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PART TWO:
THE ANIMAL-HUMAN GAZE MADE VISIBLE
CHAPTER SEVEN – SEVEN ARTISTS: SEVEN PERSPECTIVES

7.1 Implementing the Interviews

Table 7.1.1 offers an overview of the implementation of the interviews indicating the interview medium (either in person or telephone), the location, the date and the duration of the interview together with a brief contextual comment. As part of the self-reflective methodology of the research and the decision to place the researcher within the same frame as that of the interviewed artists, the researcher is also included in the interview process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Interview Medium</th>
<th>Interview Location</th>
<th>Date of Interview</th>
<th>Interview Duration</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hayden Fowler</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Phone (Sydney)</td>
<td>9 May 2007</td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
<td>Interruptions with technical problems with recorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Ann Hobbs</td>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>Phone (NZ)</td>
<td>1 June 2006</td>
<td>70 minutes</td>
<td>Interviewee video-recorded telephone interview and sent tape. Some technical problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate James</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>RMIT studio in Melbourne</td>
<td>23 June 2006</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>Visited exhibition prior to interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel McKenna</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Declined to respond through Gallery contact – no reason supplied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia Piccinini</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Declined due to overseas exhibition commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynne Roberts-Goodwin</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>COFA office in Sydney</td>
<td>29 June 2006</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>Toured COFA prior to interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa Roet</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Residence Elsternwick</td>
<td>22 June 2006</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Interruptions by sick 3 year-old child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvette Watt</td>
<td>In person</td>
<td>Tasmania Art School</td>
<td>26 June 2006</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
<td>Toured art school building prior to interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Dover</td>
<td>Self – responses</td>
<td>Cairns</td>
<td>30 July 2007</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
<td>Self-reflective methodology/ same frame as selected artists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By comparison with the face to face interviews the phone interviews proved problematic because of technical problems such as the battery expiry of the cordless phone used by Hobbs. While this abruptly ended the interview, fortuitously it was near the end. Similarly, the tapes on Fowler’s recording machine necessitated the cessation of the interview because he had underestimated the amount of recording time remaining on these tapes. Again, Fowler had responded to all questions but was, at the time, elaborating on further issues. However, to ensure completion, both the interviewees were phoned back several times during the course of the interviews when the technology failed. Fortunately, despite technological interruptions and frustrations, good grace, patience and humour prevailed and the interviews achieved their purpose. In terms of personal rapport, all interviews were characterised by an ease of communication and friendliness which made for a stimulating and enjoyable exchange.

Telephone interviews also have other shortcomings which render them less user friendly than face to face interviews. Firstly, they are less than satisfactory in establishing interpersonal rapport between interviewer and interviewee even when there has been prior contact. Secondly, the various visual cues that occur in a face to face interview such as gesticulations, facial expression, body language and other visual signals are absent in the telephone conversation. With reliance on auditory communication through speech alone and listening for tone and expression in the voice, there is greater possibility for misinterpretations or misunderstandings to occur between interviewer and interviewee. Clarification about the correct meaning of words or sentences tends thus to be more frequent in these exchanges.

Each artist was photographed in the setting in which the interview took place and both Hobbs and Fowler sent a photograph for inclusion in their profiles. The phone interview with Hobbs was undertaken prior to the face to face interviews and Fowler’s was subsequent to the others. While all six areas of the interview questions were addressed in each interview, the format varied as, in some instances, the interviewee responded expansively to a particular question, virtually
anticipating subsequent questions, thus rendering them redundant. In such instances, the interviewer offered the opportunity of further elaboration, an invitation accepted only infrequently. In the case of some artists, particular questions (for example, those relating to the artist’s use of real animals) were not relevant and hence were omitted as planned.

7.1.1 Treatment of Interview Data

Each interview was transcribed from the recordings made at the time of the interview. For the purpose of clarity and clear written English, some changes were necessary in the transcription of conversational vernacular language of the interviewees into written language, for example, when an interviewee begins to explain or express some thought with particular words but rephrases the sentence midway into the first sentence. In the Roberts-Goodwin interview, for instance, the exact words of the artist were as follows:

You know, the genre of portraiture is much maligned ... the genre of landscape ... you know, the two initial impetuses of photography ... you know, the genres that kicked it off. I want to sit back in portraiture. I just want to subvert it (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006).

To create a clear written language transcript, the three instances of the words “you know” were omitted and the sentence might be modified to join the two genres of portraiture and landscape to which Roberts-Goodwin referred as a single phrase; such amendments did not affect the sense of what Roberts-Goodwin was expressing. Hence, in principle, the more comprehensive and complete responses, without the false starts, were transcribed.

Nevertheless the words of the interviewees have been extracted and quoted as close to verbatim as possible, in order to retain the personality, speech pattern or characteristics of the interviewee so some awkward syntax and grammatical errors remain. For example, in reference to his childhood, Fowler states that “… you grow older and get more experience but you know the stuff that you got remains and is added to” (Fowler interview, 2007). The meaning of his words is
essentially clear in his direct spoken speech but might lose authenticity if corrected grammatically. In some instances, these errors have been edited where they are seen to interfere with or obfuscate the meaning or main point of what was being expressed by the artist. The following analyses of the interviews include recorded quotes from the interviewees, modified only in the respects outlined above.

7.2 Hayden Fowler

For Fowler, making art involving animals is “… more like a continual process …” from his childhood years where “… there was lots of observation of animals” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1). According to Fowler, he was innately creative and used to build a lot from an early age “… usually chicken coops and dog kennels for my grandfather’s animals, which was my other interest – watching animals” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1). At this time, it was animals rather than art that captured his imagination. Born in New Zealand, he came from “… a very provincial, rural and suburban background where art didn’t really exist in the realities of everyday life”. In his childhood, art was absent from his sphere of experience and was “… not even really known about, understood or spoken of, so
it barely even existed in my consciousness until my early twenties” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1).

When he was around eight years of age, he was particularly interested in chickens which “… have an amazing array of behaviours and, aesthetically, I found really attractive” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1). Fowler and his grandfather, “… would breed different combinations to get aesthetically more amazing individuals”. In addition to chicken breeding, he would build “… an elaborate chicken coop, including painting it all in some wild colour and then these chickens would live in there” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1). The process of breeding and creating housing for the chickens was followed by his intense observation of the chickens. He remembers that he “… would lie in the grass watching them for hours often through a peep hole, which framed the whole image like a camera” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1). Furthermore, he recalls that his other main interest when growing up was music and music video which, he claims, were his only access to pop culture and a larger world: “… in many ways, my work combines these two rather polar aspects of my experience” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1).

At thirty-three years of age, Fowler is very aware of the importance of his childhood experiences with animals and their influence on his artwork. He remarks that, “It’s interesting because I think back to that time when I was doing the same processes” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1). An adult artist perspective on his childhood years allows him to observe that “… it is the same as my [art] making now in a way as well because I used to do sets and houses and things for chickens and wild birds that I would catch” (Fowler interview, 2007: 2). Nevertheless, he maintains that these childhood activities did not lead him to making artwork. Rather, he claims, “… you grow older and get more experience but you know the stuff that you got [from childhood] remains and is added to” (Fowler interview, 2007: 1).

While Fowler’s childhood years have influenced and, to a considerable extent, charted his artistic directions, other factors also have had substantial bearing on his artistic trajectory. As a teenager he was an avid reader of both non-fiction
animal behaviour studies and biographies and auto-biographies of people who spent their lives studying animals such as chimpanzees and the great apes. This interest led him, after leaving secondary school, to undertake a Bachelor of Science in Biology majoring in animal behaviour. Fowler maintains that “It was a fascination I had there”. He elaborates: “I think what really was at the crux of it is that by understanding animal behaviour we can understand our own behaviour” (Fowler interview, 2007: 3). Nonetheless, he recalls that even during this period he was “… constantly creative in other ways”. However, it was when he moved to Wellington when he was twenty-three years old that “… suddenly I began to come into contact with artists, which spurred my decision to start art school and everything kind of fell into place from there” (Fowler interview, 2007: 3).

While the animal, for Fowler, is central to his artwork it is not necessarily the conceptual driver. The underpinning idea of his work, he argues, is really “… about our relationship, in contemporary society, to nature and the natural world and our abstraction from it … and how we, at the same time, try and hold onto it” (Fowler interview, 2007: 3). What is more, he claims, it is about sanitising nature and “… making and building an artificial nature, and animals are as much a part of that as plants but also [so are] humans and the environment”. Additionally, he sees that in much of his work, “… the animals are being partially used as metaphor for people” (Fowler interview, 2007: 3).

A major concern for Fowler is “… the disconnection with nature and real abstraction from nature” (Fowler interview, 2007: 5). With this disconnection, he suggests, there is loss. At present, for example, there is “… so much apocalyptic discourse in society about the death of nature such as global warming, ice caps melting and species extinction acceleration …”. Fowler maintains that “… we are at a real point where there is a huge sense of loss” (Fowler interview, 2007: 5). Indeed, he argues, “… we are floating without any sense of traditional, historical and ancestral culture”. He relates culture to nature because “…so much of our culture is to do with the natural world and is based in living within and worshipping the natural world” (Fowler interview, 2007: 5).
Fowler claims that essentially we “… are losing nature on the one hand and still idolising it on the other…” (Fowler interview, 2007: 5). He views this in a

… sci-fi and futuristic vision of the world … you see in movies and is predicted in novels … the way that nature is getting transformed, represented and digitalised and we are recreating it artificially … nature is dying out behind us and, at the same time, it’s such a necessary part of who we are that we have to recreate it (Fowler interview, 2007: 5).

Humans, indeed, like to take nature with them in some form whether that is

… the funny little dogs that we breed that can live in apartments or a video of animals that we can watch or pot plants or greenhouses and all those kinds of things … nature is getting transformed into something that we can carry with us (Fowler interview, 2007: 5).

A recent work, “…futuristic, white space odyssey kind of work … like inside of a white space ship” that Fowler has been working on in New Zealand is about “… the connection between nature and culture and the loss of both” (Fowler interview, 2007: 8). He describes this work as “… myself and a tattoo artist … costumed up in white outfits where I had extinct New Zealand birds tattooed on my back, that is, a pair of indigenous extinct birds” (Plate 7.2.1) (Fowler interview, 2007: 8). According to Fowler, the work “… is about a real sense of loss and anxiety and people not knowing what’s really going on” (Fowler interview, 2007: 8). Moreover, he claims, “It’s also about trying to hold onto culture and recreate culture, which is why I did tattooing” (Fowler interview, 2007: 8). Recently, there has been

… a resurgence in tattooing which is an ancient cultural practice [in New Zealand], which does have a lot to do with nature. I am bringing together tattooing and a recently extinct bird in this work (Fowler interview, 2007: 9).

Fowler points out the contradictions that he is addressing in his work, which means that on the one hand, we are losing nature and, on the other, we are still idolising it. “We still need to worship it and have it in our lives” (Fowler
Interview, 2007: 9). With the bird tattoo work, he is “… getting nature tattooed on me after nature has gone, post-nature”. Fowler views this as “… a big theme that is going on in my work as well. It’s the direction that my work seems to be evolving into” (Fowler interview, 2007: 9).

Fowler explains that, with the use of the white animals and domesticated animals and those in really high constrained environments,

…”I am thinking … about the undercurrents and references to battery farming and our relationship with our food animals, that we don’t have a relationship with food animals, we’ve got no connections with them” (Fowler interview, 2007: 6).

With his work, he sees himself as coming from an Orwellian viewpoint of the world and views the way humans live being closely related to the way factory-farmed animals live. People are living in apartments and “… working forty to fifty hours a week being entertained by television, living your own little life is battery farming really” (Fowler interview, 2007: 6).

Clearly, Fowler’s visions and views about the state of nature, animals and the planet are integral to his work. They are the conceptual drivers for his work. He maintains that “… the concept is more important because you never quite know how it is going to turn out” (Fowler interview, 2007: 5). To a considerable extent, the ideas underpinning his work and the artistic process have precedence over the documentation of the final work. He states that, “Sometimes I feel the work is already done before I produce the documentation [photographs and video] of it” (Fowler interview, 2007: 5). He claims that he is less interested in the form rather than the way the action has been documented. “The performative part is more exciting for me personally than the images afterwards” (Fowler interview, 2007: 5). Indeed, according to Fowler, “Because the creation of the work is so performative, in a sense the animals themselves really dictate the outcome of the work” (Fowler interview, 2007: 6). In the process of the work, he spends time making the set for the animals and considering such elements as scale and colour and what he thinks the animals will and won’t do, “… but when you put them all
together in front of the camera you don’t really know what is going to happen” (Fowler interview, 2007: 6).

Importantly, he is also “… trying to capture the behaviours that animals do normally”. He contends that, for example, in the goat video and the rooster video, “… it’s not so much about training the animals to do something, it’s more about what I know they’ll do really simply”. From his childhood observations and his animal behaviour studies, he understands that a rooster will sit on the perch for hours “… and crow and flap and do all those sorts of things – that’s just a very natural behaviour for them” (Fowler interview, 2007: 3). Indeed, according to Fowler, it is

… just a matter of capturing all that and editing it in a way that isolates certain behaviours so that the viewer can look at these behaviours so that maybe they can recognise something in human behaviour (Fowler interview, 2007: 3).

The process of working with animals is, then, fundamental to Fowler’s work. He remarks that, for him, apart from what he finds personally interesting, “…as well as my ideas, is the actual process of working with the animals which becomes quite important”. Furthermore, he states, he feels like “… at the moment it’s almost like a collaborative project with the animals” (Fowler interview, 2007: 6). Interestingly, he claims that “…you have a quite intense relationship with the animal when you are working with them quite intensely for that period of time”. Hence, because he has worked with them for some time and in the same way, he believes that he is “… starting to get a sense of how to work with them and it is starting to become more about a relationship between me and them in the work” (Fowler interview, 2007: 7). An example is the recent work with lambs, *Hunger*, 2007 (Plate 7.2.2), where he was the lambs’ mother for a few days and “… was with them and chasing them around the studio. That kind of interaction is very interesting for me” (Fowler interview, 2007: 7).
Aesthetics also has an important place in Fowler’s work. He argues that “… it is pretty strong, it’s overriding really. It is important to achieving a hyperrealism in the image”. Aesthetic decisions are made during his working process. “Even the choice of colour in the material I use is about what looks good with the animal” (Fowler interview, 2007: 9). In this process, he takes “… little test shots about what looks good with the animal so the end result is really important” (Fowler interview, 2007: 9). Furthermore, he looks to the past to achieve a particular ambience for a work. For example, he has been “… referencing Greco-Roman periods for the harsher kind of undertones” (Fowler interview, 2007: 10). He also explains that “… the relationship and the ambiguity to what’s been happening conceptually in the work are generally matched in some way by something cold or uncomfortable somehow”. This, he contends is “… really aesthetically controlled in that I strive really hard to alienate it from the familiar and make it unfamiliar” (Fowler interview, 2007: 10).

So too, the environments (for the humans and animals) in his work embrace a Sci-Fi futuristic aesthetic which means, he maintains, “… bringing these together so that it is referencing the past and the future at the same time …” (Fowler interview, 2007: 10). While cold, the aesthetics of the works are also “… really lush and expensive so that the animal is somehow in the outer field” (Fowler interview, 2007: 10). Moreover, Fowler argues that “We are all really healthy, lush looking and well-fed but we are completely starved in other ways – culturally or emotionally. There is something really important missing.” He maintains, moreover, that “There is some kind of absence. It varies from work to work but it
is like that in *Goat Odyssey*, the *Nursling* works and the work with lambs” (Fowler interview, 2007: 10).

Within the complexity of Fowler’s work, the interaction of humans and animals, and the animals themselves, remain important to his conceptual directions. His ideas of the human representing humanity and the animal representing themselves as well as nature and the ways in which they relate to one another are expressed through the human/s and animal/s in his images. He also expresses a desire to inquire further into the idea of the gaze in his work and is, he claims,

… really keen to explore the gaze and the relationship and interaction between the animal and human … One of the central things in the goat work is that relationship between animal and human. We and animals are mostly social creatures on some level (Fowler interview, 2007: 11).

Furthermore, he explains that when he “… first saw the main big goat on the farm for the *Nursling* series, *Nursling II*, 2006, (Plate 7.2.3) and *Goat Odyssey*, 2006, he had that gaze and he just caught my eye for some reason and I just thought it’s got to be that one”. For Fowler, “… there was something special about that goat – there was something there. He picked me in a way.” (Fowler interview, 2007: 11).
In creating the work, it is often just the artist and the animals alone in the studio for several weeks. “In a way it is going back to my childhood when I spend a lot of time alone with animals, where that relationship and interaction developed” (Fowler interview, 2007: 11). In exploring this even more deeply, he has another work proposed where he is creating “… a biosphere terrarium set, which is a kind of landscape. I am going to live in it with animals”. This landscape, according to Fowler, will be a hyper-real kind of environment and “… part of it will be living alone with animals while I’m making the work. There will be an off-camera kind of relationship that is going on” (Fowler interview, 2007: 11). Indeed, he wants “… to present that as a performative work. That relationship [between me and the animals] becomes the work and is quite central to the idea of that work” (Fowler interview, 2007: 11).

In Fowler’s work, animals and humans enact their relations within elaborate stage sets constructed by the artist. In his explorations of the complexities of the animal-human relationship and, more broadly, of nature and humanity, he mixes references as extensive as the baroque, science fiction, tribalism and pop-culture; humour and nostalgia are also present. Fowler considers nature, which includes humans and animals and their relationship, and its increasing fragmentation and, indeed, loss in contemporary society.

### 7.3 Rebecca Ann Hobbs

“I didn't know that art existed until I was in my early twenties”, Hobbs recalls. Apart from seeing the natural talent that her younger sister had with drawing and painting, Hobbs “…. wasn't exposed to Fine Art when growing up, most likely due to growing up in a humble rural Australian household” (Hobbs interview: 2006: 1). “I guess doing art was an arbitrary decision” she remarks, and explains that, “I just tend to be an overly serious, probing person who needs to keep out of trouble and art is a way to be involved in the world of the living” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 1).
Hobbs, thirty-six years old, grew up in Black River, Queensland, on the north-western outskirts of Townsville where animals contributed a significant presence during her childhood years. She relates that her mother and father were active in the horse-riding community and “… both parents were horse riders and my father broke in horses for a living and helped educate people how to ride horses”. Additionally, “Dad did the rodeo circuits as well as riding and working in rodeos” (Hobbs, 2006: 1). Up until she was around the age of thirteen, she remembers being surrounded by animals and that “… there would always be snakes or lizards in our bathroom or toilet and they would always be coming in and out of our living areas” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 1). Along with horses and wildlife, her family always had dogs but they were working dogs “… like blue heelers, more like cattle dogs and they were never inside the living area. They were kept outside”. Also, the family “… always had chooks. We ate their eggs and used them for their meat as well” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 1).

Although surrounded by animals in childhood, Hobbs feels little need to be close to them in her adulthood.
I don’t ride anymore. I haven’t ridden since I left home just because it’s an expensive hobby to have. I don’t have any pets and I don’t really feel the need to have pets (Hobbs interview, 2006: 1).

Indeed, she has “… never had a goldfish or a personal pet dog or cat even though I’ve had horses. I’ve never really formed a deep and meaningful relationship with them” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 1). However, her experience growing up in the country is a defining one when it comes to her approach to animals in art. The influences on her ideas about humans and animals, she explains, are from experience, “… definitely, and living in Black River and having animals around me on a regular basis. I draw from that a lot” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7).


Hobbs’s series of photographs, *Suck Roar*, 1999-2001, comprises seven self-portraits with various animals and has been her only series of work in which she focused on animals. This series took around two years to complete and she recalls that, at the time, she “… was interested in and researching animals” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7). She explains, however, that she “… couldn’t give a map that maps out the series in a linear way or a way that makes any sense”. She suggests
that she “… more or less stumbled across using animals as imagery for that body of work” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7). Recalling the beginning of the series of work, she states that it started off with just photographing herself in different situations. “Then I did the image with the birds, which is called Flight Using the Mouth” (Plate 7.3.2) (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7). She continued on the works because she “… really enjoyed the look of the image and the tension that was set up in the image. I used that image as a cue to continue on using other animals” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7).

In regards to Suck Roar, Hobbs is clear, nevertheless, about the concepts and major ideas behind these works, which were “… more or less concerned with people’s interaction with animals, especially what was considered socially correct and what was considered polite” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 2). One aspect that she set out to challenge is the social acceptance and boundaries of animals’ place in the world. She points out, for example, that

> We didn’t let our dogs into the living area and at no point did I question that. Yet some people will sleep with their dogs or some people will let their dogs run around their house (Hobbs interview, 2006: 2).

She argues that there are different levels of how people interact with their pet. “I don’t think any way is wrong or right in terms of society but I think there are individual aesthetic and moral choices” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 5). Hobbs suggests that her work does not “… explain the relationships that humans have to animals, it is exploring the relationship that humans have to animals” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 5). Moreover, in reference to her series of photographs, she argues that it is not even necessarily the human relationship with an animal, it is more an individual’s relationship with an animal and

> … what’s acceptable in terms of a greater audience and that individual relationship with an animal because there is only one figure or one person [in the work] interacting with the animal” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 5).

She contends that “… it’s quite an intimate interaction in that there are no other people looking in on it apart from the viewer” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 5).
Hobbs is also aware of the boundaries she is crossing in her use of and even misrepresentation of animals in these images. She claims that she has “… high-jacked the animals and … misappropriated them … I have sort of exploited their interaction with humans” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 6). “I didn’t ask them their permission if I could photograph them in that way”, Hobbs remarks. What is more, “I sort of exploited their interaction with humans in a way that is taking the piss out of both them and humans and that play that we have between them” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 6). The *Suck Roar* series, for example,”… has a high undertone of sexuality in all the images … I am blurring the boundary of what is correct and acceptable”. In the image with the dog, for instance, she contends that “… there is no way I would do that with a dog” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 6). This work represents a very large dog standing on his hind legs with his front legs resting on the woman’s shoulders. For Hobbs, this

… is a highly sexualised image in that the dog is bigger than me and I’m doing a stance that you would normally do with another human being. And I don’t like getting that close to them as well (Hobbs interview, 2006: 6).

A part of this misrepresentation, according to Hobbs, is due to the medium of photography itself. She finds that the general response of the audience “… is that they don’t see the exploitative element in it as much as I probably do and I don’t think that they see the explicit sexuality in it that I do” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 8). This, she argues, is most likely “… because they are quite aesthetically pleasing images and they are quite pretty in how they look and are presented” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 8). She considers this is because “… people are more attracted with the novelty of how they look and the novelty of animals interacting with humans in a weird way …” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 8) such as a human-size dog standing on his hind legs with his front legs resting on a girl’s shoulders. She contends that it is “…sort of like roping a viewer in to look at pretty images” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 8). However, she argues, that she can only gauge what she thinks about her relationship with animals and
… what I think is correct and what I think is incorrect. It’s a blurring if human boundaries, it’s not a blurring of animal boundaries. Animals have their own boundaries in knowing where they are (Hobbs interview, 2006: 8).

