

# HABITUAL // RITUAL

CURATED BY

SABRINA BAKER & ANJA LOUGHHEAD

ARTISTS

GRACE K BLAKE

SHAUN HAYES

PATRICK LARMOUR

AL MUNRO

LEENA RIETHMULLER

KIRSTEN FARRELL

REUBEN INGALL

ALYCIA MOFFAT

EADIE NEWMAN

KAI WASIKOWSKI

ANCA GALLERY 9 - 27 NOVEMBER 2016

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A TRANSCRIBED CONVERSATION BETWEEN CURATORS  
SABRINA BAKER & ANJA LOUGHHEAD.

THIS CONVERSATION WAS RECORDED BETWEEN 7PM AND  
7:30PM ON TUESDAY 01 NOVEMBER 2016

# GRACE K BLAKE

SB: So we've got Grace K Blake... with window stickers

AL: Hmm... all I know is that she's been on exchange for a year in Asia, but I don't even know where she is

SB: she seems to change

AL: when I was speaking to her on Facebook she was talking a lot about, large scale building development and that they would generally be penthouse apartments, that would go up really quickly and then just be

SB: empty?

AL: well empty but also, everything was just in excess just like the lavishness of it, but I think

SB: but also the homogeneity of it as well, I think it's really interesting because she was talking to me about kind of those like, interior design magazines and just again the excess and just the kind of 'I need more, it needs to be more and more and more' mantra and then she makes these really kind of hideous things as a result of all of that stuff coming together

AL: they're really vulgar

SB: they are

AL: they're like sewerage sludge

SB: Yeah

AL: and like what is that, what is this?

SB: I have no idea what that is

AL: this kinda looks like lard or like baked beans

SB: I like this bit, the half built building on the slant

AL: it kinda looks like.. uhhhh.. Duke Nukem

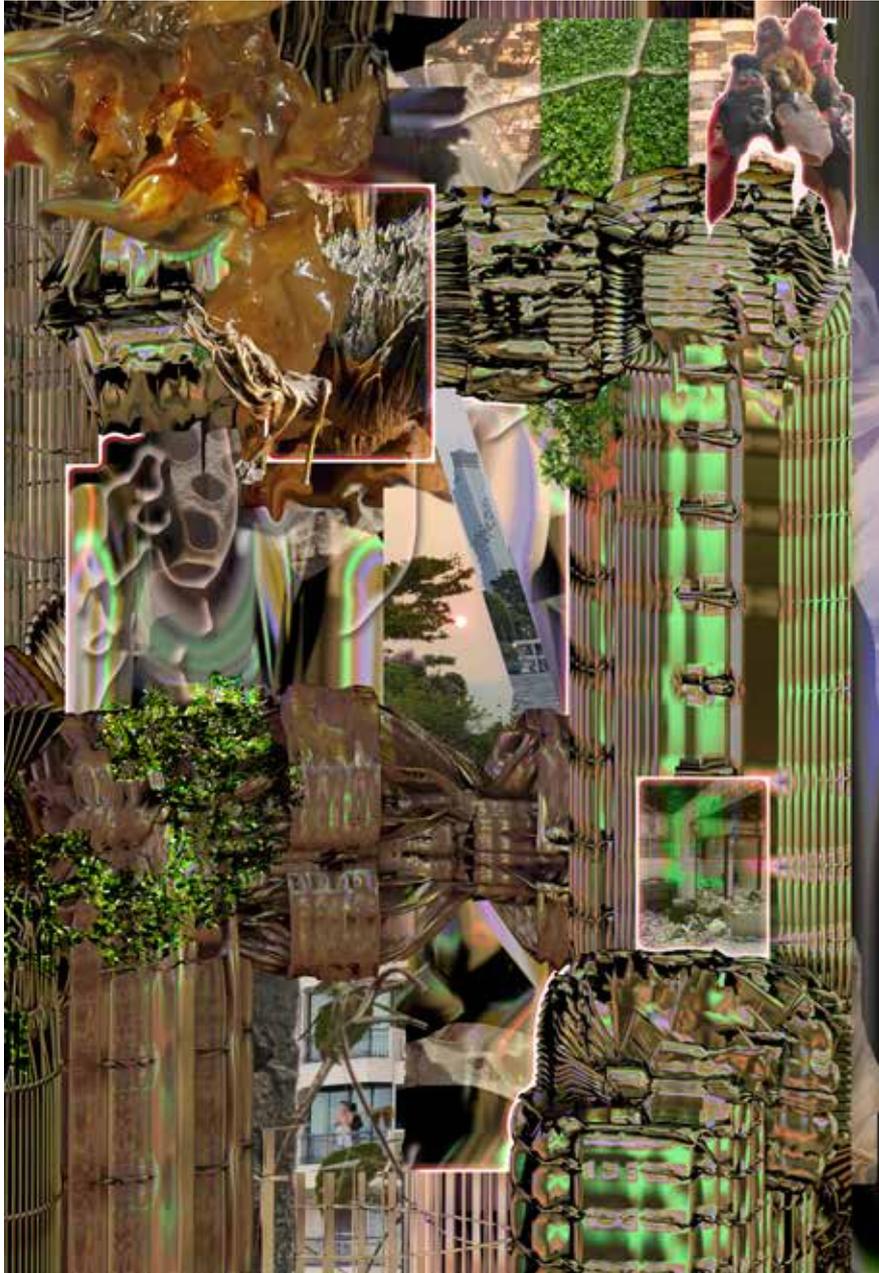
SB: hahaha, it reminds me of those montages before videos you used to see before high school somehow

