



#### ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Since graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) in 1990, Jacqui Stockdale has pursued a diverse practice covering painting, drawing, collage and photography in an astonishing combination of playful exuberance and deadly seriousness.

From her Melbourne studio Stockdale creates 'portraits' that include masks and costumes that have been found on her travels, made by hand or imagined to form an array of wonderful hybrid human and animal characters. In response to the complexity of human emotion, Stockdale explores the presence of these and other colourful and bizarre ritual objects; weaving history, folklore and the carnivalesque into all of her works.

Stockdale has been awarded numerous grants, significant prizes and residencies. Her work is represented in major public and private collections throughout Australia and overseas including Artbank, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Parliament House. She has exhibited extensively throughout Australia and internationally, including at The Art Gallery of New South Wales; Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne and Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. A documentary about her practice, *Heart*, won 'Best Documentary' at the 2008 Melbourne International Film Festival and screened on the ABC's *Artscape* in 2009. Stockdale's practice has recently been covered in a variety of media publications including *Australian Art Collector*, *Artist Profile*, and *Australian Art Review*. She was most recently awarded the Australia Council New Work Grant for established artists earlier this year.

EXHIBITION DATES 6 October - 11 November 2011

The artist would like to thank Amy Gebhardt and Rosanna Mastroianni for their assistance in the making of the animation *hello world* that forms part of this series.

Cover: *to return*, 2011, collage elements on paper, 76 x 56 cm

Leaf: *careful she might hear you*, 2011, collage elements on paper, 76 x 56 cm

Inside Left: *buoy*, 2011, collage elements on paper, 100 x 70 cm

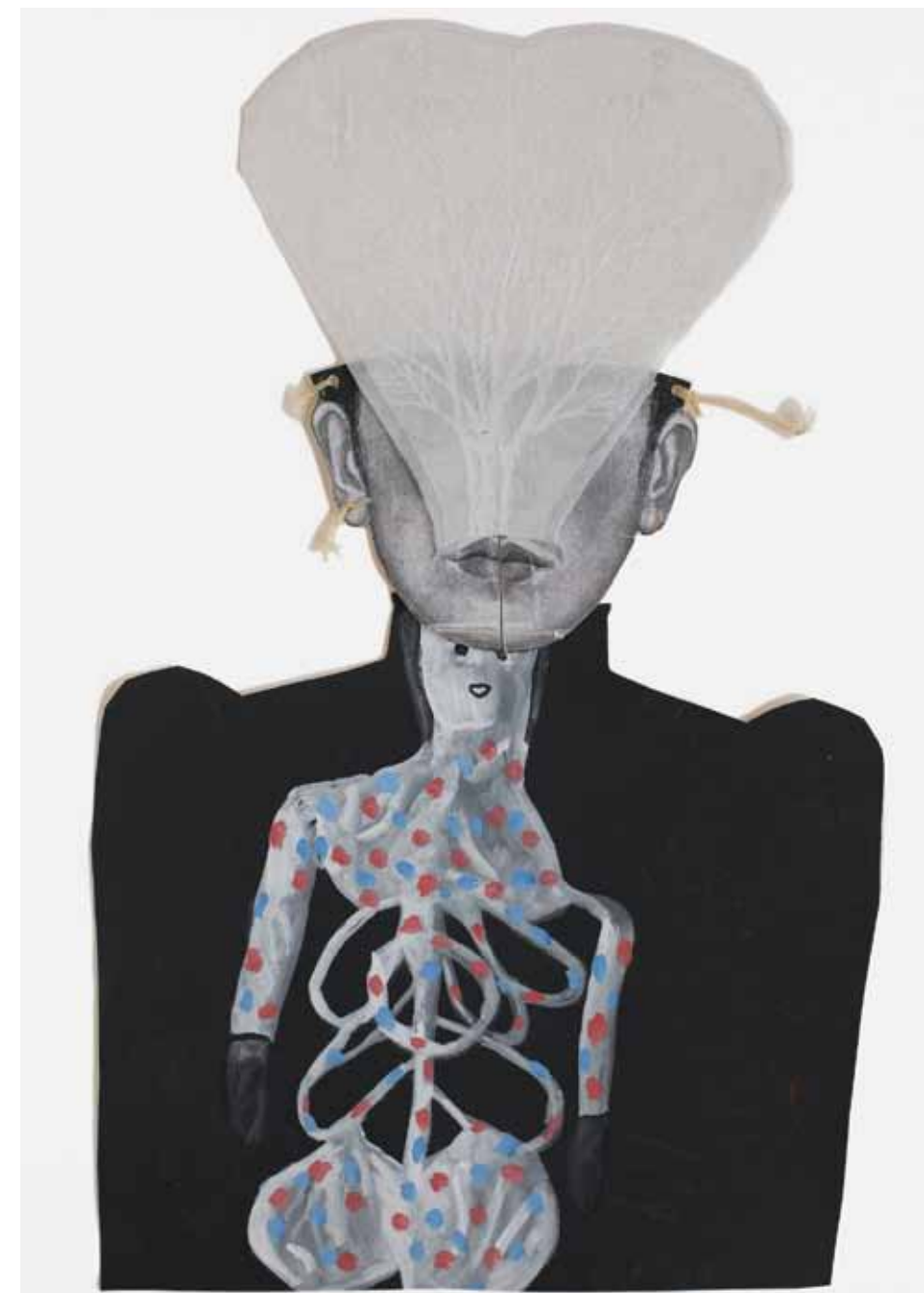
Inside Right: *the keeper*, 2011, collage elements on paper, 76 x 56 cm

