



Disposable-Affluence To Have Or Have Not

B.D.A.S. Gallery, Bowral

Travelling Exhibition

12-18 December 2007

MultiFocus

**Marlene Lux + Tamara Makeev OAM + Jennifer K Phillips +
Lorna Sim + Dr. Anna-Maria Arabia + Marianne Pietersen +
Barb Smith + Petra Weber + Barbie Robinson + Roswitha Giersch**

MultiFocus was formed by a number of Canberra-based photographers and PhotoAccess members in 1998. Although there have been some changes since then, the current members share with their predecessors diverse cultural backgrounds and an interest in the big themes central to Australia and Australian life—including migration, resettlement and gender. Since its inception, MultiFocus has presented 10 exhibitions, including *Starting Again*, *Echoes from the Past*, *Continuance*, *For those who've come across the Sea*, *Refuge?*, *Separate Realities* and *The History of Migrants* throughout the Canberra region and in Melbourne.

Disposable - Affluence continues the group's interest in contemporary issues, combining the themes of two previous exhibitions shown during the annual ACT Multicultural Festivals in February 2006 and February 2007. We have interpreted *Disposable* and *Affluence* as two aspects of a consumerist society underpinned by materialism and increasingly overlaid by elements of self-centred individualism.

Affluence is desired by most of the population, lauded by politicians, driven by advertising, promoted by envy, and displayed by everyone seeking status through style and prevailing symbols of sophistication. Glossy depictions of real estate, merchandise, collectibles, and lifestyles are interwoven with questions about the origins of abundance, the paradoxes of overproduction and the costs of unbridled pursuit of material benefit.

Disposable explores the milieu of a throw-away society, where trends are temporary, planned obsolescence may be factored into an economic framework, and recycling provides a meagre counterfoil to a philosophy of waste. It brings to our attention indisposable memories of culture and heritage, the disposable sexuality of middle aged and older women, disposable rights, waste versus collectable, disposable objects and the loss of cultural distinctiveness. It includes comment about Graffiti, that can be a powerful, though mostly temporary, tool in the repertoire of exhibitionists, satirists, anarchists, and government critics. It is usually highly visible, it can be interestingly artistic and it is always anonymous. *Disposable - Affluence* is a challenging and thought provoking exhibition using a diversity of photo media techniques, including traditional B + W and colour images, and works based on high level digital imaging processes. The artists invite the viewer to consider the nature of the throw-away society and the implications.

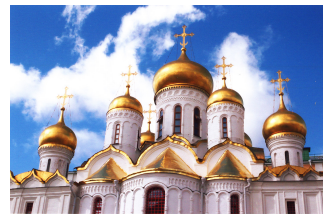


Supported by the ACT Government's Office of Multicultural Affairs.

Contributing Artists

Barb Smith B.Sc (Hons), M.Sc Associate Diploma of Art (Photomedia), Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Writing.

Barb Smith is an award-winning artist and writer living in Canberra. She completed a diploma in Photomedia at the Canberra School of Art in 1992, and a post-graduate diploma in Creative Writing at the University of Canberra in 2005. She has had seven solo shows, participated in four travelling exhibitions, and contributed images to numerous group exhibitions in the ACT, Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and the United Kingdom. Her images and her articles on the visual arts have appeared in various Australian publications. For this series, Barb has incorporated texts and slogans—randomly selected from print media adverts—to enhance the illusions portrayed in her B&W images. The original images were made in 2000 and the text applied in 2007. The series is four 18 x 22 inch prints, and a 12 page 10 x 10 inch Leporello book.



Jennifer Kathleen Phillips BEd., Dip. IT., Dip. T.C., T.T.C.

