



ALAN CONSTABLE

CLOSE-UP

ALAN CONSTABLE—CLOSE-UP

Alan Constable's lifelong interest in cameras began around the age of eight, when he started using scraps of paper and cardboard from cereal boxes to fashion his own. It may come as a surprise to people unfamiliar with Alan's story to learn that he is legally blind (with limited tunnel-vision); and also deaf, which makes his world all the more internal and contained. As observers we can only project our own perspectives onto Alan's work, but one could speculate that his physical challenges have defined his extraordinary artistic abilities.

Last year I was fortunate enough to work with Alan on a collaboration entitled *Polaroid Project*, which I initiated together with Arts Project Australia in Melbourne. Working on this exhibition was a memorable experience and a privilege that gave me an insight into Alan's studio practice rarely offered to others. *Polaroid Project* later toured to The Armory in New York City, and was shown at the Fleisher/Ollman Gallery in Philadelphia, further cementing Alan's growing international profile.

Although not a collaboration in the traditional sense, the project provided an opportunity to present two process-based artists who both work from the readymade. The result was a project with very different visual outcomes. The Polaroid boxes I created were fastidiously crafted and painted to replicate exactly the colour and scale (to the millimetre) of the original packaging. Minus text and incidental imagery, they amplified the abstract qualities of the boxes, allowing a space for viewers to trigger their own memories and narratives related to the Polaroid product. On the other hand, Alan's cameras emphasised the handmade, intensifying and celebrating the imperfections associated with the human touch. None were perfect, nor exactly to scale, but it was exactly these qualities that resonated with and engaged audiences. The original Polaroid cameras were all standard black, but Alan chose various coloured glazes for his versions; they ranged from black to red, gold and pewter. Each carefully glazed camera provided a further shift away from the original, precise, pristine machine.







While watching Alan work I was impressed by the immediacy of his construction process, unselfconscious expression and love for his subject matter: the camera. Alan works alone, holding the reference object millimetres from his eyes, scanning and touching the surface then committing the details to memory to render his impressions. The clay is carefully pushed, pinched, scraped and scratched, then pieced together with his fingers. He works quickly, hands covered in clay and slip-glaze, as each camera component is carefully built then assembled—body, lens, viewfinder, buttons, knobs and handles. Alan produces astoundingly beautiful sculptures that move beyond what they represent, beyond mere copies of static objects. More than just cameras, they carry the collective account of us all. We recognize and remember within these small sculptures our families, friends, lovers, holidays and childhood. Although these cameras might be seen as an extension of Alan (often with his fingerprints left pressed into their surface) they are also an extension of us and our memories, and embody a universal narrative.

Alan's interest in cameras (objects that are totally reliant on vision to find, frame and capture an image) is not without irony; although it is precisely these concerns, particularly the lens and the viewfinder, that seem to interest him the most. Alan accentuates the visual operatives of the camera, hollowing out the large round lens at the front and presenting an open void. Likewise the viewfinder is often enlarged, creating yet another window to the world. Alan draws our attention to these portals, inviting us to look through these distorted and exaggerated openings to see the world as he does himself.

Just like real cameras, they demand to be picked up and caressed, held against the eye and looked through. Friends of mine own a number of Alan's cameras, including one of the spectacular red works from *Polaroid Project*. When I visit, I can't help but pick it up, it is like an old friend. Whenever I hold that camera and peer through the long, tunnel-shaped viewfinder, it reminds me of Alan; in particular his clay covered hands, kneading and constructing the soft clay. I was fortunate to have sat alongside Alan when he made some of these cameras. No words were spoken—the experience spoke for itself.

PETER ATKINS, AUGUST 2015





NOT TITLED (PURPLE AND GREEN MOVIE CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

22 × 25 × 9 cm

\$1,600



NOT TITLED (BLUE INSTAMATIC CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

10 × 18 × 11 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (BLUE MOVIE CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

16 × 18 × 10 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (BOX BROWNIE CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

15 × 15 × 10 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (BROWN DUAL-LENS MEDIUM FORMAT CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

17 × 15 × 9 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (DUAL-LENS MEDIUM FORMAT CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

21 × 14 × 8 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (GREEN AND BROWN POLAROID CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

15 × 19 × 16 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (GREEN AND PINK SLR) 2015

Ceramic

9 × 20 × 9 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (GREEN DIGITAL CAMERA) 2014

Ceramic

11 × 23 × 16 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (GREEN DUAL-LENS MEDIUM FORMAT CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

18 × 13 × 9 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (MULTI-LENS PASSPORT CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

12 × 25 × 9 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (ORANGE, YELLOW AND BLACK POLAROID CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

13 × 15 × 16 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (PURPLE SLR CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

13 × 23 × 14 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (TWIN-LENS MEDIUM FORMAT CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

16 × 10 × 8 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (YELLOW AND BROWN DUAL-LENS MEDIUM FORMAT CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

8 × 14 × 8 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (YELLOW INSTAMATIC CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