<sup>1</sup>Geoffrey Farmer, in interview with Jens Hoffmann, in *Untitled, 12th Istanbul Biennial, 2011: The Companion*, Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts and Yapi Kredi Publications, Istanbul, September 2011, p. 179

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**JACQUI STOCKDALE** papercuts and bloodlines



### THE DIRECTOR'S CUT

I'm looking at a photograph of Jacqui Stockdale's Melbourne studio, taken earlier in the year when she was beginning to conceptualise her work for *papercuts and bloodlines*. It's an image which speaks of creative chaos: on the walls are works completed and in process; below them hang, or sit, an array of inspirational objects – dolls, masks, fabrics, in still life arrangements, some of which find form in her paintings and photography. There are also signs of the artist's tools: a sketchbook atop a stepladder, a glue-gun, a small paint roller (daubed with yellow), and a tub of paints tucked to one side.

As photos of artist's studios go, this one has a special allure, allowing a peek into Stockdale's artistic process, into a kind of 'world' of objects which makes her (and her work) tick. The act of constructing collage is, as Stockdale describes, 'at once rebellious'. It is an act directly born out of her studio practice as many of the collages in this exhibition are composed of fragments of past works on paper (in watercolour, pencil, charcoal, texta, pastel). The 'rebellion' lies in Stockdale's ability to surrender these past works unto a new creative process more attuned to subconscious impulse and spontaneity than her paintings, for example. Stockdale explains: 'Once I start the painting I am more or less committed to the initial design because I use light brushstrokes and I like to keep the freshness rather than over paint.'

Stockdale's collages begin by chance; she may spot an image, a face, from an earlier work, half-concealed or fallen on the floor, and it will trigger new associations, new creative

possibilities. In a sense, the reflexive nature of her collages becomes a metaphor for artistic process, for the way that particular ideas and images continually percolate and fixate with artists. An 'old' work may still resonate with new, current, or as yet known ideas.

The well-known Australian painter Vivienne Binns once told me how she still uses paints she's had for the past twenty years, that sometimes she begins a work with little motivation other than a vague desire to use up this leftover paint. In time, the act of painting and the spirit of personal/professional history imbued within these paints will lead to something else, but it says something about the primary relationship between an artist and their materials, of the many 'truths' and leaps of faith that lie therein.

Stockdale's collages are indeed an act of faith – faith in her own artistic calling and intuition, and 'faith' as a facet of human expression, namely through religion, mythology and folklore, as one of her key interests. I was lucky enough to see her last major collage-based exhibition, *body land*, almost a decade ago, in Darwin (in 2003). This was, as I recall, more of an installation employing elements of collage. *papercuts and bloodlines* may also be understood as an installation; Stockdale does after all envisage the display of these latest figurative collages to be 'like a bizarre family tree', and this analogy also inspires a more free-form sculptural work, a 'large hanging mobile of heads'. Yet, each collage 'portrait' in *papercuts and bloodlines* is above all a distinct pictorial statement.

It's interesting to observe the progression of these collages, in form and title. I see *It tis what it is* in an earlier form (then called *When the wind changed*); the later version shows the head with a less pronounced tilt. The central figure in *Beauty and the bogan* has gained a crown of paper flowers (or thorns?) compared with an earlier version called *Gigantes*. And in *Careful she might hear you*, one of several works in which we may detect the shape of Stockdale's own head in profile, elements are shifted, added or subtracted from the initial work-in-progress (called *Rainbow connection*). These works may well change again before their final exhibition view. Such is their methodology and the 'addictive' process of collage making, according to Stockdale – 'like playing with paper dolls as a child but on a more serious level'.

While there's a lot to be said for the power of play and free association, Stockdale's collages are, like her overall practice, bound up with serious and timely issues. Collage itself is a highly apt medium for portraying the contemporary human condition: multilayered, complex, vernacular, unstable. Like Stockdale, Canadian artist Geoffrey Farmer enjoys the ability to 're-evaluate and revise' his work which often employs magazine cut-outs – collaged, propped up or suspended – to suggest the drama and contradictions of human existence.' The symmetrical feature of many of Stockdale's collages in this exhibition serves as both a decorative and psychological device – somewhat like the Rorschach inkblot. As their collective title suggests, these works impart a kind of genealogy, a 'bloodline', stemming from Stockdale's storehouse of visual stimuli and the larger canvas of her everyday life. In this vein these works are like a 'director's cut' offering insights behind-the-scenes and beneath the conscious and which, in this case, affirm the breadth and beauty of Stockdale's unique artistic vision.

Maurice O'Riordan, Editor of *Art Monthly Australia* 2011

