

# **UP CLOSE**

**CAROL JERREMS**

**with LARRY CLARK, NAN GOLDIN and WILLIAM YANG**

# **UP CLOSE**

**CAROL JERREMS**

**with LARRY CLARK, NAN GOLDIN and WILLIAM YANG**

**edited by NATALIE KING**

First published in 2010 by Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne and Schwartz City, Melbourne,  
on the occasion of the exhibition:

“Up Close: Carol Jerrems with Larry Clark, Nan Goldin and William Yang”, 31 July – 31 October 2010

Curated by Natalie King

Organised by  
Heide Museum of Modern Art  
7 Templestowe Rd  
Bulleen, Victoria 3105  
Australia  
Tel: +61 3 9850 1500  
www.heide.com.au

Schwartz City is an imprint of Schwartz Media Pty Ltd  
Level 5, 289 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Australia  
email: enquiries@blackincbooks.com

Editor: Natalie King  
Managing Editor: Linda Michael  
Design: John Warwicker, tomato  
Images and permissions: Linda Short  
Production by Australian Book Connection  
Printed in China  
Image scans: Over the Line Graphics, Alexandria, New South Wales

Text © The authors, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne and Schwartz Media, Melbourne  
Images © The artists and their estates  
© Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne and Schwartz Media, Melbourne  
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system  
or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording  
or otherwise without the written permission of the copyright owners.

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Title: Up close: Carol Jerrems with Larry Clark, Nan Goldin and  
William Yang / edited by Natalie King; with essays by Virginia Fraser ... [et al.]

ISBN: 9781863955010 (hbk.)

Subjects: Jerrems, Carol, 1949–1980—Exhibitions.  
Clark, Larry, 1943—Exhibitions.  
Goldin, Nan, 1953—Exhibitions.  
Yang, William, 1943—Exhibitions.  
Photography—Australia—20th century.

Other Authors/Contributors:  
King, Natalie, 1966–  
Fraser, Virginia, 1947–  
Heide Museum of Modern Art.  
Dewey Number: 770.994074945

**Heide**  
**Museum of**  
**Modern Art**  
*Heide*

■ SCHWARTZ CITY

Front cover:  
Carol Jerrems  
Vale Street  
1975

Back cover:  
Clockwise from top left:  
Nan Goldin  
Nan and Brian in Bed, New York City  
1983

William Yang  
Patrick White #3  
1980

Larry Clark  
New York City—42nd St.  
1979

Endpaper (front):  
Carol Jerrems  
(Self Portrait in Front of Wall with  
Australian Centre for Photography  
Exhibition Posters)  
1974

Endpaper (back):

-----  
Opposite:  
Rennie Ellis  
Carol Jerrems  
1970



# CONTENTS

## UP CLOSE

**x-xi**

**PREFACE: UP CLOSE** Jason Smith

1

**INTRODUCTION: UP CLOSE** Natalie King

5

**CAROL JERREMS**

12

**CAROL JERREMS: LIVING IN THE 70s** Natalie King

76

**Pages from A BOOK ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN**

94

**MAD CONFIDENCE: A BOOK ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN** Virginia Fraser

102

**CAROL JERREMS IN 1974: A BOOK ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN** Gael Newton

110

**IF YOUR MEM'RY SERVES YOU WELL** Djon Mundine

126

**ALPHABET FOLIO** Isobel Crombie

128

**VALE STREET** Judy Annear

136

**LYNN GAILEY** Anne O'Hehir

142

**MIRROR WITH A MEMORY: MOTEL ROOM** Anne Marsh

144

**MARK'S GAME OF RAPE** Kathy Drayton

148

**WARD 3E** Helen Ennis

162

**PAUL COX REMEMBERS CAROL JERREMS** An interview with Natalie King

166

**REFLECTIONS ON CAROL JERREMS** Roger Scott

168

**CAROL JERREMS: CHRONOLOGY** Compiled by Natalie King

175

**LARRY CLARK AND TULSA** Christopher Chapman

192

**LARRY CLARK: BIOGRAPHY**

194

**NAN GOLDIN: THE BALLAD OF SEXUAL DEPENDENCY** Juliana Engberg

210

**NAN GOLDIN: BIOGRAPHY**

212

**WILLIAM YANG: DIARY OF A DENIZEN** Russell Storer

232

**WILLIAM YANG: BIOGRAPHY**

234

**AFTERWORD** Ken Jerrems

236

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

238

**IMAGE CREDITS**

# PREFACE: UP CLOSE

**The history of photography, across generations and geographies, reveals artists' preoccupation with the concept of identity, and the particular contexts of time and place that condition people's lives and the cultures of which they are part.** This book—*Up Close: Carol Jerrems with Larry Clark, Nan Goldin and William Yang*—is a scholarly and inspiring evaluation of the practices of four of the most influential photographers of the past 40 years. Working from different points of origin, their images straightforwardly and poignantly picture the social, sexual and cultural politics of their times.

While the works of Jerrems, Clark, Goldin and Yang each have a history of representation in major exhibitions and publications, there is an imbalance that this project redresses: its in-depth focus on the work of Carol Jerrems is the first significant study of the artist's work since the exhibition "Living in the 70s: Photographs by Carol Jerrems" organised in 1990 by Helen Ennis and Bob Jenyns with the University of Tasmania. Outside the art world, Jerrems remains a little-known figure whose work warrants introduction to new audiences unfamiliar with her acute and sensitive observations.

Jerrems was raised in the vicinity of Heidelberg and it is apt that Heide Museum of Modern Art has undertaken to present fresh perspectives on Jerrems's work in context with her international peers Larry Clark and Nan Goldin, and reveal the clear resonances her practice has with contemporary Australian artist William Yang, whose work for almost four decades has investigated identity, lifestyle and social diversity.

This publication and exhibition project has been in development since early 2006. From the outset Heide Museum of Modern Art and Natalie King have been in dialogue with the National Gallery of Australia, custodian of the enormous Carol Jerrems archive, regarding the ambitious scope of the exhibition. We are grateful in particular for the professional support and encouragement of Ron Radford, Director; Simon Elliott, Assistant Director, Curatorial and Educational Services; Gael Newton, Senior Curator of Photography; Anne O'Hehir, Assistant Curator of Photography; and Sara Kelly, Associate Registrar, Loans & Exhibitions. Other institutional collaborators without whom this publication and exhibition would not have been realised include the National Gallery of Victoria, Macquarie University, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, and Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris. Heide also acknowledges the special contribution to this project of the eminent photographer John Gollings.

Heide's collaboration with publisher Morry Schwartz has realised this outstanding book. Morry's early and essential contribution to Jerrems's work through the publication of *A Book About Australian Women* in 1974 through Outback Press has made him, and designer John Warwicker, important partners in this present publication. We are grateful to the sixteen essayists and interviewees for their valuable contribution to the scholarship on Jerrems, her peers and times.

We thank the exhibition's curator and editor of the publication Natalie King for her dedication over four years to the sensitive and intelligent realisation of this project.

Finally, it has been a privilege to work closely with William Yang, and the representatives of Larry Clark and Nan Goldin. We are especially grateful to Ken Jerrems and Linda Sly, representatives of the Carol Jerrems Estate, for entrusting Heide with this major reintroduction of Carol Jerrems's work to the public.

**Jason Smith**

Director & CEO

Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne



---

# INTRODUCTION: UP CLOSE

---

**Carol Jerrems was the impassioned photographer of social relationships in the era of free love, youth, beauty, violence and intoxication.** Tender connections are enacted before her camera: a couple dances, lovers embrace and a family marvel at their new baby. “Up Close” traces the personal trajectory of Jerrems and three other photographers living and working in the 1970s and early 1980s whose subjects were often friends, acquaintances and peers. Focusing on the significant legacy and vast oeuvre of Jerrems (Australia, 1949–1980), “Up Close” situates her work alongside three photo-based artists—Larry Clark (USA), Nan Goldin (USA) and William Yang (Australia)—all of whom have a remarkable capacity to capture people, places and events with candid ease through the lens. Moving away from a detached documentary style, each artist produces intimate portraits, entering into social and convivial scenarios involving a degree of complicity.<sup>1</sup> For Jerrems, a face “tells the story of what a person is thinking. The eyes reveal the suffering”.<sup>2</sup> Goldin, however, relishes the extended portrait: “I believe only in the accumulation of portraits as a representation of a person. Because I think people are really complex”.<sup>3</sup>

Opposite:  
Rennie Ellis  
Pensive, Carol Jerrems, Mozart Street  
1970

Newly commissioned texts focus on individual pictures or series, from Judy Annear's analysis of the iconic status of Jerrems's *Vale Street* (1975) and Anne O'Hehir's account of Lynn Gailey's apprehensive gaze to Kathy Drayton's speculation on the sinister implications of *Mark Lean: Rape Game* (1975). Isobel Crombie discloses new research on Jerrems's early student work, *Alphabet Folio* (1968), and Helen Ennis continues her scholarship on Jerrems's final hospital series. On a personal note, Roger Scott, Paul Cox and Jerrems's brother Ken each provide insight into their unique relationship with Jerrems. "Up Close" uncovers Jerrems's preoccupation with people and their environments, subcultures, forgotten and dispossessed groups—especially Aboriginal communities, as elucidated in Djon Mundine's essay.

Each of the four photographers unflinchingly turns the camera on themselves in illuminating self-portraits. Both Jerrems and Goldin frequently deploy mirrors to embed themselves in the framing. Anne Marsh explores the psychological and feminist implications of Jerrems's *Mirror with a Memory: Motel Room* (1977).

*A Book About Australian Women*, published in 1974 and revisited here by Virginia Fraser and Gael Newton, was a seminal publication for Jerrems, while *Tulsa's* recording of adolescents in 1971 was pivotal for American photographer and filmmaker Larry Clark. Christopher Chapman's essay encounters Clark's enmeshment in the teenage world of sex and drugs. With searing honesty, Clark renders adolescent life redolent with ennui, ecstasy and trauma. Marked by violence, his squalid interiors are nonetheless sensuous as he captures the frontline of self-destructive and self-absorbed youth culture. Adopting the dual role of participant and photographer, Clark lends an autobiographical inflection to the scenes that he portrays. His mostly interior world comprises close-ups of friends in the mode of diarist snapshot later taken up by Goldin. Tawdry and lascivious scenes reveal a participatory viewpoint akin to Jerrems's empathic and consensual approach to her subjects, most of whom were known to her. Both artists display genuine affection for their companions on the margins of society and for youth subculture.

Clark gives subjective expression to the nondescript town of Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he grew up with a delinquent, amphetamine-shooting coterie. *Tulsa* includes melancholy roadscapes, shadows on walls, a young male in a car, a father lying down and smoking with his child draped across his torso, a man pointing a gun, a man with his head in his hands. These are private and pensive moments rendered in a grainy, shot-from-the-hip style. A woman lies in bed with a black eye and bruised arm staring at her companion. We are reminded of Goldin's self-portrait—*Nan After Being Battered* (1984)—and the dazed despair of abuse. Hustlers in New York's Times Square appear in Clark's follow-up autobiographical publication, *Teenage Lust* (1983). An unforgettably raunchy image on the front cover shows naked teenage lovers making out in the back seat of a car.

*Tulsa* influenced Goldin and a generation of artists who aspired to break with traditional documentary modes. Goldin also deployed the publication format for her book *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, first developed as an evolving slide projection with sound. Originally performed at Frank Zappa's birthday party at the Mudd Club in New York in 1979, *Ballad* is a visual diary chronicling Goldin's loves, losses and friends in an era ravaged by AIDS and addiction.

Discussed by Juliana Engberg, the images are tender, charged and seething, bearing witness to sorrow, joy and lovemaking in saturated colour. Like Jerrems, Goldin connects with her

subjects, casting herself in the story of New York urban life:

***The camera is as much part of my everyday life as talking or eating or sex. The instant of photographing, instead of creating distance, is a moment of clarity and emotional connection for me.***<sup>4</sup>

***In 1974, I went to school and there was a teacher who showed me Larry Clark. It has entirely changed my work. I knew that there had been somebody else who had done their own life.***<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, Goldin, like Jerrems, has been influenced by Diane Arbus. For Goldin, their bond was that they both had "an unusual degree of empathy ... My genius, if I have any, is in the slideshows, in the narratives. It is not in making perfect images. It is in the groupings of work. It is in the relationships I have with other people".<sup>6</sup>

Gender politics, filmic sequencing and the accumulation of images combined with a connection to people mark the work of William Yang, and link his oeuvre to those of Jerrems, Clark and Goldin. Yang's photographs from the 1970s further the snapshot aesthetic through journeying into the intimate world of his particular social milieu: drag queens and flamboyant parties, Sydney's gay and inner-city culture. Russell Storer writes about Yang's direct, unpretentious photographs that chronicle marginalised groups. Like Jerrems, Clark and Goldin, Yang published books—*Sydney Diary* and *Friends of Dorothy*—in which hundreds of photos are amassed and accompanied by annotations and personal descriptions of parties, gallery openings, couples and fleeting sexual encounters. Yang wrote of his approach to taking the photographs in *Friends of Dorothy*.

***I have carried my camera to gay events in Sydney for over twenty years and I have cobbled together these moments in time in a haphazard document of Sydney's gay subculture. It's a personal view and I make no apology for that ... Often I have felt I have been in a privileged position where people have let me into their lives, that I had a role in the community, that I have been accepted as a witness to the times.***<sup>7</sup>

In the section of this book titled "Intimacies" appear three photographs, titled *Grant, M\*\*\** and *Joe*, the latter inscribed with a story of Yang's memorable one-night liaison with a deaf man, a labourer from a nearby country town. Whether photographing lovers, Mardi Gras (Peter Tully's costumes) or writers (Patrick White), Yang enters into the world of post-Stonewall coming out with joy and abandon. Yang records moments that cumulatively tell stories of love, friendship, desire and their aftermaths.

"Up Close" takes us on a joyride into the world of sharpies, addicted adolescents and drag queens. These fleeting experiences draw on the informality of the snapshot with all the compositional clutter of domestic lives. Mining the emotional depths of friends, lovers and family, the artists in "Up Close" provide an empathic close-up glimpse into semi-private worlds and amplify the emotional tenor of their times.

**Natalie King**

Natalie King is an independent curator and writer.





Carol Jerrems  
Patrisha Backstage [at Pussy Galore's, Kings Cross]  
1975

# CAROL JERREMS

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Helen Ennis, "Carol Jerrems and the politics of consent", unpublished paper, Canberra, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Jerrems quoted by Geoffrey Radcliffe, "She'll crusade with a camera", *Sunday Observer Magazine*, 14 July 1974, p.8.

<sup>3</sup> Nan Goldin interviewed by David Armstrong and Walter Keller, *Nan Goldin: I'll Be Your Mirror*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1996, p.454.

<sup>4</sup> Nan Goldin, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, Aperture, New York, 1986.

<sup>5</sup> Nan Goldin interviewed by Adam Mazur and Paulina Skirgajilo-Krajewska, Warsaw, 13 February 2003, <http://fototapeta.art.pl/2003/ngie.php>, accessed January 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> William Yang, "Introduction", *Friends of Dorothy*, Macmillan, Sydney, 1997, p.3. Yang's other publication from this period is *Sydney Diary 1974-1984*, James Fraser Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1984. A "friend of Dorothy" is a euphemism for a gay man, a phrase derived from the character Dorothy in the film *The Wizard of Oz*, played by the gay icon Judy Garland.



Stephen McNeilly  
Carol Jerrems, Daylesford, Victoria  
1973



3 stops 1.45 SM burn 2.45 more burn 4 1/2  
 "VALE STREET, 1975" ⑨ 10"X12" ⑤ INDIVIDUALS  
 3. 2 STOPS → 20 secs. 3M  
 4. SAME

① 5 MILK 2 stops  
 ② 20  
 ③ 25 SM

⑩ 15 6M  
 ⑬ SKY BURST

1.45 25 stops  
 ⑩ 15 M  
 2.45 4M (SMALLER)

MICHAEL EDOLS, '74

3 stops  
 ⑩ 15  
 ⑪ 40  
 3M

MIDGE M'KENZIE, '75

AMBROSE CAMPBELL, '73

AL VISSER, WITH FREE, '73

25 stops  
 ⑩ 15.

also, CROWN STREET / HYMIE & ANGELA / JOHN WILLIAMS



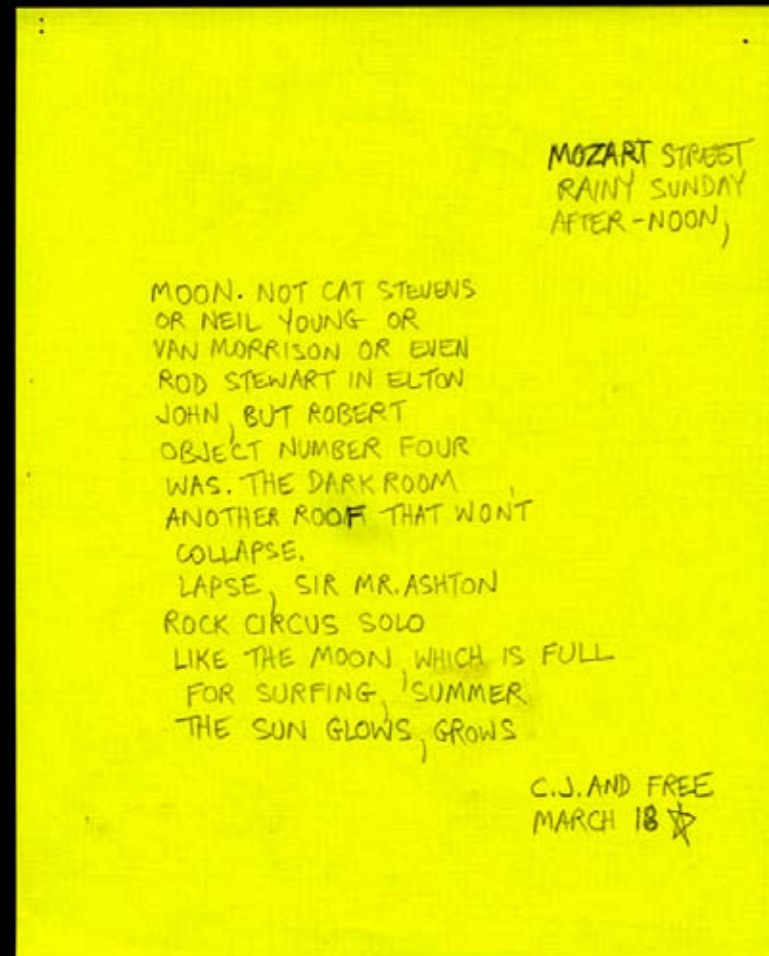
Above & opposite:  
 Carol Jerrems  
 frames from contact sheets c.1975-6



Carol Jerrems  
Marilyn Monroe  
1972

# CAROL JERREMS LIVING IN THE 70s

Natalie King



"Moon. Not Cat Stevens..."  
poem by Carol Jerrems  
18 March 1972

If you keep looking at the world through your viewfinder you see very little.<sup>1</sup>

Paul Cox

The March 1975 issue of *Vogue Australia* provides a vivid snapshot of the 1970s: perms, velvet, International Women's Year, Linda Jackson's fabulously frivolous designs for Jenny Kee's Flamingo Park boutique and an interview with art critic Robert Hughes on *Landscape With Figures*, his new television series on Australian art. A buoyant optimism about Australian culture was reflected in the opening of the Australian Centre for Photography (ACP) in Sydney's Paddington in 1974. With "high aims, handsome premises, [and] imaginative plans", the new gallery released two books on photography at a mere \$5 each. Concurrently, Outback Press in Melbourne published two copiously illustrated titles,<sup>2</sup> one of photographs by Carol Jerrems:

*Carol Jerrems, 26, curly-haired, pretty, contributes sensitive and revealing portraits—some posed and moody, some candid and joyous—to A Book About Australian Women. Her subjects range from women's libbers to lesbians, sculptors to strippers, actress Kate Fitzpatrick to veteran painter Grace Cossington Smith to Aboriginal poet Kath Walker.*<sup>3</sup>

Against a burgeoning interest in photography, Jerrems flexed her lens on a licentious era that embraced open sexuality, drugs and subcultures, as well as feminist and gay rights political movements. Photography's socially restorative potential made it an apt medium and mode of expression for the times. As Jerrems said, "I don't want to exploit people. I care about them: I'd like to help them, if I could through my photographs".<sup>4</sup>

By looking beyond the viewfinder, Jerrems's approach became consensual and participatory.<sup>5</sup> Autobiography is etched into her small-scaled, intimate portraits and images of rumpled beds, living rooms, bathrooms and backstage at concerts. Jerrems became ensconced with minority groups with whom she shared an affinity, as she embraced the politics of the times.



