

## ANNE ZAHALKA BIOGRAPHY

Anne Zahalka is one of Australia's most highly regarded contemporary artists working with photography. She has exhibited extensively in Australia and internationally for over 20 years. Her works are held in most major public collections in Australia as well as numerous private and corporate collections in Australia and overseas.

International group exhibitions include *Acting the Part: Photography as Theatre*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Canada (2006); *Supernatural Artificial* at the Chulalongkorn Art Centre, Bangkok, Thailand (2005) and the Metropolitan Museum of Photography in Tokyo, Japan (2004); *Leopold Godowsky, Jr Color Photography Awards*, Photographic Resource Centre, Boston, USA (2005); *Photographica Australis* which was exhibited at the Sala del Canal de Isabel II in Madrid, Spain and travelled Asia (2002-2003) toured by the Australian Centre for Photography); *Unhomely*, Sonje Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyong Ju, South Korea (1998); and *Distanz und Domizil, Fotografie der Gegenwart*, Künstlerhaus Dresden, Germany (1997). Major group exhibitions within Australia include *Points of View: Australian Photography 1985-1995* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (2006); *Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968-2002*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2002-2003); *2nd Sight Australian Photography in the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2002); *Sporting Life*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2000); *Photography is Dead! Long Live Photography*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (1996); *Constructed Reality: Aspects of Contemporary Photography*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (1992); *The Readymade Boomerang*, Biennale of Sydney, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney (1990); *Twenty Contemporary Photographers*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, which toured to the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, and nationally (1990); and *Photography: The 1980s* at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (1988).

In 2003 she completed a major public art commission titled *Welcome to Sydney* for Sydney Airport. Seventeen portraits from this series were exhibited at the Museum of Sydney from 2002-2003. In 1997 Zahalka was commissioned by Community Aid Abroad, Melbourne, to create the series *Woven Threads*, which documented indigenous tribal women from the Philippines. Recent solo museum exhibitions include *Welcome to Wonderland*, presented by *Fotofreo: Fremantle Festival of Photography 2006* at the Western Australian Maritime Museum, Fremantle; *Anne Zahalka*, Maritime Museum, Sydney (2003); and *Fortresses and Frontiers*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (2002). Exhibitions of her two *Leisureland* series – *Leisureland* and *Leisureland regional* – produced between 1998 and 2003, have both toured extensively within Australian museums. In mid 2007, Zahalka's works were included in a major survey of Australian art, *DE OVERKANT / DOWN UNDER*, in The Hague, The Netherlands. In 2007, her work was also the subject of an Art Gallery of New South Wales Focus Room exhibition. Her series *Wild Life* (2007) was presented during the first exhibition *Wonderful World* at The Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum of Art, University of South Australia, Adelaide in 2007.

Anne Zahalka lives and works in Sydney.



CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY

HALL OF MIRRORS: ANNE ZAHALKA PORTRAITS 1987-2007



CENTRE FOR  
CONTEMPORARY  
PHOTOGRAPHY

HALL OF MIRRORS:  
ANNE ZAHALKA  
PORTRAITS 1987-2007

**CENTRE FOR  
CONTEMPORARY  
PHOTOGRAPHY**

**HALL OF MIRRORS:  
ANNE ZAHALKA  
PORTRAITS 1987-2007**

## CONTENTS

- 02 PREFACE  
**NAOMI CASS**
- 03 THE ART OF SELF DISPLAY:  
ON ANNE ZAHALKA'S PORTRAITURE  
**DANIEL PALMER**
- 32 SCENES FROM THE SHIRE  
**JULIE ROSE**
- 41 OBJECTS IN MIRROR MAY BE  
CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR  
**ANNE ZAHALKA IN CONVERSATION  
WITH CURATOR KARRA REES**
- 45 LIST OF WORKS
- 48 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
- 49 ANNE ZAHALKA BIOGRAPHY

## PREFACE NAOMI CASS DIRECTOR, CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY

It seems that photographic portraits of other people are of never-ending interest, even if the sitter is unknown. In the portraits of Anne Zahalka, the burden of scrutiny is evenly distributed across the sitter and the setting, and our attention is endlessly rewarded. *Hall of Mirrors: Anne Zahalka Portraits 1987-2007* is a timely exhibition, casting a longer look at a particular thread within Zahalka's photography. Portraiture for Zahalka has been a consistent, evolving and multi-layered practice. *Hall of Mirrors* presents work previously exhibited, examples of self-portraits that have not yet been exhibited and portraits commissioned for this exhibition.

A significant achievement for a small public art space, *Hall of Mirrors* is the first major survey CCP has undertaken in its 21 years of operation. Recently rehoused in George Street Fitzroy, CCP's five exhibition spaces form a nautilus, ideally suited to this journey through Zahalka's career.

The origin of *Hall of Mirrors* can be found in a conversation between Anne Zahalka and Daniel Palmer, when Daniel worked at CCP. Anne Zahalka's contribution far exceeds provision of a splendid 20 years of photography, and extends to her tenacious and dedicated contribution to realising this exhibition, for which we are truly grateful. Karra Rees, CCP Curator, is to be congratulated for charting new territory for the organisation, in undertaking such a major survey with relatively few resources and with great determination and skill. It is fitting that Daniel Palmer has contributed an informative and incisive essay for *Hall of Mirrors*.

Critical financial assistance for the exhibition has been provided by the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council. As is the reality of our sector, government funding provides an initial boost from which a portfolio of financial and in kind assistance is created, as always drawing firstly upon the artist, the industry and her supporters. I thank all sponsors listed in the acknowledgments on page 48. Also listed are public and private lenders to the exhibition. As the first large exhibition drawing upon loans from private and public collections, CCP is particularly grateful for their participation.

This catalogue has been achieved through a stroke of genius hatched at the Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and we thank Roslyn Oxley, Amanda Rowell, Anne Zahalka and their generous participants: Trevor and Carole Chappell, Patrick Corrigan AM, Amanda and Andrew Love, Lisa and Egil Paulsen, Reg and Sally Richardson, Katherine Green and Warren Tease, Eleonora and Michael Triguboff. Thank you all for facing the camera.

## THE ART OF SELF DISPLAY: ON ANNE ZAHALKA'S PORTRAITURE DR DANIEL PALMER

The magical, narcissistic and truth-bearing capacity of mirrors has a long history in legends and fairy tales. Think of the magic mirror in *Snow White*, who can only tell the fatal truth when asked “who’s the fairest of them all?”. But the notion of a hall of mirrors suggests wilful self-deception, derived from the distorted mirrors found at fun fairs.<sup>1</sup> Like so many nineteenth-century optical amusements, the hall of mirrors emerges in the face of the corresponding rise of empirical sciences – which sought truth through appearances. Instead, we see ourselves broken and stretched, fatter or thinner, taller or shorter than we really are – and this inspires delight. The visual joke relies on the power of an uncanny recognition that things are not what they seem. And indeed the loss of the self is the darker side of seeing ourselves dispersed as so many simulacra. This quality of mirrors is used to brilliant effect in the heady climax of Orson Welles’ *Lady from Shanghai* (1948). In one of the greatest scenes in cinematic history, the desperate fugitives lose themselves in an endless prism of reflection, attempting to shoot one another but unable to distinguish the real from the reflection. Welles, who had studied magic, evidently glimpsed the psychoanalytic insight of the ‘mirror stage’, in which the infant (mis)recognises itself as wholly separate from the world.<sup>2</sup>

The camera is a mirror with a memory. This was Oliver Wendell Holmes’ evocative phrase for the daguerreotype, the early photographic process that used polished metal as the surface for image creation.<sup>3</sup> Photography’s uncanny ability to hold the image that had previously been fugitive led immediately to the dominance of portraiture in the first decade of the camera’s use. Hence Charles Baudelaire’s diagnosis in his *Salon critique* of 1859 of a new narcissism, as society rushed “to gaze at its trivial image on a scrap of metal”.<sup>4</sup> The extraordinary fanaticism that Baudelaire felt had taken possession of all these new ‘sun-worshippers’ has hardly abated in the years since. We still love portraits just as much as our nineteenth-century ancestors, celebrity culture is alive and well, and the great memory machine of the camera continues to aid a culture of narcissism. Moreover, we are still swayed to the intoxicating fantasy that photographic portraits offer us an insight into the truth of a person’s character, just as we like to think that camera images truthfully reflect the world. We might call this particular delusion the ‘photographic stage’.