11 × 17 × 8 cm

\$1,300



NOT TITLED (BLUE BOX BROWNIE CAMERA) 2014

Ceramic

14 × 11 × 16 cm

\$1,000



NOT TITLED (BLUE INSTAMATIC CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

5 × 20 × 6 cm

\$1,000



NOT TITLED (BLUE INSTAMATIC CAMERA) 2015

Ceramic

9 × 20 × 10 cm

\$1,000



NOT TITLED (PINK INSTAMATIC CAMERA WITH STRAP) 2015

Ceramic

10 × 20 × 9 cm

\$1,000



NOT TITLED (PINK BOX BROWNIE) 2014

Ceramic

14 × 12 × 12 cm

\$700

ALAN CONSTABLE

1956 Born, Melbourne

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Close-up*, Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane

Alan Constable, Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

2013 *Alan Constable: Ten Cameras*, South Willard, Los Angeles

2011 *Viewfinder: Alan Constable Survey*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

Constable, Stills Gallery, Sydney, New South Wales

2009 *Alan Constable: Clay Cameras*, Helen Gory Galerie, Melbourne

JOINT EXHIBITION

2014 *Polaroid Project* (with Peter Atkins), Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne; Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Victoria; The Armory in New York, NY, USA; Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Philadelphia, PA, USA

2009 *Alan Constable & Julian Martin*, Australian Galleries, Melbourne

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Victorian Craft Award*, Craft, Melbourne

The Salon, Scott Livesey Galleries, Melbourne

Well Red, Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney

That's Funny, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

2014 *Annual Gala Exhibition*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

Deakin University Contemporary Small Sculpture Award, Deakin University Art Gallery, Melbourne

Small Universe, No Vacancy Gallery, Melbourne

Into the Vault and Out of the Box, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

Animal Magnetism, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

2013–14 *Renegades: Outsider Art*, Moree Plains Gallery, New South Wales; The Arts Centre Gold Coast, Queensland; KickArts Centre of Contemporary Arts, Cairns, Queensland

2013 *Annual Gala Exhibition*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

Melbourne Now, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Supermarket, Craft, Melbourne

By Women, Of Women, Queen Victoria Women's Centre, Melbourne

Nocturne, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

Manningham Victorian Ceramic Art Award, Manningham Art Gallery, Melbourne

Modern + Traditional Auction, Leonard Joel Auction House, Melbourne

- Repeat. Restate... Reiterate*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Outsiderism*, Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Philadelphia, PA, USA
- World In My Eyes*, C3 Gallery, Melbourne
- At the Table*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Classic Albums*, Tanks Art Centre, Cairns, Queensland
- 2012 *Annual Gala Exhibition*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Walsh Bay Arts Table 2012*, The Wharf—Pier 2, Sydney
- Error and Judgement*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Classic Albums*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- In the making*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- 2011 *Annual Gala Exhibition*, Arts Project Australia, Melbourne
- The Machine*, Craft Victoria, Melbourne
- Exhibition #4*, Museum of Everything, London, England
- Moving Galleries*, Flinders Street Station, Melbourne
- This Sensual World*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Unfiltered*, Penola Visitor Information Centre, Penola, South Australia
- Art Through Other's Eyes*, Rymill Coonawarra, South Australia
- Subterranean*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Colour My World*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Stock Exhibition*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- 2010 *Annual Gala Exhibition*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Human Nature*, Alan Lane Community Gallery: Warnambool Art Gallery, Victoria
- Third Dimension*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Portrait Exchange*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- 27th Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award*, Gold Coast Arts Centre, Queensland
- Hobart Art Prize*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart
- Australiana*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Pacifica*, Gallery Impaire, Paris, France
- Fully Booked*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- Captured—nine on seven*, Rooftop Cinema, Curtin House, Melbourne
- Canvas Stock Exhibition*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- 2009–11 *The Shilo Project*, The Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, Victoria; Mildura Arts Centre, Victoria; S.H. Ervin Gallery, New South Wales; Warrnambool Art Gallery, Victoria; Wangaratta Exhibitions Gallery, Melbourne; Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, Victoria
- 2009 *Annual Gala Exhibition*, Arts Project Australia, Melbourne

