

## **Laurens Tan Biography**

Born in 1950 in Holland of Chinese parents, Laurens Tan lived in Surabaya, Indonesia and Singapore as a young child, before moving to Australia in 1962. He is the Director and Founder of *Octomat* R & D Multimedia and 3D Design in Entertainment. His work has been exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally, including; *Experimenta* 1991: MIMA/National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Australian *Perspecta*, 1991, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney; 1995, *Distance*, with Richard Goodwin, Simeon Nelson and Ari Purhonen at the Shizuoka Prefectural Museum Gallery Sowaka, Kyoto, Japan; *Octogene 2*, 1996 Biennale of Sydney satellite exhibition, Metro TV, Sydney. *Elvis + Marilyn: 2 x Immortal*, Boston Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, which toured America from 1994 to 1997. Major commissioned works include; *Octogene*, The Capitol Theatre in Sydney in 1995. In 1998 Laurens Tan was the Artist-in-Residence at the Banff Centre for the Arts, Alberta, Canada and the recipient of the Australian Post Graduate Award for Doctoral Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney. Currently he is Guest Lecturer, Faculty of Environmental Design & Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Davis.

## **Thomas Dion Biography**

Thomas Dion is a third generation Australian/Chinese born in January, 1957 in Sydney. He studied at Flinders University in South Australia, Goulburn Teacher's College and the Wollongong Institute of Technology. He has been an exhibiting artist and freelance photographer for the past seven years. His photo documentary style of photography focuses on sub-cultures, ethnicity and aboriginality and his work has been exhibited locally, nationally and internationally. He is represented in the collections of the Wollongong City Gallery, Wollongong City Council, Kawasaki City Council, the State Library of New South Wales, the University of Wollongong, the Aboriginal Medical Centre, the Historic Houses Trust of NSW and various private collections.

## **Statement**

"One's identity is constantly in a state of flux. It is part of the aging process. We are constantly taking on new roles and with them new identities. We are identified by our jobs, families, race, clothes, pastimes and habits, our friends and peer groups, our experiences and achievements. These are sign posts that are most frequently used when mapping out an identity. One's identity never seems to possess clean cut parameters, but rather different facets that bleed into others, making up a more complex picture.

Assessing one's own identity is never easy. Objectivity and public perception quite often don't see eye to eye. One role may clash with another. Expectations and illusions may not be compatible with reality.

I have attempted to reconcile some of these problems in this exhibition by using one facet, that of a photographer and collector to highlight another facet, that of my family's identity, which in itself can be a complex beast, steeped in mysteries and a local mythology. Obviously, this will be an incomplete document, in an otherwise impossible task."

## **Aaron Seeto**

### **Biography**

Born in Sydney, 1978, Aaron Seeto is currently studying for a Bachelor of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong. Recent group exhibitions include; 1999 *Going the Distance, Making the Mark*, at the Long Gallery, University of Wollongong and touring to Kudos Gallery, University of New South Wales, College of Fine Arts, Sydney and 1998, *Space*, also at the Long Gallery, University of Wollongong.

### **Statement**

"A house. Red brick, front lawn, perhaps even a swimming pool decked out with potted plants. A palm or two. Who should we say lives here?

A family with a dog or cat perhaps, even a goldfish endlessly swimming... But does this image change if the family was Chinese or even of Anglo-Celtic origin? In reality it wouldn't be all that unusual. Probably in Australia, Asians do live in redbrick houses, own dogs (as opposed to eating them) and may even enjoy swimming in the pool during the long, lazy Australian summertime.

My drawings represent an illustration of cultural concealment and the issues associated with being both Asian and Australian. The layers of white lustrous paint conceal and obscure and also mediate the marks beneath, allowing only a muted vision of the charcoal and ink layers. On the one hand I see myself as being no different from any other person because my education has been specifically positioned within a Western culture and I can identify with a white Australian culture. Yet so far as the superficiality of appearances is concerned, I am Chinese in so far as I look Chinese.

It is a constant struggle, a push and pull between the layers attempting to make sense of one's position within society. An illustration of an inability to be neither fully part nor totally separate from the dominant culture or my cultural heritage."