This exhibition of portraits by Anne Zahalka offers a unique insight into the Sydney-based artist’s practice and fascinations, and a new



artist #3 (Stephen Bush) 1990 duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

angle on her broader body of work. It includes a number of well-known series that have established Zahalka’s reputation as one of Australia’s preeminent art photographers – iconic images from *Resemblance* (1987), *Bondi, Playground of the Pacific* (1989) and *Open House* (1995). But it also shows us little known and never before seen images – some created for public exhibition, some for the artist’s personal archive and others on commission for magazines. For an artist who has recently become better known for her large-scale images of Australian leisure sites in *Leisureland* (1999–2001) and the blurry line between natural and unnatural landscapes in *Natural Wonders* (2004) and *Wonderland* (2006), this collection of images offers an unprecedented opportunity to assess Zahalka’s considerable output of portraiture over more than two decades.<sup>5</sup> Within an overriding exploration of the border between documentary

photography and theatrical artifice, we find that portraiture has been central to her practice. It has been Zahalka's vehicle to question stereotypical representations, usually through their humorous subversion. Formally, they range from large cibachromes and panoramas to photomontage. In all their variety, the images are united by Zahalka's interest in the ability of the camera to simultaneously display and deceive, achieved through the use of theatrical settings, props and poses. With a blend of Surrealist masquerade and melodramatic theatrics, Zahalka frustrates the seductive promise of photography to reveal a subject's secret, inner nature.<sup>6</sup> Instead, she offers us clichés and performances, actors engaged in role-playing or engaging in artifice. Her work belongs to a strain of postmodern portraiture that has its roots in nineteenth-century pantomime, theatre and dance and to avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

In this light it is worth considering the variety of approaches Zahalka has taken to photographing *artists*. Indeed, in the wake of the acclaimed 'death of the author' and demystification of the artist-as-genius, one might wonder why Zahalka turned to artists as a subject. Part of the answer lies in Zahalka's belief that the artist is a trickster, a conjurer of magic within the various realms of fictions we inhabit. Indeed this playfulness is brought to the fore in the previously unseen photographs of circus performers shown on the projection window outside the gallery.<sup>8</sup> The earliest of the ongoing *Artists* series, begun in 1989, play out artists' stereotypes – presenting a game player (Kim Donaldson), a scientist (Jan Nelson), a logician (Peter Tyndall) and *plein air* painter (Stephen Bush). Each portrait of her contemporaries is an elaborate staging designed around the artists' preoccupations. These are strong collaborations, reminiscent of Annie Leibovitz's portraits of celebrities like Whoopi Goldberg floating absurdly in a bathtub of milk or a naked Keith Haring entirely painted in his characteristic black-and-white graphic marks. The subjects have helped to create the environment for their pictures, and the artists' character is displaced onto what they do; thus the portraits are less celebrations of the great individual and more akin to the Constructivist belief that artists perform a productive social role.

In this exhibition seven early artist portraits are juxtaposed with a much more recent set of images. Less studio-oriented in their approach, these feature a new generation of artists working with photomedia whom Zahalka knows or admires. Once again the portraits are designed around the subject's artwork. Thus Rebecca Ann Hobbs floats above an Immants Tillers painting (at the Museum of Contemporary Art) in a reference to her gravity-defying conceptual photography. David Rosetzky is pictured at leisure in his neat backyard with his attentive well-groomed cat and pot plants. Horst Kiechle appears like a spaceman with a laser gun inside his white

sculpture. Selina Ou stands on a golf green, tripod and camera at the ready and light-meter in her hand – in reference to her own photograph of a golfer. Darren Sylvester appears as the new romantic pop star, with a flokati rug in front of a log fire, but alone with his guitar, iMac, Subway dinner and biography of The Smiths. These are portraits of how the artists wish to be seen, ideal ego-projections.<sup>9</sup> Zahalka seems to allude to the sublimation involved in the production of art, with characteristic Duchampian irony.

Zahalka's artist portraits form a contrast to the commissions of Australian art world figures, where her theatrical method is more contained and the figures stiffer. There is something of the anthropological in her depiction of the casual royalty of her gallerist Roslyn Oxley's museum-like domestic environment, and art collector Pat Corrigan engulfed by his collection highlights. Like the artists, they are surrounded by signs of their place in the world; just as early daguerreotype portraits showed their sitters with symbols of their trade, a technique borrowed from painting. The same proprietorial instinct is also true of Zahalka's extensive series of photographs of collectors. Aside from the visual spectacle, the Barbie or toy collector is defined through the display of their singular obsession. If the figures of the artist and collector have fascinated Zahalka it is perhaps because they invent their role in society. But an artist is also born into a heritage – that of the history of art. From the outset, Zahalka took it upon herself to play with this history and make it her own, from early photomontage work such as *The Immigrants No. 2* (1985), in which she restaged Frederick McCubbin's iconic Australian painting *The Pioneer* (1905) with migrants. Zahalka's reputation was secured with the *Resemblance* series, produced in 1986 during a residency in Berlin.<sup>10</sup> A series of costume dramas, it borrows knowingly from the canon of art history. One of its key images, *Marriage of Convenience*, is based directly on *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) by Jan van Eyck, a painting loaded with symbolic objects. Zahalka loosely mimics the poses and drapes of the original, and its famous convex now reflects the photographer. Contemporary details such as a radio and camera remind us that this is a conscious play upon the original. In fact, the portrait is also a modern image of two artists married for very contemporary visa-related reasons.

Most of the images in *Resemblance* are based on seventeenth-century Dutch genre paintings, where people are staged with the accoutrements of their trade. The particular tilted perspective is highly reminiscent of such painting, while several images include a black-and-white tiled floor associated with Vermeer. Indeed, *The Dutch Painter* loosely re-presents his *Allegory of Painting* (1666). In several of the images there are paintings on the wall that reference the earlier art historical period. But at the same time, the figures are contemporary late twentieth-century portraits; for instance,

the cleaner wears headphones. The images therefore function on one hand as formal portraits of real people, but in a pastiche style quoting a genre of painting that has been functionally redundant for centuries.<sup>11</sup> Zahalka's selection of source images can also be seen as a comment on the role that European art, and the values associated with it, has played in Australian culture. Meanwhile, the display format – large cibachrome prints, so favoured by postmodernists – provides the artificially rich colours and glossy surface to rival painting's impact.

