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¹ I am greatly indebted to William W.E. Slight of the University of Saskatchewan and his online article 'Marginalia' at: <http://www.lights.com/~mun/pages2/contents/marginalia.html> originally included in the conference Architectures, Ideologies & Materials of the Page presented at 'Body Projects II: Digital Matter, Digital Memory', organised by the Humanities Research Unit at the University of Saskatchewan, March 1999

Originating in the Middle-Ages, the space around the body of a text was used as a space for scholarly discourse: the learned mind of the usually very privileged reader making observations on the content of the book. This commentary became increasingly prized in its own right, and gave rise to the tradition of the medieval explanatory 'gloss'. Marginal drawings or diagrams, often fantastical, also became prized as 'illuminations' on the text.²

Stabilisation of these hand-written comments and drawings occurred during the Renaissance with printers such as Aldus Manutius, who established elaborate typographic devices to include extensive printed additions around the main text. The additional glosses received the same value as the main text and effectively became continuous with the central body of the work.

'Marginalia' is the title chosen for this exhibition of works produced by six visual researchers from Monash University, who were invited to explore, note-book and sketch pad in hand, the Art & Heritage Collection and site of the Melbourne Town Hall. Marginalia refers to the notes, sketches and doodles found in the margins of a book – a useful metaphor for considering the art works that were produced in response to the 'text' of the Town Hall and the City of Melbourne Collection.

\Mar`gi*na"li*a), n. pl. [NL.]: Marginal notes.¹

It may be as well to observe, however, that just as the goodness of your true pun is in the direct ratio of its intolerability, so is nonsense the essential sense of the Marginal Note.

Edgar Allan Poe

² See Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion, 1992).

5 Kirsty Powers

art meet street meet

Statement:

My preparation for the exhibition began by visiting Melbourne Town Hall and getting a sense of the space. I am interested in comparing the traditional late Victorian architecture in relation to its current surroundings.

My collages are a combination of rescued paper, computer print outs, drawings, found objects and images, stickers, stains, paint and photos. I have collected a number of flyers that represent modern uses for the site. I plan to celebrate modern Melbourne life: contemporary art in a traditional space.

CV:

Participated in group exhibitions including Drawing: Marking the Terrain, Faculty Gallery, Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University

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6 Anne Wertheim

Commemorative Meddles

Statement:

'The artist appeals to that part of our being... which is a gift and not an acquisition – and, therefore, more permanently enduring,' Joseph Conrad

Commemoration is present life being mindful of past life, which is a generative act. There is no history without eros. Eros is a gift to be enjoyed and shared.

Thanks to:

CALLEBAUT

WILLIAM ANGLISS INSTITUTE

CV:

Participated in group exhibitions at The Greenhouse Gallery, Faculty Gallery and Avago Korfeel at the Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University

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You are invited to the City Gallery
for the opening of

Marginalia

on 13 November at 6pm

Marginalia – Artworks by students from the
Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University
in response to the
City of Melbourne Art & Heritage Collection

Marc Alperstein
Deb Bain-King
Domenico Cozzolino
Bridget Keena
Kirsty Powers
Ann Wertheim

Curated by
Kit Wise

City Gallery
Melbourne Town Hall
(enter through Halftix)



13 November 2003 – 16 January 2004

Artworks by six students from the
Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University
in response to the
City of Melbourne Art & Heritage Collection

Gallery Times:

Monday 10am–2pm
Tuesday–Thursday 11am–6pm
Friday 11am–6.30pm
Saturday 10am–2pm

City of Melbourne
GPO Box 1603M
Melbourne Victoria 3001

Hotline: 9658 9658
enquiries@melbourne.vic.gov.au
www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

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⁵ See Jacques Derrida "This is Not an Oral Footnote" in *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. Stephen A. Barney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

³ See Evelyn Birrd Tribble, "I like a Looking-Glass in the Frame": From the Marginal Note to the Footnote' in *The Margins of the Text*, D.C. Greetham (ed.), Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997; and Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1998.

Marginalia, then, is a device whereby the reader and act of reading become integral to the conception of the text. More than just commentary, marginal notes have the potential to destabilise and 'hi-jack' a text, as effectively demonstrated by post-structuralist Jacques Derrida, in his famous statement that he located his most important critique in the footnotes where it would be 'read and not passed by, indeed read even before the main text'.⁵

This 'double' text endured until the 18th Century, when the now very dense field of the page was rationalised, and headers, shoulder-notes, footnotes, and appendices were born.³

In the present, with the advent of the digital page and the 'hyperlink' physically embedded in the text, a new multi-dimensionality of the page is apparent. Where the 'body' text ends and that which is marginal begins is more than ever ambiguous – links and 'hidden' pages allow the text to shift form and focus; the reader structuring the text according to their desire. The 'margin' is therefore entirely provisional - indeed whole other volumes can become joined to the initial text of interest. The text becomes a chimera, changing shape and direction as a potentially near-infinite intertextuality.⁴

⁴ See Jay David Bolter *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing*, Fairdawn, NJ: Erlbaum, 1991.

