

**“ USE TO STOP
DOORS FROM RATTLING
IN FRAMES ”**

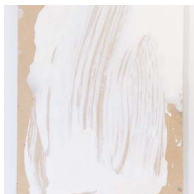
Teelah George





**“ USE TO STOP
DOORS FROM RATTLING
IN FRAMES ”**

Teelah George



The museum undermines one's confidence in sense data and erodes the impression of textures upon which our sensations exist. Memories of 'excitement' seem to promise something, but nothing is always the result... Museums are tombs, and it looks like everything is turning into a museum. Painting, sculpture and architecture are finished, but the art habit continues. Art settles into a stupendous inertia. Silence supplies the dominant chord.

From Some Void Thoughts On Museums, The Writings of Robert Smithson, edited by Nancy Holt, New York, New York University Press, 1979

Robert Smithson's famous comparison of the museum and the tomb is in some ways accurate, even though it insults both museum patrons and anyone who has ever felt the urge to commemorate the dead. The museum aims, like the tomb, to stop time, however gruesome or melancholy the task of preservation may be.

Following this analogy the life of the artwork occurs somewhere else - in the studio, for example, although Smithson would likely be turning in his own tomb at the continued persistence of the indoor 'art habit'. The studio does provide the yin to the museum's yang. In the studio things materialize and transmogrify and mutate. In the museum it is 22 degrees Celsius and between 52 and 54 percent humidity, always, conditions tailored to prevent material reaction. The studio means experimentation, the testing of hypotheses. The museum publishes papers on what worked.

At this point, I should declare my vested interest in these analogies not only as someone who believes in the necessity of remembering what's passed but as an employee of a museum, specifically as an employee of Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery at the University of Western Australia. 'LWAG' is a museum despite its gallery tendencies as it maintains, at this point in time, three collections: the University of Western Australia Art Collection; the Berndt Museum collection, a large and important archive of Aboriginal art and cultural materials, and the Cruthers Collection of Women's Art. The latter is the collection that I, as curator, care for and it is the collection that sets this body of work in motion.

Use to stop doors from rattling in frames molds the liner narrative of an artwork's journey from studio to museum into a more globular, porous shape. Something like a circle, but more nebulous. The works respond not only to their own material condition, titled as a whole after an instruction on the packet of the tack that studs their surfaces but also to the 'CCWA', which became an engine for material research. I suspect Teelah's interest in the CCWA follows on from a previous engagement with a memoir and photographic archive documenting her grandfather's employment at the Wyndham Meatworks. The CCWA began itself as a partial, personal archive of Australian art history, honed and maintained by a family in their Mosman Park home. The 2007 gift by Sir Jim and Lady Sheila Cruthers to UWA of works amassed over more than 30 years of collecting marked the beginning of another era for this 'domestic' archive; as a public resource, subject now to the conditions and infrastructure of the museum. This creation story overlays the story of the objects in the collection themselves - their inbuilt material data, their narrative references and also the story of their movement through space and time, from studio to home to storeroom to gallery to museum, between museums.

Despite specific origins, a collection built around the self-portraits of women artists, use to stop doors from rattling in their frames appears, to borrow again from Robert Smithson, as a 'collection of generalizations that mobilize the eye' – somewhat abstract. I'll admit my own initial surprise in seeing the works on their way to exhibition, given that Teelah and I had looked at particular collection works for particular reasons – Goody Barrett's 1998 Limestone Creek On Lissadell Station, for its ochres and its connection to Wyndham; Pat Larter's enormous, neon Bumpty Bump from 1993, because of my own obsession with its surface and story, Vanessa Milner's Happiness, a surreal pencil drawing from what appears to be the only commercial exhibition the artist ever held, in 2000, preserved now 'forever' on the public record.

There are remnants of subject and narrative, of landscape, object or figure, but this body of works has expanded to respond not just to one collection but to the processes of collecting, drawing from other collections held at the Art Gallery of Western Australia and the John Curtin Gallery. They recognize and challenge the processes of conservation and remembering. Built up in increments as a collection is itself, the works describe a gradual accumulation of time that disguises the thoughts of their maker, as notches carved on a cell wall might indicate years without referring to specific events.

