

SENATOR THE HON. ERIC ABETZ AND
THE KANTIAN FETISHIST: A TUTTI-
FRUTTI PORTRAIT
Andy Wear

30 June - 22 July 2007

'What can be said at all can be said clearly;
and whereof one cannot speak thereof
one must be silent.' - Ludwig Wittgenstein
Tractatus Logico Philosophicus

I spent seven years writing, reading and
obsessing over text. I left text behind in order
to paint, but I loathed the things that came
from my paint pots and brushes. Persistence
alone formed shapes, rhythm and tone -
mostly meaningless, but satisfactory. I started
painting words, and I have arrived here, now.
From this position, when I return to my texts
I can only find nonsensical word wreckage,
where Kant can't, Foucault knows fuck all,
and Deleuze is deluded. These magical texts
should have the power to transform ideas,
but amidst the clamour of wasted words their
transmission weakens.

The more we indulge the exponential growth
in communication technologies, the inherently
rational practice of word/text/language-
use has its core qualities (representation
and communication) devalued. Take, for
example, the realm of *the political*, where
this devaluation displays a most critical
failing. Gormless politicians and their political
advisors shape *politik-speak* to make the
clear opaque, seemingly only in the hope of
bedazzling the electorate into disinterest.
It feels like wherever I turn - to speak, to
hear, to write, to read - I just don't know
what people are on about. The responsibility
must be shared by the bedazzled. Sure, the
social conservatives, economic rationalists
and jubbey centrists are publicly practiced
and polished, but they no longer monopolise
the spurting of words like suds. Elsewhere,
abstract chains of text are, with the

constructive mind, becoming skeleton keys to
the psyche of the social democrats and leftists;
be they bad-teenage-poet or amateur-critical-
theorist, the piss-taking left wait for the rattle
in the lock. However one must remain cautious
(before cueing groans), so as not to succumb
to knee-jerk anti-intellectualism. There are
many fine lines we tread in this new cultural
and political landscape, and, as Homi Bhabha
observes, the spaces between these lines
'(carry) the burden of the meaning of culture
(and) in this Third Space, we may elude the
politics of polarity and emerge as the others of
our selves.'¹

*Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz and the Kantian
Fetishist: a tutti-frutti portrait* is an imagined
mapping of this *Third Space*. Here, it is the
space between (visual) detail and (textual)
distance. What is this space? What is this detail?
The visual field absorbs mediocrity; blitzed by
a parasite. The (now distasteful) lust for the
sublime has given in to the machinations of
commerce and popular culture. To find pleasure
in this aesthetic junkyard is to get down on
hands and knees and search for some minute
beauties. What is this distance? Even when
flogging the poor, dead horse of irony, the
trading of empty words means truth or beauty
in text can be determined only from afar. Take,
for example, the conflicting histories (truths?)
of the victors and the vanquished...Neo-
imperialists, Genocide Deniers...Do the varied
yet immensely detailed accounts of experiences
as historical text mean that only by stepping
back can we begin to see the almost sculptural
act of shaping text as a historical whole? Is
reading text becoming more like reading a work
of visual art, and is reading visual art becoming
more like reading text?

¹ Homi K. Bhabha *The Location of Culture*, Routledge Classics.
London ; New York: Routledge, 2004. p. 142





BIOGRAPHY

Andy Wear lives and works in Hobart. His art practice coexists (sometimes uncomfortably) with doctoral research being undertaken through the School of Political Science at the University of Queensland. Both his art practice and academic research is essentially an investigation into the relationship between political/philosophical texts and visual representations.

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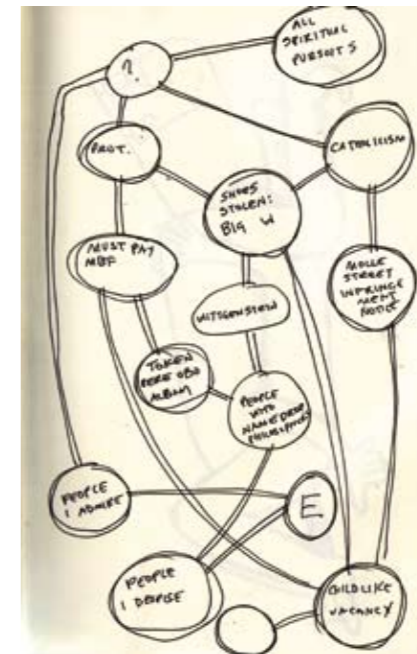
EXHIBITION

This publication accompanies the exhibition *Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz and the Kantian Fetishist: a tutti-frutti portrait* at CAST, 30 June - 22 July 2007

IMAGES

left: Preliminary sketch for *Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz and the Kantian Fetishist: a tutti-frutti portrait* 2007 pen on paper

Others: *Senator the Hon. Eric Abetz and the Kantian Fetishist: a tutti-frutti portrait* 2007 acrylic on cardboard



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