Carol Jerrems  
"Sandy": Yarra River  
1975

Carol Jerrems grew up in a middle-class family in suburban Ivanhoe near Heidelberg. From childhood, she had a passion for Warringal Park (also known as Banksia Park), with its sandy banks along the Yarra River that she frequented with her dog, Free, and later photographed as a backdrop to sharpies, in photographs such as "Sandy": Yarra River (1975).

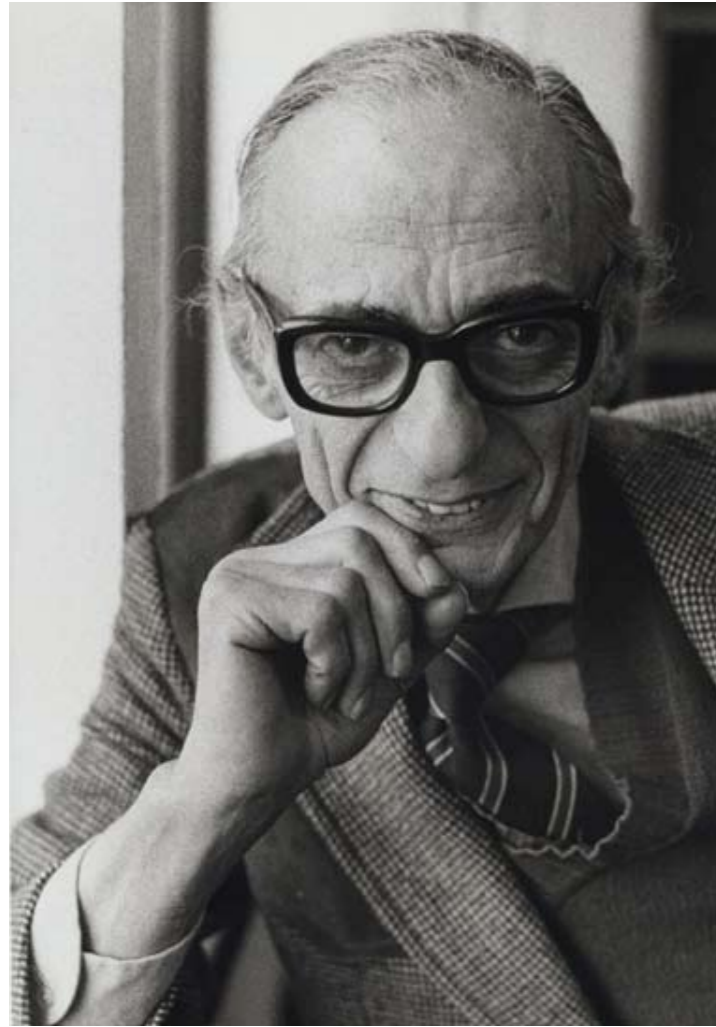
Orderly and methodical, Jerrems recorded feelings, dreams and quotes as sources of inspiration. Often in upper case, her writing was controlled and exacting. She ruminates about her longings, aspirations and personal relationships. In the folder "Thoughts, Ideas, Verbal Diarrhoea [sic], or 'Feeling-Exorcism', and Reject Letters", dated November/December 1977–8, she quotes from a broad range of sources including The Beatles, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Aristotle, John Cage and Michelangelo Antonioni. Despite persistent self-doubt, relationship difficulties and bouts of depression, Jerrems articulated her thoughts and feelings, attempting to maintain "discipline and courage". Striving for direction, she aimed to be more "assertive, decisive, self confident, positive, energetic, successful, creative".<sup>6</sup> She annotated and dated dreams, as well as an ongoing spiritual quest and journey towards self-awareness through yoga, which she taught throughout the 1970s.

In her short, compressed career, Jerrems made numerous personal and professional notes that demonstrate her unwavering commitment to photography.<sup>7</sup> A prolific worker, she kept manila folders full of letters, duplicate correspondence, exhibition ideas and checklists, dark-room notes and press clippings, in files carefully dated and meticulously arranged. Jerrems recorded comments and responses to her exhibitions and individual photographs. She wrote detailed and informative letters to friends and family—her favourite method of communication—as well as humorous poems.<sup>8</sup>

Jerrems belonged to a cultural milieu that extended artistic practice beyond galleries and other institutions. She contributed images to books, magazines and a record cover, part of what Craig McGregor described as "a new wave of younger photographers ... who have made their reputations outside the commercial studio: in books, underground magazines, on gallery walls, in touring exhibitions".<sup>9</sup> She attended parties and social gatherings, photographing fringe groups like Aborigines, strippers, skinheads, rock stars, artists and dropouts. Jerrems approached photography with sensitivity and flair, and increasingly engaged her sitters in the process. By the mid-1970s, she had begun to collaborate with her subjects by taking on an empathic, directorial role. In doing so, she produced fictions through deftly manipulating the placement of sitters, ensuring direct eye contact and emphasizing tonality.

Jerrems photographed a generation—peers, friends, family, students and acquaintances—in a subjective style. Many sitters have discussed her informal orchestration of composition. By inducing ease and comfort, Jerrems had the capacity to elicit a participatory approach. Using a "beaten-up Pentax" with a 50mm lens in natural light, Jerrems resisted cropping, the use of a flash or wide-angle lens, preferring an unmitigated engagement—she liked things "to be real, to be natural".<sup>10</sup>

In an unpublished questionnaire for *Rolling Stone*, Jerrems acknowledges the legacy of Paul Cox and Henri Cartier-Bresson.<sup>11</sup> The decisive moment championed by Bresson gave way to a spontaneous subjectivity that documented the vernacular: both methods became part of Jerrems's repertoire. Moreover, American photographer Diane Arbus is cited by Jerrems's peers—Esben Storm, Mirta Mizza and Robert Ashton—as a significant influence.<sup>12</sup> Arbus's confronting and troubling photographs of people on the edge of society were produced with



Clockwise from top left:  
Carol Jerrems  
Athol Shmith  
1976

Robert Ashton  
From left: Carol Reed, Peter Crowe, Carol Jerrems  
and Richard Muggleton, Prahran Technical College,  
c.1970

Carol Jerrems  
A  
from *Alphabet Folio*  
(1968) dated 1969

obsessive dedication—it is likely that her compulsion to document disadvantaged minorities and outcasts appealed to Jerrems.<sup>13</sup> In October 1977, Arbus exhibited at the Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney and many photographers had read the 1972 Museum of Modern Art publication accompanying her retrospective exhibition.<sup>14</sup>

### The Australian “Bauhaus” and *Alphabet Folio*

From 1967 to 1970 Jerrems attended Prahran Technical School, a College of Advanced Education, under the influential tutelage of European émigré Paul Cox. In the 1967 handbook, the Principal Alan Warren writes, in “Education for an Age of Change”, about the impact of the technological revolution and the influence of a “designed world”.<sup>15</sup> A modern and progressive institution, Prahran Tech provided a “liberal education” in “a world that is changing ever more rapidly under the impact of technology and of new media of communication”.<sup>16</sup> Cox encouraged his students’ “concern for the human condition”.<sup>17</sup> Athol Shmith and Henry Talbot also taught at Prahran, promoting a practice of self-discovery as outlined in the 1968 handbook:

***The Diploma in Art course leads in two directions, inward into self-knowledge and personal fulfillment; outward towards a full and valuable participation in the cultural life of the community.***<sup>18</sup>

Lenton Parr, the head of the art division, advanced the social role of art and design.<sup>19</sup> According to Paul Cox, Parr was a free thinker and visionary, who had invited many artists to join his Australian “Bauhaus”, creating a college that “had a significant impact on the development of the arts in Australia”.<sup>20</sup>

Cox adopted an unorthodox and original approach to teaching, incorporating classical music in an impromptu syllabus (see interview, page 163). Jerrems responded to his assignment to photograph the alphabet with the compositionally astute *Alphabet Folio* (1968; see essay page 126). A variety of forms and materials (iron, wood and paling fence) in the landscape are photographed, yet the images retain an abstract quality. We can only speculate on the anomaly of the missing letter “B”—was it an elusive form or a cheeky and purposeful omission? In any case, *Alphabet Folio* reveals Jerrems’s powers of observation in textured renditions that express the visuality of language.

Acquired by and exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria, the work was reviewed by Beatrice Faust, who noted its remarkable visual nuances:

***“V” is the slit in a waterlily leaf lying on a pond, photographed dead on, with only stygian ripples, and the slightest flare of light off water on leaf to give a clue as to where the artist found her form.***<sup>21</sup>

Jerrems went on to use this assignment in her own teaching. In March 1979 she gave her third-year students at the Tasmanian School of Art in Hobart “The Alphabet” as “an exercise in looking, and applying imagination”. She asked that the students “photograph shapes etc. found in man-made and natural forms, resembling letters from the alphabet”, to hone their observational and visual skills. Jerrems also stipulated that “the composition should be

made at the time of exposure (use full frame)", highlighting her desire to avoid cropping in the darkroom.<sup>22</sup>

Prahran provided an invaluable foundation for Jerrems, who was part of the first wave of photography graduates. Other students included filmmaker Ian Macrae, photographer Robert Ashton, Ross Hannaford from the band Daddy Cool, as well as fashion designer Linda Jackson. Cox's teaching of photography was inflected by his involvement with cinema, contributing to Jerrems's ongoing use of sequencing. A friend and seminal influence, Cox allowed Jerrems on set for some of his films and she acted in *Skin Deep* (1968) and *The Journey* (1972).

Jerrems graduated in 1970 with a Diploma of Art and Design, majoring in photography and with a minor in cinematography. In her second year at college, she made up a stamp "carol jerrems / photographic artist", which she used on the back of all her finished prints to signal her professionalism. Sometimes she bound her student work, and signed, dated and editioned her photographs with inscriptions.

In the early 1970s, Jerrems lived in a shared house with Robert Ashton and Ian Macrae in Mozart Street, St Kilda, Melbourne, settling into the front room, which she also used as a studio. Jerrems was photographed within this active artistic environment by her peers: Rennie Ellis, Robert Ashton, Ingeborg Tyssen, Paul Cox and Bill Heimerman, and she appeared in Ian Macrae's experimental short film for Channel 9, *Fly Wrinklys Fly* (1971). While living in Mozart Street, Jerrems set up a darkroom and listened to Leonard Cohen and Billie Holliday; she also had a darkroom at her mother's home in Ivanhoe.<sup>23</sup>

### The Rise of Photography

Jerrems studied against a background of flourishing support for photography as a medium. The first Australian department of photography within a state gallery was established at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1972, under curator Jennie Boddington.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, Athol Shmith and Lenton Parr from Prahran Tech were appointed to an advisory committee for this department.<sup>25</sup> In Sydney, the Australian Centre for Photography was founded in 1973 with Visual Arts Board funding while the Australia Council started providing grants to photographers. New galleries in Melbourne included Brummels Gallery of Photography, the Photographers' Gallery and Church Street Photographic Centre. As curator Helen Ennis has observed, the decade marked a shift in photographic practices:

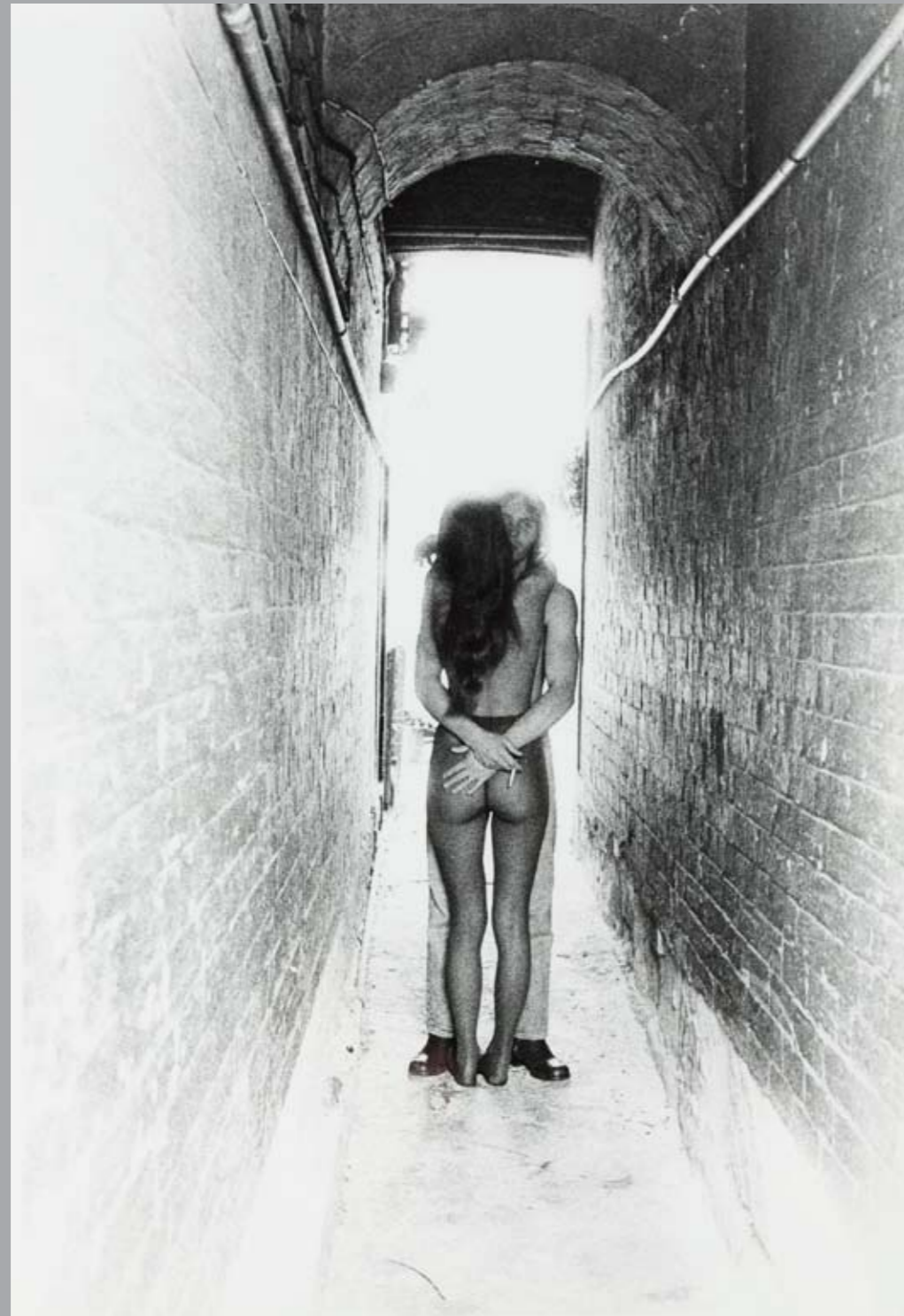
***In the 1970s formal portraiture in Australia was reinvigorated by a new generation of artist-photographers who chose not to work within an already established idiom. Carol Jerrems's portraiture, for instance, was infused with energy through the amalgam of photo-journalistic, vernacular and formal approaches.***<sup>26</sup>

It was a liberating era for photography, with the medium used as a social recording device that invoked self-discovery. Photographers increasingly drew back from realist and photo-documentary strategies; the new work that emerged arose "from personal expression or a concern with style rather than a desire to record day-to-day reality".<sup>27</sup>

