



INSIDE THE GALLERY PODCAST – SERIES 2 EPISODE 4 (April 2020)

Transcript of interviews:

GISELLE STANBOROUGH – Cinopticon

KATHIE SUTHERLAND – Brett Whiteley catalogue

AMELIA SAWARD – Ballarat Foto Biennale

## GISELLE STANBOROUGH – Cinopticon

Tim Stackpool:

First catching up with Giselle Stanborough whose work, Cinopticon is installed at Carriageworks but is now transitioning to an online experience. Cinopticon itself, contemporises the theory of the panopticon, which is a model of surveillance where the few watch and control the many. In the physical exhibition Giselle uses searchlights and sculptural forms, colossal wall diagrams and mirrored digital surfaces to reflect the performative experience of social media platforms.

Tim Stackpool:

As the subject and the object of her own scrutiny, Giselle pretty much is the ghost in her own machine. She haunts it's house of mirrors if you like, trapped as a digital apparition at the bottom of the well. Giselle joins us now on the podcast via Skype. She also spends time as a sessional teacher at university and as a museum artist educator. So Giselle before we chat about your installation at Carriageworks, you're doing okay at the moment, I guess?

Giselle Stanborough:

Yeah, I mean as well as can be expected in a global pandemic and edging into a depression. So yeah, look, I'm actually totally fine. I really enjoy making art and even though I don't have my studio or really anything, it's just something that I have been able to do. And of course I miss my day jobs too. I miss that social interaction and the kind of job satisfaction that I get teaching at uni or I teach at another art institution. And you really do feel like you have a sort of beneficence kind of role translating, making contemporary art, which can be quite abstruse into something that is legible and relevant. And that's really... I do miss my day jobs. But yeah, look, I think under the circumstances I'm dealing really well. I just really enjoy making art and even though it's probably not very good and is incredibly difficult from my tiny little studio, it could be so much worse.

Tim Stackpool:

And just digressing a little bit in terms of the teaching you've just mentioned, we had a conversation in the last podcast with Monash University about how they adapted their teaching to online, have you had the opportunity to do any of that?

Giselle Stanborough:

Yes. We have. And it really... that was a bit of a rough landing for me. It's just... the online space is so different and I guess this is going to be relevant to what we discuss later on. I have made work for online environments. I have used the digital interface in a specifically consciously, intentionally as the material, but I just think that teaching online, and I think everybody knows this, it's a very, very poor substitute if you teaching art, especially.

Tim Stackpool:

The folks at Monash actually said that they... In the faculty of arts anyway said they have a new respect for the digital domains in the last four weeks or so, purely because of what they've had to do and how they've had to adapt their teaching.

Giselle Stanborough:

Yeah. And I think because it has just been so sudden, the ways that your perception of time changes through COVID, I'm like, "Was this a month ago? Was this two months ago? What day of the week is it today?" I'm still with you working till 2:00 in the morning or at 2:00 in the morning. You would also be feeling the strange disconnect without usual rhythms of life.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes. It's all very much like that. Now let's turn to your work at Carriageworks and like all art that was designed to create an emotional response while people were in the physical space, but how well do you think it's achieving that now that it's moved online?

Giselle Stanborough:

I think that it's also still in the process of moving online in light of sort of what's happened. I have a... Or I'm in the process of making a specific digital work because as you mentioned, it's a physical space. It was never designed to be seen online. The content draws heavily from things of cyber security and surveillance capitalism and it's very much concerned with the internet. But part of its sort of logic was to take that out of the internet and use space and light and a kind of materiality that also the sort of oral sound capacities of the massive space at Carriageworks to create that kind of sensory effective encounter with the work.

Giselle Stanborough:

So of course online it is very different and it becomes a different thing. And you know there are also kinds of structural and temporal limitations, space and materials. Like the digital is a material, websites are a material, they have certain capacities and architectures and like all materials that have a cost to say make a purpose-built website is much more expensive than using a preexisting architecture. All these things kind of need to be considered.

Giselle Stanborough:

So in a way I think so important that it is out there because the whole idea was to kind of prompt a consideration of the politics and the kinds of subjectivities that are developing under communication capitalism or surveillance capitalism, whatever you want to call it. The world we're in today, which has only revved up after COVID. The world itself has been taken away and now it's like we just have the screen. So it's super important that I put those ideas out there because I believe in their validity.