Plate 7.3.3    Rebecca Ann Hobbs, Complex Social Groups, Suck Roar series, 2001, digital inkjet print

Hobbs claims that the animals have “… their own body or image or motif in the image. They are what they are”. She is clear, however, that “I am not using it as a way to talk about my sexuality … I am just highlighting the sexuality that is in everything in the world. Animals have a sexuality that is in them as well” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 9). In this series of works, she asserts, “… I am using them explicitly that way but I haven’t given the animal any voice” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 6). In these works, she argues, she was testing and pushing

… how far you can go with animals as far as using them as sexual cues and playing with that … and at what point was it aesthetically pleasing and at what point did it cross over into nasty exploitation of animals (Hobbs interview, 2006: 6).
According to Hobbs, in these images she was particularly aware of the seductive quality of photography and was “… just playing with those ideas and with those boundaries and trying to make something that sits in between all that …” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7). Although it is her chosen medium she is critical of photography arguing that, “… photography is a really powerful tool that misrepresents everybody that’s involved” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7). Indeed, Hobbs maintains that it misrepresents the photographer, the people and animals represented in the photo. This position in relation to the medium of photography, she claims “… is one thing that is very central to my thinking when I do my work” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7). However, Hobbs favours photography because it is a medium “… removed from materiality in that I don’t have to think about the quality of the fur and only have to think about it in terms of the photograph” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7). Within the consideration of ideas about photography and the boundaries of human social behaviour, she also considers that humour plays an important role, maintaining that “… lightness and humour have to be there…” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 7).

Another important element present in the Suck Roar series, according to Hobbs, is the gaze and more particularly, the reciprocal gaze: “I would say the reciprocal gaze … is happening in almost every one of those works. I was very aware of that gaze in that series” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 11). She goes further to elucidate the way in which the reciprocal gaze gives potency to the two figures in the work – the human and the animal. “That gaze is the only thing that empowers both me, the person in the image, and the animal in the image” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 11). Importantly, for the artist,

It’s almost ignoring the viewer’s gaze and whether that viewer is a male or female or an animal; it doesn’t really take that into consideration. That body of work is dependent on the idea that a reciprocal gaze could occur between a human and an animal (Hobbs interview, 2006: 11).

Furthermore, Hobbs argues, that “We are very much engaged in non-verbal communication”. In her images, she explains, “… [non-verbal communication] is very significant because the corporeal and the visceral, the physical has more of a
priority than the cerebral or thinking or language, the verbal communication” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 11). “So the measures are very much based in the body. Because the body very much takes a front seat, the idea of language takes a back seat” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 11). Hobbs argues that

A photograph can’t talk but a photograph speaks better than I can speak for myself. I don’t trust language and I don’t trust communication. I trust imagery and form more than I trust language (Hobbs interview, 2006: 11).

Indeed, she explains, “I am trying to give evidence that there is a relationship and that that relationship is odd” (Hobbs interview, 2006: 11).

In her essay in the Samstag catalogue essay (2003) Radok argues that Hobbs’s photographs “… have borders with the unknown and the unsaid” (Radok, 2003: 2). In order to address the unknown and unsaid, in Radok’s (2003) terms, Hobbs constructed and staged relationships between a human and an animal. While Hobbs’s animal-human interaction nudges at the boundaries between the two species, her work also suggests the strangeness of animal-human relationships. There is an implication of a disturbing or, at least, uncomfortable, element in this interaction and her works leave questions about their co-existence and interdependence.

7.4 Kate James

Horses have been and are at the centre of James’s world as she is “… always happiest in their company, which is a wonderful thing”. For James, “… on so many levels they represent and reflect so much about me and how I view the world” (James interview, 2006: 1). Horses and her relationship with them, James contends, “… speak so strongly about who I am” (James interview, 2006: 1). As well as her horse, she also places herself in her work The World is a Dangerous Place, 2004. James, in person, is exactly how the artist of this compelling work might be imagined. She is a softly-spoken, gentle and lovely young woman of twenty-four years.
At the time of the interview, James was exhibiting some of her work at Westspace Gallery, which is a short distance from her studio at RMIT University in Melbourne (Plate 7.4.1). A gallery visit was arranged before going on to her studio on the afternoon of 23 June 2006. Her exhibition, *Wind-suck*, (Plate 7.4.2) was part of a group show, which featured a video and two installation pieces of hand-crafted objects – a whip-like piece and a rope suspended from the ceiling, both made entirely of horse hair. She clarifies the term wind-suck as being used to describe “… the action of a horse that anchors its incisor teeth onto fixed objects and repeatedly bites down, gulping in air and making a characteristic grunting noise” (James interview, 2006: 3). James explains that this relentless and distressing behaviour often indicates the presence of anxiety in the horse. James’s exhibition comprises works in progress from her current MFA research at RMIT University, titled *The World is a Dangerous Place: The Anxious Experience*, and her ongoing investigation into the nature of anxiety as expressed by humans and domesticated animals.

She explains that in *Wind Suck*, 2006, she “… thought of the [horse’s] neck and what we do to prevent wind sucking like putting collars on” (James interview, 2006: 3). James connected the behaviour of horses to human behaviour: “We also get tight in the throat”. James started relating the two “… and noticing how
animals also experience in a similar way or act out what we might be thinking” (James interview, 2006: 3). From this, she relates the experience to herself and, as she explains, “… it has gone more into me and representing my anxieties through looking at and using an animal and my relationship with horses”. She maintains that, in wind sucking, the horse is doing exactly what the horse needs to do, “They react so purely … They just don’t hide how they feel. They will express just exactly what’s going on” (James interview, 2006: 3).

Animals have figured in James’s life since she was very young as, “… animals were always an important part of my upbringing …” (James interview, 2006: 1). Her long-standing relationship with animals includes being raised with dogs, as she puts it. Indeed her family have had four dogs for the past ten years and, currently, also have four cats. Her relationship with horses began when she twelve and, she notes “… horses have been a constant in my life since then” (James interview, 2006: 1). She acknowledges that, “I have always been comfortable around and loved the company of animals …”. What is more, she has “… always been sensitive to an animal’s feelings and have done my best to understand them” (James interview, 2006: 1). She respects the autonomy and individualism of
animals and declares that she loves them to be themselves and for her dog “… just to be a dog and roll in poo and run, my horses just to hoon around the paddock being a little herd together” (James interview, 2006: 1). This, for James, “… is always more rewarding to me than training and discipline” (James interview, 2006: 1).

Art, too, became a constant in her life with her earliest interest in art beginning when she was “… a child around the time that my parents separated” (James interview: 1). Both James and her sister spent a lot of time together on weekends at their father’s place, which was a ten acre bush property. “We had to entertain ourselves a lot”; she remembers that they would make little sculptures out of the clay mud “… and do lots of drawings; hers [sister’s] always big and expressive, mine neat, anal and contained” (James interview: 1). She recalls that “I was always the one who could draw at primary school and absolutely loved doing decorative headings and borders for all my work”. In secondary school, she knew that she wanted to do art but “… only focused on getting a folio together in Year 12” (James interview, 2006: 1). The adolescent years were not easy for her because she was clinically depressed at the time and on medication attending school only every other day. “I hated it so much and was so miserable. My school only had one art subject” (James interview, 2006: 1).

James attended TAFE at RMIT after Year 12. She recalls that “It was perfect for me and, for the first time in my life, I loved school” (James interview, 2006: 1). She majored in photography with painting as her minor. Then she went on to printmaking at RMIT, “… mainly because I had seen Ruth Johnstone’s work and adored it. I didn't even know what printmaking was!” (James interview, 2006: 1). Although she has been studying and making art for some time, she insists that she still struggles with the idea of being an artist. “It still isn't a reality for me really. I don't know if I'll ever call myself an artist, I just can't!” (James interview, 2006: 1).

That her focus is on animals and anxiety in both humans and animals is far from surprising given her gentle almost fragile demeanour and nature. James’s studio
also reflects the artist’s subtle and soft personality. Everything is painted white, the walls, floor, table, benches and chairs. This studio somewhat reflects her artwork because, as she notes, she “…now only really use[s] black or white and ha[s] a fairly minimal colour scheme” (James interview, 2006: 6). Her space is pristine, unlike other studios in the complex of student studios, with some of her crafted pieces strategically displayed along with a judicious selection of photographs pinned to the white walls. “I’m the only person who painted their entire studio, including the desk, white … I like this space empty”, James comments (James interview, 2006: 6). This is indeed a peaceful, serene place within which she is able to think about, plan and make works about anxiety and animals.

Given her passion for animals and, particularly, her horses, it follows quite naturally that her animals and especially her horses predominate in her work. She traces this interest back to earlier art training at TAFE when she was eighteen years-old. According to James, she always wanted to work with animals: “I also crocheted a bedspread in dog hair. That was probably the first big piece that used animals”. She admits that, “I guess I wasn’t even sure at all why I was using them [animals]” (James interview, 2006: 2). Her employment at a veterinary clinic started her on the path of using and spinning dog hair. “The material as a memento – that was something I started at the vet’s. I started going through the bins and gathering hair” (James interview, 2006: 3). She also could never discard her horses’ hair when she groomed them. She points to the white fluffy scarf around her neck, stating that “This scarf is knitted from Samoyed [dog fur]” (James interview, 2006: 3). For James then, “… the animal is both material and subject” (James interview, 2006: 3).

However, it remains that horses and her ownership of three horses that constitute the major contributing influences in her artwork. Horses have had an enormous impact on her life. She claims that, “… when I got my mare – I learned to ride on her when I was twelve and I bought her when I was fourteen – she was really my first love” (James interview, 2006: 2). She declares that, “I will never have another relationship like I do with her” (James interview, 2006: 2). It is this mare,
too, that is the subject of the work *The World is a Dangerous Place*, 2004 (Plate 7.4.3).

![Image](image_url)

Plate 7.4.3 Kate James, *The World is a Dangerous Place*, 2004, Pegasus print (courtesy of the artist)

James is clear that her “… life is impacted by [horses]”. She states that “I struggle with riding a great deal now and with my confidence so I have a lot of my own anxieties” (James interview, 2006: 2). She feels her struggles with both her anxieties and her riding have “… all been about me but it’s been through the horses” (James interview, 2006: 2). Even in terms of representing the animal or the horse in her work, she contends that while she is “… drawing on elements of it [the animal/horse] I am using it in my own way, it’s still, I guess, coming from me personally” (James interview, 2006: 2). She maintains that, “I don’t know whether I can get beyond that. There is always going to be me in the way and then them [the horses]” (James interview, 2006: 2).

A decisive and formative experience to which she attributes the current direction in her artwork is the five years she spent working as a veterinary nurse. “I got a job as a part-time vet nurse in 2000 and found myself face to face with animals, sickness, death and euthanasia”. She admits that this was “Not an easy job for somebody still suffering from depression and anxiety!” (James interview, 2006:}
2). It took her around three years to be able to cope with euthanasia which used to affect her enormously.

To have a living breathing being in your arms and then have it killed whilst you held it was the most confronting and shocking thing. I would be so terribly emotional and wonder why on earth I was there! (James interview, 2006: 2).

She claims that, “I always knew that I was too sensitive and too empathetic to be a vet nurse but I fell into it”. James reveals that, “I also knew that I wasn’t experiencing it like the other nurses did” (James interview, 2006: 2). She has since resigned from this position and presently works part-time at an art supplier’s store.

During the time she was a veterinary nurse she really struggled however, she claims, it also gave her “… immense insight into being with animals and the possibility of maybe trying to offer something that others didn’t and being there for them [the animals]” (James interview, 2006: 2). It was at this time she started keeping animal hair from those animals, particularly dogs, who were euthanised. “The experience of having something die in your arms was really powerful; that experience shaped how I dealt with them” James recalls that she “… empathised so deeply with them ... I finally managed to reach a mind-set where I could be there for the animal, offering my love and comfort and support” (James interview, 2006: 2). She remembers that she “… spent a lot of time thinking about those animals” (James interview, 2006: 2). James earlier work explored these experiences and she spent considerable time thinking about those animals with whom she came into contact in the surgery. She also witnessed animals experiencing anxiety at first-hand. According to James, being in an unfamiliar environment away from their owners was more than some animals could tolerate and she “… empathised so deeply with them” (James interview, 2006: 2).

Her veterinary nurse experience along with her affinity with horses, her relationship with animals, and her attitudes to and research on her own anxieties as well as those of animals all contribute to her artwork. She recognises that “…
we are not alone in experiencing emotion or the vast majority of the negative emotions such as fear and dread” (James interview, 2006: 2). It is not only humans that feel these emotions; she believes that most people are unaware of or do not recognise emotions in animals and “… there is a lot of ignorance or misunderstanding about animal psychology or behavioural issues” (James interview, 2006: 2). She “… saw that clearly at the vets … a lot of people would blame the animal [for their bad behaviour] and that bothered me” (James interview, 2006: 3). Importantly for James, she also witnessed first-hand animals experiencing anxiety. Indeed, she admits that

My own insecurities and fears have been held up like a mirror through my horses … my relationship with them says more about me than anything (James interview, 2006: 4).

James gives empathetic attention to the idea that humans and animals are on similar paths, as she phrases it, but the main difference is that the majority of the anxieties and behavioural problems in animals derive from humans. “They are not natural”, she argues, “and they would not be experiencing them in the wild: they’re human created” (James interview, 2006: 5). James believes that sometimes the ways in which humans treat animals can trigger specific negative behavioural outcomes.

James is unambiguous about the way she uses animals in her work. She understands the personalities of her horses and is aware of the lengths to which she is prepared to go in involving or using them in her work. Just as she would never kill an animal for her art, she would never upset her horses for her art. She chose two of her horses to feature in her work, The World is a Dangerous Place, 2004, the horses whom she knew would not be upset by having the knitted headgear placed on their heads (which, according to James, they were not). She recalls that one of horses, the mare, responded to the knitted piece as if it were a toy in a game being played and began to chew the garment as it was being placed over her head.
The World is a Dangerous Place derives from a body of work James created in 2004 entitled The Anxiety Survival Kit. This piece from her Masters work centres on the subject of anxiety and animals, which was inspired by her own personal experience of anxiety and empathy for the anxious animal. The kit, she points out, “… was looking at the idea of controlling or preventing anxiety and making things that help you confront or face or hide from your fears” (James interview, 2006: 3). She argues that anxiety is a universal phenomenon that constitutes a vital and necessary function for the survival of almost all living creatures. James contends that

Functioning at a low level, anxiety has a number of benefits such as keeping us alert to anticipated danger, motivating and stimulating activity, enhancing performance, improving problem solving and preparing us for future events (James, artist statement, 2007).

However, there are differences between facilitatory and inhibitory anxiety. She argues that “…. anxiety can also take on negative and unwanted characteristics that don’t appear to have any real purpose or benefits” (James, artist statement, 2007). In such instances, according to James, the level of anxiety is excessive and might have negative effects. She differentiates anxiety from fear, viewing them as separate states. “I define anxiety as a state of apprehension and uneasiness; uncertainty regarding future events and feelings of fear, tension and dread” she elaborates. On the other hand, she maintains, fear is an emotion that is usually “… a response to a known thing whereas anxiety can be caused from feelings of danger and foreboding from an unclear or even unknown source” (James interview, 2006: 3).

To give visual form to anxiety experienced both by animals and humans as well as in their relations with one another, she works simultaneously on a number of ideas and visual possibilities. Her well-organised and neat journal is full of sketches of horses with a variety of different apparatuses attached to them as well as drawings of an array of objects, some constructed in animal hair, perhaps for the relief of anxiety. She notes that she is “…trying to incorporate [her horses] into a piece at the moment which will be a giant extension of a horse tail that comes out of the
tail of my pony” (James interview, 2006: 4). This is a piece that “… I want to be a narrative”, she claims. When James nearly lost her horse last year in an accident her “… fear of losing and trying to extend out what you can’t were just pushed right in front of me”. She explains that “He caught himself upside down in a ditch. Horses shut down when they go into shock and the vet thought we wouldn’t get him out” (James interview, 2006: 4).

According to James, her work also stems from her empathy for the suffering that domesticated animals experience at the hands of humans. She explains that the reason she can relate to their experiences of anxiety is that she projects her own anxiety onto them. James claims that “… a lot of my anxiety is directed rather obsessionally towards my animals, in particular my horses” (James interview, 2006: 6). For example, James contends that she worries and has fears “…that they are going to get caught in fences and rip their legs open, slip in the mud, run into fences in storms, get hot, get cold, and so on” (James interview, 2006: 6). She admits that

I drive myself and my family mental worrying about them. In this sense, it has nothing to do with them really but is about my fears and anxieties (James interview, 2006: 6).

James pursues her relationship with her horses and other animals and sometimes struggles to understand the nature of the relationship. She asks

… why do I want to have a relationship with an animal? What is it that I get from them? Why is it that I sacrifice so much that I can’t live in the city and spend ninety dollars a week on horse food? Why would I do that? (James interview, 2006: 6).

James explains that, “… trying to understand their [animal] behaviours and animal psychology has always interested me and why they react the way they do” (James interview, 2006: 6). Importantly, she is “… coming from an empathetic and caring approach” and, what is more, she desires that “… more and more I can show that … we have animals for all different reasons” (James interview, 2006: 6).
A personal and empathetic relationship with those animals closest to her – her three horses – are fundamental to James’s art practice. While her compassion extends to all animals, James’s singular focus and love are for her companion horses. Her life is intertwined with theirs; she literally uses their hair and their bodies in her work. She crafts their collected hair into her work which, itself, centres on her equine companions while, at the same time, addressing and expressing her own personal anxieties and concerns. Her interaction with and sensitivity to horses drives her art practice. While her work emanates from this very personal interaction, James expresses more universal complexities that occur between animals and humans.

7.5 Lynne Roberts-Goodwin

The introduction to and meeting with Roberts-Goodwin was primarily mediated through her colleague at the College of Fine Arts (COFA), UNSW, Dr Vaughan Rees. After a tour of COFA, Rees introduced Roberts-Goodwin who is senior lecturer in the School of Media Arts. Prior to the meeting Rees described Roberts-Goodwin as “… a great character – loads of fun – and she has enthusiasm by the
bucketful – especially after coffee …”¹, all of which proved to be accurate. Sitting before in her well-organised and comfortable office at COFA (Plate 7.5.1), Roberts-Goodwin, a petite, almost wiry, fifty-three year old woman, radiates energy and passion – passion for photography, for animals, for travel and for her projects.

Plate 7.5.2 Lynne Roberts-Goodwin, Bad Bird #1, 2006, c-type photograph (courtesy of the artist)

However, her grandest passion for birds emerges, perhaps, as her most enduring ardour. Indeed, Roberts-Goodwin claims that, for her, “… birds are central…” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 2) and are frequently the subject of in her work (Plate 7.5.2) such as the Bad Bird series. She recalls that she “… was very much a little bird girl. I loved the nightingale and I loved bird cages”. She explains that her “… relationship to [the bird] was always quite exotic and it was never familiar”. She adds that she “… was in the city, continually. I was never a country girl” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 2). Her constant pet as a child was a canary or rather several canaries because her parents continuously replaced each yellow canary as one died, in succession, with another yellow canary which then always bore the same name, Oscar. More currently, an African peach-faced

¹ Rees, V. (2006) email to the researcher, 5 June 2006
lovebird parrot, Lulu the Zulu, is her feathered animal companion. According to Roberts-Goodwin, she “… used to sleep with it in my mohair silk shawl and she’s a part of my life. I adore her but I haven’t clipped her wings” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 2). She adopted the parrot from WIRES (wildlife information, rescue and education services). She explains that the bird is now “… in a three metre cage … She has every toy that there is to play with. She’s still a bird so I don’t teach her tricks” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 2). This relationship with birds extends to her artwork where birds are often the central focus (Plate 7.5.2).

During her childhood, Roberts-Goodwin’s other constant animal presence was taxidermic animals. “I grew up here in Sydney … with a mother who deals with deceased estates and still does at eighty-two years of age”, she explains. “I can remember a lot of animals, in terms of stuffed animals. My mother adored the *Stag at Bay* (c.1846) by Edwin Landseer” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 2). She believes her childhood has influenced her life directions and suggests that “… the whole background of taxidermic and preserved animals and the museum and the archive, I think, was fairly entrenched” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 2).

Interestingly, while animals are the predominant subject or theme in Roberts-Goodwin’s work, it is solitariness and isolation that initially drew her into photographing animals, qualities which still are, it might be suggested, integral to most of her images. She recalls that

… the first photograph I took unconsciously was when I left Australia on a travelling scholarship when I was twenty years old after I’d left university. I did my MFA in Manchester at a very, very young age, far too young (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 3).

She explains that she “… went up to Scotland and saw a solitary sheep on a snow covered mountain and I felt that’s exactly how I feel” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 3). Subsequently, she retraced the image back to the stags of Edwin Landseer, and a reproduction of a Landseer painting that belonged to her mother and with which she grew up. “I was researching Landseer and the question
was: how [the animal] is in my work and when I became aware of it and it was probably then”. She claims, however, “… it’s always has to do with isolation, I must admit. I took to animals because I was overseas for eighteen years” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 3).

As well as isolation, Roberts-Goodwin maintains that it is also displacement that underlies her work. This, too, relates to her childhood experience of continually moving homes because her father was first in the navy and then in ambassadorial positions. She observes that

There was always a displacement. … I think it was … me being displaced through no other reason than my dad being in the navy and then going into the embassy. My family was always moving around separately so I think that was embedded (Roberts-Goodwin interview: 2006: 2).

After completing her MFA in England, Roberts-Goodwin came back to Australia a number of times; however, she “… applied for a Paris studio and went to Paris, then to Zurich and then went back to the UK, after which I went and lived in New York” (Roberts-Goodwin interview: 2006: 2). She suggests that one of the things that drew her to animals was probably isolation or aloneness; “… I found relationships with animals or had an interest in observing something [animals] in silence” (Roberts-Goodwin interview: 2006: 2).

In addition to isolation and displacement, Roberts-Goodwin is drawn to animals and particularly birds because of their elusiveness. She claims that “… the concept of elusiveness is about something I just didn’t know” (Roberts-Goodwin interview: 2006: 3). She explains the idea of not knowing in relation to her work: “If I had to photograph anything, it was photographing something I didn’t know or had never seen”. What is more, she conjectures,

… I still don’t know [what I see] when I look into the eyes of an animal. It’s that unknowingness rather than the performative act or the cuteness factor that really draws me to it [photographing animals] (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 3).
Roberts-Goodwin also likes to follow the genre of animal photography such as that featured in the *National Geographic* magazine and in animal documentaries. While she believes these images are indeed beautiful photographs, she aspires to bring yet another quality, possibly edginess, to her photographs.