AL: Yeah...well clearly there's some foliage here

SB: yeah and there's this little guy on a balcony with some plants in front of him

AL: there's some rubble

SB: I think it'll be interesting when we actually see the art work on the window and how that affects your feeling in the space



AL: yeah and how uhhh like whether or not they're actually going to be semi translucent

SB: she said they were going to be like bus stickers but they're never seem to be as translucent as you think they will be

AL: yeah so I'm really interested to see them because they might kind of be like.. I dunno how well you'll be able to tell that they're there

SB: or whether people will notice that they're artwork

AL: oh look .. and I only just realized that there's a sunset in the centre... little vista, like a little belly button

# KIRSTEN FARRELL

SB: and then Kirsten Farrell's work tracks, so that's made from nail polish, is it glitter as well

AL: yeah

SB: yeah sick

AL: yeah they're made from nail polish and she did them with Isla (her daughter)

SB: I think I just liked the colour palettes in those

AL: yeah it's really nice and because they're clearly not oil or acrylic or anything like that they just look wrong

SB: umm yeah I dunno I thought they were really interesting when I first saw them and couldn't put my finger on why and then finally someone told me that she made work with nail polish cause I never read the room sheet

AL: there's something about nail polish and how different types of polish communicate different ideas ...about what type of feminine you are

SB: yeah cause I would never wear .. hot pink

AL: nah

SB: or that horrible shatter nail polish haha

AL: and glitter nail polish is typically juvenile

SB: yeah yeah yeah and I think they're really interesting and I'm keen to see how this video goes with it cause I haven't seen it

AL: well she's performing tricks that Isla does

SB: oh right!

AL: so like Isla does a trick and then she tries to do the trick that Isla is doing

SB: oh right! Gotcha

AL: so I think they're going to be kinda like monkey bar tricks or like other bodily things

SB: like little kid tricks showing you how cool they are.



Image: Kirsten Farrell, *Track* (detail), 2014, nail polish on canvas board, 25 x 30cm. Image courtesy of the artist

# SHAUN HAYES

SB: umm... Shaun Hayes' ceramics

AL: they always look like boobies even though they're babies

SB: hahahahaha

AL: I was thinking about his work and was like 'let's play a word association game' and then all I kept thinking of was like... titties

SB: hahahahaha

AL: that's all I've got

SB: so you didn't get beyond titties?

AL: can you see anything in there that's not titties

SB: well now that you've said titties

AL: and cause it's a baby and then babies suckle on titties

SB: yeah, yep... I really like these ceramics, I think they're so funny, yeah so you've ruined that

AL: oh sorry, there's something also about, like both Shaun and Grace's use of ornamentation is taken to excess even though they're like totally aesthetically different, they're both using the same principles

SB: I find them super weird as well because there's always those horror images and sitcom stories of people who collect porcelain dolls who just look at you all over the room and he's just made this beautiful vase covered in dolls with these dead faces that aren't painted or anything and it's just super creepy and also super beautiful and his craftsmanship is just gorgeous for these real whacko over the top items that most people don't want...

