

11/05/2013



## after the dreaming

AN EVENING OF ART AND PERFORMANCE OVER TWO SITES

FRANK VELDZE

KATE OSBORNE

BILL SAMPSON

ALEX PANELLI

ANNABEL NOWLAN

MEG CORSON

SUZANNE DONISTHORPE (CURATOR)



#### CREDITS

No event could succeed without the wonderful Mick and Margy from Taradale Wine and Produce and the immortal Olive Pennos who is our universally acknowledged Queen. A special mention must go to the amazing Robyn Durham whose magic has made this catalogue possible. Catalogue photos by Bill Sampson. Thanks also to Anne Blore, Jenny Nestor, Latarnie MacDonald, Team Henderson, David Purdon, Mark McGregor, Adam Fiorelli, Celeste Veldze, Grace Ernestine and Debra Goldsmith - she knows what she did.



## **Curators Statement**

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*There is something in the Taradale water. And the air, and the earth. It pulls at you, and pushes you too. There is a synergy of place and people that exudes a rare magic.*

*This show could only happen here.*

But it began with a mission. I wanted to make a show for the ever gracious Kate Osborne who has eased the way for dozens of local artists to show their work, all the while, deferring her own ambitions as an artist. She was reluctant at first, but was encouraged when Frank Veldze agreed to share the space. And an idea that she had been hatching for many years, took form and grew.

Then it began to snowball. Alex Panelli commissioned Frank to work on the ruin of the post gold-rush house that has been in his family since white settlement. He then invited Bill Sampson and Annabel Nowlan to join in, and one starlit Taradale night, the project that has become Battiani's place was born.

Then echoes began to sound... the crumbling house on the hill began to give up its essence as it was stripped back, the ghostly form of Kate's apparition, floating silently past appeared, then the unspoken eloquence of the domestic interiors evoked in Annabel's work, the crushed rupture of Bill's work, the cycle of entropy and renewal that danced in Frank's work: it all began to meld into this quite amazing show.

And for a finale – a beautiful song from a beautiful woman. And Meg Corson joined the project and chose to sing a piece of Italian opera, so completing the circle.

From Battiani to Caccini.

This project has been exasperating, exhausting and endlessly exciting as each of us have followed the crumbs of inspiration found in this place's wild parts, to bring it all together. We hope you will take with you some of the magic that we have found working here and hatching art together.

*Suzanne Donisthorpe  
May 2013*

## **Battaini's place – a place, a home, a rupture**

*The name Battaini, a variant Battaglini, is a diminutive of Battaglia, which in Italian means battle*

In 1855, less than 20 years after Mitchell (the first white man) crossed this country, Luigi Battaini, a follower of Garibaldi in the unsuccessful 1848/49 campaign to unify Italy, and separately, Serafina Udini, 17 years of age and travelling with her father, found themselves amongst an unprecedented movement of people from Lombardy in Italy and Ticino in Switzerland, to the goldfields of central Victoria. A silence follows – a time from which no words have carried through to their descendants.

In 1862 this ends. Luigi and Serafina marry. They kept (and I still have) the certificate that shows it. They have a child. In 1863 a “Certificate of Naturalisation” is granted and in the same year another child (my great grandmother) is born. Within a few more years: two more children, and a license is issued “to reside on and to cultivate” a “parcel of Crown Land”. And a house is built.

Houses are built. Places are transformed and the past, it would seem, is erased. But before building there is thought, and before thought there is something else; we do not start with thinking. There was a house. I remember. I was carried. Within its walls I slept; I woke to morning. But the thing, a ruin now, is all but gone – and I must face it.

A house is made of parts and their arrangement: solids, openings, rigidities and foldings; with the total thing dependent on a place. But a house is more: it is not formed by place, but arises from and seems to hold a dream. We enter houses. We enter respectfully, for we have dreamed this dream. But the thing dissolves or floats; it does not hold. Yet we believe. Houses are homes for us. Homes are where people come from, and we know well, it's people that are important. People go out from homes into the world, from where

if all is well they should return. Or else they build new houses.