Giselle Stanborough:

But in terms of the emotional response and the physical space, it's a different work. And that's also why I'm choosing to respond to this and to make a new one to factor those things in. And this is something that has really changed the world. This is a historic event. And the reception of the work now even if we were to open the doors is different. The world is always changing and so artworks are always changing. Even with historical artworks. You don't see a Velasquez the way that it could be seen under enlightenment style of thinking. We can only see it now. So I'm also interested in those things and hopefully one day - touchwood - you never know. Most of the show is up. Maybe the doors will open and we'll be able to see it again. That would be my primary hope to see it in the gallery

Tim Stackpool:

In terms of the piece, you spent a year developing it, now you're transitioning it to online. There's a different pressure there for you, isn't there? Because all of a sudden you've got to take what you spent a

year putting together. You've now got to compress your preparation time and also make it relevant online. I mean, there's a different kind of pressure on you as an artist to deliver now.

Giselle Stanborough:

Yes there is. But I've always been a woeful professional artists where I do art because I enjoy it. I'm incredibly skeptical of these sorts of romantic ideas that align art with sort of a kind of pathological compulsion that it's like, "Oh, you just have to make art." It's like I'm choosing to do this and maybe it won't be very good, but it certainly has utility for me in thinking through when working through what we're going through now. And it will be whatever it will be.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. So your perspective is very pragmatic in that sense. But I think there's a level of irony here in the fact that you created a work of art, which is all about, as you say, surveillance capitalism and now we find ourselves upon the launch of your work very much under surveillance, very much being controlled in terms of our movements and being monitored through our phones, through apps and all that sort of stuff. I mean, you really did predict the future in a way, didn't you, with your work?

Giselle Stanborough:

Well, it's interesting that you frame it like that because I kind of just predicted the present.

Tim Stackpool:

Oh yeah. Okay. Yeah, sure.

Giselle Stanborough:

Yeah. Oh, no, I mean sure. But in the terms of I guess our cognizance of surveillance and its legibility, I find this really interesting because it does sort of speak to the relationship between mass global neo-liberal corporations and the state. And we do feel much more ambivalent about giving our data over to the state than we do to say Facebook, Instagram, whatever. Even though I think with the Mueller investigation that we saw last year, the correlations between what we see as sort of consumer technologies and its impact on the state and the integrity of the democratic process which was located in America, but it's happening all over the world.

Giselle Stanborough:

It's not such a clear divide, but I think if what it takes is a sort of state surveillance to draw our attention to the ways that all of our movements and things that we don't even think of as biodata like our voice, our fingerprints are constantly circulating by institutions of power. Sometimes States, sometimes private, and often there is a lot of overlap.

Tim Stackpool:

Is all your art politically motivated in that sense? Are you driven by that?

Giselle Stanborough:

I don't see politics and subjectivity as neatly divisible. I don't really identify as a political artist. I just sort of was born at this time, cast into the world as we all are, and they seem to be the things that I'm

confronted with and draw my attention and seem to be worthy of consideration. But it probably comes from my immediate experience and sort of experience of subjectivity and self-reflection about that.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Giselle Stanborough:

What I ought to be and the potentialities of what I can choose to be. That obviously exists within a historical context. And this is the one that has become so every day that it's almost invisible, but it never loses its strangeness to me. So that's why I think I was drawn to that path. It's just so weird.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. No, I think art, if we speak about it in a general sense, is always a reflection of society at the time, through the eyes of the artist and how they're motivated in that sense. But it seems to be that your motivation does come from the way we either accept how we're shaped by our current politics or authoritarianism, if I can put it that way, rather than being inspired by the environment in which you're in. By the flowers, by the parklands, by the mountains, by the sea.

Giselle Stanborough:

Yeah. I mean, I think that this is about really the process of signification, which brings these sorts of two worlds together. That even how we experienced the sensate environment, the mountains, the sea can't be divisible from their kind of linguistic or identification as sign. That there is no sort of all neutral experience of the ocean. So I definitely consider the senses in the body very much. How could we not even now that I just mentioned all, now we're all on screens. We're all living online, but the screen always has a haptic. You touch it, it vibrates, you have it in your pocket, wearables are always part of the body. Working at home, it's like, "Oh, my back hurts."