## **Tiffany Lee-Shoy**

### **Biography**

Born Sydney, 1972, Tiffany Lee-Shoy graduated from the University of Wollongong in 1998 with a Bachelor of Creative Arts Degree in Visual Art & Design. She is both a practising artist and curator and has participated in several group exhibitions. In 1998, *This Way Up*, Centre for Contemporary Craft, Sydney; *Unfolding*, Foyer Gallery, Canberra School of Art, Canberra *Fashion Feast*, ASN Gallery, The Rocks, Sydney and *Text(aisles)*, Tin Sheds Gallery, Sydney. In 1999 Tiffany Lee-Shoy was the co-curator of the *wasteD* exhibition at the Wollongong City Gallery and Project Centre for Contemporary Art, Wollongong. She is represented in the University of Wollongong permanent collection and various private collections throughout Australia.

### **Statement**

"Culture and identity are shifting terrains. Culture constantly evolves and changes and identities are forged by individuals. So why is it that society tries to maintain that 'other cultures' are somehow trapped in the past? For some time now, "Multiculturalism" in Australia has been promoted as

“celebrating our cultural diversity”. Multicultural festivals show how “enriching” life can be with “ethnic” food, music and costumes. “Other cultures” are validated only by the extent to which mainstream society can benefit from their “contributions”. In this way, Multiculturalism becomes acceptable, decorative and palatable because mainstream Australia can pick and choose what aspects about other cultures they wish to keep.

My work in this exhibition revolves around these ideas. The willow pattern is an English-adapted design of a Chinese legend. Willow patterned crockery has made its way into most English and (Anglo-) Australian households at some time. For me, the willow pattern is a symbol of colonisation and Orientalism. Recently, I came across the term “Banana”, used to describe an Asian person who has been raised in Western society (yellow on the outside, white on the inside), so the bowls are filled with candy bananas and accompanied by cheap take-away disposable chopsticks - again, food references making “difference” palatable to the consumer of a Multicultural product. Sickly sweet.”

### **Jiyang Jin Biography**

Born August 6, 1967 in Harbin, Heilongjiang, China, Jiyang Jin received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Nanjing University, China in 1992. He graduated with a Master of Creative Arts in Visual Art & Design from the University of Wollongong in 1998. Jiyang Jin has exhibited work in both China and Australia, in 1997 *Chan*, Long Gallery, University of Wollongong; 1994 *Flowers 2*, Jiangsu Art Magazine & Chinese Government's Association of Artist's, China, awarded Second Prize. In 1993 *Lotus Pool*, Association of Artists, China, awarded: Distinctive Work and in 1991 *Dem*, Association of Artists and Jiangsu Province Government.

### **Statement**

“I am the sort of person who emphasises a primary understanding. The subjects of my works are not shrouded in the mysteries of Eastern culture. The cultures, both Eastern and Western which have been considered in determining the subject are, at least consciously, secondary. They are not the deepest source of inspiration. The purpose of the works which I did for this period of study are exercises in testing my personal theories of artistic expression and technique.

As a Chinese artist I have chosen to adapt and integrate both Chinese and Western artistic ideas and techniques. I strive to achieve a rudimentary effect by means of the simplest and subtlest of techniques. I am not seeking to juxtapose representational images of Chinese and Western cultures; a complex mish-mash of semiotics. On the contrary, I have come back to the original fundamentals of visual stimuli. I seek a kind of visual language read by both Western and Chinese people, because I believe that the thing we all have in common is the point where we reach ourselves.”

### **Dong Wang Fan Biography**

Born in Shanghai, China. Studied Diploma of Arts and Crafts at Shanghai School of Arts and Crafts, and Diploma of Applied Arts at Shanghai Xu-Hui District College. Migrated to Australia as a Distinguished Talent. Studied Master of Arts at the University of New South Wales, College of Fine Arts, Sydney. Recently a candidate for the Doctor of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. A recipient of many awards including the 1997 University of Wollongong Post Graduate Award. A member of many professional bodies including the Chinese Artists Association, Chinese TV Artists Association and Shanghai Research Institute of Tapestry Art. Exhibited at the Shanghai Art Gallery since 1982 and more recently at contemporary spaces in NSW. Dong Wang Fan has held many solo exhibitions including *Cultural Ambivalence*, Wollongong City Gallery in 1999. Selected group exhibitions include the 1998 Blake Prize and ACUADS 1998 Arts Exhibition. He has presented lectures and research papers at many art institutions including Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai School of Arts and Crafts and the University of Wollongong. His work is held in collections in China, Australia and the USA.