- AART.BOX 09*, Mori Gallery, Sydney
Banyule City Council Works on Paper Art Award, Banyule Arts Space, Melbourne
By Hand, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Snapshot, ACGA Gallery, Federation Square, Melbourne
Connected 09: Black Box, Victorian Arts Centre, Melbourne
2009 Liberty Victoria Dinner and Voltaire Award, Windsor Hotel, Melbourne
Pictures of You, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Off the Edge: Ceramics Triennale, Chrissie Cotter Gallery, Sydney
Clay Cameras, Centre for Contemporary Photography, (CCP) Melbourne
17th Annual Outsider Art Fair, The Mart, New York
- 2008 *Annual Gala Show*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Short Stories, Tall Tales and the Way They Wore Them, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Detour: Northern Exposure 08, Northcote Town Hall, Melbourne
Pearls of Arts Project Australia: The Stuart Purves Collection, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, College of Fine Arts, UNSW Sydney
Reaching Out, Waldron Hall, County Court of Victoria, Melbourne
- 2007–09 *Arts Project Australia: Paintings, Prints & Sculptures*, A Day on Earth, Brisbane
BloodLines: Art and the Horse, Latrobe Regional Gallery, Morwell, Victoria; Albury Regional Gallery, New South Wales; Tamworth Regional Gallery, New South Wales; Muswellbrook Regional Gallery, New South Wales; Western Plains Cultural Centre, New South Wales; QUT Art Museum, Brisbane; Parramatta Heritage Centre, New South Wales; Hawkesbury Regional Gallery, New South Wales
- 2007 *Studio Days*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
The Dinner Party, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Peter Fay Presents, Gallery 9, Sydney
Pearls of Arts Project Australia—Stuart Purves Collection, Penrith Regional Gallery, New South Wales
- 2006 *In Everyone's Company*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Yours, Mine and Ours: 50 Years of ABC TV, Penrith Regional Gallery, New South Wales
Private and Confidential, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Skyscape, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
- 2005 *Wrapped: Selected Works from the Studio*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Leo Cussen with Selected Artists, Australian Galleries, Collingwood
South of the Border, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Double Take, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

- S,M,L,XL*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
 2004 *2nd Annual Intuit Show of Folk and Outsider Art*, Chicago, United States.
Connected04, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Christmas Survey, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
 2003 *Connected*, Goya Galleries, Melbourne
A Sense of Place, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
 2002 *Arts of the Sacred Heart*, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide
Annual Ecclectic Bonanza—2002 Exhibition, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
 2001 *Suburban Dreamers*, Moore's Building, Fremantle, Western Australia
Christmas Show 2001, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
Face-Up, Idiom Studio, Wellington, New Zealand
Art of the Sacred Heart, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide
 2000 *Arterial—artists from Arts Project Australia*, Paralympic Arts Festival, Sydney Opera House
2000 National Works on Paper, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery
Smorgon Steel Group Ltd Contemporary Art Prize, Williamstown Festival, Melbourne
 1999 Pinacotheca Gallery, Melbourne
Works on Paper, Australian Galleries, Sydney
Connexions Particulières, MADMusée and Musée d'Art Moderne et d'Art Comtemporain Liège, Belgium
Nine Artists from Arts Project Australia, Australian Galleries, Melbourne
Connected, Geelong Art Gallery, Geelong
Still Life, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
The Inner View, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
 1998 *Bazaar*, Pitspace, RMIT University, Bundoora, Victoria
 1997 *Nexus*, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne
Prints & Artists' Books, Arts Project Australia, Melbourne
Canterbury Art Show (featured artist), Canterbury, New Zealand
High Beam Festival, Adelaide
Group Show, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne
 1996 Pinacotheca Gallery, Melbourne
Border Crossing, McClelland Regional Gallery, Langwarrin, Victoria
Drawing on Experience: Reflections on Popular Culture, National touring exhibition
Wild Things, Arts Project Australia, Melbourne
Word, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne

- 1995 *Reversed Image*, Arts Project Australia Gallery, Melbourne; Chapman Gallery, Canberra; MADMusée, Liège, Belgium; Vita Gallery, Portland, Oregon, USA
- 1994 Pinacotheca Gallery, Melbourne
Beyond Words, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gone to PAC, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1992 *Inside Out/Outside In*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
- 1991 *Arts Project*, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne

AWARDS

- 2015 *Victorian Craft Award* (finalist), Craft, Melbourne
- 2014 *2014 Deakin University Contemporary Small Sculpture Award* (finalist), Deakin University Art Gallery, Burwood Campus, Burwood, Victoria
- 2010 *27th Gold Coast International Ceramic Art Award*, Gold Coast Arts Centre, Queensland
Hobart Art Prize (finalist), Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart
- 2009 *2009 Banyule City Council Works on Paper Art Award* (Highly commended), Banyule Arts Space, Melbourne
- 2000 *Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Award* (finalist), Grafton Regional Gallery, New South Wales
- 1994 *Outback Art Prize* (finalist), Broken Hill Art Gallery, New South Wales
- 1993 *VTU Credit Union Art Awards* (2nd Prize), Caulfield Arts Complex, Melbourne
Diamond Valley Invitation Art Award (finalist), Diamond Valley Civic Centre, Melbourne

COLLECTIONS

The Museum of Everything, UK and Worldwide
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Broken Hill Regional Gallery Collection, New South Wales
Deakin University, Melbourne
Manningham Art Gallery, Melbourne
Orange Regional Gallery, New South Wales
The Callan Park Gallery for Self-taught and Outsider Art (STORAC), The University of Sydney, New South Wales
Peter Fay Collection, Sydney



ARTS PROJECT AUSTRALIA

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