



## PROJECT SPACE

### EX LIBRIS

JUSTIN CALEO

GRACIA HABY & LOUISE JENNISON

JESSICA IRVIN

MARION MANIFOLD

JENNIFER MILLS

JULIA SILVESTER

KATE ŽIŽYS

CURATOR JAZMINA CININAS

## SPARE ROOM

ORIGINAL PRINTS BY EX LIBRIS ARTISTS \$180

OMNUS framing

OPENING NIGHT CELEBRATION MONDAY 28 NOVEMBER 5–7PM

MONDAY 28 NOVEMBER – FRIDAY 16 DECEMBER 2005

23 – 27 CARDIGAN STREET CARLTON VICTORIA 3053 AUSTRALIA

Managed by the School of Art and School of Creative Media

DIRECTOR Dr Louiseann Zahra ADMINISTRATION Olivia Gleeson TELEPHONE 03 9925 4971

GRAPHIC DESIGN Darren Sylvester WEB DESIGN Anna Moretti

EMAIL <http://www.projectspace.rmit.edu.au> WEB <http://www.projectspace.rmit.edu.au>

OPENING HOURS Mon – Fri – 9.30am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 5.00pm



Jessica Irvin *Albie*  
etching with aquatint, image: 14.5 x 15.5cm, 2005.  
Courtesy the artist



Jennifer Mills *Pretty in Pink*  
watercolour and oil pastel on paper, 20 x 23cm, 2005.  
photo: David Mc Arthur.  
Courtesy the artist and Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney.



Gracia Haby & Louise Jennison *Trouble at Sea*  
4 page concertina artists' book. Single colour lithographic offset print hand coloured with pencil, pen and collage on 300gsm Arches Aquarelle, page size: 18cm x 18cm. Bound in cotton by the artists, printed by Redwood Prints. Edition of 16, 2005 (detail). Courtesy the artists

of spectacles and a cape were sufficient to keep one's alter-egos separate in the eyes of loved ones). Mills' 'bats' are in fact mostly spectacled flying foxes, which more closely reflect our *idea* of bats than the true animals themselves. Their different personas pay homage to the range of actors who have played the caped crusader on screen: Adam West, Michael Keaton, Val Kilmer, George Clooney and Christian Bale; in turn following the example of comic book illustrators, each of whom interprets their hero slightly differently.<sup>34</sup>

The artists in Ex Libris all, in various ways, employ illustrative conventions to create new fictions, and new truths. The artifacts they produce draw from personal libraries, testifying to the illustrated book's enduring capacity for inspiring creative acts<sup>35</sup> and for capturing the evolution of the human spirit.<sup>36</sup>

*The research team of Joseph Jacobson is working on the concept [of] a printing surface that can be infinitely printed upon...It is his vision that in the not-too-distant future every child will be given his or her "Last Book"...*<sup>37</sup>

One suspects that Caleo, Haby & Jennison, Irvin, Manifold, Mills, Silvester and Žižys imagine a somewhat different future.

Jazmina Cininas October 2005

*Project Space/Spare Room gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the artists, and their participation in the 2004/2005 Summer Studios @ 66 Residency programme*

grain and captive pigeons with their eyes sewn shut) and stumbling across incriminating evidence against ship-jumping black rats<sup>24</sup>, Haby & Jennison conjure new, pseudo-scientific scenarios. James Atlas might have been describing the artists' work when he observed: "The truth is in the prose, the style, the quality of presentation that compels us to believe".<sup>25</sup>

Haby & Jennison's truth is, by necessity, a fabrication – the species themselves being lost for all time, leaving only fragmentary data from which to glean information. Their Rabbit Rats, Pig-Footed Bandicoots, Deer Mice and Bulldog Rats are as fanciful as their names suggest, sporting sailing boats for headgear or fossils as body parts. Extinct Cloud Runners and Pink-Headed Ducks sing the blues according to Memphis Slim, sporting jail break outfits as they go fishing amongst the desert cacti, taking liberties with the argument that "narrative metaphors are an indispensable part of all "factual" discourse, whether in history or in science",<sup>26</sup> and winking at the commonly held notion that the historian's work is partly scientific, partly artistic.<sup>27</sup>