Tim Stackpool:

Yes. From sitting watching the screen too long. Yes.

Giselle Stanborough:

"Yeah. My chair is really uncomfortable. I'm not set up to work from home." I just don't think that there is these sorts of mind body or self politics kinds of divides. And I guess maybe I've framed it politically as well because I think that's something that's pretty in vogue at the moment and it's nice to sort of give artists sort of utility. But in my heart of hearts I do believe that it might be... Maybe there is a touch of politics or I don't want to say activism but a sense of an awareness of the power structure there. But that is because it is inscribed in me. When you were just mentioning this choice about seeing the flowers or the kind of structures that we're in, it's like, where does this self that is seeing the flowers come from?

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. Coming back to that, given all the work that you put in to Cinopticon at Carriageworks, then lockdown came around considering how much of a deep thinker you are, how much did your heart sink when you got that news and thought about the implications of what that meant?

Giselle Stanborough:

Well look, it was awful. I mean, yeah, I think the answer to that is sort of embedded in the question, it sucks. But on the other hand when I realized that that was going to happen, I was of course devastated for the show and still am, but I'm more devastated about the reasons why it is canceled. Number one, I do see my art like a kind of mapping, but it's not the territory itself. The territory is life and that will always be more important. And in many ways, I'm quite lucky. I mean my income is by no means stable, I'm really not wealthy, but there are people that will be extremely disadvantaged by this and I will be in the longterm for sure. Everybody in the arts will be, but in the short term, there are people that this is going to hit really hard. And I'm just lucky that I'm not one of them. I have a safe place to self isolate and I don't know, maybe it sounds naff, but things could be so much worse. So yes, my heart sunk, but it's bobbing around in the middle.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. So you keep a certain level of perspective in terms of the fact, well it's pretty tough, the situation that we're all in, but your particular situation is not as tough as it could be when compared with other people. I mean, basically that's it.

Giselle Stanborough:

There's only so much that I can indulge in my grief and I think that was a really important process to go through. At the end, I do love making art. And I love the making more than I love the exhibiting. So things could be worse. At least I have my place, I can make my stupid videos, that sort of stuff.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. So the process works for you rather than the finished product. Although it's nice to have that, I guess that satisfaction of getting it done.

Giselle Stanborough:

Oh, of course. And you know, in terms of the professionalization of art, this was a big break for me, so to have that. But of course this is in the context of an arts industry that's just been eviscerated. So, again, it's good to keep that in perspective.

Tim Stackpool:

And talking about the process that you enjoy now that you're taking that work of art and developing it for online, is there anything new you've discovered? Anything that surprised you or inspired you in that process? Or you've taken a look at the perspective that you did in terms of making the physical art and thinking, "Well, actually I didn't consider that, but I have now because I've had to bring it into the digital realm into online."

Giselle Stanborough:

That is such a great question. Thank you for... Yeah, but also very much so, but I don't think that I had consciously thought about it. The temporality of the online space is so different to the temporality of moving through the gallery. And of course, I guess, clues with different artworks about how long to spend with each of them. And of course you have a sort of agency there, but architecture and the works dictate that online. It's a completely kind of different temporality and things are popping up and shifting

and moving. And I'm very, very influenced by the structure and logic of an app called Tik Tok. Do you know Tik Tok?

Tim Stackpool:

Yes. The short video app. Yep.

Giselle Stanborough:

Oh cool. So yeah, Tik Tok was actually sort of something that influenced parts of the work, particularly around thinking through ideas of the voice. So that has certainly come through in the methods with which I have been approaching the work that I'm making now.

Tim Stackpool:

I think the other thing to consider is that when someone as a visitor, as a guest to a gallery or space, their focus is very sharp, there's very little distraction. However, when you take the artwork online, then the individual, the guest, the visitor to your online space is easily distracted by something coming in on their phone, by something popping up on their screen. So it can be a lot harder to convey whatever message that you're trying to communicate because there are distractions that you had absolutely no control over. Whereas when you're in a gallery, you have the opportunity to control those external influences that someone maybe subjected to.

