, Lux's *The Drummer* (2004) nags our presumption to identify. It's surely a nod to *The Tin Drum*, Volker Schlondorff's 1979 film of the Günter Grass novel, set in Nazi Europe. At age 3, out of disgust with adult values, protagonist Oskar refuses to grow any bigger, willfully arresting his physical growth. When

challenged or disappointed, he bangs his drum in protest. Perhaps Lux's drummer's stare is similarly an indictment.[13]

If Lux exaggerates the cliché of the Romantic child to confront us with our perverse investments in it, SALLY MANN redeems the romance of childhood. In her *Immediate Family* photographs (1984-91) she makes public the private lives of her own children. Daughters Jessie and Virginia and son Emmett are shown enjoying an "old-fashioned childhood", growing up in a clothing-optional environment in woodland Virginia.[14] Mann's haunting photographs see her kids roaming free: they play, they swim, they kill time; interact with one another and with adults; observe life and death; dress up, show off. Made using an antique view camera, the photographs have an anachronistic quality, echoing the work of Victorian pictorialist photographer Julia Margaret Cameron.

Mann explores the tension between children's dependence and their quest for autonomy and self-definition. She writes: "When the good pictures come, we hope they tell truths, but 'truths told slant', just as Emily Dickinson commanded. We are spinning a story of what it is to grow up. It is a complicated story and sometimes we try to take on the grand themes: anger, love, death, sensuality, and beauty. But we tell it all without fear and without shame."[15]

Immediate Family reflects the utopian ideal that childhood should be an adventure, unimpeded and unprogrammed by adults. The photographs are sensual: skin comes into contact with skin, water, dirt, fur. The images are confusing. They invite us to identify with the children's sensual discovery, to participate in it, at the same time as they promote childhood as a wonderful realm we no longer have access to. They also have a dark side, a disturbing eroticism that has made them controversial. While Mann has been rebuked as exploitive and predatory, she promotes her work as a collaboration with her kids. She writes, "Any parent knows that you can't force a child to make art; they have to co-operate, they have to want to be part of the process. When we made these pictures, the kids knew exactly what to do to make an image work: how to look, how to project degrees of intensity or defiance or plaintive, woebegone, Dorothea Lange dejection. I didn't pry these pictures from them – they gave them to me."[16]

However Mann's suggestive images are not so simple. She addresses her subjects from many angles. Some images have a huge documentary force based in

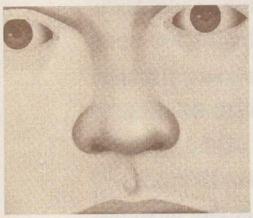
observation; others are scrupulous set ups, full of artifice, art references and allegory. Sometimes Mann seems to have the dominant hand in framing her children; other times they seem to pose aggressively, even defiantly, agents in their own presentation. The kids sometimes epitomise childhood as a world apart. At other times they sedulously ape grown-ups. Not only do Mann's images show a spectrum of moods and approaches, individual images slip and slide between categories, endangering oppositions: nature/culture, innocent/evil, adult/child, civil/feral, boy/girl. Mann frustrates our desire to stabilise her photos' meanings, while exposing that desire.

Many *Immediate Family* images hair-trigger our fear of child neglect and abuse. In *The Terrible Picture* (1989) something dangling behind Virginia's head suggests a noose. Is that blood trickling down Emmett's naked torso? No, it's only *Popsicle Drips* (1985). Mann plays a psychological shell game. If her kids are routinely shown abraded, bloodied and bruised, it's because these injuries come with childhood. In *Dog Scratches* (1991), Virginia's wounds are offered up for our viewing pleasure, as she reposes artistically, half-Cupid, half-Venus; life's duelling scars worn with pride. By romanticising scrapes, Mann reminds us that a life without risk is an impoverished one.

Mann explores the politics of the gaze as it relays between her as mother-photographer, her children-sitters and the viewers, implicating us in the dilemmas of a love-triangle. Take the famous 1989 image of Jessie hanging from a hayhook. It is hard to know how to see her sleek taut body. Is it that of an adult or a child, a gymnast or a victim? If there are echoes of pornography, there are equally echoes of Christ stretched on the cross. The composition is odd. It is dominated by a massive tree in the foreground, as though the photographer/viewer were looking surreptitiously; Mann positioning us as peeping toms. Jessie is incandescent, an incongruous bright spot in the dark. Children and adults are present, but none attend to the miracle. It is addressed only to us, as if our desire had picked out Jessie's figure; as though her luminescence were a product of our regard.[17]

If Mann makes people anxious, it is not just for what she shows, but how she implicates us within it. She holds a mirror not only to her children, but to the viewer.

School Photos



School photographs are popular fetishes, freighted with promise and potential tragedy. They are also inevitably imbued with a deep sense of melancholy – our knowledge that childhood is fleeting. GAVIN HURLEY paints portraits from school photographs. Some of the subjects he knew personally, being Catholic-school pals from the 1980s; others he knew only through books. Not that you can tell the difference from the paintings, which present their subjects as birds of a feather. Hurley's portraits exude nostalgia for children now grown up, be they friends or friends he never had.

Hurley alters his source images, translates them. He takes small liberties with the faces, improving expressions, perfecting eyebrows. But more importantly, he renders the faces in his tight non-expressionist style, hard-edged but delicately coloured. (His manner owes much to Rita Angus's chaste, colonial pioneer look, particularly the chill deco style of her 1938-9 schoolboy portrait *Head of a Boy*.) Hurley's portraits are full of formal conceits. He treats areas of the face differently – flesh fully modelled, but hair thinly and flatly painted – making the paintings seem unfinished. They look clipped together like police identikits, as though the sitters' identities were under construction, or memorial re-construction.[18] At first glance his faces seem resolved, classic, but they deconstruct before your eyes.

Portraits don't offer access. When we see faces in photos, we can't tell what's going on in the subjects' heads, where they came from, or how they will turn out. Hurley plays on this in a sweet image of a boy whose stinging title, *Son of a Priest* (2005), suggests this angel's shameful origin. Similarly *Young Donald Baechler* (2005) is a portrait of the famous American painter as a young man. Baechler is known for copying children's art, feigning a nostalgic childlike manner. In an ironic reversal, Hurley takes an image of Baechler as a child – before he'd even thought to be childlike – and presents it in an adult style. Hurley's portraiture is anti-portraiture. He knows he is making images of people we can't know through images. If school portraits are already psychologically distant, in his translations they retreat further still.

School portraits also loom large in CHRISTIAN BOLTANSKI's work. His haunting installations combine masses of rephotographed mugshots, often of children; truckloads of second-hand clothing; stacks of rusty biscuit tins and archive boxes;

and desk lamps. His *Monuments* resemble votive shrines, lost property stores and archives; in particular they recall the piles of property and records left by Holocaust victims captured in Alain Resnais' 1955 documentary *Night and Fog*. Boltanski is a Jew born in Paris just before the close of World War II. It is no surprise that his entire project is deeply informed by the Holocaust. By offering up mugshots and garments as wounding shards of the Real, he beseeches us to remember what we could not possibly know: the particular stories of the people in the photos, who wore those clothes, and whose records might be found in the tins and boxes. But while apparently insisting on the particular, Boltanski's *Monuments* also do the opposite; subsuming and orchestrating all individuals into a mighty death cult, making them equally and interchangeably representatives of death/loss. A certain black humour prevails. Over-the-top pathetic, the *Monuments* become almost sadistic, scoffing at the massacre of the innocents. This is especially so when the artist picks the most benign victims, like the comely child-stars of the Mickey Mouse Club. Likening himself to Robert Mitchum's child-slaying bad preacher in the 1955 film *The Night of the Hunter*, Boltanski at once celebrates and satirises innocence. Innocence is asking for it.

In 1992 Boltanski took a job as photographer in a London school, documenting the year's new intake looking snappy in their new uniforms. The 144 portraits in *Children of North Westminster Community School* were shown simultaneously at the school (where they were sold to parents as keepsakes of cherished ones, and their art status was incidental), and in the neighbouring Lisson Gallery.[19] In the gallery context, we approach the children as strangers. That they are uniformed only makes us more sensitive to other dimensions of difference. We distinguish the faces we find appealing, bleak, brave or pathetic; note signs of ethnicity, gender, class and creed. Our engagement recalls the classic 19th century use of photographic archives to compare-and-contrast faces, searching for signs of intelligence, insanity, criminality. Boltanski's school portraits are saturated with utopian possibility, but we know some of the subjects will be poor or lonely, will end up in prison; some will be villains, some victims; some will die young, be gay, vote Tory; some will have already had their happiest day.

Children is a social portrait and uniforms are a big part of it. The debate over school uniforms has been going on for years. Are they a bad thing: do they thwart

children's individual expression or create community? Are they repressive, cute, or both? Are they more like police uniforms or prison uniforms? We can see Boltanski's *Children* as a micro-community commensurate with society at large, or alternatively as an identifiable group within society to be celebrated or scapegoated. Boltanski taps into our complex feelings about the individual and the group, ourselves and others: our pride and paranoia. *Children* raises the question of our relation to its subjects (and to the adults they have now become) and leaves it hanging. These photos elicit curiosity about unknown stories, but they resonate with our own desires, fears and tragedies.

Save The Children

Childhood rejection, abandonment and loss can ensnare their victims in addictive cycles of longing. The desire for familial attachments lost (or considered lost) get transferred onto other people, places and things. Such feelings and fantasies animate the work of dollmaker-photographer MORTON BARTLETT. Born in Boston in 1903, Bartlett's childhood was disrupted when he was orphaned and adopted at age 8. He went to Harvard, worked as a photographer and designer, and enjoyed long-term friendships, yet he remained relatively solitary: no marriage, no children. And for around 30 years, until about 1963, dolls were the focus of his emotional existence. He created a family of them, disarmingly lifelike, anatomically correct, half scale: twelve girls ranging in age from 8 to 16 (from prepubescent to womanly) and three boys all around 8 (Bartlett lookalikes, at the moment he was orphaned). Each took a year or so to make; a head alone could take nine months. A labour of love. The dolls were given characters and provided with extensive wardrobes of clothes and accessories. Bartlett photographed them in scenarios reflecting the unique personalities he attributed to them. He posed them in childhood activities: reading, playing, bedding down, ballet-dancing. He imbued them with life. His cast express intimate emotions and perform delicious gestures – they smile, laugh, cry; act surprised, concerned, forlorn; wave goodbye. Bartlett hung the photos around his apartment, insulating himself with images of his made-up family.