David Porter  
(Carol Jerrems with Camera)  
c.1968







Carol Jerrems  
 untitled photograph from the series *Hanging About*  
 1972

### Rennie Ellis & *Two Views of Erotica*

In 1972 Rennie Ellis established Brummels Gallery of Photography, Australia's first gallery dedicated to photography. This not-for-profit enterprise was above a coffee lounge in Toorak Road, South Yarra, in inner Melbourne. Ellis ran Brummels with Robert Ashton and they were close friends and colleagues of Jerrems. Opened by Paul Cox, the inaugural exhibition "Two Views of Erotica" featured Henry Talbot and Carol Jerrems. A biographical statement by Jerrems in the accompanying brochure states:

***Last year taught art to secondary school students at Heidelberg Technical School. Since then has done some freelance work, been on the dole, borrowed money and worked on location as a stills photographer with the Commonwealth Film Unit. Believes working in a commercial studio would be compromising her artistic integrity.***<sup>28</sup>

Talbot included four nudes of Jerrems while Jerrems exhibited twelve single images and the two series *Hanging Around* (1972) and *Trentham Blues* (1972). *Hanging Around* was also referred to as *Hanging About* or *Hanging About with Pearl*, and was reproduced alongside a suite of images of Ross Hannaford in the experimental publication from the University of Melbourne, *Circus*.<sup>29</sup> *Hanging Around* was photographed in a laneway in Crown Street, in Sydney's Surry Hills, where Haydn Keenan and Esben Storm were living.<sup>30</sup> Linda Piper appears naked in the foreground while her companion frolics with a cat. Together, they adopt playful poses against the natural light streaming from the back of the laneway, which Jerrems exploits for compositional depth. This series is an early example of Jerrems's adoption of sequencing and use of a tunnel or corridor as a compositional device, later appearing in her Macquarie University and hospital series:

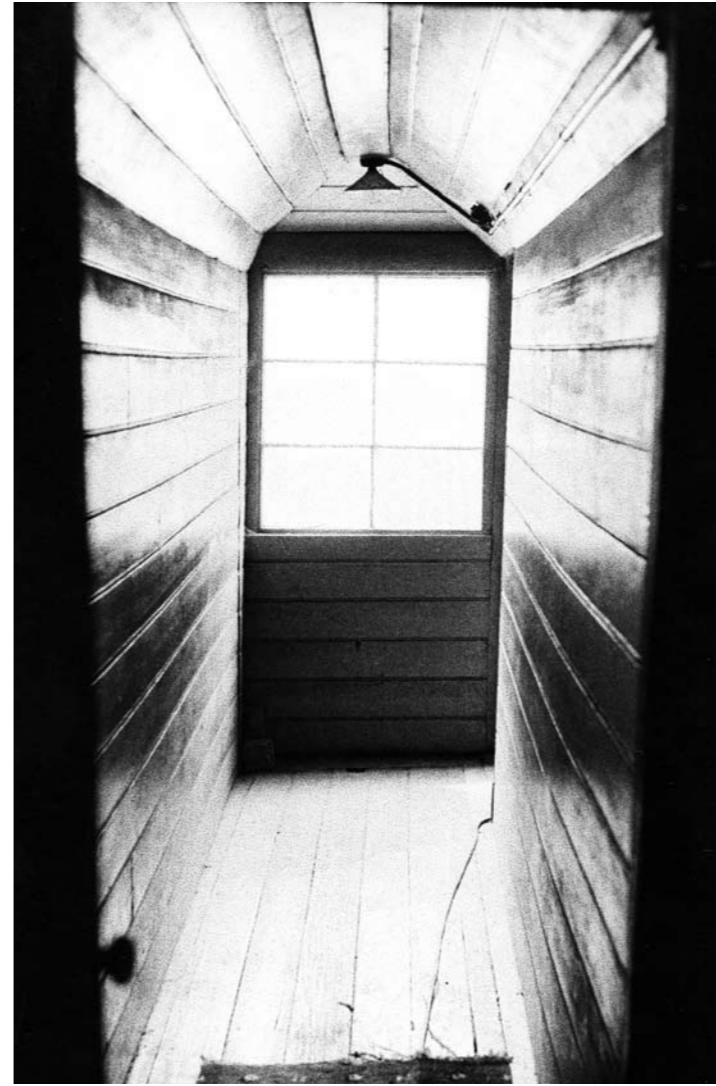
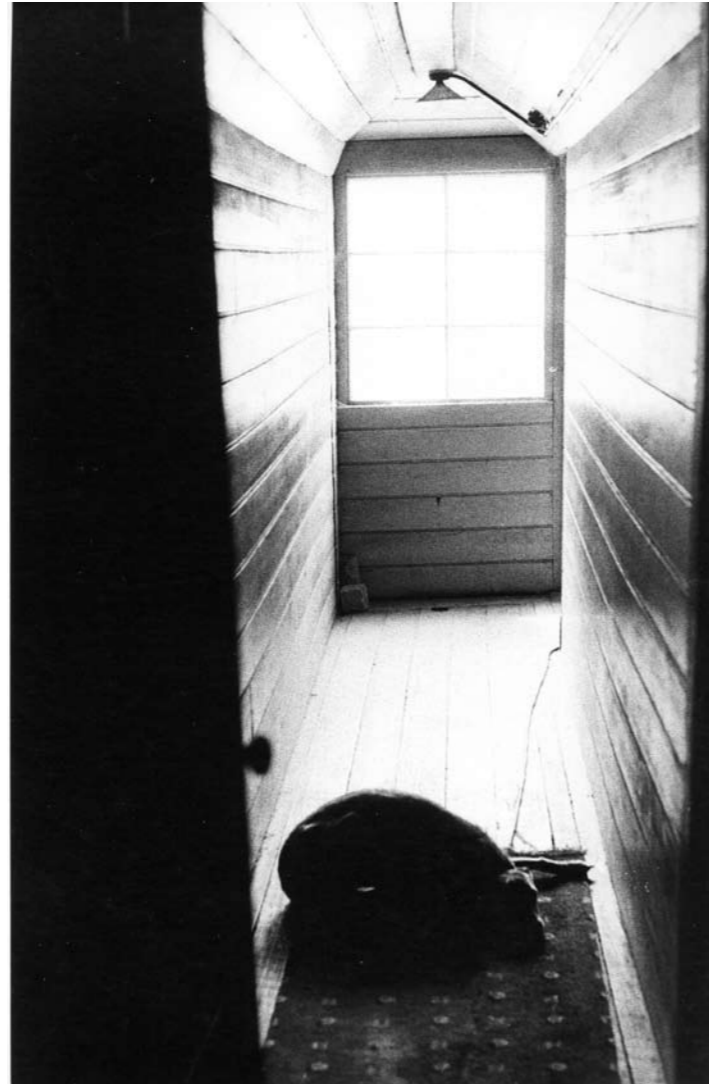
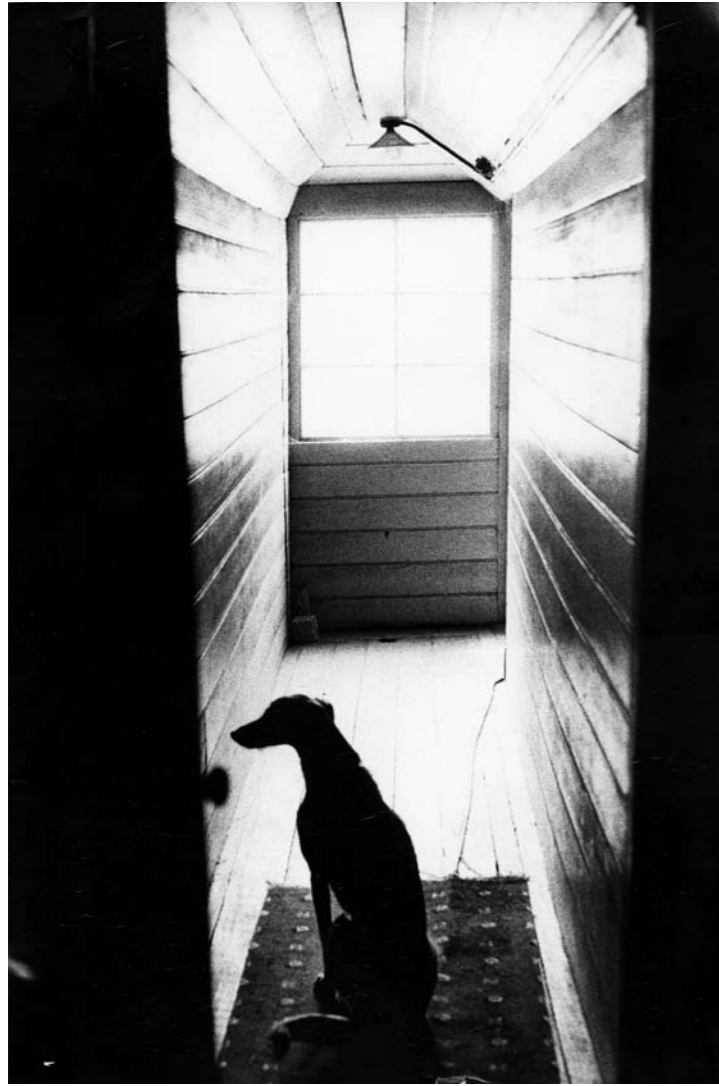
***The picture-stories read from left to right, and the audience shall gain most by entering the situations, in their minds. Empathy. With love from my imagination to yours, Carol Jerrems.***<sup>31</sup>

More sombre in tone, *Trentham Blues* deploys an interior corridor viewed from an open doorway. Jerrems's dog, Free, moves in and out of the photographic frame, with the silhouette of a man nearby. The final frame is backlit and luminous, devoid of occupants and with an otherworldly quality. As reviewer Beatrice Faust notes of Jerrems's more enigmatic photographs, they are "full of unresolved business which demands active involvement from the viewer, not reflective admiration".<sup>32</sup>

By 1975, Jerrems's use of sequencing, cinematic flow and multiple frames is evident in an application to the Australia Council for a travel grant. Jerrems writes about her "interest in 'photographic filmmaking' (filmic photography) [and] sequential imagery which exercises control over spectator response".<sup>33</sup>

Opposite & overleaf:  
 Carol Jerrems  
 untitled photographs from the series *Hanging About*  
 1972





Carol Jerrems  
Trentham Blues, Image Three  
1972

Trentham Blues, Image Five  
1972

Trentham Blues, Image Six  
1972

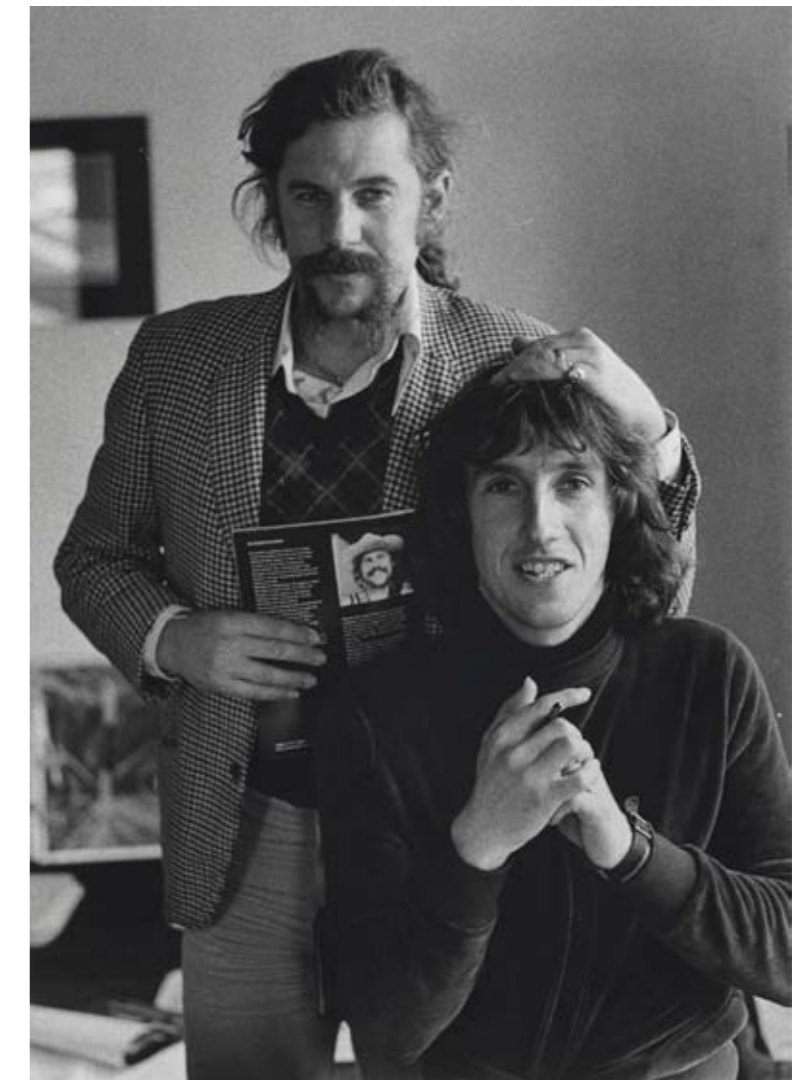
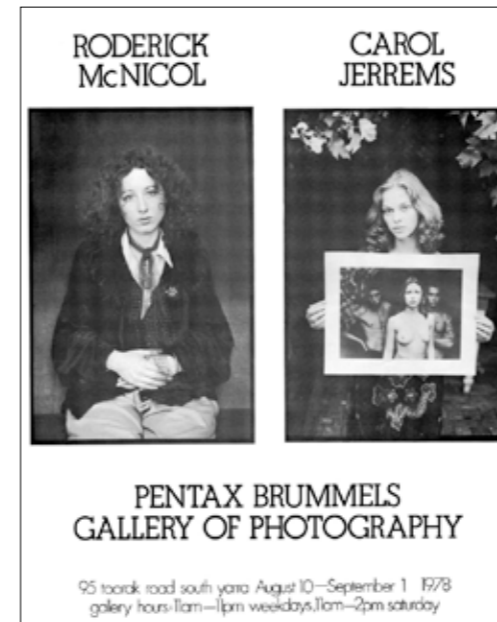


Rennie Ellis  
Carol Jerrems, Brummels  
1975

Clockwise from left:  
"Roderick McNicol and Carol Jerrems",  
Pentax Brummels Gallery of Photography  
poster  
1978

Carol Jerrems  
Rennie Ellis and Robert Ashton  
1976

Rennie Ellis  
Brummels Interior,  
Carol Jerrems Exhibition  
1974





Carol Jerrems  
Syvanna Doolan, National Black Theatre, Sydney  
1974

### Feminism and Photography: *A Book About Australian Women*

By the mid-1970s the art colleges had become a powerhouse of feminist instruction, support and politics.<sup>34</sup> In 1975, the rise of feminism culminated in International Women's Year as the groundswell of women's rights gained momentum in the context of Vietnam War protests. Large-scale demonstrations against Australia's involvement in this conflict marked the emergence of an alternative culture, remembered by Jerrems's friend Mirta Mizza as "a time of liberation" when "we felt the air around us was charged with energy".<sup>35</sup> Jerrems exhibited two images—*Margaret Tucker with Rosslyn Johnson, Aboriginal House* (1973) and *Jane Oehr, Film-makers Co-op, Sydney* (1973)—in the exhibition and publication "Woman", selected by Jennie Boddington and organised by the YWCA. In her catalogue foreword, Stella Watson announced the feminist aspirations of the show:

***Our aim in holding such an exhibition was to capture in about 150 photographs the diversified life of women in Australia, particularly with regard to age, race and culture; the roles of women as seen through their own eyes and the eyes of others; the joys, griefs, dignity and humiliation of women; and the struggle of women to affirm and maintain their identity.***<sup>36</sup>

In a 1974 portrait of Jerrems at the Australian Centre for Photography, she proudly wears a badge with the slogan, "You're Among Equals". Germaine Greer had published her landmark book *The Female Eunuch* in 1970 and Jerrems's friend and fellow photographer, Rod McNicol, recalls giving Jerrems a copy of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*.<sup>37</sup> Feminist photographers challenged their status and representation, by adopting a "self-conscious and consensual approach to photo-documentary. Early 1970s projects by Carol Jerrems, Ponch Hawkes, Ruth Maddison, Micky Allan and Sue Ford marked an important step in destabilising traditional documentary affirmations of women's social identity".<sup>38</sup>

In 1974 Jerrems's major (and only) publication—*A Book About Australian Women*—was published by Outback Press, a small, experimental publishing house in Fitzroy, Melbourne. The design and layout of the photographic pages was carefully orchestrated by Jerrems, who assembled 131 images dating from 1968 to 1974, indexed in the book by the sitters' first names. The conjunction and pairing of photographs accumulate to tell a story of the experience of women in Australia:

***Each portrait is honest. Some are extended in the form of a sequence, with between four and sixteen images, which like an individual photograph reads as a "whole"; the interrelated "parts" flow from left to right.***<sup>39</sup>



Carol Jerrems  
Grace Cossington Smith, OBE,  
Turrumurra, NSW  
1974

Alongside Jerrems's photographs, Virginia Fraser contributed prose portraits edited from interviews with unnamed women under headings: "Slaves", "Care for one another", "Dreams" and "Reconciliation". Together the photographs and texts reflect the increasing awareness and celebration of gender. In a letter to the Australia Council, Jerrems describes the intent of the publication:

***The emotions, attitudes, sexuality and intellect of Australian women through the eyes of women has not been considered in the anticipated format, and a greater depth will be achieved by going beyond the single picture concept, and by intermeshing of photographs and words concerning themes personally experienced by the artists involved.***<sup>40</sup>

*A Book About Australian Women* is central to Jerrems's oeuvre. Her housemate at the time, Mirta Mizza, recalls how "she took great pains to assemble the book and she really laboured and agonised over what photos to put in".<sup>41</sup> Jerrems photographed professional peers including curator Jennie Boddington at the Henri Cartier-Bresson exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria. A little girl—Caroline Slade—is the first arresting image, at her fourth birthday party in Toorak. Standing coyly, she stares at the camera wearing a floral dress and white ribbed tights, hands clasped against a patterned, wallpaper background. A female child photographed within the decorative synergy between foreground and background sets the scene for the ensuing portraits that reveal the hopes and aspirations of a generation.

