

ARTMARKET

Issue 36 Second Quarter 2010

REPORT

Essential info for collectors of art
with a focus on Australasia and
the new emerging global markets



The background image shows two women from behind, standing in an art gallery. They are looking at a large, monochromatic blue portrait of a man with a beard, which occupies the right half of the cover. To the left of the women is a tall, narrow pink artwork. The woman on the left is wearing a white top and a dark skirt, while the woman on the right is wearing a light-colored dress with a floral pattern and high heels.

Hong Kong rising
Art market Analysis
Aboriginal Art
Video Art
Artist practice
Artist Yi Zhou
John Schaeffer
interviewed

AUD \$17.95

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Work benefits



Artists' studios, Factory 798 being bulldozed in Beijing

Artists have to live like everyone else. Serena Bentley looks at how a number of innovative artists are supporting their practice and how their labour impacts on their art.

In February this year, a number of artists were forcibly evicted from their studios in Beijing's renowned art district, Factory 798. Emblematic of China's relentless economic development, the studios are being destroyed to make way for high-end shops, cafes and commercial galleries. The demolition of these spaces not only reflects the rapid growth and popularity of contemporary Chinese art both locally and internationally, but also reveals the financial strain on artists as they are pushed out of main centres.

This issue is not exclusive to Beijing. Finding studio space and sustaining it is equally pertinent for artists in Australia and New Zealand. As population in urban areas increases, artists must take a multi-leveled approach to obtaining workspace. They are often forced to share studios, move to outer suburbs or work from home.

For fine art students in Australasia, studio spaces are often provided by the institutions they attend. Upon graduation however, artists are wholly responsible for generating revenue to maintain their practice. If they do not make sufficient sales independently or through a dealer to support themselves as full-time artists (this is the domain of a small group of established practitioners) their living costs must be subsidised in other ways. Anita Taylor, Director of the National Art School in Sydney observes that "The preparation (young artists) require for post-art school careers needs to reflect the diversity of methods possible of supporting their art practice, and to ensure they have equal credibility as there is no widespread or common pattern of survival and income in the visual arts."¹

Tom Lowenstein, Director of Lowenstein's Arts Management says that of the 2,500 artists on his books, at least 80 per cent do not earn their income from art alone.² Consequently artists can often be found working within the arts in a larger sphere – in public institutions, dealer galleries and secondary and tertiary teaching establishments and Anita Taylor sees this as a realistic trajectory for young artists as to how to manage and develop their occupation. She says: "Most emerging (and often established) artists have 'portfolio careers' where they may earn some money through teaching or working in associated jobs or professions to essentially support what they would see as their main practice."³

'Pursuing a career in the visual arts is not an easy path, but as these artists prove, the journey makes for compelling, problematic – and sometimes profitable – viewing.'

Opposite:
Billy Apple, *Paid* an ongoing series begun in 1987
Invoice mounted on lithograph on paper

Below:
Chris Howlett
Hire Me Out,
video archive
Image courtesy the artist

Sometimes, artists operate outside of the art world entirely, working full time or taking part-time jobs that complement studio hours. Many of the artists I spoke with have worked odd jobs to pay the rent – at bars, factories or clothing stores. Brisbane-based artist Chris Howlett made this kind of routine labor the subject of a major conceptual project during his tenure at the California Institute of Arts from 1999 to 2000.

Hire Me Out consisted of a series of activities executed in Los Angeles in which the artist hired himself out to members of the local art community. Each transaction involved an artist's fee, a verbal contract and recorded video documentation of the event. Howlett explains, "The task and rate of pay would always be negotiated depending on the requested service, but the participant would always be aware that when they hired me out they were participating in a collaborative art project even if it meant disposing of their trash."⁴ The series culminated in his MFA thesis exhibition at CalArts that consisted of a video archive of his labor reduced to hours worked, money paid and tasks performed. The artist built walls, made crates, cleaned studios, gave massages. For his services as masseur, he charged acquaintance Jesse Proska a rate of US\$6.25 an hour, receiving US\$18.75 for three hours' work. The entire massage was recorded on film. As such, Howlett's assignments become performative.