Family life was Bartlett's preoccupation. He would drop everything to catch *One Man's Family*, the 1950s radio soap "dedicated to the mothers and fathers of the younger generation and their bewildering offspring".[20] And throughout his life he contributed to charities for children without families, and bequeathed his estate to them. Lavishing attention on dolls can involve a dread of being abandoned or unloved. Marion Harris argues, "The body of work... served as Morton Bartlett's surrogate family, sublimating the lack of real relatives while acceptably containing his own private storm, a need for a family life, and ensuring that the fantasy remained safe by never crossing over into reality."[21] As the artist himself once admitted, "Its purpose is that of all proper hobbies – to let out urges that do not find expression in other channels."[22] (Perhaps this explains why Bartlett also sculpted a crying child's head, to call forth his nurturing nature.)

Powerful currents of nostalgia and longing well through Bartlett's small black and white photos. The children come across as starlets, their "cloying sweetness tinged with loneliness"[23]. The photos are often described as "creepy" and "uncanny". Freud used the latter term to explain our unease when the unliving takes the place of the living. In Bartlett's case the dolls' uncanny quality is redoubled when they are photographed; in the photos the dolls seem even more vital. Bartlett's desire to freeze children in their ideal state "runs uncomfortably close to the erotic."[24]

Picket Fence

Many of our images of the ideal childhood derive from 1950s America. After World War II, America presented itself as a middle-class consumer paradise built on the cornerstone of the happy nuclear family. Yet 50 years later this ideology seems both extravagant and repressive. And it's certainly the butt of the joke in the American fashion photographer STEVEN MEISEL's 1997 photostory *The Good Life*. Meisel's eight images parody 1950s American publicity and advertising images, showing beautiful archetypal family-types experiencing abundance. They set off on vacation; enjoy quality time; play together, stay together. It's the family as institution, as team. There's a period look to Meisel's photography, with everything suffused in a golden glow. Once normative, such

scenes now seem hollow; their evocation of the good life prescribed and paternalistic. Meisel's consummately art-directed images drip contempt for the picket fence dream. However, especially in its original context, *Italian Vogue*, his critique serves as an inoculation.[25] We laugh and feel superior, but this deflects us from considering the absurdity of today's prescriptions. In 50 years time, our images of childhood may seem equally contingent and absurd.

ROBERT GOBER is also critical of the picket fence childhood. But while Meisel lampoons it in retrospect, Gober takes its oppressive ethos to heart. He deals with it as something he's internalised, understanding his Catholic middle-class childhood as repressive but not without poetry. He says: "most of my sculptures have been memories remade, recombined and filtered through my current experiences ... nursing an image that haunts me ... letting it sit and breed in my mind."[26] "An impresario of menace in simple things"[27], Gober is known for recreating familiar domestic objects – sinks and urinals, cribs and beds, doors and wallpapers, dog baskets and sacks of kitty litter, bridal gowns – investing them with dark emotions.

At first glance his works look like found objects, but they are overtly handmade, invested with the artist's labour and the intimacy of his touch. Many relate directly to childhood. They deal with the domestic environment, the home, as repressive, a mould. Gober describes his distorted play-pen variations as "childhood cages".[28] A box of tissues sitting on a plastic kiddy-chair is "an indictment of a culture that has stopped listening to its children."[29] And a closet suggests a childhood hidey-hole, a place to closet one's very self. Much has been made of the ill effect on women of the nuclear family ideology, yet it was also oppressive to children, like Gober, who identified as gay.

Promised perfection and cruel reality are juxtaposed in Gober's first "newspaper replica" from 1991. Looking like a page from the local news section of the *New York Times* – dated Thursday October 4, 1960 – it is in fact a scrupulous fake. Its bizarre mix of miscellaneous contents include: high-society wedding notices with headshots of glamorous brides (one entry mentions divorce); a generally sunny world-wide weather report, tempered by threats of cold fronts, harsh winds and snow; a breezy advertisement – "Theatre anyone?"; and winning lottery numbers. Scattered among these items are reports of everyday tragedies involving children. A 6-year-old, with

the same name and age as the artist, drowns in a backyard swimming pool. There are suggestions of foul play – mother is detained for questioning. A 13-year-old girl is discovered in a cockroach-infested closet. "Joseph Sauceda, 33, denied that he and his 31-year-old wife abused their daughter. He said the closet was not a cell and that his family was a loving one." These stories of children cheated out of childhood defile the dream represented by the brides. Gober's newspaper page's coffee-cup stains remind us of the settings in which such stories are consumed, at the suburban breakfast table. Who souvenired the page, a happy bride or someone concerned for a damaged child?

Gober's works are redolent with themes of childhood loss. A lifelike boy's leg, wearing sock and sandal, protrudes from the wall. Carelessly placed, it threatens to trip the viewer; or is it pathetic, there to be stomped on? There's something grisly about it, even though it is pristine – no bruises, no cuts, and the sock is spotless. Gober's leg sculptures may have been inspired by his mother's traumatic tale of a leg amputation she witnessed as a nurse. They have also been read as a comment on the homeless, jutting out unexpectedly like some dosser's leg in shop doorway. While his meaning is never so specific, the boy-leg offers itself as a general sign of loss keyed to childhood. So does Gober's wax replica of a single small Mary Jane shoe. It suggests a shoe lost, discarded, or grown out of; preserved as a fetishised momento or as evidence of a crime; a lost child or childhood. For a lapsed Catholic like Gober, these waxworks represent acts of spiritual ablution, suggesting Catholic ex-votos, objects offered to saints petitioned to heal wounds.[30] While his works question Catholic values, their appeal also takes a somewhat Catholic form.[31] He left the church, but the church did not leave him. He may have rejected Catholicism along with other prescriptions of his middle-class childhood, and yet these formative experiences are the basis of Gober's thinking and art language. In the end his work is about mourning, purification and some kind of faith.

Everybody Hurts

Since Freud, we've been obsessed with childhood trauma. We have a love/hate relationship with the idea. Though no one wants to be "messed up", we believe our trauma tales do explain who we are and why it's not our fault. We turn our personal

tragedies to our advantage, making them into get-out-of-jail-free cards. They empower us.[32] In her sympathetically titled series *Scarred for Life* (1994), TRACEY MOFFATT illustrates real-life childhood sob-stories in the manner of an old *Life* magazine pictorial. The stories range from subtle to harsh, from petty name-calling to bad touching. They have a universal archetypal quality. "Everyone has a tragic tale to tell", says the artist.[33]

Several of the stories are to do with prescribed gender roles. In *Doll Birth, 1972* a mother discovers her son pretending to give birth. The caption: "He was banned from playing with the boy next door." The date is significant. In the 1970s some parents encouraged boys to play with dolls, despite fears that feminised boyhood would result in emasculated manhood. Other stories involve being slapped by mum on Mother's Day; being labelled useless, unemployable and deficient. In *Birth Certificate, 1962*, a mother uses the circumstances of her daughter's birth as a weapon. "During the fight, her mother threw her birth certificate at her. This is how she found out her real father's name."

Scarred for Life is about how childhood experiences make us who we are, but it is equally about how we reinvent our childhood experiences to serve us. Sob-stories may dredge up pain, but we tell them to our advantage. We can recall them resentfully, claiming others held us back (perhaps they did); or proudly, because we transcended them (becoming Prime Minister even though mum said we were "useless", or just to prove her wrong). And we also tell them for the sheer pleasure of playing the martyr. The trick with Moffatt's work is that she gives us the stories, but leaves us to imagine the contexts in which their owners bring them into play. Just as we wonder what became of the kids in Boltanski's school photographs, we speculate how the subjects of these stories turned out; how they co-evolved with their personal melodramas.

One work in the series is exceptional. *Heart Attack, 1970* exploits dissociation between text and image. The caption reads: "She glimpsed her father belting the girl from down the street." The image, however, shows a naked man with his hands on the back of a little girl sitting on a bed. Glimpsed through an open door, it suggests sexual abuse. It is as if what was actually seen (what's in the picture) had been suppressed by a milder "screen" memory (that's in the text), albeit a seeming traumatic one. The caption continues: "That day he died of a heart attack." While the other

works in *Scarred for Life* suggest tales told for the benefit of the teller, *Heart Attack, 1970* reminds us that perhaps the worst traumas are those we cannot speak of.

Like Father

It's an old chestnut: the way we are brought up makes us who we are; the sins of the father are passed on to the son. It's conditioning. PAUL MCCARTHY'S harrowing video double feature *Family Tyranny (Modeling and Molding) / Cultural Soup* (1987) is a satire on best-practice parenting. The action takes place in a low-budget set – part workshop, part playhouse, part sit-com set – with McCarthy as the stereotypical bad dad.

In *Family Tyranny* he demonstrates how he was dealt to by his father, how he deals with his son; offering us the benefit of his experience, tips on discipline. He

jams a funnel into a polystyrene sphere wearing a little hat, calling it a naughty boy, then force-feeds it, ramming the gloop down its throat with his fist. Patiently he explains, "Try to do it slowly, let them feel it, let them get used to it, they'll remember it, don't worry about that, they'll keep it, they'll remember it, they'll use it, let them get it in their memory."[34] And proudly, "My daddy did this to me; you can do this to your son too." In a cameo Mike Kelley plays the screaming son. McCarthy's tone flips from responsible to downright nasty (he calls his son "worm breath" and "piece of shit"). When he sings "Daddy come home from work again, daddy come home from work", it is a reminder of dad's traditional disciplinary role, with mum postponing corporal punishment "until your father gets home".

Cultural Soup is like a mix of *Play School* and a television cooking show, with parenting understood as cooking, using kids as ingredients. "You want the young ones, you can do a lot more with them; they are easier to form, you begin to work with them, use them around the house, work with them, mould them, get 'em down onto the ground, teach them how to do things, how to crawl, how to walk, try to teach them everything you can teach them, you're blending them into the soup."[35] McCarthy smears mayonnaise over a smiling little boy doll, oiling it like a paternal phallus; or like he is working clay, dousing it to make it more malleable. Shots of

McCarthy juggling a small metal bowl within a large metal colander suggest the son being formed within the environment of the father.

Family Tyranny / Cultural Soup is at once harrowing and hysterical because it incorporates so much from responsible parenting: the idea of parenting as education, an awareness that early childhood experiences will have a profound effect, the desire to do a good job and to pass something on to the next generation. McCarthy is an adult playing a child, playing a parent. We can read him as a bad dad, or as a child playing a bad dad, or as an infantile adult playing a child playing a bad dad. Where we locate the problems and pleasures depends on which we choose.

A Sorry Saint

Born in 1892, HENRY DARGER is one of America's most acclaimed outsider artists and the oldest artist in this show. His visionary art has drawn comparison with Blake and Bosch.