⁷ See Edgar Allan Poe, *Marginalia*, University of Virginia Press, 1982.

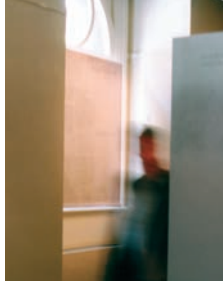
⁶ See H.J. Jackson's *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books*, Yale University Press, 2001.

regarding the validity of the primary text, narrated appropriately enough by a fraudulent poet. The authority of both, if not all, text is called into question, in a celebration of the texture of the published word.⁶

Yet Edgar Allan Poe is perhaps the most apt exponent of the margin in relation to this exhibition. His collection of prose and essays, largely criticism of poets and literary tropes, was brought together in the last five years of his life under the title 'Marginalia', after the frontispiece of the group, a short essay of reflections upon his own note-taking in the margins of his private library. Of his "subjoined farrago" he comments:

Perhaps it was what the Germans call the "brain-scattering" humor of the moment; but, while the picturesqueness of the numerous pencil-scratches arrested my attention, their helter-skelter-iness of commentary amused me. I found myself at length forming a wish that it had been some other hand than my own which had so bedevilled the books, and fancying that, in such case, I might have derived no inconsiderable pleasure from turning them over. From this the transition- thought... was natural enough:- there might be something even in my scribbings which, for the mere sake of scribbings would have interest for others.

The main difficulty respected the mode of transferring the notes from the volumes- the context from the text- without detriment to that exceedingly frail fabric of intelligibility in which the context was imbedded . [...] What, then, would become of it- this context- if transferred?- if translated? Would it not rather be traduit (traduced) which is the French synonym, or overzezet (turned topsy-turvy) which is the Dutch one?⁷



In this exhibition, the six artists present their comments and observations around the 'central text' of the Melbourne Town Hall. Located in the City Gallery, their interventions in the site and context of the Town Hall blur the distinction between current life and lived history; artefact and object; the academic and the everyday. The permeability of the text – its ability to host intellectual comment as well as be the subject of play; and to then re-absorb these influences – has resulted in works that tread a line between “pencil-scratchings” and critique, documentation and

This shift, from the academicism of the medieval gloss to the play of the modern novel, illuminates the work of the artists. Their brief was to approach the phenomena of the Town Hall as a complex of information or ‘body of knowledge’ – to tease out meanings from the location, and develop a response commenting on an aspect of the site or identity that it represented. Some worked with a quasi-forensic technique, photographically identifying details or ‘clues’ that led them to their observations; some with the atmosphere and idiosyncrasies of the site; others in a more painterly way, to comment on existing motifs in the Collection.

3) Domenico M Cozzolino

100 Peace(s)

Statement:

I am always intrigued by how organisations catalogue what they collect. This archive collects a lot of marginalia some of which is very hard to store. I could work here for years using this material as inspiration.

I use a scanner because I like its clinical and Frankensteinish light. It's always the same and it tends to record every object in exactly the same way.

CV:

In 2001 Domenico diverted from a career in design to concentrate on his art practice, which he has maintained in his spare time for the past 20 years. Drawing, photography and digital imaging form the backbone of his practice.

In the early 1970s he began to research material tracing the visual history of Australian trademarks. His findings were published in Symbols of Australia, (co-written with Fysh Rutherford) Melbourne, Penguin Books, 1980.

His most recent exhibition was Flush: 1990-2003, The Band Hall Gallery, Kyneton (2003). He is the winner of the 2003 Leica/CCP Documentary Photography Award.

Contact:

cozzolino@netspace.net.au

4) Bridget Keena

Study for the Fortunate Fall

Statement:

‘All the images belong to the same language and all are more or less equal within it, because they have been chosen in a highly personal way to match and express the experience of the room’s inhabitant.’