In *Resemblance II* (1988), Zahalka abandoned the period styling, while continuing to portray individuals in the anachronistic manner of generic types. Figures such as *The Botanist*, *The Forger*, *The Card Player* and *The Writer* are shown at domestic workspaces laden with delicately placed symbolic objects such as bowls of fruit and drapes. The red-headed forger is depicted at work copying a Renaissance portrait (by Rogier van der Weyden), surrounded by art history books and reproductions. Zahalka appears to be reminding us that contemporary artists are forced to create within these image histories. Moreover, the figure of the forger stands in for Zahalka's own rampant image appropriations. These borrowings reached a new height in her *Gesture* (1993–4) series, in which she rephotographed and scanned historical paintings themselves, and extracted details. In the portrait section from that series included in this show, Zahalka has erased and darkened the faces in an early instance of digital imaging, revealing the expressivity of hands. Viewing these works, our own reflected faces float into the inky spaces of the paintings – implying that our identities are the product of historical circumstance. Meanwhile, *The Collector* seems to foreshadow Zahalka's more recent landscape imagery, with its 'fantastic' swarm of butterflies.

Zahalka's work has often explored the image of the immigrant. A child of refugee parents – with a Jewish Austrian mother and Catholic Czech father – and politicised by postmodernism in the 1980s, she has repeatedly prodded and tested national mythologies. *The Sunbather #1 and #2* (1989) are among the best known of Zahalka's images. The first photograph shows a woman in a black bikini shot from above, reading a penguin edition of Marcel Proust's modern novel *Remembrance of Things Past*. The second depicts a slim young redhead lying on the beach against a blue sky. Both images, especially the low angle and pose of the second, playfully parody what is undoubtedly Australia's most iconic and well-loved photograph, *Sunbaker* (1937), by the modernist photographer Max Dupain. The colours of the first, with the towel, hat and bikini, give it a nostalgic glow; Zahalka is effectively inserting back into history the more foreign image of intellectual, female beach culture. Familiarity with Dupain's work is essential to our understanding of *The Sunbather #2*; in the shift from black and white to colour, the

bronzed male icon has become pale, scrawny and androgynous (he is in fact 'the forger' of *Resemblance II*). Zahalka's restaging of the original work reveals the mythical nature of the cherished national stereotype. The work is a classic of Australian postmodernist photography, quoting a specific source and questioning its truth value by introducing an ironic reading.

The beach has long been regarded as a national symbol, signifying the apparently relaxed lifestyle of Australia's white settler inhabitants. The two sunbather images belong to a series called *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific*, in which Zahalka subverts the mythology and stereotypes that have evolved around our most famous beach. The series' other key image, *The Bathers*, takes inspiration from the celebrated Charles Meere painting *Australian beach pattern* (1940). Like Meere's painting, the people in her photograph are not 'individuals' but generic types. But unlike Meere's original, Zahalka presents a cast of people who more accurately reflect the multicultural nature of contemporary Australia. Moreover, Zahalka draws attention to the constructedness of her imagery, setting her photographs in a studio setting, importing sand, furniture and beach paraphernalia, and using an obviously artificial, painted backdrop whose edges are clearly visible. Other images in the series refresh the cultural stereotypes that define the visual history of Bondi – beach inspectors, council workers, Asian surfers and migrants. This series, made during a period in which Australia was more officially enthusiastic in its embrace of multiculturalism, is both satirical and affectionate about the Australian beach experience. A new set of documentary-style portraits of the Lebanese community at Cronulla challenge the latest chapter in Australia's racist history, with women in brightly coloured 'burqinis' and others training to be lifesavers.

While Zahalka's use of appropriation is less overtly feminist in orientation than some of her counterparts such as Julie Rrap, her most directly critical image was occasioned by a patriarchal advertisement, promoting a Fuji Professional Photography award. The black-and-white brochure featured 15 professional photographers, all of whom were men. Zahalka gathered a community of Sydney photographers and restaged the advertisement in the exact poses of the original, with its slogan as her title – *At last an award for you* (1989). This simple but effective riposte to an outdated male culture reads now as a photograph of commitment by a community at a moment in time – featuring a number of well-known artists such as Tracey Moffatt, Robyn Stacey, Sandy Edwards, Debra Phillips and Anne Ferran. Zahalka was in fact a finalist in one of the award categories.

Zahalka has often been inspired to challenge popular imagery, and has taken a great deal of inspiration from the sometimes wonderful,



(left) *At last an award for you* 1989 type C photograph 48.0 x 40.0 cm

(right) Advert for the inaugural FUJI Professional Photography Awards 1989 © Fujifilm



stereotypical imagery featured in postcards, of which she has a large collection (as several self-portraits show). Indeed, this passion explains why, in a series of photographs commissioned by Community Aid Abroad to document work the organisation had sponsored over several years with women on an island in the Philippines, Zahalka produced a remarkable series of postcard-like images. In *Woven Threads: Picturing Tribal Women in Mindanao* (1997) Zahalka presents three digitally-altered versions of each formal portrait, posed in landscapes transformed by logging and agriculture – hyper-real and touristic, black-and-white and ethnographic, and one with text on the image which attempts to return political context and agency to the subjects. The repetition emphasises the problematic of representation, playing on the conventions of representing the exotic other.

Similar motivations are at play in *Welcome to Sydney* (2002), a series of 17 panoramic portraits portraying the city's multicultural community in front of new housing estates and other Sydney

landscape (originally shown with a greeting in their local language). Zahalka's interest in portraiture and place, and the stereotypes involved in picturing cultural difference, was brought home in this public commission from the Sydney Airport. Pictured in traditional dress or with an object from their homeland, of all Zahalka's works these are the closest to traditional portraiture; the subjects stare back at us rather than being absorbed in their own thoughts.<sup>12</sup> However, the individuals and families appear distinctly out of place in their new surroundings, like cut-outs or as if they may have been pasted there by Photoshop. And like many of Zahalka's photographs, the series was available to purchase as a set of postcards.<sup>13</sup>

In *The Pencil of Nature* (1844), a sort of prospectus for the new medium of photography, William Henry Fox Talbot pointed out that groups take no longer to obtain than single figures, and observed that "family groups are especial favourites". Kodak, of course, turned this insight into a mission, and the camera into a constant companion. Zahalka has also been acutely interested in the family, and in

particular the space of the domestic. In 1995, Zahalka produced *Open House*, which, like *Resemblance*, was a series of tableaux vivants populated by friends of the artist. However, this series of portraits explored the details of relationships and the small rituals performed in living situations. The images are titled by the exact time that the photograph is taken – *Wednesday, 8:40 pm*, *Saturday, 9:15 pm* and so on – suggesting a documentary impulse. However, we are acutely aware that these are highly choreographed moments. One of the key images in the series, *Saturday, 2:48 pm*, shows a couple undergoing ordinary weekend practices – reading the paper, drinking tea and so on. In the frozen moment of the photograph, a private life is laid before us, inviting us to scrutinise a domestic interior as if it were a stage set. While the subjects display themselves as if they are oblivious to our gaze, Zahalka lends the composition a certain theatricality by carefully arranging the objects and posing the figures. Drawing again on the language of genre painting but now fusing it with TV sitcoms, the familiarity and intimacy of the private interiors jars in fact with their public display, instilling a sense of the uncanny. This is enhanced by its lightbox format, characteristic of the duratrans used in bus-stop advertising.