Mother and daughter (Wendy Sime with Silver Sime), siblings (Rachael Maza and her new baby brother; sisters Maya and Bala Shuddhananda), singer (Wendy Saddington), writers (Kath Walker, Beatrice Faust), actress (Kate Fitzpatrick), fashion designer (Linda Jackson), activist (Roberta Sykes) and artist (Grace Cossington Smith) make up a compendium of women. The jazz-blues vocalist Wendy Saddington appears in a tight facial portrait that consumes the photographic frame. Her short hair, heavily made-up eyes, dangling earrings and pursed lips are framed to create a compositionally strident statement of black and white tones, in tune with the times. Saddington had appeared as "The Nurse" in the Australian production of the rock opera *Tommy* the previous year; later in the 1970s she joined the Hare Krishna movement.<sup>42</sup>

Opposite:  
Carol Jerrems  
Caroline Slade  
1973



Carol Jerrems  
Wendy Saddington, Melbourne  
1972



Overleaf:  
Carol Jerrems  
Enid Lorimer, Gordon, NSW  
1974

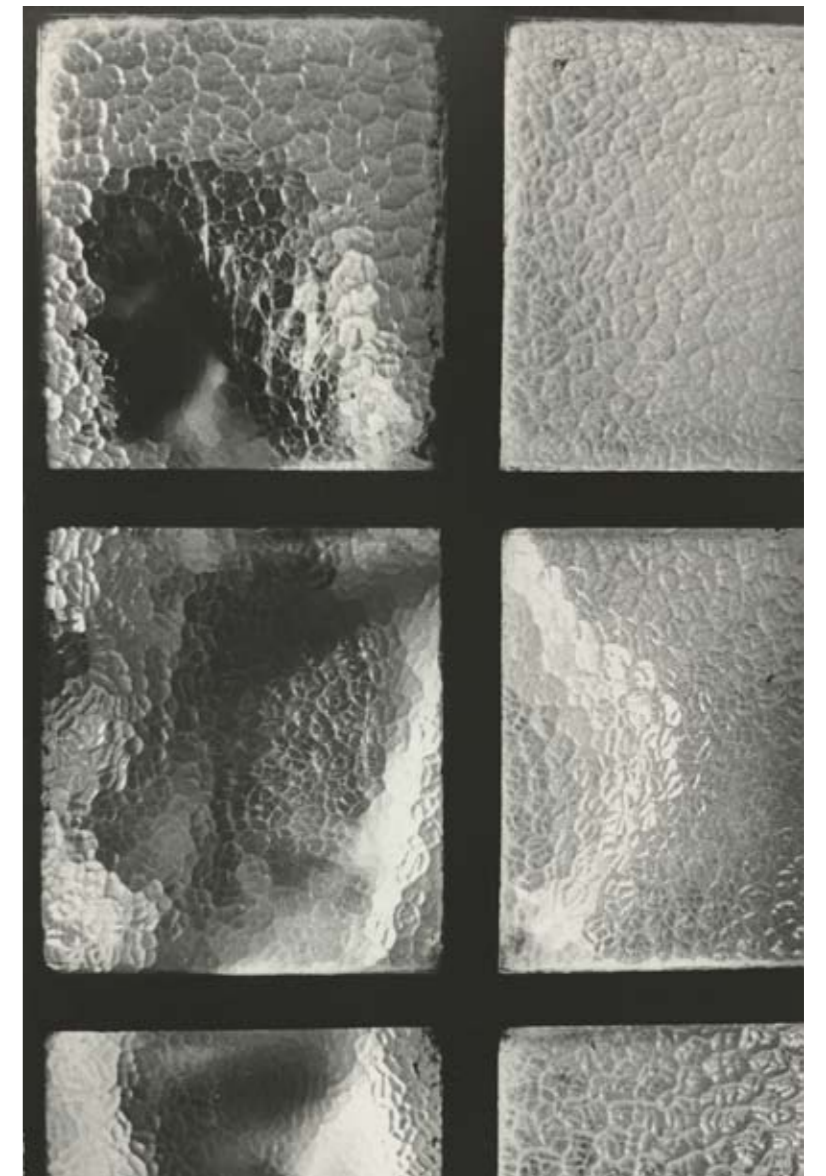
Pages 36-37:  
Carol Jerrems  
Jenny Bonnette, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney  
1974

Jenny Bonnette with Sandra Leveson,  
Elizabeth Bay, Sydney  
1974









From left to right:  
Carol Jerrems  
"Lady Ruth", Daylesford, Victoria  
1972

Carol Jerrems  
Eileen Regan, Kings Cross, Sydney  
1973

Carol Jerrems  
Sandy Mitchel, Clifton Hill, Melbourne  
1973

Carol Jerrems  
Carmel [Lonsdale] Behind Glass, Surry Hills, Sydney  
1973

### Indigenous representation in *A Book About Australian Women*

Jerrems's entry into the Melbourne Aboriginal community was via her student, Ron Johnson—the son of Joyce Johnson, a member of the United Council of Aboriginal Women. Jerrems was one of the first photographers to portray urban Aboriginal people in an empathic and empowering way. *A Book About Australian Women* contains a segment of Aboriginal portraits after the section titled "Reconciliation": photographs of author Kath Walker are followed by a suite of images of Joyce Johnson at Aboriginal House in Melbourne with Margaret Tucker, author, campaigner and community worker. Images of Ningla A-Na Moratorium land rights march and a lone woman in a Redfern pub complete the cycle. This final, blurry image of an Aboriginal woman with a beer bottle was taken during the shoot of Jerrems's series of four tightly composed Aboriginal faces, *Redfern Life* (1973). Though Jerrems's Pentax camera was easy to manipulate, her photographs in the Redfern pub were most likely clandestine and shot in haste, given their tonal drop out and blurriness.<sup>43</sup> Michael Edols recalls an altercation in the dingy pub and Jerrems's fearless, unwavering drive to apprehend life on the street.<sup>44</sup>

Jerrems photographed Nindethana Theatre in Melbourne and National Black Theatre in Redfern—the first all-Indigenous theatre companies with an active and powerful voice in promoting Aboriginality and Indigenous political concerns. She photographed Roberta Sykes at a black moratorium march, Nindethana rehearsing, and composed a tender portrait of actor and playwright Bob Maza (1939–2000) surrounded by his young family and new baby.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, a biographical note in *A Book About Australian Women* suggested Jerrems was planning a follow-up publication: "Her next project is a book about Australian Aboriginals, to be published in 1975".<sup>46</sup> Although this publication never came to fruition, *A Book About Urban Aboriginals* was in the early planning stages, with encouragement from Kath Walker.<sup>47</sup>

Jerrems inserted four photographs of herself in the publication and two images of her mother painting her aunt, Edna Kelly, at Ivanhoe. Like the striking portrait of Saddington, Stephen McNeilly's portrait of Jerrems with strands of hair sweeping across her face is captivating in its beauty and directness. Lastly, *Flying Dog* is the final image in this landmark publication: a dog in startling mid-air motion catching a ball on a street curb, near Haydn Keenan's house in Surry Hills, Sydney.<sup>48</sup> Jerrems's capacity to arrest a fleeting moment or chance incident is miraculous.





Carol Jerrems  
Bobbi Sykes, Black Moratorium, Sydney  
1972

Carol Jerrems  
Flying Dog  
1973



FLYING DOG, 3/9

JERREMS, 1973.

A BOOK-ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

OUTBACK PRESS

IN RIDGE STREET SURRY HILLS WHERE A BOY WAS PLAYING BALL WITH HIS DOG, THE PHOTOGRAPHER WAS WALKING TO THE MILK-BAR; THE GREEK MAN IN THAT SHOP HAD A TELEPHONE. SHE PHOTOGRAPHED THE DOG AS IT MOVED IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS, TRYING TO CATCH THE BALL IN MID AIR. FANTASTIC! HAYDN KEENAN PARKS HIS CAR AROUND THE CORNER. SYDNEY IS LIKE THAT, YOU KNOW?



## Sharpies & Subcultures

Jerrems was preoccupied with subcultures or oppressed minorities and she found ways to infiltrate these groups. *She captured pockets of life in the world of filmmakers, photographers and other creators living in group houses during the 1970s. She was also fascinated by the local skinheads, then called “sharpies”, and spent time photographing them swimming in rivers and hanging around in backyards.* Jerrems photographed these white, working-class adolescent males with their distinctive dress code of knitted cardigans, tattoos and tight jeans, and taught at Heidelberg Technical School in the middle of a tough housing commission area.<sup>49</sup> Later, when teaching at Hornsby and Meadowbank Tech in Sydney, Jerrems referred to her students as a “clan”: “They give me a sense of belonging to them, their group, and always respect my opinions”.<sup>50</sup> She lived by the hippie dictum that “Love is the key word”.<sup>51</sup> Adventurous and curious, Jerrems occasionally placed herself in potentially compromising or dangerous situations in order to access fringe groups. Yet at times she uncovers tenderness rather than combative behaviour, as evident in her photograph *Mark and Flappers* (1975).<sup>52</sup>

Reviewing a joint exhibition of Jerrems and Melanie le Guay at the ACP, John Williams notes that Jerrems treated her subjects with understanding and compassion:

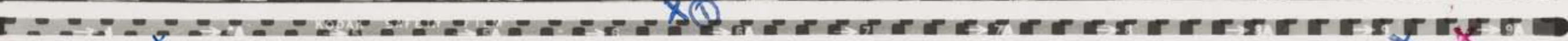
***The underprivileged kids of Melbourne’s outer suburbs are the subjects of her most sensitive images. It says much for her dedication and essential toughness that she has been able to share the lifestyles of skinheads and sharpies, and be accepted enough that they willingly pose for her camera.***<sup>53</sup>

In an interview Jerrems said, “I want to focus on the under-dogs, the under privileged of Australian society and all the things that people don’t want to talk about or know about”.<sup>54</sup>

*Vale Street* (1975), Jerrems’s most famous image, was orchestrated over a number of hours in a St Kilda backyard where Robert Ashton was living with his girlfriend in March 1975. The sequence was completed at Mozart Street where Ian Macrae was living with Ross Wilson from Daddy Cool. An aspiring actress, 21-year-old Catriona Brown, is flanked by two of Jerrems’s sharpie students, Mark Lean and Jon Bourke from Heidelberg Technical School. They had not met beforehand yet Jerrems elicits ease by placing her subjects within close proximity, using natural light with no reflectors. The contact sheet reveals that in the course of the shoot the three participants remove their tops. Catriona steps forward in an act of assertive self-control, while the tattooed teenagers recede under the shade of ivy that ran around the outhouse. It is possible that Jerrems was aware during the shoot that she had taken her iconic image, as there is only one subsequent frame before she moved indoors to photograph Ian Macrae. The decisive moment was harnessed.<sup>55</sup>

***She chose the boys being angry, cunning and watching carefully guarding themselves against my openness, directness and honesty ... She was a great observer of people.***<sup>56</sup>

Vale Street  
1975  
cropped version by Carol Jerrems



KODAK SAFETY FILM

KODAK TRI X PAN FILM



KODAK SAFETY FILM

KODAK TRI X PAN FILM

KODAK SAFETY FILM



LM

KODAK TRI X PAN FILM

KODAK SAFETY FILM



KODAK TRI X PAN FILM

KODAK SAFETY FILM



SUBJECT

AT VALE STREET, AND MOZART, (ONE)

DATE

MARCH, 1975

KATRINA, MARK, JOHN, AND IAN.

Herein lies Jerrems's ability to stage fictions, taking the time and effort to connect with her subjects. The woman's pose encapsulates the pulse of the times; she appears frank and open in contrast with the sharpies, who are embedded in shadows. With strong tonal contrast and large areas of black, Jerrems accentuates dark and light, black and white, male and female, soft and hard. Jerrems relishes natural light. Responding to a question from *Rolling Stone*: "If you could be in any one situation anywhere, at any time with anyone and any camera, what would it be?" she had answered, "With people or one person, natural light, morning or late afternoon, and a 35mm SLR".<sup>57</sup>

*Vale Street* reappears in *Juliet Holding Vale Street* (1976), photographed in Paul Cox's garden in Prahran, Melbourne.<sup>58</sup> Juliet Bacskai poses under a vine that mimics the composition of *Vale Street*. Jerrems again uses the device of a subject holding a photograph in *David* (1976). By 1976, Jerrems's portraits were marked by distinctive tonal shifts and shadows. For example, she produced three portraits of Lynn Gailey—one standing casually in front of a Buick, her floral dress swept up by the wind, the other two photographed at Smart Street films in Bondi Junction, Sydney, where Gailey sits before a sewing machine, her gaze direct and uncompromising. As her practice matures, Jerrems savours her directorial role harnessing light to serve her insider's vision. When Jerrems was teaching she wrote about her philosophy "to encourage a greater awareness of light, and the student's environment, and him or herself".<sup>59</sup>



Carol Jerrems  
Sharpies  
1976

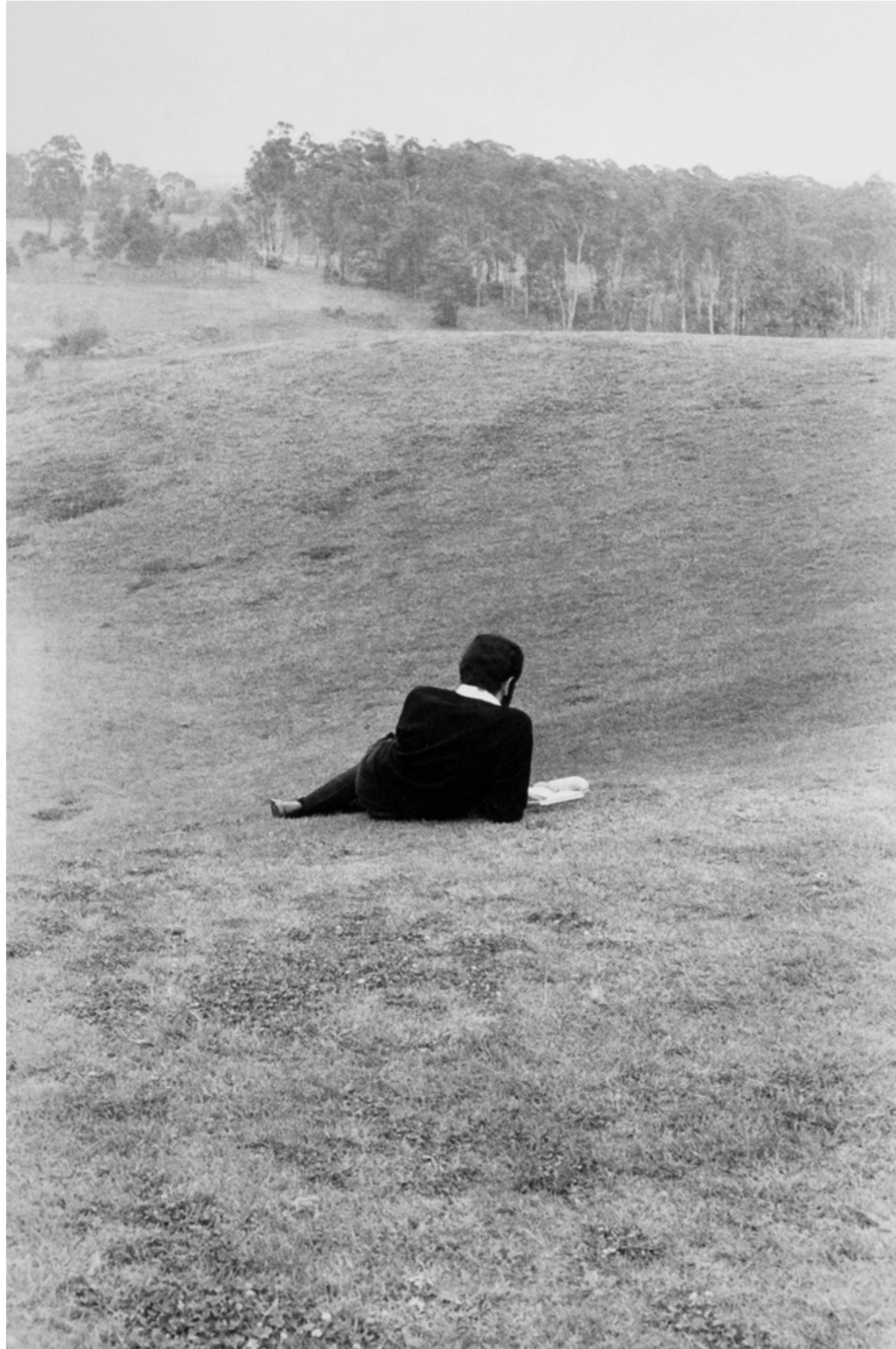


MARK AND FLAPPERS. 4/79

JERREMS, 1975.

Carol Jerrems  
Mark and Flappers  
1975





### Macquarie Series Commission

Late in 1976, the Vice-Chancellor of Macquarie University approved a recommendation of the university's first architect-planner, Wally Abraham, to select a photographer to produce a folio documenting university life. Situated in northwest Sydney, Macquarie University had commenced undergraduate teaching in 1967, seeking to break away from traditional academic patterns by encouraging an interdisciplinary approach, and allowing students flexibility in their choice of studies.<sup>60</sup> Jerrems was excited about this new commission and wrote to her mother about her accomplishment. She was selected from a list of six photographers, as advised by the director of the Australian Centre for Photography. From May 1977 she spent weeks roaming the campus, producing a folio of six black-and-white photographs that respond to the following brief:

***The photographs were to be taken within campus and there were no limitations on subject matter which might include any human activities or natural or built objects or scenes. They were to have the highest creative and technical quality, and were to express a part of the spirit of the University.***<sup>61</sup>

Jerrems took dozens of photographs before selecting a folio that was presented to the Vice-Chancellor in October. The resultant suite is bleak: a portrayal of campus life as austere and devoid of a sense of community. Her vantage point is remote—she avoids the bustling busyness of university life, instead depicting vacant corridors, a lone figure reading on a lawn and men in suits before a vast building. Architectural renditions are a feature of the photographs; one, for example, shows two disconnected figure passing each other on the library stairs, caught unawares. Here, her observation becomes detached, brooding and solitary. Jerrems also photographed political activism on campus, such as anti-uranium protests, but the dominant mood of the series is determined by the university's unforgiving concrete environment. Shot at a distance, Jerrems's architectural renditions are in stark contrast to her passionate, close-up portraits.

