

asia-australia arts centre

an initiative of the asian australian artists association inc
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MEDIA RELEASE

Feminine handiwork: An Australian and Chinese-Hawaiian experience

The Asia-Australia Arts Centre is pleased to announce an exhibition featuring Sydney based artist Karen Coull and Hawaiian based artist Gaye Chan. *Soft Touch* is an exhibition which brings together two lesbian artists from different cultural perspectives.

The curator Melissa Chiu comments that "the work in this exhibition is interesting because it plays with ideas of femininity through craft-based practices, making an incisive critique of gender stereotypes".

Gaye Chan migrated from Hong Kong when she was twelve years old to Hawaii where she now lives. Over the last five years her work has focussed on immigrant narratives from a feminist perspective. Previous works have included the use of images of women from a set of playing cards called "*Hong Kong Beauties*". Combining the found images with another set of books titled "*Historic Characters and Famous Events*", Chan used 'liquid paper' to white-out selected information in an attempt to locate stories about these tiny naked Asian women.

Karen Coull is an artist based in Sydney whose work explores the juxtaposition of the vernacular and the feminine. One of the best examples of this is "*Keeping Yourself Nice When Dating a Fast Boy in a Fast Car*", in which she constructed handbags made to open as if they were a car glove box. Inside each bag, Coull crocheted various objects such as diaphragms, dams and latex gloves.

Both artists address in different ways issues relating to the representation of women from a lesbian perspective. Chan's interest in migration and her place within Hawaiian society offers alternative multicultural considerations to the debate while Karen Coull's work deconstructs Australian vernacular readings of femininity.

The artists and curator are available for interview

Exhibition	Soft Touch, curated by Melissa Chiu
Artists	Karen Coull, Gaye Chan
Venue	Gallery 4A, Asia-Australia Arts Centre, 181-187 Hay Street, Sydney
Dates	Saturday 10 February 2-4 pm preview, exhibition continues until 10 March 2001
	Admission free

