

Diagrams

Violence is the quest for identity. When identity disappears with technological innovation, violence is the natural recourse.

Marshal McLuhan¹

Diagrams departs from the idea of performing a technological intervention on Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly motif. The presentation can be understood as pictorial diagrams which function to decontextualize, dissect and reframe the work via a set of new image apparatuses; primarily those of the 3D animation workspace. My intention is to orchestrate an encounter between landscape paintings that embody our cultural identity and the tools that epitomise McLuhan's threat of technological innovation in an effort to stage a generative confrontation with the sacred historical matter that inform Australian art history and adjacent identities.

Central to this work are images describing assemblages that are both sculptural and diagrammatic; objects assembled from art-historical citations and internet detritus are filtered through the vernacular of highly composed documentary photography.

In *Horse Effigy*, slabs of pumice from a Polish quarry - sourced from an online archive of photogrammetry assets - are assembled into a hobby horse fixed by a steel frame. A sculpture, minimal in its construction and reminiscent of a Bernd and Hilla Becher photograph - an architectural 'typology' of the garden sculpture variety - supports a series of steel apparatus attached to which are several objects and images: a scanned plastic astronaut mask, a portrait of a Gallipoli soldier by Sidney Nolan and a green screen.

The scanned body of a masked man frozen mid push-up in a state of heightened bravado and performative masculinity acts as the framing device for a small Nolan drawing; a preparatory sketch for the Kelly series depicting a limbless female torso astride an armless man in an act of disembodied intimacy.

In *Node Stack*, iPhone snaps of the horizon lines in twenty-three of Nolan's Ned Kelly series are attached to an IKEA bed frame and placed in the landscape. The work explores the question; moving beyond traditional depictions of the landscape, what would it look like to create a 'mediascape' whose subject is an assemblage of recycled material from the very history of landscape representation, in short, a landscape built from 'reframed' landscapes? A form of digital appropriation, exploiting the Creative Commons framework by mirroring and physically realising the sampling culture of the internet.

The other major question in this work is one of form. Lacking any real tangibility, all CGI objects/images are inherently speculative. This speculation offers a space for endless tentative investigations, i.e. investigations without commitment to bringing the object into the physical realm. But though these tools are native to digital spaces, what does it mean to print and frame these images? To force a physical relation to the body in space?

Diagrams seeks to discover what happens when the CGI image's relationship to photography is made explicit within the image; a new digital image technology trying to excavate, represent and ultimately become the objects its formal qualities seek to reference, i.e. the photograph. The success of the CGI image hinges on its appropriation of both the semiotic and formal qualities of the photograph without which any affordance of referential meaning becomes unstable, risks excessive novelty and, as is often the case with CGI, veers into the realms of fantasy. The question becomes, how to restrain the infinite possibility of CGI imagery within the language of photography.

¹ *Violence as a Quest for Identity*, The Mike McManus Show, TV Ontario, 1977.