Opposite:  
Carol Jerrems  
Macquarie University: Forest  
1977

Right:  
Carol Jerrems  
Macquarie University: Library Lawn  
1977

Macquarie University: Two Men, E7A  
1977



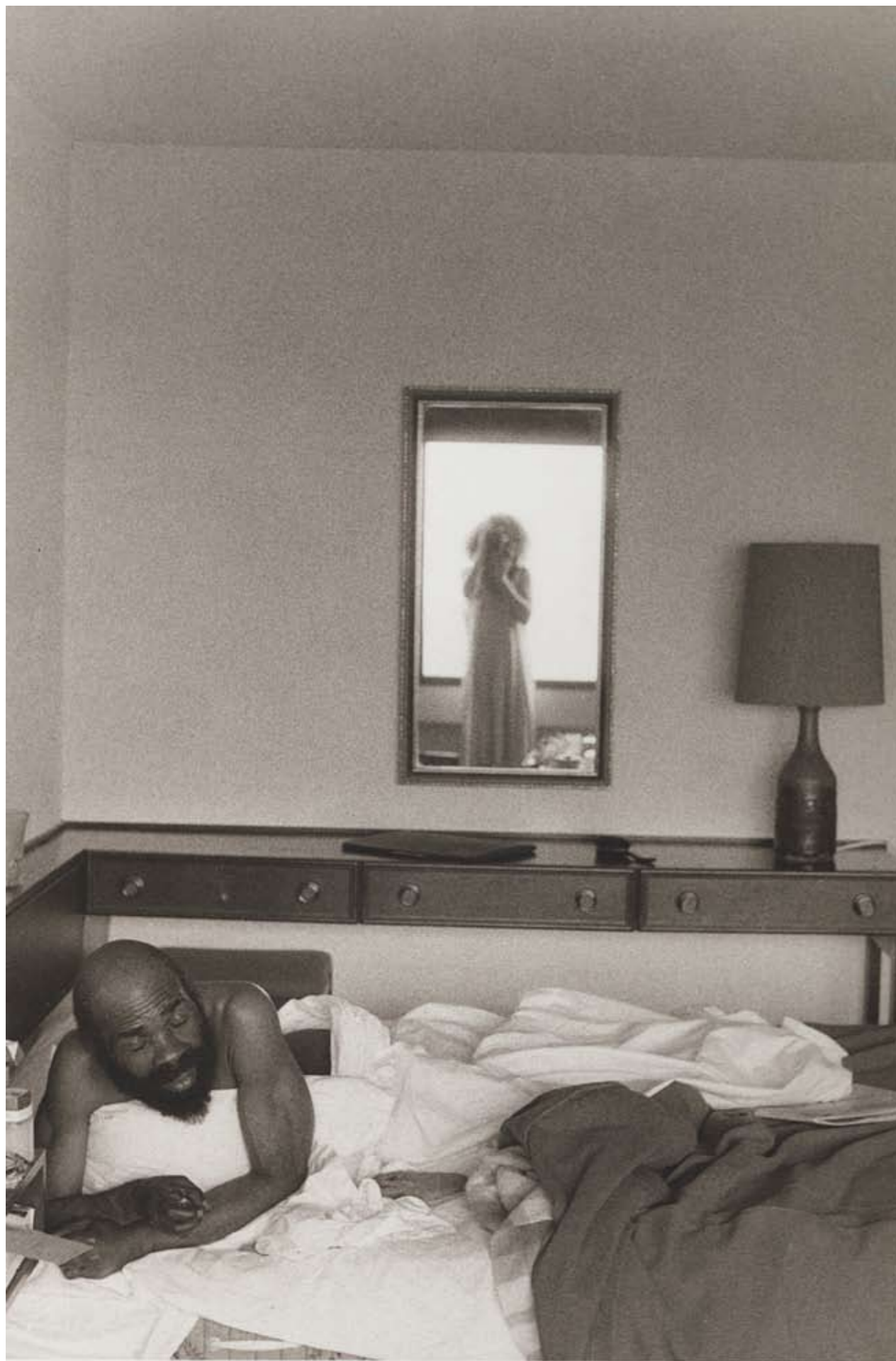


Opposite:  
Carol Jerrems  
Macquarie University: Corridor, W6B  
1977

Below, from left:  
Carol Jerrems  
Macquarie University: Library Stairs  
1977

Macquarie University: Students, C4  
1977





Carol Jerrems  
Ambrose Campbell  
1973

## Music, Men & Mirrors

**I'll be your mirror,  
reflect what you are,  
in case you don't know.**

The Velvet Underground and Nico, 1967

Jerrems deployed mirrors as a reflective surface that expanded the photographic realm to include her own image, fusing self-portraiture within the overall composition.<sup>62</sup> Sometimes this device enabled an erotic self-reflection as she casts herself before lovers: Ambrose Campbell, a Nigerian musician, lies in a dishevelled bed with Jerrems's reflection appearing in a mirror; in a self-portrait, Jerrems sits wistfully on the same bed as a companion whose gender and identity is uncertain. We are reminded of Arbus's *Girl Sitting in a Bed with her Boyfriend, N.Y.C.* (1966).

For cinematographer and friend Michael Edols, Jerrems's camera was "a mirror upon herself".<sup>63</sup> The mirror is featured in a post-coital portrait with long-term boyfriend Esben Storm, who reappears as a subject in photographs throughout the 1970s. *Mirror with a Memory* (1977) is a rare example of Jerrems's use of colour photography. While taking production and film stills for Storm's feature, *In Search of Anna*,<sup>64</sup> Jerrems had gained access to a large-format camera using colour film. En route to Queensland for Storm's film, the couple stayed in a motel on the Gold Coast. After a sexual encounter, Jerrems turns her camera on an intimate frisson while Storm is absorbed on the telephone. Storm recalls that "intimacy allowed her to take photos".<sup>65</sup> A cropped, black-and-white version of the photograph, without Storm, appears in *A Book About Australian Women*.<sup>66</sup>

On other occasions, Jerrems uses the mirror in a more detached way as a compositional device: Robyn Ravlich holds a black dog whose head is reflected in a mirror, Grace Cossington Smith appears near a mirror on a door exposing a different perspective, while Shirley Strachan sits alongside a mirror, deep in thought. Jerrems started photographing musicians and performances, especially *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*, completed in 1970 as a bound assignment for Prahran Tech. Less interested in theatricality than in incidental and quiet moments, Jerrems often went backstage with her camera. She also provided most of the images for Jenny Brown's 1975 publication, *Skyhooks: Million Dollar Riff*, exposing private moments rather than onstage glory.<sup>68</sup>

*Living in the 70's* (1975) is the title of Jerrems's introspective portrait of Red Symons from the band Skyhooks: the guitarist with flicking tongue whose public showmanship is replaced by private self-absorption. Skyhooks' debut album of the same title sold 300,000 albums, lodged firmly in Australian music charts.<sup>69</sup> In December 1974 the band performed *Horror Movie* on the first colour transmission of ABC TV's *Countdown*, which became compulsory viewing on Sunday evenings at six o'clock. With flamboyant make-up and costumes, Skyhooks was able to kick the cultural cringe with Australian-themed songs—*Lygon Street Limbo*, *Toorak Cowboy* and *Balwyn Calling*. *Butterfly Behind Glass* (1975) is Jerrems's backstage portrait at Melbourne's Chelsea Civic Centre with Red Symons concentrating while applying make-up at a mirror.

At times, Jerrems suggested homoerotic encounters between men in semi-naked portraits of Rod McNicol and the actor "Bud" John Ley, and Esben and Dusan Werner. Even though the outcomes appear spontaneous, Jerrems contrived situations and insinuated sexual connections between her subjects. *Boys* (1973) depicts a naked, entangled embrace at the base of a bed, the entwined bodies exemplifying Jerrems's enduring desire to portray love and lovers.



Above:  
Carol Jerrems  
Living in the 70's  
1975

Opposite, from top:  
Carol Jerrems  
Butterfly Behind Glass  
1975

Boys  
1973





From left:  
Carol Jerrems  
Esben and Dusan, Cronulla  
1977

("Bud" John Ley and Rod McNicol)  
1977

Overleaf:  
Carol Jerrems  
Esben Storm  
1976



## Films—Hanging About and School's Out

As Jerrems's photographic output diminished in the late 1970s, she focused on film. From 1975 to 1978, Jerrems worked on her 16mm, black-and-white film *Hanging About*, concerning a woman's reaction to being raped. She wrote, directed and edited the film with a grant from the Creative Development Branch of the Australian Film Commission. In the first draft of a number of scripts, Jerrems outlines the main protagonists: Linda, of "slight build, aged about twenty-five years, a schoolteacher who becomes an alcoholic after being bashed and raped"; and Carmel, "a vivacious photographer who has just returned from overseas. In love with life; confident and decisive". Initially, its overall treatment was to be "light-hearted, over-acted, exaggerated facial expressions, almost a comedy",<sup>70</sup> yet the final footage is redolent with despair and hostility.

Music by Wendy Saddington is overlaid by a complex interior monologue as the main character, Linda (Linda Piper), starts working in a strip club but is terrified of men and has a flashback to being raped: "Every woman gets raped at some time in their life". Esben Storm, Kate Grenville and Richard Moir appear in the film. The initial dark, interior shots are accompanied by footsteps and a woman whispering, "It's too personal. I can't talk about it. What happened?" They cut to photos on a wall of a stripper. Linda watches drag queens applying make-up amidst ostrich feathers, nail polish and mascara while she reflects on a lesbian relationship. She whispers: "I'm sick of being bossed around by men. Nobody has the right". Eventually, she leaves the club, walks and punches a male stranger. Her act of revenge is followed by the final statement written on screen:

***Rape is the hatred, contempt and oppression of women in this society, in one act. It is a symptom of a mass sickness called sexism. This sickness can be cured. In order to change, we have to change.***<sup>71</sup>

In 1975, Jerrems applied unsuccessfully to the Experimental Film and Television Fund for assistance to make her ten-minute film about sharpies called *School's Out* with Ron Johnson, Mark Lean and Jon Bourke:

***The particular "skin-head" cult in Melbourne is unique to Australia; this film portrays the life-style, values and attitudes of seven adolescents who are part of it. The main actor I know well, having taught him drawing and photography last year at Heidelberg Technical School. Now he is in form four, fifteen years old, tattooed, with self-pierced ears and very short hair ... He, and the gang he hangs with in Heidelberg, like bashing, beer, sheilas, gang-bangs (rape), gang fights, billiards, stealing, and hanging about.***<sup>72</sup>

Ian Macrae and Paul Cox were her referees and Michael Edols was listed as cinematographer. In the opening sequence, the camera lingers on Ron Johnson's face in a besotted close-up. He removes his top, grimaces, yawns, laughs, stares, and shrugs. Then, the camera moves slowly and hypnotically across the lithe bodies of sharpies at the Yarra River. Filmed from the waist up, they smoke and prepare to swim as the camera observes their youthful bodies bathed in sunlight. This seductive footage contrasts with *Hanging About* (1978), with its minimal dialogue and violent overtones.



Stills from:  
Carol Jerrems's unfinished film *School's Out*  
1975



Stills from:  
Carol Jerrems's film *Hanging About*  
1978





Carol Jerrems  
(Self Portrait)  
from a series of photographs taken by Carol Jerrems  
in the Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania  
1979; printed by Roger Scott, 2004

### Self as Subject: The Hospital Series

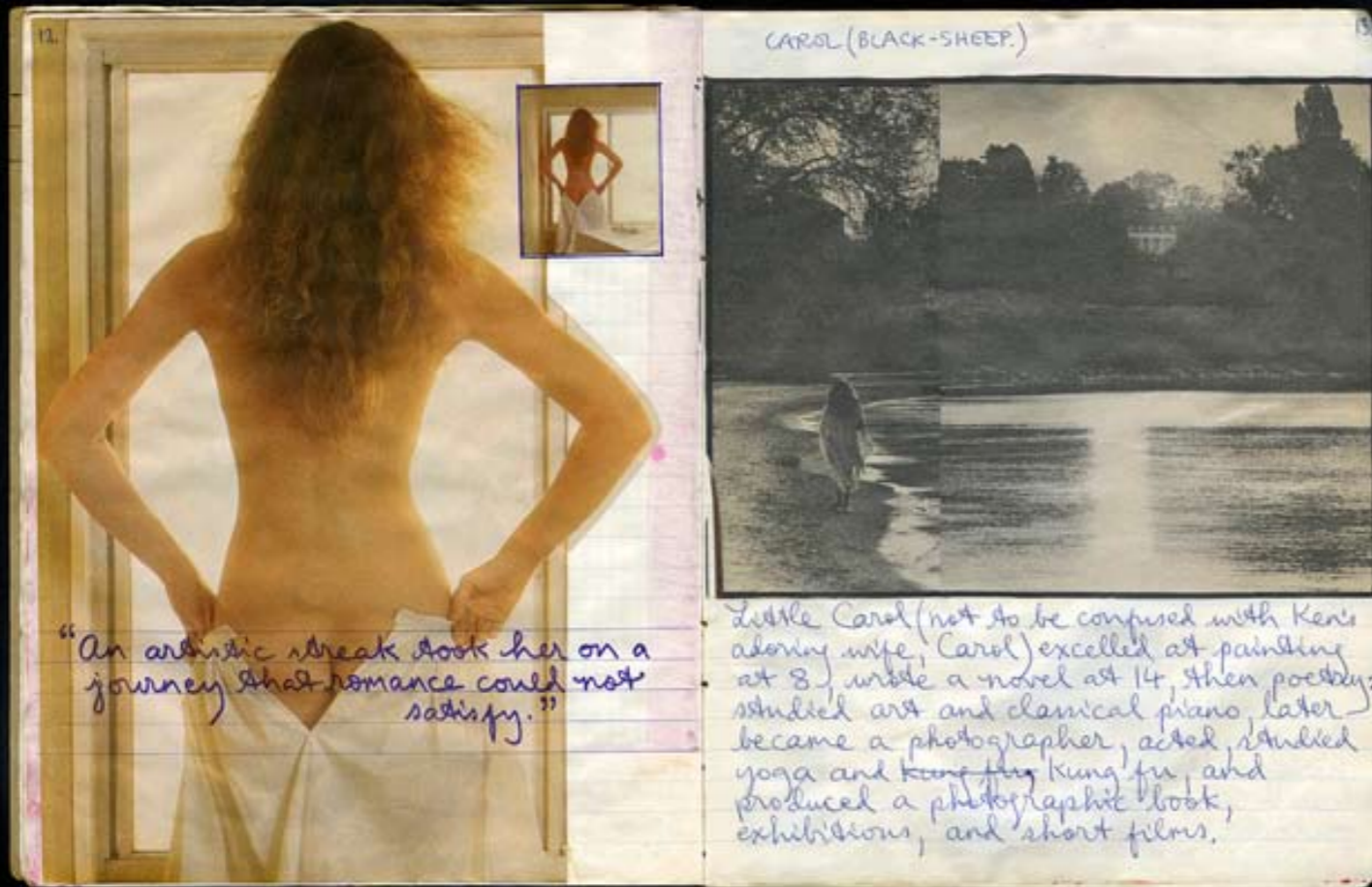
In 1979, Jerrems's notes disclose increasing fatigue as she grapples with the onset of an undiagnosed illness. Some of her last publicly exhibited photographs were presented at the ACP in 1978 while she was living in Paddington, Sydney, before moving to Tasmania to teach at the Tasmanian School of Art in Hobart. She writes to her mother, Joy, telling her that she has another name—Savitā—"which means to be, and to become, positive!" and in an artist's statement she signs off as Kalāvita.<sup>73</sup> Jerrems focuses on yoga and seeks guidance from her gurus, photographing them at an ashram at Mangrove Mountain, New South Wales.

In the hospital series, Jerrems photographs her body under medical scrutiny from the perspective of a patient. Hers is a detached recording of herself as a medical oddity or specimen: she stands in front of a mirror with a swollen belly and scars from an operation, observing her physical demise and bodily transformations. In another image, Jerrems watches her mother arriving at the airport, unaware of the camera. Jerrems documents the hospital staff and the daily activity of the ward. There is a hint of death and the journey beyond life in her images of dark, empty and lonely corridors. Other motifs suggest mortality especially the vista of a moon through a window alluding to the prospect of dying.