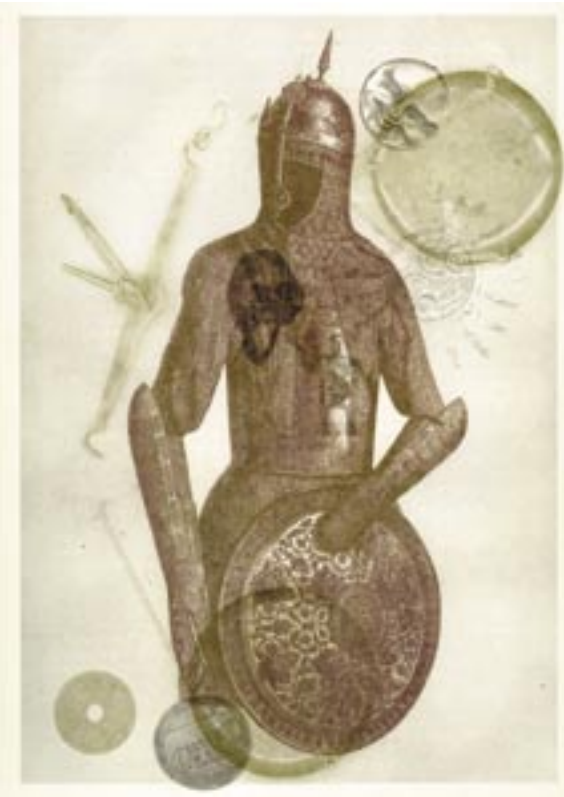
Jessica Irvin adopts a similar hybrid approach in her detailed records of family pets. Her *Incidental Reports* (2002) are modeled on early childhood observations, such as might be found in childcare centres and kindergartens. Mayzee's and Jake's interactions with their fellows, their inspections of boundaries and space and their engagement with power hierarchies are conscientiously recorded, should they ever need to be studied by concerned 'parents' or RSPCA social workers. Irvin's documentary portraits explore the human compulsion to anthropomorphise animal behaviour, particularly where pets serve as child substitutes.

Like Kristen Bakis with her novel, *Lives of the Monster Dogs*, Irvin uses the device of the journal entry to lend 'credibility' to her insightful study of the ways in which humans and animals resemble each other. The diary entries of the Monster Dog 'inventor', Augustus Rank, pinpoint the source of our cross-species affectations:

*I have never in my entire life known real love. The inconstant devotion of my people is a pale substitute. Had I completed my dogs, their love would have been fierce and undying, a passion... Someday they will be created and they will know that they were everything to me, that I loved them like my children...They will wait for my return as dogs wait for their masters, desperately hanging by the door...thinking of nothing else but that moment, that moment when the door will open...<sup>28</sup>*

24. Information on the passenger pigeon and the rats was supplied to the author by the artists, October 2005, citing Clive Ponting, *A Green History of the World*, Penguin Books, 1992; [www.ulala.org/P\\_Pigeon](http://www.ulala.org/P_Pigeon); and Tim Flannery & Peter Schouten, *A Gap in Nature – Discovering the World's Extinct Animals*, Text Publishing Australia, 2001.  
25. Tanselle  
26. Donald N. McCloskey, cited in *ibid.*  
27. See G. M. Trevelyan, cited in *ibid.*  
28. Kristen Bakis, *Lives of the Monster Dogs*, Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1997. p.p.11-12.  
29. Jennifer Mills in an artist statement supplied to the author, October 2005.  
30. "[Potter displays a] close, positively Pre-Raphaelite observation of the natural world...[and] could have made her reputation entirely as a serious scientific illustrator, but in the public mind she is inextricably linked with rabbits." James Bettley, ed. "Children's books" *The Art of the Book: From Medieval Manuscript to Graphic Novel*, V&A Publications, London, 2001, p.97.  
31. *ibid.*