Darger had a tragic childhood. His mother died in childbirth when he was 3, and his new baby sister was adopted out. In 1900 his crippled father went into a Catholic mission and Darger was lodged in a Catholic boys' home. After a doctor declared that Henry's "heart isn't in the right place"[36], he was consigned to the Asylum for Feeble-Minded Children, Lincoln, Illinois, until 19. Conditions there were harsh; in fact the asylum was the subject of a sensational child abuse case. In 1907 Darger received word that his father had died. Darger went on to live a meagre reclusive life, working as a janitor, dishwasher and bandage-roller at various Chicago hospitals, attending mass at least daily, living in a one room flat, with no friends to speak of. However behind his apparently drab and unremarkable public existence, Darger was immersed in a rich private fantasy world. In 1973, just before his death, his secret life as author and artist was revealed.

Darger's key text is a 15,000 page novel *The Story of the Vivian Girls, in What Is Known as the Realms of the Unreal, of the Glandeco-Angelinian War Storm, Caused by the Child Slave Rebellion*. He started writing it soon after leaving the asylum. It took more than 11 years to write longhand; he also made a typed copy. *The Realms* chronicles a civil war on an unnamed planet of which our Earth is a moon. It focuses on seven beautiful

princesses – the Vivian Girls – who set out to rescue innocent children (girls) enslaved and abused by the evil adult Glandelinians (men). They are aided by a cast of heroes, including the horned and winged Blengians. The story goes on and on, with charging armies, ominous storms and explosions; moments of repose; scenes of torture, disembowelling and crucifixion. The causes of the conflict are not elaborated, but its battles are described in exhausting detail. Darger draws on his knowledge of the American Civil War, Catholicism, children's literature and details from his own childhood.[37] After writing his epic, Darger set about illustrating it.

With negligible art knowledge and no formal art training, Darger developed a unique approach. He traced images from children's books, magazines and comics, altering, rescaling and compositing them to create complex scenes. He coloured the drawings with watercolours and occasionally added collage. Over decades Darger created hundreds of double-sided scroll-like panoramas, which grew to over nine feet in length. While he may have been a deficient draughtsman, Darger nevertheless had a keen compositional sense, marshalling ensembles of figures in action in rhythmic compositions. His collage/drawing technique enabled him to integrate heterogeneous material into plausible scenes. Favourite images were repeated from work to work and within works, recalling the use of cartoon-templates in pre-Renaissance painting. Darger's component images carry associations from their original contexts, as though his innocent little girls have simply stepped out of magazines into his perverse parallel realm. Darger emphasises the little girls' vulnerability by showing them naked.

Darger's work lurches from whimsical / idyllic to savage / gruesome, from Eden to Hell, often mixing them up. It is hard to know quite how to approach it. We will probably never get to the bottom of what he intended. Critics are endlessly energised by unanswerable questions. The favourite one being: why did Darger frequently draw his girls with penises? Was it because he didn't know better, or because he wanted to invent a new species of humanity? Darger's work was produced for his own private enjoyment (not for viewers coming cold) and its sheer scale and intricacy beggars interpretation. Was it the product of a fertile imagination or arrested emotional development? Should we approach it as art or interrogate it as symptom, marvel at its creativity or worry at its pathology?

Darger considered himself an ardent protector of children, particularly those whose "lives were of continual misery, toil, illness and ill treatment, and never had

good things or presents to enjoy and were never allowed to play or have good times".[38] However, pointing to the work's eroticism, psychologist and Darger biographer John MacGregor suggests that a conflicted Darger wanted to both protect and punish children, reading the battles, fires and tempests that define the story as reflections of this unconscious conflict.[39] Supporting this claim is the fact that there are numerous Darger namesake characters in the *Realms*, fighting on both sides, as though Darger was at war with himself, his male adult side versus his female child side. In his work these sides are cast as distinct, as if different species; as though adults and children were not part of the same society, children never grew up, and males and females were not jointly implicated in procreation. If Darger understood the facts of life, they are ignored in the *Realms*. Despite the girls' nakedness, sex as such plays no role in the story – the Glandelinians preferring to throttle and disembowl them.

Darger exemplifies a Catch-22. When we protect children from the unimaginable, we are already imagining it. The desire to safeguard them calls forth, at least in our imaginations, the very bogeys we are supposedly protecting them from. Which makes some sense of Darger's claim to be a "sorry saint".[40]

Close to Home

The opposite of a Romantic childhood has to be a tough and knowing one. We like the idea of keeping children ignorant of harsh realities until they are supposedly adult enough to deal with them. But such insulation is a privilege; some kids have to deal with these realities. Two New Zealand short films address this, SIMA URALE's *O Tamaiti / The Children* and GREGOR NICHOLAS's *Avondale Dogs* (both 1996). These slice-of-life films attempt to capture a child's point of view, and involve coming to terms with death. Other than that, they are chalk and cheese.

O Tamaiti / The Children evokes daily life for five closely-spaced kids in a poor immigrant Samoan family. The film starts in a hospital, with the birth of a new baby; and ends in church, at the same baby's funeral. It is shot in black and white, which gives it a period documentary look; a bleak, impoverished feel. There's almost no

dialogue. Paradoxically the overwhelming silence gives voice to the interests of those best seen-but-not-heard. Urale places her camera down low, concerned that we see the drama through child eyes. The parents do shift work, and leave the children to fend for themselves and one another, despite New Zealand laws that make it a crime to leave children home alone. They take themselves to school and do the shopping, and on the way encounter a variety of distractions (arcade games) and threats (a creepy man). At home the older kids have to cook for, dress and clean up after the younger ones. Urale emphasises the burden of domestic responsibility shouldered by the eldest, 11-year-old Tino, who is forced to operate as a surrogate parent, to be an adult.[42]

Urale does not paint a rosy picture. Dad comes home late, to mum accusing him of squandering the bill money at the pub. The baby dies amid clutter and confusion, and we never get to the bottom of why, but all the way we can see the risks.[41] Urale achieves a neat reversal: it's parents who are the burden, they're selfish, they aren't aware of what's going on for their children. Even at the funeral, the kids are kicked out of church for making a noise, as if grief is an adult-only emotion. But Urale also points to wider socio-economic and cultural considerations. The church plays a key role in Samoan life and children are seen as gifts from God. Samoans value big families and back in Samoa they enjoy supportive, extended family structures. But when the many-kids lifestyle is carried into urban New Zealand, without kin, problems emerge. Isolated families go nuclear, becoming under-resourced, risky.

Urale makes heroes of her kids, idealises them in their self-reliance and initiative. They're not beautiful innocent children, but beautiful knowing ones. Ultimately though her account is fatalistic. These overwhelming problems won't go away. Tino hears the moans and sighs through the walls – another gift from God will soon be on the way.

Avondale Dogs tells the story of a boy, Paul, coming to terms with his mother's protracted death from cancer. Gregor Nicholas made the film after his mother died when he was in his early 30s. Set in the state-housing suburb of Avondale in 1965, it is based on his childhood memories. Shot in memorial monochrome, the film vividly captures Paul's experience, particularly his difficulty in understanding cause-and-effect relationships. Paul shoots his Maori neighbours' pigeon with his father's gun, and watches it fall to the ground, dead. Returning inside he finds his father comforting his distressed mother as she receives a morphine shot. When the woman

from next door arrives with smoked eels, Paul imagines she has brought the dead bird, meaning to accuse him. Later he steals a ring from the dairy to give to his mum, as a token of his love. But when he gets home, the house is empty; his mother has been taken to hospital. When Paul gets there she's already unconscious, near death. Inside his head, Paul's experiences mingle and inform one another, as though his snipering and shoplifting have brought on his mother's death: children blame themselves. Paul also transfers his loving feelings for his mother onto Glenys, the girl next door. They lie hand-in-hand on the floor of her family's smokehouse as eel grease drips into their mouths. At the end, at the reception after his mother's funeral, he gives Glenys the stolen ring.

Avondale Dogs gets its title from a surreal incident Nicholas recalled from his own childhood. Paul dreams that an overturned delivery van has spilt its cargo of pies onto the road, and the local dogs come out like wolves to devour the lot. Paul watches from the security of his mother's arms. When you are protected, safe and secure, you can deal with these puzzles. Paul's love of his mother, her impending death and his romantic feelings for Glenys are condensed in this instance of the marvellous, this ambiguous image of hunger and greed, abundance and waste.

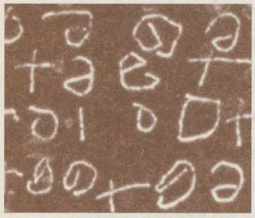
A remarkable portrayal of life and love in 1960s New Zealand, Nicholas's film offers a counterpoint to Urale's. In *Avondale Dogs*, there is no racial conflict, no isolation; Maori and Pakeha live side by side, exchanging values, accepting difference. Neighbours operate like extended family: Paul's mother teaches Glenys the piano, Glenys's mother shares her eels. Both families are poor but loving. Tragedy is not tied to abuse, neglect or poverty. It is just one of those horrible things.

Research and Development

While the mother and child – or Madonna and Child – had long been a big subject in art, in the 1970s MARY KELLY tackled it in a totally new way, through the de-romanticised language of conceptual art. Her *Post-Partum Document* (1973-9) was a watershed work, coming at a crucial juncture in the interplay of feminism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, developmental psychology and semiotics; minimalism and conceptualism. Kelly tracks her son Kelly Barrie's development through the first years of his

life, addressing her own role and development as a mother. Intersubjectivity is a key theme; the way mother and child are reciprocally defined in their increasing separation. Kelly's archaeology was guided by the feminist principle "the personal is political", making explicit the reality of women's labour as mothers. However the *Document* was controversial within the Women's Art Movement, rejecting its prevailing essentialism.

The *Document* comes in six chapters, analysing the stages in the child's development. It is based in observation, but observation filtered through the schemas of Lacanian psychoanalysis and developmental psychology. Evidence and quasi-scientific analysis sit alongside personal diary-notes. Kelly does not present her cherished son's body directly, but uses emotionally loaded items of maternal memorabilia – maternal fetishises. Kelly writes, "So perhaps in the place of the more familiar notion of [fetishism in] pornography, it is possible to talk about the mother's memorabilia – the way she saves things – first shoes, photographs, locks of hair or school reports. My work proceeds from this site; instead of first shoes, the first words set out in type, stained liners, hand imprints, comforter fragments, drawings, writings or even the plants and insects that were his gifts; all these are intended to be seen as transitional objects ... emblems of desire."[43]



The *Document*'s ultimate chapter, *Document VI: Pre-writing Alphabet, Exerque and Diary* (1978) records the final phase, Kelly Barrie's learning to read and write from age 3 years 5 months to 4 years 8 months. It begins with him identifying letter shapes and ends when he writes his own name. During this time he enters infant school, responsibility for his education and care moving out of Kelly's hands into professional social institutions. Each of the 15 slate tablets has three language levels, like the Rosetta Stone, the ancient Egyptian tablet in the British Museum.[44] (Inscribed numbers on Kelly's slates suggest the accession numbers museums put on artefacts.) At the top of each slate are Kelly Barrie's marks (pre-writing alphabet), his attempts to write. In the middle are Kelly's hand-printed commentaries (exerque), incorporating her observations on how her son is learning and texts from his alphabet books. At the bottom are her typewritten notes (diary), which chronicle her son's entry into nursery school.