But, what if it's not like that? What if we (in the steps of our ancestors) come to something that confuses, and there we dream. And then, though we awake, the dream still lingers?

Our houses are intermediaries, having two sides; they stand for us, and yet also with place. Can they be true? Are our houses really for us? What might that mean? Should they help us be with place – on peaceful terms, and lasting? Or should they insulate us from a harsher truth, and help us in naivety to trust that we are quite at home when we are not? Ultimately, could a house yet hold for us what makes this land our own, or can it only ever echo and unfold?

With their thoughts, our ancestors brought residues of houses that arose in other places.

They remembered. Growing home-sick, yet choosing not to return to the realms from which they came, they tried to build such houses. They had come to this land believing that they could take from nature and subdue it. They dreamed of gold and houses. The quest for the security that finding gold might bring, and the building of houses, are not such separate things.

What then should my attitude be to this house? This much is clear: the thing itself and the dream from which it came, was flawed and failing. Yet I have come from it and dreamed its dream. So should it be, and in what form, perpetuated?

I have asked three artists, Frank Veldze, Bill Sampson and Annabel Nowlan, each in their own way, to help me face this challenge.

ALEX PANELLI

I was attracted to Alex's anthropological yet poetic vision from the start. I feel I know this tension between nihilistic sentimentality, the rational, and artistic ineffability. I certainly shared similar experiences – of waking as a young lad in a strange makeshift bed full of expectancy as the day dawned; having baths in a shallow enamel pan in front of the fire at night; potties under the bed; hot mash and cold mutton; finding comfort and the familiar amongst exotic smells and sounds.

I was afraid of being sidetracked by the allure of the past. But I was encouraged by Alex's attraction to my crushed paintings.

But they are more than that. More like crushed ideas, crushed dreams, ghosts of thoughts and memories, blowing through the landscape, the space, the place, the house, the home – vanquished perhaps or dead, but always replenished, in conflict or belonging, blow-ins and blow-throughs, attractive but flawed, damaging and damaged, always moving on, but always present – elements of a home anchored in our remnant arcadia.

BILL SAMPSON





I'm on the dance floor again with my old friends Entropy and Renewal.

Trying to make some sense out of an old song and verse.

Rescore it into something else, something other than a reconstruction of its exquisite mouldering decay.

Bare bones for a new age: shoring up and tearing down in equal measure.

My old friends look over my shoulder and offer their two cents worth and try out the new dance steps on the old floor.

Renewal is young and has the moves, but Entropy always leads with a firm hand on the waist.

*One two three, one two three, one two three...*

FRANK VELDZE





*In my mixed media works I seek to illuminate, rather than illustrate, registrations of place and experience of the land.*

My attention is drawn towards the evidence of human activity in the landscape: of repetitious patterns, the patina of worn materials and the ingenuity of 'making do' – essentially, notions of beauty in what is often considered mundane.

In this project I have utilised materials gleaned from the site. The hand-stitched hessian produce bags that lined the internal walls of the home, the linoleum from the floor and the home-fashioned wheelbarrow used to carry suitcases to and from the railway station.

The re-established hand-hewn horse yard posts are a reminder of the rural farming traditions as well as referencing an indigenous connection to country that exists at a spiritual level rather than through ownership.

ANNABEL NOWLAN





**Long days (detail)**  
 Drawing and pigments on hessian  
 75 x 103cms



**Horse Yard**  
 12m diameter circular yard  
 Limed posts

## Visitation

*It started with a petticoat. A remnant from the past that evoked a time and a place that was strangely alluring. When I put on the petticoat, a woman began to appear – not me – but someone visiting me. She wears a white hat and veil, a tailored jacket and full skirts; she carries a white parasol and floats silently across the landscape... Who is she?*

I know very little of my heritage beyond my grandparents. It is a strange feeling, as I grow older, to realise that I do not know where my ancestors lived or where they came from; of not having a sense of place or cultural heritage.