As in *Resemblance II*, Zahalka's *Resemblance* works appear in the frame of at least one of the images in *Open House* – a self-referential play that also reveals the sitters' proximity to the artist. The domestic environment, of course, is our canvas of self-expression. Viewing these images now we are acutely conscious of the then popular bohemian fashion for '50s style furniture and kitchen design. Zahalka returns to the domestic sphere in some of the recent portraits of artists, and it might also be noted that her portraits of collectors appear at home. Their collections threaten to overtake their domestic space, and seem to have become part of the family. In 1998 Zahalka produced a series of portraits of Jewish people in their home environments called *How Jewish is Your Home?*, including one of herself and her daughter shown here.<sup>14</sup>

A photograph of the tremendously ornate interior of the Austrian Embassy in Paris by Eugène Atget in 1905 shows a reflection of an old hooded camera in a grand mirror. There is only the vaguest hint of a photographer using the camera, but what this image reminds us is that all photographs are also 'portraits' of the operator. Characteristically self-reflexive in her approach, Zahalka appears reflected in mirrors in *Resemblance* and other series. More overtly, Zahalka almost always records a portrait of herself with each series. These have been collected as outtakes, and are here brought together. They include a self portrait made in Berlin shooting the *Resemblance* series, in which the artist is seen at a table poring over a book of portrait paintings. Another elaborate self-portrait shows the artist against the mountainous background painted by Stephen Bush,

now recast with a view camera in reference to nineteenth-century exploration photography. One is reminded here of Tracey Moffatt's camp self-portraits as a photojournalist adventurer. Zahalka shows herself at work in her scenes of wilful artifice, as well as at home. By turns deadpan and comical, this personal photo-biography returns us to Zahalka's work more generally as a self-conscious explorer of the visual: we see the artist as a stranger to herself, looking out to the world, vainly attempting to penetrate the mirror.

Daniel Palmer is a Lecturer in the Theory Department at Monash Art & Design

## ENDNOTES

- 1 The most famous hall of mirrors is located at that French house of decadence, Versailles. La Galerie des Glaces was erected to the glory of Louis XIV in 1678 when the chateau became the official residence. At one end of the 73 metre-long hall is the Salon of War, at the other is the Salon of Peace. La Galerie des Glaces was the symbolic focus of the kingdom during the *ancien régime*, and in 1919 the First World War officially ended when Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles there.
- 2 For the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, the 'mirror stage' (or phase) is fundamental to the formation of the self. The infant sees its image in a mirror, and both recognises itself and misrecognises itself. The image seems to be psychologically integrated and physically coordinated in a way that the baby does not feel. This imaginary misrecognition creates a sense of loss and a lifelong desire to regain the jouissance of the connected wholeness. An enduring narcissistic fantasy ensues, rooted in the adoration of the perfect image – cementing the trauma of imperfection and self-loathing.
- 3 Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'The Stereoscope and The Stereograph' [1859] in Alan Trachtenberg (ed.), *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980), pp. 71–82. Of course mirrors were used in camera obscuras to correct the inverted image, and the same principle applies to single-lens reflex (SLR) camera today. The mirror in the SLR functions to enable the photographer to capture *exactly* what they see.
- 4 Charles Baudelaire, 'Photography' [1859] in Beaumont Newhall (ed.), *Photography: Essays and Images* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1990), pp. 112–121.
- 5 For a general discussion on Zahalka's work, see Anne O'Hehir, 'Anne Zahalka: How Did We Get to be Here?', *Art + Australia*, 41.3, March/April/May 2004, pp. 410–417. On Leisureland, see Blair French, 'The Photogenic Image: Anne Zahalka's *Leisureland*' in Daniel Palmer (ed.), *Photogenic: Essays/Photography/CCP 2000–2004* (Melbourne: Centre for Contemporary Photography & Ellikon Press, 2005), pp. 45–59.
- 6 Most early photographers, particularly those who aspired to artistic status, focused on the camera's apparent ability to elicit or extract the hidden soul of its subject. Artists from Nadar to Julia Margaret Cameron took it upon themselves to interpret their sitter's character, to "penetrate below the surface of his subject", as Edward Western claimed even as late as 1939. On the other hand, modernist portraiture gradually came to abandon this aim, and took the subject as raw material to be shaped by artists' creative expression. The modernist portrait became a study of abstracted surfaces, often blank if not clinical. Nevertheless, some of the greatest portraits, those of August Sander, Richard Avedon, Diane Arbus and so many of the derivative versions we see today, contain at least the suggestion of subjectivity behind them. Zahalka departs from both of these approaches. See Robert A. Sobieszek, *Ghost in the Shell: Photography and the Human Soul 1850–2000* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1999), p. 23.
- 7 One thinks immediately of Cindy Sherman, whose self-portraiture suggests that identity is a refracting prism.
- 8 The circus images were occasioned by a short residency at Albury Regional Art Gallery in April 2006, when Zahalka was invited to make use of a large touring Polaroid camera.
- 9 Zahalka's recent portraits complement other bodies of artist portraits such as Concertina Insera's *Lives and Works in Melbourne* (2003) – simple, unpretentious portraits in the disarming familiarity of the subjects' bedrooms and gardens – and Lyndal Walker's more fictional *All New Personal Style* (2000), which sees Callum Morton out to rob a suburban convenience store and Starlie Geikie in a nightie at the local video shop.
- 10 The *Resemblance* exhibition toured to numerous institutions in Australia in 1987, including the Institute of Modern Art in Brisbane and Gertrude Street Gallery in Melbourne, as well as Camerawork in London.
- 11 Martyn Jolly, 'Anne Zahalka: Spurs of the Moment', *Art + Text*, 54, 1996, p. 63.
- 12 See Anne Zahalka, 'Interview: Anne Zahalka in Conversation with Alasdair Foster', *Photofile*, 69, August 2003, p. 19.
- 13 *Welcome to Sydney* was acquired by the Museum of Sydney and exhibited there in 2002–2003.
- 14 Zahalka created a set of portraits of Jewish families depicted in their homes for exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Australia as part of *Haimish* (Homely), curated by Naomi Cass and Natalie King in 1998.

(opposite) *The Writer* (Dr Michael Haerdtler/director, Künstlerhaus Bethanien) 1987  
cibachrome photograph 80.0 x 80.0 cm



**D**eutsche  
und  
Österreichische  
Maler  
George Lindemann

Deutsche  
und  
Österreichische  
Maler  
George Lindemann



*The Musician (Jon Rose/composer/musician) 1987*  
cibachrome photograph 94.0 x 80.5 cm



*The Dutch Painter (Guus Koenraads/painter) 1987*  
cibachrome photograph 88.0 x 89.0 cm



*The Cleaner* (Marianne Redpath/performance artist) 1987  
cibachrome photograph 80.0 x 80.0 cm



*The Cook* (Michael Schmidt/architect) 1987  
cibachrome photograph 80.0 x 80.0 cm



1747  
Vermischte







*The Collector* 1994  
ilfachrome photograph  
96.0 x 73.0 cm

(opposite)  
*The Gentleman* 1994  
ilfachrome photograph  
96.0 x 73.0 cm  
Angela and David Morrell







*The Artist (self portrait)* 1988 cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm



*The Collector (self portrait)* 1988 cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

(page 12) *Marriage of Convenience (Graham Budgett and Jane Mulfinger/artists)* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 97.0 x 88.0 cm