… I like to think that I interrogate that quality that just slips the image on the edge of [the question] ‘what is it that I am looking at?’... I try to look at that subversion of the genre” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 4).

The subversion of the genre of animal photography, as she puts it, takes Roberts-Goodwin into spheres and environments which are seldom explored by artists. She has been, for example, to Saudi Arabia to photograph falcons with their handlers (Plate 7.5.3) and to the CSIRO to photograph the Australian blowfly, *Luculía cuprina*, which are bred there. Conversely, she is also fascinated by a very common but over-looked bird, the pigeon. She offers a different vision of these much maligned animals, which show the birds as individuals, almost from their own viewpoints, close-up perching on high city buildings. She suggests that she
likes the naturalness of photographing interactions between animals and people but “… to get that naturalness, sometimes, is so difficult. There aren’t people flying around with birds …”. The pursuit of photographing both birds and people interacting with birds is a challenge. According to Roberts-Goodwin, “It’s not something that’s there at the tip of your fingers. To go out and get what you want, without knowing what you want, is difficult” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 13).

Roberts-Goodwin also deliberately shifts and considers the aesthetic elements in her work. She argues that

> When I’m there, the framing is incredibly important, that is, the aesthetic framing of it. Sometimes I go out of my comfort zone and go – what if? (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 10).

Moreover, contends Roberts-Goodwin, she has to be really aware of her position or relationship to her subject “… to create that aesthetic … I love beautiful images but not sublime beauty … They are easy to take”. She maintains that, “The hard ones for me are what’s really amazing and astounding or incredible in this landscape. That’s another sort of aesthetic” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 10).

Roberts-Goodwin’s obsession with birds is an ongoing fascination. As well as work on pigeons and sea-gulls, in 2007 she started work on a book project with an avian vet on the history of falconry. According to Roberts-Goodwin, she allows the pigeons and other birds and animals in her work to be “… very much autonomous creatures” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 6). She also argues that “The animal in my work is not extraneous. It’s not a photographic punctum like a little Napoleon’s dog walking out of the frame” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 6). While her photographic oeuvre embraces landscape, animals (especially birds) and the animal-human relationship fascinate her and remain centre-stage of her work.
7.6 Lisa Roet

“I feel it is me in there as well – I am the chimp without doing it consciously – when I look back on some works” (Roet interview, 2006: 2). Roet’s reflection on her work indicates her passion for apes and representing them visually in her work. Roet is an established and well-known artist whose artwork is exhibited widely. About seven months prior to this interview, she was awarded the prestigious biennial $100,000 McClelland Award for her monumental work, White Ape. An acquisitive prize, the work was exhibited as part of the McClelland Contemporary Sculpture Survey 2005 and is now permanently sited in the grounds of the McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park on the Mornington Peninsula. Thirty-nine year-old Roet is based in Melbourne, living in the suburb of Elsternwick (Plate 7.6.1) with her studio some distance away on the Mornington Peninsula near the sea.

Plate 7.6.1 Lisa Roet at her Elsternwick home, 2006

The impressive White Ape sculpture epitomises Roet’s passionate interest in apes and particularly chimpanzees. Her fascination with primates goes back to childhood, as she remembers,

I was very, almost obsessively, interested in apes as a child from about ten to thirteen. I read all these books by Jane Goodall and all the populist science coming out about apes at that time (Roet interview, 2006: 1).
Indeed, her obsession was very much encouraged by her parents. “My father, in fact both my parents, were very interested in natural history and nature” and their fascination meant that they “… used to give me a book about nature and animals for birthdays” (Roet interview, 2006: 1). This interest, she explains, meant that in high school, she wanted to study zoology or animal behaviour science when she completed secondary education, “… but I did badly in physics and I wasn’t allowed to continue studying it in HSC” (Roet interview, 2006: 1). Fortunately, however, she states that, “I had a new art teacher who took me under her wing and encouraged me to study art” (Roet interview, 2006: 1).

Although Roet was deeply interested in all things in nature, she also enjoyed art, which was nurtured by her parents. “I had early interest in art due to both my parents being interested”. She reminisces that, “They would take me to exhibitions, both museum and commercial, and there would be a lot of discussion about the work” (Roet interview, 2006: 1). Indeed, her father was obsessed with Francis Bacon in the seventies and early eighties and “… at one stage wanted to sell the family home to buy a painting in auction in London” (Roet interview, 2006: 1). After her secondary schooling, Roet studied art at RMIT: “… when I was seventeen and finished at nineteen with a Bachelor of Arts (painting, with minor in sculpture and drawing)” (Roet interview, 2006: 1). She recalls that “They tried to fail me in drawing as they said I didn’t draw correctly and I drew then like I do now …”. For Roet, art was a clear pathway. “When I left art school I just continued to work. I didn’t really question if I would or not” (Roet interview, 2006: 1).

In art school, Roet explains, “I was painting animal carcasses, dried fish and the ducks that hang from Chinese restaurant windows – red and dripping” (Roet interview, 2006: 1). She remarks that, “Though dead, their eyes were animated as if I was bringing them to life”. When she finished her art studies, she travelled and “… ended up in Berlin in 1989 when I started to draw elephants and apes at the Berlin Zoo and it has continued from there but just apes now” (Roet interview, 2006: 1). She contends that, “The correlation between ape and elephant was their
intelligence and how humans related to this” (Roet interview, 2006: 1). However, she maintains,

I refined this down to the study of apes because it [the ape] is symbolically the closest genetic relative to the human and therefore conceptually more precise (Roet interview, 2006: 1).

For Roet, particularly while she was in Germany, the animal, primarily, became “… a way of reflecting on humanity” (Roet interview, 2006:2). While in Berlin, at the time the wall divided East from West Germany, Roet made the connection of people living in the Eastern bloc with the way captive apes were living in East German zoos. She found herself “… thinking a lot about societies and how people treat each other and this whole landslide of thoughts and ideas about humanity from this experience of living over there [East Germany]” (Roet interview, 2006: 2). While it is evident that her principal focus and passion are primates and nature, her considerations are deeply interconnected with her ideas about people and society.

Plate 7.6.2  Lisa Roet, *3 Wise Men*, 1998, Cibachrome print (courtesy of the artist)

Roet worked on a series of photographs that explored the ideas of captive animals and human societies. She explains that the works comprising the *Ape and the*
*Bunnyman* series (Plates 7.6.2 and 7.6.3) are images of chimpanzees “… in these almost toilet block cells”. Interestingly, she argues, “People hardly ever pick up on that and they talk about Jewish people and the bunny and why they’re looking at the ape and why is the ape looking at them” (Roet interview, 2006: 2). She observes that viewers of the works are so used to seeing apes in captivity and in zoos that they “… don’t ever ask why this ape is in a concentration camp because I think they are so primed to that”. Indeed, she contends that, “One of the few people that actually wrote something that I thought came closest to how I felt about my work was an animal liberationist from Sweden who wrote an article [about the work] in a Swedish animal rights magazine” (Roet interview, 2006: 2). According to Roet, “… most people only know the ape in these concentration camps and they just don’t even question it, which I think is amazing” (Roet interview, 2006: 2).

Plate 7.6.3   Lisa Roet, *Ape and the Bunnyman*, 1998, Cibachrome print
(courtesy of the artist)
Whilst not directly addressing issues of animal advocacy, Roet contends that she would like to “… indirectly bring an awareness of some sort to the general public who may not be aware of these issues” (Roet interview, 2006: 7). Indeed, one of her main influences is her experience of laboratories where research work is undertaken with chimps. This experience has caused her to reach the conclusion that “I’m not big on scientists” (Roet interview, 2006: 7). Here she is referring particularly to the renowned primate scientist, Susan Savage-Rumbaugh in the United States. During her time at Savage-Rumbaugh’s laboratory, she witnessed the researcher’s treatment of a chimp she had reared almost as her child but then discarded for another one. Roet saw this chimp signing and pining for her mother, Savage-Rumbaugh, and asking obsessively to see her. Roet observes that, “I thought this was so awful that she didn’t even care and yet she pretends to the world how devoted she is [to chimps]” (Roet interview, 2006: 7).

While the animal is clearly evident in Roet’s work, subtlety underlies her work. While animal advocacy issues are outside her driving conceptual concerns, she is interested in shifting her audience’s perceptions about apes. She claims that, “I would like to be able to say that I indirectly bring an awareness of some sort to the general public who may not be aware of these issues” (Roet interview, 2006: 10). Roet sees the contradictions and dilemmas in working to improve the life of apes referring to the Perth zoo. The head of Orang-u-tan Society works at the zoo and also has a worldwide fund to stop deforestation of habitat and support breeding programs. She observes that “It’s a hard reconciliation, that zoo thing. They are now all going on the bandwagon of breeding programs. It is a very strange world” (Roet interview, 2006: 10).

Roet argues that, by looking at the ape in her work, it is reflecting back our own humanity, however; “… it also lets people look at how we perceive these animals” (Roet interview, 2006: 7). Her exhibition in New York of the Ape and the Bunnyman series, which depict chimpanzees with a person in a bunny costume (Plate 7.6.3) showed that the American audiences “… weren’t very good with ambiguity. They are a bit paranoid about ambiguity” (Roet interview, 2006: 7). Outside the New York gallery, according to Roet, “… there was a demonstration
… saying that I was exploiting animals and I was for science and the vivisection” (Roet interview, 2006: 7). She explains that the demonstrators missed the underlying point of the exhibition or apparently even looked at these works to see that

… I am obviously showing them [the animals] in this extreme environment and it’s a subtle way for people to see what’s going on and it’s a bleak vision about what’s going on (Roet interview, 2006: 8).

She claims that “They didn’t even get it”. Moreover, she continues, “… they just thought I was saying, isn’t this great, rather than me saying, isn’t this weird? What are we doing? Why is this so bizarre?” (Roet interview, 2006: 8).

Roet is particularly aware of the situations in which she has come into contact with apes. She notes that, with gorillas, it is offensive to stare into their eyes because it is seen by them as a form of aggression so consequently there is rarely any direct eye contact. Looking at primates directly is significant for Roet. She claims that “My own gaze with the ape is important. It is very important to look into the eyes” (Roet interview, 2006: 9), and particularly notes the similarities of eyes of apes with our own. “The eyes of apes are so human even though they are so dark; there is just this depth to them. They are so dark but they are so expressive” (Roet interview, 2006: 9). The eyes of chimpanzees are especially fascinating for Roet.

Chimps have these incredibly intense staring eyes and look like someone who has taken a lot of Speed. They have these really frighteningly drugged-looking frenzied eyes (Roet interview, 2006: 9).

Aware that she observes and has experiences with these animals in their captive state rather than their natural environment, she observes that “…. I don’t know if that’s because they are in captivity and they are in a mental state as I’ve never experienced them in the wild”. What is more, she claims, she is aware that “It is not the natural way those apes are. They are mentally impaired somehow; they are in a changed state” (Roet interview, 2006: 10). At a lecture Roet presented recently in 2006, a person came up to her and told her that
… they are going to the zoo to have a look because they have never looked at apes in that way before. So I think it [the artwork] does change the perception [of apes] with some people (Roet interview, 2006: 10).

Roet’s singular focus on apes is driven by a need to understand not only apes but, more broadly, humanity. Her work urges serious but sensitive reflection upon the prevailing attitudes towards and treatment of all apes, whether they are in zoos, circuses, scientific research facilities or in their increasingly threatened wild habitat. Roet’s work implores us to consider our similarities with apes without proselytising or politicising her work. Indeed, she employs humour in her work to deflect any heavy-handed political sloganeering regarding her subject. Her work diminishes hierarchies between human and ape and even crosses the boundaries we have set up between the two. We discover in Roet’s work that the animal-human connection is in our DNA.

7.7 Yvette Watt

Plate 7.7.1 Yvette Watt in her Tasmanian School of Art, UTAS, studio, Hobart, 2006

“What is it like to be another animal other than yourself? How can we understand that?” (Watt interview, 2006: 6). Watt asks these fundamental questions which drive her artwork and, upon entering her light and airy studio (Plate 7.7.1), it is clear that everything in this space reflects her intense passion for her primary
subject – animals. One wall of the studio is covered with a range of animal artwork postcards. The bookshelves are stacked with books about animal art and other animal-related subjects; and her artworks, some pinned to the wall and others on the floor leaning against the wall, all confirm her animal-centric art and animal-focused life. Watt lives and works in Hobart and it was there, at her Tasmanian School of Art studio in the historic building sited on the equally historic Hobart port harbour, that the interview took place.

Watt’s commitment to and ethical position about animals extends to her choices in food, clothes and other products. According to Watt, animal advocacy “… is central. It’s the core thing. It’s a difficult one because it is one of those things where it is becoming more prominent in my work” (Watt interview, 2006: 11). Indeed, for Watt, as animal advocacy becomes more significant to her work, “… the harder it is to avoid work that becomes literal or preachy. It’s a fine line that you tread” (Watt interview, 2006: 11). Her appearance at forty-three years – attractive, chic and slender with short-cropped fair hair – is counter to the stereotypical image of a long-time animal activist and vegan. Having been involved, since 1984, with an animal advocacy group in Hobart, she initiated another group in 2003 – Against Animal Cruelty in Tasmania (AACT), a group in which she is still actively involved. She admits that her main struggle is “… that parallel thing about being an artist and an activist and how do I actually find a balance between these two things” (Watt interview, 2006: 3).

Yet animals have always been integral to Watt’s life. When growing up in Perth, dogs, cats, birds, mice and other assorted animals were a constant presence. “I grew up in a suburban family that doted on family pets. We always had a dog and a cat and would regularly take in strays that would be kept or re-homed …” (Watt interview, 2006: 3). She was equally fascinated by the animal life in the garden and “… went so far as to set up a kind of laboratory in a friend’s back shed where we studied the life cycle of butterflies and dissected dead insects we had found”.

Indeed, according to Watt, among certain primary school friends, she “… earned the nickname of the naturalist, a title I was simultaneously embarrassed about and proud to be given” (Watt interview, 2006: 4). Around about twelve years-old, she
developed a typical schoolgirl passion for horses. Although her parents were unable to buy her a horse at the time, she recalls that on weekends “…my father would take me to the mounted police stables … where I was allowed to sketch the horses, many of whom I knew by name” (Watt interview, 2006: 4). Indeed, she still possesses a sketchbook from this time that is filled with studies of horse movement, “… plotting each stage of the gallop by cutting out and making studies of horses on the racing pages of the newspaper” (Watt interview, 2006: 5).

Animals still occupy a large presence in Watt’s everyday life. Currently, along with a human partner, she shares her life with three cats and a dog as well as another dog who stays during the day for company. This continuing passion for animals flows seamlessly into her artwork. Animals and animal issues have been “… a major, major part of my work”, she admits. Animals

… are really what drives my work and have done for twenty-something years … essentially, animals have been a fascination for me as long as I can remember (Watt interview, 2006: 1).

Moreover, she explains, it was when she was writing her paper for her Masters degree that she looked at her almost obsessive choice of animals as subject matter for her art and was trying to tease that question out and the aberration was “…the first few years of my undergraduate study where I was looking for subject matter but didn’t really have anything” (Watt interview, 2006: 2). Indeed, Watt claims that,

On the rare occasion where I have tried to give animals less part in my work, I always feel like there is something missing. There was a level of engagement in my work that is absent (Watt interview, 2006: 1).

However, she points out that, while her work such as Domestic Animals (Interview), 2007 (Plate 7.7.2) was influenced by her involvement in animal rights and campaigning, “… it is not in an overtly political way ….but I’ve always been someone whose work is content-driven anyway” (Watt interview, 2006: 1). Nonetheless, her recent direction in her artwork has a farm animal focus which
examines their commoditification and exploitation and might be viewed as somewhat political. According to Watt,

> It just feels like it’s an endless source of subject matter and possibilities. I can’t imagine working in any other way. I think I would just give up making art (Watt interview, 2006: 1).

Her recent work deliberately shifts the representation of animals from the way in which she previously portrayed animals as a set of animal archetypes, which were open to multiple interpretations, including being metaphors or symbols for the human world. She explains that prior to the late nineties, she “… was dealing much more with the language of mythology and the role that animals play in that respect”. Although, according to Watt, she saw animals as having their own autonomy and presence, “… the work could be read on a symbolic level as well. But now I have shifted right away from that” (Watt interview, 2006: 1).

Watt’s concern about farm animals is heightened to the extent that she has hybridised her own face and body with that of an animal’s face and body. In some recent works, her eyes are replaced with the eyes of her animal subject whether it is a pig, cow, sheep or chicken (Plate 7.7.3). Conversely, in other of works, the
eyes and mouth of the pig, cow, sheep and chicken are replaced with her own features. For Watt, this is an inquiry into what it is like to be another animal, above all a farm animal. She claims that if you spend any time with another animal, cat, dog, or whatever animal it might be,

… if you are genuinely open to seeing things beyond your preconceptions of that animal, then you can’t help but realise that the differences are nowhere near as profound as people might think (Watt interview, 2006: 4).

Plate 7.7.3  Yvette Watt, Second Sight (Chicken), 2007, digital print (courtesy of the artist)

Watt contends that while this move into hybridising herself with animals is important, it is also “… strange that I’m starting this crossover. It’s not a symbolic thing … But it’s actually why the self portraits are part of it because it’s about my personal journey with the whole issue” (Watt interview, 2006: 2). In addition, she explains, “The works where my eyes are replaced by animals’ eyes are self portraits but are also about an idea. They are called an alternative point of view” (Watt interview, 2006: 2). She argues that “It’s about a kind of recognition of these animals as sentient beings not unlike myself” (Watt interview, 2006: 3).
However, importantly, it is also “… about that parallel thing about being an artist and an activist and how do I actually find a balance with these two things” (Watt interview, 2006: 3).

While the animal, animal advocacy issues and ethical concerns are the conceptual drivers for Watt’s work, aesthetics remains vital to her work. She maintains that “… if you’re going to disturb people you need to seduce them a bit as well” (Watt interview, 2006: 4). She is “… most determinedly a figurative artist, in painting primarily, and that’s important to me as well because I believe in the power of communication and that’s a big part of my work”. Painting in a representational style is significant because “… I want to make works that people can engage with and that aren’t too obscure” (Watt interview, 2006: 5).

Watt also believes in the potency of humour in her work stating that, “Humour plays a big part in my work … there is that velvet glove thing, of getting people in there”. However, Watt views it as a somewhat dark humour. The viewer “… might find them disturbing but there’s also something funny” (Watt interview, 2006: 5). She anticipates that her audience finds the humour in her work, because “I paint myself as a chicken and I can’t help but laugh … There’s a silliness to them. I hoped that it would diffuse some of the disturbing stuff …” (Watt interview, 2006: 5). Aware that there are two sides to her work, she contends that “They [the audience] might find them [paintings] disturbing but there’s also something funny” (Watt interview, 2006: 6).

For Watt, along with balancing a disturbing subject with humour, there is also an attempt to balance ethics and aesthetics. While in the process of addressing uncomfortable subject matter such as the slaughter of animals, she aims also to produce images which are compelling as she “… does not want to make works that are repellent”. It is important to Watt that the viewer looks at her work for a period of time and considers very thoughtfully her work and contends that “… I want to actually seduce people into spending some time thinking about what it is I have to say … on that level, the aesthetics [of the work] are important” (Watt interview, 2006: 6). Nonetheless, in the end,
It is a balance. That’s the thing that I am really interested in. If I go ahead with the series of animal portraits in blood [animal portraits on tea towels painted with Watt’s own blood], it will be very much this thing of balance (Watt interview, 2006: 6).

However, there are yet more dilemmas for Watt the conflict is one of asking “Am I becoming too gentle for the issue? You think of someone like Sue Coe and it is really in-your-face – I kind of back off from that” (Watt interview, 2006: 11). Watt is an ardent admirer of Coe’s work and claims that “Sometimes I think I’m wishy-washy by comparison”. She argues that “… there’s a story book quality to my work that’s always been there. I think it leans towards the illustrative, which can be a weakness as well” (Watt interview, 2006: 11). Trying to reconcile the different threads in her work, she claims that “… it says something of the way I think about the works”. Making the link with illustrations in children’s books, she suggests that good children’s book illustrations are also quite poetic at times. However, she considers that where she may have a problem and the work “… loses some of its poetry because the issues are so strong and I feel so strongly about them” (Watt interview, 2006: 11). Returning to her aim of bringing the viewer to her work, she concludes, “But I guess I back off at being more overt at the moment because I don’t want to repel people who have a problem with it” (Watt interview, 2006: 11).

Within this fine balance and mix of ethics and aesthetics, Watt is also acutely aware of the impact and effect of animal eyes in artwork. Present in many of her works is the gaze and reciprocal gaze. She observes that gaze occurs with some animals more than others, noting that if a dog does not know a person, then direct eye contact can be seen as a threatening gesture. She recounts her experience with her own pets. “We have a blind cat and I would say we engage in each other’s gaze so it’s not just a visual thing. He loves to rub his face all over you”. The gaze, then, might be a physiological as well as a visual awareness. “It’s body language and … a physical recognition of each other’s presence that happens in all sorts of ways” (Watt interview, 2006: 15). Moreover, she contends, “… a cat you know well will engage you visually but also there are other non-verbal things
that we don’t even realise we are doing” (Watt interview, 2006: 16). Watt’s other pets, too, engage her with gaze.

We have one very neurotic cat and even she will sometimes just walk up to you and stare at you and meow and you know that that’s a sign that you are supposed to give her a scratch (Watt interview, 2006: 16).

Looking into animal eyes is an experience Watt understands and expresses in her work. She relates an event that occurred at the agricultural expo in Paris when, she states, “I think I was desperately in need of animal contact as well – where I was trying to take this photo of a sheep from a distance”. She recalls that there were two sheep in the pen and “… one was off eating and one was just standing there and I was trying to take close up photos of the eyes” (Watt interview, 2006: 16). Amazingly, for Watt, “The one that was the eating just turned and stood and stared at me and came and walked straight up to me and just stood there looking at me” (Watt interview, 2006: 17). According to Watt, “It was just one of those extraordinary moments. That sheep initiated the whole gaze and contact, not me”. This visual communication with the sheep, she claims, is revealing. “It’s not an animal I know yet I felt really an extraordinary connection to that sheep at the end …”. Connection and communication such as this “… is something you anticipate and assume would be part of your relationship with the pets not farm animals” (Watt interview, 2006: 17).