As a child Jennifer loved making art. She won prizes for her art and had her work published. In 1969 she moved from New Zealand to Australia and achieved the highest possible marks for the state secondary school Art exams and exhibited and sold her work. At the age of 17 she returned to New Zealand. In 1973 she was sponsored to attend the Canterbury Arts Workshop for the potentially most gifted secondary art students. She completed three years at Teachers College majoring in Art for which she received the grade of 'Outstanding' each year. In 2000 she graduated in the top 5% with a degree in Education and migrated to Australia. While teaching full time, she completed a range of studies including an IT Diploma in Multimedia Integration and a certificate in Screen. In 2004 she published her fifth book and made her first piece of digital art. In 2006 she was awarded a Diploma of Excellence (Honourable award) in the Realtime Juried Online Global Art Annual Award, had her first solo digital art exhibition, won the People's Choice Award at the *Art Views in the Hills* exhibition in Wanniasa and began selling her limited edition prints to an overseas market through one of her many online galleries. You can keep up-to-date with her achievements and work through her website: <http://citwings.com>



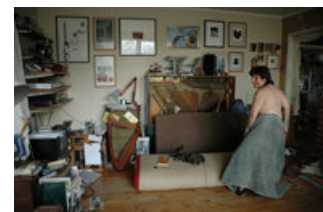
Marianne Pietersen BA., MA.

Marianne Pietersen is from the Netherlands. When in her twenties she moved to the USA and after 20 years there she moved to Australia in 1989. Marianne was secretary of the Canberra Dutch Club 1993-2003, and a member of the ACT Multicultural Council. She holds a BA in Maths and an MA in Economics and worked for the Commonwealth government. Since retiring last year Marianne does a Dutch radio show as well as many other volunteer activities. Marianne has been interested in photography since she was a teenager. Both her parents were accomplished amateur photographers. After completing her degrees in New York, Marianne trained in art, photography and movie production. Most of her images for Disposable - Affluence were taken with a digital camera but Marianne still uses 35mm cameras as well. Since coming to Canberra in 1992 she has participated in twenty group exhibitions and has won prizes in competitions. Her present focus is on computer manipulation of her images.



Barbie Robinson BA., Dip.Ed.

Barbie Robinson is a Canberra based photomedia artist who has hung work in more than 30 group and solo exhibitions both in the ACT and interstate. She has also published four books, two of which include her photographs. In 2004 she was a student finalist in the Sydney Morning Herald's Shoot the Chef competition at the Art Gallery of NSW. In 2005 she was artist in residence at Photoaccess, Manuka Arts Centre, where she received an ACT Government grant to make a digital story DVD and portrait exhibition about Canberrans over the age of 70. Her most recent academic qualification is a Certificate in Creative Photography from ANU School of Art/Photoaccess. She is a member of NAVA and Photoaccess. Barbie's work is held in private collections in Australia and Pakistan.



Petra Weber

Petra studied photographic and dark room practice at the Technical College of Pretoria, South Africa in 1987, and Berlin in 1991. She extended her painting and drawing skills at the Canberra School of Art from 1994 to 1996 and studied printmaking at the Rijks Hogere Onderwijs School voor Kunst (Art Academy) in Brussels from 1997 to 2000. She joined MultiFocus in 2000. From 1996 to 2000 Petra showed in group exhibitions in Brussels. She was selected to show in the Royal Society for Artists watercolour exhibition at the Pall Mall Gallery, London in 1999 and 2000, and *Kunsttriennale FURAMENT '99* in Tervuren, Belgium. She has also exhibited works in oil at Galerie Joseph II, in Charleroi, Belgium in 1999, and more recently in Berlin at Gallery Twenty-Four, and in Moscow. Petra has a diploma in Journalism, degrees in Political Science and International Politics, and graduated with a Master of International Relations degree from the Australian National University in 2003. She has worked in diplomacy and the civil service in South Africa, as a journalist and editor with the Hungarian Observer in Hungary and as an educator and guide at the National Gallery of Australia. From 2003 to 2006 Petra resided in Moscow with her husband and two children and after a one year stay in Canberra she recently moved to Budapest.



Lorna Sim

Lorna migrated from Sarawak, Malaysia, to Canberra in 1981. She is an award-winning Canberra-based photographic artist. She has been involved in photographic and video work since 1997. Before that, she graduated from ANU majoring in Anthropology and Sociology. She did her video and photographic training at the National Recording Studios (Media Production & Communications), PhotoAccess Inc. (specialty photographic courses) and the Canberra Institute of Technology (Advanced Diploma of Photography). Since 2000, she has been taking part in group exhibitions in Canberra, Melbourne and other regional areas. She is a member of PhotoAccess Inc. and the Australian Institute of Professional Photographers (AIPP).