Like Howlett, American artist Andrea Fraser uses herself as her medium, but her 2004 performance



PAID



AUCKLAND CITY

Property Location
40 Elizabeth Knox Place, St Johns 1005
Postal Address 455618
B Apple
40 Elizabeth Knox Place
St Johns
Auckland 1005



RATES INSTALMENT NOTICE

TAX INVOICE (GST inclusive) GST NO. 53-101-038
PERIOD 01/07/02 TO 30/06/03
BILLING NUMBER 000000455618
INSTALMENT NUMBER ONE OF FIVE
INVOICE DATE 20/08/02
VALUATION NUMBER 01601410030500
RATEABLE VALUE \$7500
PROPERTY DESCRIPTION UNIT F WITH AU9 & AU15
LEGAL DESCRIPTION UNIT F UP 101056 AU9, AU15

Rates Breakdown

Description of Rates	Value/Unit	Rate	Total rates for year
Residential		0.67231	504.23
UAC Waste Collection	1	47.00	47.00
			\$551.23

Rates Instalments

Number	Amount	Payable by
1	111.23	20/09/02
2	110.00	20/11/02
3	110.00	20/01/03
4	110.00	20/03/03
5	110.00	20/05/03
	\$551.23	

YOUR RATES THIS YEAR

SEE THE ENCLOSED BROCHURE FOR DETAILS

A 2001/2 Rates Council ARC Levy	\$444.75 \$54.96	B Plus uniform annual charge for Waste Management	\$47.00	C Plus Increase ARC Levy	\$4.52
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Note: This assumes no valuation or differential change from previous year.

ARC Levy	\$52.87
Council Rates	\$437.11
GST	\$61.25
TOTAL RATES	\$551.23

Important Notes

- If you wish to pay your rates in one sum, and take advantage of the 2.25% discount of \$12.40, your payment of \$538.83 must be received by Auckland City before 4.30pm on 20/09/02.
- The minimum payment due is \$111.23 and must be received by Auckland City before 4.30pm on 20/09/02. Any portion of this amount remaining unpaid after 4.30pm on 20/09/02 will incur a 10% penalty of up to \$11.12.
- Payments received by us up to 07/08/02 have been included on this notice.
- Please read the enclosed information about the Rates Direct Payment option. If you intend paying by Rates Direct, you do not need to pay the minimum amount due provided your application reaches Auckland City by 04 September 2002.