Giselle Stanborough:

Look. Yes and no. I think 100% absolutely, it's an extremely kind of competitive attention economy online, but I kind of make niche work. It's the quality, not the quantity of the audience to me. I do make Tik Toks and they're incredibly niche, but the audience that enjoys them enjoys them, very much. So that kind of balances out. And I think it would be nice to have this kind of fantasy of purity between the cyber space and the meat space that everybody sort of dreamed about back in the '90s. But they've been fluid for a very long time. As much as the gallery remains a cathedral and a sacred space. And of course your attention is centered on the work. Everybody has their phone in their pocket all the time and it's not unusual.

Giselle Stanborough:

I work in a gallery as my day job and people spend a lot of time on their phones in the gallery. Not only to sort of get that external kind of stimulation that needs to be not self-initiated but certainly self-maintained to spend a long time considering an artwork. You can get a quick kind of heat by whipping out your phone, but also to sort of mediate between you and the artwork, you can very quickly render your experience in the gallery into a form of social capital by posting a picture of you in front of an artwork or a mirror and then sharing that on Instagram, which I think is great. Share your joy, but it is also certainly performing a kind of classed idea of cultural capital, which I think I do too. I use all of these apps. This is the thing that why I'm sort of not, I guess a kind of political purist. I'm more inquisitive and I don't really have the solutions. It's certainly not an option to opt out now under COVID but it wasn't before.

Tim Stackpool:

So your work at Carriageworks, it is available through Carriageworks Journal, which includes some of your diaries, curated conversations, video content, exhibition imagery as well is all in there. There's a

link to it in the description at [insidethegallery.com.au](http://insidethegallery.com.au), the podcast website. And Giselle I thank you so much for your insights with us on the podcast today.

Giselle Stanborough:

Thank you Tim. You enjoy the rest of your day. Thanks for having me.

Tim Stackpool:

Giselle Stanborough there, who's Cinopticon at Carriageworks can be experienced via the Carriageworks Journal. And you can access it by heading to [carriageworks.com.au](http://carriageworks.com.au). But as you'd expect, there is a link to it in this edition's description at [www.insidethegallery.com.au](http://www.insidethegallery.com.au).

## KATHIE SUTHERLAND – Brett Whiteley catalogue

Tim Stackpool:

Eight years of research, cross-referencing, studying detective work, and total preoccupation has finally led to the publishing of Kathie Sutherland's comprehensive and exceptionally detailed seven volume set cataloging the work of Brett Whiteley. It is truly exceptional, not just historically, but a worthy tribute to the art and the artist. Weighing 25 kilograms and totaling 3000 pages, the catalogue is unprecedented and confirms Brett Whiteley's enduring significance as a visionary force of Australian art. Kathie is on the line. Thanks for joining us on the podcast.

Kathie Sutherland:

You're very welcome.

Tim Stackpool:

Eight years working on this project. I mean, are you now ultimately satisfied with the result?

Kathie Sutherland:

Well, the catalogue raisonné is a difficult creature because it never really comes to an end. Every time there's an exhibition or an auction or a sale, it's likely that new information comes to light or that one could extend the text to include the details of that exhibition or that sale. So it's really hard to say this is now closed, but I had to do it. It was absolutely overwhelming amount of work in putting this all together.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

So I've been as careful as I possibly can be, so I've done my best.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. And tell me, how did you first connect with this project? How did it come your way?

Kathie Sutherland:

It came my way sort of, I was full-time, working within the arts industry. I was with Christie's for many years as head of paintings for Christie's. And I got a little bit tired of buying and commerciality, so I wanted to take myself back to study. So I went to university, went to Melbourne University and I started a master's degree in art curatorship. I wanted to write a thesis. At that stage, I was very interested in Australian artists as expats and particularly in London. And I'd been stomping around London in the late 60s, 70s, so I was particularly interested in the experience of Australian artists. And then I looked at who might I research further and Boyd - sort of done, Blackman - done, Nolan a bit earlier, but done, Whiteley not, and a big gap there. There was very little known about his overseas experience. Everybody was sort of concentrating on his blue and gold beach scenes and the Australian subject matter, but not much known.

Kathie Sutherland:

So I thought, I'm going to do Whiteley. And then I didn't realise that the most significant perhaps, series that he created during the London period was the Christie series, which is a series based on a necrophilia murderer, John Christie.

Tim Stackpool:

Right.

