



ARTSHEALTH CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH

The New Bird

For almost thirty years, Trevor Weekes' practice-based research has explored the theme of nature versus technology with a recurring echo of flight. For each project, he has undertaken extensive anatomical research which is very much grounded in science and biology. His latest project, 'The New Bird' is an exposé of genetic engineering and man's struggle to control his environment. The ongoing project started in 2005 when he spent time in France at Zootheque, the Natural History Museum's archive, which houses over eighty thousand bird specimens. While there Weekes produced over 500 sketches of birds. His resulting body of sculptures and paintings were based upon hybrid and fantastical species of birds – birds which exist in the infinite possibilities of nature's imagination.

Art and the Archive

This collaborative research project led by Professor Ann Graham with Dr Pam Sinnott, Emeritus Professor Elizabeth Ashburn, Dr Allan Chawner and Ms Miranda Lawry is part of a long-term investigation into location and place, with particular reference to historic and archival sites. Researchers will 'bio-map' the physical responses of subjects to artworks in order to discover more about how the body responds to visual stimuli and specific locations. This will provide new knowledge about how light, colour, sound and space could be used to enhance healing and learning. Practice-based outcomes will be exhibited at the historic John Paynter Gallery as part of the ArtsHealth Symposium #1 in October 2008.

CREDITS

- Anahita Haghi,** Tissue Culture 2007, digital print.
- Trevor Weekes,** The Roof Tile Falcon (detail) 2006, acrylic on canvas.
- Andre Brodyk,** Painting culture-art-in-vitro 2007, mixed media.
- Rachel Burgess,** Post-Doctoral Research Fellow in Arts/Health.
- Miranda Lawry,** Framing the Memory series 2005, digital print.
- Andre Brodyk,** fish 91 2006, living genetically modified bacteria drawing on agar.



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"The arts and medicine: these are two human callings that belong together and our challenge is to rediscover the ways in which they can most effectively be brought together again".

Dana Gioia, Chair of the National Endowment for the Arts



ARTSHEALTH CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The ArtsHealth Centre for Research and Practice is a new initiative of the University of Newcastle established to undertake collaborative research that examines the interface between creative arts, health and allied disciplines.

ArtsHealth will bring together the research of academics and post-graduate students in the creative arts with those of academics in the social sciences, sciences, humanities, education, architecture and medicine.

There has been a significant amount of research on the use and value of the arts in health and medicine in a number of countries. However, in sharp contrast to this international position there has been no sustained examination of the use of the arts in health/medicine in Australia.

The ArtsHealth Center for Research and Practice will directly address this deficit by undertaking innovative projects that can be divided into three broad themes:

- The Humanities/Creative Arts and Medical Science
- Creativity, Culture, Community and Wellbeing
- Practice-based Research

ArtsHealth Symposium #1
8-9 October 2008, Newcastle

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ArtsHealth webpage
www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/artshealth

THE HUMANITIES/CREATIVE ARTS AND MEDICAL SCIENCE

Xenogenic junk?

André Brodyk is a new media Genetic artist and researcher who uses living transgenic organisms as new art media and genetic protocols as new art processes. Brodyk has been working at the university under the supervision of Dr Peter Lewis in the School of Environmental and Life Sciences using his molecular biology laboratory as an artist's studio. His art is part of a new international art tendency known as Genetic art. Most recently while working in collaboration with one of Dr Lewis' Honours students named Ryan Withers, Brodyk created a number of re-coded DNA transcripts from ready-made non-coding or 'junk' DNA. These were transformed into the genomes of a strain of Escherichia coli bacteria along with synthetic versions of visible markers which code for either a green or red fluorescence protein. Using a very fine artist's sable hair brush, near-invisible miniature images of a pedestrian nature are drawn onto nutrient agar gels incubated and become visible as coloured 2D/3D images.

The philosophy of medical research

Dr Yin Gao is an early career researcher with interests in the philosophy of science and the foundations of medical research. Dr William Herfel is a Conjoint Lecturer in the School of Humanities and Social Science. His early work in the US focused on the philosophic implications of chaos theory. Bill and Yin have teamed up – along with Dianah Rodrigues – to explore the philosophic foundations of Chinese medicine from a complex systems perspective at the ArtsHealth Centre for Research and Practice. Their current cross-cultural study into

the epistemic, socioeconomic, political and ethical implications of using evidence-based medicine to evaluate Traditional Chinese Medicine combines expertise in ancient and modern Chinese language, philosophy of complex systems, an understanding of biomedical research methods and traditional Chinese philosophy and medical practice.

The Uses and Interventions of Arts and Humanities in Health and Medicine:

Led by Professor Patrick Fuery, this research project aims to document and examine the contribution and value of arts and humanities in a range of areas in the health and medical fields; and the impact of these contributions to improving wellbeing through creativity. This will include an analysis of the arts in various health environments in Australia, and a comparative analysis of this situation to the international developments. Such research will produce Australia's first qualitative analysis of the relationships between the arts and health/medicine in terms of discursive practices. In turn, this will allow the development of a methodology to better understand the paradigm shifts that take place in the convergence of these disciplines.

CREATIVITY, CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING

Start Right Live Long: The Importance of a Healthy Start to Life in Improving Health Disparities in Aboriginal Australians

The current population structure of most Aboriginal communities with large numbers of premature births of small babies and teenage pregnancies is a major contributor to poor educational and health outcomes for this group

within our society. The Start Right, Live Long project aims to develop culturally appropriate programs which are aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy through in-depth education of fertility control (contraceptive usage), the concept that a healthy mother leads to a healthy baby, and an improved understanding of the role that medical care (antenatal services) play in pregnancy and early childhood development. This project is a collaboration led by Professor Roger Smith between the Mothers and Babies Research Centre and ArtsHealth Centre for Research and Practice.

Artmaking, identity, representations of knowledge and well-being

Early career researcher Dr Kath Grushka has combined her background in visual arts with her academic qualification in education to interrogate the contribution of visual art education to the intuitive, critical and creative aspects of how individuals construct meaning for themselves. Dr Grushka is researching the connections between health and well being and creativity and the embodied act of artmaking. Using the narratives of artmaking, her project is exploring the links between the unique epistemology of the visual as a philosophy of action or agency and knowledge by analysing how self image, technology, representation and narrative influence the construction of the contemporary subject.