7.8 The Researcher’s Perspective: Barbara Dover

After interviewing the six artists, the researcher then turned the focus to herself (Plate 7.8.1). In order to integrate the research questions with the research art practice, it was necessary to place the same frame upon the researcher as that placed on the artists: the interview questions were thus considered and addressed in written form, moving the researcher into the personal reflective position of the artist.
Animals were always a part of my life: as far back as I can remember there were constantly animals in the household especially cats but also many dogs, mice, guinea pigs, rabbits and birds. The family home was a haven for stray and injured animals rescued by my elder sister and me. For those unfortunate ones who died, my sister and I performed a funeral service and buried the animal in a small grave we had dug in the backyard. However, this life-long interest in and connection to animals has not always been simpatico with my other enduring passion – art.

While animals and questions of our relationship with them are currently pivotal to my artwork, the anomaly is that this was not always the case. With my strong personal connection to and interest in animals, I drew and painted them from time to time but I had never addressed the sort of issues that concerned me about animals even after I had become aware of how those animals, for example, in the food industry, in research, in circuses and zoos are treated and live out their lives.

My awareness of the many concerns associated with our attitude towards animals and my subsequent involvement with the animal cause was initiated in 1983 by the reading of Peter Singer’s book, Animal Liberation, which was, for me, life changing. Before reading this book, I had no idea what had happened to the animal – the chicken, pig, cow or sheep – before it became a piece of meat I
consumed or even that I could possibly make an ethical decision about not eating the piece of meat. This period represented a time of critical realisations about both art and animals.

While pursuing a professional career in arts education, I began to spend most of my spare time working for the cause of those hundreds of thousands of exploited animals who were largely unseen and ignored but suffering lives of deprivation and pain in such places as factory farms and research laboratories. There was very little time for my personal art practice. Indeed, for me, the work of animal advocacy seemed a more urgent and relevant concern on which to be spending time while art making began to look like an indulgence or a waste of time that would not make any difference to bettering the life of a single animal. My gradual movement away from art indicated the pursuit of an alternative path through which animals, rather than art, were at the heart of my preoccupations.

After a period of travelling then moving to Cairns to live, I returned to art practice again, steadily building up skills that had long lain dormant. It was during this time that I came to the realisation that there was potential to coalesce my art practice with my commitment to animal advocacy. I undertook Master of Creative Arts research to address the absence of the animal from my artwork, to confront the separation of animals and art and to bring the two together in a meaningful way. Indeed, the Masters research both aimed at bringing together my two previously separate spheres of concern – art and animal advocacy – within the widening and shifting environments of both areas. The contextual setting and conceptual underpinnings for the Masters research of both my first-hand experience of the animal advocacy movement and the proliferation of literature on animal ethology and animal rights that had occurred within the last thirty or so years and also, importantly, the changing nature of contemporary arts, located the pedagogical scope and duality of this research.

The fallow period when my art practice was relinquished for animal advocacy work might well have been a formative time for my art at another level. The thematic focus of the Masters’ work found its source or germination in my deep
and long-held commitment to the cause of animals. The many years of research and effort to comprehend the philosophical questions and ideas relating to the ethics and dichotomies of our relationship with animals emerged as a significant factor in the formation of the conceptual and theoretical basis of my work. Moreover, the Masters research stage might be viewed as a demarcation point or an invisible line beyond which my more current work commences and the period in which my work leads into the phase where the issue of our moral relations to animals is explored in a more considered way.

The decision to embark upon the area of animal exploitation as my Masters research and art practice focus raised some old and some new dilemmas. One of the foremost concerns for me was how to address, in visual terms, the complex philosophical, moral and ethical questions in relation to animals without slipping into sentimentality or political sloganeering. Yet another quandary was how, with regard particularly to aesthetics, to represent visually the dichotomous nature of society’s attitude towards and treatment of animals without resorting, for example, to the portrayal of images of brutalised animals in slaughterhouses and laboratories. While the visual approaches in which our dichotomous relationship with animals are expressed by contemporary artists are broad, from confrontational to alluring, from raw graphic realism to traditional figurative representation, the critical issue for me at this time was in the location and choice of the appropriate and meaningful expressive visual language for my art practice.

In one work, created at this time, *Barrier*, 2003 (Plate 7.8.2), I sought to represent the dichotomy inherent in our attitudes towards those animals we eat and utilise for many products – cattle. In this work, I endeavoured to reveal the beauty of the ordinary animal through the matter or material – in this case, the textural variety and colours of cattle tail hair – of the animal in the clean and clinical format of a transparent acrylic tube, and allow the exploitation and dreadfulness behind the beauty unfold slowly. The words *conditioned*, *rendered*, *transported*, *automated* and *engineered* sandblasted on the tubes, and only obvious when viewed closely, were used to suggest the dispassionate and mechanised approach to the animals taken by the industries involving cattle.
Another work from the Masters research, *Breathless*, 2003, (Plate 7.8.3) also centred on the exploitation of animals and the ethics of our relations with them.
The specific exploitation focus in *Breathless* was the confinement of sentient, breathing beings in enclosures that deprive them of their natural behaviours and cause them suffering. While all intensively-farmed animals are confined within spaces which result in deprivation and suffering, for me, the mass-production techniques endured by factory-farmed chickens, more commonly known as battery hens, represented factory farming both at its worst and at its grossest in terms of sheer numbers of animals. Furthermore, the chicken was the first animal to be removed from its relatively free-roaming traditional farm conditions to cage confinement. As an unambiguous referent to chickens specifically, and living creatures generally, I placed the small white feathers sourced from feather pillows, in the box/cage acrylic structures. The feathers also signified the symbolic associations of the colour white such as purity, innocence and goodness as well as qualities of fragility, vulnerability, delicacy, softness and subtlety. The box/cage in *Breathless* also represented confinement, containment and enclosures as well as airlessness, breathlessness and suffocation. Through the repetition of nine structures, I maintained the metaphoric associations to multiple numbers and the relentlessness of cages in factory farms. Additionally, in order to bring the acrylic turreted box even closer to its referents of both battery-hen cages and iconic north Queensland domestic and commercial architecture, I placed the feather-filled acrylic box/cage on stilts or legs.

This Masters research project was a critical turning point in resolving my parallel interests and involvement with animals and art. I had finally dealt with two fundamental issues – ethics and aesthetics – that previously had seemed irreconcilable. Specifically, while this research probed the issue of exploitation, it also confronted the issue and simultaneously considered the important role of aesthetics. I brought together aesthetic deliberations with confronting animal issues, that is, I placed the pleasing and displeasing together, which underlined the inherent contradictions in the subject of animals. Now, ethical issues in my artwork are closely allied with aesthetics and are fundamental drivers. My work is informed and shaped by ethical considerations but within an aesthetic frame. My approach to aesthetics and to the question of beauty in an artwork aligns with the ideas that are used to describe not only formal qualities of a work but also quality...
of ideas, concepts and pursuits. When all these aspects of a work coalesce then the work is close to being successful. The idea of the combining conceptual rigour with formal beauty in an artwork is appealing to me. However, working in the realm of aesthetics to address the unpleasant and horrible side of animal-human interactions remains difficult.

While I address animal issues in my work, I am adamant that I would never harm, exploit or kill an animal for a work. Also, I would never force an animal to do something against his or her will for the purpose or sake of a work. While I have photographed animals, it has been on their terms and with their cooperation. Although I have used animal industry by-products such as feathers and horse hair in some works, I must admit still to having some issues with reconciling the use of these. Nevertheless, I would consider using a dead animal in some circumstances, for example, road kill or found dead animals if the work is conceptually sound in regards to animals.

However, central to my approach to the subject of animals in my work is the consideration of animals as sentient beings, capable of experiencing suffering and pain but also pleasure as beings with lives and needs of their own. This is a fundamental tenet underpinning my work concerning animals; indeed my current research is more directly concerned with sentience. Animal sentience is clear to observe when you live with animals and my lifelong close association with companion animals particularly has influenced my views. It is important in my work that I engage with animals as individuals, standing or meaning nothing more than themselves, as sentient individuals seen to have their own autonomy rather than representing the human condition or a specific human characteristic. Also, living with animals not only reveals their sentience but it also points to the fine boundaries between humans and non-human animals. The boundaries between different animal species can seem greater than the boundaries between some animals and humans. Like a number of other contemporary artists such as Watt and James, I am interested in questioning the traditional animal-human demarcations.
7.9 Commonalities and Points of Divergence

It is evident from talking to these artists that, while the gaze and reciprocal gaze are threads that form a strong tie between the works of the artists, conceptual diversity and fundamental differences in their consideration of animal-human relations are also apparent. Table 7.9.1 uses the main frames provided by the interviews to profile the seven artists. The different hue/shading in the table indicates the category or grouping of an area of focus which relates generally to the organisation and categorisation of the interview questions.

Table 7.9.1 Animal Interface in Selected Art Practices

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<td>Depiction of reciprocal gaze</td>
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For Hobbs, for example, the boundaries and borders between the animal and human remain in question. While she implies co-existence and interdependence, at the same time she intimates that there is something rather disquieting and strange in the animal-human relationship. Not all is what it seems on the surface of this interaction. Indeed, the animals and humans that Hobbs portrays in her works are entangled in a constructed narrative indicating that the animal-human relationship is being pushed to the edge of social acceptability.

Fowler, too, addresses ethical issues in regards to relations between animals and humans but his scope embraces these under the broad sweep of nature and culture. His concern is that humanity is losing touch with nature and culture which, for Fowler, represent animals, the environment and human cultural traditions. Most importantly, his work with animals and animal behaviour strongly comments on and reflects the human condition. Roet’s work, too, is a mirror to humanity. Her singular focus on apes and, particularly chimpanzees, animals with whom humans share more than ninety-eight percent DNA, is empathetic and sensitive to these creatures but, through this close consideration of the primate, her work compels us towards enhanced understanding of humanity.

James also seeks to understand human behaviour, especially her own. Anxiety underpins her artwork, which centres on her own horses. James addresses both her anxiety and the anxiety animals might experience. Her work emanates from her particular sensitivities and personal interactions with her horses. Roberts-Goodwin’s driving concerns are less explicitly personal than those of James but nonetheless derive from a personal sense of displacement or aloneness, as she terms it. Her animals and humans are isolated in the landscape or some desolate setting, whatever the context might be. Indeed, Roberts-Goodwin physically and actually displaces herself in countries and cities around the world, some of which are dangerous, in order to realise her images. Watt displaces herself too but she endeavours to see the world from the animal’s point of view. The driving concern in her art practice stems from empathetic transference of her experience as a human to the experience of a sentient animal. Her work considers what it is like to be an animal other than a human and probes questions of animals’ viewpoints.
The perceptions revealed by the interviews demonstrate that these artists are insightful in relation to the contemporary shifts and changes in the animal-human relationship. They are engaged with and insightful about the perplexing boundaries between animals and humans and suggest that there are continuities between the two species. These artists engage with these sensitive issues within the considerations of ethical and aesthetical concerns and express strongly these concerns in their work. Social and/or individual ethics in our relationship with animals are important for both the artists and the researcher. Roet, for instance, maintains that her work aims to address the moral issue of how we perceive animals; indeed, she urges people to consider these issues. Watt’s work, too, is driven by her strongly held views and ethical issues are also an integral part of Roberts-Goodwin’s work. Fowler also contends that he is considering and conceptualising ethical issues in relation to the ways animals are treated. For James, ethical issues are also important because she is “…coming at it from a concerned pet owner role …” (James interview, 2006: 7), part of this being to encourage awareness of the issues to others. Hobbs states that she is constantly aware of ethics and would misrepresent neither animals nor people in her work.

Significantly, this diversity and complexity of conceptual approaches among the artists reflect the complexity, density and intricacy of the animal-human relationship itself. The interview data evidences the nature of this multifarious interaction with the particular animal/s represented in the works, which include domesticated and captive wild animals. So too, the position of animal advocacy within the artists’ conceptual frame of reference demonstrates apparent wide divergence among the individual approaches and attitudes with Watt, who advocates for animals, at one end of the spectrum and Hobbs, who does not experience the need to be close to animals, at the other end. Roberts-Goodwin, Fowler, James and Roet are located at points along the centre of this advocacy continuum, each with varying viewpoints and philosophies on the relevance of animal advocacy and animal issues to their work.
Fowler’s view of animal advocacy is, “… rather than being didactic about it, I try in the work to be reverent of the animal” (Fowler interview, 2006: 10). Roberts-Goodwin works in collaboration or conjunction with animal causes and considers that, rather than address animal advocacy directly, she might “…construct a narrative around [an animal] to champion a cause” (Roberts-Goodwin interview, 2006: 11). James contends that “… I tread very carefully with that area and I’m really wary of preaching …” (James interview, 2006: 9). While Watt echoes James’s sentiment, she claims that it is hard “… to avoid work that becomes literal or preachy … it’s a fine line that you tread” (Watt interview, 2006 8). Roet, too, argues that she prefers to indirectly bring an awareness of the animal issues through her work.

Interestingly, while their viewpoints about animal advocacy, ethics and aesthetics vary, all use photographic technologies to create their artworks. Although the broad choice of medium is a commonality, it is also evident that materiality takes a back seat conceptually to the artists’ media choice in their work. Some artists, such as Hobbs, specifically seek to avoid materiality while, for others, such as Fowler, the materiality is expressed in the photograph itself. In utilising photographic technologies, each artist achieves an authenticity and verisimilitude in the interaction between their subjects within the works that perhaps might not have been achievable with other media. The subjects – the human and the animal – of the works are in one sense real people and real animals who are compelling and draw the viewer into work. While the medium of photographic and digital technologies remain a linking factor, each artist explores ideas through this medium in varied ways.

Consistent with the clear position on ethics is the principled base of the artists in relation to portraying and using animals, which centres on integrity and non-exploitation. All artists are unequivocal that they would not harm or kill animals for the sake of their work. Indeed, there are limits to their use of animals for art’s sake. Roet suggests that some of her works address exploitation indirectly although The Ape and the Bunnyman works show exploitation in the extreme. Fowler also addresses these issues in an indirect way, particularly referencing
battery farming and the factory farming of animals. Watt, on the other hand, deals very directly with the issue of animal exploitation, which both informs and drives her work. Like Watt, James avoids using imagery of animals in distress and seeks to reflect the animal’s point of view. Hobbs also aims to represent autonomous animals, respecting them and their place in the world.

The idea of the animal-human connection or boundary blurring, as it is often described, or even animal-human continuity, as Noske (1997) argues, is a strong linkage between some of the artists and the researcher. James contends that the work with her mare in *The World is a Dangerous Place* (2004) “… was really me trying to connect and relate to her even though it was meant to be about anxiety …” (James, 2006: 5). For James, the human-animal relationship and boundaries in her work are becoming increasingly important to her work. Watt, too, particularly in her hybrid works, which are part her and part other animal, are about breaking down the boundaries between human and animal. Fowler argues that what he seeks to express in his work is that “…there aren’t boundaries or shouldn’t be boundaries … I think of it as a fluid interaction” (Fowler, 2007: 7). According to Roet, her portrayal of apes, particularly in her drawings, just naturally blur and, indeed, transcend the boundaries because of the similarities between apes and humans.

James contends that she likes neat and finished work and has “… a fairly minimal colour scheme … I now only really use black and white” (James, 2006: 8). However, James is also aware that her aesthetic concerns interconnect with ethical issues. Representing the similarities between human and animal anxiety as a shared experience, for James, means that “… it’s going to be something that isn’t always aesthetically nice or positive …” (James, 2006: 8). In his art practice, Fowler’s aesthetic and ethical concerns are also deeply connected and aesthetics, particularly, is “…pretty strong … overriding really” (Fowler, 2007: 9), as he phrases it. For Watt, aesthetics is also important and she is especially interested in the balance between ethics and aesthetics. She aims to make works with which the viewer engages. Balance between the two is also important for Roberts-Goodwin who argues that “… framing is incredibly important … the aesthetic framing of it
[the image]” (Roberts-Goodwin, 2006: 10) while, at the same time, she believes that ethical awareness is important too contending that, “I like to think that they are not just pretty pictures” (Roberts-Goodwin, 2006: 10).

The animal focus also represented a point of divergence between the artists. To some extent, James’s work reflected the domestic situation between people and their companion animals and the closeness and intimacy of this emotional connection in her representation of a horse and young woman. This might be considered to be more tenuous because horses are less universally identified as pets as, say, dogs or cats; however, it is obvious that the relationship between the horse and human is just as close and as intense as it is with other companion animals. The range of animals that were the focal point of the artists’ works includes farm animals (Watt’s and Fowler’s) and captive wild animals (Roet’s and Roberts-Goodwin’s). While these animals visually connect with the humans in the works and are portrayed as themselves, that is, as individual sentient beings with their own sense of agency, the animals also represent groups or categories of animals from which humans are both physically and emotionally more distanced or remote. Pets, on the other hand, share the everyday lives of a great number of humans and are in close daily proximity to people on both a physical and psychological level.

The interviews reveal a number of commonalities between the artists’ work and the researcher’s work. First, like James, my work too, is driven by personal connections with my companion animals but also by an acute awareness of their own behavioural needs and particularly their sentience and sapience. Also, similarly to Watt, while animal advocacy informs and shapes my work, I avoid proselytising in my work. So too, ethical and moral responsibilities underlie my work, in much the same way as it does for Watt, Roet and Fowler. As with these artists too, I also seek to portray animals as individuals with their own sense of agency. My work seeks to explore the boundaries and borders between animals as does Roet, Watt, Fowler and Hobbs. Significant commonalities between the artists and my work lie within aesthetics and ethical aspects. Aesthetic considerations are
fundamental to the work of each of the interviewed artist and, equally, an interplay and balance between aesthetics and ethics are important.

However, along with these commonalities are also some significant divergences between the artists’ work and my work. An important difference is the representation of the reciprocal gaze between the animal and human: for me, the expression of the mutual gaze is fundamental to my current work while for the other artists it is subsumed by different conceptual drivers. For instance, the gaze for Watt is an expression of her ideas about animal advocacy, particularly personal identification with those animals we eat such as cows, sheep and pigs. For James, while the depiction of the reciprocal gaze is a powerful one in her work, her fundamental underpinning concept concerns anxiety and the ways in which animals and human share this experience. So too, while articulating the gaze between humans and animals, Fowler’s principal concern is the inequitable relationship between nature and humanity while Roet seeks to understand and reflect humanity through nature. Roberts-Goodwin seeks to discover what she does not yet know.

For each of the artists, the reciprocal gaze between the animal and human represented the expressive effect of a different primary conceptual driver rather than a specific and foregrounded concept. Hence, the mutual gaze was expressed in the artists’ series of works to a greater or lesser extent, from very obvious and intense in, say, James’s work to less so in Roberts-Goodwin’s work. Importantly, the underpinning concepts of the artists’ works referred to ideas unrelated to the reciprocal gaze whereas, for this researcher’s work, it was a fundamental conceptual focus. While both researcher and artists bring animals and humans together and utilise non-verbal communication and the gaze as potent means to connect the two and to make the animal-human boundaries indistinct, the researcher considers these in the primary context of the powerful bonds and attachment between people and their pets, a relationship like no other between animal and human. Moreover, for the researcher, the mutual non-verbal connection and communication between humans and their companion animals was the driving conceptual focus and bases of the work. Another notable
divergence is the degree to which the animal is depicted as a sentient being. While all artists portray animals as autonomous individuals with consideration of their agency, for me, the animal and human connective tissue is constructed from sentience and this is essential to the *raison d’être* of my current work.
CHAPTER EIGHT – EYE TO EYE: SAMPLING THE ANIMAL-HUMAN INTERACTION

8.1  *Eye to Eye*: The Curatorial Principles and the Proposal

The exhibition of the interviewed artists work represented the formal and considered presentation of the interview process and deliberations into a public forum, in this case the Dubbo Regional Gallery. Several months before the interviews with the artists, the Dubbo Regional Gallery management expressed interest in receiving a proposal derived from the current research providing “… it is the best work that fits their project core aim ‘to add rigor to the DRG collection thematic’, the Animal in Art” (Appendix E.2). In order to respond to this expression of interest, it was important to ascertain the participation of the artists before a proposal for a group exhibition could be submitted. At the time of the interviews, the possibility of a group exhibition was proposed and, later, when their involvement in such an exhibition was more definitely suggested, all agreed without hesitation. With the confirmation of the artists’ participation, a proposal for a group exhibition, titled *Eye to Eye*, was prepared and presented to Dubbo Regional Gallery for their consideration.

This proposal sought to bring together Australian contemporary artists – Fowler, Hobbs, James, Roberts-Goodwin, Roet, Watt and Dover – who are exploring our complex relations with animals at a time when the animal and human interaction is increasingly under scrutiny as research evidences new findings about animal intelligence, ability to think and capacity to feel both pain and emotion. Within this broad frame, the proposal (Appendix E.1) argued the particular conceptual basis for the group exhibition being the way in which *Eye to Eye* investigates the extent to which the *gaze* and *reciprocal gaze* between humans and animals are critical to the animal-human relationship. The proposal noted that to a large extent our encounters with animals are mediated through our eyes and that, just as *looking* at other humans and being looked at by other humans are fundamental in
human social behaviour, looking and direct eye contact play an important role in animal-human interaction. As well as noting that the work touches on the moral responsibility we have for animals and addresses continuity and boundary blurring between animals and human, the proposal also argued that the exhibition would reflect the intensity of our relationships with animals, including our pets, zoo animals, farm animals and animals in the wild expressed through the reciprocal or mutual gaze. Additionally, it was proposed that the exhibition comprise two to three works by each artist and presented visual examples of the work of the potential artists to be included.

In the subsequent discussions with Gallery staff, the clear focus on the animal in contemporary art, the strong credibility of the artists as well as the sound conceptual basis for the exhibition were specifically highlighted. The explicit focus on the animal-human interaction in the works was considered an important feature of the exhibition. In the view of the Gallery, *Eye to Eye* met their collections policy objectives in their focus on the animal in art. As outlined in their exhibition schedule agreement (Appendix E.2), the exhibition promoted and increased “… the credibility of the Collection and policy”, “… display the finest works available to cement the importance of the policy”, “… highlight the importance of the concept in Australian art history”, and “display a dynamic and robust exhibition that supports the collection”. The Gallery accepted the proposal verbally and then proceeded to direct its organisational planning and funding towards this exhibition as its major animals and art exhibition for 2007.

While the title *Eye to Eye* was at first a working one, it remained the title throughout the exhibition’s duration and was favoured by the Gallery staff. Simple and direct, it was also applicable not only because it clearly reflected the conceptual directions of the exhibition works (humans and animals in visual interchange and connection with each other) but also because it indicated the driving curatorial principles. Importantly too, the words *eye to eye* implied the ideas of seeing (perceiving with the eyes and/or other senses), considering, ascertaining, agreement, complicity and equality or egalitarianism. These are all
terms underpinning the curatorial decision making which foregrounded the publication of this phase of the research.

