

Everyone is OK with ghosts

Written for *Un Magazine* (print only edition) curated by Benjamin Forster and Robert Cook.
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Date: 04/02/14
Location: □□□□□
Weather: heavy rain

Note to self, the gallery closes at 5pm. Note to self, so does the ooo.

It is 4:56pm.

A young girl is tying a sash around her waist into a bow. She is focused on the twisting and looping and the way it all pieces together. She is working the bow with complete precision, as though she is both arranging flowers and applying gauze. In front of her a young man is taking a selfie next to the A. It is likely that his name starts with 'a'.

I try to imagine the collection outside so I can see it, but it's raining so instead I'm imagining sculptures and paintings laid out in quadrants recomposing themselves as mush while people look on, hands to mouths, shrieking at a visible loss of history.

It seems only natural to ask at this point, as we begin, that if these objects are just referents, placeholders for things and possible worlds, what variables should we braid together? And to remember, of course, that there are also multiple interdependent narratives taking place.

Under close scrutiny paint, marble and the holy wafer begin to resemble the same thing.

Date: 05/02/14
Location: □□□□□
Weather: overcast, clearing to blue skies at 21°C~

The building itself is a partially sandstone structure with eight steps, twelve columns and important names engraved across the top. It has two bronze men on horseback either side. They are impressive and robust, but they have oxidized over the years and are now a mottled shade of teal. I like them even though I don't know who they are.

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To their left and right are three large palms behind two smaller ones. Then there is a road and across the road a park. In the park are evergreens, dappled light and potholes. Amongst this are minor birds, ibises, pigeons, lorikeets, magpies and sometimes seagulls.

1 Apparently, □□□□□□□□□□ killed or at least allowed his student, □□□□□□□□, to mysteriously die after he proved the presence of irrational numbers. There will be no irrationality, he said irrationally, and ended the conversation with one final irrational act, which took place in a boat while the moon and the water were too busy kissing to notice. Anyway, now his name is on the side of a building, probably on the side of many buildings.

Through the park from the city
From 1 of the 3 train stations
Over the footbridge
Get drop off in a blue ute

Things to do on the steps:

Sit
Point
Take photos of the building
Take photos of family or friends sitting or standing in front of the building
Take photos of family or friends sitting or standing near A, M, E, R, I, C, or A
Choose a letter; stand next to it, lean on it, press your body against it like it's your lover

Ways to react to the performing security guards:

Laugh
Look shocked
Walk past quickly
Get a fright then smile and clap
Raise your hand at the end like
it's all for you
Look shocked
Wait politely until you can walk past, then walk past as though nothing happened

What to do in the foyer:

Check your bag
Check your phone
Check the time, 10:32am.

The gallery smells like airplane food, it's only subtle though. It reminds me that the gallery is temperature controlled. That it has its own temperate microenvironment fit for preservation that will far exceed you, or me.

'Old friends' are subbed in and out for us now and our senses are woven with these objects, which just as much clutch at our instruments of perception. They are synthetic but immediate. As though days here are actually a few hundred years long.

Date: 07/02/14

Location: □□□□□

Weather: Sunny, top of 26°C

Lunch hour. 12:11pm.

Enter the building and take a hard right. You should see an arch, a staircase leading down, a flat black leather bench and then a circular burgundy leather lounge. Walk through the arch.

You are now in the 19th century collection.

Most paintings in the room depict this country at about 4-5pm, golden hour, and are landscapes.

Sometimes there are subjects, but often they are just cows. Occasionally there is a beach scene, which looks nothing like the beach we know. There is no flocking of people throwing themselves back into their primordial mother, just a pastel and grey mass.

People move quickly between the paintings, moving back and forth between focal lengths, like pinching and scrolling in real life.

62 paintings of which 39 are landscapes.

Head right. You're now in one of the donor galleries. In here there are mostly pots, urns, angels and lots of blackness.

59 paintings of which 39 are portraits.

Walk to the back of the room and turn left. This is another donor wing. It's mostly 19th century paintings from the motherland.

4 landscapes, 3 with cows, 1 portrait of a dog and 28 depictions of civility to a greater or lesser extent.

It's now 12:42pm and people are sitting in front of the walls titling their cheeks upwards, as though they are in the sun, as though they are tranced by moments in time. Or, perhaps they are just surrendering.

Leave the room in the opposite direction you came, you should find yourself in a 19-20th century room. One room has been skipped by the layout. There is less 'civility' here and more war and languid women and roses and moral concepts. You get the feeling you're looking at a phase when someone could wrap your fingers in finely woven silk and slowly break them into fragments while whispering to you about what is bad and not bad.

I am standing in a room, in a building in a city. I am looking at someone looking at someone in a painting. The someone in the painting is looking at the painter. The order of things doesn't really matter.

A museum is an inorganic structure with four or so walls, designed for continuous and open occupancy, and a complex web of story telling.

Date: 13/02/14

Location: □□□□□

Weather: partial sun, with grey clouds to the south

It's not in bloom now, but there is a tree that limply cloaks a bench in the garden alcove near the gallery. Not many people know what the tree is, with the exception of the possums and those dabbling in organic psychotropics. It is recognisable by its white trumpet shaped flowers. People called them angels and they cause a state of complete amnesia. Below the tree is a bench and below that is a bronze plate - a sanctioned memory.

It is 12:33pm and the gardener that tends to this alcove is tending.

He tells me what all the plants are. That the summers been hot and they have all flushed early so he is cutting them back to ground.

He says that you just have to be, whatever that is, just be. He says he used to put 4 rubber bands around a ruler and play it like a guitar. He says at 15 he realised something and exploded, like a flower would. Then he mentions something about decorative oil lamps and I'm reminded of clear inflatable furniture and the feeling of sweaty skin on vinyl.

At the entrance of the gallery are 3 security guards singing ' Ohh, this is so contemporary, contemporary, con-temp-orrrr-aaaarrryyyyyy'.

Memory is a low-lying fog that lurks around never really making itself known, then dissipates. Like after images.