Here Kelly records parental dilemmas. She confesses to fibbing about her son's competency and to her envy of other children, their superior manners and perform-

ance. Issues of gender, class and ethnicity also enter the frame. Kelly observes her son becoming one of the "troublesome boys", and notes the absence of men in childcare and various pernicious social influences. She understands her son's behaviour as a mark of her competence as a mother, even as she is forced to cede control of him. She addresses her desire to find him the best school possible, despite the constraints of being zoned in a "deprived" working class, multi-racial, inner city area.

If *Document VI* starts in close, with Kelly Barrie's private mark making, it pulls back to show the wider social context in which he and his mother are being formed. There is a struggle for "possession" of the child between Kelly as mother and social institutions identified with the father. It is a struggle she necessarily loses, as she is erased in "the name of the father". *Post-Partum Document* seems dryly scientific in appearance, yet it maps deep and mixed emotions.

If Kelly addresses the child's entry into society through writing, RICHARD KILLEEN is interested in a parallel process: entry into society through the language of images. In the 1980s, informed by post-structuralism and feminism, he developed a novel painting format that jettisons the visual grammar that traditionally structures pictures. The cutouts are collections of diverse image fragments that can be arranged – physically and conceptually – any which way. Scanning these image-fields we make our own connections. We link all the green things, all the flat things, the tools, the organisms; or make more personal associations. These "democratic" anti-pictures seek to empower us; they are a kind of visual de-programming. They recall nursery decorations and illustrations from children's encyclopedias, returning us to a mythic play-time, when we were still learning to connect the dots, to sort and classify, to make sense of the world. They endorse the wide-eyed way children are thought to see before they are schooled in seeing. Sometimes Killeen appears to romanticise this moment, presenting his cutouts as a utopia of sorts; rich, colourful and harmonious. However, he also seems concerned that even the simplest image that makes its way into the nursery is already riddled with covert social meaning; that socialisation is pernicious and inevitable. In *Stories We Tell Each Other* (1987), Killeen juxtaposes computer-generated and xeroxed images. Some look like they were made for children, others by them. The presence of a professionally rendered face and a childish schematic one suggest that we learn by imitating. Killeen's cutouts are rooted in an ambivalence as

to whether children learn by opening up or closing down. He poses again that vexing question: what is the relationship between nature and nurture?

In counterpoint to Kelly's *Document*, guided by Lacanian psychoanalysis and developmental psychology, MIKE KELLEY's *We Communicate Only Through Our Shared Dismissal of the Pre-Linguistic* (1995) challenges the presumption and authority of the psychological and psychoanalytical gaze. Kelley juxtaposes children's drawings with commentaries he has written on them which parody classic texts of art therapy and child art analysis.[45] Drenched in technical language, Kelley's accounts flick from plausible to hysterical, deducing, for instance, "sexual abuse by a satanic cult" in the case of a "lovely painting by Laura". Kelley shows up the habit of reading unusual aesthetic features as evidence of emotional and sexual abuse, turning the benign kindergarten wall into a catalogue of symptoms. The kids' drawings operate like Rorschach Blots, onto which Kelley's imagined analyst projects his own unconscious desires and professional pathologies. Kelley satirises the expertise industry that has developed around child abuse inquisitions, where specialists are so concerned to uncover evidence of presumed abuse that they cajole children to imagine it, and even take absence of evidence as proof. Kelley: "The success of this tactic of repression explains why Laura's drawing is, on the surface, socialized and does not bear the normal signs of dysfunction easily visible in the artistic output of abused children who remember their abuse."[46] Kelley's interpretations are presented on a computer, which allows the viewer to edit and augment them, to censor, counter or extend his analysis with their own – everyone's an expert. As John Welchman has it, "The children's 'unconscious' productions may now be consciously interpreted by viewers to fulfill their own ideological needs." Kelley presents a Foucaultian critique of the way social sciences pathologise us, to define us. It is another case of children being silenced by the discourses that presume to speak for them.

Repair Kit

The story of LOUISE BOURGEOIS's early childhood came out late in the piece, at the time of her 1982 MoMA retrospective. The details are well known. She was born into

a prosperous Parisian family in the business of repairing and re-selling antique tapestries. She was named for her father, Louis, who would have preferred a son. Her seemingly privileged lifestyle was rocked with family tensions, exacerbated when her philandering father moved in his English mistress Sadie on the pretext of her being the children's tutor. Sadie stayed for 10 years, formative ones for Bourgeois, who felt implicated in a triangle of betrayal and denial, resenting both her father's adultery and her mother's acquiescence. In a 1982 *Artforum* pagework, Bourgeois condemned her father, labelling this "child abuse".[47] While her characterisation seems extreme (we normally reserve expressions like "child abuse" for more heinous maltreatment), the experience had a profound influence on Bourgeois's life and work. Cheated out of her right to a picturebook childhood, she is still working through the issues. She writes, "all my subjects have found their inspiration in my childhood. My childhood has never lost its magic, it has never lost its mystery, and it has never lost its drama."[48]

Childhood issues, implicit in her earlier works, become super-explicit in the *Cell* installations she started making in the 1980s. Encompasing symbolic arrangements of symbolic objects, the *Cells* have been described as "houses of the mind, sheltering and facilitating ... childhood memories."[49] They are like an ever-expanding complex of mental backrooms, a memory palace where childhood traumas are symbolised, contained and domesticated. In revisiting and imaging her issues, Bourgeois comes to terms with them. She says, "Each Cell deals with fear. Fear is pain ... Each Cell deals with the pleasure of the voyeur, the thrill of looking, and being looked at."[50] Part cage, part greenhouse, *Cell (Glass Spheres and Hands)* (1992-3) suggests at once protection and imprisonment, privacy and retreat but also surveillance and vulnerability. Within, five glass spheres – old fishing floats – rest on old chairs and stools. They are arranged in a semicircle around a table, upon which sits a marble sculpture of a pair of hands clasped in pain. The scene suggests a learning situation: a classroom, dining room or sculptor's atelier.

For Bourgeois the spheres are portraits of family members as emotional bubbles: "They are transparent bubbles. They're enclosed ... They are sealed off without the possibility of communication and yet they are together. This is a very pessimistic situation. Suppose I want this person to love me and – they're a bubble, I have no access; I'm unable to make myself heard or loved." And the hands are her: "I clasp

my hands in despair ... I despair because I have no impact on them."[51] Although Bourgeois provides a crystal clear interpretation of this work, that in itself is misleading. The *Cells* really gain their charge from being obscure and mysterious, letting us in only so far. As symptoms, their coded contents exert power over us even though, or because, we can't quite decipher them. The artist's anxieties are paced by our own, "as helpless witnesses to a psychodrama within which we are neither really included nor excluded."[52] The *Cells* are simultaneously revealing and concealing: a confession combined with a no trespassing sign, restricted access, caged rage.

Potter GRAYSON PERRY also explores issues from childhood. His classically-shaped pots, vases and urns stand within a centuries old decorative arts tradition.

These attractive, symmetrical vessels immediately suggest unification and integration, conservative civil values and middle-class taste, but closer inspection reveals their imagery to be heavy, bleak, rude. Born and bred in working-class Essex, he had a difficult childhood. His parents split up when he was 5 and his mother shacked up with the milkman, who turned out to be a bit of a brute. As a child Perry resented his stepfather's influence, and says the seeds of his transvestitism were sown when he was 6 or 7. Perry's pots often present autobiographical images related to his childhood and his transvestite alter-ego Claire, as well as references to political events and observed cultural stereotypes. It is punk craft.

Much of Perry's work revolves around his cross-dressing. Transvestites are typically heterosexual men who have been brought up strictly male and feel a need to get in touch with their feminine side to rebalance. Perry's pot *Western Man* (2004) juxtaposes snaps of transvestites Perry met at a weekend get-together in Bournemouth with line drawings of boys dressed as a cowboy, a pilot and space ranger Dan Dare taken from a 1940s clothing catalogue. The work turns on an ambiguity. You can see these two kinds of images as opposed, suggesting childhood prescriptions were refused and socialisation failed; or as analogues, both involving campy, compensatory dress-up fantasies. Proudly, or with tongue in cheek, the title *Western Man* proposes its cross-dressers as the apex of civilisation.

In *Pattern of Cigarette Burns and Bruises* (2004) Perry appears in a baby doll dress in his Claire persona.[53] The work addresses domestic violence. Playboy bunnies, teddies, childish flowers, wine bottles, erections, pussycat bows and crosses form a

background symbol-quilt. On one side, a nasty brute threatens Perry-as-Claire, whose big penis ejaculates angry, arguing flowers; on the other side, Claire fights back, terrorising the man, brandishing her doll as a club. A broken chair suggests a broken home. Perry identifies with the girl as both ideal and abject. He writes: "One of the reasons I dress up as a woman is my low self-esteem, to go with the image of women being seen as second class. It is an outsiderish stance. I have walled myself off. It is like pottery: that's seen as a second-class thing too."[54]

Perry's work develops out of a therapy culture that argues that we are sexually repressed and must learn to be more open about our sexuality, to talk about it, enjoy it. However Perry's work also illustrates how sexuality – in all its richness – is also grounded in repression. He doesn't present childhood as an idyll. He doesn't recover some blissful sexual feeling that preceded childhood torment, so much as explore, revisit and even relish the way his bad old days of childhood make him the cross-dresser he is today.

Take *Interior Conflict* (2004), a landscape of humiliation, cruelty and neglect. There's a war going on but it isn't totally clear who's fighting whom. Soldiers have occupied the village, and are caging up little girls, clubbing them, molesting them, lynching them. "The soldiers are kind of WWI to add a feeling of nostalgia as is present in our view of childhood", says Perry.[55] The children fare no better from the women of the village, who carry on as usual: force-feeding them, making them wear reins. A pooey baby lies prone on his nappy. One woman ticks him off; another caregiver puts bondage mittens on his hands, rendering him even more helpless. Giant parents loom above the scene as accusing gods. Buildings suggest the childhood institutions of home, school and church.

