

## **Bricolage**

**Adelaide Central Gallery**

**27 March – 28 April 2017**

Welcome to Bricolage an exhibition of works by the artists **Peter Atkins & Matt Arbuckle**.

For those amongst you who have not come across the term 'bricolage' previously, perhaps the most apt English translation would involve phrases such as to make do, to tinker or more succinctly the term D.I.Y, do it yourself.

'Bricolage' has in many ways, inescapably always involved some form of subversion of content, beginning with DADA and Kurt Schwitter's transformations of the detritus of a collapsing Berlin (and by a nice piece of synchronicity Matt Arbuckle's work *Berlin* has arrived in time for the show), through to the allegedly low cultural debris and discarded material of Italian Arte Povera, to one of the most remarkable and enduring transformations of material some 40 years ago.

In an economically collapsing London of 1977 Jamie Reid's poster for the Sex Pistols single, *God save the Queen*, featured a souvenir/ed poster of Queen Elizabeth which had been officially produced for the silver jubilee and pasted all over London. Over the top of this poster four words 'god save the queen', cut ransom note style from various newspaper types were pasted centrally across the face of Queen Elizabeth by Reid, then photographed and printed –with the resulting poster being repasted all over London, and amusingly, over the top of the original souvenir poster.



Both items in 1977 were readily available to Reid and involving the selective and subverting 'piecing-together' of various components to form a new and un/intended reading.

Not incidentally, John Lydon aka Johnny Rotten, told his young audience to 'get off your arses and go' (here's that phrase again) 'do it yourself.'

Perhaps, then as we look at these particular works of bricolage we need be mindful that those everyday materials that may be or were at hand also involve a transformation of material through a number of strategies and processes.

It may be that what comes to hand determines the process, but as the example of Jamie Reid shows, elements of intervention and repurposing, not without a certain sly sense of humour, are at play. The found object to be tinkered with, repurposed and rerouted.

Both the artists in this show also use similar strategies with their material but also have a very different touch in relation to those strategies. That sense of an individual touch or voice remains a vital component in the work of bricolage. How much interference should the bricoleur involve themselves within the material? When and how does the material transform and speak beyond its origins?

Both draw allusive references with their material, each exhibit some forms of erasure which alter and decontextualise the material at hand to varying degrees. Both clearly contend with the formal qualities of the material at hand (and in relation to the formal qualities referenced in other artworks), which in truth may have been specifically saved and chosen for the work. Both show a sensitivity to the familiarity of everyday materials, a sense that we then as viewers participate with inherently.

We all know and associate the particular ochre of the government envelope, the deep cool cyan blue of a blueprint, the soft pastel blue of an envelope marked 'Par Avion' (although the association with envelopes now evince a form of nostalgia as that material is bypassed by other forms of electronic communication) or the crinkled onion skin texture of masking tape. But the knowing of a particular material in conjunction with other material can produce strange and apt synchronicities and readings

This is all material for the imagination, material made for a detour, the poetry of choices made by the bricoleur whose voice may speak not of things but of speaking through things. These are objects for contemplation and both Peter Atkins and Matt Arbuckle provide us with the material for that.

**Daryl Austin | 28 March 2017**