

SITE LINES - ARTIST STATEMENT

I remember living through the OPEC Oil Crises of the 1970s. It stirred in me an interest in alternative technologies and social structures. The D.I.Y. ethic, self-reliance, sustainability, multiskilling, tolerance and understanding were promoted as tactics for navigating a rapidly changing cultural landscape. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1990 and the fallout of the 2008 global financial crisis have significantly reshaped or confirmed long held beliefs, confirmed in the publications of Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett, "The Spirit Level" and James Gilligan, "Why Some Politicians Are More Dangerous Than Others".

Performative, non-objective, hybrid, cross discipline practises have the potential for reshaping saner, rational and more resilient personal practises. I began seeing socially engaged practises as interventions that encourage behavioural change, especially in regard to health, mobility, the environment and a range of quality of life issues. The bicycle is a practical tool that converges with other zero emission and sustainable technologies as part of a necessary adaptation to climate change.

Following a successful series of gallery and studio tours organised jointly by Brendan Penzer as Director of ATVP and myself as Secretary of BIKESydney and co-director at ATVP, in 2011 it was decided to incorporate ARTcycle. We now operate as an artist run initiative, a membership based, not-for-profit, incorporated association. We support artists and artist friendly events that incorporate bicycles, cycling and zero emission vehicles.

Realising the pre-eminence of the visual senses, image making still retains a prominent place in my daily practise. Since the 90s my work has been created from photographic sources. Working up drawings no longer satisfied. My daily routine was one of reading and researching followed by work in the studio. At twilight I would stretch my legs and fill my lungs on the bicycle. Upon return to the studio I would sketch up work, carve relief blocks and stencils, etc.

Stencil and stamp making, lubki prints, medieval woodblocks, ukio-e, have contributed to the development of the printed images. The relief printing blocks have all been carved from re-purposed mdf salvaged from previous Hazelhurst installations. The prints were all printed by hand using oil paint and medium, a baren and calligraphy paper. The paintings are artist quality oil paint on primed cotton canvas using a medium derived from scouring technical manuals. Many of the stretcher bars from the large paintings were source 'dumpster diving' at SCA where I am completing an MFA in painting.

The Botany Bay Trail part of the Great Kai Mia Trail, and is part of Sydney Metropolitan region wide network of off-road paths and trails that if connected and provisioned with the correct infrastructure could reduce car usage up to 50%. That 50% is a realistic goal set by planning officials in Copenhagen where they currently have 35% of daily trips in the urban areas made on bicycle a topography very similar to Sydney's southern suburbs. The benefits are reduced dependence on oil, freeing road space, and parking space, improved health, cleaner more liveable environment. These recreational trail corridors would then become urban wildlife habitat, a lattice of green to enable flora and fauna to reconnect increasing biological diversity, amplifying the biophilic effect for humans.

The exhibition is the culmination of various tactics, a strategic attempt at create a stable foundation upon which to experiment with diverse forms that have a social and ecological ambitions and to refine and consolidate existing practises.

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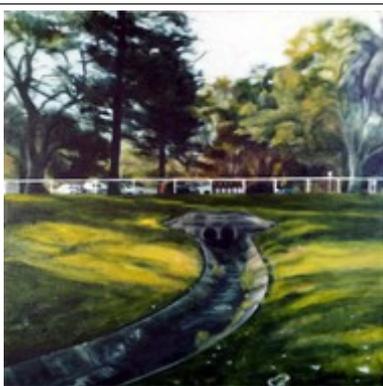
No	Image	Description
01		<p><i>Air Traffic Control</i> 2015 Oil on canvas 167(h) x 198(w) cm \$4,500 Aristotle thought that air <i>pneuma</i> animated the human body. To those inclined to magical thinking 'air' is analogous to thought/ intuition/ telepathy, and is often personified as a figure with wings. For example, ghosts, angels (messengers), demons, cherubs, Cupid, Nemesis, dragons, horses, etc. All rendered innocuous metaphors in this age of synthetic telepathy.</p>
02		<p><i>The Professor and Mary Ann</i> 2014 Oil on canvas 195(h) x 224(w) cm \$8000 James Gilligan wrote <i>Why Some Politicians are More Dangerous Than Others</i>. An analysis of violence in America and its relationship to political power, his conclusion is that traditional conservative cultures of shame/honour prescribe violence as a means of solving conflict. This corroborates the findings of Prof Richard Taylor of Sydney University who found suicide rates (one form of violence) increase under conservative governments in Australia and Britain in a dose-response relationship.</p>
03, 04, 05		<p><i>Site Lines</i> 2015 Oil unique state block prints on calligraphy paper Image 13(h) x 23(w) cm \$100 unframed</p>

