

## anne kay

*"Saying goodbye to that room"*

Making art is often a balancing act, on one side is nuance and risk of mockery, on the other reverence. In order not to fall over and succumb to either side one must consult the imagination with a maverick attitude. Anne Kay I believe, achieves this by setting up multiple relationships with her work and the context in which it is situated. To do this she uses her physical body and all its intricacies, as well as her mind. For Kay the mind and body are not two parts of a whole, instead the mind also resides in the body. Hands feet breasts and stomach, with these limbs and organs she thinks. This rapport with her body is used in the process of making art.

With the help of her bodily memories she is documenting parts of her life, hence her works are derived from strong internal feelings. Though personal feelings and drives are in attendance, equally vital is imagination and fantasy. This is done so that the art is digested back into the external culture and its broader context. In this instance art, life, culture and personal issues are intertwined in a way too complex to unravel. Like life itself we act and react, sometimes we know why, sometimes it's involuntary. If art is solely focused on the singular, and its fundamental principle of keeping art separate from life, there will never be involvement with the larger community. We need active exchange that attracts others into the process and stimulates ideas.

The physical source of Kay's work comes from a Federation style home. The ornate floral plaster motif from a living room ceiling has been transposed onto the Viaduct arch, square by square, with hand made chalks. The scale has been altered to fit into the public arena. Two aspects arise from this. Firstly, Kay aggrandises the motif by placing it in an

industrial space and alternatively the viaduct becomes domesticised via the stencilling. However Kay's work is not solely about taking a pattern and placing it in an alternate context. It is also derived from a collaboration with the architecture and the environment. Consequently she treats the Viaduct as if it were a home, albeit temporal. Firstly familiarising herself with the space, nourishing it, treating it with respect, and finally metaphorically restoring the neglected Viaduct to a grandeur of bygone days.

A section of earth has also been removed just below the arch, in its place is a mattress shaped sack. The zip on the top surface can be opened, inside is fresh soil. For Kay the hole in the ground and the process of digging has symbolic and psychological implications. This relates to both previous artworks as well as the idea of chasms in both nature and the mind. In nature chasms can be very awe inspiring, these great crevasses that have being formed over centuries are immense. In one's mind a chasm can also represent immense power, and bring into play deep emotions, fear of abandonment, passion and isolation. The passage of time also plays a hand in the work, as it creates and alters both chasms of the mind and land. This reference to continuance evokes endurance embodied in *esprit de corps* (Group spirit) and place.

An artist may choose to present an emotive theme whilst personally remaining cut off from the work, but if she chooses like Kay to challenge her own one-sidedness, the anguish and uneasiness of confronting moral and physical weakness, rather than presenting what is familiar and safe, then the art is truly challenging.

*Linda Goodman, November 1995*