(page 13) *Graham Budgett and Jane Mulfinger, London* 1988  
type C photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

(opposite, clockwise from top left)  
*The Botanist (Joanne Walsh)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

*The Card Player (Hedy Zahalka)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

*The Writer (Emily Gibson)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

*The Forger (Stephen Marcus)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm



*Wednesday, 8:40 pm* 1995 type C photograph 54.0 x 80.0 cm



*Saturday, 9:15 pm* 1995 type C photograph 65.0 x 79.0 cm



*Tuesday, 9:10 pm* 1995 type C photograph 71.0 x 88.0 cm

(opposite) *Saturday, 2:48 pm* 1995  
duratran and light box 125.0 x 176.0 x 25.0 cm  
Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne





*Saturday, 5:18 pm* 1995 type C photograph 81.0 x 66.0 cm



*Thursday, 8:33 pm* 1995 type C photograph 80.0 x 65.0 cm



21 Collector #11 (*Barbie dolls*) 1996 cibachrome photograph 100.0 x 76.5 cm



Collector #13 (*tin toys*) 1996 cibachrome photograph 100.0 x 76.5 cm



















*The Bathers* 1989 type C photograph 74.0 x 90.0 cm



(page 28) *The Sunbather #1* 1989 type C photograph 49.0 x 49.0 cm  
(page 29) *The Sunbather #2* 1989 type C photograph 49.0 x 49.0 cm

(left) *The Lifesaver* 1989 type C photograph 60.0 x 48.5 cm  
David Urquhart

(below) *The Surfers* 1989 type C photograph 74.0 x 90.0 cm



## SCENES FROM THE SHIRE JULIE ROSE

The Shire is a charmed circle, ringed by water, from the sea westward to the Woronora River, from the Georges River in the north to the Port Hacking River in the south, at Cronulla. Despite tramlines that took outsiders right onto the shore in the 1920s and 1930s, long since gone, Cronulla, like the larger shire it bedizens, has always seen itself as a place apart. Neither an homogenous Anglo-Saxon enclave, nor a multicultural melting pot, Cronulla became, in the 1990s, the beach of choice at the end of the line for Middle Easterners from the landlocked suburbs of Lakemba and Wiley Park, where the mosques are.

In Zahalka's picture *The Girls #2, Cronulla Beach* (2007), the three burqini-clad young women parody the stern, almost military machismo of Aussie male lifesaver stance. Arms folded and legs akimbo or stiffly pulled together, the girls look out at the lens with full-frontal, open-faced evenness. Only the burqinis give the lie to the implied aggression, with their bold colours and playfully feminine 'beachy' motifs. The top worn by the woman in the middle displays the brandname, *ahiiida*, of Aheda Zanetti, the designer of the burqini, in unmistakably 'Arabic' lettering. Marooned in the wet sand to the right, well out of the waves, the rubber lifeboat is unoccupied, as though they have just sped across the high seas on a mission of rescue. But, in a permutation on the meaning of 'Surf Rescue', the burqini girls are the new guardians of beach morality, a homegrown Muslim hybrid, Allah's Angels.

In the far distance to the left, we can just make out the white cylinders of the Kurnell Oil Refinery that mars Cronulla's display of leisurely perfection. But that also reminds us of where we are: smack bang in the middle of that jewel in the crown known as The Shire – the 'birthplace of the nation'. For when Captain Cook netted 'Terra Australis' for the British Empire in 1770, he did so sailing past the beaches of Cronulla, round the mighty sand dunes of Kurnell – since cannibalised by the building industry – and round the headland – since cannibalised by the oil refinery – up into Botany Bay, where he dropped anchor at the ruggedly beautiful Cape Solander.

In Zahalka's picture, the burqini girls rule a beach that looks deserted, except for tiny faraway figures frolicking in very small surf, enjoying a very Australian freedom that predates burqinis, riots, contemporary doom-and-gloom about sun exposure... But if Zahalka deliberately distances us from the nostalgia such a backdrop induces, it is to suggest that we can all invent, make, grab a place for ourselves

– through forms of (goodhumoured!) transgression that might involve the subversion of 'mainstream Australian values'... or even their embrace. It is an oceanic embrace, taking place in the glassy breakers that are the mirrors we hold up to each other.

Julie Rose is a writer and has translated Paul Virillio's *Art As Far As The Eye Can See* and Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*.





*T'boli woman in traditional costume* 1997 digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm  
*Greetings from Lemlahak, Mindanao* 1997 digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm  
*Elma Segundo* 1997 digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm



*Abbot Thich Vien Chon, Lake Chipping Norton, near Cabramatta 2001 type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm*  
Museum of Sydney, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney



*Catherine Phan, Cabramatta 2001 type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm*  
Museum of Sydney, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney



*Zaheda Ghani, Parramatta Park 2002 type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm*  
Museum of Sydney, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney



*Guangan Wu, Market Gardens, Kyeemagh 2001 type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm*  
Museum of Sydney, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney





*Bridie Hooper, Contortionist (#3) 2006*  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm



*Lachlan McAulay and Jason Kotzur, Adagio, base and flyer (#2) 2006*  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm



*Susan Norrie* 1994  
type C photograph 39.5 x 47.5 cm



*Betty Churcher* 1994  
cibachrome photograph 40.0 x 40.0 cm



## OBJECTS IN MIRROR MAY BE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

### ANNE ZAHALKA IN CONVERSATION WITH CURATOR KARRA REES

From the self-conscious stage-setting of her earlier works to the later images presented in a more documentary vein, the idea that appearances can be deceptive has been central to Zahalka's practice. Often conflating reality with fiction, she has appropriated or re-staged iconic images and simulated period styles as part of an ongoing enquiry into the nature of image-making, and the representation of the world in which we live. Breaking down myths and cleverly subverting stereotypes, Zahalka addresses issues of national and personal identity, gender and representation, examining the fabric of Australian and European culture through the lens of art history.

**KARRA REES:** Anne, you state in your Masters of Fine Art thesis: "No category in pictorial art is as conservative as portraiture. It is subject to a number of strict conditions for a portrait is not just a likeness of an individual to be preserved for posterity; it is also an image of pride, a projection of a social position."<sup>1</sup> Do you see your portraits as homage, or perhaps a continuation or reaction to traditional portraiture?

ANNE ZAHALKA: I didn't initially set out to pay homage to the 'Old Masters' but rather wanted to understand their influence and the nature of their incumbent value system. Portraiture is deeply embedded in our cultural and social life but we pay little attention to the role it plays in contemporary representations. My engagement with portraiture is concerned with these aspects and is both a reaction to the strictures of traditional portraiture as well as an engagement with its structures and conventions. Portraiture is conservative because it is governed by a set of codes and conditions established through its long history. I like to work within these established codes and find new ways of portraying my subjects.

**Painting and painters appear to be the strongest influence on your work, so what drew you to photography?**

The direct transcription of what lies before the lens onto the photographic surface recording a place, person or object is what interests me. It is the detail and the clarity with which the photograph conveys its subject and its immediacy and directness that I like. The idea of being able to look at something closely in order to interpret and understand, is why the early seventeenth-century northern European painters painted their objects and scenes so precisely. They appeared real to the eye and could be studied and shown as evidence of their knowledge and wealth. It is what the photograph reveals as evidence of the world that I find so compelling.