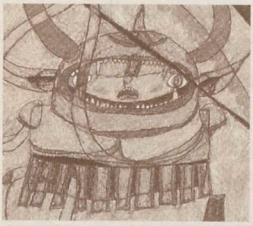
Over the battle scene, which is inscribed in a retro children's book illustration style, Perry adds incongruously rustic flowers, a direct steal from Darger. Like Darger, Perry identifies with his girl protagonists. Both use the metaphor of a war to describe an internal psychological struggle, identifying with oppressor and oppressed. But while Darger uses metaphors to cloak his psychological conflicts, Perry uses them to unveil his.

Interior Conflict is over the top. Its pathos is so hyperbolic, it's funny; like something out of Hogarth or Gilray, Punch and Judy or Monty Python. Because of this, it's tempting to read Perry as a satirist of therapy culture rather than an advocate. But he says, "I know you could take this in a sarcastic way but it ain't – it's like a double bluff."[56]

Neverland

To childhood's central question – what do you want to be when you grow up? – who has ever replied "a child"? And yet returning to childhood seems to top the list of adult desires.

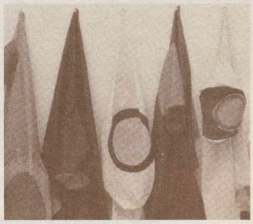
SHINTARO MIYAKE is one of a number of Japanese artists who work in a child-like manner, as if reluctant to grow up. His work combines traditional aesthetics with the contemporary Japanese cult of cute. Miyake was first noticed for his drawings of his ideal girl Sweet-San (Miss Sweet) with her distinctive, wet noodle limbs and huge head. Miyake drew her over and over on large sheets of paper creating colourful figure fields, a Sweet-San population explosion. She lies on the beach, rides killer whales and climbs mountains. While Miyake has now branched out into other characters, they are essentially just avatars of his number one girl. Miyake's desire to occupy his characters has taken him further. By donning costumes he transforms himself into Sweet-San, a hare, a Kabuki actor, a pink Godzilla, C3-PO and Fluffy (a blue-sky-and-white-clouds figure with an oversized head and long floppy rabbit ears held up by balloons). He has become a performer, making drawings in costume. He uses costumes to distance himself from his audience but also to connect with them, likening it to meeting Mickey Mouse in Disneyland. In *Kumao* (2005), his work for *Mixed-Up Childhood*, Miyake will dress-up as an iconic transitional object. As a teddy bear, surrounded by teddy bears, in a teddy bear wallpapered room, he will draw teddy bears. Is this teddy bear therapy, a refuge, a picnic, or a symptom of a cultural malaise?



MIKALA DWYER also invites us into a world of dress-ups, a space synonymous with childhood. Since Picasso, Klee and co., we often think of modern artists as approaching the world with wide-eyed wonder. Regressive and vanguard at once, their experiments re-enacted child's play on a more pedigreed plane.[57] Dwyer exemplifies and parodies this idea in her work. Her garish Play-Doh stalagmites, for instance, recall Giacometti sculptures; her pretty pinned organza cubes are baby doll constructivism; while her mock-modernist enclosures suggest treehuts and makeshift rainy-day play spaces. Dwyer's work entails a feminist critique: valuing the space of childhood, but also satirising male modern masters as infantile.[58] Dwyer's installations are frequently described as landscapes of memory and fantasy, play-

grounds where we are invited to assume a child's eye view, enabling a regressive, pleasurable reintegration of the self. She links modernist phenomenology (where viewer and viewed are one) with a baby's-eye view, where no discrimination is made between the self and its surroundings.[59]

In *Hanging Eyes* (1999) Dwyer invites us to wrap modernist art language around us. She presents a modern art cliché – Jasper Johns-ish or Kenneth Noland-ish "target" paintings – as fancy dress. Unstretched and draped, Dwyer's targets become a closet-full of witchy Halloween costumes. On the one hand, these looming cloaks are pointy and phallic; on the other, their bulging "eye" forms suggest an infantile obsession with mummy's eyes and breasts. We can imagine ourselves inside them (being ghoulish or absurd) and outside them (being afraid or amused). These empty sacks are waiting for us to fill them, by occupying them literally or metaphorically. One writer has interpreted them as "disguises", "Ku Klux Klan hats" and "a row of judges", suggesting some ominous social associations underpinning the fun and games.[60]



But if Dwyer invites us into this childhood realm of dress-up play – offering costumes for us to occupy as Miyake occupies his – this invitation is complicated in her two monitor video installation *The Nearly Faraways* (2003). Located at either end of a room, facing one another, one monitor shows small children at kindy, the other seniors in a nursing home, in their so-called "second childhood". Both groups wave, as if to each other, but are totally disconnected in space and time. Dwyer slightly speeds up the seniors, and slows down the kids. She has both wave for far too long, and young and old get weary, visibly bored; is it a duty or a pleasure? Are they waving hello or bye-bye? Don't know. They are never far away, but also, sadly, never quite there for each other. If elsewhere Dwyer's works enable us to imagine we have regressed into a sensual utopian childhood space, here she stages the space between young and old as a gulf, with us stranded in between, as piggies in the middle.

Many Mes

In ANTHONY GOICOLEA's photoshopped scenes, his pubescent clones interact in sexually fuelled scenarios. Some works find their inspiration in his 1970s American suburban childhood; others draw on that cruel childhood staple *Grimms' Fairytales*. At home, at school and in the woods, Goicoleas flirt, play and make love with themselves. With no adults around, they get up to no good: they smoke, have food fights, piss in the bath, watch pornography and stuff themselves silly. They give in to their appetites (illustrating Freud's theory that childhood sexuality is polymorphously perverse) and be all they can be. They enjoy the trappings of privilege (stately homes, preppy church-schools, elite uniforms), but go feral in a social restraint vacuum, sliding into depravity, unwinding civilisation like the marooned public school boys in *Lord of the Flies*. Defiant, they parade their hickeys and colonise the world.

The Goicoleas get it on, but their relationship with the viewer is also sexually charged. Goicolea's catalogue of perversities is one thing, but what really gives these works their kick is the way he poses as an adolescent sex-object for our gaze, as if to say, "ephebophiles, come get me".[61] On the one hand, Goicolea's *Home Alone* naughtiness is caught by our reproachful gaze; we stumble onto it like judgemental parents. On the other hand, like Sally Mann in *Hayhook*, he positions us as voyeurs. Far from precluding viewers, his narcissistic self-absorption is premised on them. Goicolea implicates us in his exhibitionism, to fulfil his desire.

Goicolea's work is all about adolescence. Erik Erikson writes, "The adolescent mind is essentially a mind of the moratorium, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult."[62] For Erikson, adolescence involves a dialectic of conformity and dissension. Eager to be affirmed by their peers and confirmed by society, adolescents struggle to define themselves. Adolescence is marked by cliquey, clannish behaviour. Adolescents bond, cruelly excluding others, stereotyping themselves and their enemies alike. Goicolea's work is this to a T. In his society of like minds, his mirror selves are constantly engaged in fraternity initiation rites and fidelity pledges. All are of a piece in Goicolea's man-child utopia.

Damage Control

We are reassured by media images of perfect childhood: unblemished, beautiful children. They make us feel good. Bad boy British sculptors JAKE AND DINOS CHAPMAN deny us this basic happiness. They are famous for their mutant, shop-mannequin children, rudely fused, with genitals folding in and sticking out every which way. Naked as God intended, but for their new trainers, they look like punk window displays; the consumer dream gone awry. With titles like *DNA Zygotic* (1995), the Chapmans' walking abortions seemed to warn against tampering with Mother Nature. But when they placed their mutants in Edenic sets for *Tragic Anatomies* (1996), the brothers reframed these bodies as naturally glitched, making our idea of natural perfection seem artificial. The works were read as a critique of the exploitation of sexualised children and as an instance of it. They were even described as a sexual fantasy, as though the brothers preferred their lovelife Bellmeresque. There is certainly a juvenile cheap-shot aspect to them, yet these works should not be dismissed without considering what is at stake.

Take *The Return of the Repressed* (1997). Although the mannequin's pube is unsexed, its two heads are fused in a sticky vulva-like ear-cleft. It is as if a denied sexuality had reemerged, breaking out on the figure's faces, acne-like. With witchy wigs on both heads, smeared in blood, it is displayed in a museum case as a freak show. *The Return of the Repressed* is deeply exploitative, not for how it exploits children, but how it exploits adults, tapping our anxieties and fears.

The title says it all. Freud coined the expression "return of the repressed" in arguing that civility demands repression, with what is repressed later erupting in dreams and slips of the tongue. The Chapmans' sculpture certainly presents what is suppressed and denied by our view of childhood perfection. House proud, we cloister abnormal, deranged and damaged children in closets, attics and institutions, actual or metaphorical. Out of sight, out of mind. But as in any proper scary movie, the monster of our own making refuses to go away without a fight; it must be confronted. *The Return of the Repressed* is like a deliberate Freudian slip: they meant to say perfect childhood, but look what came out by mistake. Oops.

Special Needs

YVONNE TODD trained in commercial photography, and it shows. Studio photography is used to peddle people and things, to cast them in a glamorous light, to sell a way of life. But while she draws on its modes and manners, Todd creates not-quite-right images whose common thread is a nagging sense of physical and psychological malfunction. Her new suite, created for *Mixed-Up Childhood*, explores the angsty, phobic side of childhood.

As a child Todd was jealous of the attention her sick friends received; one broke a leg and got a Walkman, while an asthmatic cousin was cherished as delicate. Craving attention from her working parents, Todd repeatedly leapt out of an oak tree hoping to break a leg, and sometimes acted as if she were paralysed from the waist down. This idea informs *Envy Log* (2005), in which a wheelchair-bound 6-year-old girl is pushed by an elegant 17-year-old woman. Both their faces are in shadow and we are in the dark as to their relationship: who's envious of whom? Which is better off, the young cripple or the one fated to be her pusher?

Childhood envy also underpins *Pupators* (2005), which plays on the jealousy still flat-chested girls feel towards their more buxom contemporaries. A product shot for an imaginary clothing catalogue, it shows three fluffy feminine sweaters tightly stretched over flat-chested body forms, which undermine their feminine association. The neologistic title asks us to imagine buds developing inside these rose-coloured sweaters; bodies transforming insect-like within these chrysalises, pupating. In another unlikely product shot, *Empire* (2005), designer asthma puffers from the space age hover miraculously in a clear Magritte sky. Asthma is a childhood disease; Freud thought it was a symptom of birth trauma. However Todd presents her oral gratifiers as cool, stylish accessories, in "artificial food" colours, marketing them like sweets or mobile phones. A single mucus drip spoils the illusion, exposing the denial at the heart of the image. Childhood sucks.