Grappling with illness and isolation in Hobart, Jerrems produced a diary called "The Patient" during her stay in Ward 3E, Medical Unit A, at the Royal Hobart Hospital. From June 1979 Jerrems describes her vulnerability, delays in diagnosis, pain and the doctor-patient relationship during ninety-nine days in hospital:

***Four years later, here I am recovering from a broken heart,  
a beaten body, and hospitalisation. Again, with no darkroom,  
but this time, I plan to use the kitchen. The laundry needs time  
and money to make it workable, and I cannot commit myself  
to a future that doesn't exist.***<sup>74</sup>

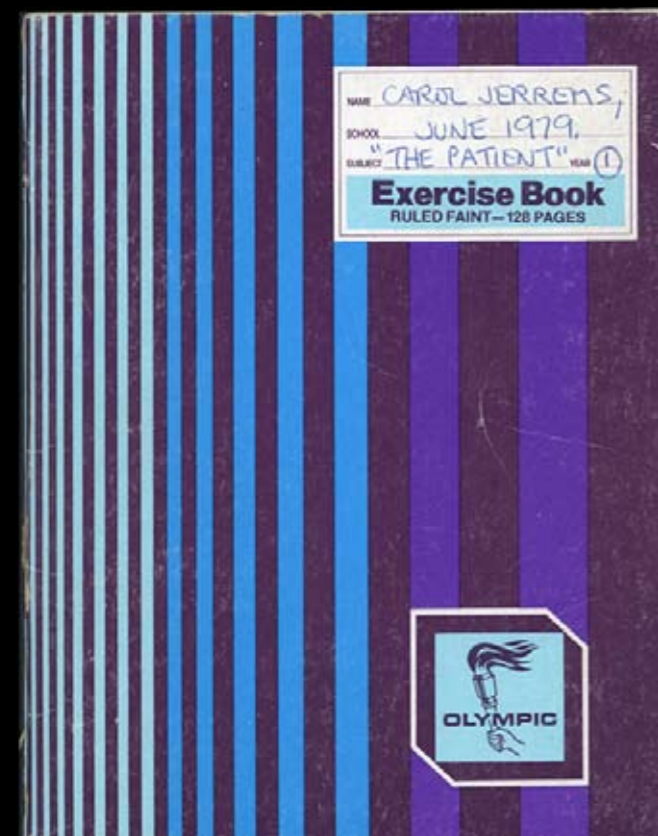
Concurrently, Jerrems made a collaged letter/story in an exercise book she called "The Gem".<sup>75</sup> Modeled on a woman's magazine with humorous cutouts, the story is lovingly dedicated to her mother, Joy. Like a parting gift, it is a tender and funny tribute to her family. Even though Jerrems was in hospital with minimal resources, she continued producing, attesting to her unwavering need to be creative. In "The Patient", Jerrems's childhood longing for a horse returns. Eventually, Jerrems was brought back to the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne where she underwent two operations and succumbed to a rare liver disease, Budd-Chiari syndrome. Her final words are cathartic: "A positive vibration, and good feeling. Yes see, writing really helped ... my mind is less confused".<sup>76</sup>



CAROL (BLACK-SHEEP)

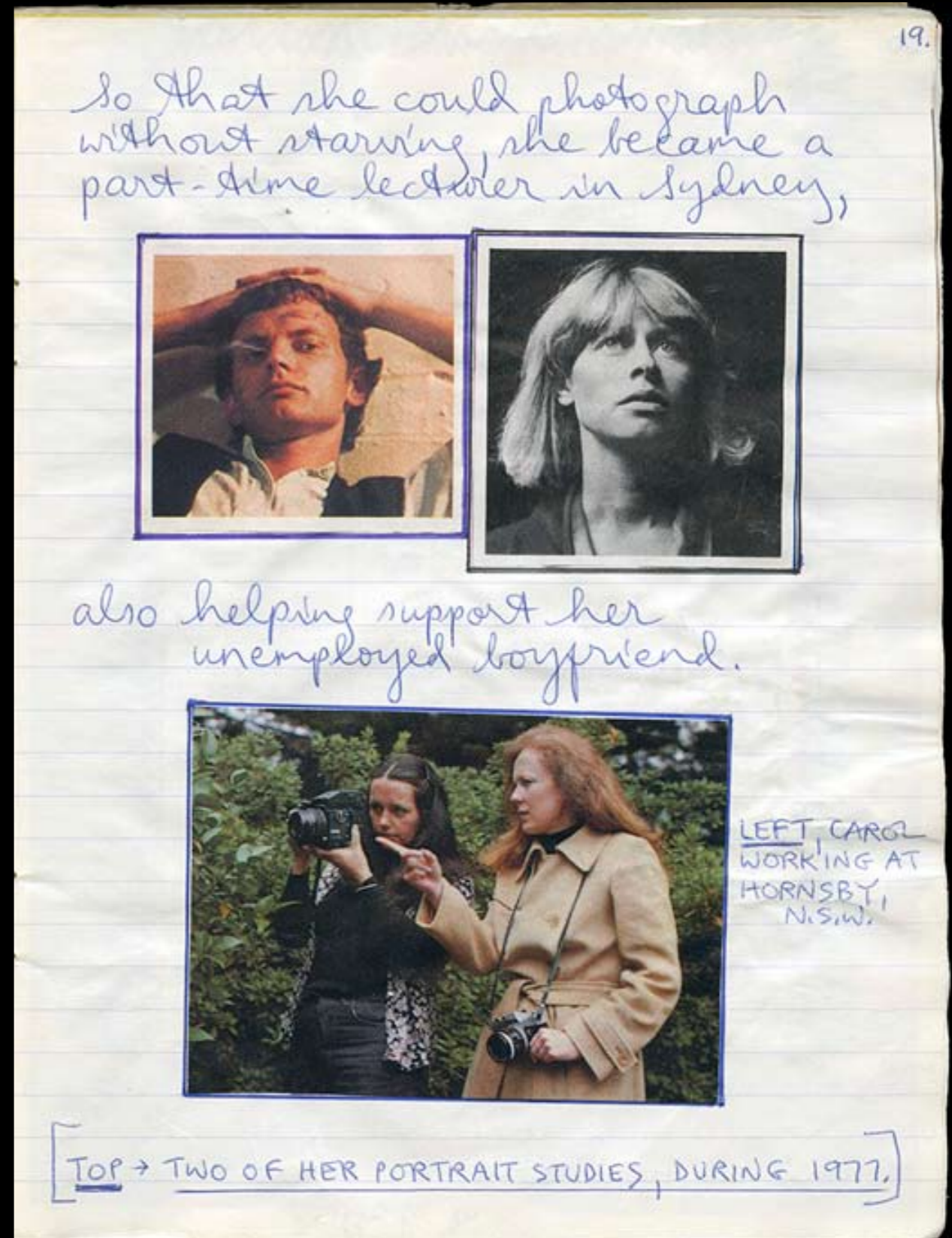
"An artistic streak took her on a journey that romance could not satisfy."

Little Carol (not to be confused with Ken's adoring wife, Carol) excelled at painting at 8, wrote a novel at 14, then poetry; studied art and classical piano, later became a photographer, acted, studied yoga and kung fu, and produced a photographic book, exhibitions, and short films.



Above & opposite:  
"The Gem", a letter/story by Carol Jerrems for Joy Jerrems, 1979

Left:  
"The Patient", a diary kept by Carol Jerrems, Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania, June-September 1979



so that she could photograph without starving, she became a part-time lecturer in Sydney,



also helping support her unemployed boyfriend.



LEFT CAROL WORKING AT HORNSBY, N.S.W.

[TOP → TWO OF HER PORTRAIT STUDIES, DURING 1977.]

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Paul Cox interviewed by Peter Turner, *Light Vision*, Issue 2, November/December 1977, p. 29. The title of this essay pays homage to Carol Jerrems's portrait of Red Symons, *Living in the 70's*; Skyhooks debut album and single from 1974 and the 1990 survey exhibition, "Living in the 70s: Photographs by Carol Jerrems", an Australian National Gallery travelling exhibition, curated by Helen Ennis and Bob Jenyns.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Fraser and Carol Jerrems, *A Book About Australian Woman*, Outback Press, North Fitzroy, Vic., 1974, and Mark Gillespie and Robert Ashton, *Into the Hollow Mountains*, Outback Press, North Fitzroy, Vic., 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Reeve, "Vogue Eyeview", *Vogue Australia*, March 1975, no. 2, p. 34.

<sup>4</sup> Craig McGregor, "If I hadn't taken the photo, no-one would have noticed it", *Australian Men Vogue*, March/April 1977, p. 78.

<sup>5</sup> Carol Jerrems quoted by Geoffrey Radcliffe, "She'll crusade with a camera", *Sunday Observer Magazine*, 14 July 1974, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Carol Jerrems, unpublished notes, 26 January 1979.

<sup>7</sup> I am extremely grateful to Ken Jerrems, Linda Sly and Emma Risvanis for giving me comprehensive access to Jerrems's personal archive.

All unpublished material by Jerrems cited in this essay is from material in their collections.

<sup>8</sup> According to Robert Ashton: "She always had her camera with her. She was very meticulous technically so even her proof sheets were a work of art as far as she was concerned so they had to be right". Interviewed by Natalie King, November 2009.

<sup>9</sup> Craig McGregor, "If I hadn't taken the photo", p. 73.

<sup>10</sup> Carol Jerrems quoted by Craig McGregor, *ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>11</sup> Carol Jerrems interviewed by Philip Quirk, questionnaire for *Rolling Stone*, unpublished, 1978.

<sup>12</sup> Esben Storm, Mirta Mizza and Robert Ashton interviewed by Natalie King, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> See *Diane Arbus: Revelations*, Random House, New York, 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Previously, John Szarkowski exhibited Arbus's photographs in "New Documents" at MOMA in 1967 with Garry Winogrand and Lee Friedlander: "In the past decade, a new generation of photographers has directed the documentary approach toward more personal ends. Their work has been not to reform life, but to know it ...", quoted by Gilles Mora, "Photography of the Moment", *The Last Photographic Heroes: American Photographer of the Sixties and Seventies*, Abrams, New York, 2007, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> Alan Warren, "Education for an Age of Change", *1967 Handbook*, Prahran Technical School: A College of Advanced Education, Melbourne, p. 4. The Prahran Mechanics' Institute, founded in 1854, conducted classes in Chapel Street from 1864; in 1915 it relocated to High Street and on 8 October, the opening ceremony of Prahran Technical Art School took place.

<sup>16</sup> Judith Buckrich, "The Best Time of their Lives", *The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, September 2006, no. 5, p. 4.

See Judith Buckrich, *Design for Living: A History of "Prahran Tech"*, Prahran Mechanics' Institute Press, Melbourne, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Cox, interview in *Light Vision*, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Prahran Technical School Handbook 1968.

<sup>19</sup> Lenton Parr graduated from RMIT with a Fellowship of Sculpture in 1951. He later worked as an assistant to Henry Moore in Britain.

He returned to Australia to advance the cause of sculpture through his own work and through teaching.

<sup>20</sup> Paul Cox, *Reflections: An Autobiographical Journey*, Currency Press, Sydney, 1998, p. 74.

<sup>21</sup> Beatrice Faust, "Characters to 25", *Nation Review*, 8–14 November 1974, p. 110.

<sup>22</sup> Carol Jerrems, unpublished notes, 6 March 1979.

<sup>23</sup> In Carol Jerrems's letter to Robert Ashton (c.1972) she wrote, "And I am wearing the denim shorts that I got for Christmas and Leonard Cohen is singing". Later in the letter she wrote, "It was really funny because Ian had started to paint the darkroom and at the time of the explosion I was home alone. And the darkroom was like a water-fall".

<sup>24</sup> Jennie Boddington with Melanie le Guay was photographed by Jerrems in 1974 for *A Book About Australian Women*. For an interview with Jennie Boddington see *Photofile*, Autumn 1983, no pagination. Boddington corresponded with Jerrems throughout the 1970s and sent her the postal addresses of Henri Cartier-Bresson and John Szarkowski.

<sup>25</sup> Established on 20 October 1969, the advisory committee included Dacre Stubbs, Les Gray, Athol Shmith and for a short time Albert Brown along with Lenton Parr. See Isobel Crombie, "Introduction", *2nd Sight: Australian Photography in the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2002, p. 8; Isobel Crombie, "Creating a Collection: International Photography at the National Gallery of Victoria", *RE\_View: 170 Years of Photography*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2009, pp. 7–10.

<sup>26</sup> Helen Ennis, *Mirror with a Memory: Photographic Portraiture in Australia*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, 2000, p. 21.

For an overview of Australian photography see Gael Newton, *Shades of Light: Photography and Australia 1839–1988*, The Australian National Gallery and Collins Australia, 1988 especially Helen Ennis, "Contemporary Photographic Practices", Chapter 14, pp. 134–160.

<sup>27</sup> Anne-Marie Willis, "Introduction", *Aspects of the Philip Morris Collection: Four Australian Photographers*, Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, Sydney 1980, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Carol Jerrems quoted in exhibition brochure, *Two Views of Erotica: Henry Talbot/Carol Jerrems*, Brummels Gallery of Photography, Melbourne, 14 December 1972 – 21 January 1973, no pagination. This was Jerrems's first solo exhibition, held when she was twenty-three years old.

<sup>29</sup> *Circus*, Summer 1973, p. 25–40.

<sup>30</sup> Filmmaker Esben Storm was Jerrems's boyfriend; Haydn Keenan and Storm had a film company called Smart Street Films.

<sup>31</sup> Carol Jerrems quoted in *Two Views of Erotica*.

<sup>32</sup> Beatrice Faust, "Erotica", *Nation Review*, 16–22 December 1972, p. 288.

<sup>33</sup> Application for Overseas Travel Grant, Australia Council, 10 August 1975. \$1,024 was granted for the airfare. In November 1974, Jerrems wrote to Nola Yule [her misspelling of Noela Yuill] at the Visual Arts Board saying that she was unable to raise funds for a living allowance.

<sup>34</sup> Catriona Moore, "The feminist artist", *Indecent Exposures: Twenty Years of Australian Feminist Photography*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1991, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Mirta Mizza interviewed by Natalie King, Melbourne, November 2009.

<sup>36</sup> Stella C. Watson, "Foreword", *Woman*, Young Women's Christian Association of Australia, Melbourne, 1975, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> Rod McNicol interviewed by Natalie King, Melbourne, July 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Catriona Moore, "The feminist artist", pp. 25–6.

<sup>39</sup> Carol Jerrems and Virginia Fraser, *A Book About Australian Women*, Outback Press, North Fitzroy, 1974, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Application for Direct Assistance Grant, Category III, Australia Council, 14 August 1973.

<sup>41</sup> Mirta Mizza interview.

<sup>42</sup> See "Long Way to the Top", [http://www.abc.net.au/longway/artist\\_index/wendysaddington.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/longway/artist_index/wendysaddington.htm), accessed January 2010.

Jerrems strident depiction of Saddington contrasts with interviews where she appears shy and softly spoken. See Jeune Pritchard interview with Wendy Saddington, 6 May 1971, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=urhgdKLtqog&feature=fvw>; David Elfick interview with Wendy Saddington, 15 October 1969, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dDQTU-1m0BI>, accessed January 2010. William Yang also photographed Saddington on stage.

<sup>43</sup> Peter Kelly, photographer and Carol Jerrems's cousin, interviewed by Natalie King, Melbourne, January 2010.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Edols in Kathy Drayton's documentary, *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*, produced by Helen Bowden, 2005.

<sup>45</sup> Bob Maza was a significant Indigenous role model and mentor as well as the first Indigenous AFC commissioner.

<sup>46</sup> Carol Jerrems and Virginia Fraser, *A Book About Australian Women*.

<sup>47</sup> A number of documents outline Jerrems's planning for *A Book About Urban Aboriginals* including letters from Bobbi (now Roberta) Sykes and Kath Walker.

<sup>48</sup> "The photo with the dog was taken on the corner of Ridge St and Ridge Lane in Surry Hills Sydney on the way to or from my place in Ridge St. Met Carol through Esben when Smart St Films was at 299 Crown St Darlinghurst", Haydn Keenan, email correspondence, 11 January 2010.

<sup>49</sup> Phone conversation with Robert Adair Westfield who taught film at Heidelberg Technical School with Jerrems in the 1970s, February, 2010.

<sup>50</sup> Carol Jerrems, unpublished notes, 17 November 1978.

<sup>51</sup> Carol Jerrems, in Carol Jerrems and Virginia Fraser, *A Book About Australian Women*, p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> See Isobel Crombie's discussion of Jerrems's shift from photo-documentary to a consensual approach in Isobel Crombie and Susan van Wyk, *2nd Sight: Australian Photography in the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2002, p. 82.

<sup>53</sup> John Williams, "An Emerging Talent", *The Australian*, February 1976.

<sup>54</sup> Carol Jerrems quoted by Geoffrey Radcliffe, "She'll crusade with a camera". *Sunday Observer Magazine*, 14 July 1974, p. 8.

<sup>55</sup> Carol Jerrems, unpublished document, "Teaching Philosophy", Jerrems lists four elements to photography:

"1. Subject Matter; 2. Composition; 3. Lighting; 4. The Decisive Moment". All of these were achieved in *Vale Street* (1975).

<sup>56</sup> Catriona Brown interviewed by Myfanwy Warhurst, "Carol Jerrems: Documenting a Life", *The Arts Show*, ABC TV, 1999.

<sup>57</sup> Carol Jerrems interviewed by Philip Quirk.

<sup>58</sup> *Juliet Holding Vale Street* (1976) appears on the cover of *Photography: Art Gallery of New South Wales Collection*, commissioning editor Judy Annear, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2007.

<sup>59</sup> Carol Jerrems, "Teaching Philosophy".

<sup>60</sup> Campus Brochure, Macquarie University, Sydney, 1977.

<sup>61</sup> Exhibition Brochure, Macquarie University, Sydney, June 1978.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of mirrors and self-portraits see Whitney Chadwick, "How Do I Look?", *Mirror Mirror: Self-portraits by Women Artists*, National Portrait Gallery, London, 2001, pp. 8–21.

<sup>63</sup> Michael Edols, [http://www.edols.com.au/ARC05\\_01.htm](http://www.edols.com.au/ARC05_01.htm), accessed February 2010.

<sup>64</sup> For an interview with Esben Storm on *In Search of Anna* see *Cinema Papers*, July 1977, Issue 13, pp. 52–5.

<sup>65</sup> Esben Storm interviewed in Kathy Drayton's documentary, *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*, produced by Helen Bowden, 2005.

<sup>66</sup> Carol Jerrems and Virginia Fraser, *A Book About Australian Women*, p. 104.

<sup>67</sup> For a discussion of Jerrems's rock photographs including Leon Russell, Hound Dog Taylor and Brownie McGhee see Kelly Gellatly, *So you want be a Rock Star: Portraits and Rock Music in Australia*, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, 2001–2, pp. 54–73; Helen Ennis, "Gentle Men", *Art Monthly Australia*, no. 149, May 2007, pp. 20–1.

<sup>68</sup> Jenny Brown, *Skyhooks: Million Dollar Riff*, Dingo Books, Melbourne, 1975. Apart from Skyhooks, other prominent bands from the 1970s include Daddy Cool, AC/DC, Lobby Loyde, Coloured Balls and Hush, some of whom were photographed by Jerrems.

<sup>69</sup> See Skyhooks website, <http://www.skyhooks-music.com/index.html>, accessed January 2010.

<sup>70</sup> Carol Jerrems, letter to Australian Film Institute, unpublished, 19 October 1975.

<sup>71</sup> *Hanging About: A Short Film* by Carol Jerrems, 1978, 16mm. Cast: Robyn Bucknall, Linda Piper, Kate Grenville, Richard Moir, Esben Storm. Cinematographer: Michael Edols; Production: Australian Film Commission.

<sup>72</sup> Carol Jerrems, Application to Experimental Film & Television Fund, Australian Film Institute, 1975 (unsuccessful).