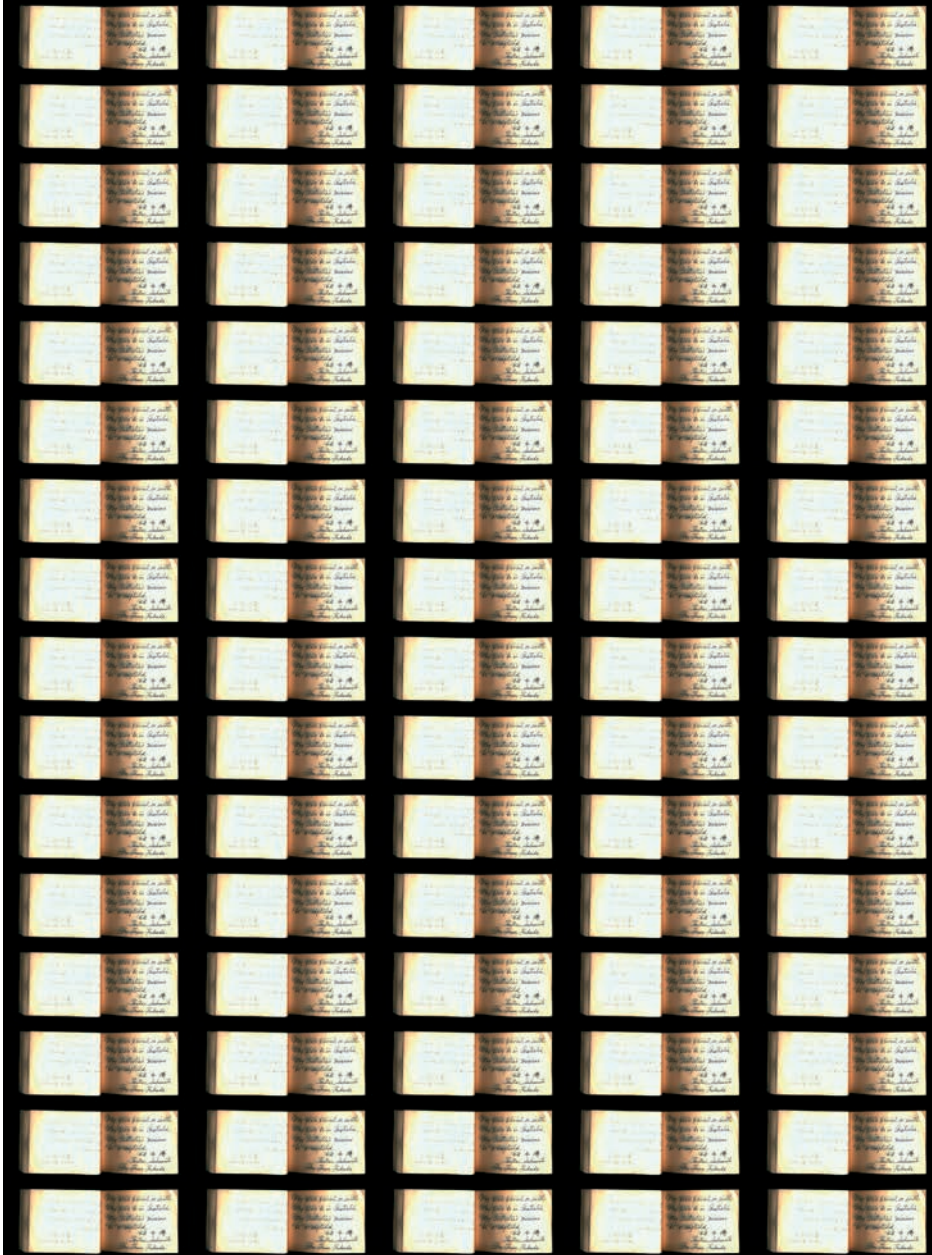
John Berger

CV:

Participated in group exhibitions at The Greenhouse Gallery, Faculty Gallery and Avago Korfeel at the Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University

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1 Mark Alperstein

Untitled

Statement:

My intention is to make the stored and unseen or invisible, visible: returning the publicly owned from the private location to the public domain and completing the logic of the archival process, documenting the documentation itself.

CV:

Previously exhibited at Gallery Wren, Sydney (2003). Also participated in group exhibitions at Faculty Gallery, Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University and 69 Smith Street Gallery.

Contact:

uancallmemarc@hotmail.com

2 Deb Bain-King

Lift

Statement:

I'm interested in working within a set space, and being sensitive to the physical encounter of that space. The Melbourne Town Hall can be seen as an imposing building, yet the play of light and sound within and around it is delicately nuanced, creating possibilities for quiet reflection.

CV:

Deborah Bain-King won an honourable mention in the Melbourne Fringe Artistic Visual Arts Awards in 1999 and is a recipient of the 2003 George Paton Exhibition program. She currently has work in progress for a show at Inflight Gallery in Hobart for March 2004.

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Kit Wise

Curator

Statement:

The curator would like to thank the artists, the City of Melbourne, Monash University, Eddie Butler-Bowdon, Bernard Hoffert, Jane Stewart, Dorela Gerardi, Lauren Supple, Michaela, Rob, Gavin and all at Studio Round for their invaluable enthusiasm and support of the project.

Kit Wise
November 2003

Honours Coordinator
& Studio Coordinator of Drawing
Monash University

inspiration. However in the final reading of these works, the artists have, along with Poe:

concluded, at length, to put extensive faith in the acumen and imagination of the reader.

CV:

Kit Wise completed an MA at the Royal College of Art (London) before receiving a Rome Scholarship and subsequently a Boise Travel Scholarship. He was Artist in Residence at the Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University in 2002 and is currently Honours Coordinator and Studio Coordinator of Drawing at Monash University.

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