Todd often refers to body anxieties and the cosmetics and pharmaceuticals that address them. The trade name Kloteen could refer to either. The latest addition to her catalogue of female misfits, *Kloteen®* (2005), is a little chemist, bespectacled, serious looking, dressed in white and brandishing a test tube. A 9-year-old, she's half angel, half nerd; a high-achiever science type with a touch of the evil genius.

Jacques Lacan's idea of the three orders is useful in understanding Todd's work. Lacan argued that our lives are caught in a tension between the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. The Symbolic is the dominant social order, the big other; it defines us but isn't us. The Imaginary is the arena of individual fantasy, where we intervene in and rewrite the Symbolic. The Real is the brute reality that shows through cracks in both, exemplified by the failing and sick body. In short: the Symbolic denies you, the Imaginary affirms you, and the Real traumatises you. Todd brings these three "paradigmatic structures of the self" that impact on the child into conversation. The Symbolic is exemplified by her commercial photography register, its sugar-coated imperatives about how we must think and live; the Imaginary, by the way she warps received images, introducing her own fantastic twists; the Real, by her morbid obsession with illness and the failing body.

Consuming Children

Nicole Armour writes, "It's easy for us to consider the pedophile as a slavering, grotesque, predatory monster ... Though we buy clothes, lotions and fitness equipment to restore our youthfulness, we refuse to acknowledge that we know the pedophile's lust for soft taut skin ... A delicate child is something we want to touch, to be, to capture ... The difference between adults and children resonates with desire, but we hypocritically loathe the pedophiles who fall prey to their erotic urge. Though our vision of children is false and harmful, we blame the pedophile for perverting our intentions, destroying our illusions and threatening the concept of the 'child' we've worked so hard to sustain. We need the *idea* of children so badly we're willing to sacrifice them for it."[63]

It's true. We worry about dodgy characters trading in illicit pictures, and yet there are big problems with acceptable ones, those commonsense images that define how the culture sees children. Mainstream media are saturated with images of children that play to adult interests. Photographer INEZ VAN LAMSWEERDE and her collaborator, stylist VINOODH MATADIN, explore this in *Final Fantasy* (1993). They hired four 3-year-old girls from a modelling agency, and photographed them in their rompers. Looking at the

pictures, something seems terribly wrong. The girls seem inappropriately sexual, strangely adult, creepy. That's because the artists replaced the girls' mouths with a man's leer. These daddy's girls are monstrous hybrids of child and adult, female and male, real and artificial, subject and object. They embody psychologist Emily Hancock's contention that a little girl's identity is inevitably tainted by adult and masculine forces: "contained, adapted and sexualised long before adolescence, a girl is cowed and tamed as her natural spontaneity gives way to the patriarchal construction of the female. In donning the mask provided by the culture a girl easily loses sight of who and what she is beneath the feminine face she adopts in youth."[64]

Originally shot as a spread for *The Face*, *Petra* (1994) is equally disarming.[65] A Helmut Newton femme fatale runs her hands under a young boy's shirt, examining him. Fetishistically dressed, she arches back, rolling her eyes in an orgasmic shudder, enjoying a frisson we don't expect from a professional pediatrician. The boy doesn't mind. He's amused, unconcerned, unharmed. This picture is deranged, perverse. Who is the sex object here? Like the Chapmans, Van Lamsweerde and Matadin know the quickest way to confront us with our expectations is by not meeting them, and spectacularly.

We are the world, we are the children...

Advertising agencies know they can always use beautiful wide-eyed children to pull on our heart strings and prise open our wallets. It's the feel-good factor: fresh-faced kids sell the future, attaching their appeal to any product or ideology they're aligned with. Russian artists AES+F address this in their film trilogy *The King of the Forest* (2001-3).[66] The title refers to medieval European folklore, the tale of a King who imprisoned beautiful children in his palace for his pleasure. Similarly, AES+F "steal" hundreds of children, recruiting them from local model agencies, ballet schools and sports clubs. They dress them generically, in classic whites, suggesting both sports kit and underwear; install them in picturesque locations; film them in lingering slow-mo; then cut the footage to music. *Le Roi des Aulnes* (2001) was shot in the gilded, mirrored halls of Tsarskoye Selo, Catherine the Great's St. Petersburg palace. This film of beautiful children

caught in a hall of mirrors suggests a mass audition or a ballet studio study after Degas. The 200-odd kids instinctively court the camera, striking poses. *More Than Paradise* (2002) was shot in Cairo's mosque-castle Mohammed Ali. AES+F required the children to demonstrate well-known ritual situations such as processions and circling, which have become clichés of the Islamic world in the Western media. For a complete contrast, *KFNY* (2003) was shot in the hubbub of New York's Times Square with Navy recruiting ads playing on overhead video screens displaying dramatic images of battleships, warplanes and helicopters. Attentive to the ironies of the new world order, this final installment involves a deep contradiction: its all-embracing multi-cultural cast of "heroes" lining up on the side of America.

The King of the Forest drips with art, advertising and pop culture associations. AES+F put a real spin on Vanessa Beecroft (with her performance-tableaux of inscrutable glamorous half-naked women), Shirin Neshat (with her orientalist videos of massed milling "Others") and Art Club 2000 (a tribe of identically dressed juveniles who gather in Times Square to be photographed). It also recalls fashion advertising campaigns for Benetton (whose multicultural appeal veils dubious third world labour practices), Calvin Klein and others. *The King of the Forest* trilogy remains ambiguous. Like ads which largely forget to mention their product, the films leave us to ponder only the pitch and its effect on us. Their extended duration grants us the chance to map all possible interpretations and affects: to see the children as innocent and knowing; as vulnerable and sublime; as the filmmakers' patsies and as coquettish spoilt agents. One moment we are jealous of their perfect existence and good looks, the next fearful for their safety. Equally our concern over their possible exploitation gives way to a realisation that their beauty can be used to exploit us. Kids may be captive but they are also captivating, their beauty exercising a magical force over us. AES+F leave us "balanced on a fine line between nobleness and treachery, bewitched by a beauty that has turned into a trap".[67] "Our protest against the 'stealing' of children does not prevent us from admiring them."[68]

Sometimes reality intervenes after the fact, changing the significance of an artwork forever. It's hard not to read *The King of the Forest* in this way. On 1 September 2004, terrorists calling for Chechnyan independence "stole" hundreds of staff and students at a school in the Russian town of Beslan. They herded their hostages into the school's gym. Deprived of food and water, the hostages were forced to drink their own urine; to cope with the stifling heat they were stripped to their underwear.

On several occasions, released or escaped children were photographed fleeing in their smalls. By targeting "innocent children", the terrorists were guaranteed the glare of world attention. The media milked it for all it was worth, giving the terrorists the publicity they sought, viewers something racy, and their advertisers a bigger audience. Three days in, a shoot-out between the terrorists and Russian security forces claimed the lives of over 300 hostages, more than 170 of them children. Despite moralising over evil, the media would be criticised for participating in it by running exploitative suggestive images of traumatised children in their whites. It is at such moments that our moral panic over child abuse spectacularly aligns with reality, and our obsession with safeguarding childhood innocence reveals its pornographic underbelly.

McGuffin

Childhood is a collision of ideologies and realities – it is hard to separate fact from fiction. Our adult ideas of childhood may be riddled with fantasies and projections but they are a product of our real lived experiences and desires, and in turn they frame up lived realities for children. Childhood is a conundrum.

You can see this in the furore over New Zealand Telecom's new T3G mobile phone advertising campaign, where children are presented precociously, aping adults. The hyperactive Fast Eddie sips his coffee and bangs out emails using his high-speed mobile connection. Consumer kids ponder the role mobiles will play in their businesses and lifestyles. The ads could be understood as epitomising what Helen May calls the new "economic gaze". They turn on the idea that children are the future, citizens in waiting, preparing to take their place in a knowledge economy. However they also present this idea as a little absurd. There is something cute about these children aping adult behaviour, which emphasises and preserves our desire that the realms remain distinct. Saatchi and Saatchi have a bob each way.

The T3G campaign has been greeted with a laundry list of anxieties. There is a concern about exploiting children. There is a concern about hard selling to children: glamourising and normalising cellphone use. There's a concern that children aren't allowed to be children, that they have lost their innocence, that they are forced to grow up too fast. Critics promote their idea of a proper childhood of direct interac-

tion, play and healthy outdoors life. The *New Zealand Herald* quotes Judith Duncan, a lecturer at Otago University's Children's Issues Centre: "It's sucking children into using cellphones at much too young an age, but it's also encouraging meaningless interactions which aren't about building real relationships."[69] But from whose perspective are these relationships unreal, these interactions meaningless? Surely not the children's? Green MP Sue Kedgley is also quoted: "We're bringing up kids addicted to and dependent on technology". But would we complain about bringing up kids addicted to and dependent on electricity? This nostalgic technophobia really has nothing *specifically* to do with children, but happily captures them as its cause.

The T3G campaign is clever advertising because it simultaneously pitches to apparently mutually exclusive concerns – angering the people who want innocent children and appealing to those who want knowing ones. It catches everyone in its web. And that's the problem. Our moral discourses exploit childhood as a cause, a focus for playing out issues and ideologies that have no necessary relation to children. In this way the Saatchi campaign and its critics have a lot in common: both use children to talk about other things. As Alfred Hitchcock might say, the child becomes the ultimate McGuffin: it is an arbitrary thing around which the plot turns, but is irrelevant in itself.

Perhaps that's a problem in *Mixed-Up Childhood* too.

1. *Myths of Childhood* (a series of three documentaries, written and directed by Sarah Gibson) Film Australia, Lindfield, 1997.

2. *Islands of Innocence: The Childhood Theme in New Zealand Fiction* A.H. and A.W. Reed, Wellington, Auckland and Sydney, 1964, p11.

3. *Edge of the Earth: Stories and Images of the Antipodes* Heinemann Reed, Auckland, 1990, p70.

4. There is no consensus on the dividing line between childhood and adulthood. In 1989 the United Nations Rights of the Child (UNROC) advocated that children are those under 18. But a 17-year-old might resent being labelled a child. People can have sex, drive cars and go to war earlier than that, and every country has its own opinion when these things can happen. The age of consent in New Zealand may be 16, but in Chile it's 12 for heterosexuals and 18 for homosexuals (www.ageofconsent.com/ageofconsent.htm). UNROC is criticised for promoting a universal idea of childhood.

5. It is also a largely a Western phenomenon.

6. Pan Books, London, 1988, p93.

7. "Filmic Regression: The Baby and Baby Huey" *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticism* (ed. John C. Welchman) MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 2003, p53.