AL: yeah hmmm ... I really wanna buy it

(Both laugh)



Image: Shaun Hayes, *Baby baby ohh*, 2016, stoneware ceramic, 46 x 35 x 35 cm. Image courtesy of the artist

# REUBEN INGALL

SB: so, Reuben Ingall's microwave performance, umm.. I think it's really interesting that he's not an 'artist' and that he's been really self conscious about it this whole time, because performance artists would dream of making this work. It's just so kooky and just so perfectly performance art and so good I was really sad when I heard about it because I bought the tape because I never saw the performance, I remember going on a road trip with my sister and I'd packed all my tapes to play in my car and she's like 'what the fuck is this?'

AL: hahaha

SB: and she pulls it out and plays it and we're driving across the hay plains where you can pretty much see the curve of the earth and there's nothin to see and we're just listening to it with this like German backpacker in the back of the car being like 'what we're listening to?' and I'm like 'it's this guy kinda manipulating a microwave while he cooks a pie' and he's like 'why would you cook a pie in a microwave?' but umm it was this perfect very Australian moment of my life like listening to cooking a pie in a microwave and driving across the middle of nowhere and just being like, this is perfect

AL: yeah, I think his work really I think stands out from the others because the others' work aligns more with habitual

SB: yep

AL: like habitat, everyday kind of, going through it

SB: your domestic environment and like your actual environment and your circumstances within that and maybe the highs and lows of that

AL: yep and his is definitely playing on ritual and pushing something that's so mundane into the sublime

SB: yep

AL: and just like celebrating how banal like waiting for a microwave is

SB: I'm keen to see who gets the pie at the end, the coveted pie

AL: I think he eats it!

SB: no! Jonathan got it last time because I remember that's one of the first things I ever learnt about Jonathan was that he got the pie

AL: Oh! Someone gets the pie?!

SB: someone gets the pie! It dings and you've gotta be there. It's like catching the bouquet at the end of a wedding

AL: fuck



SB: maybe we can share it although, neither of us eat meat

AL: ew no, hopefully Gus can eat it, we should tee it up

SB: we should make sure that Gus is in line

AL: yep

SB: yep

# PATRICK LARMOUR

SB: oh yeah.. uhhh Pat Larmour's work

AL: oh Pat, be still my heart

SB: his paintings are so good, just I've always been impressed with how good he is at painting and how surreal they are, but they're just, like I saw pictures on the internet at first and I assumed they were collaged

AL: oh really

SB: yeah, the ones of pill packets cause I was updated the CCAS website and I was changing over his exhibition and I remember seeing the pill packets and thinking they were incredible but assumed they were stuck on top of the backgrounds

AL: nah he's a freak

SB: total freak

AL: freaky deaky.. gotta leave that in by the way

Both laugh

SB: but I must say I really enjoy the floating croc, that pink croc

AL: everything about it is so good

SB: but they're actually just the shittiest objects he could find around the house

AL: but the compositions are just on point even like, they're so tactile like the condom wrapper its just kind of this gross thing where you're in your early twenties and you've fucked some guy and you're in a share house and you can hear him like rustling for it...

SB: but it's also that awkward combination of things because it's with a scalpel and scissors and a lighter and you just and like the croc...

AL: but the lighter is totally...

SB: and you're like why is your condom existing in the same world as like scalpels, it's kind of a nightmare but its beautiful with those pink colours

AL: but it's like when you look at it and you're like yeah that's like the shit that would be on the floor of my shitty boyfriend I dated in art school, he's got the lighter for his bong, the bong water is still there, he's got his scalpel for his like collage or whatever he does

SB: he's got crocs so he doesn't get gross feet in the shower, the communal shower



AL: yeah!

SB yep fair enough, fair enough

SB: but they're super gorgeous and I would happily have that on my mantle piece

AL: oh yeah definitely

# ALYCIA MOFFAT

SB: umm Alycia Moffat's Wall

AL: it's kinda freaky sexy

SB: yeah? How so?

AL: I dunno aren't they panties?

SB: nah with this one like some of them, a lot of them are jeans and t-shirts and stuff but I think cause she's cutting them out they kinda start to feel like intimate wear

AL: ooh that's even better

SB: I think it's because with intimate wear they're usually made out of sheer fabric you only see the seams and because she's reducing your clothes to their seams it does feel like this weird...