Taradale has given me a sense of place, however tenuous. Sometimes the only way I feel anchored, is to paint the landscape or to dig it or to build upon it. The one immutable force is the land – the rest – simply ghosts which sink back into the earth.

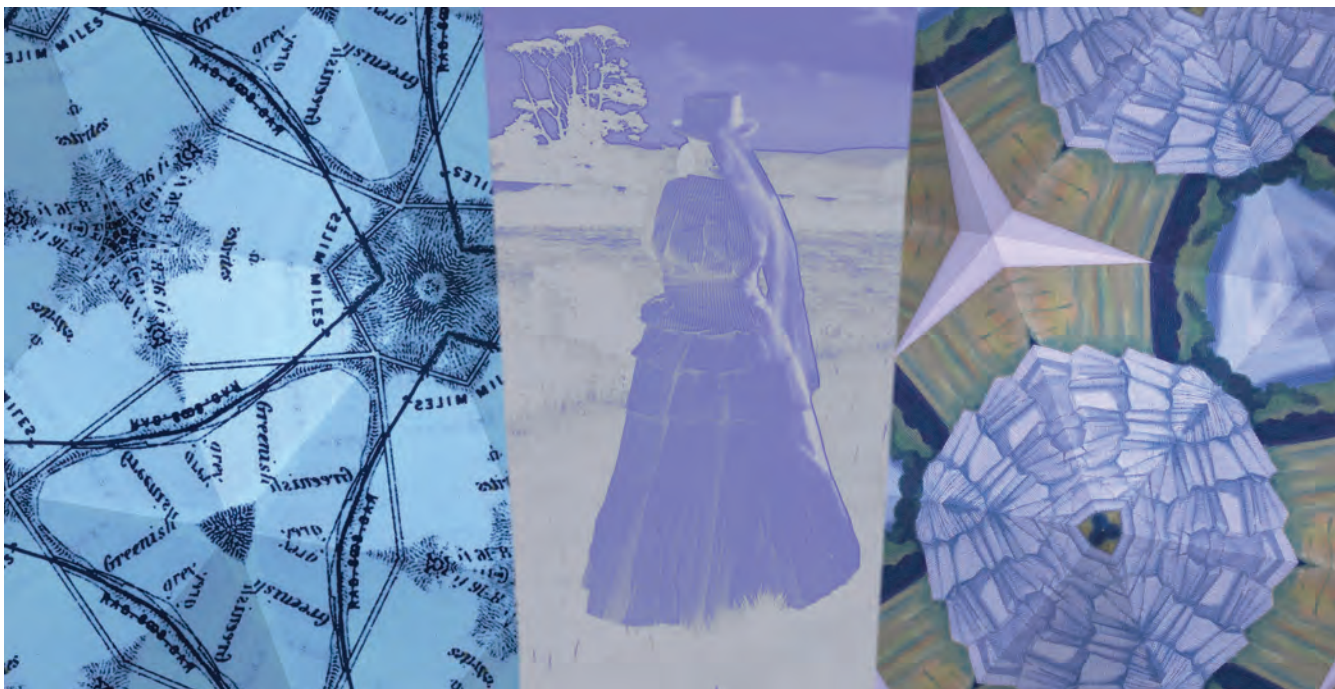
And from that silence she appears.

Who is she?

A meditation on the familiar trope of the “figure in the landscape”? An exploration of time, history, absence and the search for ancestors in the void of forgotten stories and the faint tracery of lives long gone?

In order to evoke my unknown ancestors I need to embody them – thus this woman has emerged. So for now, she is a cipher through which I experience the land; I see it through her body and her eyes as I place myself in this timeless land.