8.2 The Venue – Dubbo Regional Gallery, Western Plains Cultural Centre

During 2006, a new Dubbo Regional Gallery building was constructed (Plate 8.2.1). This new building incorporates a large contemporary gallery space, a foyer and café area and has been integrated with an existing red brick school building, which was refitted and refurbished to become the Dubbo museum and office space along with a community arts centre (Plate 8.2.2 and Plate 8.2.3). The new complex development, the Western Plains Cultural Centre, was fully completed and functional some ten months before the planned *Eye to Eye* exhibition.

Plate 8.2.1 The Western Plains Cultural Centre, Dubbo
8.3 The Curatorial Role

Clearly the planning, development and implementation of the *Eye to Eye* required the researcher to undertake both a curatorial role and an artist role. The distinct tasks pertaining to both areas were managed separately, and with a clear application. The initial meeting with the Dubbo Regional Gallery management in early March, 2007, in relation to *Eye to Eye*, established an overview of the tasks to be undertaken by both the gallery and the researcher/curator for the exhibition scheduled for September 2007. These tasks included confirming the curatorial rationale; reviewing the exhibition space; confirming the participation of the artists and their work requirements; considering the design of the exhibition and the design of the catalogue; finalising the exact dates for the exhibition; establishing and confirming the public programs to be associated with the exhibition; preparing a draft for a proposed gallery-artist contract; and preparing a budget and fee structure. The researcher/curator also presented a promotional public lecture foregrounding the research basis for the forthcoming exhibition some months prior to it.

Subsequent to the meeting, an *Independent Curator and Exhibition Space Agreement* (Appendix E.2) between the research curator and the Western Plains Cultural Centre was signed.
Following the first face to face meeting held at Dubbo Regional Gallery was a second meeting by teleconference. The agenda and minutes (Appendix E.4) from these meetings recorded the tasks accomplished and those still to be carried out. Less formal consultation during the lead-up time to the exhibition accomplished tasks such as arranging the signature of gallery and artist agreements (Appendix E.3), deciding on the design of the invitation and catalogue, finalising freighting requirements and arranging the opening event.

At the second meeting, the withdrawal of Hobbs was discussed. The work to which Hobbs referred and discussed in her interview, the photographic series, Roar, (which related to animal-human interactions) was unavailable for this exhibition. Hobbs submitted recent work, a video depicting a toy monkey riding a toy bike and a photograph of a horse tethered to a tree. Given the conceptual basis of the exhibition, these works were deemed inappropriate for the context as both lacked the animal-human interaction evident in the earlier Roar series. Hence, the exhibition proceeded with a group of six rather than seven artists.

8.4 Preparatory Tasks

In accordance with the curatorial responsibilities outlined in Appendix E.4, the following preparatory tasks were undertaken as outlined below.

8.4.1 Invitation

The choice of the exhibition hero image, as the gallery termed it, to be used in the invitation (Appendix E.5) and the catalogue was surprisingly simple since all agreed on the compelling nature of James’s photograph, The World is a Dangerous Place, and supported its appropriateness as an image to reflect the intrinsic nature and conceptual framework of the exhibition.
8.4.2 Opening Speaker

The information for the invitation also required confirming the exact date and time of opening and, importantly, the opening guest speaker. The selection of the invited speaker took into consideration credentials in relation to the nature of the exhibition which, in this case, correlate broadly to contemporary art but specifically to animal art. After some deliberation, the choice was Mr Tony Bond AOM, Director of Curatorial Services at The Art Gallery of New South Wales where he also heads the Western Art Department. He first joined the Gallery in 1985 and has a curatorial specialisation in 20th century and contemporary international art. He also sits on a number of advisory boards, including the Biennale of Sydney and the Council of the Power Foundation at Sydney University. Mr Tony Bond also has had past collaboration with Dubbo Regional Gallery on a number of exhibitions and is personally known to the staff. This fact, along with his extensive experience and expertise in contemporary art, meant that he was well qualified for the role of the opening guest speaker. With the choice of opening speaker fixed, the design and printing of the invitation was undertaken some four weeks before the opening of the exhibition.

8.4.3 Catalogue

The process of designing and developing the catalogue, however, was underway soon after the first exhibition planning meeting. The major tasks included the preparation of the foreword (Appendix E.6) by the gallery manager and the catalogue essay by the researcher/curator (Appendix E.7) along with the artists’ statements and the collection of artist exhibition images and their titles. Editing and checking the publication was a responsibility of both the researcher/curator and the manager, while the final proof-reading of the document remained as a task for the gallery. The completed catalogue (Appendix E.8) is a 22 x 22 cm square full colour publication of thirty-two pages in a quality satin stock paper with an allocation of two pages per artist, three pages for the artists’ biographies, two pages for the list of works, two pages for acknowledgements, two pages for the catalogue essay and one page for the foreword. The additional pages presented
selected work of the artists and the cover is a detail of James’s photograph. The final catalogue design, discussed and agreed upon by both the gallery manager and curator/researcher, fittingly reflected the élan and spaciousness of the design of the exhibition and the curatorial directions.

8.4.4 Didactic Panel Text

A didactic panel (Appendix E.9), printed in the same type face as that for the labels and the catalogue was displayed on a partition wall at the entrance of exhibition near the exhibition title label and James’s work.

8.5 The Exhibition Installation

Around one month prior to the delivery of the works to the gallery by the artists, information was supplied for the labels, including titles, sizes and media. A scale model of the main gallery space at Dubbo Regional Gallery proved to be an invaluable tool for the planning and installation of the works. Indeed, the scale model gallery and an approximation of each work allowed exploration and consideration of the options, possibilities and variations of installation before the first day of installing the works (Plate 8.5.1). Again, this pre-planning meant that the installation of works and working with the gallery staff was both straightforward and expedient. The exhibition installation was carried out by the Dubbo Regional Gallery’s exhibitions staff over a period of four days before the opening the exhibition.

The exhibition, Eye to Eye comprised the works of six artists and twenty-four artworks. These were:

Hayden Fowler – Nursling I – V, 2006, mounted digital photographs, (Plate 8.6.1 to Plate 8.6.5) and Goat Odyssey, 2006, digital video (Plate 8.6.6).

Kate James – The World is a Dangerous Place, 2004, knitted object and Pegasus print (Plate 8.6.7 and Plate 8.6.9).
Lynne Roberts-Goodwin – Gulf-desert Saqqar #5, 2003, Gulf-desert Saqqar #9, 2003, Yashen-Saqqar portrait #7, 2003, all c-type photographic prints (Plate 8.6.9 to Plate 8.6.11).


Barbara Dover – (face to face) Bachy, Margaret and Julia, 2007, (face to face) Midge and Eike, 2007, (face to face) Betty and Julie – heart to heart, 2007, all Giclée prints and pencil (Plate 8.6.23 to Plate 8.6.25)

The first task was to re-arrange the gallery space and the movable walls/partitions that were used in the previous exhibition. Since the intended overall ambience of the space was one of spaciousness and openness, consideration was initially given to re-configuration of the moveable walls for the creation of a small room for Fowler’s video work and for an entrance wall displaying James’s installation work. The positioning of these walls established the layout of the space and the total dimension of wall space available for the works. Once the walls were in place, the artworks were wheeled out on moveable stands from the storage room. As each work was unpacked during the installation, a gallery officer closely checked and documented the delivery condition of the work (Plate 8.5.2). The resultant report is made available to the gallery or artist should there be any issues regarding the condition of the work on its return.
The placement of Fowler’s video was determined along with the position of Fowler’s photographic series (Plate 8.5.3). Fowler’s video and related photographs needed to be in near proximity. Hence these five works were placed on the rear wall of the gallery near the video room. After establishing the location of both James’s and Fowler’s works, the positioning of the largest works in the exhibition was determined. Roberts-Goodwin’s three photographic works on aluminium were not only large in scale but also intense in colour thus requiring ample space around each work (Plate 8.5.4). The works were placed approximately 130 cm apart from each other at the southern section of the right-
hand wall. The positioning of the works on the wall was carefully calculated and a surveyor’s laser spirit level was used to precisely locate the works’ horizontal and vertical positions and corner intersections with its laser beam.

Plate 8.5.3  Positioning the Fowler *Nursling I-V* series

Plate 8.5.4  Positioning the Roberts-Goodwin series
Day Two of the installation process continued with the installation of works on the right-hand wall and the decision to place Watt’s three works on paper alongside Roberts-Goodwin’s work (Plate 8.5.5). These were attached to the wall with adhesive tabs. Watt’s more detailed images created an effective interplay of forms and colour with Roberts-Goodwin’s larger works. The two series of Watt and Roberts-Goodwin, displayed side-by-side, and Fowler’s works along the rear wall, left the remaining walls. The wall facing Watt and Roberts-Goodwin offered a more than suitable position for Roet’s works, which comprised five photographs and three bronze busts. Three photographs were arranged on the gallery wall while two were placed on the moveable wall which formed part of the video room (Plate 8.5.6). Continuing with Roet’s work, the three busts were placed on tall narrow white plinths in front of one wall of the video room. The busts of chimpanzees were faced towards each other (Plate 8.5.7). This left the space on the rear the entrance moveable wall for Dover’s series (Plate 8.5.8). Then James’s photograph was placed at the entrance (Plate 8.5.9) and the knitted installation was carefully attached by fishing wire on the ceiling and aligned according to James’s written and drawn instructions (Plate 8.5.10).
Day Three involved finalising adjustments to Fowler’s video and ensuring it played at its optimum quality. Also, some slight changes were made to the gallery entrance moveable wall allowing a slightly larger space behind the wall. The adhesive exhibition title was positioned and placed on the entrance moveable wall, several metres from James’s photograph and installation. This wall, facing the entrance, then comprised the title of the exhibition, *Eye to Eye*, and James’s work, which was the first work viewed when entering the exhibition. The didactic panel text, also printed on clear adhesive film, was positioned on the wall diagonally opposite James’s work at the entrance.

Plate 8.5.6  Positioning the Roet photograph series
Plate 8.5.7  Positioning the Roet sculptures

Plate 8.5.8  Positioning the Dover series
Plate 8.5.9  Positioning the James installation

Plate 8.5.10  Positioning the James photograph
While the placement of the works created ambience, the lighting of exhibition was critical. The exhibition lighting not only brought life to the forms and colour of the work, but also played an important role in the interaction of the works in generating a dynamic specific to the groups of work in this particular space. Some considerable time was invested in achieving the most effective lighting for each work. This necessitated different lighting arrangements for each series of works while, at the same time, considering an overall lighting effect. For this, a variety of lights was used including wall wash lights, beam shapers and spotlights. These were then adjusted, brightened, heightened or softened depending upon the specific work’s requirements. The soft wall wash lights through the whole gallery integrated the works and unify the exhibition.

On Day Four, some final adjustments were made to the lights and the labels were positioned near the works. The room was cleared of all equipment, tools and packing material, the walls were cleaned and the low bench was placed near the centre of the space. The exhibition was ready for opening to the public. The installation process had been smooth and unproblematic, clearly facilitated by the professionalism, expertise and experience of the Gallery’s exhibition staff.

8.6 The Exhibition Works

In 8.6.1 the works by each artist are presented: Hayden Fowler (Plate 8.6.1 – 8.6.6); Kate James (Plate 8.6.7 – 8.6.8); Lynne Roberts-Goodwin (Plate 8.6.9 – 8.6.11); Lisa Roet (Plate 8.6.12 – 8.6.19); Yvette Watt (Plate 8.6.20 – 8.6.22); Barbara Dover (Plate 8.6.23 – 8.6.25). In 8.6.2 Plates 8.6.26 – 8.6.42 present a visual walk through the installed exhibition.
8.6.1 The Exhibition Works

Plate 8.6.1 Hayden Fowler, *Nursling I*, 2006, mounted digital photograph (courtesy of the artist)

Plate 8.6.2 Hayden Fowler, *Nursling II*, 2006, mounted digital photograph (courtesy of the artist)
Plate 8.6.3  Hayden Fowler, *Nursling III*, 2006, mounted digital photograph (courtesy of the artist)

Plate 8.6.4  Hayden Fowler, *Nursling IV*, 2006, mounted digital photograph (courtesy of the artist)
Plate 8.6.5  Hayden Fowler, *Nursling V*, 2006, mounted digital photograph (courtesy of the artist)

Plate 8.6.6  Hayden Fowler, still from *Goat Odyssey*, 2006, looped digital video on DVD 15 min 10 sec (courtesy of the artist)
Plate 8.6.7  Kate James, *The World is a Dangerous Place*, 2004, Pegasus print  
(courtesy of the artist)

Plate 8.6.8  Kate James, *The World is a Dangerous Place*, 2004, knitted installation  
(courtesy of the artist)
Plate 8.6.9  Lynne Roberts-Goodwin, *Gulf-desert Saqqar* #5, 2003, c-type photographic print  
(courtesy of the artist)

Plate 8.6.10  Lynne Roberts-Goodwin, *Gulf-desert Saqqar* #9, 2003, c-type photographic print  
(courtesy of the artist)
Plate 8.6.11  Lynne Roberts-Goodwin, Yashen-Saqqar portrait #7, 2003, c-type photographic print  
(courtesy of the artist)

Plate 8.6.12  Lisa Roet, 3 Wise Men, 1998, Cibachrome print  
(courtesy of the artist)
(courtesy of the artist)

(courtesy of the artist)
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(courtesy of the artist)

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8.6.2 The Exhibition in situ

Plates 8.6.26 – 8.6.42 represent a visual walk through the exhibition from the entrance and James’s work, along the right-hand wall to the rear of the gallery space to the video projection room and the Roet sculptures on plinths in front of this room to the left-hand wall and back to the entrance.
Plate 8.6.27  Entrance, looking to rear wall of gallery and Fowler series

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Plate 8.6.42  The entrance, James photograph and installation
8.7 Opening the Exhibition: *Eye to Eye*

*Eye to Eye* was open to the public on 8 September 2007 and remained installed until its closing date on 11 November, 2007; the official opening took place on Thursday 20 September 2007. In addition to the opening speaker, Mr Tony Bond, and to provide a particular animal focus to the occasion, Mr William Garton, General Manager of the Western Plains Zoo, also delivered an opening talk. The relationship between the gallery and the zoo is important for both organisations who work cooperatively on projects. Accompanying Mr Garton and his zoo staff was a large python called Rocky. This snake was found in a shipment of bananas from Rockhampton and is in the care of the zoo. Because of his placid temperament, the zoo management and staff frequently take him to events.

The manager of the Western Plains Cultural Centre, Ms Brigette Leece, welcomed the guests and introduced the speakers. Through his informative and eloquent talk, the opening speaker, Mr Bond, set the context for those in attendance to consider the works by deliberating on his background and experience with animals, particularly his cat, as well as offering a perspective on contemporary art. He then invited the audience to engage with the works through their experience with animals. Following Mr Bond, the Western Plains Zoo General Manager, Mr Garton, spoke about the various individual animals at the zoo and the zoo’s education program and its future links with the Dubbo Regional Gallery with residency at the zoo of one of the artists featured in *Eye to Eye*. After, Mr Garton, the curator/researcher spoke about the intent of the exhibition and acknowledged the work of the gallery and funding organisations in the development and preparation of the exhibition. One other exhibiting artist, Fowler, also attended the opening.

On the day following the opening, the curator/researcher also presented a floor talk in the exhibition gallery, giving the audience an opportunity to explore the works at more depth. The artist, Fowler, discussed his work during this talk as well as at a special volunteer guide’s meeting. Further to these presentations, several other public programs were organised in conjunction with the exhibition.
These included a residency of one of the artists in the exhibition, Roberts-Goodwin, at the Western Plains Zoo, in which she ran workshops with school-aged groups at the zoo for four days and presented talks.
9.1 Defining and Encapsulating Critical Gaze Moments

Figure 6.5.1, *Overview of the Shape of the Research*, indicates the progress of research from the macro level of the exhibition of the interviewed artists, which represented a bridge to the micro phase of research in which important personal choices, decisions and resolutions were made in relation to artistic practice.

Table 9.1.1 Key Aesthetic Decisions and Technical Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
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<td>Proximity, Connectedness and Gaze</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Attention to individual features of animal and human</td>
<td>• Applications of media</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Absence (presence of background details)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on the non-verbal interaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal Autonomy and Empathetic Agency</td>
<td>• Animal as free agent with equal sentience vis-à-vis human</td>
<td>• Mutuality via close-up</td>
<td>• Grid format multiplies focus</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Use /choice of realia</td>
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<td>Image Compatibility and Continuity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Use/choice of realia</td>
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Table 9.1.1 provides an overview of key decisions and encapsulates the major considerations in the process. Critical to the consideration of the research art practice process was the guiding frame of essential driving principles outlined in
Chapter Six, which comprised reciprocal gaze and participation, proximity, connectedness and continuity, responsibility, empathetic agency, subtlety and restraint. The interaction of these working principles in the aesthetic and technical decision-making and the development of the prototype works were an important and decisive step forward to the final works.

For the research art practice, an important element in this exchange was the animal-human visual connectedness and non-verbal communication implicit in reciprocal gaze and participation. The intensity of this gaze was influenced by the proximity of the one to the other: they indeed share the same space because of the enactment of the mutual gaze. Somewhat superfluous to this gaze, between the animal and human, was the background or context in which they look at one another.

a) The Aesthetics of Proximity

One method through which proximity and connectedness were intensified, and for which aesthetic decisions were imperative, was the diminishment or even the elimination of the background depicted in the photograph of the animal and human so that the figures or the important elements of the figures in the work predominate. Another device was to portray the figures – animal and human – near to life-size so that the physical attributes and fine nuance of details of the animal and/or human such as eyes, facial features and hair can be seen clearly, emphasising both the individual nature and characteristics of each individual’s physical features.

Another device through which proximity might be achieved was with the introduction of realia or objects which either reference or were redolent of the animal and/or human. The use of such material near or attached to the photograph enhances the idea that the animal and human depicted are real and extends the personal and intimate nature of the animal-human interaction.
b) Scale, consistency and aesthetic continuity

To achieve consistency and aesthetic continuity across the body of works, particularly for exhibition purposes, the decision on the scale of the work was critical in the early stage of the research. Importantly, the scale of the figures determines, to a great extent, the scale of the finished image. As referred to in the previous section a), for the art practice, a large scale, able to accommodate close to life-size humans and animals, was considered as more appropriate than a small or medium scale. The range of an average height of a person might be estimated to be between 160 to 200 centimetres. If the work represented these figures slightly smaller than life-size, then 180 centimetres represented a minimum length that would adequately accommodate an image of a person standing, bending, lying or kneeling. Correspondingly, the width of the artwork was determined by the width of the available printer on which the photographic works were to be printed.

So too, the properties of the paper was paramount to the quality of the final artwork. Because the format size was large, a substantially durable paper was preferable. Also, it was essential that the paper was archival and acid-free. After consultation with HighScan (a local business offering quality art printing) on the range of available high quality photographic papers as well as the printer and inks that the work will require, the technical and aesthetic aspects of size, format and surface were resolved to be Giclée prints on 305gsm PhotoRag paper at 112 x 180 cm (Appendix F).

c) Responsibility, empathetic agency and aesthetics

The principles of responsibility and empathetic agency also played an important role in determining a number of aesthetic and technical decisions. Equality or equal consideration of animals as sentient individuals was essential, hence the preference for portraying the animal as a free agent. Care and responsibility towards the animal was conveyed in the manner in which the human relates to the animal, that is, the degree of attentiveness towards their animal companion.
Mutuality was depicted in the way an animal responded to, gazed at or interacted with the human and close-up images, which conveyed intimacy, familiarity and confidence, even at the exclusion of all others in this relationship. The format of the grid offered a means by which the subjects might be portrayed in such close-up focus.

d) The grid and aesthetics

In order to suggest responsibility and empathetic agency as well as proximity and connectedness, the grid format was an appropriate one. The use of a series of images of humans and animals in the format of a grid suggested pastiches of their lives captured at a particular time. The grid also implied a type of archive of perspectives on the relations of animals and humans.

The grid is a device used in the past research art practice (see Chapter Six) as well as one utilised by a number of artists such as Pat Steir (1940-), Jennifer Bartlett (1941-) and Imants Tillers (1950-) as a compositional element and means to create dynamic tension as well as serving as an underlying structure for the composition of the work. So too, the grid was employed by artists using photography as a medium such as Andy Warhol (1928-1987), in his screen print work *Nine Jackies*, 1964 (Plate 9.1.1) and the photographic and text work of Sophie Calle (1953-), *The Hotel, Room 30, March 4, 1983*, 1983 (Plate 9.1.2). Campany (2003) argues that, in photographic technology, the grid is “… an anti-hierarchical form that flattens time and de-narrativises images” (Campany, 2003: 21).

An additional significant reference to the grid for the research art practice was the work of Eadweard Muybridge (1839-1904) who famously used several cameras to capture the motion of animals and people. His work, *The Galloping Horse*, 1887, (Plate 9.1.3) represents some twenty-two frames showing the movements of a rider and horse. *Muybridge's Complete Human and Animal Locomotion* from 1887 is a well-known publication with seven hundred and eighty-one plates comprising 20,000 photographs. The nuances of the slight actions and movements of animals and humans captured by Muybridge reveal multiple consecutive views that form a comprehensive perspective on the animal and human form.
The series-like grid format was also redolent of snapshots in a photograph album; images taken, perhaps spontaneously, by a family member of everyday activities in the household. The family dog or cat frequently features in such photographs with unaffected natural interaction between animal and human often characterising such snapshots.

**e) Photography, digital imaging and Photoshop**

While photography has long been accepted as an art form and is commonplace in and, indeed, pervades the visual culture of our everyday lives – from newspapers to billboards and from computers to mobile phones – photographic and digital technology is a particularly popular contemporary art medium.

Within the field of photographic digital imaging and Adobe Photoshop™, myriad image options are possible. For example, the colours of the original photographs taken of the human and animal subjects might be one choice among the entire colour spectrum and colour correction techniques available in Photoshop. The colours of the original photograph can be adjusted and completely changed using the Photoshop computer program, which involves such image adjustment steps as correcting curves, channel blending and sharpening. The traditions of
photography, art theories and methods are essential references and resources for the research art practice.

Appreciation of the traditions, aesthetics and sensibilities of the classical silver gelatin prints of master photographers including Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976), Walker Evans (1903-1975) and Henri Cartier-Bresson (1908-2004) among many others, contributed towards the role and importance of the research principles of subtlety and restraint. Hence the use of minimal colour schemes for the research art practice became a clear direction. As well as referencing the classical traditions of silver gelatin photography and Muybridge’s work, the decision to utilise a black, white and grey tonal approach to the photographic digital imaging was made for a number of reasons. Because there was substantial colour range and variation between the different photographed subjects, that is, the clothing of the humans, the fur of the animal as well as their backgrounds or settings all varied to a considerable degree, this might have served to detract from the essential concept of the overall group of works.

