

Nicola Loder. Landscape 1 - 18. 17 Feb - 7 Mar 98. Gallery 101 Ground Level, 101 Collins St Melb, Vic 3000. T: 03 9654 6886. F: 03 9650 5357. Hrs: Tue - Fri 10 - 5pm. Sat 12 - 4 pm.



Nicola's problem. Renowned educationalist and school principal, Miss Margaret Little informed Nicola Loder's mother that she had ruined her young child by taking her abroad, too often. There are many such cautionary tales about what children should or shouldn't be exposed to at a tender age so as not to harm their creative development. Our mother frowned upon colouring-in books. Miss Little frowned upon over stimulating young children with experiences beyond suburban Melbourne. Having seen so much, how could a child process so much information, how would she form her own expression? The world often feels like a giant hurling images and information and judgement, and it is precisely distinguishing and processing this onslaught that propels Nicola Loder's fearless and intuitive excursions around Melbourne with her grandfathers old Russian Zenet E camera. New technologies enhance anxiety about the gargantuan task of knowing the world, yet Loder seems undaunted, her focus turned to the giants of nature, city and individual.


Problems of scale Viewing the giant in one go is of course impossible. Like a vast mountain range only partial views are seen at any one time. Aerial and satellite photographs or maps and other forms of schematic rendering which reduce the giant to other types of information, serve certain forms of enquiry, but not necessarily the longing to see clearly. As a concept, gigantic, seems strangely pre-modern in character, even small in comparison to the scale of modern life. Yet the term is often invoked in current discussion about globalisation. Financial crisis in Asia is spoken of in gargantuan terms with no regard to individual countries, let alone communities. Except perhaps recently when middle class Indonesian women were blamed for panic buying staple goods and causing further problems for the currency. This was the first time I recall hearing a part of the economic giant's anatomy specifically mentioned. The trouble with seeing the big picture only (Asia as a giant market) is that this permits a less than human regard, for individuals. So what used to occur around the corner (the market) has disappeared and re-emerged in gargantuan terms disassociated from lived experience and on the global scale. Conversely, in this the International Year of the Oceans, what was once experienced as axiomatically gigantic, we are now told is really quite small and endangered.



Nicola's stone Loder's first installation, *The Apprenticeship of Silence* (1994) tackled problems of scale and in particular the city and its different renderings in reality (gigantic) and in model (miniature). Delighting in the inconsistencies of photography's apprehension of reality as opposed to the model, Nicola Loder presented 828 small photographs within 3 grids. The individual was inserted throughout this grid as little narrative incidents, ironically the model looking more convincing than the real. In her next series, *Child 1-175* (1996), Loder make gigantic the individual. Through 175 individual portraits, the diminutive world of children was blown up, out of proportion. But whose proportion? In these works there is something scurrilous about the respect and interest given to the enormity of children's feelings, to their often monumental composure. Scurrilous because the process of growing up is predicated upon forgetting (out-growing) these childish postures. What's also interesting here is how Loder came to witness and photograph these expressions as children don't usually reveal such moments to adults. She must have developed a special relationship with these Lilliputian individuals. Without cloying sentimentality this installation punctured the big (adult) picture space with ordinary children, photographed from below so not only are they shot against the sky (or the shared big picture), but they cast their eyes across and above the viewer. Warm feelings of delight at such audacity mingled with icy recognition of the rigid strictures imposed by the adult world upon the child. While in order to be an adult it is necessary to see children as other, in this work it was possible to linger upon that which is necessarily forgotten. Loder has consistently slung Goliath through the device of the grid. A giant of a device, in her hands it allows her to compose a compelling whole from what could be messy, even sentimental bits. The grid allows Loder to reduce complexity and make architectural claims on the exhibition space. In *Landscape 1 - 19* (1998), the grid is less obvious, nevertheless it sustains an even greater architectural claim through tall thin photographs of 6 metres high by 1.2, .8 and .4 metres wide. Loder's totalising disregard for natural scale is most evident in this series where the individual is monumentalised, the monumental sky is minimised, as are incidental expressions of the city.



On one hand these photographs adhered to paper-thin aluminium, recall monumental wall-hangings depicting not the kingly but the ordinary, specific and yet anonymous individual. Or perhaps they mimic Doric columns, those ancient and giant devices for insinuating the human form, albeit out of scale, into architecture's vocabulary. One of the revolutionary tasks of linear perspective was quite literally to organise the viewer's position in relation to the painted surface and by implication the world depicted. Previously, throngs of viewers moving through the church could read frescoes of parallel narratives performed within shallow picture planes analogous of heavenly space. Whereas the effect of a 'window to the world' achieved through perspective, only did so from a certain optimum viewing point, namely one viewer standing stationary in one spot (and with one eye closed). No longer at the centre of the world, the individual however was directly addressed by the artist. Nicola Loder also positions the viewer vis a vis the picture plane, albeit in a less prescriptive manner. The viewer shifts from close range where the image is abstracted to further back where the grain can be composed into an image. The optimum viewing point will depend upon the viewer's desire for abstraction or image, for part or whole.