KATE OSBORNE



Performance, works on canvas, mixed media, projection, sound

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Suzanne Donisthorpe: for her vision, inspiration and support

Frank Veldze: Photographer/technician/artist

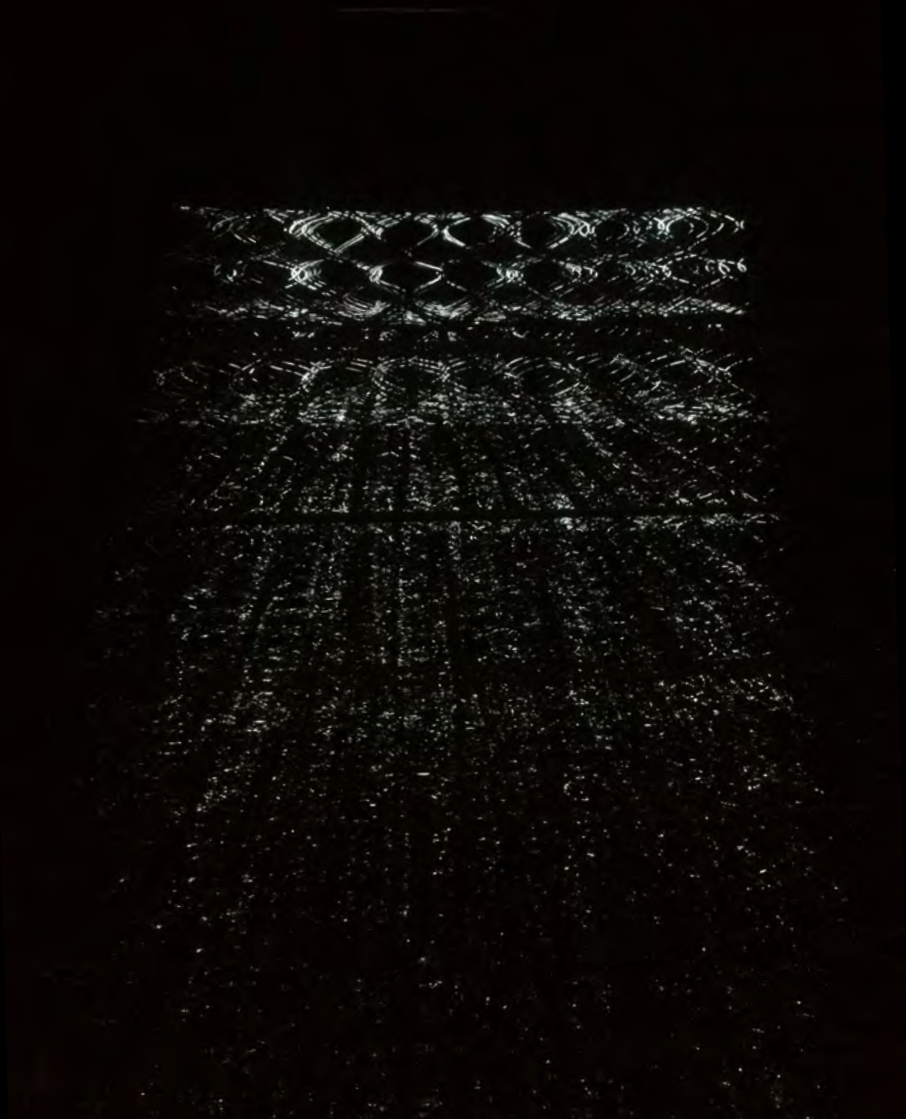
Greg Sneddon: Projection piece

Adam Phillips: Photographer/assistant

Marg Potter: Assistant

dreamSTATE Ambient Music: *Clearing and Phases of the Moon*

Scott M2 Jamie Todd & Susanna Hood



MUSIC CREDIT  
Greg Haines *183 Times*



Are you lying down?

It begins with a slap and ends with a sigh. Birth, sex and death.  
What stories does your mattress hold?

FRANK VELDZE



## Finale

Meg Corson, although mainly grounded in jazz, has a singing and performance background that spans most genres of music. Inspired by her mother who was a classical soprano, Meg sings this piece in her honour, for her unfailing support and love. It is fitting that a show that begins at the dream home of an Italian migrant family should end with an Italian song to Maria - the eternal mother.

After raising her own children, Meg will be reigniting her career by recording an album later this year called *Authenticity Truth Love!*

### after the dreaming ARTIST CONTACT DETAILS

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