06		<p>Site Lines 2014 Charcoal on Fabriano paper 190(h) x 150(w) cm \$900 High tension stanchions like the one sketched litter the landscape speaking of centralised and distributed power, a dim call to the heady days of Stalinism (The Man of Steel) and even Mao's home iron smelters. Estimates are that 30% of the power distributed along such gold plated lines is dissipated.</p>
07, 08, 09, 10, 11		<p>Desire Line 2015 Oil unique state block prints on calligraphy paper Image 52(h) x 74(w) cm \$150 unframed See <i>HMS Desire</i> below.</p>
12		<p>Stormwater 1 2014 Oil on canvas (h) x (w) cm \$900 The Mill Stream behind Doncaster Avenue, Kensington.</p>
13		<p>Stormwater 2 2014 Oil on canvas (h) x (w) cm \$900 The Mill Stream behind Doncaster Avenue, Kensington.</p>

14		<p>HMS Desire 2015 Oil on canvas 158.5(h) x 711(w)cm \$4,500 Container ships also use the least refined fuel oil contributing enormous amounts to the worlds noxious gas and particulate load. Machines without organs. HMS Desire was a British privateer ship in the late 1500s. It is on the crest of the Falkland Islands. Desire Petroleum was named for it, it is yet to find oil.</p>
15 - 28		<p>Australian Impressions 2014 Oil on medium density fibreboard 13(h) x 23(w)cm 9" x 5" \$200 ea Tribute to the 9 x 5 Impressionist Show. These sketches are the beginning of the process of painting before scaling up the works. The MDF is recycled from The Ghost Show, Hazelhurst.</p>
29		<p>Jet 2014 Oil on canvas (h) x (w) cm Kingsford Smith Airport at Mascot operated by Sydney Airport Corp., creates a large pollution problem for Sydney. Once publicly owned it was sold to a consortium including Macquarie Bank just over ten years ago. The operating structure has just gone through another overhaul. Recent public comment regarding road works at T2-3 attracted 130 comments (approx) of these 70+ were from cyclists demanding better access to and past the airport. Completing the Botany Bay Trail would deliver most of the requested improvement. Jet fuel is the lightest component of crude oil.</p>

30		<p>Black Swan 2014 Oil on canvas 73(h) x 90(w) cm \$900 Nassim Nicolas Taleb penned a book <i>The Black Swan</i> about the use of mathematics and logic to undermine our most cherished shibboleths and tin gods.</p>
32		<p>Sydney Green Ring – Mill Stream Culvert 2 2013 Charcoal on Fabriano Paper 183(h) x 120(w) cm \$900 Botany Swamps or Eastlakes was the subject of a major clean up by Sydney Water less than a decade ago. The debris in this image is the result of “stormwater run off” emerging from under Astrolabe Park before rejoining the Eastlakes proper. Coca Cola Amatil, Lion Nathan, the Grocery Retailers Association and others attempted to prevent container deposit legislation knowing it has little or no impact on their profits.</p>
33		<p>Mrs Macarthurs See 2013 Charcoal on Fabriano paper 190(h) x 140(w) cm \$900 John Macarthur bought the farm from another of the Rum Corp officers for the price of a barrel of rum. The spring pictured, a favourite water hole and resting place for local indigenous is on the western side of Pymont. It was one of a few springs on the peninsula and the only permanent spring. After having acquired the land a picnic visited the spring and it inspired Mrs Macarthur to rename the farm Pymont after Bad Pymont a spa town in Germany. The German town features a cave into which carbon dioxide seeps from underground vents. A visit to the cave was sold as a therapeutic cure. The 'cave' a rock overhang is viewable from Anzac Bridge, the spring however does not flow.</p>
34		<p>Turner Prize Wynner 1 2014 Oil on canvas 73(h) x 90(w) cm \$900 A paen to solar divinities and lens artefacts. Deus ex machina.</p>

35		<p>Turner Prize Wynner 2 2014 Oil on canvas 80(h) x 80(w) cm \$900 See Turner Prize Wynner 1.</p>
36		<p>All That Is Solid 2015 Oil on canvas 152(h) x 183(w) cm The title of Marshal Berman's 1982 book on surviving modernity borrowed from Marx and Engel's <i>Communist Manifesto</i>. The sky this day was so leaden and grey that the phrase adhered itself to the image. 'The personal is political' - I am not a fan of government by slogan but some things always ring true. The overpainting is deliberately artless as if someone had attempted to insert vocational, i.e. <i>declassée</i>, reality filters.</p>
37		<p>Man of Steele 2014 Oil on canvas 80(h) x 80(w) cm \$900 Mount Steele and obvious allusions to Frederick Neitzsche, Joseph Stalin, Clark Kent.</p>
38		<p>Culvert 2014 Oil on canvas 80(h) x 80(w) cm \$900 The extensive wetlands that originate in the now Centennial Park are the largest freshwater wetlands in Sydney. All that remains of the wetlands is the man made dams of Centennial Park, Eastlakes and the Mill Ponds, and the stormwater channels that connect them.</p>