Kathie Sutherland:

And the subject matter was very topical at the time that Whiteley was considering it as a subject, because he lived around the corner from where the murders had taken place. And they'd taken place a decade before, but they'd convicted the wrong man and hung the wrong man.

Tim Stackpool:

Oh.

Kathie Sutherland:

So there was a considerable discussion at the time, in the early 60s, as to the rights and wrongs of capital punishment. So it was a very topical subject. So that's where it all started. And I've finished my studies at the end of '67, which was when he left England and went to America. So that was the end of my thesis. And then I reworked it and added more and it became the first publication called, *A Sensual Line*, and that was published by Macmillan in 2010. So it came to a full stop. Okay, done my job.

Tim Stackpool:

Yes.

Kathie Sutherland:

Two years later I'm thinking, I think somebody needs to do the catalogue raisonné on the rest of his work, their life's work, and I'm the obvious turkey to do it. I'm the one. You can't understand an artist's life's work unless you understand the nuts and bolts of his early work.

Tim Stackpool:

In terms of what you were saying earlier, did you have to curate it to the extent of leaving anything out of these volumes?

Kathie Sutherland:

I had to make a conscious decision about how I was going to structure it. So I wrote two essays, one on the nude and one on landscape. And then the rest was the catalogue raisonné, or an explanation of terms to begin with. But the catalogue raisonné is the nuts and bolts of the project and I set it out in a way that it worked in tandem with existing biographies. I felt that the public knew enough about the celebrity status of the artist, the notoriety, his lifestyle with the drug taking.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

So, I've used that as a sort of a backdrop. Every entry will have a section called Literature, where if there's a relevant anecdote in one of the existing biographies, I've included a page reference so that you can look it up, so that can extend the story.

Tim Stackpool:

Right.

Kathie Sutherland:

At the same time, quite often I was able to learn anecdotal stories about a work through Wendy Whiteley, with her memory of the events, and through friends and contemporaries. So sometimes, when I can, I add a note if it's additional information. The one thing I left out, I did a very, very exhaustive study of Whiteley's stamps, his chops and his monograms.

Tim Stackpool:

Right.

Kathie Sutherland:

And they're very significant because they changed through the years. It does help dating a work if you know the sequence of his use of monograms and chops and stamps. So I thought that information was probably something that I should keep as a tool for research when people come to me wanting me to sort of give them information about a particular work, but also to protect it from any of the bad guys out there.

Tim Stackpool:

Okay. You mentioned Wendy just then. Was there input in this project from the estate?

Kathie Sutherland:

Yes, yes. The estate holds more than 1500 works. Most of them from the estate would be drawings and sketches, but they're really sort of vital pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. And the estate was fantastic. Brett Whiteley's studio, which is administered by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, they were incredibly supportive. I mean, clearly only a crazy person like myself would take on a task like this as a voluntary job.

Tim Stackpool:

Of course!

Kathie Sutherland:

So I can't imagine why they wouldn't want me to do it, but they were terrific. And the Art Gallery of New South Wales supported me with illustrations, a lot of, maybe more than a hundred illustrations they would have sent through to me.

Tim Stackpool:

Wow. Great.

Kathie Sutherland:

High resolution. All the galleries have been fantastic. All the estate and regional galleries, they've all been amazingly supportive, as have the commercial galleries. And Whiteley's dealers, Australian galleries, Stuart Purves in particular. And in Sydney, Robin Gibson, and in Queensland, Philip Bacon. They've all been so generous with their time and the information they've given me from their early records about who collected, and early sales. And then on top of that and then it's of course scouring newspapers and magazines, looking for references to works. And the auction houses have been very helpful too.

Tim Stackpool:

Well it certainly shows in the comprehensive nature of what you've put into the volumes. But let me go back and just ask you for your opinion regarding Whiteley. And we know he's important in the history of art in Australia, but what do you think is the most unique quality that that makes him so important?

Kathie Sutherland:

He had a fantastic, amazing visual memory and ability to just jot down, because he had this innate facility for drawing, for sketching, and he could just jot down the incident, the moment, and capture it either in pen, charcoal or pencil. And that whole collection of impressions forms the basis of his work, whether he developed it into more larger drawings or oil paintings. But the sketches, the on the spot input is really the foundation of his work. And I think his uniqueness, his ability to observe the world around him and capture that moment.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

I think that that's his great, great strength. And at the same time, he's creating a social commentary about his life and time.