Tamara Makeev OAM

Tamara was born in Poland. Her parents had fled from Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution. She herself fled from Poland during the second World War on the last train and wound up in a displaced persons camp in Germany. Tamara came with her husband to Australia in the post-war migration. She is the founder and coordinator of the Malinka Russian Dance Group of Canberra. For many years she was also an executive member on the ACT Multicultural Council. In the early pioneering days of the Snowy Mountains project Tamara lived in Jindabyne with her family and has plenty of memories of how, as migrants, one adapts to difficult and primitive conditions. Her lifelong interest in photography has led to a vast collection of photographs documenting her journey from WW2 Poland as a refugee to her destination in Australia. She has been living in Canberra now for over 30 years. She continues to document her life's journey and experiences in Australia via photography, and never leaves home without her camera.



Marlene Lux Dip. IT.

Marlene describes her life as one full of activities and energy. She was born in Santiago de Chile in 1962, left home and that city to attend university at 16 years of age. By 23 she was married, with two lovely children and an IT degree, when the idea of immigrating to Australia was set. A four-year rewarding period of teaching IT followed, ending with the family's arrival in Sydney. It meant leaving the extended family and many friends behind, the beginning of discovery of new beautiful friends, and immersion into a new culture that she had to understand, accept, and somehow make her own; on top of all that, learning a totally new language! Always upbeat and curious, she started her photography career at 40, marking the end of her studies with an exhibition about Cuba. An absolute devotee of colour, she is now dedicated to photographing people.



Roswitha Giersch

Roswitha Giersch, born in Trier, Germany, was working as a nurse in intensive care and as a naturopath before she and her husband came to Australia in July 1996. She is founding member of the MultiFocus group as well as the Wollondilly Artist Group Inc. Since 1996 Roswitha exhibited extensively in group exhibitions in Canberra, Melbourne and Wollondilly. She is a community photographer at various community events and an active committee member of several community organisations. Roswitha has been introduced to art and photography, developing her own photos taken with a box camera, in her early childhood as her father was a passionate 'hobby' photographer and artist. After meeting her husband they travelled Europe photographing the diverse land, sea and cityscapes. Roswitha's special interest is in Alternative Photographic Processes and recently in printmaking/photo etching. She likes to experiment in the darkroom as well as with the digital media to find different forms of expression in photography. In Australia she was fascinated by the Community life (spirit) in Canberra. She became involved and worked as a volunteer for numerous Community Groups in Canberra as well as in the Macarthur Region (South West of Sydney). During this time she met many people from all walks of life with different cultural, linguistic, educational and social backgrounds. They shared their stories, cuisine, culture and worked together on community projects and community art projects. She also learnt about the issues of concern within this part of the Australian Society, that does not have a voice - the disadvantaged, the elderly, the people with a mental illness or a disability, the people coming from foreign countries to seek refuge from persecution, torture and injustice. They are coming to Australia, a country to be known as honouring the basic human rights. She learnt about their vulnerability, their despair and the feeling of 'unheardness', helplessness and injustice, 'not to be part of.....' and their poverty. Though in their hearts they may be rich, on the outside they appear in stark contrast to the affluent society amongst whom they live.



Anna-Maria Arabia

Anna-Maria is Australian born of Italian cultural heritage. Her formal training is in science, having undertaken medical research in the field of neuroscience both in Australia and in Italy. Anna-Maria has worked in the Commonwealth Public Service and is currently an adviser to a Federal Minister. She is the founding member of an Italian-Australian youth organisation and elected member an Italian government body that represents the rights and interests of Italians residing in Canberra, Queanbeyan and Cooma. Anna-Maria has participated in various photography competitions and exhibitions in Melbourne and Canberra. She joined MultiFocus in 2004.



Affluence

Petra Weber

A rare sense III, 2007, hand-printed B + W silver gelatine prints from re re-worked negatives, 65 x 50 cm.