AL: it looks like some bondage shit, that's what I thought. I thought they were panties

SB: yeah, nah, cause she's previously done smaller versions that were wall mounted that were like more undies based... I like that you say panties instead of undies by the way

AL: panties

SB: I'm more of an undies person

AL: ohh I like panties, cause it's like kinda creepy naughty

SB: oh yeah it's a bit naughty

AL: yeah it's like her work kinda creepy naughty

SB: yep

AL: it's like when you see Alycia her work is so it's like really cutting, like something about it is just like... you wouldn't expect it from her which is why I love it even more

SB: yep, I think for her it's also really about that excess of consumption and kind of really bringing it to your attention like those piles of clothes on your floor or the stuff you're sending to the salvos and like not being able to find anything to wear and just really going for it and how like I dunno. How like, she was talking to me once about how women buy clothes that don't fit them and keep them because they just bought it and they liked how much it was on sale and like this absurd relationship we have with our clothes and just like, hitting this wall of all of those feelings that we have wrapped up in our clothing

AL: or how like, you buy something that doesn't quite fit and you're like 'I'll make it fit!' and then it's that garment where you're like I'll fit into it and then it never fits. I had to let go of those, like this leather skirt I bought on sale



SB: leather? Oh I thought you said lettuce

AL: no! Leather! It was second hand

SB: oh yeah, I woulda tried to make that work, you'd have a real sexy vibe in it, freaky sexy

AL: I could do it up when I bought it

SB: laughs

AL: I just.. and then, I dunno what happened

SB it's ok you don't have to explain

# AL MUNRO

SB: Al Munro's work

AL: well they are like 2D versions of like knitting patterns

SB: ohh right

AL: she stopped doing the like knitted...

SB: vessels?

AL: and then

SB: is it cause she wanted to move away from being a 'textile artist'?

AL: I don't know .. umm I was talking to her about it and yeah, they're, I don't know if she's knitted something and then done a drawn interpretation of the knitting pattern or if they're just

SB: cause I know there's pretty elaborate knitting patterns out there and I've tried to do some but I don't understand the language, like the language is beyond me because for so many people they write it down in a way that's impenetrable because it's their internal knowledge and they hammer it out

AL: it's a coding system

SB: and the maths that's required for some knitting is pretty wild

AL: totally, so.. yeah Al told me the other day that she would carry the cards in her overnight bag on the way to her BF's house and draw them lying down in bed. So that's really that idea of a 'studio space' is pretty perfect for the show



Image: Al Munro, *Yellow Meteorite Surface Study*, 2016, pencil on file cards, 20 x 25 cm. Image courtesy of the artist  
Al Munro is represented by Brenda May Gallery

# EADIE NEWMAN

AL: Eadie!

SB: so we've got drawings of hers? Which ones are we including? The abstracto ones?

AL: there's some which have these creepy faces, some that have flowers and there's some that have abstract line work and some of them, within the abstract line work, will have a weird little garden snake, cause her's is all about ritual

SB: well I just like the fact that you have a stack of drawings when you asked for a couple and she just gives you a pile, it does speak to this obsessive quality in her manner of making and just kind of like, drawing the everyday, what ever is around her

AL: and her statement is really creepy, it says a ritual is a coping mechanism, 'I've lost every part of myself, a drawing is an unresolved problem, take the different parts of me into you, keep them safe, I put these onto paper, my body is inadequate, my voice is dead, a drawing is a reminder something lived here once, I take your image, I keep it safe, I take it in my hands and feel restless and futile, I've tried to be better than I am and I tried to think deeply on it'... they're very melancholy as well

SB: yeah, despondent

AL: and it's like umm she's only recently started using water colour because before all of hers were

SB: were they pencil?

AL: yeah they were pencil and ink but they were always black and white and Jordan and I were talking to her once in the car and she said that she, as a child always did water colours and then she stopped for some reason and then, she's been working in early childhood learning and she was teaching them to do water colour and she's picked it back up again. Her work now with the water colour is so much more, it, they're kind of, I guess like Alycia's appear soft and delicate but they're still so cold and cutting

SB: yeah, there is a nice duality with what's going on in her work between those things

AL: there's some in the manila folder that are just a mass of black scribbles



Image: Eadie Newman, *Unhinged*, 2016, watercolour, ink and graphite on paper, 30 x 21 cm. Image courtesy of the artist

# LEENA RIETHMULLER

SB: Leena Riethmuller.. umm so the work that we've got is, she's recorded people describing a feeling.