Tim Stackpool:

Sure.

Kathie Sutherland:

The people who surrounded him, his friends, fellow artists, musicians, Whiteley just adored. He worked with music, music was incredibly important to him. Drinking mates in England or Australia, drug addicts, there's a tremendously colourful who's who of characters that go right through the catalogue. So you learn a lot about his environment, as well as learning about Whiteley, the man.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. And did you discover anything unknown or unusual that surprised you when you came across it?

Kathie Sutherland:

I think that I was very aware of Whiteley the celebrity and his successes in prize winning and of course his reputation, the notoriety of his drug taking. But what really impressed me, it was through letters and looking at his drawings, particularly his drawings, was a vulnerability he expresses and a concern for his

fellow, a real compassion of a very generous and warm spirit that he expresses in his letters. And the sort of uncertainty about what he considered to be a God given gift. It belies the confidence that comes from the press reviews and all the successes, that there's this underflow, undercurrent, of vulnerability of caring and concern, which I found very touching.

Tim Stackpool:

And in terms of the work that you've turned out in creating this, and it's very comprehensive and very well designed, I might add as well, but do you see yourself as a bit of an artist as well, in putting this together?

Kathie Sutherland:

The overall design, I agree, it's an artwork in itself that's a beautiful, almost like a medieval manuscript being kept in this beautiful box. Well that really is Morry Schwartz's conception, working in tandem with the designer, John Warrick. My part was really with the illustrations saying which works should go together, that was my creative important.

Tim Stackpool:

Okay.

Kathie Sutherland:

So if there was a drawing from a sketchbook of pigeons, been of Brett feeding the pigeons, I knew that that should be shown opposite the oil painting.

Tim Stackpool:

Sure.

Kathie Sutherland:

And that was probably, that's something nobody else could have known because I knew. I would love to have done it, set up the illustrations according to themes, but I couldn't do that because it had to run chronologically year by year. And sometimes that's quite difficult because years blend into each other in terms of his output. Paintings of animals in 1978 and '79, it's very hard to draw a line and say this is the end of '78. And the same when he was preparing for the Vincent show, '82 and '83, I found that very difficult. So when I was assembling the images, occasionally I'd have to take something from '82 and put it in '83, just to make sense of a drawing relating to a painting.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

So that that was my creative input, that part.

Tim Stackpool:

Now there's only a thousand of these volumes being produced and they are very labour intensive to create, and a collector's item too. But do you think considering the thousands of hours that have been put into this, not only by you but by your colleagues, is that enough? Is a thousand enough?

Kathie Sutherland:

We won't know for a while, but I think one of the problems is storing these. There's seven volumes in a box, is quite a task for shipping and storage.

Tim Stackpool:

Sure, sure.

Kathie Sutherland:

And I suppose if the thousand copies go and the demand is there, then Black Inc and Morry Schwartz will probably think about doing a rerun.

Tim Stackpool:

After eight years of this, is this a defining work for your life? Is there anything else to come?

Kathie Sutherland:

It's certainly the defining work and I won't be able to close shop. I'll be looking. And I mean, for instance, I had to close, I had to say, "That's it no more."

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

But I know there's a drawing in Los Angeles, I've seen an iPhone snap of it.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

It should go into an addendum. But at the time of closing the catalogue, I didn't have enough information to include it.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

So throughout the catalogue, I've left gaps, and those gaps are for what will, because he was for many reasons, but he was generous, but he was also taking drugs. So occasionally he would sell things just quickly. They might not have been cataloged for an exhibition, they're just quickly sold. And I was also saying to somebody the other day, when he went into a rehab places, he did, he gave away drawings to people, sketching while he was in hospital and just giving them away. There's no way I will have found every drawing.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah, I know.

Kathie Sutherland:

So I had to leave the gaps. And that works quite well. And it worked quite well as it was reported in a newspaper article recently. Wendy amazingly found 197 drawings.

Tim Stackpool:

Wow.

Kathie Sutherland:

After I'd finished cataloguing, after I'd finished numbering the entire catalogue, she found 197. I nearly, I mean I absolutely choked with shock because they all had to be identified, dated, and then slotted in to the right spot. And some of them were quite important.