Achieving consistency between works in colour would have required a controlled studio environment where the animal and human subjects were photographed. This constructed studio setting might also have detracted from the informality or naturalness of interactions that normally occur in domestic situations. Moreover, subtlety and restraint in the use of colour, for the research art practice, more effectively achieved an understated rather than overstated effect. With the original and predominating colour removed from all the images, the essence of the human and animal remain – for example, the dog-ness of the dog and the human-ness of the human – cohesively described across the final body of works in a tonal scale of greys, whites and blacks.

f) Subverting photography

A further element to the aesthetic and technical decision-making was the conjunction of photographic technologies and digital imaging with other media and/or materials. For the research art practice, photographic technologies and
digital imaging was a tool, like any other, that was available to be utilised in the construction of an image. This technology was used as a technical and aesthetic means to a conceptual and aesthetic end. However, there are other ways in which a photographic image might be altered. An example of an artist who used such methods in combination with photography is the Austrian artist Arnulf Rainer (1929-) who, in the 1950s, began with what is termed as destruction of forms. He continued with this rather dark and intense work during the 1960s in much of his experimental work in which he over-painted and aggressively scribbled on photographs, particularly self-portraits (Plate 9.1.4). In this way, the integrity of photographic image in Rainer’s work is subverted or destroyed. His work became a type of drawing using a photograph as the surface onto which the artist responds with pencil or paint.


Further to Rainer’s influence on the research art practice was the work of two Australian artists, Jennifer Mills (1966-) and Kate Breakey, (1957-) who, in different ways, subverted or altered the integrity of the original image. Mills’s precise and perfectly rendered black and white drawings and watercolours of
animals are scribbled over with brightly coloured chunky pastel in a childlike way as shown in her work *Batman (Adam West) V*, 2007 (Plate 9.1.5). According to Mills, she became interested in this childish scribble when she collected books owned by children which had been scribbled on, “…effectively taking over the original printed image” (Lingard, 2007). This graffiti-like scribble, Mills suggests, changes the way we see the original image. Mills’s colourful and painterly pastel work is so obviously and blatantly applied over the image, seemingly with a careless disregard, alters or subverts the original image, provoking playfulness, humour and surprise. Breakey, on the other hand, carefully incorporates subtle and semi-transparent layers of oil or acrylic paint and coloured pencils onto large scale (almost one metre square) black and white gelatin silver print close-up photographs of found dead animals.

Courtesy of the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

Plate 9.1.6 Kate Breakey, *Passer domesticis, House Sparrow II*, 1997, silver gelatin photograph with mixed media, 80 x 80 cm

Her work *Passer domesticis, House Sparrow II*, 1997 (Plate 9.1.6) indicates this process of fusing photography and painting. Breakey notes, “…the media combine, become enmeshed and inseparable, a curious marriage of what might be real and what is imagined or desired” (Breakey, 2001:15). Both Mills and Breakey are particularly significant to the current research art practice because they use animals as their subject matter and, importantly, combine traditional
media – watercolour painting and photography respectively – with evidently conflicting media of pastels and paint, thus taking both media out of their conventional realms towards unexpected and indeterminate borders. The conjunction of media and the subversion of the photograph provide appropriate artistic processes for the research art practice, the focus of which is the liminal state between animals and humans, where boundaries are questioned and borders are uncertain.

9.2 Capturing the Moment and Trialling Possibilities

To achieve an unaffected and close-to-normal and natural interchange between the human and companion animal required both subjects to be at ease without the affectation which might dominate an unfamiliar environment. The decision to undertake a series of photographic sessions of intimate and personal animal-human interactions within their domestic dwellings rather than a constructed or staged setting was an important initial decision. A sample group of exploratory photographic sessions with four willing human participants was arranged in order to test the feasibility of taking photographs of human and companion animal encounters.

The first photographic session with Margaret and her canine friends, Bachy, the Boxer and Julia, the Basenji was, to some extent, a pilot photographic session in which not only photographic procedures were tested but also interaction with the human and animal subjects. Margaret and Bachy were the most welcoming while Julia was a little reserved and more camera-shy. The most evident feature which emerged from photographing dogs was that of movement. Bachy and Julia were active and moved quickly around the room. It was necessary to adjust the camera setting to the continuous shot setting most commonly used for action subjects such as sporting events. Another, perhaps more expected aspect that emerged from the first photographic session was that of familiarity. Bachy and Julia were, to some extent, reserved with an interloper, albeit a friendly one, in their territory. The normal everyday interactions with their human companion seemed more
restrained and wariness characterised their behaviour. Time for familiarisation was required and necessitated a second visit to achieve more successful images.

The next photographic session was at the home of Julie and Betty, the little grey cat. The arrival at Julie’s place was well-timed. Betty was sleeping on her favourite place, Julie’s bed. Julie gently woke Betty and laid down on the bed placing drowsy Betty on her chest. Betty enjoyed this unexpected attention and laid happily and sleepily gazing into Julie’s eyes as Julie stroked her reassuringly. Continuous shots were taken with the knowledge that Betty’s cooperation might soon be curtailed as she became a little more alert. The mutual gaze between the two, human and cat, was affectionate and familiar in this private space. Betty sat very still, for the most part, seemingly oblivious to intrusions on her morning’s rest. The critical issue that arose for the researcher in this situation was a technical one. The lighting was dim and the space in the bedroom between the bed and the wall, in which to set up the camera, was narrow. A second photographic session was necessary.

The third photographic session with Jenny and Bogus, a Great Dane, was characterised by movement as with Bachy and Julia. Bogus was in an energetic mood and loped around. Again continuous shots were taken in an attempt to capture some exchanges that occur in rapid succession between Jenny and this massive black dog. The dark colour of Bogus required a lighter background against which to photograph him so the outdoor decking rather than inside the house was chosen as the setting for the interaction between the Jenny and Bogus. However, the house was open with no window panes or screens which meant the inside and outside flow into one with little demarcation between inside and outside. Bogus showed little reserve or concern about being photographed and was happy to play with Jenny. The day was overcast which affected the lighting for the session and the possibility of a follow-up visit was suggested.

The fourth session was with Eike and Midge, an elderly grey cat. Midge was quite content to remain still and calm while the camera was directed at her and Eike. The white tile floor on which Eike and Midge interacted with each other served as
a contrast to Midge’s grey fur and Eike’s dark hair and clothing. The quietness, stillness and intimacy of Midge and Eike created the overriding ambient mood of the session. Taking photographs of them almost became an intrusion into the personal exchange. This session provided a good basis for a further one.

These four pilot photographic sessions served to establish the nature of the issues that occur for the researcher when photographing humans and non-human animals in their domestic contexts. The first issue related to the behaviour of the animals. It was evident that some reassurance and time needed to be taken with the dog or cat so that he or she viewed changes in their situations as non-threatening to the point where they were able to relax with their human companion to interact as normally and naturally as possible. Sometimes, prompting with the aid (or bribe) of dog or cat treats encouraged this reassurance. What emerged as the single most challenging aspect of photographing human-animal exchanges was the unpredictability of the non-human animal response during the photographic session. The human subjects were more than cooperative, unreservedly focusing their attention on their beloved non-human animal companions. The technical issues confirmed from the four sessions included the need for the continuous shot camera setting and also, because the images might be enlarged, the necessity for high resolution or raw data images.

A series of contact sheets of images (Plate 9.2.1 to Plate 9.2.4) from each of the four photographic pilot sessions were printed for the deliberation and determination of the suitability and potential of the images.
Sixteen photographs from each session were selected on the basis of their depiction of mutual gaze and interactive exchange between the person and his/her pet. These images also provided a foundation for decisions about factors such as the selection of an appropriate background for the subjects – animal and human; the camera setting requirements for lighting in indoor and outdoor settings; the length of time that a session might take for the different animals, that is, a lively dog might be less inclined to stay in one position for very long compared with a more docile cat; and the scale of figures within the photographs; So too, the directions for the possible format, scale and colour along with potential media combinations were determined from these pilot contact sheets. These contact sheets allowed a more clearly planned, focused and purposeful photographic session to be determined prior to the future session. However, the unpredictability
of the animals on the particular day of the sessions ultimately determined the session’s direction and outcomes.

9.3 Constructing the Prototypes

In order to trial the aesthetic and technical decision-making processes, two prototype works were constructed. These works were based on a series of photographs taken of Eike and Midge. The pilot works were undertaken to assess and confirm the resolutions relating to size, scale, format, colour, printing processes and combination of media.

The first prototype work comprised a grid of fifteen black and white close-up photographs of Eike and Midge. After consideration of several grid dimensions, the scale of each grid image was determined at 31 x 24 cm, which approximately corresponds to the rectangular format of the paper on which the final work was to be printed – 180 x 112 cm. The work, then, consisted of fifteen smaller images of three grids across the width of the paper and five grids down its length with a two centimetre gap between each grid leaving an approximately 26 cm space at both the top and bottom of the paper and 7.5 cm at either side of the grids. The fifteen images forming the grid allowed the presentation of a composite of images at a scale at which the subjects might be portrayed almost life-size with all their details clearly discernable. The format of fifteen images at 31 x 24 cm also allowed space around the grid which effectively frames and unites the fifteen images into one cohesive image. This grid format was prepared in Photoshop to serve as a template for possible further works. The photographs of Midge and Eike were then re-sized and cropped in Photoshop to fit the 31 x 24 cm format. The photographic images were all close-up views of Midge and Eike, suggesting intimacy and affectionate interaction and also some gaze moments between the two. An initial working test print, which might be likened to a preliminary sketch of the image, was printed on A3 bond paper on an Epson inkjet printer. These A3 sheets were then placed together to form the 180 x 112 cm image (Plate 9.3.1).
To give further depth and expression to the very personal nature of the interaction in this prototype work, the intervention of additional material and/or processes which had the capacity to convey specific expanded meaning to the exchange of Eike and Midge were considered. Rather than drawing in pencil directly onto the photograph as in the work of Rainer (1929-), Mills (1966-) and Breakey (1957-), the decision to introduce another layer or surface to the printed image was tested. A suitable and appropriate material that achieves an effect of a layer while, at the same time, incorporates and retains the integrity of the surface below this layer, was semi-transparent tracing paper. This surface was also a more than suitable one, indeed a very agreeable one, on which to draw with pencils and/or coloured pencils. A coloured pencil and graphite drawing of the cat, Midge, (Plate 9.3.2) on a piece of tracing paper, the width of one image of the grid, was placed over and adhered to the centre of the grid. The photographic image beneath the drawing was evident but obviously unclear; however, the desired effect of a layer was achieved with the addition of the hand-drawn image. This additional translucent layer suggested a veil or screen over the unknowable intimacy and exchange of the human and animal depicted in the photographic image beneath and prompted the question: can we ever know the reality of the interchange and communication between an animal and a human?
The tracing paper was adhered with archival adhesive linen tape to one of the photographs in the centre of the grid. After consideration of a range of adhesive methods such as masking tape, adhesive tape and stitching with thread, Lineco self-adhesive linen hinging tape proved the most appropriate because of its archival quality, its delicacy and sheerness and its colour, which was the same soft white as the PhotoRag paper. This method of attaching the tracing paper to the grid work achieved an understated and subtle effect. The almost invisible appearance of the tape allowed minimal interference with both the drawing and the photographic grid. The drawing and the tracing paper were the important elements in this aspect of the work whereas foregrounding the method of adhesion was irrelevant to the meaning or conceptual purpose of the work.

Importantly, the hand-drawn and tracing paper image over the photographs also functioned to interrupt the integrity of the photograph beneath. The pencil marks, so evidently made by a human hand, on the digitalised photographic image disrupted and questioned this mechanical and technological process. As the work of Rainer (1929-), Mills (1966-) and Breakey (1957-) indicates, the intention of the drawing on the original image was to subvert this image. The drawing was a
reminder that the representation of Midge and Eike in the photographs was mediated through the sensitivities and sensibilities of the researcher. That is, the drawings served to disrupt the verisimilitude and verity of the photograph suggesting the subjectivity of both the process and the exchange between the person and the cat in the photographs. The drawing, to some extent, undermined the actual photographic image which typically suggests unquestioning veracity. The hand-drawn image of the cat, Midge, was loosely rendered thus inferring a juxtaposition of formal (photograph) with informal or even chaotic (drawing). The drawing itself and the disordered scribbles within and around the drawing of the cat also evoked the seemingly inaccessible language that is being exchanged between the human and the animal.

Further to the drawing on tracing paper was the addition of material or realia, which had the inherent capacity to confer extended meaning on the work. The potency of real objects and material placed in a setting or juxtaposition outside their normal environment was determined in past art research art practice (see 6.2). An unanticipated combination of realia also had the potential to create further levels of interpretation in a work. To both heighten and allude to the complexity, autonomy and individuality of the cat, Midge, who might appear on the surface to be similar to any other small grey cat, realia associated with her was used in conjunction with the photographic grid. Midge especially enjoyed food and eating and had numerous ceramic bowls to cater for the daily fare presented to her, thus her food bowls were an obvious selection. Twenty of these bowls were used to represent the age of Midge when she passed away. These bowls were then filled with clear liquid to represent the tears that flowed at the time of her passing: here, glycerine was used as a suitable approximation of tears. Also, glycerine was a preferable liquid to water because it was unlikely to evaporate over a period of weeks in a gallery environment. Midge’s third favourite activity, after sleeping and eating, was playing with ribbons: beneath Midge’s ageing body was the spirit and playfulness of a kitten. Hence, her favourite red ribbon was another clear choice. The bowls and the ribbon, then, were arranged on the floor, about 40 cm from the wall and directly in front of the photographic work, which was attached to the wall. The bowls were stacked in groups of four. Glycerine was placed in the
The second prototype image trialled a device and approach, which intensified the animal and human reciprocal gaze through focusing on a single image of the animal and human. This involved isolating the figures – animal and human – from their context or background. Once more, a digital image of Midge and Eike was chosen for this testing process. Photoshop was employed to separate the figures of Midge and Eike from their background and remove this background leaving only their two forms. The photographic term for this is masking, which essentially refers to the process of protecting part of the photograph/image while leaving other parts of the photograph/image exposed so that it might be removed or altered in some way. The masking process might be likened to creating a silhouette of the image that appears as if it has been very precisely cut using a fine-edged scalpel (Eismann, 2005). In the photograph of Midge and Eike, there were many fine details such as Midge’s fur and whiskers and Eike’s hair so, in order to achieve a convincing image, as much of this detail as possible as well as the transitional tones in this detail was preserved in the masking process.

A section of the masked image was printed on A3 in order to test that the edges and fine details of both figures have been retained. The aim in the masking process was to achieve credible photographic images of Midge and Eike which plausibly retain all their details. Because the figures of Midge and Eike were
almost life-size, the precision and correctness of these details were especially critical. In the masking process, a sharp and clear original digital photograph is also essential. The process is more difficult, if not impossible, if the photograph is blurred or the figures are less than distinct against their background. The separation of the figures from the highly textured or detailed background is problematic so photographs of animals and humans, for this masking process, are best taken against a simple single-colour background. The tonal contrast of, say, Midge’s dark form against a white background ensured clarity of the minute detail of the texture of her fur. To trial the viability of Midge’s image, a test print was printed at HighScan on the 305gsm PhotoRag paper. This indicated the success or viability of the printed masked image. After assessment of this image, the final prototype of Midge and Eike at the same scale of the first prototype, 112 x 180 cm, was printed at HighScan (Plate 9.3.4).

Particularly relevant to the prototype masked image of Midge and Eike were the key working principles of gaze reciprocity, participation, subtlety, restraint, connectedness, proximity, responsibility and empathetic agency. All extraneous elements and detail were eliminated from the image leaving the fundamental features of intimacy and intensity of mutual gaze as the clear focus of the work. With the background and context of the figures eliminated, the figures themselves were central. Moreover, the critical aspect to the work was the non-verbal
communication occurring between the two. Indeed, the apparent empty space between Midge and Eike as they gaze across this space became a focal point or an area of intensity. This focal point was also a feature in the grid prototype, albeit to a lesser extent.

To further link this prototype to the first one, the use of hand-drawn pencil marks was introduced. Correspondingly to the first prototype, the intention of the drawing in the masked prototype was to subvert and disrupt the photographic process and to serve as a reminder that the photograph of Midge and Eike has been mediated by the researcher. The scribbly but soft and subtle pencil marks also visibly represented the non-verbal communication occurring between the two. As suggested, the pencil marks might also suggest the engagement of Midge and Eike in a secret language that only they can understand. The marks approximate the murmurings that frequently happen when a person speaks to their companion animal: they are white noise signals, between animal and human, made visible.

The two prototype works coalesced and resolved the focus and scope of the research art practice and provided the direction of the artwork. In order to expand on the work of the prototypes and the photographic material from the earlier photographic work, further photographic sessions were undertaken with Victoria and Taku, the dog; Tess and Bella, the pony; Anna and Kazi, the dog; and Diana and Sophie and Sasha, the cats. The photographic images from these sittings not only provided the bases for the development of a body of work, importantly, they also established considerable momentum along a clear path to planning the final exhibition works, which gave a visual form to an aesthetic and animal-focused sensibility and conceptual frame.
9.4 Negotiating the Creative Process: Creating the Artworks
Towards the Exhibitions

The planning and scope of artworks for exhibition progressively evolved from the prototype trial phase into resolution of the focus of the work. Throughout the trialling and testing in the prototype development phase, the conceptual frame not only remained the fundamental and pivotal driver of the research but also the constant base from which to assess and evaluate the validity and verity of the prototype works. These works, together with the initial photographic sessions, provided the ideas and information for the way forward to the final works. Additionally, while the planned exhibition gallery spaces impact upon the number and scale of artworks that might be exhibited, it is critical that all the works, in concert, represent and encapsulate the complexities of the exhibition’s conceptual framework as well as unite the technical and aesthetic processes involved in creating these works.

The two prototype works of Midge and Eike (section 9.3) provided the direction for related but distinct bodies of work. The first is the grid and installation work which, for the purpose of the research, is titled the installation while the second body of work is the masked image work which, henceforth, is titled the wall work. Further to these is a group of works which also focus on the grid and, for the purpose of the research, is titled the grid wall work. A connected but separate three-dimensional work, undertaken in collaboration with another artist, is referred to as the sculpture. The entire creative and collaborative process for this sculptural work, from maquette to final work, is explicated in Appendix F. While the works, a total of sixteen – installations, wall works, grid wall works and sculpture – are single and discrete works in themselves, they comprise a cohesive body of works for exhibition with three of the works additionally comprising a series for the group exhibition.

From the prototype works to the final pieces for exhibition, the making of the body of artworks was undertaken over a period of approximately twelve months. To elucidate the developmental logic underpinning the processes involved in
creating individual works or group of works, each work is documented in relation to the prototype and processes from which it evolved. The process in making the works was not necessarily linear, often for the mundane reason that there was a waiting time for a specific material to be found or a process to be completed for a particular work. Nevertheless, several of the works were developed concurrently and hence there are clear links in both form and material between the installations, wall works and grid wall works. The construction of the sculpture also developed simultaneously alongside the other works. The following four sections – the installations, the wall works, the grid wall works and the sculpture – document and describe the processes of making each separate piece to the final exhibition work.

9.5 The Installations

The installations were an interrelated group of six works, each with a focus on six individual animal-human relationships. Each installation comprised a grid wall work, 180 x 112 cm, and an installation of realia arranged on the floor about 40 to 60 cm directly in front of the wall work. All works incorporated a drawing on tracing paper of the animal portrayed in the photographic grid. The scale of the tracing paper in each was the width of one image, 31 cm, while the length was variable for each installation. The group of six installations comprised major works for the final exhibitions and, together, orchestrate an evocation of the essentially exclusive and private but universal nature of relations between people and their close animal companions and, importantly, their mutual gaze.

Each installation, too, while constructed in reference to the individuals portrayed, was considered in relation to the other installations. This involved deliberation on the nature of realia used, its substance or textural qualities, its colour range as well as its dimensions and scale. While the realia in each work retained its own integrity as a singular work, overall, none sought to dominate another. The objects and materials were contained approximately within the width dimensions of the wall work and placed directly in front so as to interconnect with the work. The
colour scale and textural qualities of the realia correlated, to a substantial extent, to the other works and reflected the minimalist colour palette as well as the restrained and subtle tonal variations across the installations.

9.5.1 Installation One: (face to face) eternal

The initial photographic session with Margaret, Bachy and Julia (section 9.2) was followed, some time later, by another session after the family had moved home to a property in the rainforest where Margaret, her husband, Bachy and Julia lived temporarily in a shed while their new home was being built. Hence, the second photographic session took place outdoors in front of the shed as well as on the concrete slab foundations of the new house. Bachy was still friendly and Julia still wary. The photographs centred then, in the main, on the interchange between Margaret and Bachy, the boxer. Julia, the ever-cautious Basenji, still watched from the sidelines. Because the surrounding environment of this new home site is a rainforest, the decision to place Margaret and Bachy in front of a sheet hanging from a temporary clothesline was taken so as to ensure a clear and light background. Fortunately, the day was sunny and bright, which meant good conditions for photography. Bachy and Margaret started interacting with each other and were soon engrossed in their interchange, ostensibly forgetting all that was happening around them. A series of photographs of these intimate moments were taken. Margaret, Bachy along with Julia, who had been observing the activity, then moved onto the concrete slab foundation and wandered about. More photographs were taken as they investigated the house site after which the dogs became distracted and the session finished.

On examination of the photographs from the time spent with Margaret, Bachy and Julia, it was evident that there was an adequate amount of material for two works – an installation and a wall work. Because the photographic session coincided with a particularly sunny day, there were a number of photographs which captured a clear shadow of Margaret which was cast on the white sheet hanging behind her (Plate 9.5.1). The photographs of Margaret’s shadow offered a further potential
facet to the images of Margaret and Bachy in their exchanges and the decision was made to include some of these images in the selection of fifteen images.

Overall, the photographs suggested abundant affection, care and delight in this human and canine relationship. Margaret and Bachy are old friends having been together for over thirteen years. The effects of Bachy’s age are evident in his greying face and fur and his warty body and laboured gait. Nevertheless, he basked in Margaret’s caring attentiveness. They looked into each other’s familiar eyes with Bachy pressing eagerly and increasingly closer so that he could lick Margaret’s face. The reflection of this longstanding, loving and familiar intimacy was a primary consideration in the selection of the fifteen grid images. After the selection, the images were then cropped and arranged in Photoshop. Important factors in the selection decisions about the grid arrangement included deliberation on a variety of animal-human interchanges represented, the inclusion of images of Margaret’s shadow silhouette and a balanced play of light forms against the darker forms. While the grid might appear to be suggestive of a narrative, the sequence of images was ordered, in the main, according to aesthetic principles rather than a storyline. After a satisfactory grid composition was arrived at, the grid image was then converted, in Photoshop, into black and white. To achieve a warmth and softness redolent of silver gelatine photographs, a colour adjustment of five per cent of orange colour was made to the grey scale image. A trial print out of the image in full scale was then made to confirm the grid configuration and the tonal qualities of the print.
A drawing on tracing paper was made of Bachy’s head as he reaches up to lick Margaret (Plate 9.5.2). Soft Faber-Castell (Albrecht Dürer) coloured pencils were used for the drawing. The range of greys, from dark to light, as well some brown and ochre colours were selected to represent the fur. The light grey and white pencil marks were clear and obvious against the darker photographic image beneath the tracing paper. Touches of browns and ochres were used to indicate the actual colour of Bachy’s coat. Rapidly applied marks in front of Bachy’s nose and mouth represented the intensity of his eagerness and his efforts in communication with Margaret.

