

NOTE TO SELF

MATTHEW CROOKES PATRICK JONES RICHARD TIPPING LIBBY TULIP
CURATED BY GERRY BOBSIEN

Note to Self was an opportunity to present works by four very different artists all engaged in some way with word and image. Their individual approach marked by the exhibition's title showcases the elasticity of contemporary art in its role as storyteller. Richard Tipping has for many years been at the nexus of poetry, communication and visual design. His artpoems tweak an assumed language of sign and symbol for inversion and subversion. Libby Tulip has a longstanding interest in the tension between formal sculpture and the narrative impulse. Her poetic interests are revealed in the works made over the past twenty years from her 1994 *Constructivist Garden* for London's Chelsea Flower Show to large-scale public artworks and installations. Neither romantic nor fanciful, Tulip's work is often based on existing narratives in song or nursery rhyme and from here she presents a new visual and material interpretation as a disturbance. In a recent exhibition at Auckland's Room Gallery, Matthew Crookes read excerpts from B Traven's *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*. His fascination with this mysterious author of the 1920's and with the visual placement of text makes for an interesting fit in this exhibition. Patrick Jones revels in the mischief to be made with language. His art and writing are interconnected, mixing graphic typography, performance, video and poetry in work that is both political and crackingly disruptive.



MATTHEW CROOKES

Matthew Crookes works with what he calls 'low status' materials to construct a world of imagined narratives. These constructions are both beat poem and crude construction made with what seems to be a laboured and nervous energy. Unsettling and gripping at the same time, the oddity of the materials and choice of words anticipates a kind of narrative but their random construction makes them a tempting code to crack.

In his work for this exhibition and as Artist in Residence, Matthew Crookes has created a work in response to the historic context of the Lock-Up. As artist and narrator he explores a fiction that speaks of a character with little or no control over their environment. Confined from the world and isolated, he explores what people might make or do to retain a sense of self and the creative results of this alienation. In this context, Crookes draws on rituals like the making of trench art objects and prison graffiti to identify common elements in the way displacement affects the individual.

Matthew Crookes is a New Zealand artist and the Lock-Up's October artist in residence. He has produced a large-scale public work in Wellington as part of a billboard project for the Adam Art Gallery and exhibited in Auckland, Wellington and Melbourne's C3 Gallery. He is currently a candidate for a Doctorate of Fine Art at Elam School of Fine Art, University of Auckland.

LIBBY TULIP



Libby Tulip is driven by a narrative impulse to present us with the confounding world of Love. Her painted scroll of love song titles, all predominantly featuring the word *Don't*, make real this paradox. How can such a negative command be an entreaty to romance? The finality of those words painted onto her 150 metre long list are made abject with the act of swallowing in a performance that rejects this notion most bitterly.

Tulip continues her interpretation of folkloric storytelling in the women's cell. Be careful what you wish for as this oversized wishbone forged and fabricated in steel mocks the fragility of the real thing. *If wishes were horses/Beggars would ride* - you have as much chance of getting that wish granted as you have breaking the weld on this wishbone. The idea of clasping this previously flimsy object is ludicrous, the sharp-edge of the 'bone' menacing. The nursery rhyme is presented for us as a reminder of the implicit role of story in our lives.

Libby Tulip is a Sydney-based artist working across a range of media. She completed a Bachelor of Arts at Sydney College of the Arts in 1988 and went on to complete a British Higher National Diploma (Blacksmithing and Design) from Hereford College of Art and Design. Returning to Australia in 1994, Tulip established a business designing and producing architectural ironwork for public and private commission. She has taught in the sculpture departments of Sydney College of the Arts and Australian National University, Canberra and is currently a Masters candidate at Sydney College of the Arts.

In 2009 Patrick Jones and his collaborators – Meg Ulman and Zephyr Ogden Jones – participated in the Lock-Up's residency program. Here they combined their efforts as the *Artist-as-Family* in a unique cooperative practice. Over the three week period they collected waste, processed it and made the short, creative documentary tracking the experience, *17 Days*.

Food Forest is the result of another family collaborative effort commissioned by the Museum of Contemporary Art for their current exhibition, *In the Balance: Art for a Changing World*. Entirely edible and self-sustaining, the community garden was an oasis of sustainability in Sydney's Surry Hills. The final video *Mashed* is a survey of Jones' practice with Jason Workman between 2006 and 2009. During this period, the duo used their bodies as tools of investigation; using performance to intervene and interact with public attitudes and spaces. Where the artists themselves become the text with a physical and rigorous version of 'tagging'.

Jones describes himself as an intermedia artist, poet and collaborator. Although he shifts effortlessly between mediums – performance, video, installation and poetry – rather, it is a social space that Jones engages. Through his collaborations he enters into a number of commensurate fields from eco-politics to social commentary. He builds a practice hinged upon community and cooperative efforts with work collectively created and owned.



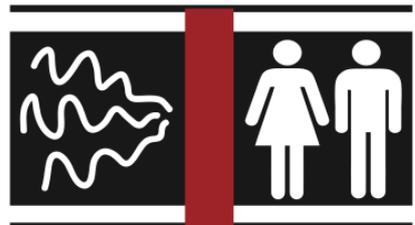
**PATRICK
JONES**

Richard Tipping is a hybrid creative working within and through the fields of literature, fine art and design. The works exhibited for *Note to Self* are what Tipping calls artpoems or hypergraphics and in his words, *Some are sweet takes and some sour grapes...my feelings swing between lyrical and political, between bemused and amused, angry and hopeful. These reworkings of sign templates push out from a conversation between word and image questioning the viewer's attitudes and expectations, bringing a private heat to public messaging.*

Richard Tipping grew up in Adelaide and studied film, philosophy and literature at Flinders University. Whilst lecturing at the University of Newcastle he continually explores the physical qualities of language as a sculptor and word-artist exhibiting widely throughout Australia and Internationally. He is known as a poet through four books and representation in major anthologies including the *Oxford Book of Australian Verse* and the *Penguin Book of Australian Poetry*. He began composing typographic concrete poems on a manual typewriter in 1967, exploring the spatial qualities of lettering and the page as a field of composition. In the late 1970's he began photographing ironies and oddities in public signage. He is represented by Australian Galleries and small versions of some of his 'artsigns' published by Artpoem.com are available through the stores of the Museum of Modern Art and the Tate Modern. He continues making art with words, getting poetry off the page and into the streets. (see : www.artpoem.com for more)

**RICHARD
TIPPING**

**SYMBOL
BARRIER**



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INTERPRET**

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MATTHEW CROOKES
PATRICK JONES
RICHARD TIPPING
LIBBY TULIP
8 - 24 OCTOBER 2010

CATALOGUE WRITTEN AND DESIGNED BY
BELINDA HOWDEN AND GERRY BOBSIEN

IMAGES
MATTHEW CROOKES, *BOOK COVERS (STUDIO)*, 2010
LIBBY TULIP, *DON'T (DETAIL)*, 2010
WORKMAN JONES (PATRICK JONES AND JASON WORKMAN), *TAG*, 2008
RICHARD TIPPING, *SYMBOL BARRIER*, 2010

BACK COVER
RICHARD TIPPING, *SOUND SILENCE (QUIET)*, 2010



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THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

THELOCK-UP CULTURAL CENTRE
90 HUNTER ST NEWCASTLE
PHONE 4925 2265
WWW.THELOCKUP.INFO

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