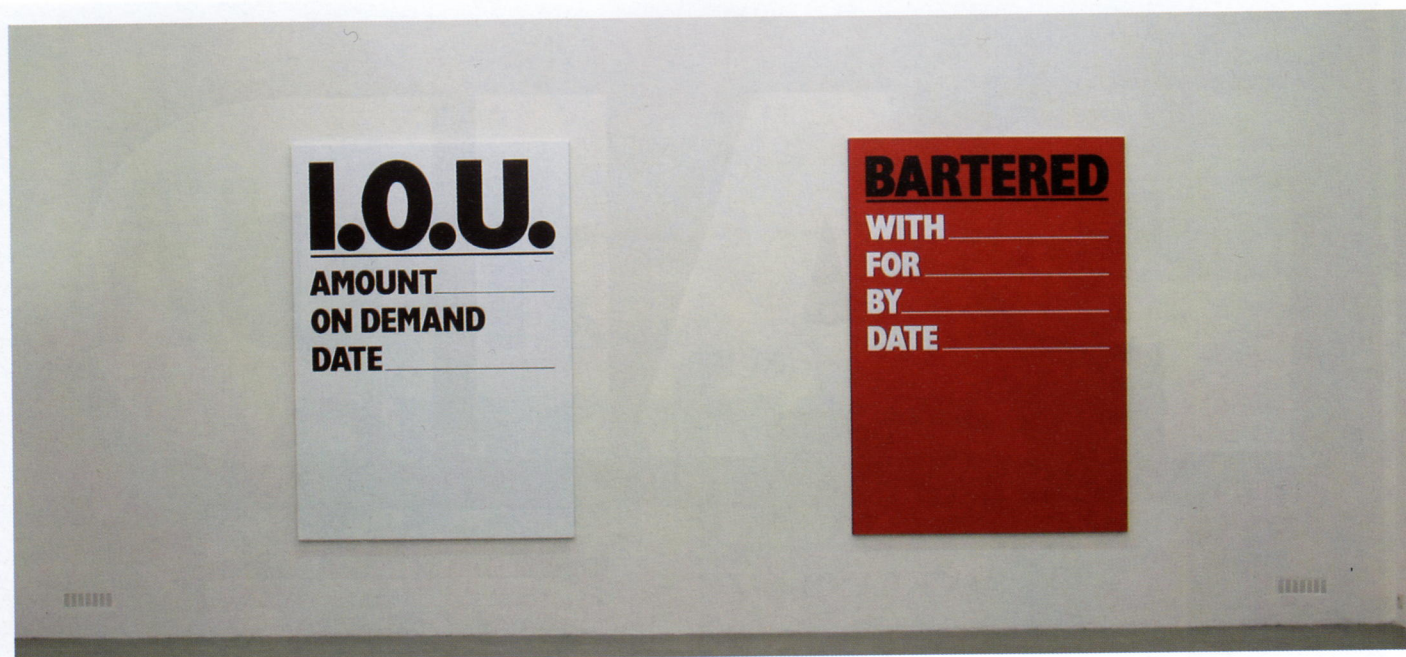
Statement of Account

BALANCE AT 1 JULY	0.00
PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS	0.00
PAYMENTS MADE	0.00
PENALTIES	0.00
INSTALMENT No. ONE	111.23
MINIMUM PAYMENT	\$111.23

Current - Please pay by 20/09/02 **\$111.23**

Discounted amount to pay in full
if paid by 20/09/02 **\$538.83**

THE ARTIST HAS TO LIVE LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE



Above:
Billy Apple
I.O.U. (untransacted), 1987
Acrylic on linen
Image courtesy the artist

Billy Apple
Bartered (untransacted), 1984
Acrylic on linen
Image courtesy the artist

Untitled takes things to the next level. The work consists of a videotaped sexual encounter between the artist and an unidentified collector who paid US\$20,000 for the privilege. The contractual terms of this transaction were worked out in advance by the artist's dealer, Friedrich Petzel, and the collector received an unedited video of the performance for his part in the collaboration. Shrugging off the adage that selling your art is a form of prostitution, Fraser explained: "All of my work is about what we want from art, what collectors want, what artists want from collectors, what museum audiences want."¹

In these instances Howlett and Fraser make labour the subject of their art. Other artists prefer to make their jobs work for them. In 2000, New Zealand artist Rohan Wealleans used a part-time job to his advantage, making the dairy he worked in a location for his short film *Where's Our Indians?* This entrepreneurial drive is epitomised in the practice

of New Zealand conceptual artist Billy Apple. The subject of a major exhibition at the Witte de With Centre for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam last year, his proposition that "the artist has to live like everyone else" has appeared in numerous contexts including billboards, magazines and electronic signs since its inception during the economic boom of 1985.

Apple reveals the inherent transactions between art and everyday life. His name is trademarked, he has his own logo and presents himself as a corporate entity. His work addresses the business of art. Apple's *Paid* series is an ongoing body of work in which patronage is made overt. Collectors are invited to foot the bill for invoices associated with Apple's day-to-day living expenses and, upon payment, receive their artwork – a framed invoice emblazoned with Apple's aforementioned catchphrase. Other series carry slickly designed tag-lines like "I.O.U.", "commissioned", "auctioned" and "sold". These bald statements lay bare the transactions that the artist and collector (or institution) have entered into.

Apple proves there's money in ideas: his work is highly collectable. For other artists, cultivating an income is more challenging. Chris Howlett postulates: "How can you live off your art work? Do you make paintings or do you apply for every grant, competition, residency and public art commission under the sun ... in the hope of winning to provide yourself with an artist fee to live off?"²

Anita Taylor says, "It becomes harder to find structures and systems of support beyond the art school community the further you are away from it." But she believes that "maturity and experience may deepen the achievements within the individual practice itself."³ Pursuing a career in the visual arts is not an easy path, but as these artists prove, the journey makes for compelling, problematic – and sometimes profitable – viewing.

'The work consists of a videotaped sexual encounter between the artist and an unidentified collector who paid US\$20,000 for the privilege.'

Billy Apple is represented by Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington: www.hamishmckaygallery.com and Sue Crockford Gallery, Auckland: www.suecrockford.com
Apple's works are priced from the cost of a given invoice to NZ\$500,000.00.

Andrea Fraser is represented by Friedrich Petzel Gallery, New York: www.petzel.com
Friedrich Petzel Gallery refrained from offering a price range for the artist's work.

Chris Howlett is self-represented: www.christopherhowlett.com/
Howlett's works are priced between AU\$5.25 and \$15,000.00.

¹ Taylor, Ibid.

² Anita Taylor, email correspondence with the author, April 12, 2010.

³ Tom Lowenstein in conversation with the author, April 21, 2010.

⁴ Taylor, Ibid.

⁵ Chris Howlett, email correspondence with the author, April 13, 2010.

⁶ Andrea Fraser in 'Sex, Art and Videotape', The New York Times Magazine, June 13, 2004.

⁷ Howlett, Ibid.

⁸ Taylor, Ibid.