

The Narrows

Interview with Warren Taylor

Caroline McCurdy



The Narrows gallery in Melbourne hosts a wide range of work from local, national and international artists/designers. The curator of the diverse art space, Warren Taylor speaks about the most important aspects of running a gallery.

What was your idea behind starting The Narrows?

To incorporate a diverse range of projects into an exhibition program and to learn how to build walls.

Was there a particular concept you wished to represent?

There wasn't a clear agenda at the start but I developed a focus on instigating collaborations between artists and designers and establishing a sound platform for a rich cross-fertilisation of disciplines.

I understand you are also a member on the council for AGDA, what other work are you currently involved in?

Far too many projects!

I really like how the gallery has an emphasis on representing art and design together. What influences your choices of the kinds of work that the gallery will exhibit?

Thankyou. Projects that instigate points of reference and departures between art and design practices interest me most. I stumbled across an exhibition at The New Museum in New York City in 2003. It was on Afro funk musician Fela Anikulapo Kuti. The exhibition wasn't particularly well installed but the content was inspiring. Music, film, archival material and artistic interpretations created an interactive, museum-like context for this cult figure of African music. This was an inspiring show and certainly influenced my curatorial agenda in the beginning. I tend to curate like I am working in a museum rather than a gallery. I like glass vitrines and formal arrangements of pictures. And 60's modernism.

Could you tell me a little bit about your background? Where you find inspiration, where you studied, etc.

I grew up as an air force child—living in Malaysia, Sydney, Darwin and Newcastle (where I completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts at Newcastle University in 1994). After graduating I worked as a demonstrator

at the university whilst maintaining a freelance illustration practice – doing (mostly) editorial pictures for Sydney based magazines.

At present I am finding inspiration in; the books and posters of Arte Povera; the collaboration between Roger Willems & Mark manders; the recommended reading of Matt Hinkley; the banter of Alan Partridge; the new timelessness of Times New Roman; the discovery of Pataphysics; the no coffee, no beer regime of Cameron Bird and; the music of Robert Wyatt & Lindsay Buckingham (not collectively)

Being a small gallery in Melbourne, how do you overcome challenges of standing out from the crowd in a city of hundreds of galleries?

1. Good posters
2. Free posters
3. Good beer
4. Free beer

What is your opinion of the current design scene in Melbourne?

When you sift through the plethora of indifferent graphic work there are a handful of innovative studios that I admire for their output and energy. The frequently blurred line between fashion, music, street art and graphic design make it a bit difficult to isolate 'the design scene' – but the interesting printed matter is certainly more accessible now. The dialogue I have had with designers, who visit the space, shows that there is an enthusiastic movement towards seeking out, supporting and promoting interesting projects in Melbourne. This is good.

Currently showing at the Narrows is work by illustrator Nathan Gray, 'Tudo Que Acho' from December 4 - 20 2008. The work featured in the exhibition was produced by Gray while spending two months in Brazil. The exhibition explores the 'boundaries between experiences and ideas'.

The Narrows
Level 2, 141 Flinders Lane
Melbourne

Open Wednesday to Friday 12-6pm and Saturday 12-5pm or by appointment.

thenarrows.org

top
The gallery space. Designed by Craig Chatman architects.

below
'Tudo Que Acho', Nathan Gray, December 4-20 2008.