Blurring distinctions between photography, painterly effects and installation, Nicola Loder's technical prowess is minuscule compared with what she achieves through the gestalt of her project. Erratic exposure, hand held cameras, the wrong lenses and funny old cameras are devices she relishes and which allow her to get to the heart of the matter. You could say she even trespasses on the turf of commercial photography, simply taking what she needs. Similarly, her work grapples with the spectre of advertising, stealing back some of the devices and power expropriated from the arts by financial giants such as Benetton, Esprit and the TAC.¹ Loder achieves a remarkable taxonomy of in camera looks, only possible through taking vast numbers of photographs. Her portraits are characterised by a leaning towards compassion never squandered on meaningless sentimentality. Quite simply she takes ordinary people and finds extraordinary, nameless poetic and unconscious moments, which link people. Far from enigmatic, such unconscious repose is utterly familiar from the inside. Her subjects may be oblivious to her process but are far from passive. These faces are curiously specific in their details such as the minutiae of age, gender and nationality, signs which are tangibly small yet gigantic in their implications. And what of the context for these portraits, the slivers of sky and city? As Susan Stewart comments, "our most fundamental relation to the gigantic is articulated in our relation to the landscape, our immediate and lived relation to nature."² The gigantic, as represented by sky and city "present an analogical mode of thought, world without world".³ Loder isn't merely making big, human emotions but inserting the ordinary human within gigantic social constructs of nature and city, which usually occur above or surround the body. This gigantic space above the body which is usually occupied by the anonymity of corporate architecture and the complimentary detached "personalism" of advertising⁴, is all filled up with thoughtful anonymous individuals.



Our problem When an economist working for a transnational investment firm barates middle class Indonesian women for panic buying as a response to events which are totally beyond her control (and surely her comprehension) he momentarily conflates worlds of incommensurate scale and reveals his disregard for humanity. When Nicola Loder inflates the inward thoughts of unknown individuals and places them alongside monumental cloud formations and slivers of cities, she shows her regard.

Naomi Cass 1998

¹.As Susan Stewart comments, the twentieth century has signalled the appropriation of the sphere of the gigantic by commercial advertising. Susan Stewart *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1984, p. 101

².ibid., p. 71

³.ibid., p. 74

⁴.ibid., p.102



NICOLA LODER Born 1964 Melbourne
EDUCATION 1994-97 Master of Arts (Media Arts), Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. 1992 Post Graduate Diploma in Film, The Victorian College of the Arts. 1987-89 Bachelor of Fine Art in Photography, The Victorian College of The Arts. 1994-97 Lecturer in Photography, Monash University, Lecturer in Photography, Swinburne University. **SOLO EXHIBITIONS** 1998 Landscape 1-19, Gallery 101 Melb. 1996 Child 1-175: A Nostalgia for the Present, Stop 22, Melb. 1994 The Apprenticeship of Silence, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Broken In My Mouth, Main gallery The Basement Project, Melb Untitled, (collaboration with Deborah Ostrow) Back gallery, The Basement, Melb. 1993 Untitled, (collaboration with Deborah Ostrow) Studio 12, 200 Gertrude St. **GROUP EXHIBITIONS** 1998 Image=Object, curated by Blair French, ACP, Sydney, Glasgow Exchange Exhibition, ACCA, curated by Clare Williamson (to be confirmed). 1997 Moët & Chandon touring exhibition, QAG Brisbane, NGV Melb, AGWA Perth, NSWAG Sydney, AGSA Adelaide, Rapport: Eight Artists from Singapore and Australia, Curators Natalie King and Tay Swee Lin, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, IMA, Brisbane, Rupert Bunny Prize exhibition, Linden Gallery, Melb, Christ I'm Pissed Off, curator Marion Harper, Stop 22, Melb. 1996 Rapport: Eight Artists from Singapore and Australia, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore, Monash Gallery, Melb, The Rupert Bunny Prize exhibition, Linden Gallery, Melb. 1995 Labyrinth, Platform Gallery, Curator Rachael Kent, Melbourne Steam, curator Marion Harper, Stop 22, Melb, Faktura, Curator Rosalind Drummond, Stop 22 Melb, Art On The Met (display on billboards and trams) Melbourne. 1993 Pure Cinema, Curator Rosalind Drummond, Charles Williams Gallery, Department of Architecture, R.M.I.T., Melb. 1990 Transparent Gallery, Next Wave Festival, Melb, 1988 Photo Access, Link Gallery (subsidiary of The National Gallery), Canberra. **SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY** 1997 Colin Simpson, The Bulletin, page 71 May. Wahyuni Hadi, ART AsiaPacific, Number 13, February. Sasha Grishin, Canberra Times, April, page C6 Jason Smith, Museum National, vol 5, no. 3 Feb, page 19-20 Anna Clabburn, Moët & Chandon ex. cat. 1996 Edward Colless, Child 1-175, ex. cat. Richard Holt, World Art, October. Robert Nelson, The Age, September. Rachel Farnay, Asian art news, May/June page 80. Rod McLeish, Temple Studio Publication #16, July page 5-8. Susie Wong, The Strait Times, June. Anne Marsh, The Herald Sun, September. Natalie King, Real Time, August/September page 4. Natalie King, Rapport ex. cat. Freda Freiberg, The Age, April. Rachel Farney, Asian Art News, May/June. 1995 Natalie King, Photofile, November. 1994 Zara Stanhope, Photofile, November. Simeon Kronenberg, Agenda, September. Clare Williamson, Artfan, Spring. Lin Tobias, Artfan, Spring. Anne Marsh, Herald Sun, May. Deborah Hennessy, Jennifer Higgie, Sandra Webster, The Apprenticeship of Silence ex. cat. **GRANTS & AWARDS** 1997 Visual Arts/Crafts Board of The Australia Council Project Development Grant, New work Arts Victoria Arts Development Grant. Shortlisted for Asia Link Artist in Residence program (Vietnam). 1995 Visual Arts/Crafts Board of The Australia Council Project Development Grant. **COLLECTIONS** 1996 National Gallery of Victoria. 1989 Victorian College of the Arts Various private **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE** 1997 Lecturer in Photography, Monash University, Gippsland campus. Curated [insert title here], ARC Gallery, Yinnar, (exhibition of students work). 1994-95 Lecturer in Photography, Swinburne University, Prahran campus. 1995 Lecturer in Photography, Monash University, Gippsland campus. Curated, Out of the Dark, Latrobe Regional Gallery, (exhibition of students work). 1993-95 Photography Tutor, St Kilda Park Primary School. 1994 Curated Close Up On St Kilda Park, Linden Gallery (exhibition of students work). **ARTISTS PUBLICATIONS** 1998 Landscape 1-19, ex. cat. Melbourne. 1996 Child 1-175: A Nostalgia for the Present, ex. cat. Melbourne. 1994 The Apprenticeship of Silence ex. cat. Melbourne. 1993 Untitled, Deborah Ostrow/Nicola Loder ex. cat. Melbourne. 1988 Australian Arts Diary publication of selected work.