Plate 9.5.2  Bachy and Margaret (detail) drawing on tracing paper over photograph

The realia for this installation related directly to both Margaret and Bachy. Two simple, old-fashioned wooden chairs found at a second-hand shop were cleaned and painted white, then sanded back to achieve a worn appearance. These chairs were placed together facing each other, representing the old friendship of Margaret and Bachy. The chairs also represented the need of the two to sit down from time to time, Bachy because he is an elderly dog but also Margaret since an accident in which she broke her spine. On the seats of the two chairs forty cardboard seedling containers were placed in a group of nine and in stacks of five.
The arrangement and grouping of the containers served to echo the grid structure while, at the same time, referenced the nature/nurture interplay within the installation. The seedling containers, apart from their natural brownish colour reminiscent of Bachy’s fur, represented Margaret’s nurturing and caring nature. This was expressed, firstly, through her efforts to plant seedling trees around their house site to replace the trees and bushes that were taken out when the house site was established. Margaret too demonstrates her caring nature with her two dogs as well as for the wildlife around her property.

Plate 9.5.3  *(face to face) eternal*, Giclée print, tracing paper, pencil, found objects, photograph  
180 x 112 cm

Additionally, as an art lecturer and teacher of longstanding, Margaret has supported and encouraged many students along the way and has positively affected the lives of a great number. The installation therefore was a highly personal one, reflecting both Margaret and Bachy but particularly the spirit and
nature of Margaret in this relationship (Plate 9.5.3). The title, *(face to face) eternal*, is suggestive of the longevity and enduring association of Margaret and Bachy. The prefix in parenthesis in the title of this one and all the final works, *(face to face)*, operated as an inclusive link between all the works but also subtly intimated the equality of the two beings represented in the works.

### 9.5.2 Installation Two: *(face to face)* treasure

Similar to the work with Margaret, Bachy and Julia, the earlier trial photographic session (section 9.2) with Julie and her grey feline companion, Betty, was followed by another visit. While some of the photographs from the first visit proved to be useful for the final work, a larger selection of images was necessary, particularly as more than one work was planned. Again, at the second photographic session, Betty was relatively docile and cooperative. The favoured position of Betty was lying on Julie who was on the bed; receiving Julie’s full attention and admiration, she was also the focus of the photographs. This configuration was ideal for the face to face interaction of a small cat with a human. Indeed, Betty’s innate superior feline personality was fully expressed in this arrangement and she gave every appearance of being the adored top cat in the house. Julie and Betty engaged in their typical interchange of soft murmurings and understanding gaze while both seemed to ignore the presence of a third party and a camera.

On examination of the photographs after the visit, a workable selection of images offered potential for the construction of two works – an installation and a grid wall work. For the installation, fifteen images were selected, cropped and arranged in the grid template in Photoshop. Again, as with the previous installation, decisions about the arrangement were primarily based on aesthetic elements. The images of Betty and Julie are close-up views which further imply the deep intimacy of the two. They also reflect the pleasure both Betty and Julie enjoy in this close interaction. To achieve consistency across all the works, the grid was converted, in Photoshop, into the same black and white tonal system used for the previous installation. A trial print of the grid was printed and, after
further adjustments were made to the grid arrangement, another trial print was made before the final work was printed at HighScan.

A drawing of Betty was made (Plate 9.5.4) on tracing paper with soft coloured pencils as well as with graphite pencils. The range of dark to light greys and white highlights helped achieve form and volume in the figure of grey Betty. The scribbled spontaneous marks implied the purring of Betty and soft vocal sounds of Julie. This drawing was then placed over the central image of the grid. The final adhering of the tracing was left to just prior to the exhibition of the work because of the fragility of the tracing paper and its susceptibility to damage.

![Plate 9.5.4](image)

Plate 9.5.4  
(face to face) treasure (detail), drawing on tracing paper on photograph

The installation of realia related both to Betty and Julie but, in this work, more so to Betty (Plate 9.5.5 and Plate 9.5.6). A number of white sheets were neatly folded and stacked into three piles. These sheets were interleaved with neatly folded sheets of calico. The pristine white sheets suggested the indoor and bedroom environment of Julie’s home where Betty spends her time sleeping while the calico represents Julie’s occupation as a painter and artist. On top of each stack of
folded material was placed objects which relate to Betty’s penchant for bringing in trophies or treasures of small scale wildlife that she hunts and catches in her one acre garden. This is strongly discouraged but her pursuit of butterflies, moths, lizards and, sometimes, birds is relentless. The efforts at discouragement of Betty’s hunting activities were represented through the enclosure of the butterflies and moths in folded envelopes of tracing paper. Numerous of these tracing paper envelopes were stacked one upon the other, each with the bodies of caught insects. These envelopes were placed on two of the stacks of sheets. On the third and centre stack, objects were placed. These objects included a white feather, gecko (a plastic one painted white) and a grey mouse (toy), each with a ribbon (of a colour typically used by Julie in her paintings) tied around them. From Betty’s perspective, the caught creatures are treasures and trophies from her garden ventures. However, from the human perspective, the objects are delicate, even fragile, and their ambience is melancholic. The title of the installation work (Plate 9.5.7), (face to face) treasure, encapsulates Betty’s predilections but is also suggestive of Julie’s consideration and care for her beloved animal companion.

Plate 9.5.5 (face to face) treasure (detail) installation of found objects
Plate 9.5.6  *(face to face) treasure* (detail), installation of found objects

Plate 9.5.7  *(face to face) treasure*, Giclée print, found objects, photograph
180 x 112 cm, overall variable
9.5.3 Installation Three: (face to face) entrust

The trial photographic session with Jenny and Bogus (section 9.2) was also followed by a further visit. The second session, like the first, coincided with an overcast and rainy day. The photographs were taken on the patio at the open and wide uncover entrance of the living area of the house. Jenny and Bogus stretch out on Bogus’s large cushion bedding, which is one among many soft pillow bedding areas he might chose around the house. Bogus is a large, loping black Great Dane whose appearance, at first sight, might recall the Hound of the Baskervilles in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes tale of the same name. However, this resemblance is merely superficial. Bogus’s size and presence belies his actual soft and gentle nature. It is apt that Bogus and Jenny leisurely reclined on his favourite cushion for the photographic session. While Bogus is clearly larger in size than Jenny, he might well be as small as Betty the cat when he and Jenny interacted with each other. He was tender and placid and, in no respect, endeavours to dominate in this animal-human relationship. He displayed pleasure in being close to Jenny and enjoyed her intimate attention.

The photographs from this second session, while generally dark in overall tone, provided an appropriate selection for two works – an installation and a grid wall work. Fifteen images were selected, cropped and arranged in Photoshop for the installation. Some adjustments were made to the images in order to clarify the dark form of Bogus and Jenny’s dark hair and clothing. However, the darker forms of the figures contrast with the white pillow beneath them affording a more dynamic interplay of darks and lights for the final grid. As with the other installations, the grids were converted, in Photoshop, to the black and white tonal scheme. A trial grid was printed in full scale, which tested the tonal range as well as the arrangement of the photographs.

A drawing on tracing paper of Bogus was completed with coloured pencils (Plate 9.5.8). The drawing emphasised his doleful eyes and his hound-like jowls. As he ages, slight flecks of grey are appearing amongst his black fur. This lighter colour was also accentuated in the drawing with white pencil. Again, additional
spontaneous pencil marks signified the private undercurrent communication between Jenny and Bogus. The drawing was placed on a central image of the printed grid and adjustments and additions were made in relation to the photographic image beneath the tracing paper.

The installation realia comprised found and constructed objects which correlate to both Jenny and Bogus (Plate 9.5.9). First, two wooden window frames from a Queenslander house, found at a second-hand shop, were selected. These old glassless timber frames signified the house in which Jenny and Bogus live. This wooden construction, sitting next to a rainforest, is windowless and open. Not deterred by the probability of an array of wild creatures joining them from the surrounding rainforest, Jenny and her partner have removed the majority of the windows leaving the window space openings. For the installation, the found glassless frames were placed one upon the other. Upon these were placed four square cushions which were covered with tracing paper with seams stitched together with gold thread. These tracing paper cushions relate to both Jenny and Bogus.
The actual cushions beneath the tracing paper are covered with traditional Indonesian woven fabric. Jenny has hereditary links to the Indonesian culture through her Indonesian grandmother. This cultural connection is often expressed in Jenny’s own artwork through her use of the colour gold and also of the complex layering of textures and fabrics. The addition of gold leaf and stitching onto the fabric cushions referred to Jenny’s artwork. The tracing paper cushion covers allowed some visibility of the Indonesian fabric underneath. The semi-transparent tracing paper softened the patterns of the Indonesian fabric but allowed the traditional colours and designs to be detected when viewed at close quarters.

Plate 9.5.9  (face to face) entrust (detail), installation of found objects, tracing paper, gold leaf

The tracing paper cushion cover was stitched along the edges with fine gold thread using a French knot embroidery stitch thus providing a subtle and understated method of joining the edges to form the cushion. Again, the gold thread used for the stitching of the seams is a referent to Jenny’s work. The carefully French knot stitched cushions also refer to the surgical stitches on Bogus’s back leg. As a puppy, he jumped from a car window and broke his leg leaving him with a limping gait and a 30 cm long visible scar down the length of
his leg. To complete the installation, the tracing paper cushions were laid in two stacks on top of the window frames, which lay flat on the floor.

Plate 9.5.10  (face to face) entrust, Giclée print, found objects, photograph
180 x 112 cm, overall variable

The title of the installation, (face to face) entrust (Plate 9.5.10), refers to not only the shared trust between Jenny and Bogus but also their kind-hearted natures.

9.5.4  Installation Four: (face to face) grace

The development of the prototype installation of Midge and Eike (section 9.3) explains the process and outcome of this installation. For the final work, some adjustments to the arrangement of the images in the grid were made in Photoshop to achieve a more balanced composition of tonal darks and lights in the images of
Midge and Eike. The placement of images included a consideration of the creation of interplay of the human and animal figures and the overall pictorial dynamic this achieves. Additionally, the drawing of Midge was re-drawn on a longer piece of tracing paper to portray Midge’s appearance more accurately. The final image was printed at HighScan. The red ribbon was adhered to the reverse side of the image at the bottom right hand corner from where it was draped down to the floor and loosely wound around the bowls.

The title of the installation, *(face to face) grace*, (Plate 9.5.11), refers to the nature, personality and spirit of Midge.

Plate 9.5.11 *(face to face) grace*, Giclée print, found objects, photograph 180 x 112 cm, overall variable
9.5.5 Installation Five: (face to face) entre nous

In addition to the photographic sessions undertaken at the trial phase of the research art practice, a number of other photographic sittings were embarked upon which both deepen and broaden the scope of the representation of animal-human interchange. The first of these sessions was with Victoria and her companion dog, Taku.

Victoria lives in a compact timber Queenslander, which has a small backyard where Taku, her mixed-breed terrier, can run around. Taku was around six-years old when Victoria found her in an animal rescue refuge. She is a scruffy-looking, good-natured dog with a long body and short legs and has been with Victoria for around fourteen months. Victoria, a playwright, is patient and gentle and has steadily gained the trust of her once-abandoned canine friend. On the first and only photographic session, sitting together in their back garden, Victoria quietly reassured Taku who looked trustingly and lovingly into her eyes. Taku’s red heart-shaped identity tag might well be the outward sign of her own glowing heart as she looked into Victoria’s eyes. A series of photographs were taken of Taku and Victoria’s warm exchange which, with the clear day for the session, provided an adequate range for the selection for two works – an installation and wall work.

Fifteen photographs were selected, cropped and arranged in the grid template for the installation. The majority of the images portrayed Taku’s face and the profile of Victoria, whose long dark hair also frames her face in a similar fashion to Taku’s. The textural qualities of human hair and animal fur were emphasised when the images were adjusted and converted in Photoshop to the black and white tonal scheme. A test of the grid was printed and, after minor adjustments are made to the grid arrangement, another trial print was made before the final work was printed at HighScan.

A pencil drawing on tracing paper of Taku was made and placed on the centre grid (Plate 9.5.12). Taku’s doleful eyes and dishevelled fur became the obvious focus of the drawing but also some indication was given to the red identity tag.
which is glimpsed beneath her fur just under her chin. As well as noting this tag in the drawing, a heart shape, or part of a heart shape, was embroidered in a long cushion embroidery stitch with off-white thread on the lower section of the tracing paper. This served as a subtle echo of the tag around Taku’s neck while, at the same time, linked to the embroidered work in the installation directly in front of the grid image.

The installation of realia contained references to both Taku and Victoria. Three stacks of plain, unadorned cardboard boxes, four in each stack, were wound around about eight times with off-white embroidery thread. This noticeable thread binding around the containers suggested inaccessibility to the contents of the boxes.

The inability to open the containers references Victoria’s inability to access Taku’s past life. She can only guess at the reasons for Taku’s abandonment by her previous owner. Taku’s history is closed tight and remains unknown; her name being the only part of her previous life that came with her. However, Victoria is now providing a secure and happy life for Taku. As referents to Victoria’s attention and care for Taku, pieces of tracing paper, torn roughly in the shape of a heart, were embroidered in loose cushion stitch with off-white thread. Around
eight of these hearts are placed on the centre stack of boxes. In addition to the boxes and tracing paper shapes, a number of books of plays by Victoria’s favourite playwrights – Harold Pinter, Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco – were placed between the containers, which indicated the interconnection and interwoven nature of Victoria’s life with Taku’s (Plate 9.5.13).

Plate 9.5.13  (face to face) entre nous (detail), installation of found objects

The title of the installation, (face to face) entre nous (Plate 9.5.14), is suggestive of the intimacy and close relationship that Victoria and Taku share but also the fact that Taku’s life is now a matter between Victoria and Taku.
9.5.6 Installation Six: (face to face) entwined

Dogs and cats are typically the chosen pet for most people (see Chapter One) and the research art practice represents this most commonplace situation. The prior photographic sessions involve people and their companion animals who are all either dogs or cats; however, close relationships are formed between humans and a wide range of pets. Particularly relevant to the research was the close bond of James with her companion horses. The inclusion of Tess and her pony, Bella, thus not only expanded the representation of pet to involve an equine companion animal but also referenced James, her horses and her work. Similar to James’s interaction with her horses, Tess rarely rides her pony and relates to her as one of her family pets. During the day, Tess’s pony, Bella, roams freely in several acres
of lushly grassed paddock at the back of Tess’s home while, at night, is stabled close to the house. In Tess’s family, Bella is one companion animal among others including three dogs, two cats and two guinea pigs. Bella and Tess have been together for over nine years and share a relationship as close as, say, a person might have with a companion dog or cat. Trust, familiarity, love and care characterise this animal-human association. Bella is treated as one of the family.

During the photographic session, Bella enjoyed both Tess’s attention and apple treats. The sunny day ensured good outdoor lighting conditions for photography as Tess and Bella wandered together around the paddock. Since Bella is not an especially tall pony, Tess and Bella were able relate to each other at approximately the same eye level. While Tess talked to her, Bella responded with soft snorts. Close-up views of the two revealed the closeness of this intimate human-equine interaction. For the installation, fifteen images were selected, cropped and arranged in Photoshop into the grid template. As with the previous installations, decisions about the arrangement of images were primarily based on aesthetic fundamentals. The grid images were then converted, in Photoshop, from colour into black and white. A trial print of the grid was made and, after further adjustments to the arrangement, another trial print was printed before the final work was printed at HighScan.

The drawing of Bella, on tracing paper, highlighted her eye and straggling forelock hair which hung messily between her eyes (Plate 9.5.15). The drawing only suggests the lower part of Bella’s head which was simply represented with a few faint lines. A more detailed rendering of Bella’s entire head would dominate the installation and, particularly, the photographs in the grid. The length of the tracing paper was deliberately extended for the installation not only to reflect the scale of the animal represented but also to serve as a stronger connection between the work and the realia. The tracing paper drawing was placed on the centre grid and, after consideration of the photographic image on the grid beneath the tracing paper, further adjustments were made to the drawing.
The most striking aspects of viewing Bella and Tess together were, firstly, the similarity of their hair colour and, secondly, their abundance of hair. The sensate texture, substance and quantity of human and animal hair, lustrous in the sunlight, were the major foci in the photographic images and bind the two – human and equine – together. These shared qualities effectively predominated over their more obvious differences. Hence the realia for the installation highlighted and reflected Tess and Bella’s binding and related characteristics. Horse hair, human hair and synthetic human hair were the basis for the installation construction. Twenty-four 80-100 cm lengths of horse with some human hair, in a range of colours, were bound together with pieces of off-white twine into long rolls. Two additional lengths of horse, human and synthetic hair of around 150 cm were plaited together and then bound with off-white twine. (The synthetic human hair was used in this work primarily due to lack of availability of large quantities of long human hair.) The rolls of bound hair were placed, two across, in eleven rows with the two
plaited rolls placed at the rear and the front of the group of rolls. The hair rolls were then laid on the tracing paper. An additional length of tracing paper was attached with horse hair stitches to the tracing paper on which the drawing was made (Plate 9.5.16).

Plate 9.5.16  (face to face) entwined (detail), installation, found objects, horse, human and synthetic hair

The title of the work, (face to face) entwined (Plate 9.5.17), references the shared life and physical attributes of Bella and Tess as well as the special care and responsibility that Tess demonstrates for her pony companion.
9.6 The Wall Works

The second series of works involved the development of four wall works. These works continued the process of the second prototype masked image of Midge and Eike (section 9.3). The process of masking (also referred to as deep-etching) in Photoshop, described in section 9.3, was used for each of the four images. These four works, which included that of Midge and Eike, served to deepen and strengthen the animal and human reciprocal gaze through focusing on a single image of the animal and human in this exchange. This involved the separation of the figures – the animal and human – from their background context leaving only the figures together, arranged on the white PhotoRag paper surface. All the animal and human figures for the wall works were created almost life-size while the
format size of the paper on which the figures were arranged was consistent with the installation grid wall works, 112 x 180 cm. The black and white system was also the same as the installation work so that unity and cohesiveness were achieved across the whole body of works for the exhibitions.

Pertinent to the wall works, as with the prototype masked image of Midge and Eike, were the key working principles of reciprocity of gaze, participation, subtlety, restraint, connectedness, proximity, responsibility and empathetic agency. Cognisance of these fundamental principles ensured that irrelevant and unconnected elements and detail were removed from the image so that the essential features of intimacy and intensity of mutual gaze were maintained as the clear focus of the work. The addition of soft and subtle pencil marks heightened the animal-human interchange, visually suggesting the visual, non-verbal communication and sensations occurring between the two. The four wall works are (face to face) Taku and Victoria (Plate 9.6.1), (face to face) Bachy, Julia and Margaret (Plate 9.6.2), (face to face) Kazi and Anna (Plate 9.6.3) and (face to face) Midge and Eike (Plate 9.6.4).

Plate 9.6.1  (face to face) Taku and Victoria, Giclée print, pencil
112 x 180 cm
Plate 9.6.2  *(face to face)* Bachy, Julia and Margaret, Giclée print, pencil
112 x 180 cm

Plate 9.6.3  *(face to face)* Kazi and Anna, Giclée print, pencil
112 x 180 cm
9.7 The Grid Wall Works

The grid wall works were closely related to the installation works in their use of the grid format of black and white photographs and of the tracing paper overlay. The focus of the grid wall works, however, was closer. With the use of fewer grid images, six in three of the works and three in two works, instead of fifteen in the installation works, the images of the human and animal were larger, closer to life-size. The intensity of the animal-human gaze interaction was utilised in each of the six grids. In three works, the tracing paper overlay on two of the six grid images served to emphasise this exchange with the pencil marks drawn in the space between the animal and human. The pencil marks in the two works without tracing paper stressed the points of contact between the two – human and animal.

The grid wall works comprised a group of five works which expanded and further developed the ideas and series for the research art practice, particularly in relation to the grid. Three of the grid wall works were composed of six images each with the dimension of 36 x 47 cm, arranged with two images across and three images down, and organised vertically on 180 x 112 cm PhotoRag paper. Each of the
three grid wall works, *(face to face) Bella and Tess – eye to eye* (Plate 9.7.1), *(face to face) Betty and Julie – heart to heart* (Plate 9.7.2) and *(face to face) Bogus and Jenny – tour de force* (Plate 9.7.3), also comprised tracing paper, the width of the work and the height of one grid image and which was placed over two of the grid images. This tracing paper imparted a veil-like layer through which the images were barely discernable. This interruption to the clear visibility of two of the six grid images, in this group of works, inferred the private nature of the animal-human relationship, one which is difficult, if not impossible, to fully know or understand.

Plate 9.7.1 *(face to face) Bella and Tess – eye to eye*, Giclée print, tracing paper, pencil
180 x 112 cm
Plate 9.7.2  (face to face) Betty and Julie – heart to heart, Giclée print, tracing paper, pencil
180 x 112 cm

Plate 9.7.3  (face to face) Bogus and Jenny – tour de force, Giclée print, tracing paper, pencil
180 x 112 cm
The photographs in these grid wall work images were merely a glimpse into the private world of people and their companions suggesting that a great deal of familiarity and understanding about these associations is largely unattainable. The semi-transparent tracing paper prevented a clear focus of the image beneath, only allowing and indicating the outlines and suggestions of the forms rather than fine details. The unknown, and perhaps the unknowable, was signified by the tracing paper over the image. Additionally, faint and subtle pencil marks were scratched, scribbled and worked onto the tracing paper. These marks link to those made in the installations and wall works and, again, were referents to the intimacy and intensity of communication between the animal and human. Also, the bolder and vigorous coloured pencil marks made on the photographs more visibly suggested this exchange while, at the same time, subverted the photographic image and the verity of this image.

Plate 9.7.4  (face to face) secrets, Giclée print, pencil
200 x 112 cm

An additional two works in the group of grid wall works, (face to face) secrets (Plate 9.7.4) and (face to face) double gaze (Plate 9.7.5) expressed further refinement of the grid work. In these works, instead of six grid images, three grid images were placed, side by side, across the horizontal format. The width of the format for these works was 200 cm while the height was 112 cm. Subtle changes of movement and action in the interactions of the humans with the animals in each work echoed the work of Muybridge rather than suggest a narrative or storyline.
The coloured pencil marks on the black and white photographs, while suggesting communication between the subjects in the images also challenged and altered the photographic process.