### **Statement**

"Painting is a game to solve the puzzling images of a world shaped by a different time, space and identity. In this process our perspective is shifting between the significance of the individual fragment and the balance of the overall imagery. My work examines the diverse shifting perspective's employed in both historical and contemporary Western and Chinese art by dealing with the representation of human identities in relation to the ever changing social and technological environment.

As an established fine artist from China, my study included a wide range of the visual arts: traditional Chinese painting, sculpture, ivory carving, Western oil painting as well as design. I have benefited greatly from my own culture in my present work. The different cultural heritage contributes to the development of my artistic identity in Australia which is to explore shifting perspective's as a painting method, manipulating the cultural differences in my work."

### **Montri Muenouy**

#### **Biography**

Born 30 March, 1972, Thailand. Migrated to Australia as a young boy. In 1994 Montri Muenouy graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from the University of New South Wales, College of Fine Arts and in 1993 gained a Diploma of Fine Arts, majoring in painting and photography from Meadowbank Technical College. He has exhibited work at Artspace, Sydney in 1993 and other selected contemporary spaces. Recently held a solo exhibition with Project Contemporary Art Space in 1999.

#### **Statement**

"When I think back to my childhood I'm acutely aware of how few good memories I have from that period in my life. Of what I can recall, most are associated with loss and anger. As the youngest of eight children my entry into the world wasn't really on the drawing board so to speak, as my mother hadn't realised she was pregnant with me until five or six months into her pregnancy. My conception wasn't planned.



Of all the people that have affected my life, my father undoubtedly overshadowed and dominated a large part of it. He was an alcoholic and a gambler who was physically violent to his family and those around him. The emotional wounds he caused have left a deep scar that is still being felt to date. The legacy he left to me has not been a positive one, by any means. Now, at the age of 27 I often feel a sense of detachment and mistrust of others. I know and am fully aware that this trait was developed as a result of my father's physical and emotional violence. I have often felt isolated and disowned, like a lost and lonely little boy.

*Song of Innocence* was produced as a means by which I might come to grips with, and help heal the past; my past; my childhood's past. For a number of years facing up to the reality of my father's behaviour has always been to forget, to ignore or to avoid. Now on the eve of ten years since his death I have come to a point where I needed to start letting go and to forgive him. This photograph is my way of saying that I have forgiven him. That he was my father, the one who brought me into the world, the one who gave me life."

### **Savanhdary Vongpoothorn Biography**

Born in 1971 in Laos, Savanhdary Vongpoothorn arrived in Australia in 1979. She lives and works in Wedderburn, Campbelltown, Australia. She received her Bachelor of Visual Arts from the University of Western Sydney, Nepean in 1992 and her Masters of Visual Arts from the UNSW College of Fine Arts in 1993. She has exhibited widely, both solo at King Street Gallery on Burton, Sydney and in numerous group exhibitions. In 1994, *Fresh Art II*, at the S H Ervin Gallery, Sydney; 1996, *Still Life* at the Performance Space, Sydney and *Heirloom*, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne. In 1997, *Spirit and Place*, *Art in Australia 1861-1996*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney Gallery 4A, Sydney (joint show with Elizabeth Pulie). In 1998 her work toured with the *Moet and Chandon 1998 Touring Exhibition*, National Gallery of Australia and with *Ways of Being*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney. Savanhdary Vongpoothorn's work is represented in the collections of the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur and Nepean NSW, Campbelltown City Art Gallery NSW, Monash university Victoria and Artbank Sydney.

### **Statement**

"In Vongpoothorn's work Eastern and Western abstraction are not set up in contest or opposition but rather look eye to eye through a two-way mirror, each speaking its own language. The use of the grid, for example, comes equally from a modernist genealogy as from Lao textile design. In this frame, Western modernism ceases to be definitive and instead becomes but another form of encryption in an ancient history of religious and secular design. Vongpoothorn's handsewn modernism at once recuperates a defunct style and uncovers a buried anxiety: that canvas is, after all, fabric, and that abstraction might simply be a system of patterning. Where painting is a staining of fabric, and embroidery a piercing, weaving is intrinsic to fabric - it is the canvas itself." (Hannah Fink, 1999)

## **Ngoc Tran**

### **Biography**

Born in Cambodia, Ngoc Tran and her family migrated to Moss Vale, NSW, Australia in 1980. She studied at the Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in 1996. Selected group exhibitions in 1998 include work being shown at the University of Sonkla, Thailand; "*Some? painting*"; Project Centre for Contemporary Art, Wollongong; "*Life among Legs*", Wollongong City Gallery and in 1997, "*New Star 6*", Project Centre for Contemporary Art, Wollongong.

