

*Revealed<sup>2</sup>: CollectorSpace*  
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 Lipman Karas Gallery 1

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 University of South Australia  
 GPO Box 2471, Adelaide SA 5001  
 T 08 8302 0870  
 E samstagmuseum@unisa.edu.au  
 W unisa.edu.au/samstagmuseum

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Building on the success of *Revealed<sup>1</sup>: inside the private collections of South Australia*, the Samstag Museum of Art is delighted to present this second exhibition in the *Revealed* series.

*Revealed<sup>2</sup>: CollectorSpace* seeks to reveal something of the forces that motivate the contemporary art collector. Through their passion and imaginative appreciation for the contemporary visual arts, collectors also provide crucial support to some of our most exciting and intriguing artists: it is a distinguished and historic patronage.

The Samstag Museum of Art would like to thank all the participating collectors: Mark and Jill Awerbuch, Candy Bennett, Rick and Jan Frolich, Stephanie and Julian Grose, Nicholas Jose, Khai Liew and Nichole Palyga, the Michell Family, Jeff and Lexie Mincham, and Vivonne Thwaites. They have not only generously agreed to lend their treasures for *Revealed<sup>2</sup>: CollectorSpace*, but also to share their thoughts about these favourite works.

*Revealed<sup>2</sup>: CollectorSpace* is a Samstag Museum of Art exhibition, generously supported by Lipman Karas.

The University of South Australia's Samstag Museum of Art is one of Australia's leading university art museums. We gratefully acknowledge our naming sponsors Lipman Karas and Bestec, as well as the ongoing support of Marc D Bowden, Anna Ciccarelli, Stephanie and Julian Grose and Robert Lyons.

#### Hayden Fowler

Hayden Fowler is a New Zealand born artist, based in Sydney, Australia. He holds a Master of Fine Arts degree from the UNSW College of Fine Arts (COFA) as well as an earlier degree in Biology.

Fowler's methodology involves the construction of elaborate sets in which he choreographs human or animal subjects, creating hyper-real video and photographic work from within these fictional spaces.

Fowler has exhibited nationally and internationally and his work is held in a number of public and private collections. In 2008, Fowler was awarded a prestigious Anne & Gordon Samstag International Visual Arts Scholarship to undertake study abroad at the Universität der Künste in Berlin, Germany.

Currently Fowler lectures in the Sculpture, Performance and Installation studio at COFA in Sydney and is completing a PhD in Fine Arts.

#### Dr Gene Sherman AM

Dr Gene Sherman AM is Chairman and Executive Director of Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation.

She was formerly Director and Proprietor of Sherman Galleries, representing major artists across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region 1986–2007. She is Adjunct Professor, College of Fine Arts (COFA), Deputy Chair of the National Portrait Gallery Board, an Asialink Asia Literacy Ambassador, and a member of the *Art & Australia* magazine Advisory Board, the Tate Asia-Pacific Acquisitions Committee and the International Association of Art Critics.

The Sherman Foundation is a member of CIMAM, the International Committee of ICOM for Museums and Collections of Modern Art. Dr Sherman's awards include the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres 2003; Doctorate of Letters honoris causa, The University of Sydney, 2008; and Member of the Order of Australia 2010.

Cover: Hayden FOWLER, *Goat Odyssey* (detail), 2006, production still by Michael Randall, image courtesy the artist. Collection of Candy Bennett



Revealed<sup>2</sup>: CollectorSpace

# The artist, the critic and the collector: sands

As artists and communities adapt to ever-changing national and global socioeconomic realities, art world modes of creation, perception and reception echo or resist the prevailing preoccupations of successive generations.

