



SEAN CORDEIRO & CLAIRE HEALY

Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Divided Worlds

ART GALLERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

NORTH TERRACE, ADELAIDE Open daily 10am–5pm artgallery.sa.gov.au



SEAN CORDEIRO AND CLAIRE HEALY

Australian artists Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy have been working together since 2001. Cordeiro and Healy transform found objects and every-day items, such as VHS tapes, bricks of Lego, Ikea furniture and household items, into large-scale installations, sculptures and site specific works of art. Together the artists have spent a great deal of time travelling, often responding to ideas associated with travel, movement, consumerism and the domestic space.

In *We Hunt Mammoth*, 2015 the artists pulled apart or deconstructed a Honda car, reducing it to 121 components each part tied with bamboo and jute, a traditional Japanese method for packaging. The work combines modern materials with ancient traditions of making. This consists of the disassembled car itself – a contemporary consumer object created via a production line, and the trained hand that repackages the pieces using traditional materials.

In *Mondo Futuro*, 2017, a 1950s-vintage retro-engineered Mercedes operates on a biofuel made from a process in which gas is extracted from heated woodchips. Its exterior is marked with iconic motifs derived from masquerade traditions in Europe, Swabian Alemannic Fasnacht and Wilder Mann; Pagan traditions which praise the forest. *Mondo Futuro* meaning 'future world', is symbolic of the complex relationship between the environment and technology. It offers a glimpse of our future world, one filled with contradictions and sacrifices.



image: Claire Healy, Australia, born 1971, Sean Cordeiro, Australia, born 1974, *Mondo Futuro*, 2017, performance still; Courtesy the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, photo: Jonah Cordeiro

image detail (cover): Installation view 2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: *Divided Worlds* featuring Sean Cordeiro & Claire Healy, *We Hunt Mammoth*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

IN THE COLLECTION – UPSTAIRS STUDY – PENGUIN, 2014

Upstairs study – Penguin, 2014 unites Lego and IKEA, brands well known for their practicality, functionality and assembly requirements.



image: Sean Cordeiro, Australia, 1974, Claire Healy, Australia, 1971, *Upstairs study – Penguin*, 2014, Sydney, Lego, IKEA chair; plastic potted plant, 80.0 x 67.0 x 62.0 cm; Gift of Patrick Corrigan AM through the Art Gallery of South Australia Contemporary Collectors 2016. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

Reference (Lack), 2007 belongs to a series that explores the concept of the human everyday experience and addresses the small things we do to make ourselves feel at home. This work was created in Berlin in 2007 and is comprised of mass produced flat-packed IKEA bookshelves called *Lack* and 252 second hand reference books. The juxtaposition of different sources of materials also highlights the global need to balance cheap production costs, the non-sustainable use of natural resources, the oversupply of commodities and guaranteed employment.



image: Sean Cordeiro, Australia, 1974, Claire Healy, Australia, 1971, *Reference (Lack)*, 2007, Berlin, customised reference books and IKEA (LACK), bookshelves, 79.0 x 110. x 27.0 cm; Gift of Patrick Corrigan AM through the Art Gallery of South Australia Foundation 2012. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

'Lego, which we grew up with, represents the dreams and fantasies of a child; Ikea furniture, which has become so ubiquitous, represents the dreams and fantasies of an adult. By meshing these two objects together we can think about the gap between our fantastic dreams and our ordinary longings'

Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro
(Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery Press Release)

RESPONDING

Have you ever been on holiday or had a sleep over at someone else's home? What routines make you feel at home?

Undertake a class investigation on IKEA and Lego. In small groups research the following areas and conduct a SWOT analysis:

- Production costs
- Use of resources (impact on environment to produce product)
- Employment (economic contribution)
- Durability & function of products

What conclusions did your group make about these companies? Does the benefit for society outweigh the impact production has on the environment?

Cordeiro and Healy reference the work of Marcel Duchamp and his use of the 'readymade'. Research a 'readymade' work of art that responds to a social or environmental issue.

MAKING

Packing, unpacking, collecting, sorting and discarding are central themes in Cordeiro and Healy's work. Create a work of art that responds to the global issue of mass consumption.

Both the Lego and IKEA products used in *Upstairs study – Penguin* and *Reference (Lack)* require assembly. Create a sculpture that references the past and future version of yourself using only cheap or reclaimed materials.

EARLY YEARS

RESPONDING

List the features of *Mondo Futuro* that are typical of a car. List the characteristics of *Mondo Futuro* that suggests it is a work of art.

Cordeiro and Healy like to collect everyday items. What items do you like to collect? Make a list of 5 items that tell a story about who you are.

MAKING

Cordeiro and Healy collect everyday items and sometimes use objects from around the home. As a class begin to categorise the items in your classroom. You may like to group all items of a similar colour, shape or texture. Photograph your classroom collections.

The designs on *Mondo Futuro* are inspired by Pagan traditions in Europe such as Wilder Mann where people dress up, wear masks and celebrate the changing of seasons.

- As a class, explore and investigate other Pagan traditions.
- Create a mask that celebrates the natural environment.

PRIMARY

RESPONDING

As a class, brainstorm the words of the exhibition title *Divided Worlds*. How does the work of Cordeiro and Healy connect to the term *Divided Worlds*?

Look carefully at *We Hunt Mammoth*, both as an entire composition and the individual pieces. What does this work remind you of?

Consider the way Cordeiro and Healy have packaged the car pieces in *We Hunt Mammoth*. Suggest some reasons why the artists have dismantled the car? Why did the artists not wrap the car as one object?

Cordeiro and Healy respond to human impact on the world. Over the course of a week, record everything you and your family use or consume. Calculate how much electricity, fuel (for transport) and water is used and how much waste is produced. Consider these figures multiplied by a year and then multiplied by the number of families in your class. As a class brainstorm some ways schools and families could reduce their environmental footprint.