### **Statement**

"My motivation for every work is to discover something I did not know previously. Although I'm not interested in making any one ultimate work, I'm interested in the manipulation of the variables. I am concerned with maximising the learning experience. While the work explores linear descriptions of space, the surface areas speak more about how paint works. I am currently concerned with scale - how subtle mark changes can manipulate the size of the form; modulating the surface forms through volumetric descriptions with paint. How far can one manipulate the materials and still retain their authenticity?"

## **Jiawei Shen**

### **Biography**

Born in Shanghai, 1948 and largely self taught, Shen became recognised as an artist in the mid 1970's. Later he studied at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing from 1982 to 1984 and became an acclaimed history painter. His work has been hung in the acclaimed public collections of the China Art Gallery and the Museum of the Chinese Revolution, both in Beijing.

Since moving to Australia in 1989, Jiawei Shen has painted full-time and won numerous prizes and awards, including the Mary MacKillop Award in 1995. Shen has been an Archibald Prize finalist since 1993 and in 1999 was a Sullman Prize finalist.

### **Statement**

"As an immigrant artist, a new face appearing in the Australian art circle, the Archibald Prize competition offered me a good opportunity to let people appreciate my talent. People can feel my subjects being surrounded by an historic atmosphere and can see the depth of the human mind through their faces in the time perspective.

I know it's out of fashion, but my academic technique helps to express my thoughts effectively. Behind a conservative surface, there is a contemporary heart."

## **Lan Wang**

### **Biography**

Born in Beijing, China, in 1953, Lan Wang was sent to the Northern Wilderness Farm at 16 years of age and worked there as a labourer for nine

years. In 1977 she was admitted to the Print Department of the Lu Xun Academy of Fine Arts, where she studied for her Masters Degree. Lan Wang worked there as both an artist and teacher until her move to Australia with her young daughter, reuniting with her husband Jiawei Shen at the end of 1991.

Lan Wang is a member of the Chinese Artist's Association. Her works are represented in many public collections, such as the China Art Gallery in Beijing and she has won many prizes, including the silver medal at the 1998 National Art Exhibition in China.

Lan Wang has held solo exhibitions at Coventry Gallery in 1993 and 1997 and in 1998 she was commissioned to paint three murals for the Sydney Children's Hospital.

### **Statement**

Lan Wang recently participated in the *Beyond China* exhibition, where the critic, Benjamin Genocchio noted, "the work in this exhibition is a creative interaction of Chinese traditional painting techniques and European modern art styles. Wang Lan renders idyllic landscapes along with scenes from traditional Jing-ju opera in a fragmentary style reminiscent of the work of Paul Klee."

### **Ying Guo Biography**

Ying Guo was born in China. Graduating in 1976 from Shanghai Hua Dong Teachers University, she became an art teacher and graphic designer and participated in several exhibitions in Shanghai, China. Migrating to Australia in 1992 she has exhibited locally and continues to teach and paint. Recently her work was selected for a watercolour exhibition held at the Wollongong City Gallery. Ying Guo has studied both traditional Chinese painting and Western painting styles and is interested in exploring ways in which to combine the two in her work.

### **Statement**

"To me, an attractive piece of work is one that expresses the artist's feelings. As a famous Russian artist once said, an artist should not only be good at observing nature, but should also deeply and thoroughly research nature, love it and bring this love into the canvas. Hence I have loved to paint those I feel for, such as friends portraits, familiar natural scenes and memories of the old days. In general I like to paint subjects that touch my heart.

On the technical side I have been trying to integrate Western art in the use of light, colour and shape with the traditional Chinese painting, brushing and colouring techniques as well as contrast arrangements. I do not really care about what I have to draw on - silk paper, watercolour paper or canvas. I am also not particular about using lines or patches. In other words, I use any choices in order to achieve my aimed for result. This is a very difficult task, a task I want to do well and will continue to explore in the future."