**Your series *Resemblance* adopts conventions of seventeenth-century painting, and seems to invite the viewer to spot the references. What is the currency of appropriation today?**

It's difficult to avoid some sort of reference or quotation as all kinds of media inform what an artist does. I continue to have an

(opposite) *The Photographer (self portrait)* 1989  
type C photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

interest in re-working historical and contemporary images because it enables a dialogue and understanding between them. The initial tenets of Postmodernism were that everything had already been done so one could only continue to speak through the images and texts of the past. This is probably still true yet there are always subtle shifts or ellipses that can provide new meanings.

**Historically, portraits immortalised sitters in their finest clothing and jewels, surrounded by worldly possessions indicating their wealth and status. In a similar way, the domestic scenes in *Open House* classify the subjects, defining them by their décor, clothing and possessions. Are the objects and interiors more revealing than the sitters?**

In some ways I see the subject as just another object in the room – I know this sounds appalling! While I am concerned with the subjects and what they project through their setting and their performance, I am equally interested in the stuff that surrounds them and what this says about them. Ensnared with their 'worldly possessions' they speak about their passions, their wealth (or lack of) and their place in the world. These portraits of my friends have been immortalised in the neon glow of the illuminated light box (in which they were originally cast), at a particular time in history (eg. *Saturday, 2:48 pm* 1995), in a particular domestic place and now in the public space of the art gallery. How much more revealing can this be?

**The disjunction between subject and surroundings is explored in your series *Welcome to Sydney*. Immigrants to Australia stand tall and look out from large format light-boxes at Sydney's international airport. Each figure is photographed with an object carried from their homeland, and they seem to both belong in this environment and are alien to it. Why did you choose to represent them in this way?**

I wanted to suggest ideas of both displacement and belonging through this series of portraits. I chose locations that were known and popular, such as postcard views of Sydney, and others that were unfamiliar. All of the selected locations had some relationship to the subject representing areas where they lived, worked or were connected to. They appear both rooted to, but isolated from

their surroundings, like a new species being planted but not yet becoming part of the native landscape. I hoped that the audience would respond to the people as individuals who have different ethnic backgrounds. To the fact that each brings with them cultural and symbolic belongings that are part of who they are. These portraits should be seen as positive affirmations of the complex and diverse nationalities settling here. I hope it portrays them with dignity and respect.

**The original *Artists* portraits were taken in the late 80s with a view to continuing the series, with the most recent work having been made this year. Have you approached the new portraits in the same way?**

The recent portraits are less concerned with playing out the artist stereotypes. They still perform self-consciously, as artists on location, in their own domestic space or against the backdrop of their workplace. I became more interested in setting them in the environments they work and think in and yet having them still reminiscent of their artwork, so that they looked a little like one of the characters of their own making. The earlier artist portraits were situated in, or against, a representation of their own signature-style of work that had been elaborately constructed in a studio. They played out the various roles of the artist as hero, revolutionary, alchemist, inventor, magician, gambler or game-player which connected them in some way to their practice. Later I became more interested in working with artists who use photography/video or film to also make portraits and see how they might behave when the camera is turned on them. I especially like the collaborative aspect of working with artists and what they bring to the process. It gives me greater insight into their practice.

**In *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific*, you restaged two iconic Australian images; Max Dupain's *Sunbaker* (1937) and Charles Meere's *Australian beach pattern* (1940). Did you anticipate your images would, in turn, become iconic images?**

I had no idea how significant these works were to become and that they would appear on the covers of books, catalogues and anthologies, or as posters and postcards, and be studied by art students; now even my daughter is studying *The Bathers* in her primary school text book, *Australian Readers Discovering Democracy!*

I made *The Sunbather #2* and *The Bathers* during a six-month residency at the Bondi Pavilion, and exhibited them at the end of the residency in the gallery there to a very broad audience. Sandra Byron, then curator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, walked into the gallery on the last day of the show and acquired five works from the series for the exhibition *Twenty Contemporary Australian Photographers from the Hallmark Cards Australian Photographic Collection*. Once they were out in the public domain they were swept along with the whole multicultural tide. The photographs were made at a time when we were questioning the dominant images of the nation and I wanted to rewrite these to reflect a more culturally diverse and balanced idea of its community.

**Continuing your meditation on the dynamics of stereotypes in Australian culture, your new series, *Scenes from the Shire* photographed at Cronulla, follows on from *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific*. The subjects however, are set against the sand and surf, not a painted imitation. What has inspired this return to the Australian beach and how has your approach changed?**

I wanted to revisit the beach following the aftermath of the Cronulla riots and see what signs of racism might exist there. Like most people I was horrified when racial violence erupted there a year ago on such a mythologised site of our nation, the beach. I realised the beach has always been a contested site for different ethnic and social groups – it's just that one seems to have more claim on it than another. Having been given some background reading to the history of Cronulla and the riots written by my friend Julie Rose,<sup>2</sup> and an introduction to Aheda Zanetti – an Australian Muslim dynamo who recently launched the burqini, a new design of modest swimwear for Muslim women – I felt equipped to return. I also knew of a documentary film being made following the recruiting of Lebanese men and women into the lifesaving club. It seemed like there was change adrift on the beachfront.

Having moved away from the staged studio tableau work of the late 80s and working in a more documentary style since my *Fortresses and Frontiers* series through to *Leisureland*, I became more interested in using the location as a kind of ready-made set to place my figures in or against, thereby contextualising them in a real place. While the portrait still appears staged there is the

obvious participation of the subject. I think this gives these portraits an interesting tension between being part of the scene and yet performing in it.

**In most of your series you have made a self portrait, however these portraits have rarely been included when you exhibited the series. Do you see the self portraits as a part of each body of work or something personal that sits alongside the series?**

The self portraits I have made are sometimes personal and sometimes belong to a body of work. I have never seen them as being an important part of my practice but have made them when the opportunity has arisen. I can spend long periods preparing for one self portrait while others are quick – like snap shots. Some are more like a documentation of the set-up I have been working on,

*The Artist (self portrait), Berlin 1987* cibachrome photograph 80.0 x 80.0 cm





*Home 3, Anne and Alice Zahalka (version 2, from the series How Jewish is your Home?) 1998 type C photograph 50.0 x 60.5 cm*

while others tie into a series. When I have exhibited my self portraits alongside other 'sitters' in a series I subject myself to the same examination as them. In the case of the *Collector #8 (postcards)* it seemed important to put my own obsession on display and subject myself to the same sort of scrutiny. It suggested not only our joint interest in the nature of collecting but revealed more about me as the artist. In a series such as *How Jewish is Your Home?* I wanted to subject myself to the same question and invite the viewer into my home revealing myself as both subject and maker of these portraits. But appearances can be deceptive and while I might appear in the context in which I live, I am merely a reflection, framed repeatedly by the architecture within the image.

**I think the appeal of your images resides partly in a clever fusing of humour with a critical eye. Is irony and wit an aperture for audience engagement?**

I think humour is a really useful entry point to my work – it allows viewers to respond more immediately, identifying with the subjects or seeing oneself reflected. It can make audiences more aware of their own complicity in the reading of the images and invites them to question their responses.