Post-Second World War and beyond, in the United States and the West at large, the artist and critic reigned supreme. The creative member of the duo was most likely to work in an isolated studio, often allied to a named school or group. Philosophical underpinnings, continuously debated over food and alcohol (drugs were not yet de rigueur), provided the glue that bound protagonists at one level and yet inevitably separated them. Deeply personal, emotional and intellectual resources shaped their prevailing ideas into individual art works. Jackson Pollock, Lee Krasner, Barnett Newman, Willem de Kooning and others sparred and parried among themselves, with powerful critics such as Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg providing the words to describe and evaluate their creative output. The art world was intimate and the robust, financially driven art market we know today provided little incentive for artists and no interest for the all-powerful critics.

The world turned and the paradigm changed. The sixties and the pop art period presented a different face to the public. The rise of increasingly professional and often independently wealthy commercial galleries marked the next era in metropolitan art centres worldwide, in particular New York, London and Paris/Europe.

Private gallery owners such as Leo Castelli and Ileana Sonnabend resolutely tilted the power towards the dealer, creating in the process a new version of the profession – the gallerist, a job description that stands in the twenty-first century as distinct from the secondary market dealer in professional activity as the gulf that yawns between the private dealer and the auctioneer.

In Asia, perspectives were constantly shifting, too. Tokyo harboured various groups of creative experimenters: the Gutai group, the Mono-ha school and various avant-garde performance and conceptual artists, Yoko Ono among them.<sup>1</sup> Korea introduced Nam Jun Paik to the world; or perhaps perceived from another angle, the artist introduced his little known country to a curious international visual arts community.

In the postmodern period art creation turned on irony, pastiche, appropriation and re-creation. The artist, in searching for often ahistorical images, created a new paradigm whereby critics had a field day establishing sources. In turn, the viewing public and a growing number of collectors were able to transform their newly acquired internet capabilities into an understanding of the contemporary art modalities of their era. Photomedia, mixed media and, more recently, moving image work proliferated in biennales, world museums and galleries. Julian Schnabel and Jean-Michel Basquiat in the United States, Imants Tillers and John Young in Australia, and many others internationally, attracted larger and larger audiences who were able to relate easily to the work. These audiences produced dedicated followers and, in some cases, thoughtful, knowledgeable collectors.

The eighties moved along with the creator/critic/collector triumvirate balance teetering precariously. Art prices started to soar. Unheard of auction records were set and the collector sector started commanding the attention that had previously been accorded the critics. In 1980, the Whitney Museum paid a record-breaking price for a work by a living artist: US\$1 million for *Three Plays*, 1958, by Jasper Johns. In 1990, Vincent van Gogh's *Portrait of Dr Gachet* was sold to a private collector for a record price of US\$82.5 million.

With the collector firmly in the power seat came the rise and rise of the gallerist, whose role as gate keeper intensified. In the frequent situations in which waiting lists formed for work by significant artists, the real power of gallerists lay in their ability to select where to 'place' a star artist's work.

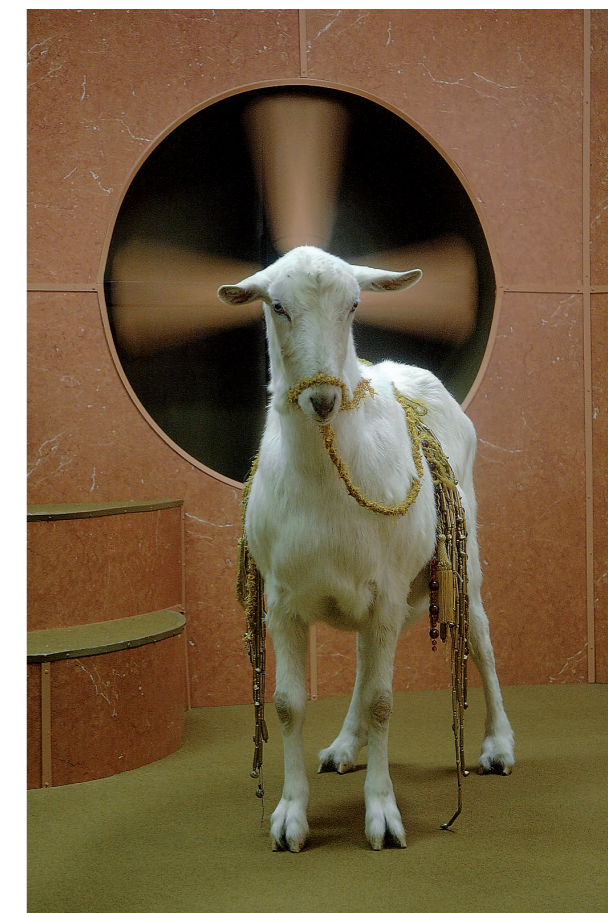
Museum collections were and remain the preferred option for almost all artists. However, suddenly competition loomed. Hedge fund and high-tech billionaires joined the elite collecting fraternity. Their numbers rose dramatically with the demise of European Communism and the rise of the Asian Tiger economies and their status in the global community rose exponentially. Front page media coverage of multimillion dollar acquisitions became the norm. The moveable feast was on the move and recognition of value in visual practice slid inexorably towards those with serious acquisition funds – a hugely influential coterie of international, competitive, mega-wealthy collectors all set to bag trophies.