<sup>73</sup> Carol Jerrems, letter to Joy Jerrems, 23 November 1978; Artist's Statement, ACP, Sydney, October 1978.

<sup>74</sup> Carol Jerrems, unpublished notes from exercise book titled "The Patient", June – September 1979, pp. 45–6.

<sup>75</sup> Carol Jerrems, from her exercise book titled "The Gem": 1. Hospital 2. Life. A book, for Joy, 1979.

<sup>76</sup> Carol Jerrems, unpublished notes from "The Patient", p. 81.



The cover and selected internal pages from *A Book About Australian Women* (Outback Press, Melbourne, 1974) are reproduced in full at original size on the following pages, according to the original pagination:

Front cover:

Linda Piper, Watters Gallery, Sydney, 1974 (*A Good Idea* reproduced with permission of the artist Aleksander Danko)

p. 22

Kris Oleson with Susanne Lever, Surry Hills, Sydney, 1973

p. 23

Jennie Boddington with Melanie le Guay at "Henri Cartier-Bresson" exhibition, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

p. 26

Nikki Reynolds and Jenny Bonnette, Surry Hills, Sydney, 1974

p. 27

Joy Jerrems with Edna Kelly, Ivanhoe, Melbourne, 1974

p. 30

Beatrice Faust, Carlton, Melbourne, 1974

p. 31

Lyndall Ryan, Annandale, Sydney, 1974

p. 50

Anne Tait, Surry Hills, Sydney, 1973

p. 51

Robyn Ravlich, Balmain, Sydney, 1974

p. 70

Linda Jackson with Jenny Kee, Flamingo Park, Sydney, 1973

p. 71

Juliette Hawthorne, Bondi, Sydney, 1973

p. 100

Wendy Saddington, Melbourne, 1972

Wendy Saddington, Warringal Park, Melbourne, 1973

p. 101

Leon Russell Concert, one, onstage (American visitor), Sydney, 1973

Leon Russell Concert, two, backstage (American visitor), Sydney, 1973

p. 102

Roberta (then Bobbi) Sykes, Black Moratorium, Sydney, 1972

p. 103

Roberta (then Bobbi) Sykes, Aboriginal Medical Service, Redfern, Sydney, 1972

Back cover:

Linda Piper, Watters Gallery, Sydney, 1974

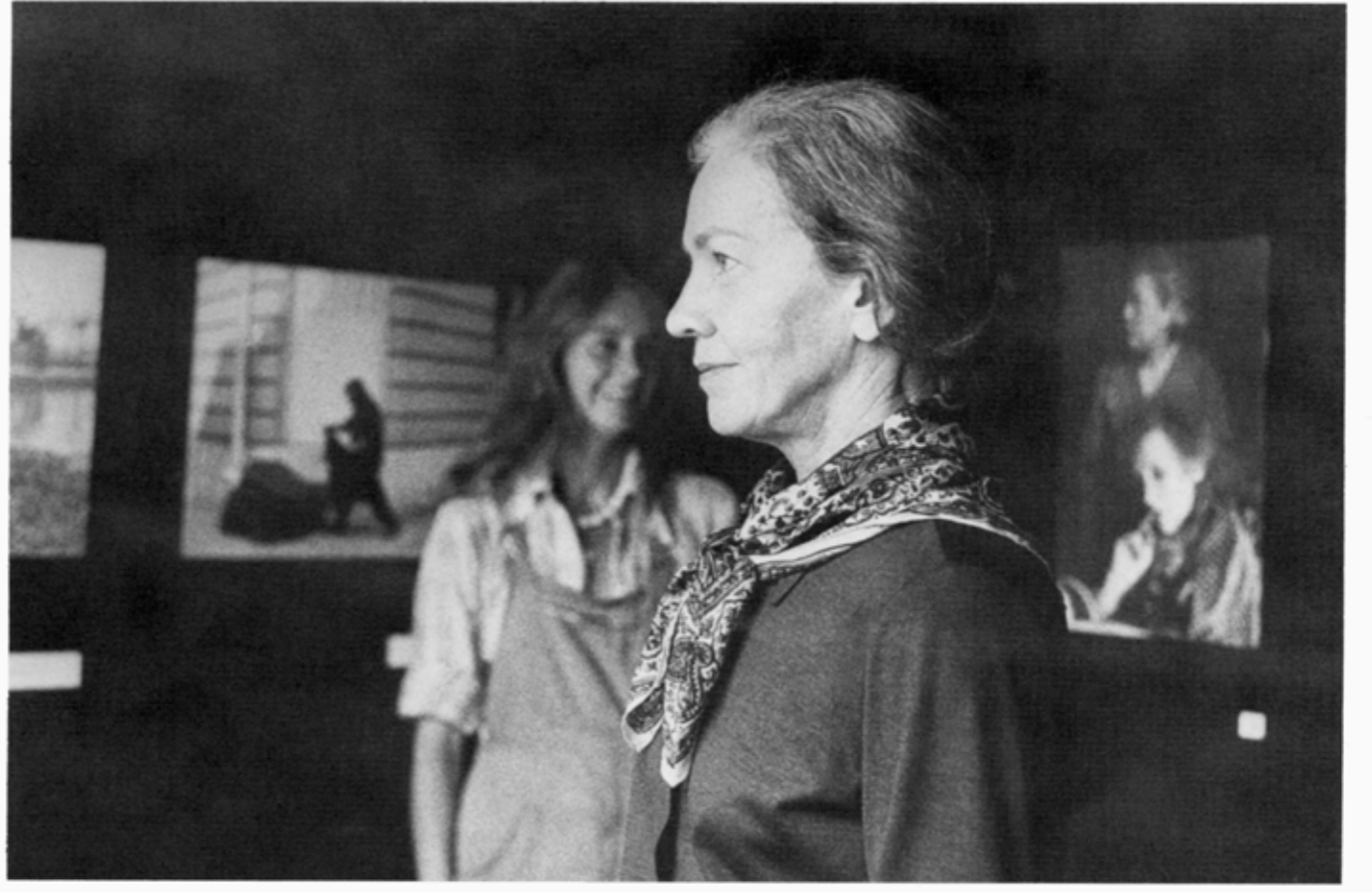
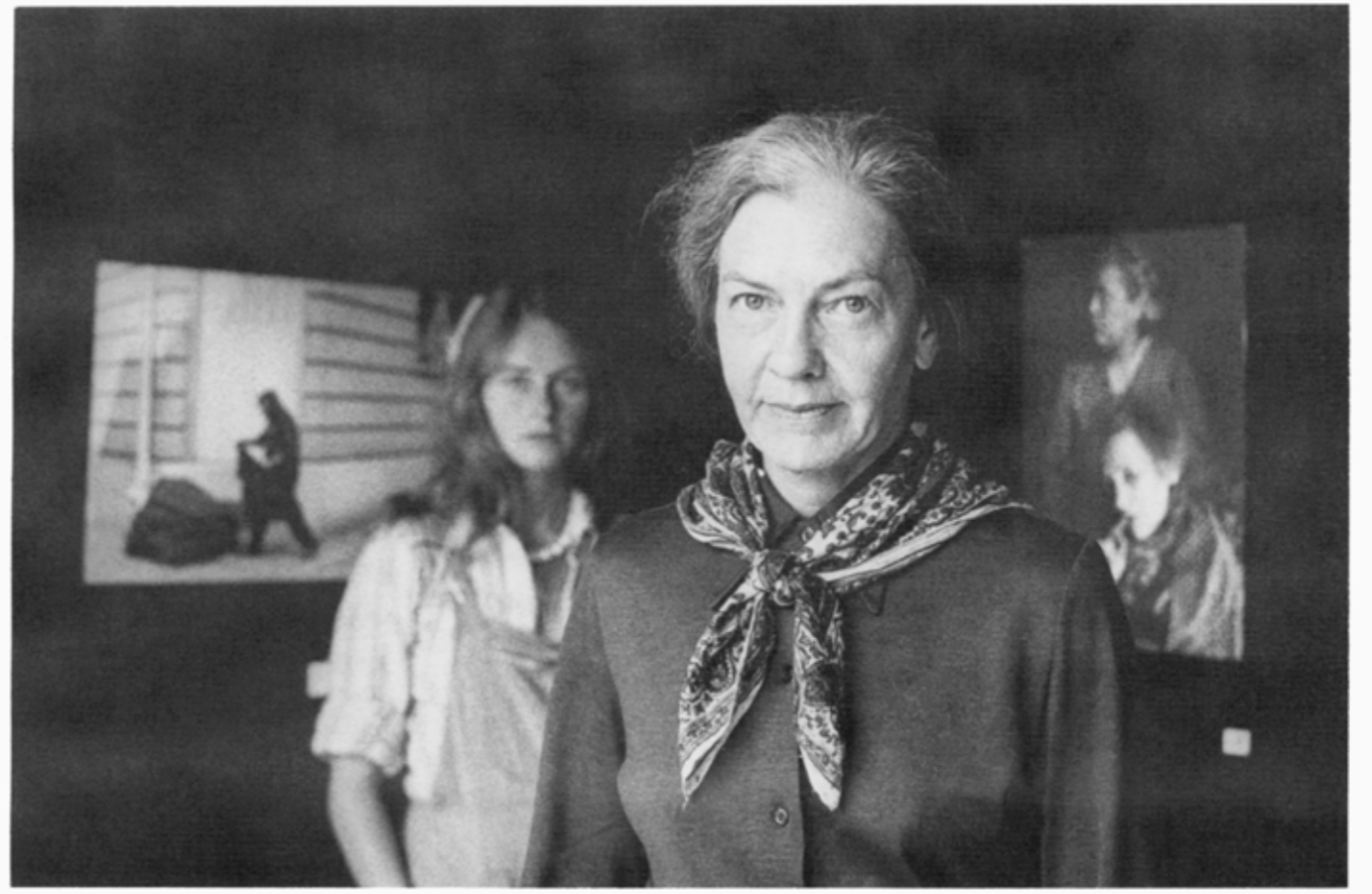
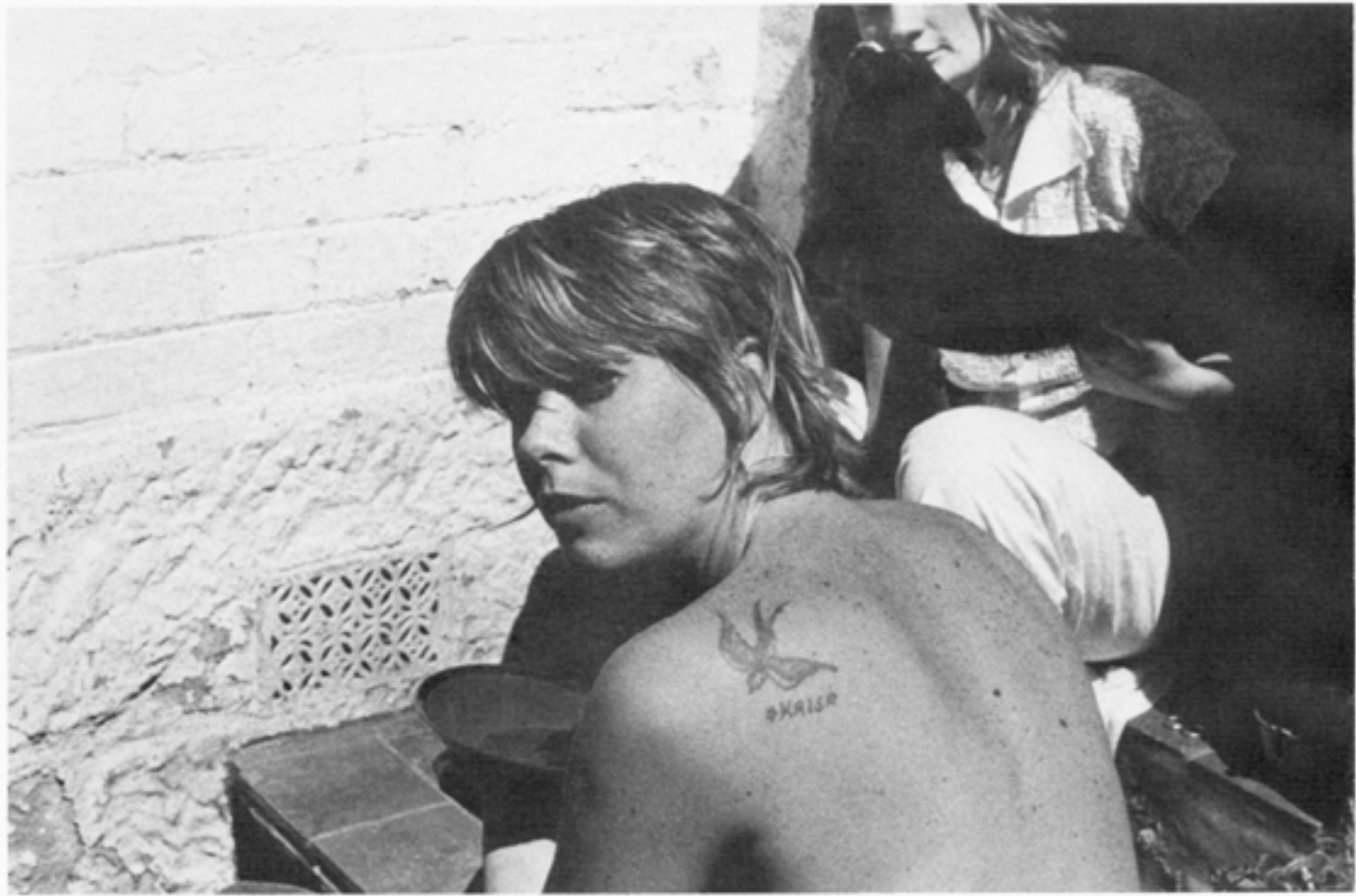
(*A Good Idea* reproduced with permission of the artist Aleksander Danko)

# A BOOK

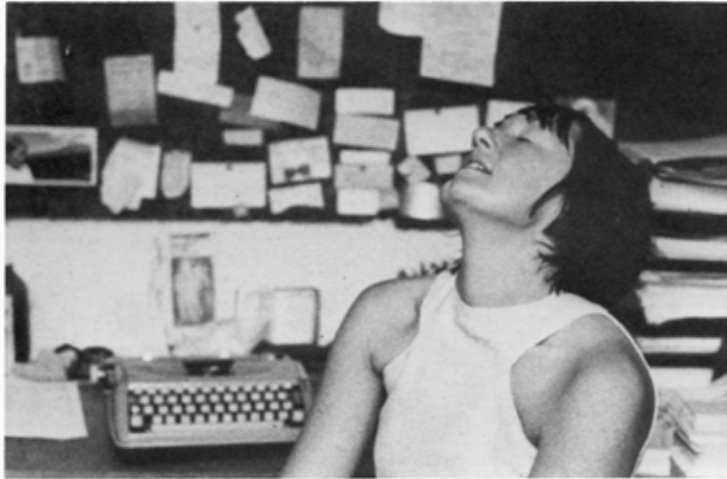
## ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN



Photographs by Carol Jerrems  
Text Edited by Virginia Fraser

















# QUIBACK PRESS



\$3.95

recommended but not obligatory



# MAD CONFIDENCE: A BOOK ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

Virginia Fraser

---

***A Book About Australian Women*, published in 1974, is still one of the few places it's possible to see a permanent collection of Carol Jerrems's work and was, until now, one of only two major publications of her photos and the only one where her pictures were a reason for the book's existence.<sup>1</sup>**

Though usually treated today as a photography book, *A Book About Australian Women* also includes my twelve interviews<sup>2</sup> as well as Carol's 131 photos, and when first published was generally reviewed as something to read plus pictures. Apparently it sold well,<sup>3</sup> though neither Carol nor I made much money out of it.

Our book appeared on the eve of International Women's Year, and the newly appointed (and first) Women's Advisor to an Australian federal government, Elizabeth Reid, launched it at the Arts Council Gallery in Sydney where Carol exhibited prints from its pages.<sup>4</sup> The Literature Board of the newly formed Australia Council for the Arts supported the book, as it did other early publications by Outback Press. In a bucolic passage from a metaphor-stuffed, full-page ad for its products in the *Digger*, Outback referred to "the fresh springs of government grants".<sup>5</sup> With an eye to funding and to the market for material by and about women being conjured up by the times and by organisations from the United Nations to the Women's Liberation Movement, Outback also produced several other works by women.<sup>6</sup>

The newly formed company consisted of Colin Talbot, Mark Gillespie, Fred Milgrom and Morry Schwartz, an energetic, undercapitalised and, as it turned out, temporary and mismatched coalition of young writers, former architecture students and a science graduate who, before finances and their differences got the better of the arrangement, produced risky books by Australian authors relating text and images in adventurous ways.

Earlier in the 1970s, Fred Milgrom, with occasional co-editors who included Mark Gillespie, published *Circus*,<sup>7</sup> a quarterly, university magazine where text and graphics by multiple authors got equal weight regardless of medium—perhaps a model for other Outback books.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1990s Catriona Moore described *A Book About Australian Women* as a "strictly sub-cultural publication",<sup>9</sup> but in late 1974 and early 1975 the subject, spelled out in the title, was about to be mainstream. It got quite a lot of attention including reviews in the *Herald* and the *Age*, two articles in the *Sunday Observer* and a mention in *Vogue Australia*.<sup>10</sup>

As an object, it was a 144-page, black-and-white, perfect bound, large-format paperback with the qualities of a pulp paperback, namely "cheaply made and often fall[ing] apart after much handling or several years".<sup>11</sup> It was lightly proofed. Carol's index appeared with many spelling mistakes and a chunk of my text got lost during layout with the gap just closed up around it. The binding was the cheapest you could buy and still have a book.