39		<p>Riparian bush 2014 Oil on canvas 80(h) x 80(w) cm \$900 Centennial Park was once the subject of a Green Ban when developers threatened to build a parking lot. Recent attempts to introduce speed humps would have dissuaded road cyclists <i>en masse</i> including paralympic cyclists who have no other locations to train and induced more car use. Popular monthly Car Free days were cancelled to facilitate car use.</p>
40		<p>Gully 2014 Oil on canvas 80(h) x 80(w) cm \$900 The Mill Stream originates in Centennial park beneath the ridge line that forms the Botany Watershed. This image is uncannily like a Jason Wing sculpture on the Bay Run at Drummoyne. The sculpture is based upon the creation myth of a snake or eel that creates water courses. Long Finned Eels migrate from Centennial Park to the Coral Sea to mate and die. The Glass Eels make their way back to Centennial Park.</p>
41		<p>Running Jumping Standing Still 2014 Oil on canvas 200(h) x 200(w) cm \$8000 Spike Milligan bought a movie camera for Peter Sellers as a present. Together and with friends they then created a short movie composed of comedic vignettes called <i>Running Jumping Standing Still</i>. It was nominated for an Oscar. <i>Ars vivendi</i> – 'treading water' describes the plight of the environment. As sea levels rise liminal spaces will be consumed by the sea. Water glimpse is of the stormwater canal linking Busby and Kensington Ponds in Centennial Park.</p>
42		<p>Re:cycle 2014 Oil on canvas 74(h) x 86(w) cm \$900 Centennial Park Trust wanted to introduce speed humps so that families could drive to the Park, park their cars inside the Parklands, and cross the road safely so their children could cycle on the learners track. A report was published that blamed all driver error collisions on bicycles.</p>

43		<p>Running Jumping Standing Still 2014 Oil on canvas 73(h) x 90(w) cm \$900 See the room sheet for large paintings.</p>
44		<p>Cooks Last Stand 2015 Oil on canvas 213(h) x 213(w) cm \$8000 Memorial to James Cook at Kaelakekua Bay, Hawaii. Last stop on Cooks tour. Some might say that the Cooks tour was over when Cook went for a second helping in the Sandwich Islands and his temper led to him getting his just deserts. Claims of him being eaten by cannibals is a gross oversimplification.</p>
45		<p>Black Face 2015 Oil on canvas 167(h) x 213(w) cm \$6000 James Cook learned his trade hauling coal before joining the Navy. The HMS Endeavour was a former coal bark. Black Lung is a disease coal miners contract from breathing coal dust. Black Face is a form of Vaudeville pantomime popular with the British. Coal was mined at Birchgrove, the deepest shaft in Australia.</p>
Bike 1		<p>Ongoing project developing a standalone power source for audio visual and other electrical presentations. A fleet of bikes equipped with in wheel motors generates electricity which is stored in the battery and converted to 240v by pure sine wave inverter. The images in the slide show represent 10 years of ongoing research in the Sydney regions where art and environmental themed tours and rides have been conducted. It is based on the truism that the best form of bicycle advocacy is riding your bike.</p>
Bike 2		<p>The use of a bicycle to generate electricity is not the best nor most efficient use of mechanical power. This friction drive blender base has been specially manufactured to accept off-the-shelf components. It is used regularly to make smoothies, cocktails, soup and pesto sauce – a favourite. The trailer was purchased for a project in 2000 and is still in use. Another three trailers will be purchased as part of the ARTcycle Inc fleet. The Schwinn bicycle is one of many that was found abandoned – and restored. This bike only required a new chain and puncture repair.</p>

Wood
blocks



This method of woodblock relief printing was devised to be quick, portable, and frugal. It uses mdf as the substrate as it is cheap and easily obtained (this re-purposed from a Hazelhurst install). Techniques were borrowed from Russian lubki printing, Japanese ukio-e, traditional woodblock, lino printing and intaglio using oil paint as the ink. The result is a painterly multiple, each individual, each printed by hand. The idea of unique multiples owes something to Andy Warhol and his screen printed 'paintings'.