Now seen as a professional of sorts, the collector circles the globe in a constant quest to view and be viewed, to compare, contrast and cover biennales, triennales and art fairs and, for those with a research bent or background, to attend seminars, symposia and contemporary art conferences. The proliferation of these events is staggering and in the twenty-first century the collector stands as a patron, philanthropist and cheer squad leader endowed with significant acquisition budgets. The creation/perception/reception paradigm has shifted again: the collector is king.

In Samstag Museum of Art's *Revealed* suite of exhibitions, works by South Australia-based collectors are solicited, scrutinised, documented and contextualised. The collectors' thought processes and goals are glimpsed and we have access to what represents for many a significant aspect of their financial outlay. We understand obliquely their internal world and their aesthetic sensibilities.

So where to now? It is my guess that the wheel will continue to turn. Already at the highest level of collection building, the construction of privately funded/publically accessible, star architect-designed museums continues to gain momentum.

In May 2013, Art Basel Hong Kong was the location for the third iteration of a meeting of forty collectors turned private museum and foundation owners from China, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, Belgium, France, Singapore and Australia. (The United States was deliberately left off the invitation list!) Unsurprisingly, the Chinese dominated. Forceful examples are Wang Wei and her husband Liu Yiquan. The couple's US\$43 million Long Museum will soon be superseded in size and ambition by their new 16,000 square metre museum on the banks of the Huangpu River. Indonesian-Chinese collector Budi Tek, having established the Yuz Museum in Jakarta in 2008, is opening his Shanghai Museum this year next to the DreamWorks Animation film studio in Shanghai's government-sanctioned West Bank Media Port cultural corridor.



Hayden FOWLER, *Goat Odyssey IV*, 2006  
production still by Michael Randall, image courtesy the artist  
Collection of Candy Bennett

'Here comes everybody'<sup>2</sup> – contemporary art is now ubiquitous, to the point of being **seen and sold in large European luxury** houses, such as Louis Vuitton and Prada. **Young people follow** the most talked-about artists and are up to date on current trends. The collector is king and the king has many subjects.

Some predict a breakaway scene – a new avant-garde of artists and critics who deliberately isolate themselves, as they were once isolated, by others sixty or more years ago.

Meanwhile, diverse collections are being created. The trophy hunters and follow-the-leaders will probably fade away and the true collectors – those with an interest in the Zeitgeist as expressed through material culture – will stand proud as the art nurturers and cultural adventurers they are.

**Gene Sherman**  
June 2013

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> **The revelatory group show** *Japanese Art after 1945: Scream against the Sky* (Yokohama Museum of Art; Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1994–95) drew these artists together in a powerful historical survey of post war Japanese avant-garde art. Just this year, the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York, produced the exhibition *Gutai: Splendid Playground* (15 February – 8 May 2013).
- <sup>2</sup> **Clay Shirky, Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing without Organizations**, Penguin USA, New York, 2008.