THE IMAGE BOX PTY LTD 17 Izett St. Prahan 3181 Vic. Australia
email: imagebox@netspace website: www.imagebox.com
facsimile:+61 3 9510 9234 telephone: +61 3 9510 902
Image Box, a visual communications company, was formed in 1988 to provide quality imaging for professionals. Image Box is the market leader in both Digital printing and imaging, and has the widest range of in house digital services on offer to our clients. In the rapidly growing Digital imaging market, we were the first business in Victoria to install wide format digital inkjet printing, and now have an extensive range of equipment including the recent installation of the Lambda 130 wide format laser imager, on which the images for this exhibition were printed. Our company's continued success has been made possible by forming working relationships with our customers. Providing them with consistent quality, fast turnarounds and new products and services. An important area of our business is assisting our clients to achieve the end result they require by a process of sound advice, technical assistance and quality products. The business is owned and managed by David Asker and Dominic Borrello, the founders of the company. They are actively involved in the day to day operation of the business and have extensive industry experience in all areas of the services provided. Twenty staff are employed by the company, in the areas of administration, finance, customer service, sales and marketing, digital imaging, photographic and mounting and laminating.

ILFORD

All images in this exhibition have been prepared on Ilford Ilfocolor negative photographic paper. Ilford Ilfocolor paper was chosen for its superior picture quality from the digital enlarging process.

This project has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

Nicola wishes to thank the following people without whose support and help this project would not have been possible. David Asker, Fiona Beckworht, Lawrence Beesley, Brian Bell, Grant Bidois, Dominic Borrello, Naomi Cass, Geoff Crosby, Chris Dodds, Peter Dunphy, Bill Eichhorn, Geraldine Frankland, George Giannopoulos, Dianna Gold, Raphael Grosso, Peter Handsacker, Marion Harper, Doris Hills, Edwin Hills, Nick Kocher, Elizabeth Loder, John Loder, Hamish Maccormick, Chip Monk, Laurie Nishimoto, Deborah Ostrow, Jo Painter, Maria Prenderghast, Palmer Ragno, Robert Ray, Darren Rokahr, Les Walkling, John Bilan. Kirstin Gollings, Keith Lewis, Jeff Steven and all of the staff at CPL. A special thank you to Trevor Morgan for all of his work, cloning and rendering the images. Also Cycad Ind. for layout and design of catalogue, Paul Davis (Event Montage) for all his help with the installation and Jim Clavering for sourcing and designing the lighting. Thanks also to **digitalhouse** for system time and graphic reproduction.