Plate 9.7.5  (face to face) double gaze, Giclée print, pencil
200 x 112 cm

The grid wall works together with the wall works and the installations formed the body of sixteen works for exhibition. The three series of works were designed to orchestrate in a space. The aesthetic of the whole was as important as the aesthetic of its parts. The interplay of one with the other, both next to each other as well as across the space, was significant. The ambience of the exhibition was created by both the individual works and the collective works. The arrangement of the group of works considered the resonance of works in a particular space as well as their relation to one another. This kaleidoscope of animal-human intimacy suggested the ubiquity of this interaction yet, so too, the private nature of it. The containment of the exchange in each work indicated the individual emotional connection of the human and animal while the many works, in concert, implied universality of animal-human relations. The potency of the individual work was in the interchange of animal and human and each work, to a great extent, resisted any intersection with another work. However, the form and material – the grid format, black and white photography on white paper, the minimalist use of colour in the photographic works and the installation objects – of the works compelled this interaction without detracting from the self-containment of each work.
Another related but discrete work, a sculptural piece, was developed concurrently to echo and interact with the wall works but in the third dimension. Similar to the wall works, the sculpture was an individual animal-human exchange.

## 9.8 The Sculpture

The design of the sculpture was based on the interaction between a human and a cat. While the position of the cat, sitting on the female human’s chest, began with Julie and her cat, Betty (section 9.5.2), the figures were not necessarily those of Julie and Betty but represented a more universal human/feline exchange. The work also inverted, to some degree, the hierarchy of humans and animals where a small cat might be seen in a dominating position in relation to the human. Importantly, however, the mutual gaze between the two held both together.

The sculpture began concurrently with the development of the prototypes for the installations and works on paper. The work was designed to counterpoint and complement the other two-dimensional and installation works and to give a further three-dimensional form to animal-human gaze interaction. The three-dimensional work was the collaboration, for the research art practice, with an artist, Anna Holan, who works primarily in the sculptural medium. The time scale over which the work was constructed from design (the work of the researcher) to finished piece was approximately twelve months. Sculptural work is highly process oriented and takes considerable time to develop and construct. A visual step-by-step process (Appendix G) records and describes the various stages of the process from the initial idea realised in a clay maquette to the completed concrete piece.

Materials such as clay and plaster were considered, however, both were discounted as media for a large work because of their fragility. Concrete was the chosen material for the sculpture primarily because of its commonplace nature, directness, durability and solidity. Additionally, the understated grey colour of the work was designed to connect to the black, white and grey wall works.
The title of the final concrete sculpture, *Who in this world can you trust?* (Plate 9.8.1 and Plate 9.8.2), refers particularly to the nexus of trust between animals and humans, an important characteristic in any but particularly an animal-human relationship, which is frequently expressed through the gaze. It also related to the betrayal of trust that can occur between humans, which is a human rather than animal trait.

Plate 9.8.1  *Who in this world can you trust?*, concrete  
50 x 140 x 40 cm

Plate 9.8.2  *Who in this world can you trust?*, (detail), concrete  
50 x 140 x 40 cm
CHAPTER TEN – ACHIEVING BALANCE: *FACE TO FACE* AND *INTERROGATING GAZE*

10.1 The Solo Exhibitions

The two solo exhibitions, *Face to Face* and *Interrogating Gaze*, represent two overlapping stages in the research process. The most important underpinning factor in the choice of titles was the unambiguous connection and resonance to the conceptual frame of the works in the exhibitions, particularly the idea of the reciprocal gaze. Simplicity and clarity of terms were paramount so both titles are short, direct and encapsulate the research focus. While the phrase *Face to Face* links directly to the group exhibition, *Eye to Eye*, *Interrogating Gaze* embraces both titles in suggesting relations or actions beyond the visual. The term *Face to Face* indicates two persons – animal and human – coming together equally and openly. *Interrogating Gaze* also signifies dialogue with *interrogating* and is thus redolent of interaction and meeting and *gaze* indicative of visual exchange. *Interrogating Gaze* also suggests intensity. It points to specific ongoing inquiry, investigation and exploration. The second stage exhibition was designed to further refine and emphasise the gaze experience between animal and human with its selection and placement of works. The titles imply invitations to interpretive viewing rather than responses to didactics.

10.2 The Venues – KickArts and Pinnacles Gallery

The exhibitions are the public face of the research. Therefore, the research art practice moved into the public arena of a gallery space, the requirements of both the research and the management of the spaces interconnect. Thus, sound and clear administration along with cooperation and collaboration in the processes and negotiations of organising an exhibition with a gallery became vital to the outcome of the research. The procedural organisation for the two solo exhibitions
was similar. For example, although the venues differed, corresponding procedures were undertaken for the preparation of the artist statement, the provision of images of the works for media purposes, the preparation of the room brochure through to the installation of the work.

The two exhibition locations encompassed the large audience base of north Queensland in parallel contemporary arts spaces – Centre of Contemporary Arts (CoCA), Cairns (Plate 10.2.1) and Riverway Arts Centre, Thuringowa (Plate 10.2.2). CoCA houses KickArts, a contemporary art organisation which facilitates and promotes contemporary arts in Cairns and the surrounding region including Cape York Peninsula. Riverway Arts Centre at Thuringowa is a major contemporary centre in the Townsville region and its gallery space, Pinnacles Gallery, is a large space dedicated to the display of contemporary works.

Plate 10.2.1  CoCA (Centre of Contemporary Art), Cairns

Plate 10.2.2  Riverway Arts Centre
Exhibition proposals were submitted to KickArts and Pinnacles Gallery. Both galleries’ format for the exhibition proposal required potential exhibitors to present a working title, exhibition rationale and description. A floor plan of both gallery spaces (Figure 10.2.1 and Figure 10.2.2) provided exact dimensions of the area in which the works were to be displayed thus allowing precise planning of numbers and possible placement of works to proceed. In the case of KickArts, a standard art exhibition contract (Appendix H.1) forwarded by the gallery director was agreed upon after the director and deputy director of KickArts viewed several potential exhibition works and discussed the exhibition.

Figure 10.2.1  KickArts Gallery 2 Elevation Floor Plan

Figure 10.2.2  Pinnacles Gallery Plan
Both KickArts and Pinnacles galleries are contemporary minimalist spaces with white walls and a neutral grey concrete floor especially suited to contemporary art exhibitions. Pinnacles Gallery is the main large gallery space of the Riverway Arts Centre at Thuringowa. Located on the Ross River in Thuringowa, near Townsville, Riverway is a complex of cultural, sports, leisure, residential and commercial venues. Comprising two large swimming lagoons (Plate 10.2.3), the Riverway Arts Centre, Pinnacles Gallery, the river walk and parklands, the Riverway precinct stretches along eleven kilometres of the Ross River.

![Riverway Arts Centre, internal lagoon](image)

Plate 10.2.3 Riverway Arts Centre, internal lagoon

The Riverway Arts Centre, also housing a performance space, is designed to be part of the environmental ethos of the entire Riverway complex with the building structured as a geographical formation with the parkland rising over its roof from one end and the lagoon-facing end evolved as a series of serrations where water enters the built environment.

As with the *Eye to Eye* exhibition, scale models of the both galleries were constructed (Plate 10.2.4 and Plate 10.2.5) with scale model artworks placed within the model space to better ascertain the potential configuration of artworks within the space. This was an invaluable tool for planning the installation of the artworks allowing the exploration of multiple options, possibilities and variations of installations.
Placement of the installation works in relation to the more minimal wall works was an important consideration in the overall design. For instance, juxtaposing the grid wall works and the wall works with some of the installations allowed the objects of the installations greater space. Grouping other installations together helped create interplay between the objects of each installation. The scale models provided the means by which different combinations and placements of works could be tested and trialled before the actual installation of work in the respective galleries and their different spaces. For example, the entrance to the Pinnacles Gallery (Plate 10.2.6) is through a wide opening which also accommodates the reception and shop area of the gallery. Thus only three walls of the gallery are available for the display of works.
10.3 The Process of the Exhibitions

Once the dates of the exhibitions had been established, the approach to the exhibition became that of project management. Like most projects, an art exhibition has specific aims and objectives and a life cycle with defined start and end dates. In order to manage both the *Face to Face* and *Interrogating Gaze* exhibition projects from beginning to end, planning was necessary. Specific and definable phases of the lead-up to the exhibitions were established and tasks plotted so that targets could be achieved in a timely manner. For *Face to Face*, for example, a few weeks after the exhibition was confirmed, a meeting with KickArts management and marketing officer was arranged to discuss the details of the exhibition including the invitation, the room brochure, the opening night event, the opening speaker, the dates of the installation and de-installation of the work, and the possible hanging systems for the works. The gallery also required text for the media releases and the room brochure. In addition to these tasks, the gallery also requested biographical details, photographs of the works in the exhibition with titles, date, dimensions, media, and prices of each work as well as didactic labels for the works.
Thus, for both *Face to Face* and *Interrogating Gaze*, two key pre-exhibition tasks were that of arranging for photographs to be taken of the completed works and preparing an artist’s statement (Appendix H.2). These were to be completed around six weeks ahead of the exhibition date. Photographs of works were required for the invitation and room brochure as well as for the gallery’s publicity and media releases. Writing the artist’s statement was necessary for the invitation, room brochure and for marketing purposes but was also important as a synthesising and focusing process, which assisted in gathering the many threads of the research into one cohesive and communicable document of about one page.

### 10.3.1 Exhibition Publicity and Room Brochures

Marketing and publicising an art exhibition is fundamental to its organisation and outcomes. Thus, additional important components of *Face to Face* and *Interrogating Gaze* were marketing and publicity which were primarily administered by the respective venue’s marketing manager. The broad process to marketing the exhibitions can be divided into two main phases: pre-publicity and concurrent exhibition publicity. The pre-publicity stage involved discussion with the marketing manager and the provision of photographs of several works, an artist’s statement and biographical details. For both exhibitions, the pre-publicity commenced two months before the exhibition. As well as website notification with KickArts (www.KickArts.org.au) in which *Face to Face* featured as one of the forthcoming events, pre-publicity also appeared in local publications including *Style* magazine and *The Cairns Post* (Appendix H.3). *Interrogating Gaze* was listed in the Riverway Arts Centre 2007 calendar of events in the (Appendix H.4). An exhibition poster for display at the Centre was also prepared by Pinnacles Gallery.

In the main, the concurrent exhibition publicity focused on the local media. For *Face to Face*, from information provided by the KickArts media releases, the local newspaper, *The Cairns Post*, presented short articles and reviews on arts events and activities where *Face to Face* received attention. The media release also prompted interest from local television and local ABC radio and local WIN
television profiled the exhibition in a brief segment at the end of the six o’clock news.

Several factors were overriding and guiding in relation to the publicity and printed material accompanying the exhibitions. For example, in the development of the room brochures for *Face to Face* and *Interrogating Gaze* (Appendix H.6), the first factor was that the printed material accompanying the exhibitions be well designed and, second, that the material reflected the ambient and aesthetic qualities of the exhibitions. A third factor also somewhat influenced decisions about this material. As room brochures become windows on the exhibitions and have an existence beyond the particular exhibition time frame, it was necessary that these publications be given careful attention and consideration. For both exhibitions, the room brochure’s main purpose was to inform and record.

The resolve for the design of the room brochures was to reflect restraint and refined simplicity as well as quality. The KickArts graphic designer undertook the design and printing of the brochure *Face to Face*, which was two A4 size sheets with one fold using 280gsm satin paper stock and the use of full colour for printing. The overall appearance of the document was considered along with deliberations about the range of images to be placed in the room brochure. The photographs used included two installations, *(face to face) eternal* and *(face to face) entwined* as well as a wall work, *(face to face) Bachy, Julia and Margaret* along with a detail of *(face to face) entwined*. Similarly to the development of the room brochure for *Face to Face*, the document for *Interrogating Gaze* was to resonate with the overall directions and qualities of the exhibition. So too, brief biographical information, the artworks and their details were included in the room brochure. The room brochure design and printing was undertaken by the researcher in brief consultation with Pinnacles Gallery staff. The format of the room brochure was A5 size, folded from an A4 sheet using 280gsm satin paper stock and the use of full colour for printing. The three photographs used for the brochure include a grid wall work, *(face to face) Betty and Julie – heart to heart*, on the front, a wall work, *(face to face) Bachy, Julia and Margaret*, and an
installation, *(face to face) eternal* to give an indication of the range of work in the exhibition.

Additionally, for the opening event of *Face to Face* an invitation (Appendix H.5) was prepared by the KickArts designer. Because the invitation offers the first glimpse of artworks from a forthcoming exhibition, the choice of image was crucial. To encapsulate the representational aspects that feature in the exhibition works, the image of Taku and Victoria was used for the invitation.

### 10.4 *Face to Face* – The Exhibition

The exhibition installation for *Face to Face* was undertaken one week prior to the opening. Around two weeks prior to the delivery of the works to KickArts, information about the works for the labels, which included titles, sizes, and media along with prices was provided. KickArts arranged the labelling and the price list for the exhibition.

The pre-planning and consideration of the layout of the exhibition meant that the installation of works and working with the gallery staff was both straightforward and expedient. Upon the delivery of the works, each work was located in the area in which it was planned to be installed. The location and spacing of each work was re-considered in view of its relation to other works and the installation proceeded in accordance to the original plan determined in the scale model. The day long process was smooth and unproblematic, facilitated by the professionalism, expertise and experience of the gallery’s exhibition staff.

The works on the walls of the KickArts space along with the realia installation on the floor require specific lighting so the works appear integrated, that is, the wall and the floor are incorporated rather than seen as two separate pieces of work. To achieve this cohesion, spotlights along with wall wash lights were chosen as the most effective lighting to heighten and brighten each installation. The sculpture placed near the centre of the gallery space was lit more dramatically with a
spotlight above focused on the heads of the figures. The general resulting effect for the works and overall the exhibition was an optimum outcome of the lighting arrangement (Plate 10.4.1).

Plate 10.4.1  *Face to Face*, KickArts, Centre of Contemporary Arts, Cairns

The format and forms of the works and their interaction with each other generated a dynamic specific to the group of works in the particular space. The more minimalist wall works were placed between the installations and the grid wall works. The works, rather than being grouped with their series, were placed so that some interplay between all the works was achieved. Consideration was given to the material, scale and dimension of the realia associated with the installations.
Plate 10.4.2  *Face to Face*, KickArts, Centre of Contemporary Arts, Cairns

Plate 10.4.3  *Face to Face*, KickArts, Centre of Contemporary Arts, Cairns
The two largest, and potentially dominating, installations, \textit{(face to face) eternal} and \textit{(face to face) entwined} were placed either side of a wall work, \textit{(face to face) Taku and Victoria}, on the centre far end wall of the gallery so that they faced the viewer entering the wide door at the other end (Plate 10.4.2). The dimension and presence of these works required the space afforded by the length on the gallery. The sculpture, \textit{Who in this world can you trust?} was placed near, but off-centre, in front of \textit{(face to face) Taku and Victoria}. The figures in the works were oppositely reclining and presented a contrasting but related view to the other.

The more intimate and delicate installations, \textit{(face to face) grace}, \textit{(face to face) entre nous} and \textit{(face to face) treasure} (Plate 10.4.3) were placed along the right-hand wall. The colour, scale and dimensions of the realia of these installations complimented rather than competed with the others. The left-hand wall presented an installation, \textit{(face to face) Bogus and Jenny} (Plate 10.4.4) grid wall work, \textit{(face to face) heart to heart} (Plate 10.4.5) and a wall work \textit{(face to face) Bachy, Julia and Margaret} (Plate 10.4.6), the variation of which was a counterpoint to the opposite wall of installations. The wall at the entrance end of the gallery allowed space for one wall work, \textit{(face to face) Midge and Eike} (Plate 10.4.7). The opportunity to display two additional works, \textit{(face to face) Bogus and Jen – tour de force} (Plate 10.4.8) and \textit{(face to face) Bella and Tess – eye to eye} (Plate 10.4.9), in the foyer entrance to the gallery served to expand the exhibition and allowed the works to flow from the entry from the lift into the gallery space. Echoes, reverberations and resonances of animal-human exchanges in black and white photographic images along with an array of objects and material orchestrated to present this exhibition experience.
Plate 10.4.4  *(face to face)* Bogus and Jenny at KickArts Gallery
Plate 10.4.5  *(face to face) heart to heart* at KickArts Gallery

Plate 10.4.6  *(face to face) Bachy, Julia and Margaret* at KickArts Gallery
Plate 10.4.7  (face to face) Midge and Eike at KickArts Gallery

Plate 10.4.8  (face to face) Bogus and Jen – tour de force at KickArts Gallery
The official opening of *Face to Face* was on Friday 11 April 2007. The evening included live music, a bar and light refreshments along with lucky door prizes and other such activities along with the official opening for the exhibition. The opening speaker for *Face to Face* was Dr Annabelle Olsson, a veterinarian and Wildlife Rescue founding member and president, among other credentials including fly-in veterinarian to the companion felines of expatriates in West Papua. Dr Olsson set the context for those in attendance to consider the works by presenting both a background of her work and her specific interactions, as a veterinarian, with animals which involve the reciprocal gaze. Dr Olsson held the opening night audience in thrall as she spoke movingly about an accident involving a dog being hit by a car on the day before the opening. She related the calming and reassuring effect of the owner on her dog, whose skull was split open, by the owner holding his gaze with hers while talking softly to him, leading him into the surgery and also as Dr Olsson administered a pain relieving injection. This, she believed, was a clear demonstration of the bond between the owner and the dog which was expressed through the gaze.
10.5 Interrogating Gaze – The Exhibition

The second exhibition at Pinnacles Gallery, Interrogating Gaze, followed the same installation processes as Face to Face with the installation taking place in a smooth and problem free way several days prior to the opening date. Around two weeks prior to the delivery of the works to Pinnacles, information about the works for the labels, which included titles, sizes, and media along with prices was provided. Pinnacles arranged the title labels for the works as well as the didactic label for the wall, which were printed on clear adhesive sheets.

The pre-planning of the exhibition in its scale model format was invaluable for locating each work in its designated area. To confirm the pre-determined plan, the location and spacing of each work was re-considered in view of its relation to other works and the actual gallery space. The installation proceeded in accordance to the original plan determined in the scale model.

The following day, the gallery’s exhibitions officer set up the lighting in the space. The lighting of the works with an effect from overall wash lights unified the works as well as brought the focus onto the walls. As with Face to Face, the lighting was a critical factor in illuminating specific works as well as creating a cohesive effect for the exhibition as a whole. Accurate and skilful exhibition lighting plays a fundamental role in overall ambience and quality of the exhibition: its importance if underestimated is to the exhibition’s detriment. Diffuse lighting directed at the walls provided more than adequate lighting for the wall works and the installations (Plate 10.5.1 and Plate 10.5.2).
Plate 10.5.1  *Interrogating Gaze*, Pinnacles Gallery, Riverway Arts Centre, Thuringowa

Plate 10.5.2  *Interrogating Gaze*, Pinnacles Gallery, Riverway Arts Centre, Thuringowa
The format and forms of the works and their interaction with each other generated a dynamic interplay specific to the group of works in the Pinnacles contemporary art space. The more minimal wall works were placed between the installations and the grid wall works. The works, rather than being grouped with their series, were placed so that interchange between all the works was achieved.

Plate 10.5.3 (face to face) eternal and (face to face) Taku and Victoria and (face to face) entwined (closest) at Pinnacles Gallery
Three installations, (face to face) grace and (face to face) entre nous (Plate 10.5.5) were placed together along the right-hand wall so that their colour, scale and dimensions could interconnect. Placed next to these installations was a wall work, (face to face) Kazi and Anna (Plate 10.5.6 and Plate 10.5.7), which were developed subsequent to the Face to Face exhibition. Alongside this wall work were two grid wall works (face to face) Bogus and Jen – tour de force and (face to face) Bella and Tess – eye to eye. Thus, six works, approximately 150 cm apart, were displayed on this wall. On the opposite wall, facing the three installations, were the wall work (face to face) Bachy, Julia and Margaret, the installation (face to face) treasure, the wall work (face to face) Midge and Eike) and the installation (face to face) entrust (Plate 10.5.8) providing an interplay and connection between different works as well as for the works on the opposite wall.
Plate 10.5.5  
(*face to face*) grace (foreground) and (*face to face*) entre nous at Pinnacles Gallery

Plate 10.5.6  
(*face to face*) Kazi and Anna at Pinnacles Gallery
Plate 10.5.7  (face to face) Kazi and Anna (detail) at Pinnacles Gallery

Plate 10.5.8  (face to face) secrets, (face to face) Bachy, Julia and Margaret, the installation (face to face) treasure, (face to face) Midge and Eike and (face to face) entrust at Pinnacles Gallery
Plate 10.5.9  *(face to face)* Bogus and Jen – *tour de force* (detail) at Pinnacles Gallery

Plate 10.5.10  *(face to face)* entrust (detail) at Pinnacles Gallery
Two additional grid wall works, in a horizontal/landscape format were located alongside these first three. These are \textit{(face to face) secrets} (Plate 10.5.11) and \textit{(face to face) double gaze} (Plate 10.5.12).

Plate 10.5.11 \textit{(face to face) secrets} at Pinnacles Gallery

Plate 10.5.12 \textit{(face to face) double gaze} at Pinnacles Gallery
These works also embody a further step in the exhibition process towards a more focused and refined representation of the works. The additional works of the wall work (*face to face*) *Kazi and Anna* and the two works comprising three grids - (*face to face*) *double gaze* and (*face to face*) *secrets* – portrayed a more minimalist representation thus emphasising and accentuating the intensity of the interactive reciprocal gaze as well as the close emotional connections between the animal and human.

One work from *Face to Face* was not included in *Interrogating Gaze* because of the different spatial relationships between the two galleries. Both the wall and floor area of Pinnacles Gallery are considerably greater than that of the KickArts upper gallery. The KickArts gallery accommodated the sculptural piece *Who in this world can you trust?* (Plate 9.8.1) located near the centre of the space so that it interrelated with all the wall works being physically closer to them. This interrelationship of the three-dimensional work to the wall works could not be achieved in the larger space of Pinnacles. When placed in a central position of the Pinnacles space, the sculpture would have been both isolated and disassociated from the wall works and consequently would have lost considerable potency. Indeed, the work, to a great extent, would have interrupted or distracted the interplay between the works on the three gallery walls.

Ultimately with this exclusion, the expansive dimensions of Pinnacles Gallery allowed all the works to be displayed with optimum space both between and above them and to resonate with each other across the space. This spatial arrangement of works, therefore, represented a refinement of the earlier exhibition *Face to Face.*