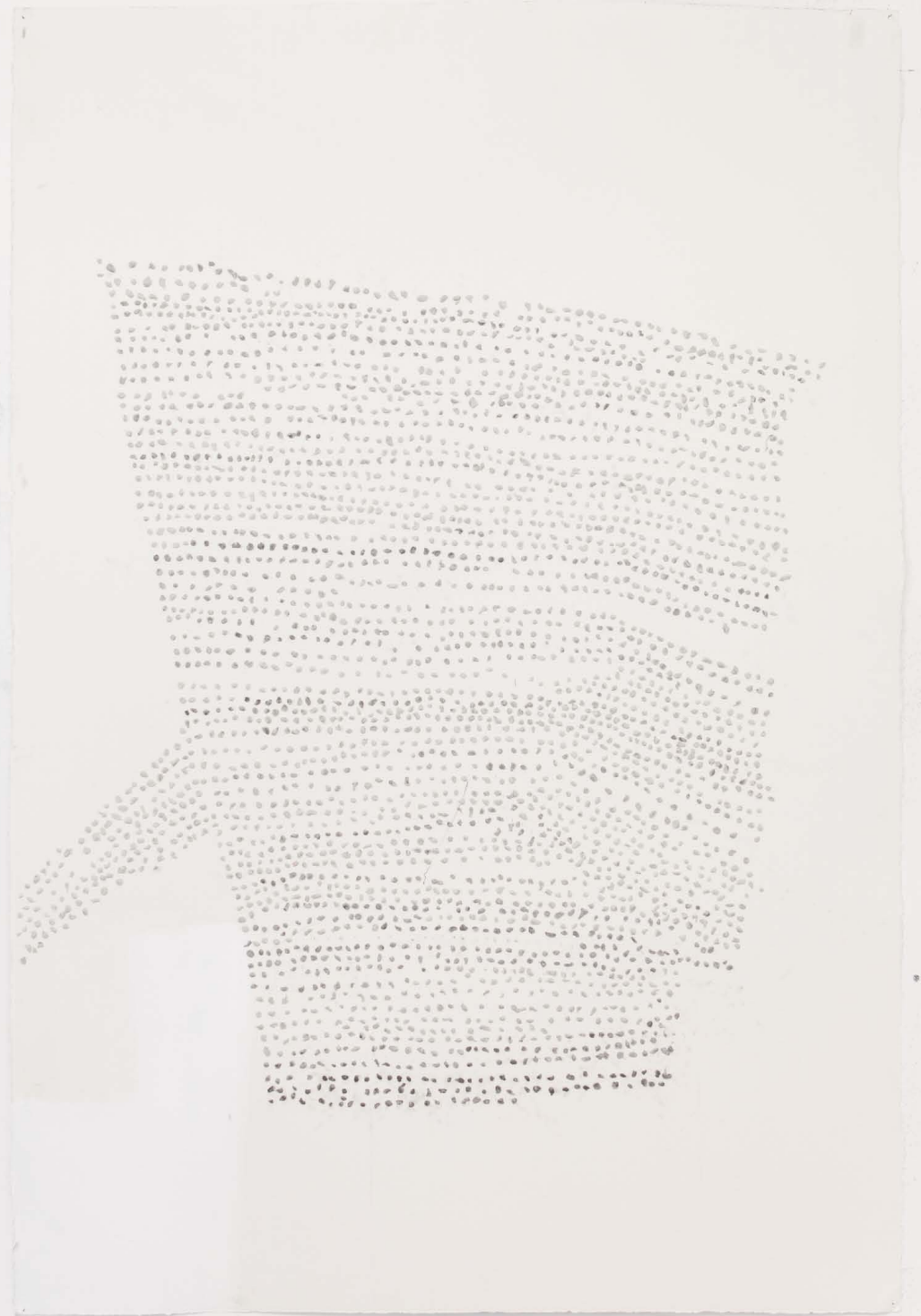
Held in their substance a battery of references linked together by the impulse simply to see what happens next, a database disguised by an tactile, opaque system of counting, cataloging, classifying. Archival frames hold the temporary stabilizations of the studio in place. They are works made with an eye on the future, with the awareness of their potential circulation, of the relationships they might form with disparate objects on the wall of a living room, on a storeroom shelf or compactus.

