

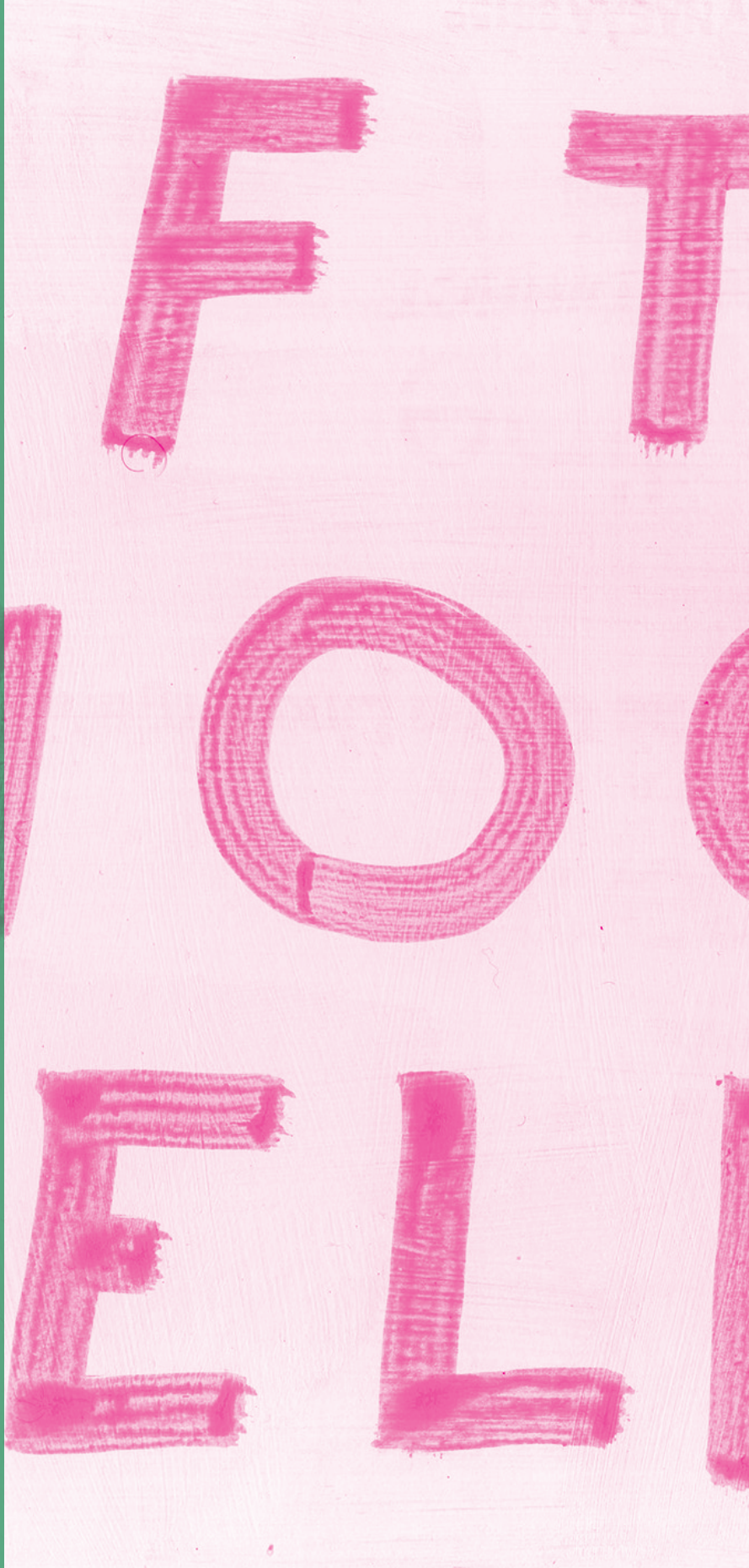


I3I SOFA

Ilam Campus Gallery
School of Fine Arts
University of Canterbury

AFTERNOON
DELIGHT
JON CAMPBELL

13 September – 5 October 2017



Your Shrimps Are Getting Lonely

For three years I was the worst Business English teacher in São Paulo. I was two months into the job before I realised that ‘grammar’ did not end with ‘er’. I didn’t fully comprehend what the different parts of speech were so when a student asked if a word were a verb or an adjective, I would look them in the eye and say, “It’s both... Now try and put it in a sentence.” My spelling is so bad that I often don’t even get close enough for the autocorrect to guess the word I am trying to spell. Please keep all this in mind while you read the rest of my story. What I lacked in language skills, I tried to make up for with personality. I have zero knowledge of the fundamentals of business so I would usually try to steer the conversational part of my class towards explaining pop culture idioms that the students had heard in songs or American films. Every now and again I would be in the middle of explaining a bit of Australian slang to a Brazilian banker when I would have a flashback to an incident that happened to me twenty years ago.

