

The gestures implicit in support; to hug, to carry, to hold

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Objects, like bodies, exist on a three-dimensional plane. The space objects take up, and their interactions with other things, are like the gestures of the body. Objects can hug each other, can carry, can prop up. Objects support each other.

Reconfiguring the relationship between the picture and the frame reveals an interaction between two objects usually implied within traditional mediums. When value is awarded to the frame's object-like qualities it can cuddle the painting, raise it up or offer it on a ceramic platter. One that harkens back to the earthenware Mum would use for dinner parties. It says: 'here you go'. It's an offering. The relationship between frame and image can be more than one sided. It can be an equal dialogue of forms talking to each other.

My Dad told me a story once, that in the time of colonial settlement in Australia people would go to the post office to set their watches. Far before the age of iPhone Auto Updates marking daylight savings; time was a physical construct shared by people. It had to be physically passed from one person to another and worn on the body. Our relationships with objects are built up over time. The many gestures and body language impulses of checking the watch around your wrist. Muscle memory. The ghostly relationship of your body adapting to a physical object, only revealed when you forget your watch and check your bare wrist for the time. We perform with objects through habit, this performance becomes layered.

Australia Post's function as an institution which distributes communication is a colonial structure. It's representative of Commonwealth ownership and communication as it relates to the ownership of stolen indigenous land. Indigenous songlines, which are communicated across groups and across country are deeply connected to this land. The disrespect non-indigenous Australia shows songlines belittles this communication: exemplifying a colonial arrogance that ignores the connection between country, communication and knowledge. It's a separation between land and concepts, between the physical and the idea. Mumu Mike Williams makes paintings about land rights by adopting a postbag, a traditional emblem of colonial power. The bag becomes the support for his work, performing as a kind of canvas onto which he redefines its imperial symbolism. Emerging from underneath the painting are the words THEFT OR MISUSE OF THIS BAG IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE. The word bag is crossed out and replaced with 'Ngura', in Pitjantjatjara *Ngura* (Ngoo-rra) refers to 'country'. On stolen land the act of defacing is a criminal offence on whose terms? Physically piercing through the bag is a spear. The gesture here isn't passive, it's a violent reclamation of stolen land. The gesture is aggressive, it uses material of the colonial to push against a settler narrative.

Time builds up in layers, in memories, in coincidences, in interactions. And so often for artists time takes the form of memories of material. The way paint moves. A colour made when two paint tubes are mixed together. Something pushed, something brushed, something smudged. To paint without the creation of a surface in mind is to work from these memories. Layers created over time produce a resultant form. In Jake Walker's work *0104* there's a layering of paint exposed at the edges of the canvas. A tiny portion of the top coat is missing at the seams, evidence of many layers underneath can be seen. Or in *0102* marks are scraped into the painted surface to reveal the goings on underneath. There are many different kinds of support. There is the support of layers of paint previously applied that allows the outermost layer to form the surface of the work, a layering of time.

As I write I'm on a train. Journeying from the exhibition in Bendigo passing mighty hundred-year old gum trees. And country towns, whose gold rush financed Victorian churches, town halls and banks butt hard against the barren landscape of the Western plains. I think about how the building of the gallery was made, how architecture always requires a level of support from foundations. That tall buildings require large roots underground to stand tall. There are many different kinds of support, as there are gestures between things. I listen to *Into Dust* by Mazzy Star and imagine the layers of gestures I've performed today, imagine them like layers of paint, like layers of rock deep below the surface of the earth, a million miles under where I am, here.

In Kate Tucker's work the support and the painting work together, physically holding each other up. Canvases are cupped in ceramic and bronze forms that mirror the geometric shapes and patterns of one another. A reciprocal relationship is formed, one of equal value. Physically leaning on each other as you might a good mate's shoulder. *In Deep's* bronze, support allows the 'painting' to be viewed much more like an object. The support picks the painting up off the ground. They are made specifically to fit together. They're mates these two, they work together. Finger prints pushing lumpy textures in bronze riff off the transparent gooey surface that covers braided canvas. I imagine my fingers performing these gestures, pushing into the wax that was cast to be bronze. Plating the canvas.

I remember as a kid going to a carnival. There was a stall where you filled small glass bottles with colourful sand. Delicately pouring into a tiny opening an array of brightly coloured powders, I remember being so struck by the process: having little control over the end result. The pattern it would make, each grain falling through the glass to be layered on the previous layer. The resultant form was a series of colourful stripes that resembled the geological strata

of the earth's surface. I guess they are one in the same, layers of sand and layers of rock just on different scales of time.

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