Tim Stackpool:

And given the intensity of the work, daily for you over the past eight years, how has your whole mental disposition changed after you closed the catalogue off, after you'd finished the work? It's been published now you wake up in the morning. What happens now? How has your day changed?

Kathie Sutherland:

I think my nights have changed a lot. I've had to carry the imagery of the entire catalogue in my head all this time, have to know all the time, the page sequence, where every, each category, because every year is divided into themes and categories. I couldn't afford, for a minute, to forget any of the detail of the catalogue.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

So my sleeping patterns have been horrendous and I have had, for years, I have had terrible nightmares. I wake up in an absolute panic thinking, I've forgotten this, I've left this art. And so I suppose the big difference will be that it's gone, I can't do anything about it now, I can relax a little bit.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah, so you are relieved or are you empty or are you regretful?

Kathie Sutherland:

I'm not empty, no. I think I'm relieved. I think it's a huge relief that it's on the printing press now.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah.

Kathie Sutherland:

It's gone. I can't be allowed to fiddle with it anymore at this stage.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. Well look Kathie, it's a tremendous achievement I have to admit.

Kathie Sutherland:

Thank you Tim.

Tim Stackpool:

And such a pleasure to hear you talk about it and very much looking forward to, at some point, being able to pour over all the volumes and see the extent of your work and to see this catalogue of Whiteley's work. It'll just be amazing to do so. And thank you so much for your time on the podcast.

Kathie Sutherland:

Great pleasure Tim. Thank you.

Tim Stackpool:

That's Kathie Sutherland, talking about her eight year project cataloguing Brett Whiteley's work, a never-ending project really, as she said. And the one off print release is limited to 1000 copies, with each individual set foiled with a unique number in the series. Head to the Schwartz City website to take a look, at [schwartzcitybooks.com](http://schwartzcitybooks.com).

## AMELIA SAWARD – Ballarat Foto Biennale

Tim Stackpool:

Okay finally, the Ballarat International Foto Biennale has partnered with the Format International Photography Festival and the Gallery of Photography Ireland to launch Mass Isolation Australia, a visual record of the COVID-19 crisis on Instagram. Inspired by the 1937 Mass Observation Project, which specialised in documenting everyday life in Britain and continues to this day, Mass Isolation Australia invites Australians to share their photographs and experience to build an online visual archive of this extraordinary moment in our history.

Tim Stackpool:

Amelia Saward is a curator on the project. She joins us on the phone. Thanks for your time, Amelia.

Amelia Saward:

No problem. Thanks for having us, Tim.

Tim Stackpool:

That's all right. Now how about how this whole project evolved? Can you give us a bit of an idea?

Amelia Saward:

So, basically the project really evolved, the FORMAT Festival in the UK, a big photography festival over in England. They started a Mass Isolation account in conjunction with the Gallery Photography in Ireland, and it looks like a great project. Basically, we got involved with them and decided to create an Australian version so we could document the impact of coronavirus in Australia, and create a digital visual archive for that. We're really pleased to partnership with them and create the Australian version of this project.

Tim Stackpool:

How can people get involved in this?

Amelia Saward:

They can get involved on the Instagram account. It's MassIsolationAUS for Australia. They can tag us in their photos or they can use the hashtag #massisolationAUS, and we'll see them through there. We're really keen for people to share all their photos with us, whatever they'd like to tag us in, whether they're a professional photographer or they're more of a ... I guess someone with their iPhone, just documenting things around the house. That's absolutely fine. We want everyone to participate. It's completely free. But yeah, it's based off the Instagram platform.

Tim Stackpool:

This is a significant time in our history. How do you think photographs are capturing the entirety of this impact in terms of emotion, really, beyond just observation?

Amelia Saward:

I think photographs, they've always been used as a good source of documentation. But also it's that crossover of documenting, but as an art form, they do have the ability to evoke emotion to allow people to document more their inner feelings as well.

Amelia Seward:

I think it's important, at the moment a lot of people are in their homes. They're not going out as much. This is very much a global issue, but at the same time, people are in private spheres quite a bit. Photography, and particularly being able to share it digitally, gives people a visual way of communicating with others and of sharing their images with the wider world as well.

Tim Stackpool:

I think in terms of mobile phone ownership, pretty much everyone has a camera built into their mobile phone. I'm not aware of any actual phone that has no camera built in. In terms of curating these images, what are you looking for?