At the tail end of a profoundly unenjoyable hitchhiking odyssey around Tasmania, my travelling companion and I spent our final evening at a caravan park in Hobart. The trip had started well but had grown arduous. Monotony and lack of comfort had begun to expose some of the holes in our friendship.

Barry, my fellow wayfarer, was a six foot six, strapping young lad that required a lot more food than either of us had budgeted for. We had spent the last two weeks living on packet pasta and an invention of ours named after the town where we had first created it.

Cygnet Sandwich

Serves: 2

Ingredients:

1 Sausage Roll

4 Plain white rolls

Directions:

Break sausage roll into 4 even pieces

Place piece of sausage roll in bread roll

Serve

As this would be our last supper, we had decided to blow our remaining budget on our final meal. Sticking firmly to the stodgy section of the healthy diet pyramid, we had splurged on some sausages to cook on the caravan park’s communal barbie. So, at sunset, we headed down to the secluded BBQ area to prepare dinner. Upon arrival, we discovered that we would not be eating alone. Perched amongst one of the several coin-operated grills was a beautiful Swedish backpacker. There were some

shopping bags and a couple of drinks on her table, so after some mental Columbo-ing, I deduced (hoped) that there could be a second Swede lurking around. Things were starting to look up. Suddenly, there seemed a chance that my lame hitchhiking adventure might turn out after all. The girl looked exactly like how movies had promised me a Swedish backpacker would. Unfortunately, I looked exactly like a broke art student. We exchanged polite smiles and pleasantries and I enquired if she was there alone. She told me that her friend had just gone to get something. Bingo. My sojourn to this point had been a dismal failure. I had been dreading arriving home and recounting three weeks of uneventful fruit picking, unsuccessful hitch hiking and bickering. No-one wants to hear about that. But a romantic sausage-based dinner with two Swedish backpackers. Now that's a story! Hearing footsteps caused me to puff out my chest in a pathetic attempt to look cool for the approaching, imagined Swede. To my disappointment, her 'friend' turned out to be a middle aged businessman. When I say 'businessman', I mean more like a used car salesman and when I say 'middle aged', I mean how anyone over twenty-five appears to a twenty-year-old. Eavesdropping revealed that he was not some old friend of hers, but rather a caravan park Casanova that

had swooped in while my friend and I were out dilly-dallying in the meat aisle at Coles. Undeterred, I began to plot my seduction of the backpacker. Let him bore her with stories about old Volvos and as soon as there is a lull in the conversation, I will casually inform her that I am a bohemian art student on a voyage of self-discovery. The film Titanic had just been released and it had given me a false belief that deep down all women longed to be sketched. I began to envisage, that if all went to plan, I'd be hearing "draw me like one of your Swedish girls!" with some regularity. If the bohemian-art-guy angle failed, I still had sausages. Let's call the Swedish girl Elsa as Google has just informed me that it's a popular Swedish name. The Australian used car Lothario was named Richard; I remember that because Elsa kept punctuating her beguiling sentences with it, which chipped away at my confidence while piquing my interest. Richard, a grill master, sautéed while I seethed, pretending not to listen. He was playing up his Australianess by peppering the conversation with slang which, to my horror, Elsa was eating up. He would deliberately use a colloquialism and then act surprised when she asked for the definition.

"What is a 'drongo' Richard?"
"Oh, well a 'drongo' is a type of idiot."

"Hee hee, Oh Richard, tell me some more of these funny Australian expressions."

Richard began running out of esoteric jargon; he was soon scraping the hot plate and the bottom of the linguistic barrel.

"Well, if I were to say 'throw another shrimp on the barbie' that would mean, ah, please put another prawn on the barbecue."

This one particularly annoyed me. I had never heard anyone use that expression in real life. In fact, I'd never seen anyone cook prawns on a barbie. Casting a stink eye over, I discovered that Richard had a mountain of prawns sizzling and an exotic woman giggling. I rotated my six sausages in silence with the understanding that they couldn't compete with a seafood feast. Richard excused himself by announcing he needed to "take a slash" and walked into the bush to relieve himself. I knew this would be my last chance to make an impression on Elsa. I needed her to see what she was missing. A couple of awkward minutes passed while I flexed and tried to make eye contact without success. I regretted not bringing my Derwents. Eventually, Elsa cooed "Richaaard... Oh Richaaaaard... your shrimps are getting loooonley Richard... and so am I..."