**You highlight the camera's ability to distort the truth and blur the boundary between reality and fiction. What do we really learn about a person from a portrait?**

The making and taking of portraits is such a contrivance. There is nothing natural about the process, yet the aim is for it to appear so and for the subject to appear natural and unselfconscious. Few people are comfortable with the camera (except those who are trained for it) and we often want to be told what to do. I give very little direction to my sitters – I prefer to let them find their own way of sitting. Increasingly I am more interested in the unease expressed in the pose. It is confronting to see oneself in a bad light so to speak and even more confronting when we know this is how we may appear to others (even if we don't see ourselves this way). The photograph is evidence and in this case it doesn't lie. But a photographic portrait is also only one moment in the course of a sitting and many expressions pass across the face during this time. So while we might want to read into the person presented before us in the photograph, through their face and eyes – the so-called 'window to the soul' – there is no real way of knowing. Everything else in the picture however is a clue.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 Anne Zahalka, *The Language of Gesture Towards a Lexicon*, (Sydney: The Author, 1994), p. 10.
- 2 Julie Rose, 'Sur la Plage: Again, and Again', *Log*, 7, Winter/Spring, (New York: Anyone Corporation, 2006), p. 100.

## LIST OF WORKS

All works reproduced and exhibited courtesy of Anne Zahalka, unless otherwise stated.

All works are listed alphabetically within their series and all series are listed in alphabetical order. All listed measurements are image size, height x width x depth, unless stated.

## ARTISTS

*artist #1 (Peter Tyndall)* 1990  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #2 (Rosemary Laing)* 1998  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #3 (Stephen Bush)* 1990  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #5 (Rose Farrell & George Parkin)* 1990  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #7 (Stieg Persson)* 1989  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #10 (Darren Sylvester)* 2005  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #13 (Horst Kiechle)* 1998  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #17 (Rebecca Ann Hobbs)* 2005  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #30 (Selina Ou)* 2003  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #31 (Kim Donaldson)* 1989  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #36 (The Kingpins)* 2007  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #40 (David Rosetzky)* 2006  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #47 (Debra Phillips)* 1990  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*artist #49 (Jan Nelson)* 1989  
duraflex photograph 72.5 x 72.5 cm

*Who is the artist the spectator is looking for?*  
engraving on synthetic polymer resin 50.0 x 41.0 cm

*Who is the spectator the artist is looking for?*  
engraving on synthetic polymer resin 50.0 x 41.0 cm

## BONDI: PLAYGROUND OF THE PACIFIC

*The Bathers* 1989  
type C photograph 74.0 x 90.0 cm

*The Girl* 1989  
type C photograph 60.0 x 48.5 cm

*The Lifesaver* 1989  
type C photograph 60.0 x 48.5 cm  
David Urquhart Collection  
Courtesy of David Urquhart

*The Sunbather #1* 1989  
type C photograph 49.0 x 49.0 cm

*The Sunbather #2* 1989  
type C photograph 49.0 x 49.0 cm

*The Surfers* 1989  
type C photograph 74.0 x 90.0 cm

## CIRCUS WORK

Polaroid photographs transferred to colour DVD, silent, 1 min 20 sec, looped, projected in CCP Projection Window, original images listed.

*Bridie Hooper, Contortionist (#1)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm  
Albury Regional Art Gallery Collection  
Commissioned 2006  
Courtesy of Albury Regional Art Gallery,  
New South Wales

*Bridie Hooper, Contortionist (#2)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm

*Bridie Hooper, Contortionist (#3)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm

*Brigitte Bailey, Tight-wire performer (#1)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm  
Albury Regional Art Gallery Collection  
Commissioned 2006  
Courtesy of Albury Regional Art Gallery,  
New South Wales

*Freyja Edney, Hula hoop performer (#1)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm

*Freyja Edney, Hula hoop performer (#3)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm

*Lachlan McAulay and Jason Kotzur, Adagio, base and flyer (#2)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm

*Spencer Inwood, Acrobat (#1)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm

*Till Cappelli, Juggler (balls)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm

*Till Cappelli, Juggler (clubs)* 2006  
Polaroid photograph 60.0 x 50.0 cm

## COLLECTORS

*Collector #11 (Barbie dolls)* 1996  
cibachrome photograph 100.0 x 76.5 cm

*Collector #13 (tin toys)* 1996  
cibachrome photograph 100.0 x 76.5 cm

## COMMISSIONED PORTRAITS

*Betty Churcher* 1994  
cibachrome photograph 40.0 x 40.0 cm

*Patrick Corrigan AM* 2007  
type C photograph 50.0 x 46.5 cm

*Roslyn Oxley* 2007  
type C photograph 41.2 x 50.0 cm

*Susan Norrie* 1994  
type C photograph 39.5 x 47.5 cm

*Wendy Whiteley* 1993  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 40.5 cm

## GESTURE

*The Collector* 1994  
ilfachrome photograph 96.0 x 73.0 cm

*The Gentleman* 1994  
ilfachrome photograph 96.0 x 73.0 cm  
Angela and David Morrell Collection  
Courtesy of Angela and David Morrell

*The Geographer* 1994  
ilfachrome photograph 96.0 x 73.0 cm

*The Mathematician* 1994  
ilfachrome photograph 96.0 x 73.0 cm

## OPEN HOUSE

*Saturday, 2:48 pm* 1995  
duratran and light box 125.0 x 176.0 x 25.0 cm  
Monash University Collection  
Purchased 1996  
Courtesy of Monash University Museum of Art,  
Melbourne

*Saturday, 5:18 pm* 1995  
type C photograph 81.0 x 66.0 cm

*Saturday, 9:15 pm* 1995  
type C photograph 65.0 x 79.0 cm

*Sunday, 2:09 pm* 1995  
type C photograph 66.0 x 80.0 cm

*Thursday, 8:33 pm* 1995  
type C photograph 80.0 x 65.0 cm

*Tuesday, 9:10 pm* 1995  
type C photograph 71.0 x 88.0 cm

*Wednesday, 8:40 pm* 1995  
type C photograph 54.0 x 80.0 cm

## RESEMBLANCE

*Marriage of Convenience (Graham Budgett and Jane Mullfingher/artists)* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 97.0 x 88.0 cm

*The Cleaner (Marianne Redpath/performance artist)* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 80.0 x 80.0 cm

*The Cook (Michael Schmidt/architect)* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 80.0 x 80.0 cm

*The Dutch Painter (Guus Koenraads/painter)* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 88.0 x 89.0 cm

*The Musician (Jon Rose/composer/musician)* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 94.0 x 80.5 cm

*The Veterinary (Thomas Ravenbourg/veterinary)* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 87.0 x 102.5 cm

*The Writer (Dr Michael Haerter/director, Künstlerhaus Bethanien)* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 80.0 x 80.0 cm

## RESEMBLANCE II

*The Botanist (Joanne Walsh)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

*The Card Player (Hedy Zahalka)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

*The Forger (Stephen Marcus)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

*The Writer (Emily Gibson)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

## RESEMBLANCE REVISITED

*Graham Budgett and Jane Mullfingher, London* 1988  
type C photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

## SCENES FROM THE SHIRE

*The Girls #2, Cronulla Beach* 2007  
type C photograph 74.0 x 90.0 cm

*The Lifesavers #2, Cronulla Beach* 2007  
type C photograph 60.0 x 49.0 cm

## SELF PORTRAITS

*artist #33 (Anne Zahalka)* 1990  
type C photograph 87.0 x 85.0 cm

*At last an award for you* 1989  
type C photograph 48.0 x 40.0 cm

*Collector #8 (postcards)* 1996  
type C photograph 59.0 x 42.0 cm

*Home 3, Anne and Alice Zahalka* (version 2,  
from the series *How Jewish is your Home?*) 1998  
type C photograph 50.0 x 60.5 cm