8. Vince Aletti "Loving the Alien" *Village Voice* 25 February 2004.

9. Quoted in Kate Salter "Little Girl Lost" *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine* 22 February 2004.

10. Artist's statement, quoted in www.larsholst.info/blog/2004/02/05/loretta-lux/

11. Kate Salter, op cit.

12. Compare John Everett Millais' painting *Cherry Ripe* (1879), an image simultaneously saturated with innocence and sexual promise. This painting became one of most popular mass-produced images of Romantic childhood in the Victorian period.

13. Almost 20 years after *The Tin Drum* won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, the ultra-conservative pressure group Oklahomans for Children and Families sought to have it banned in their state as child pornography.

14. Noelle Oxenhandler *The Eros of Parenthood* St. Martins Press, New York , 2001, p197.

15. *Immediate Family* Aperture, New York, 1992, np.

16. www.nerve.com/dispatches/voicebox/puberty/Mann_Answer3.asp

17. See also Jeffrey Eugenides "Sally Mann: Hayhook" *Artforum* December 1994, pp56-7.

18. Hurley developed this constructed look by processing his source images through collage studies and tracings.

19. Kobena Mercer *Imagined Communities* Hayward Gallery, London, 1995, p25.

20. Laurie Simmons "Guys and Dolls" *Artforum* September 2003, p261.

21. "Commentary and Acknowledgements: From Prinzhorn to Picasso" *Family Found: The Lifetime Obsession of Morton Bartlett* Marion Harris, New York, 2002, p15.

22. "Biography from the Harvard Class of 1932 25th Anniversary Report" *Family Found* op cit, p58.

23. Laurie Simmons, op cit, p207.

24. James Kincaid "Literary and Literal Parallels: The Theoretical and Cultural Positioning of the Child" *Family Found* op cit, p40.

25. *Italian Vogue* October 1997.

26. Quoted in Lynne Cooke "Disputed Terrain" *Robert Gober* Tate Gallery and Serpentine Gallery, London, 1993, p17.

27. Holland Cotter "An Impresario of Menace in Simple Things" *New York Times* 26 March 2000.

28. Cited in Karel Schampers "Robert Gober" *Robert Gober* Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1990, p33.

29. Richard Flood "Interview" *Robert Gober: Sculpture + Drawing* Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis, 1999, p129. Cited in Olga M. Viso "Life's Small Epiphanies" *Robert Gober: The United States Pavilion; 49th*

Venice Biennale 2001, p16.

30. For instance, to heal a crippled or wounded leg, the petitioner will offer a carved wooden or wax leg. Candles are also used as ex-votos, and recurrently feature in Gober's work.

31. Gober's work exemplifies the conflicted nature of gay critiques of mainstream values. While some rail against the ideology of straight society, others demand inclusion. While marriage stands condemned as a repressive straight institution, activists campaign for gay marriage. (So some feminists applaud the introduction of women into the clergy, while others reject the church as a patriarchal institution.) Gober had himself photographed in a wedding dress for one of his newspaper replicas. The image was accompanied by a story about the exclusion of same sex couples from the institution of marriage.

32. The point is beautifully made in Monty Python's "Four Yorkshiremen Sketch", from their 1974 album *Live at Drury Lane*. Its characters compete to see who had the most traumatic childhood.

> MICHAEL PALIN: *We lived for three months in a brown paper bag in a septic tank. We used to have to get up at 6 o'clock in the morning, clean the bag, eat a crust of stale bread, go to work down mill for 14 hours a day, week in, week out. When we got home, our dad would thrash us to sleep with his belt!*
>
> GRAHAM CHAPMAN: *Luxury. We used to have to get out of the lake at 3 o'clock in the morning, clean the lake, eat a handful of hot gravel, go to work at the mill every day for tuppence a month, come home, and dad would beat us around the head and neck with a broken bottle, if we were lucky!*
>
> TERRY GILLIAM: *Well, we had it tough. We used to have to get up out of the shoebox at 12 o'clock at night, and lick the road clean with our tongues. We had half a handful of freezing cold gravel, worked 24 hours a day at the mill for fourpence every 6 years, and when we got home, our dad would slice us in two with a bread knife.*
>
> ERIC IDLE: *Right. I had to get up in the morning at 10 o'clock at night, half an hour before I went to bed, eat a lump of cold poison, work 29 hours a day down mill, and pay mill owner for permission to come to work, and when we got home, our dad would kill us, and dance about on our graves singing Hallelujah.*
>
> MICHAEL PALIN: *But you try and tell the young people today that and they won't believe ya.*

33. Interviewed by Michael Cathcart, Radio National, Australia, 9 January 2001. (www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/atoday/stories/s229128.htm) Moffat added: "It became such a smash hit ... And over the years people have come up to me. They couldn't wait to tell me their tragic story."

34. Abridged.

35. Abridged.

36. Henry Darger *The History of My Life* unpublished manuscript, p41. Cited in Michael Bonesteel *Henry Darger: Art and Selected Writings* Rizzoli, New York, 2000, p9.

37. Darger's reading included L. Frank Baum, Charles Dickens and Booth Tarkington.

38. Henry Darger *In the Realms of the Unreal* unpublished manuscript, volume III, p334. Quoted in Michael Bonesteel, op cit, p20.

39. John M. MacGregor *Henry Darger: In the Realms of the Unreal* Delano Greenidge Editions, New York, 2002.

40. Cited in Michael Bonesteel, op cit, p33.

41. In New Zealand cot death is particularly prevalent among Pacific Islanders.

42. In Samoan Tino means "good", and Tino certainly is a model compliant child.

43. Mary Kelly "Preface" *Post-Partum Document* Routledge and Keagan Paul, London, 1983, pxvi.

44. The Rosetta Stone features a decree from the priests of Memphis in honour of Ptolemaios V. (196 B.C.) written in hieroglyphs (script of official and religious texts), Demotic (everyday Egyptian) and Greek. The representation of one text in three languages enables the hieroglyphs to be deciphered and helps prove that they do not just have symbolic meaning but also represent a spoken language.

45. Kelley collected the kids' paintings in the early 1970s, while teaching kindergarten and elementary grade art and studying art education at the University of Michigan. By the time he made the work, the children were already adults.

46. "We Communicate Only Through Our Shared Dismissal of the Pre-Linguistic: Fourteen Analyses" Mike Kelley *Minor Histories: Statements, Conversations, Proposals* (ed. John C. Welchman) MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachussets, 2004, p206.

47. "Child Abuse" *Artforum* December 1982, pp40-7.

48. "Louise Bourgeois: Album" (1994) *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father / Reconstruction of the Father; Writings and Interviews 1923-1997* (eds. Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Marie-Laure Bernadac) MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1998, p277.

49. Mieke Bal *Louise Bourgeois Spider: The Architecture of Art-Writing* University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2001, p38.

50. Louise Bourgeois, artist's statement *The Carnegie International* Museum of Art, Pittsburg, 1991, p.60.

51. "Mortal Elements: Pat Steir Talks With Louise Bourgeois" (1993) *Louise Bourgeois: Destruction of the Father*, op cit, p237.

52. Allan Schwartzman "Untitled" *Louise Bourgeois* Phaidon, London, 2003, p103.

53. "This is a pot I made to raise money for a charity I am patron of called The Violence Initiative which deals with violent people and helps them deal with their impulses. I think it an important yet understandably difficult charity to support." Email to the curators, January 2005.

54. *Grayson Perry: Guerrilla Tactics* Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 2002, p33.

55. Email to the curators, January 2005.

56. *Guerrilla Tactics* op cit, p16.

57. In the 1830s German utopian educationist Friedrich Froebel invented kindergarten to teach young children about art, design, mathematics and natural history. With his sequence of 20 "gifts" and "occupations", Froebel's child-centered method influenced many 20th century painters and architects who passed through kindergarten, including Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Piet Mondrian and Frank Lloyd Wright. In *Inventing Kindergarten* Norman Brosterman traces kindergarten's influence on the development of modern art, particularly abstraction. (Harry N. Abrams, New York, 1997.)

58. See *Avant-gardism for Children* University Art Museum, University of Queensland, Brisbane, 1999.

59. Dwyer has also made pieces engaging with childhood in specific ways. For instance *Olloodoo* (1998), an island-oasis created in collaboration with daughter Olive; and *Closing Eyes* (1999), a set of wooden cradles with everyday objects (a blanket, a toothbrush, a pot plant, a water bottle, a TV, a cassette player), as if rocking them to sleep. She is designing a playground for Casula Art Centre.

60. Linda Michael "Hanging Eyes 2" *Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968-2002* National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2002, pp112-3.

61. Ephebophiles fancy adolescents, while paeodphiles are attracted to pre-adolescents.

62. *Childhood and Society* (1951) Paladin Books, London, 1987, p236.

63. "The Enchanted Hunters" *Bunnyhop 9* 1998, p108.

64. Cited in www.mcachicago.org/MCA/exhibit/past/pretty/lamsweerde.html. With apologies to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago

65. "Global Warming TV" *The Face* September 1994, pp134-5.

66. AES are graphic designer Evgeny Svyatsky and conceptual architects Tatiana Arzamasova and Lev Evzovitch. When they work with fashion photographer Vladimir Fridkes, they are AES+F.