Richard trotted back, and the insufferable Australian-a and giggling resumed. At one point he came to our table, winked (breaking the fourth wall for the first time) and asked if he could borrow the "Dead Horse". Rhyming slang. Are you kidding me? Elsa couldn't believe it. I realised I no longer stood a chance. It continued heating up in the European section of the barbecue area. Barry and I sat eating in disbelief; the joy sucked from our snags. This fiasco reached its crescendo when Elsa asked for one final definition. Sensing that this was his moment, Richard dropped the bravado for the first time. I could tell that he was about to get real. He thought for a moment, choosing his words carefully, and finally said: "Well, if I were to say 'you're a hornbag', it would mean that you are a very beautiful woman. And Elsa... you are a hornbag." That was it. My amigo and I picked up our rubbish and walked out of there while they kissed passionately, oblivious to our departure. Like shrimps passing in the night.

Matthew Griffin



AFTER
NOON
DELIGHT

UPTIGHT
+
PARANOID





Jon Campbell was born in Belfast in 1961 and migrated to Australia in 1964. He studied painting at RMIT from 1980-1982 and VCA from 1984-1985 and currently lives and works in Melbourne.

Campbell is an artist and musician known for his ongoing exploration of the visual potential of words through the use of vernacular language and popular culture. His art is a thoughtful and intuitive questioning of who we are, constructed with a laidback lyricism, lo-fi aesthetic and sense of humour.

Recent projects include:
It's a World full of Cover Versions, artist book, Ilam Press, NZ, 2017. *Archibald Prize*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2017. *Absolutely Disgusting*, Darren Knight Gallery in association with Stephen McLaughlin Gallery, Melbourne, 2016. *Painting more Painting*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2016. *Lettering*, artist book, The Narrows, Melbourne, 2016. *Jon Campbell*, self titled vinyl LP, 2016. *Art Basel Hong Kong*, with Darren Knight Gallery, 2015. *It's gonna take a lotta love*, Franklin Street Works, Stamford, CT, USA, 2015. *Just Sing What You Feel*, National Gallery of Victoria, 2012.

Matthew Griffin is an Australian artist whose practice engages a wide range of media including sculpture, photography, video, installation and collage. Recurring themes in his works include: the body as an object in relation to other objects; the makeshift and impermanent as sculptural qualities; and the contemporary ubiquity of cameras and the resulting difficulty of producing meaningful images in the post-internet age. In recent projects he has examined the way humour

functions in both a visual and narrative form, and the ethical dilemmas associated with the production of contemporary art. Griffin plays music with Jon Campbell in the band Olympic Doughnuts. He recently noticed he has developed a beer gut and has begun exercising daily in an attempt to tone up for summer.

He has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally. Solo exhibitions include: *Ddesign*, Neon Parc, Melbourne, 2017; *Matt Griffin*, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington, 2015; *Going going bye-gones*, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington, 2011; *Running running regards*, Uplands Gallery, Melbourne, 2009; and *Ttomorroww will be dfferent*, The Physics Room, Christchurch, 2007. Selected recent group exhibitions include: *Art as a verb*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2014; *The Financial Report*, ArtSpace, Sydney, 2013; *In the cut: Contemporary collage*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), Melbourne, 2013; *New 09*, ACCA, Melbourne, 2009; *Make a scene*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney, 2009; and *Laughing in a foreign language*, The Hayward Gallery, London, 2008.

Griffin recently got a licence to drive a forklift.

List of works in the show

Pros and Cons, 2017
Watercolour, 30 x 21cm

Hair of the dog, 2017
Watercolour, 30 x 21cm

Blah Blah Blah, 2017
Watercolour, pencil, 30 x 21cm

It's a world full of lying bastards, 2017
Watercolour, 21 x 30cm

Same old bullshit, 2017
Watercolour, 21 x 30cm

Fuck Yeah, 2017
Watercolour, 30 x 21cm

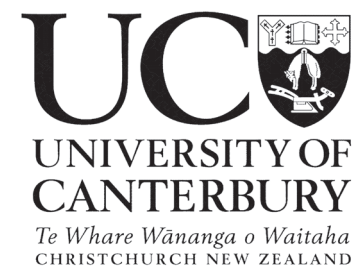
Absolutely Disgusting, 2017
Watercolour, 30 x 42cm

Wall Paintings, dimensions variable:
Afternoon Delight
Kebabs
No Problemo
Uptight + Paranoid

Acknowledgements

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Jon Campbell is represented by Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney.



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Ilam Campus Gallery is the University of Canterbury's public exhibition space, connecting staff and students with contemporary art communities internationally, nationally and locally.

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