

2016: Issue 7: The list: 2016 edition



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Australian art power lists, like winning second prize in a beauty contest



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Of course it is not criticism. Of course it is not worth reading. Contrary to this, of course people read it (more than almost anything else I write), and of course it is fun to write: the list, 2016 edition.

1. Jennifer Moon, Felix Kalmenson, Yuri Pattison, Institute for new feeling, Julika Rudelius, Stefanos Tsivopoulos. No Confidence. Success Gallery. A declaration of intention, that flattened the competition at the Perth International Arts Festival, showed the direction Success would travel in, and demonstrated the gallery's commitment to absolutely excellent global art. No Confidence was a show that I was ambivalent to at the time (<http://sensibleperth.blogspot.com.au/2016/04/no-confidence-success.html>), but in retrospect it is the best show seen in Perth this year from the most ambitious and consistently bold and interesting space to show art this year.
2. Mary Reid Kelley. Priapus Agonistes. AGWA's Screen Space. (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=28) A strange video work, but one that managed to juggle the difficult history of art and cinema – stretching right from classical antiquity through modernist 'Avant garde' into the contemporary world without being boring or trite. Here at Number 2 for its breadth of vision, and its skilful literary and filmic execution, and humour.
3. Julie Gough. Collisions. Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. This artwork was an incredible one; you can read the long review here (<http://sensibleperth.blogspot.com.au/2016/05/jitish-kallat-and-julie-gough-agwa-and.html>). But in essence, it was one that showed important contemporary art being made here in Australia, about important issues that need to be addressed, in an incredibly interesting and intelligent manner. Curated by Gemma Weston.
4. Nicola Gunn. Piece for person and ghetto blaster. (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=351). PICA. This was a really wonderful performance, pared back to a single person on stage with limited props. A searching, didactic analysis followed by the most convincing finale of the year.
5. Chen Chieh-Jen. Echoes of a historical photograph. Success Gallery. Curated by Laetitia Wilson, this was another stunning work of art that I only wish I had have written about at the time. A good indication of the relatively unknown (or at least not previously exhibited here) and yet important work that success gallery was able to bring.
6. Megan Cope. The Blaktism. (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=288). Spectrum project space. Part of 'dead centre', curated by Anna Richardson. A work that blew me away the first, second, and third time I watched it the whole way through. The full review can be read by clicking on the title.
7. Success Gallery. Kieron Broadhurst, Ollie Hull, Giles Bunch. An Event. (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=375). Also addressed in this issue, the website was a fascinating part of the work, but there were few things this year as mad and involving as this

strange artwork that transformed the space into a cinema set and a conspiracy theory all at once. There really was nothing else quite like it.

8. Shannon Lyons. A dead mouse and a Broken Coffee machine. (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=253) Small things can often be the most important, and Lyon's work continuously proves that the tiniest of interventions can often be the most important details.
9. Jacobus Capone. Volta. Success Gallery. Another amazing work, that took up the whole of Success' main gallery space – a luxury that is rarely afforded, though Capone made a similarly spatial work that topped last years list with his involving work in PSAS. One of the most successful of success' shows due to its engagement with the entirety of the space. The essay can be read here. (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=67). While the writing about this show is quite critical, Capone' work here was undeniably one of the most impressive things around. We look forward to his work in PICA for PIAF with great anticipation.
10. Peer to Peer. Benjamin Forster, Nicolas Maignet, Metahaven, Lance Wakeling. Pet Projects. Pet Projects was the second major ARI-sort-of that opened this year, run by Gemma Weston, Andrew Varano and Dan Bourke. The shows it put on seemed to be an intelligent counter-point to the overblown scale and effort of Success (not to say no effort was put in, but just look to the names: 'success', 'pet projects': there are two very different forms of irony at work here). It none-the-less presented some extremely important and engaging artwork: Max Grau's *craving for narrative*, Kimmo Modig's *Express Yourself*, CIOMA (I didn't see these last two, but I heard about them – quite a bit.) Jacqueline Ball's new (or rather, recently shown) photos and Dan Bourke's more than impressive collection of mugs. Despite this wonderful list of works, the artworks seemed almost constantly to be undercutting themselves in an ironic manner, pointing up their problems and flaws; or the shows did it for them. This internal-critical machinery (That is often a good thing, but sometimes, unfortunately, like in *the sixth year*, it was merely art showing how shit art is) makes it difficult to place the space. I feel slightly guilty for putting their first entry on the list at ten – but really, it could have been any of their shows and gone anywhere on this list and been at home, so diverse and divergent was this gallery's approach. Pet projects would probably hate being on this list because of this, and so I'll end its pain by saying that peer-to-peer was great.
11. Benjamin Forster. An encyclopaedia of sorts. Success gallery. Forster's show was an absolute joy to read through and spend time with. While Success' video work could be overwhelming, Forster's intimate and personal reflections provided an important counterpoint. I have never enjoyed didactic panels, but this show is cause for reconsideration of this judgement: and perhaps offers a model that moves away from the typically dull descriptions people give artwork.
12. J. (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=297)ames Cooper. Blend 43 (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=297). Shopfront gallery. Not only impressive on the ARI circuit, but throughout the selection of professional galleries as well – no mean feat for some aquarelle pencil and white-primed board. Proof if ever we needed it that you don't need a lot to make some of the best art around. Cooper's work unveils a bizarre psychological world in its naïve-art-like sketching, and one that is happily distinct from the increasingly Richter-like work that seems to be produced in contemporary painting.
13. S (<http://sensibleperth.blogspot.com.au/2016/05/jitish-kallat-and-julie-gough-agwa-and.html>)acred and Profane. AGWA. (<http://sensibleperth.blogspot.com.au/2016/05/jitish-kallat-and-julie-gough-agwa-and.html>) It is good to see the massive space in AGWA put to its full use, and Sacred and Profane did this in the best possible way. Few things this year were as wonderful as reading Jitish Kallat's re-casting of Ghandi's speech before the salt marches. I read it in its new form as a ray of hope from the largest democracy on earth.
14. Dangling in the Romp (https://www.sensibleperth.com/?page_id=372). Pet Projects. The second entry of Pet projects is here because all the strengths of the space were also in this show: its undercutting self-criticality, but it was paired with something more speculative and wild than its other shows.
15. Success Gallery. Bye. The best mini-golf course in town, while it could have been really silly, the miniature model of Trump's mansion by Dale Buckley, the golf course of spiritual enlightenment

by Lyndon Blue and many of the other holes proved that you could make a seemingly gimmicky idea into great art.

16. Rebecca Baumann. WA Focus. Art Gallery of Western Australia. A small show that functioned as a tiny retrospective, it was the best WA focus this year, and proves once again that Rebecca Baumann is one of our finest artists, and deserves the success she has had, and all the more that will come.

And so the list did perform a function, at least for me: To remind me to be thankful of all that is good that has happened in Perth this year past. Here's to 2016. Thank you to you all.

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