She makes heaps of work about like people and their relationships, bodily relationships and she's mostly a performance artist but she's recently been studying to be umm to be a librarian like library studies, like archiving and keeping umm chronology and all of that kind of stuff and I think her work is slowly starting to talk about serials and kinda collecting and organizing and that kind of stuff.

She's also really into looking after your body so she did these body information workshops where you could book in and do a one on one with her and there's all these great images of people brushing each other's teeth, I'm glad we're not doing that one, I think it'd be really difficult without her present

AL: but we've got a chair!

SB: we do have a chair, she's made the chair, she's a bit worried about the chair

AL: why???

SB: because she's made the chair

AL: ohh haha

SB: umm but she believes that bodies are institutionalised and socialised in ways that limit individuals from perceiving and experiencing their bodies on their own terms. New and alternative ways of understanding bodies must be developed to disrupt current discourse about bodies and encourage independent thought.. umm yeah, I think it's really interesting I guess, most of the other artists aren't considering the body, everything is really absent of humans, like we're talking about home spaces and the rituals we perform but its all very removed I guess. And I think this will be a really interesting sound performance and so often people don't sit down and actually listen to whatever you have in a gallery and whether people will actually get to experience this one or not

AL: well yeah people are kinda scared to interact with things

SB: but I think it's interesting because its one of the most familiar things in the room, like you'll be sitting on a chair like you'll walk into your living room and sit down but in a gallery people freak out and won't do it...



Image: Leena Riethmuller, *Describe a positive feeling* (documentation of audience participation with work), 2015-16, audio, headphones, chair, dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist

# KAI WASIKOWSKI

SB: and Kai Wasikowski with his pictures... they're lenticular?

AL: yeah

SB: lenticular pictures of plants

AL: it's hard to know what to say about these because they're the series after his 'Handscape' series where there's clearly cues in the 'Handscape' works that indicate what the meaning is. These are more ambiguous

SB: yep

AL: umm but his work is about nature like how do we experience nature and...

SB: but both the plants in these lenticulars are very domestic, that everyone in Canberra would like have in either their garden or their neighbor's garden and then it's also that thing where, when you display them in this particular manner its almost like wallpaper, like the repetition in the planting just becomes pattern so it's that manicuring of our space and our selection of our environment and which environment we'll inhabit, even the spiky plants, you've selected that spiky plant because it looks nice

AL: but then it's so easily overlooked at the same time, like it's something that once it's there it's just kind of just like

SB: it's just background noise, or wallpaper

AL: yeah! It's just, you walk past it to get somewhere else

SB: you clip it when it's in the way or when the council sends you a notice

AL: yep! And the fact that they are lenticular and they're going to jump out at you reinforces that they need to be acknowledged



Image: Kai Wasikowski, *Breathing data*, 2016, pure pigment on archival paper, acrylic lenticular lens, 165 x 118 cm. Image courtesy of the artist

SB: I really hope this recording has worked because it'd be a real bummer if it hasn't. I think it's really good though, it's a really like weird selection of artists to all put in a room together and they're all, I don't think any of them are particularly focused on the concerns of our theme within their practice and so for most of them its been pretty surprising that they've been included and I think that that's a really nice challenge in bringing them all together because it'll be a pretty kooky selection

AL: yeah umm, I think that that's probably the thing that I'm most nervous about is whether or not people can pick it up

SB: or will believe that what we're saying is right

AL: yeah, cause they could just be like what's that barf shit on that wall with Grace's work

SB: 'hey I don't see a house here, what's that about? I thought this was about homes,' cause I think that that's something that we really tried to steer away from, like the obvious choices

AL: like you don't just want some doilies

SB: (laughs) I would love some doilies, can we put some under Shaun's

AL: yeah ok, but I think that that's the whole issue around the current or past dialogues about domesticity that it's always kind of fallen back to being a female space when it's not. it's communal space

SB: well we're in a world where more people are trying to buy homes as singles than ever before and can't afford it

AL: it's not just a group of women who are making work about not working and being at home

SB: but none of - most of these people aren't engaging in these traditional mediums I guess that we would have previously considered in this domestic way and I think that that's a really nice thing that we haven't chosen those people. We're choosing them on maybe an abstract part of their practice or you know, asking them to think a bit differently about their work, like Grace Blake for example is producing this work for this show so she's thinking about it really differently which I think is a really exciting thing when you're curating artists into a show and maybe by putting one work that doesn't make sense next to one that really, really does, then they both... will become.. about the same thing

AL: yep

SB: cool

AL: do you think I swear too much?