Each element of the exhibition presents a challenge to time; the invitation disposed of once the exhibition closes, the putty that records the moment and the hand that gave it its shape, the glass that battles with UV rays for as long as it can, the object taking its chance on outlasting us all. Use to stop doors from rattling in frames requests that we live comfortably with the temporary, with entropy, with the knowledge that even at 22 degrees and 52 percent humidity, our archives have lives beyond our control.

Gemma Weston
Cutator, Cruthers Collection of Women's Art



1) *Use to stop doors from rattling in frames (2014)*
Power tack, tape, granite and graphite on cardboard
165 x 115 x 6 cm (framed)
photographer, Thomas Rowe



2) *Cheese tin creek (2014)*
Power tack, house paint and graphite on watercolour paper
165 x 115 x 6 cm (framed)
photographer, Thomas Rowe



3) *Old country, record (2014)*
Yellow tack, house paint, and power tack on watercolour paper
165 x 115 x 6 cm (framed)
photographer, Thomas Rowe



4) *Like watching rage (2014)*
Power tack, house paint and graphite on watercolour paper
165 x 115 x 6 cm (framed)
photographer, Thomas Rowe



5) *Hold unsteady objects from falling (2014)*
Power tack and glitter on watercolour paper
165 x 115 x 6 cm (framed)
photographer, Thomas Rowe



6) *Paper weight* (2014)
Power tack, house paint and graphite on watercolour paper
165 x 115 x 6 cm (framed)
photographer, Thomas Rowe



7) *A measure* (2014)
Power tack, house paint and graphite on watercolour paper
165 x 115 x 6 cm (framed)
photographer, Thomas Rowe



8) *Notes, memos and charts 1 (2014)*
Oil and enamel on board with ceramic
40 x 21 x 6 cm
photographer, Thomas Rowe



9) *Notes, memos and charts 2 (2014)*
Oil and enamel on board with ceramic
40 x 30 x 6 cm
photographer, Thomas Rowe



10) *Notes, memos and charts 3 (2014)*
Oil and enamel on board with ceramic
40 x 21 x 6 cm
photographer, Thomas Rowe

Teelah George (b.1984 Perth) employs archives and collections as a point of departure and questioning within her practice. Through a multi disciplinary approach, including, painting, drawing, print, sculpture and installation, she examines the relationship between narrative, representation and archival frameworks. Recent projects include; *Use to stop doors from rattling in frames* (Venn Gallery, Perth), *Will to Keep* (107 Projects, Sydney) both 2014, *Meatworks Mens Qtrs* (OK Gallery, Northbridge), *Thematic Mapping* (MOANA, Perth) both 2013, and *Hey Babe horizon* (Perth), a collaborative public art commission with Neil Aldum for City of Perth, 2013. Teelah has been a finalist in the *2013 Fremantle Print Award*, *Rick Amor Drawing Prize 2014* and a semi finalist in the *2013 Doug Moran National Portrait Prize*. Later this year Teelah will participate in a group exhibition curated by Richard Lewer, *Win Win* (Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide), *The City of Joondalup Invitation Art Award* and a studio artist residency at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA).

teelahgeorge.com

SPECIAL THANKS

Gemma Weston
Robert Cook
Jessie Mitchell
Thomas Rowe
Kate Hamersley
Richard Lewer
Lachie Bisset
Sonja Danilovic
John Durey
Venn Gallery
Ruth and Nigel @ Bitches Brew
Cruthers Collection of Women's Art
Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery

V E I I. Gallery

NUDEDESIGNSTUDIO.COM.AU