Marianne Pietersen

My theme is the over-consumption and waste in today's society. I am a trained economist but not of the 'growth at all cost' variety. I support the ideas of E. F. Schumacher, who in 1973 wrote a book *Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*. I also agree in full with the ideas in the recent books *Growth Fetish* and *Affluenza* by Clive Hamilton, which describe how Australians have evolved from happy but struggling battlers to unhappy, overworked and materialistic middle classes, in pursuit of consumerism under the flag of 'progress'. Hence these pursuits of money cause the affliction now known as Affluenza. Last year I embraced downsizing and since then I have been enjoying a much more relaxed and cheaper lifestyle. I don't believe that money is the source of all evil, but it's uneven distribution certainly causes a lot of pain in the world, both through a lack of it and through too much of it.

For this series Marianne has manipulated digital images and mounted them as 30 x 42 cm Type C prints on blocked black board.

Affluenza, what money does to us.

Mobile Madness, everywhere there's mobile telephone shops.

Just like Imelda, shoes and a woman's statement of need.

Shop till you drop, Sales suck us in.

Reduce, Re-use, Recycle, Op-shop bins with contents spilling out.

Tamara Makeev OAM

Tamara's work is about collecting mementos from travels and objects that reflect her ethnic Russian background. Her cabinets of curios are full to overflowing with objects she may not 'need', but which provide her lots of enjoyment and memories of her youth.

Memories I to IV, 2007, Type C photographs.

Jennifer Kathleen Phillips

Most taps have one spout for the water but I saw one that had two! Imagine then the abundance suggested by four! When I looked up the meaning of 'affluence' and what it meant to be affluent, I was surprised how well freely flowing water portrayed it. Being affluent suggests to me not only having the wealth and resources that create a wider range of choices but also having the freedom to choose. It is like having a lolly tree, where jars of lollies peel off like bark. Wealth affects our consumer habits and can result in waste, like the highly valued trappings of a communication and income generation method that become technological waste products. What we value as a symbol of wealth today may be discarded as waste tomorrow. I thought of Dickens' Oliver, who was hungry because of the culture and greed of those in more powerful positions and thought that the things we value and attach wealth significance to can be as temporary as a ribbon blowing in the wind and whether hungry or not we may still want more, more, more. Like a rusty watering can, we may not make the most of our resources.

Grafted In, 2007, Limited edition Giclee print on paper, artist's proof, edition 10.

Affluence, 2007, Limited edition Giclee print on paper, artist's proof, edition 10.

Please Sir Can I Have So Some More?, 2006, Giclee print on paper, artist's proof, edition 10.

The Lolly Tree, 2007, Limited edition Giclee print on paper, artist's proof, edition 10.

Barb Smith

Spin in the Age of Spending

Affluence is typified by the person who believes she can have everything. She is comfortably well off and aspires to be recognised for her impeccable style as defined by glossy magazines and prevailing advertising spin. Her status is secured by her beautiful home, her preoccupation in buying desirable items at 'good' prices, and the perfecting of her personal development until ... what was all that about rampant overspending and escalating credit card debt?

For this series, Barb has incorporated texts and slogans— randomly selected from print media adverts—to enhance the illusions portrayed in her B&W images. The original images were made in 2000 and the text applied in 2007. The series is four 18 x 22 inch framed prints, one 50 x 66 cm framed photo collage, and a 12 page 10 x 10 inch Leporello book, *the Eterno Riposo Project*.

Russian Opulence, Russian Affluence

Since the fall of the Iron Curtain around 1990, Russia has been replacing its former communist manifestations with free market economic trappings. Socialist-realist sculptures have been relegated to obscure parklands or hidden in storage facilities. The poverty gap between rich and poor has widened. Formerly abandoned churches have been beautifully renovated and the opulent palaces are more resplendent than ever. Advertising signs litter the urban landscapes and tourists are now wooed with multiple souvenir stalls at every site. The images in this series subvert the perfect pictures in tourist brochures and reveal glimpses of the new capitalism that has emerged so rampantly during the last decade.

Opulence consists of thirteen 16 x 20 inch framed Type C prints.

Russian Affluence consists of sixteen 15 x 18 inch framed Type C prints.