32. "Colour printing always costs so much time and trouble to keep one colour from intruding onto another that printers originally bothered with colour only to avoid even more bothersome hand painting...modern colour printing became possible when Isaac Newton deduced from the spectrum that all colours are mixtures of red, blue, and yellow." Hyatt Mayor, "Illustration in the English-speaking 1860s."  
33. Bettley, "Comics", p.122.  
34. Having spent some years researching representations of female werewolves, the author has noted this in the changing representations of the *Wolfsbane* character, which shift between buxom Barbarella-esque vamp, pony-tailed tomboy and baggy-suited, flat-chested girl next door.  
35. "...the effects produced by printing may be plausibly related to an increased incidence of creative acts...", Eisenstein, p.688.  
36. Our best chance of capturing the human spirit...is through studying the artefacts it has produced...Printing history is essential for examining a major class of those artefacts by helping us to decipher, in the fullest way possible, the physical marks that constitute verbal messages from the past. Tanselle, p.289.  
37. Stephan Fussel, "Gutenberg and Today's Media Change", *Publishing Research Quarterly*, Winter 2001, Vol.16, Issue 4, p.p. 3-11.



**Kate Žižys Armour**  
5 colour digital to plate lithograph on Medley archival paper, colour trial proof, 38 x 29cm, printed by Kate Žižys and Justin Caleo, 2003. Courtesy the artist

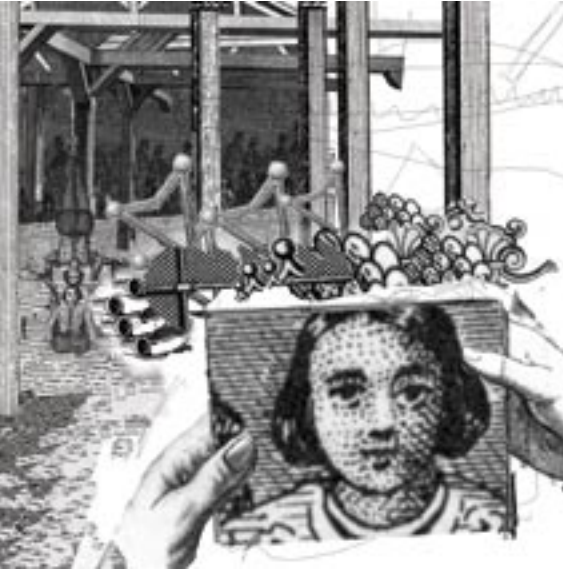
The 19th century author Henri Bouchon poetically defined the *ex libris* as:

...the oldest mark of men's sincere love for [their] literary property. It is the coat of arms of the spirit, a beautiful and original manner of showing ownership which has no other explanation than...love for the book.<sup>1</sup>

Small enameled tablets dating from around 1400 BC identify papyri as belonging to Pharaoh Amenophis III's library, these earliest of *ex libri* attesting to the long-standing love affair between mankind and books.<sup>2</sup> It is the illustrated book that has proved particularly seductive to the eight *Ex Libris* artists. In defiance of common academic and cultural elitism against all things 'illustrative', these artists champion pictorial depictions and narratives, acknowledging their debt to, and celebrating their affection for, the illustrator.

Gutenberg's invention of the mobile-type printing press has been described as the greatest influence on the development of mankind,<sup>3</sup> but Pfister's 1461 innovation, which allowed for the printing of pictures alongside the typographic texts, cannot be underestimated.<sup>4</sup> The life sciences gained a new status<sup>5</sup> once the illustration commanded the leading role in building the professional knowledge of architects, engineers, anatomists, botanists, and zoologists<sup>6</sup>, challenging Classical privileging of ideas and text over image.<sup>7</sup>