67. Elana Zaitseva, www.artekgallery.com/artist_07.htm

68. Ibid.

69. Quoted in Amanda Spratt "Young and Mobile: Should We Be Worried?" *New Zealand Herald* 12 December 2004.

List of Works

AES+F
Tatiana Arzamasova
Born 1955 Moscow, lives in Moscow
Lev Evzovitch
Born 1958 Moscow, lives in Moscow
Vladimir Fridkes
Born 1956 Moscow, Lives in Moscow
Evgeny Svyatsky
Born 1957 Moscow, lives in Moscow

from *The King of the Forest*

Le Roi des Aulnes 2001
video
9 minutes

More Than Paradise 2002
video
10 minutes

The King of the Forest: New York (aka KFNY) 2003
video
10 minutes
Courtesy the artists, Moscow

Morton Bartlett
Born 1909 Chicago, died 1992 Boston

Untitled (head of a crying boy) c.1950
178mm high
plaster with knitted wool hat and scarf
Philip Retzky, Santa Fe

22 Untitled black and white photographs
the largest 123x84mm, the smallest 64x47mm
Marion Harris Untraditional Arts and Antiques, New York

Christian Boltanski
Born 1944 Paris, lives in Paris

Children of North Westminster Community School 1992
144 colour photographs
300x200mm each, approx 2000x5720mm installed
Lisson Gallery, London

Louise Bourgeois
Born 1911 Paris, lives in New York

Child Abuse 1982
pagework
Artforum December 1982

Cell (Glass Spheres and Hands) 1990-3
glass, iron, wood, linoleum, canvas and marble
2195 x 2188 x 2200mm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
purchased with the assistance of the Leslie Moira Henderson Bequest, 1995

Jake and Dinos Chapman
Jake Chapman
Born 1966 Cheltenham, lives in London
Dinos Chapman
Born 1962 London, lives in London

The Return of the Repressed 1997
mixed media
1340x600x420mm
Courtesy the artists and Jay Jopling, White Cube, London

Henry Darger
Born 1892 Chicago, died 1973 Chicago

At 5 Norma Catherine. but are retaken.
watercolour, pencil and carbon tracing on pieced paper
After M Whurther Run Glandelinians attack and blow up a train carrying children to refuge.
watercolour, pencil, carbon tracing and collage on pieced paper
838x1220mm
American Folk Art Museum, New York
Gift of Sam and Betsey Farber

Untitled (Blengins capturing Glandelinian Soldiers)
watercolour, pencil, carbon tracing and collage on pieced paper
Picture One. This scene here shows the murderous massacre still going on before the winged blengins arrived from the sky. They came so quick how however that those fastened to the trees, or board, and those on the run escaped the murderist rascals or were rescued, and flown to permanent safty and security.
watercolour, pencil, carbon tracing and collage on pieced paper
800x3327mm
American Folk Art Museum, New York
Gift of Sam and Betsey Farber

2 At Cederine She witnesses a frightful slaughter of officers.
watercolour, pencil and carbon tracing on pieced paper
3 Place not mentioned / Episode 3 2 Escape with great number of kids still fighting
watercolour, pencil and carbon tracing on pieced paper
838x2184mm
American Folk Art Museum, New York

Mikala Dwyer
Born 1959 Sydney, lives in Sydney

Hanging Eyes 1999
acrylic, vinyl, canvas
installed dimensions variable,
2200x4000x400mm approx
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

The Nearly Faraways 2003
two monitor video installation
installed dimensions variable
Courtesy Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne

Robert Gober
Born 1954 Wallingford, Connecticut, lives in New York

Untitled 1990
red casting wax
76x67x190mm
Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

Untitled 1991
photolithograph on newsprint with hand-torn edges
562x352mm
Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

Untitled 1992
beeswax, cotton, leather, aluminium, human hair
171x95x470mm
Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

Anthony Goicolea
Lives in New York

Warriors 2001
colour photograph
762x7010mm
Courtesy Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

Window Washers 2001
colour photograph
1016x2083mm
Private collection, Courtesy Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

Tree Dwellers 2004
colour photograph
1800x2440mm
Courtesy Gow Langsford Gallery, Auckland

Gavin Hurley
Born 1973 Auckland, lives in Auckland

Edward 2005
oil on hessian
460x350mm
Courtesy Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland

Kallan 2005
oil on hessian
460x350mm
Courtesy Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland

Son of a Priest 2005
oil on hessian
460x350mm
Courtesy Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland

Young Donald Baechler 2004
oil on hessian
1400x1000mm
Courtesy Anna Bibby Gallery, Auckland

Mike Kelley
Born 1954 Detroit, lives in Los Angeles

We Communicate Only Through Our Shared Dismissal of the Pre-Linguistic 1995
15 colour photographs, and texts accessed via computer
each photograph 610x737mm
ARCO Foundation Collection, CGAC, Santiago de Compostela, Spain

Mary Kelly
Born 1941 Fort Dodge, Iowa; lives in Los Angeles

from *Post-Partum Document* 1973-9

Documentation VI: Pre-Writing Alphabet, Exerque and Diary 1978
18 perspex units: 15 containing objects (resin on slate), 3 containing diagrams
each 356x279mm
Arts Council Collection, Hayward Gallery, London

Richard Killeen
Born 1946 Auckland, lives in Auckland

Stories We Tell Each Other 1987
pencil, oilstick, pastel, acrylic and collage on aluminium, 136 pieces
3000x4500mm approx installed
Courtesy Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington

Inez van Lamsweerde and Vinoodh Matadin
Inez van Lamsweerde
Born 1963 Amsterdam, lives in New York and Amsterdam
Vinoodh Matadin
Born 1961 Amsterdam, lives in New York and Amsterdam

Final Fantasy 1993
Caroline
Topaze
Ursula
Wendy
colour photographs
each 1000x1500mm
Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

Petra 1994
colour photograph
1800x1200mm
Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

Loretta Lux
Born 1969 Dresden, lives in Bonn

The Rose Garden 2001
colour photograph
500x500mm
Courtesy the artist and Yossi Milo Gallery, New York

Study of a Girl 1 2002
colour photograph
650x500mm
Courtesy the artist and Yossi Milo Gallery, New York

The Bride 2003
colour photograph
500x500mm
Courtesy the artist and Yossi Milo Gallery, New York

At The Window 2004
colour photograph
500x500mm
Courtesy the artist and Yossi Milo Gallery, New York

The Drummer 2004
colour photograph
570x500mm
Courtesy the artist and Yossi Milo Gallery, New York

Paul McCarthy
Born 1945 Salt Lake City, lives in Los Angeles

Family Tyranny (Modeling and Molding) 1987
video
8 minutes
Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

Cultural Soup 1987
video
7 minutes
Courtesy Electronic Arts Intermix, New York

Sally Mann
Born 1951 Lexington, Virginia; lives in Lexington

Emmett's Bloody Nose 1985
black and white photograph
510x610mm
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Popsicle Drips 1985
black and white photograph
610x510mm
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Blowing Bubbles 1987
black and white photograph
510x610mm
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Candy Cigarette 1989
black and white photograph
510x610mm
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Hayhook 1989
black and white photograph
510x610mm
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

The New Mothers 1989
black and white photograph
510x610mm
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Sunday Funnies 1991
black and white photograph
510x610mm
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Dog Scratches 1991
black and white photograph
510x610mm
Courtesy of the artist and Edwynn Houk Gallery, New York

Steven Meisel
Born 1954 New York, lives in New York

The Good Life 1997
8 colour photographs
6 at 635x762mm, 2 at 762x635mm
Courtesy of the artist and Art + Commerce, New York

Shintaro Miyake
Born 1970 Tokyo, lives in Tokyo

Kumao 2005
A new performance / installation for *Mixed-Up Childhood*
Courtesy Tomio Koyama Gallery, Tokyo

Tracey Moffatt
Born 1960 Brisbane, lives in New York

from *Scarred for Life* 1994
Birth Certificate, 1962
Doll Birth, 1972
Heart Attack, 1970
The Wizard of Oz, 1956
offset prints
each 800x600mm
Robin and Erika Congreve, Auckland

Gregor Nicholas
Born 1959 Auckland, lives in Auckland

Avondale Dogs 1996
35mm film transferred to video
15 minutes
Courtesy New Zealand Film Commission

Grayson Perry
Born 1960 Chelmsford, lives in London

Interior Conflict 2004
glazed ceramic
435x350x350mm
Jay Ecklund, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Pattern of Cigarette Burns and Bruises 2004
glazed ceramic,
560x380x380mm
Private Collection, London

Western Man 2004
glazed ceramic
505x320x320mm
Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro Gallery, London

Yvonne Todd
Born 1973 Auckland, lives in Auckland

Empire 2005
colour photograph
920x810mm
Courtesy Ivan Anthony Gallery, Auckland, and Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington

Envy Log 2005
colour photograph
1160x930mm
Courtesy Ivan Anthony Gallery, Auckland, and Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington

Kloteen® 2005
colour photograph
1300x920mm
Courtesy Ivan Anthony Gallery, Auckland, and Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington

Pupators 2005
colour photograph
1500x867mm
Courtesy Ivan Anthony Gallery, Auckland, and Peter McLeavey Gallery, Wellington

Sima Urale
Born 1967 Savali, Samoa; lives in Wellington

O Tamaiti / The Children 1996
35mm film transferred to video
15 minutes
Courtesy New Zealand Film Commission

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Sergey Bratkov
Gerrit Bretzler @ Goethe Institut
Christine Burgin @ Christine Burgin Gallery
Connie Butler @ LA MOCA
Jonathan Bywater
Joyce Campbell
Julie Castellano @ Edwynn Houk Gallery
Elizabeth Caldwell @ Creative New Zealand
John Cheim @ Cheim and Read
Derrick Cherrie
Robin and Erika Congreve
Victoria Cuthbert @ Matthew Marks Gallery
Charlotte, Lukrecya and Oliver Craw
Richard Dale
Inspector Derek Davidson @ NZ Police
Mary Doyle @ The Drawing Room
Iris Duhn
Jay Ecklund
Juliana Engberg @ Australian Centre for Contemporary Art
Heather Galbraith
Derek Gehring
Bill Gosden
Marion Harris
Paul Hartigan
Nola Harvey
Bill Hastings
David Hatcher
Hayward Gallery
Christine Jeffs
Jay Jopling @ White Cube
Mary Kisler
Darren Knight
Tomio Koyama @ Tomio Koyama Gallery
Saskia Leek
Luhring Augustine Gallery
Roger McDonald
Jodie Molloy @ British Council New Zealand
Tim Marlow @ White Cube
Phillip Matthews @ New Zealand Listener
Yossi Milo @ Yossi Milo Gallery
Linda Michael
Paula Middleton @ British Council New Zealand
Victoria Miro @ Victoria Miro Gallery
Samantha Mitchell
Mondriaan Foundation
Carrie Moorehead @ Edwynn Houk Gallery
Frances Morris @ Tate Modern
Matt O'Dell @ Lisson Gallery
Lisa Overduin @ Regen Projects
Nova Paul
Seth Price @ Electronic Arts Intermix
Philip Retzky
Revolution Films
Peter Robinson
Jean Rockel
Melanie Roger @ Gow Langsford Gallery
Brett Rogers @ British Council UK
Amanda Rowell @ Roslyn Oxley 9 Gallery
Catherine Saunders @ AK05
Andrew Silewicz @ Victoria Miro Gallery
Jason Smith @ National Gallery of Victoria
Michael Smith
Anna Schwartz @ Anna Schwartz Gallery
Danielle Tolson @ Creative New Zealand
Wayne Tunnicliffe @ Art Gallery of New South Wales
Adrian Turner @ Matthew Marks Gallery
David Watson
Hayly Weston @ New Zealand Film Commission
Wendy @ Patrick Painter Editions
Elga Wimmer

Not to forget:

Our tireless researcher Serena Bentley

Janita Craw lectures in early childhood in the School of Education at Unitec New Zealand in Auckland.

Robert Leonard is Auckland Art Gallery's curator of contemporary art. He was 2002 J.D. Stout Research Fellow at Victoria University of Wellington.