Marlene Lux

Dressing up my little doll

The television presents us new things; we then come to want them. It only takes a few minutes and keystrokes, and we have purchased it over the internet. Things unimaginable not long ago; my good artist friend designs and hand crafts these dresses, and sells them all over the world via the internet. If this is not *affluence*, what is it? *Una bellezza* and *Aristocrata* are 60 x 40 cm; other images are 15 x 20 cm

La feria, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Se cae, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Una bellezza, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Aristocrata, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Muros reales, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Toilet, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Internet to dress a doll, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Internet for every thing, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Internet doll and lenceria, 2007, Type C print, edition of 9.

Disposable

Marianne Pietersen

Disposable society has thrown away the best in me!
It's thrown away sincerity, the keystone of integrity.
Disposable to throw away - buy something new another day.
There's nothing made that's made to stay.
Planned obsolescence will make you pay.

From "*Disposable Society*" by Eugene McDaniels.

Disposable Culture: My images illustrate how the continuous global quest for something new contributes to cultural dilution. I have used Dutch traditional objects and their modern counterparts in Australia. Consumerism and the spread of multinational branding are disposing of cultural identity and tradition.

Dolls, traditional dolls & Barbies.

Books, Medieval songbook & modern romance.

Coffee, traditional coffee grinder & modern electric coffeemaker.

Disposable People:

Beyond the Call of Duty, a digital collage of Mitchell cemetery, military section, and a grave from Woden cemetery.

Captains Flat Cemetery, a false colour image. Photo taken during drought when everything was brown and dusty.

Disposable John, SIEV X Memorial in Weston, ACT.

Disposable Things:

Affluent - Disposal, the recycle facility in Hume, ACT.

It has a roof, a shed about to collapse near Coonawindra, NSW.

Juliana House, Woden, once again vacant. Will it survive or be razed to the ground for a bigger building?

Edison Park, Woden, threatened with development.

Mt Stromlo, ACT, the ANU's main telescope destroyed by 2003 fires. The insurance fight lasted till end of 2007.

Barbie Robinson

Digital prints on archival watercolour paper, Series of 5 images.

Woman with Piano and Cat, 30 editions, *Digital Prints to Watercolour paper, matted.*

The series addresses the issue of the disposable sexuality and identity of the middle aged woman. The woman is deliciously surrounded by an sculptor's collection of found objects disposed of by others as worthless. She flits cheekily from one side of the room to the other observed by the apparently uninterested cat. She is comfortable with her folds and curves and unaffected by the goading imperatives of the advertising and cosmetic industries in their effort to construct our beauty for us.

Old Bags single edition prints, *original Prints.*

The work is from a series of images printed onto used paper bags. The women are placed in the midst of domestic or abandoned objects, some accompanied by sardonic labels taken from the popular derisive labels applied so commonly to middle aged and older women.

Marlene Lux

With four decades of U.S. economic embargo against them, there has been no need for public campaigns promoting "reuse" to Cubans. Much human work and ingenuity is invested to repair tools, appliances, furniture, bikes, and other sorts of goods over and over, rather than dumping them on the front lawn when a quarterly special shire garbage collection service would be due! Cuba must be the only country where so many large American cars of the 1950's are still in use for daily transport, most of them badly in need of spare parts, and only just surviving. Although one senses a generally positive outlook on life, it is obvious that many Cubans do long for access to new goods to ease their material life. This photography work is deliberately presented through many small frames; hence an explicit reference to the effort one would have to put in to notice so many details of the real world they represent. A magnifying glass is provided as a visual aid. Inspired by the Cuban practice of reuse, I have dedicated many hours in preparing this work trying to keep the material used to a minimum.

Cuba, *Digital Print.*

Forced to Reuse, *Digital Print.*

Barb Smith

Poster art and Graffiti can be powerful, though mostly temporary, tools in the repertoire of exhibitionists, satirists, anarchists, and government critics. Such images are usually highly visible, they can be interestingly artistic and they are mostly anonymous. As such, they offer enormous scope for frank social comment. Barb Smith has utilised convenient walls around Canberra, disposable cameras and the facilities of Photoshop to highlight past government policies, priorities and personalities. We have just seen how suddenly these can revert to a mere footnote in history. Note that no walls were harmed in the making of these images.