1. José Miguel Valderrama, *EX LIBRIS (Bookplate): A secret bond of affection between the book and its owner*, <http://www.geocities.com/andaluzadexlibristas/ExlibrisIngles.htm>, viewed 21 October 2005.
2. *From earliest times, books have always been cherished and jealously guarded by their owners [being regarded as] privileged vehicles of knowledge, and prized possessions.* Benoît Junod, "Ex-Libris Or The Mark Of Possession Of Books", *The World Of Ex-Libris: A Historical Retrospective*, <http://www.karaart.com/prints/ex-libris/index.html>, viewed 21 October 2005.
3. "No invention has had a greater influence on the development of mankind than that of printing." Ibid.
4. See A. Hyatt Mayor, "Herbals and scientific illustration" and "Printing breaks away from manuscript", *Prints & People: A Social History of Printed Pictures*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1971.
5. "By paying more attention to the duplication of pictorial statements, we might see more clearly why the life science no less than the physical ones were placed on a new footing and how the authority of Pliny, no less than Galen and Ptolemy, was undermined." Elizabeth I. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Volume II*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1979, p.686.
6. See Hyatt Mayor, "Printing breaks away from manuscript."
7. "New ways of picture making changed the very basis of knowledge. The Greeks and Romans...scorned the instability of appearances, whose images shifted when repeated through the only replication then known. Today the emphasis is reversed." Ibid, "Herbals and scientific illustration."



**Justin Caleo** *Problems with Photography II*  
CTP direct lithograph, 39 x 39cm, 2005. Courtesy the artist

Illustrations lured the average German into literacy, making it possible in the 1500s for Luther to split Western Christendom through Protestant pamphleteering.<sup>8</sup> The woodcut became a mediaeval industry, filling church coffers with sales from souvenir holy pictures. Printed saints on linen bandaged sores and wounds, or pasted onto wafers were ingested by sick men and cattle.<sup>9</sup> Printing was even declared a divine invention, ordained by God himself,<sup>10</sup> a belief extending beyond Western thinking. The Mayans credit the Mesoamerican god Quetzalcoatl (who features in the prints of **Kate Žižys**) with the gifts of writing and the calendar.

Printing's divine status has been challenged over the years, with John Ruskin declaring in 1857 "Let no lithographic work come into your house if you can help it."<sup>11</sup> The ease with which lithography could be employed for commercial applications initially saw it reviled as the poor cousin of reproductive aquatint and engraving,

suffering the same snobbery as screen-printing in the 50s and 60s and digital technologies in conservative printmaking vanguards of the moment. Expediency and cost efficacy, however, are the very things that initially motivated Žižys and **Justin Caleo** to modify commercial lithographic reproduction methods, notably CTP (computer to plate), for hand printing.

The imperfections inherent in historical commercial printing processes particularly fascinate Žižys, who makes a feature of them in her manipulations and re-interpretations, careful to protect them from well meaning printers who regularly ask if she'd like her 'mistakes' corrected. Her four Persian armour prints are each unique states, subverting the very nature of the commercial printing process she employs (intended as it is for mass production) while her deliberately 'inept' registration pays homage to the relaxed practices of Soviet Lubok printers<sup>12</sup>. The imagery itself hints at the genesis of the etching process – originally employed for armour decoration – while Žižys' cyanotype cosmonauts offer a parallel evolutionary history of armour.

Žižys rescued her source image from a discarded 1950s encyclopaedia of weaponry, most probably printed with a lithographic offset press. This, in turn, very likely reproduced an 1800s carbon print,<sup>13</sup> itself a copy of the original technical drawing.<sup>14</sup> This reproduction of a reproduction of an illustration was scanned and digitally manipulated, before its final incarnation as a hand-printed Žižys original. Each generation of print technology imparts its own signature, with new qualities being lost and gained along the way.

