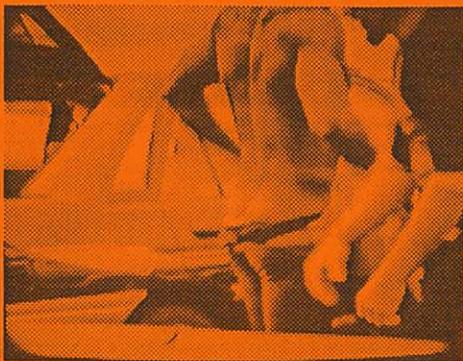


Photo / History

Tracey Moffatt *Up in the Sky and Heaven*

Margaret Dawson *The Men from Uncle*



Tracey Moffatt, video still from *Heaven* 1997

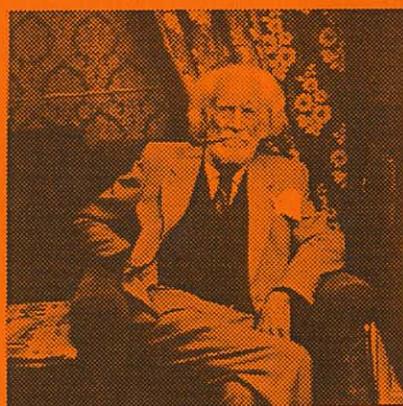
MEDIA RELEASE

Margaret Dawson and Tracey Moffatt play with our minds. Using photography, the very art form which traditionally claimed to 'speak' the truth, they stage dramas, build towns and bring the dead back to life.

Sydney and New York based artist Tracey Moffatt was commissioned by the acclaimed Dia Center for the Arts in New York to produce the works which are exhibited here in Melbourne for the first time. Her series, *Up in the Sky*, plays with notions of the documentary and the fabricated. Against a searing sky or the walls of a dilapidated bedroom, a motley cast of 'saints' and 'sinners' act out a drama which suggests teenage motherhood, the removal of indigenous children, and poverty, violence and desperation amongst a rural underclass. Moffatt's eye ranges across mass culture as well as the 'high' arts, and here one thinks of *Mad Max* as much as Pier Paolo Pasolini, David Moore along with David Lynch, Sidney Nolan but perhaps also Pro Hart.

Moffatt reverses the roles of her figures in this landscape, with muscular female car wreckers replacing the noble pioneer, and black and white youths grappling in the dust in place of the epic battles of the 'West'. Moffatt subverts another iconic Australian identity in her video work, *Heaven*, that of the surfer. Using the low-tech means of home video, she stalks her prey, capturing them as they change in and out of their bathers on the street or in beach carparks.

New Zealand artist Margaret Dawson exhibits her series, *The Men from Uncle*, in which the artist re-stages famous icons in photography's history, in most cases portraits of well known men and women. What links each image is the fact that each identity is re-presented by Dawson's elderly uncle, with whom she has collaborated on these fictions. Dawson has written of this project, 'We, my uncle and I, altered his appearance by growing his beard and hair...The meaning and the concept of the famous image was altered by having a different subject, a different context and another artist's signature to the artwork.'



Margaret Dawson, *After Cecil Beaton of Augustus John 1940* from *The Men from Uncle* 1995-97

Margaret Dawson's project has been assisted by Creative New Zealand. She is represented by Johnathan Smart Gallery, Christchurch. Tracey Moffatt is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney. Her works in this exhibition are courtesy of the Monash University Collection.

For information, images and catalogues, call ACCA on (03) 9654 6422



Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Dallas Brooks Drive, South Yarra, 3141 (Melways 2L, Ref A1).

Gallery Hours: Tues to Fri 11 - 5 Sat and Sun 2 - 5 acca@adm.monash.edu.au

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