*The Artist (self portrait)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

*The Artist (self portrait), Berlin* 1987  
cibachrome photograph 80.0 x 80.0 cm

*The Collector (self portrait)* 1988  
cibachrome photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

*The Cooking Lesson* 2000  
type C photograph 50.0 x 60.5 cm

*The Photographer (self portrait)* 1989  
type C photograph 50.0 x 50.0 cm

## WELCOME TO SYDNEY

*Abbot Thich Vien Chon, Lake Chipping Norton,  
near Cabramatta* 2001  
type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm  
Museum of Sydney Collection  
Purchased 2003  
Courtesy of the Historic Houses Trust of  
New South Wales, Sydney

*Catherine Phan, Cabramatta* 2001  
type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm  
Museum of Sydney Collection  
Purchased 2003  
Courtesy of the Historic Houses Trust of  
New South Wales, Sydney

*Guangan Wu, Market Gardens, Kyeemagh* 2001  
type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm  
Museum of Sydney Collection  
Purchased 2003  
Courtesy of the Historic Houses Trust of  
New South Wales, Sydney

*Kastel Family, Bondi Beach* 2001  
type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm  
Museum of Sydney Collection  
Purchased 2003  
Courtesy of the Historic Houses Trust of  
New South Wales, Sydney

*Shabnam Hameed, Sydney Park, St Peters* 2002  
type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm  
Museum of Sydney Collection  
Purchased 2003  
Courtesy of the Historic Houses Trust of  
New South Wales, Sydney

*Zaheda Ghani, Parramatta Park* 2002  
type C photograph 50.0 x 150.0 cm  
Museum of Sydney Collection  
Purchased 2003  
Courtesy of the Historic Houses Trust of  
New South Wales, Sydney

## WOVEN THREADS PICTURING TRIBAL WOMEN IN MINDANAO

*Amada Tudal* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Elma Segundo* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Filopina* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Goy Unga* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Greetings from Lemlahak, Mindanao* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Lisa Timbang* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Manobo tribal women* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Manobo women and village* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Mindanao* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Philippines* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*Pilsar Ongan and Tagaling Akil* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*T'boli elder* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*T'boli woman in cornfield* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*T'boli woman in traditional costume* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

*T'boli woman with child* 1997  
digital print 41.5 x 61.0 cm

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## CURATOR ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with Anne Zahalka, who has dedicated much more than 20 years of luminous portraits to CCP's exhibition spaces. I extend my sincere gratitude to Anne for her time and commitment to *Hall of Mirrors*. Thank you also to Naomi Cass for her encouragement and direction; Darren Sylvester for his elegant design; colleagues Rebecca Chew, Tony Dutton, Sidonie Haass and Jaana Sahling for their assistance and support; contributors Daniel Palmer and Julie Rose for their considered and insightful essays; David Belzycki, National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) for his cataloguing expertise; Jacki Bloustien for copyediting; and the fabulous team of CCP volunteers. The assistance of numerous institutions and individuals has been invaluable, and I extend my thanks to Roslyn Oxley and her team, especially Naomi Evans; Jules Boag, Albury Regional Art Gallery; Kिरrily Hammond, Monash University Museum of Art; Inara Walden, Museum of Sydney; Daryl West-Moore, NGV; Natasha Bullock; Adam Green; Danny Jacobsen; and other colleagues and friends, many of whom have been very generous with their time and ideas.

## CCP ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This catalogue has been achieved through support galvanised by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and we thank Roslyn Oxley, Amanda Rowell, Anne Zahalka and their generous participants: Trevor and Carole Chappell, Patrick Corrigan AM, Amanda and Andrew Love, Lisa and Egil Paulsen, Reg and Sally Richardson, Katherine Green and Warren Tease, Eleonora and Michael Triguboff.

Critical financial assistance for the exhibition has been provided by both the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council as well as generous support from Anne Zahalka, Roslyn Oxley, Colour Factory, Graphic Art Mount, Red Connect, Sandy Prints, Sofitel, Tint Design and David Wilson, Bedford Framing.

Lenders to *Hall of Mirrors* are gratefully acknowledged: Albury Regional Art Gallery, Angela and David Morrell, David Urquhart, Monash University Collection, Monash University Museum of Art and Museum of Sydney, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales.

## EXHIBITION SPONSORS



CCP is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. CCP is supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria and the Community Support Fund, and by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. CCP is a member of CAOS, Contemporary Arts Organisations of Australia.

## ARTIST ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Assembling such a comprehensive exhibition as *Hall of Mirrors* has involved the commitment and support of many wonderful people. I want to thank Naomi Cass, Director of the Centre for Contemporary Photography for her initial enthusiasm for this survey and for steering us through its lengthy corridors to such a brilliant end. Karra Rees, the charismatic curator of this exhibition has worked tirelessly through my archive bringing unseen works to the surface along with a few gems. She has encouraged me to create several new works, revisit some old and I am grateful for her passion and dedication. It has been an incredibly demanding but rewarding process and she's managed it with grace and good humour.

For the catalogue, I'd like to thank the generous support of the donors who have helped finance its production and to Roslyn Oxley who made it happen. Special thanks go to Darren Sylvester for his gorgeous design, Daniel Palmer for his thoughtful essay, Andy Wood for his assistance and advice and Julie Rose for her brilliant piece on 'Allah's Angels'.

I am indebted to the many other people who have been involved in one way or another, either as 'sitters', friends, collaborators, artists, assistants, collectors, cooks, clients, dealers, designers, printers, framers and candle stick-makers. I really enjoyed working with you all and appreciate the input you have had in the making of these portraits. I am especially grateful to all those who have allowed me into their homes and trusted me there. It is a confronting thing to have a mirror held up to you and even more so to have its reflection put on display.

*Hall of Mirrors* is dedicated to my mother Hedy, a keen supporter of my work who holds more Zahalkas than any other private collector in the world and who is unquestionably my greatest fan.

First published on the occasion of the exhibition  
*Hall of Mirrors: Anne Zahalka Portraits 1987-2007*  
Curated by Karra Rees

Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne 23 March-12 May 2007

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical (including photocopying, recording or any information retrieval system), without permission from the publisher.

Produced and published by Centre for Contemporary Photography  
404 George Street  
Fitzroy, Victoria 3065  
Australia  
www.ccp.org.au

© Centre for Contemporary Photography 2007, the artist and authors

Editor: Karra Rees  
Designer: Darren Sylvester  
Printer: Bamba Press

Cataloguing-in-Publication data  
Hall of mirrors : Anne Zahalka portraits, 1987-2007.

ISBN 9780975137154 (pbk).

1. Zahalka, Anne, 1957- . 2. Women artists - Australia - Exhibitions. 3. Portrait photography - Australia - Exhibitions - Catalogs. 4. Art, Modern - 20th century - Exhibitions - Catalogs. 5. Art, Modern - 21st century - Exhibitions - Catalogs. I. Centre for Contemporary Photography.

779.20994

Distributed in Australia by  
Thames and Hudson (Australia) Pty Ltd  
11 Central Boulevard  
Portside Business Park  
Port Melbourne, Victoria 3207

All images reproduced in this catalogue are courtesy of Anne Zahalka

Anne Zahalka is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney and  
Arc One Gallery, Melbourne



This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through  
the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



(cover image) *Sunday, 2:09 pm* 1995 (detail)