Series ***We rule OK!***

Individual Titles: *You'd Better Believe It*
 My Secret Ambition
 Asylum
 Lecture Tonight
 Hitting the Headlines

Medium: Four colour images in A2 panoramic format. One A1 poster.

Series ***Extraordinary Rendition***, consisting of six A3 block mounted Type C works with accompanying quotes

Wrong Time, Wrong Place

Pakistan

Egypt

Guantanamo Bay

Rationalisations

Consequences

Lorna Sim

Disempowered I, II, III

This series addresses the issue of women's lack of legal rights and self-empowerment. In many different situations around the world, their control over their own lives has been disposed of by their male counterparts, the patriarchal system, government policies and socio-cultural and religious traditions.

Melbourne: City of Affluence and Destitution I, II, III, IV, V

This series highlights common scenes in cities around the world. The haves and the have-nots live side by side, but the have-nots are usually treated as non-existent in an environment of plenty. Meanwhile the back streets overflow with the refuse of the rich.

Roswitha Giersch

Lives fractured - Hearts broken, 2003, layered photographic digital print, 57.5 x 42.5cm.

Where Is the Light?, 2003, layered photographic digital print, 57.5 x 42.5cm.

Lives fractured - Hearts broken and *Where is the Light?* are linked to the Refugee situation, the detention centres and the situation of the people within the detention centres - their hopes and doubts, their suffering, disappointments and psychological torture.

Living in a society of affluence, these people don't even have the 'luxury' of basic human rights.

In the Stranglehold of Time, 2007, digitized print of sandwiched negatives on canvas, 33 x 30cm. This image reflects on the affluent society we live in - being time poor and material rich while losing the appreciation for the essential things in life. The urge to 'have' robs us of time so that there is no time left for 'life'.

Anna-Maria Arabia

Australians would recall that when the former Federal Government was given control of the Senate in 2004, democratic rights and parliamentary process became disposable. This body of work aims to shed light on those Australians who would have been particularly disadvantaged by the former Howard Government's attempt to make extreme changes to Australian laws. For workers whose second language is English, and other groups that have low bargaining power such as many casual and part time workers, women, youth, unskilled workers, single parents, and people with a disability, the extreme industrial relations laws stood to impact significantly on their living standards and family life. Australians spoke loud and clear at the 2007 Federal Election. They chose to preserve their democratic rights and to ensure social and human capital can also be measures of a nation's wealth.

"In the past few days this House has been debating one of the most important pieces of legislation that I've seen in 25 years in public life. Nothing so fundamentally out of touch with basic Australian values. Nothing targeted so deliberately to undermine the security of Australian families. And nothing so deceptively handled by a government that thinks it can get away with anything. The government calls it Work Choices....." **THEN-LEADER OF THE FEDERAL LABOR PARTY, THE HON KIM C BEAZLEY MP, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA, 10 November 2005**

"...but instead the Government spends tens of millions of taxpayer's money on slippery and deceitful advertising. The claims that peoples' rights will be protected by law is the most expensive lie ever perpetrated in Australian politics."

"These are scandalous abuses of democratic rights in this country." **GREG COMBET, NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION, 15 November 2005**

"This is as bad as any piece of legislation that we have seen in the history of the Commonwealth of Australia." **SENATOR JOHN FAULKNER, SENATE, PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA, 2 December 2005**

Disposable Democracy – Work Choices?, Digital Print.

Disposable Democracy – Working class, not second class, Gelatin-Silver Prints / digital print.

Tamara Makeev OAM

Tamara has taken a light-hearted, humorous approach to the topic of Disposability, highlighting the fact, that although it is currently an angst-ridden issue, it is not a recent phenomenon.

Abandoned Journey, Munich, Germany 1949.

Disposable Breakfast, Augsburg, Germany 1949.

Disposable (Birth) Banquet by MultiFocus, Canberra 2005.



This exhibition project has been made possible by the continued funding support of the ACT Office of Multicultural and Community Affairs. Nic Manikis, now Executive Director of the Multicultural and Community Engagement Group, has been constant in his support and faith in the group's projects since MultiFocus' inception.