

## YOUR REFERENCE TO MORE GRACIOUS LIVING: BEVAN HONEY

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA)  
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Like the Scarborough Beach parking lot on a Friday night, the West End gallery at PICA has been given over to burnouts, fishtails and doughnuts. Well, one burnout anyway, a circular, repetitive burnout, which literally draws on the history of kinetic drawing machines to form its own 'meta-matic' (a word used by Jean Tinguely to describe his machines).

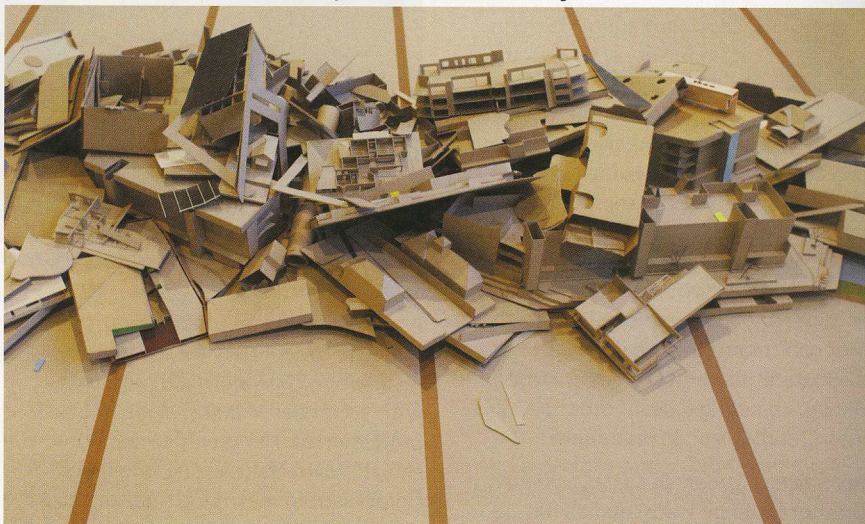
The smell of burning rubber and oil may fill the air and the repetitious sound of a screaming engine cloud the senses but this is no hoon get-together, rather a particular element in Bevan Honey's *Your Reference to More Gracious Living*. Easy to relate to in this car-obsessed city, Honey's *Burn Out (state dependent memory)* is a cleverly titled piece (the memory of this state of Western Australia is rather dependent on the car) built of a single wheel connected to an armature and driven by a small engine. The wheel in its circle motion burns oil and rips up the floor leaving the circumference of a circle. The wheel is going nowhere, the car that should be connected to it just a dismembered memory.

Honey's work has always been locative and in *Gracious Living* the artist interestingly moves through the industrial, interior and architectural design history of Australia. But here location becomes more specific, and I think more involved with positive characteristics for the future, like hope and sustainability. With pictures from his own home balcony, seen through different tinted lenses, and the use of craypots, an industry that has long operated out of the Port, Fremantle itself becomes a central focus. Reductionism is a key point too in Honey's approach to materials and in their pragmatic use we see the strong influence of Port-living on his work.

Perhaps more interesting, or at least holding equal ground in Honey's work, is the relationship in his work between



Bevan Honey Installation view of *Your Reference to More Gracious Living* 2010, PICA. Photo: Traianos Pakiousfakis.



Bevan Honey *Tactical Response (detail)* 2010, PICA. Photo: Traianos Pakiousfakis.

concept and realisation. Honey has become adept at instigating a tension between what is a concept and what is an object, and indeed how the two interchange. This idea of inter-dimensionality, when 2D concept becomes 3D form and vice versa, provides a crucial test not only from the legacy of conceptual art but the imaginative and generating processes of drawing as it is used in planning, architecture and more generally art today. In *Gracious Living* craypots flatten to become an optical modernist design, a ping-pong ball's chalkstring takes hold as a linear horizon painting while a series of architectural maquettes crash under the weight of their own stunted growth as they attempt to rise out of 2D conception.

Equally in *Pre-tension* the crumpled form of a car is drawn and then obscured by overpainting thus the 3D form that the painting represents is flattened, reduced and eventually erased. These are clever and resolved works, indeed the show as a whole is sophisticated, not only in its

material frugality but in what it urges us to consider. The realisation of an idea as either 2D, 3D, concept or material form are important issues in the ongoing translation of art but, as in the burnout machine, the narrative in Honey's work goes full cycle. Not only does he gain inspiration from local issues, he gazes back at them through critical eyes. The idea of seeing concept as material form and vice versa is pivotal to the economic and cultural situation Western Australia finds itself in today. For me Honey's work shows a generational response to how boom times are utilised to build significant infrastructure ... and the way these structures need to hold sway in the eyes of future generations. Attitudes toward industry and aesthetics have changed since WA's mineral booms of the sixties; today things need to be self-generative and sustainable – otherwise, as Honey's work reminds us, no amount of gracious living will save us.

**RIC SPENCER**