Amelia Seward:

We don't want to dictate anything in particular that we are looking for. We just want a range of whatever the public want to share with us. We're getting some who are clearly professional photographers who are using it as a chance to document their perceptions. But then we're getting people who very much don't have a background in photography and are just taking photos of things at home, their family, their household, that kind of thing. We really do want everyone's day-to-day experiences.

Tim Stackpool:

I wonder if there's any kind of social trends that you're seeing here. Some themes like loneliness, abandonment, domestic violence, we've talked about quite a bit actually generally in the community during this isolation period, or inner reflections. Are you seeing any sort of trend in the pictures that you're receiving?

Amelia Seward:

Yeah, we have. We haven't seen anything in particular domestic violence-related. Some of the themes we are seeing, I think early on we saw quite a few street-scape kind of images, photographs that were very much taken out in what would usually be very basic public areas and there was a clear sense of shock really or surprise at what those kinds of scenes looked like at the moment.

Amelia Seward:

I think perhaps more later on like more ... that was a few weeks ago that more we're getting to a point where we're seeing posts that are of more inner reflection or a sense of loneliness, but also a sense of family and of friends, that people are really coming together as a community. But also that sense of loneliness. A lot of images of people looking in through windows, through doors, taken from the road, people's driveways, that kind of thing. So there are definitely themes, loneliness, reflection, and just the awe of what the city is looking like at the moment.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah. We're living in a period now of heightened anxieties amongst some members of the community. Are there any images that you've received that have been particularly moving for you?

Amelia Saward:

Definitely. There's been a few. There was one image that I found particularly moving, someone had taken it of their elderly parent sitting alone on a bed with the curtains drawn and lot of mood lighting. It was a darkened room and it is difficult thinking of that, of the older members of our community who may be alone, or not being able to have as many visits. The experience of this is hard enough for everyone, but for people in our community who are already more vulnerable, then it is especially difficult. Images like that can be particularly moving for us.

Tim Stackpool:

Yeah, there's certainly the extent of isolation that members of the community feel anyway, and now it's been amplified to a large extent because of the fact that there's pretty much no movement around the community.

Amelia Saward:

Definitely. And perhaps it's also making some of us realise how isolated certain members usually are, how we're feeling that now, and that's what some people ... their reality is a lot of the time. I'm hoping that perhaps this will also lead to perhaps greater compassion amongst the general public for people who are feeling in isolated situations.

Tim Stackpool:

I think in general there'll be less taken for granted going forward Amelia after we come through all of this. But at some point you actually intend to hold a real world exhibition of some of the photos you're receiving?

Amelia Saward:

Yes, we do. It's a little bit undecided at moment. We're definitely planning on having a project and an exhibition based around this project next year. The main Ballarat Biennale is on in August next year, so we will hold an event that is the continuation of this then. We're not sure if it will be a physical exhibition or perhaps, given the format of the original project online, that will be confirmed a little bit later. But if people want to keep an eye on the Facebook pages, Instagram, and the website, then there definitely will be an exhibition of some form next year related, so they can hear more about it then.

Tim Stackpool:

It's quite interesting that you've actually been able to generate an obvious evolution due to the situation that we're in. You've actually been able to extend what your photo biennale would originally try to achieve, and now you have this vehicle which is born out of an unfortunate circumstance to create a whole different perspective and a whole different motivation in terms of what people can do to participate in what you guys are doing.

Amelia Saward:

Yes, definitely and I think it gives also people who perhaps wouldn't usually get the chance to participate or to engage with the festival, it gives a whole new way, a whole new audience of people who will

engage with it, and hopefully will continue to do so. We're just very keen to see it. We're enjoying seeing everyone's submissions and a very keen for people to keep sending through their photos.

Tim Stackpool:

Excellent, Amelia. Well done on putting this all together. I hope it continues to go well, albeit due to difficult circumstances, but congratulations on getting it up.

Amelia Saward:

Thank you so much Tim.

Tim Stackpool:

That's Amelia Saward talking about Ballarat International Foto Biennale's Mass Isolation Australia Instagram project, and you can get more details by visiting [Ballaratfoto.org](http://Ballaratfoto.org) that's photo's spelled F-O-T-O. Okay, so [Ballaratfoto.org](http://Ballaratfoto.org).