By contrast, it is the greater reproductive integrity offered by CTP printing that ultimately seduced Caleo away from photo etching. As does **Marion Manifold**, Caleo borrows heavily from Victorian book illustrations, his chief muse being Heck's *The*

8. *ibid*, "Printing breaks away from manuscript" and "Savonarola."
9. *ibid*, "Holy pictures."
10. "[John] Foxe [1563] entertained no doubt about whether the advent of printing provided a necessary precondition for the reformation...[asserting] that divine providence assured the invention of printing..." John N. King, "The Light of Printing: William Tyndale, John Foxe, John Day, and Early Modern Print Culture", *Renaissance Quarterly*, Spring 2001, vol. 54.
11. Hyatt Mayor, "Early lithography."
12. The *lubok* is a cheap, popular print produced in Russia, and is characteristically bold and colourful.
13. "The first re-production of the illustration hails from somewhere in the 1800's and is very likely to be a Carbon Print – one produced by one of the many versions of this process that was invented by A.L.Poitevin in 1855/56. This process has also been called photolithography; it is a binary pattern transfer: there is no greyscale, colour or depth present – the images developed this way were permanent and characterized by a deep rich brown which did not deteriorate – the process was widely used between 1870 and 1888." Kate Žižys, email correspondence with author, October 2005.
14. The pictorial description of a suit of Persian armour dates from the early part of the 18th Century and is located in the Tzarskoje Selo Collection, now the State Museum of Russia. Ibid.



**Marion Manifold** *Ex Caliga*  
from the *Ex Corpo* folio of boxed prints, Linocut on BKF Rives in buckram box with tissue interleaves, box size: 54 x 46cm, image size: 31 x 24cm, paper size: 50 x 38.5cm, 2005. Courtesy the artist

*Complete Encyclopaedia of Illustration*.<sup>15</sup> The late 1800s saw an unprecedented, and unrivalled, proliferation of illustrated poems and stories in England,<sup>16</sup> the exquisite engravings and meticulous studies adorning everything from scientific journals and political editorials to shopping catalogues and potboilers in weekly magazines.<sup>17</sup> Before photography established its reign as *the* purveyor of visual 'truth',

engravings served to inform and edify an "inquisitive people with a thirst for knowledge".<sup>18</sup>

Caleo's *Problems with Photography II* (2005) challenges the camera's claim to veracity, his montaged elements fabricating a new narrative exposing the distortions that result from 'privileging' information. Ambiguity features not only in the imagery, but also in the titles of the works. *WhereWear* (2001), an open blazer lined with collaged clouds of engraving details, and *Phoney* (2003), a constructed forest in which identical Victorian gents converse over mobile phones, draw our attention to the invention inherent in all knowledge, in all illustration.

Manifold also invents Victorian scenarios in her Surrealist tribute, the *Cadavre Exquis* suite, composing new feminine identities that embody the notion of chance, and its influence on one's own identity. Unlike Caleo, however, Manifold diligently cuts her imagery from linoleum blocks, the repetitive, labour intensive and notably hand-crafted nature of her practice mirroring the skills traditionally admired (if somewhat dismissively) as 'women's work'. Masculine elements introduce the suggestion of voyeurism and fetishism.<sup>19</sup>

Manifold acquired a remarkable new history when she married the heir to an 1880s homestead in the Western District. This living museum (which even hosts coach tours), overflows with relics and mementoes from the lives and histories of Edward Manifold's pioneering ancestors, weighty ledgers faithfully recording every transaction – and the philanthropic generosity – of earlier generations. Much of Manifold's imagery is made up of the extraordinary objects that surround her in her everyday life: mannequins, vanity cases, lace trims from Victorian dresses and other exquisite treasures.

While Manifold has embraced her inherited ancestry, she remains conscious of its capacity to reconstruct, and at times overwhelm, her own identity. Even her name is shared with three earlier generations of Manifold matriarchs. The MM monogram that adorns her *Ex Corpo* portfolio has been reclaimed from her great grandmother-in-law, and one is left unsure as to whether the gloves, shoes, hats and eyes that feature in the large format 'bookplates' are "from the body of" the artist, or from an earlier MM.