MAKING

Draw one of the parcels in *We Hunt Mammoth*. Re-draw this parcel multiple times to create an interesting composition.

Tsutsumu is one method of traditional Japanese packaging. What other traditional methods of packaging can you discover? Trial some of these techniques and compare these to contemporary means of carrying items. Make a list of pros and cons for each material, consider means of production and durability. Design a new product for carrying items. The design must have limited impact on the environment.

Cordeiro and Healy have been working together since 2001. Create a work of art with a friend that uses only recycled items.



image detail: Claire Healy, Australia, born 1971, Sean Cordeiro, Australia, born 1974, *We hunt mammoth*, 2015, KAIR, Kamiyama Artist In Residence, Shikoku, Japan, 121 bagged components (entire Honda) in jute and bamboo using traditional Japanese method for packaging, dimensions variable; Courtesy the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, photo: Keizo Konishi

SECONDARY



image detail: Installation view 2018 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: *Divided Worlds*, Claire Healy and Sean Cordeiro, *We Hunt Mammoth*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide.

RESPONDING

Brainstorm and investigate the titles *Mondo Futuro* & *We Hunt Mammoth*. What information do these titles add to your understanding of the works?

Given that the *Mondo Futuro* is mobile, what challenges or benefits might this work present for the audience, artist and Gallery?

Investigate the history of sculpture and installation. What historical connections can you make to the work by Cordeiro and Healy?

With a partner discuss what you think the artists are communicating by combining the contemporary Honda car with traditional Japanese packaging in *We Hunt Mammoth*.

Artists will often work collaboratively, particularly when creating large scale works. Compare the practice of Cordeiro and Healy with Ken and Julia Yonetani. Find other artists who work in collaboration. What are the benefits of working in this way?

MAKING

Find a discarded or unwanted, mechanical or electrical item such as a radio, phone or an old toy. With supervision, protective gear and using appropriate equipment, carefully disassemble the object. Lay the pieces onto a sheet of white paper to create a composition you are happy with. Photograph your results. Recreate a new work of art with the pieces of your object.

With a partner, create a collaborative work of art that responds to an environmental issue relevant to the area you live in. Try using recycled or unwanted items to communicate your ideas. What challenges did you encounter working collaboratively?

TIP Some collaborative works in the collection include: *Bruce [cabinet on stand]*, 2010 by Khai Liew & Bruce Nuske and *Das swings unt roundabouts fur der kinder? Ja? Nein! Schweinhund! (Swings and roundabouts for the children? Yes? No! Pigface!)*, 2011 by Jake & Dinos Chapman.

Cordeiro and Healy have created works of art that deal with ideas of travel, movement and transportation. Compare *We Hunt Mammoth* with another of their works and consider the use of material, concept, historical reference and humour.

Cordeiro and Healy are concerned with the environment, technology and the balance between the two. Discuss how their works highlight the consequences of living in the contemporary world.

TIP Consider consumerism, technological advances and the impact on the environment.

SCIENCE AS HUMAN ENDEAVOUR (SHE) – SECONDARY

Crude oil (petroleum), also used to make plastics, is a non-renewable resource. Once it has been used it cannot be replaced. Over time, the price of fuel will increase as the resource is depleted. Biofuels are made using plant and animal waste as a replacement for petrol and diesel. *Mondo Futuro* operates on a biofuel made from a process in which gas is extracted from heated woodchips. Woodchips are not a sustainable source of biofuel because wood takes a very long time to grow. However, many countries are pushing ahead with biofuel made from sugarcane, such as Brazil.

Investigate the positives and negatives of biofuel both environmentally and economically.

Could this type of biofuel production work in Australia?

TAKE IT FURTHER..

Why not investigate energy production for electricity? In Australia both renewable and non-renewable sources are used to generate electricity. What innovative ways could we implement to reduce carbon emissions? Research wind, nuclear and solar solutions. Which of these alternatives would work best for the area you live in and why? Begin by investigating the world-first solar tower powered tomato farm (yes, it's a real thing) in Port Augusta.



image: Claire Healy, Australia, born 1971, Sean Cordeiro, Australia, born 1974, *Mondo Futuro*, 2017, performance still; Courtesy the artists and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, photo: Jonah Cordeiro

RESOURCES

ABC Science – Crude Oil

<http://ab.co/2wsTk5C>

BBC – Brazil's biofuel industry finds new sweetspot

<http://bbc.in/IGHn8bD>

Biofuels Association of Australia

<http://bit.ly/2b0aonH>

Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy

<http://bit.ly/2DxrU2d>

Clean Energy Council

<http://bit.ly/2Bkd7mw>

Designboom – claire healy + sean cordeiro interweave LEGO and IKEA furniture

<http://bit.ly/2DxrV6h>

Sydney Morning Herald – Sean

Cordeiro and Claire Healy

<http://bit.ly/2FWjv6j>

Sydney Morning Herald – Form and Dysfunction

<http://bit.ly/2DvqAOI>

Sydney Morning Herald – At home with Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy

<http://bit.ly/2Dob7Lw>

Venice Biennale Education Resource 2012 – Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy

<http://bit.ly/2mZdIdE>

World-first solar tower powered tomato farm in Port Augusta

<http://bit.ly/2hijc54>

VIDEOS

IKEA Documentary

<http://bit.ly/2FpGiqn>

How Lego is Made Documentary

<http://bit.ly/2DHTmLv>

Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy interview, 2013, MCA Artist Voice

<http://bit.ly/2ruj80i>

Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy – Vimeo

<http://bit.ly/2FYJwCq>

The Gallery's Learning programs are supported by the Department for Education and Child Development.