15. Caleo also borrows from Mondadori's *Tutte le tavole della Encyclopedie die Diderot e D. Alembert* (first edition 1751). See notes in Sheena Jones, "Enlightening Shadows: the Prints of Justin Caleo", *Imprint*, Vol.39, No.2, Winter 2004, p.10.
16. See Hyatt Mayor, "Illustration in the English-speaking 1860s."
17. *ibid*.
18. Jones.
19. Marion Manifold, in correspondence with the author, October 2005.



**Julia Silvester** *Antipodean view*  
digital image on 310gsm Hahnemuhle, 2 panels, each 21 x 20cm, 2005 (detail). Courtesy the artist

**Julia Silvester** returns to pre-settlement Australia with her constructed panorama of Melbourne, in the form of the earliest of all books, the scroll. Like Caleo, Silvester employs digital technology to impart a uniform surface to her collaged scans of historical illustrations, acknowledging computerization as "simply the latest chapter in the long story of facilitating the reproduction and alteration of texts."<sup>20</sup> Silvester is equally open about her fakery, sharing Simon Schama's conviction that the boundary between fact and fiction is always in flux, and that history's "best prospects lie in the forthright admission of...imagination."<sup>21</sup>

Despite 'immigrating' from Perth in 1996, Silvester still feels the newcomer's lack of familiarity with Melbourne geography. She presented mock-ups of her panorama to 'locals' for advice on

the positioning of natural landmarks, which would be adjusted accordingly; the You Yangs nudged a little further west, the Dandenongs fractionally reduced in the east. As such Silvester operates as the direct descendant of early map makers and illustrators, who depended on second hand reports from witnesses; easy (and possibly willing) prey to their inaccuracies and embellishments.

Silvester shares Žižys' fascination with the vagaries that occur in successive generations of reproduction, harking even further back to early herbals and scientific texts, whose images were so corrupted by generations of sloppy copyists as to be ultimately unrecognisable.<sup>22</sup> She is equally intrigued by the (mis) translations imposed on the Australian landscape by colonial illustrators, who felt compelled to tidy up the unruly bushland, adorning their eucalypts with oak leaves. Fauna also suffered Anglicisation; the kangaroo was likely drawn from a skin sent to England and stuffed to appear more deer-like. Silvester's companion panorama, made up of local indigenous words for land, sky and clouds, testifies to her conviction that only the land can possess its true history.

**Gracia Haby** and **Louise Jennison** employ an equally slippery approach to 'facts', creating whimsical narratives about disappeared species that operate according to their own logic. The printing process, as both a technical and artistic activity, has been linked not only to the memory of human thought, but also to the memorial process.<sup>23</sup> Haby & Jennison's artist's books employ digital collages of drawings and found illustrations, mediated through offset lithography, to pay tribute to extinct creatures. Their Christie-esque book titles – *By the Pricking of My Claws*; *The Case of the Lost Aviary*; *Trouble at Sea*; *The Dubious Clue* – attest to Haby & Jennison's delight in amateur detective work. Unearthing sad tales such as that of the Passenger Pigeon (once so numerous flocks blackened the skies for hours, but lured to extinction by alcoholic

20. p.288 G. Thomas Tanselle, "Printing History and Other History", *Studies in Bibliography*, Volume 48 (1995)
21. Simon Schama, cited in *ibid*, p.287. See also p.286.
22. "...the copyists who redrew manuscripts inevitably degraded drawings of plants into unintelligibility, as old Pliny lamented in his *Natural History*... For centuries...copyists copied copies, shirking the hard analysis of drawing from...nature." Hyatt Mayor, "Herbals and scientific illustration"
23. "Printing as Memory", a pair of lectures delivered by Alvin Eisenman at Dartmouth in 1992 imply in their title "not only the idea of printed texts as the memory of human thought but also the role of printing, as a technical and artistic activity, in the memorial process." G. Thomas Tanselle, "Printing History and Other History", *Studies in Bibliography*, Volume 48 (1995), p.289