It alternated four sections of text with three of images. Carol and I each organised the order of our own material and the designer, Laurel Olszewski, managed the cover, overall look and typography. An early draft of the cover used the photograph *Carmel Behind Glass* showing a grid of textured window-panes occluding and distorting the shape of a naked woman. The title was in a fat, curly script. I remember telling Laurel I didn't like it but don't know whose idea it was. The final version had plainer typography and Carol's picture of a woman, Linda Piper,

in overalls holding a block of wood stenciled with the words A GOOD IDEA to which a light bulb with socket and cord is attached.<sup>12</sup>

The book was offset printed on two stocks—the sixty text pages on a matte, medium-weight bond that's yellowed over time to the colour of a chain smoker's teeth, and the eighty-four photo pages on a low-gloss art stock that's stayed whiter except where it pressed against the bond. The main business of the printer, Standard Commercial Printers in Cheltenham, was local weekly newspapers produced by its parent, Standard Press, for Melbourne's southern suburbs. Standard's outside jobs included wedding invitations, booklets, and magazines—*Police Life* and *Bowls* among them. The principal work of its bindery was stapling, and it infrequently handled books,<sup>13</sup> though Outback used it several times before chasing cheap deals all over the Melbourne suburbs, as subsequent publications show.

Our book's recommended retail price of \$3.95 was four cents less than a bath towel from Buckley's but almost a dollar more than a long-line bra or a pair of reinforced short-leg briefs from Waltons. You could have had four copies of *Vogue* for the price and a newspaper for fewer than ten cents. It was the most expensive of Outback's first four projects but didn't take long to start disintegrating. It was, as the study guide to Kathy Drayton's film about Carol said, "a cheaply-printed collection of Jerrems's photographs with text by Virginia Fraser, timed to coincide with International Women's Year".<sup>14</sup>

This was certainly true without exhausting everything to be said about it.

Christine Wallace's description of the book as "an astonishing collective portrait" is closer to our ambitions for it—as far as we could be said to have had a shared ambition.<sup>15</sup> Carol and I weren't really each other's cup of tea. We didn't know each other before working together, met sparingly during, and never after. In pictures of us together taken on the afternoon she came to photograph me we look like pals, standing close, laughing in my backyard. I remember it being a more convivial meeting than some others at which I found Carol not warm and sometimes prickly, but the people we're smiling at are not so much each other as our friends on the other side of the camera, one of whom must have taken those shots.<sup>16</sup>

Despite that, we started at the same place, travelled down our parallel paths producing portraits in different media from inside and outside our subjects and arrived at the end having negotiated the title, cover images and launch. Outback's *Digger* ad, not altogether helpfully, said:

***As you would imagine photos about women, text about women. But the two do not corroborate each other, and this way the authors have shown the elements of frustrations in the lives of certain women in Australia. Graphically and journalistically it is honest.***<sup>17</sup>

Thinking about this strange un-promotion, plus the reviews I could find or remember with their mixed hostility, curiosity, faint praise straining at gnats and vigorous gatekeeping, I had the unpleasant experience of travelling back in time to those moments when I first saw them and it mattered what they said.

Dianne Wood in the *Herald* called the interviews case histories and "interviews" in inverted commas. In a piece headed "Where are the Mums?" she judged the book's title a "misdemeanour" for misleading the reader about its scope: "Suburban mums, that vast silent majority, have



Photographer unknown (Paul Roche or Ron Johnson)  
(Carol Jerrems and Virginia Fraser), Melbourne  
1974

been neglected".<sup>18</sup> Actually almost half the women interviewed were mothers, some outwardly matching the stereotype she referred to. Carol's photos didn't comment one way or another on motherhood, but the *Age* repeated the complaint in different words.<sup>19</sup> *Digger's* reviewer engaged with the text as prose rather than sociology, but Carol's index, which frustrated easy identification of her subjects—being arranged alphabetically by first names—irritated the author so much she mentioned it twice.<sup>20</sup>

At the time, I found these responses disturbing, as I did Carol's tendency to publicly distance herself from the women's movement that helped make our enterprise possible and from anything about the book that received criticism. Now I'm surprised at how much attention it got (some due to Carol's efforts on her own behalf).

Then is not just now performed with different clothes and slang. Until the women's movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was as though a big sieve strained out women's opinions before they reached the public sphere. Everyone in our book had lived in an Australia with considerably less social, financial and legal freedom for women than at present. There were many, many places women couldn't go, but few besides the ladies lavatories that excluded men. The women's movement forced cracks in the social crust through which what had been long controlled erupted. A lot of people, male and female, were as astonished and unsettled to hear women's private thoughts spoken (sometimes angrily) in public as they were to hear what Aborigines really thought and wanted.

In her short essay on *Girl in a Mirror*, Kathy Schwartz refers to "the youthful confidence and indolent sexuality" of the 1970s,<sup>21</sup> which seems to me a fanciful fictionalisation of the suddenly deregulated sexual, social, emotional and sensory environment that we found ourselves in. Reliable contraception that women could control weakened the link between sex with men and pregnancy with its consequences. It aided feminism,<sup>22</sup> but also made possible a winner-takes-all sexual and emotional libertarianism. There was plenty of bad sex, bad drugs and bad feelings. It wasn't all fun and games I can tell you. The subject of one of Carol's photos, Dianne Fenlon, called it a "maelstrom".<sup>23</sup>

Despite the gathering social storm, it seems to have been Outback Press that cooked up the idea for what became our book. Mark Gillespie, Colin Talbot and Fred Milgrom recall with various degrees of certainty that Mark, who already knew Carol, suggested her for the photos.

Responding to my question about origins, Mark wrote:

***Because of her recognised-early unusual talent at photography and professionalism, and her unusual warm, quirky, non-ideological but no-nonsense brand of belief in herself . . . I thought she'd be perfect for such a project, but I can't definitely say now where the germ of the idea sprang from . . . Colin and I tended to come through with a few . . . [but] it's not impossible it was her idea, she told me, and I told them.***<sup>24</sup>

I knew Colin Talbot from our days as junior journalists on the *Australian* in Melbourne. Responding to the same question, he wrote:

***Like Mother I'm Rooted, I thought up the idea of your book in a general sense and chose you, like I chose Kate Jennings.***

***Your usual circumspection meant that I had no idea, really, what kind of book you would deliver but I knew you would put a lot of work into it. I didn't expect her to do a 500-page book and I didn't expect you to call the book what you called it.***<sup>25</sup>

(The unexpectedly contentious title was a compromise when Carol and I couldn't agree on anything else.)

I recall Colin suggesting "captions", but I had been producing long interviews for *Digger* developed in the same way as those in the book—taping a directed conversation, editing it minus my questions and comments into a continuous story using the speaker's own words, not paraphrases, to keep their individual voices. I was interested in the way American writer and broadcaster, Studs Terkel, developed big stories by letting many people tell them.

But, until I consulted for this essay some of the women Carol photographed,<sup>26</sup> I had little idea how she produced the book's pictures. It seems her subjects, like mine, were mostly people sought out for the purpose—acquaintances, neighbours, friends of friends. Both Carol and I travelled into new realms under what Dorothy Porter called "the magic cloak of legitimate research"<sup>27</sup> and there is a chameleon side to this. Kate Fitzpatrick, a very amusing and gregarious person, remembers that on her two shoots with Carol, including their trip to visit Grace Cossington Smith, they chatted and laughed a lot. But Wendy Saddington, famously enigmatic, recalls Carol as a little bit shy: "She didn't talk much and I didn't talk much. We always liked each other but we weren't real talkative types".

Carol's pictures often seem unstaged, uncontrived, natural—an effect produced with patience, chance and many small interventions. Kate Fitzpatrick, a much photographed actor, recalled that Carol wanted her to have "my ordinary hair", a wavy cloud rather like Carol's own: "Hideous photos of me, but I really loved Carol I thought she was great".

Robyn Ravlich remembers "a very quiet presence and a very simple shoot . . . it looks like there was no preparation on my part at all . . . which surprises me . . . I was a very theatrical person". But she doesn't recall who had the idea for her embrace with her dog.

Jacque Mitelman recalls being neighbours with Carol in Kew but not how she came to her pose: "She probably would have told me stand there. I would have if I'd been the photographer". Jacque, then a new student of photography, remembers Carol was working on a project. "I'd never seen anybody with so many proofs around them. Later I was in the same position."

Carol shot Linda Jackson and Jenny Kee in Jenny's recently opened clothing shop, Flamingo Park. Both Linda and Jenny remember them all enjoying themselves while Linda was "posing a bit" in an outfit she'd designed. But the picture used in the book captures an unplanned moment when Jenny came into frame answering the shop phone: "It wasn't posed otherwise she would have told me to move across so you could see Jenny more".

The picture of child sisters Bala and Maya Shuddhananda in matching dresses suggests a cheerful pastiche of Diane Arbus's gothic identical twins from 1967, but Bala's memory of the day is now contained only in copies of the images Carol gave their parents—shots of the sisters doing different activities, several "posing, looking straight at the camera". Bala reads them as staged—"nothing spontaneous about them".<sup>28</sup>

When Carol took the photo of Dianne Fenlon (then Small), she and Dianne's live-in boyfriend, Esben Storm, were having a relationship they never discussed with Dianne but that she sensed.







Carol Jerrems  
Maya and Bala Shuddhananda, Kew, Melbourne  
1973

The picture was “one of many photos on that day. I felt she was trying to become friends with me . . . Certain aspects of that era tried to push you into being friendly . . . It was extraordinarily unrealistic really but we were all trying to get on with everyone’s lovers even if it was breaking our hearts . . . Anyway that was the situation and actually I think it’s one of the most interesting photos I’ve ever had taken of me in my life”.

But, Dianne said, “I always felt Carol was a kind of a bomb waiting to go off. I didn’t ever get that she was coming from a place of deep reflection. I just had the feeling that she made it up as she went along a bit which is possibly why some of her stuff is so brilliant . . . She was fearless. She had a mad confidence”.

Replying to my questions about her shoot with Carol, Anne Summers called the book “a remarkable thing to do at the time”.<sup>29</sup> To Gael Newton in 2005 it seemed “from a distant planet of past feminist high hopes, energy and enterprises”.<sup>30</sup> To me it’s still the product of a place where the aspirations of an unlikely un-team<sup>31</sup> coincided—the Outback partners’ ambitions for themselves as publishers and their ability to raise just enough capital of every sort to pursue them, Carol’s very focused plan for herself as a photographer, my interest in a kind of journalism different from that in which I’d been trained, the women who allowed themselves to be drawn into the project, all our intentions for ourselves as people, and the boiling political, cultural and historical moment.

Virginia Fraser is an artist, writer and editor. She lives in Melbourne.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Jen Jewell Brown’s book for Skyhooks’ fans, *Skyhooks: Million Dollar Riff*, included a backstage photo essay by Carol, for which Carol got thanks in small-point type on the colophon page.
- <sup>2</sup> The women were unnamed because anonymity was the condition of doing it for some of them and I promised it to all.
- <sup>3</sup> Gael Newton, “A Book About Australian Women”, *Art and Australia*, vol. 43, no. 2, p. 239.
- <sup>4</sup> The exhibition’s location is from a CV in Carol’s private papers held by her family. Neither Elizabeth Reid (whom I emailed) nor I can recall exactly where it was or what it was called though we were both there. A search by the Australia Council through records it still holds produced no mention of it, so whether this is the correct name for the gallery I can’t say.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Digger*, 5 November – 3 December 1974, p. 11.
- <sup>6</sup> Including *Mother I’m Rooted*, edited by Kate Jennings, 1975, a 544-page anthology of poetry solicited by public advertisement, and a book of Kate Jennings’s own poetry, *Come to Me My Melancholy Baby*, 1975.
- <sup>7</sup> Published by the University of Melbourne Magazine Society. Some of Carol’s photos appeared in its issues.
- <sup>8</sup> For instance: *Into the Hollow Mountains*, *Applestealers*, and *The Outback Reader*.
- <sup>9</sup> “Reconstructing the Social” in *Indecent Exposures: Twenty Years of Australian Feminist Photography*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1994, p. 38.
- <sup>10</sup> Diane Wood, “Where are the mums?” *The Herald*, 25 December 1974, p. 10; Anne Latreille, “A lot about women—but it’s not all”, *The Age*, 17 December 1974, p. 23; Geoffrey Radcliffe, “She’ll crusade with a camera”, *Sunday Observer Magazine*, 14 July 1974, pp. 8–9 (an interview with Carol), and an interview with me in the paper’s “Woman” magazine insert, 12 December 1974; and E.R., “Photography”, *Vogue Australia*, March 1975, p. 34.
- <sup>11</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bookbinding>
- <sup>12</sup> *A Good Idea* (1971), mixed media, dimensions variable, edition of seven; part of the show “Heavy Aesthetic Content” at Watters Gallery, Sydney, 1971. The index says: “reproduced with permission of the artist Aleksander Danko”, but Aleks doesn’t recall being contacted at the time though he was “pleasantly surprised” to see it on the cover (phone conversation, February 2010).
- <sup>13</sup> Standard has since been taken over by Leader newspapers itself now owned by News Limited. The information about Standard’s output is from Chris Dunkerton, who worked in the office at Standard Commercial Printing in the 1970s.
- <sup>14</sup> *Girl in a Mirror Study Guide*, Kate Raynor, [http://www.abc.net.au/programsales/studyguide/StGd\\_GirlInAMirror.pdf](http://www.abc.net.au/programsales/studyguide/StGd_GirlInAMirror.pdf)
- <sup>15</sup> “Book Review: Anne Summers, *The Lost Mother: A Story of Art and Love*”, *Biography Footnotes*, no. 3, 2009, National Centre of Biography, <http://ncb.anu.edu.au/newsletter/book-review1>
- <sup>16</sup> The friends were Paul Roche and Ron Johnson.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Digger*, op. cit.
- <sup>18</sup> *The Herald*, op. cit.
- <sup>19</sup> *The Age*, op. cit.
- <sup>20</sup> Helen Garner, “Book of stolen voices”, *The Digger*, 14 January 1975 – 11 February 1975, p. 9; Helen and I had been work colleagues at *Digger*.
- <sup>21</sup> Gael Newton, “Girl in a Mirror”, *Art & Australia*, vol. 43 no. 2, p. 244.
- <sup>22</sup> Or women’s liberation or the women’s movement as it was more generally called, feminism being associated with earlier and supposedly old-fashioned politics.
- <sup>23</sup> Dianne Fenlon was Dianne Small when Carol photographed her. This and all other quotations from people in the book are from phone conversations in January and February 2010, unless otherwise specified.
- <sup>24</sup> Email, 15 January 2010.
- <sup>25</sup> Email, 15 October 2008.
- <sup>26</sup> They are: Jennie Boddington, Digby Duncan, Dianne Fenlon (previously Small), Kate Fitzpatrick, Jenny Kee, Linda Jackson, Marg Jacobs, Rachael Maza-Long, Jacquie Mitelman, Jane Oehr, Robyn Ravlich, Margret RoadKnight, Wendy Saddington, Caroline Slade, Bala Starr (then Shuddanahda), Anne Summers and myself.
- <sup>27</sup> *El Dorado*, Picador, Sydney, 2008, p. 76.
- <sup>28</sup> Email, 7 January 2010.
- <sup>29</sup> Email, 6 January 2010.
- <sup>30</sup> Gael Newton, op. cit. p. 239.
- <sup>31</sup> As Aleks Danko quipped about the publishers: “What a team they were – or un-team as they say”, phone conversation February 2010.

# CAROL JERREMS IN 1974: A BOOK ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN

Gael Newton



Toni Schofield  
Carol Jerrems, Sydney  
1973

This essay was first published in *Art & Australia*, vol. 43, no. 2, Summer 2005, pp. 236–43. It has been reprinted with the kind permission of the author and publisher.

Falling neatly between the 1972 release of Helen Reddy's anthem "I Am Woman" and International Women's Year in 1975, two young Melbourne women—the photographer Carol Jerrems and the writer Virginia Fraser—published *A Book About Australian Women*. The front cover of the book was striking and sexy, showing a beautiful young woman in dungarees holding a conceptual sculpture by the artist Aleks Danko: a phallic light bulb atop a block of wood on which is stencilled "A Good Idea", the words thus amusingly conscripted to a message about women's liberation.

In the spirit of the times, the contents of *A Book About Australian Women* are a proclamation of solidarity and a prediction for a better future for women. The book is made up of photographic portraits by Jerrems and interviews by Fraser with more than eighty women, who are described by Jerrems in the frontispiece as being:

*mostly artists ... painters, sculptors, writers, poets, filmmakers, photographers, designers, dancers, musicians, actresses, strippers. Others include women's liberationists, Aboriginal spokeswomen, activists, revolutionaries, teachers, students, drop-outs, mothers, prostitutes, lesbians and friends.*

The portraits for the book were taken in the two years following Jerrems's graduation in art photography from the Prahran Institute of Technology in Melbourne. Two photographs, *Margaret Jacobs* (1968) and *Australian Ballet Company* (1970), were from Jerrems's student years, but struggled to be portraits with their bold sixties-style graphic design. Images of children opened and closed the book, while other subjects were older role models, including Aboriginal writer Kath Walker (who later wrote under the name Oodgeroo Noonuccal), actress and scriptwriter Enid Lorimer and the painter Grace Cossington Smith. Some of the women already had high profiles, including the actress Kate Fitzpatrick, Aboriginal rights activist Roberta (Bobbi) Sykes, and the singers Margret RoadKnight and Wendy Saddington, but mostly the women were young and emerging talents, some destined for continued public prominence, such as the poet Kate Jennings and the cultural critics Anne Summers and Beatrice Faust.

*A Book About Australian Women* contains five images of Jerrems, including a romantic close-up by a man (Stephen McNeilly) and a photograph by Jerrems's friend, Toni Schofield, which shows Jerrems as a radiant flower-child wearing hot-pants and surrounded by a neon halo. Significantly, Jerrems chose two self portraits for the book, including one in which she is faceless, her identity melded with her camera. Several filmmakers, but only one other photographer, were included in the book.

Jerrems, who is described in *A Book About Australian Women* as a full-time teacher of photography, drawing, painting and yoga, chose all the pictures for the book and designed the layout. The design reveals her skill in composing precise and assured relationships between single images and sequences. Particularly exquisite is a double-page spread of four sequential studies, one blurred, of the beautiful Aboriginal singer Syvanna Doolan. Two images with a distinctive wiggly surface texture, *Redfern Life* and *Maza Family*, were from a series of portraits of Aboriginal people in Melbourne and Sydney's Redfern which was exhibited in an Ilford photography competition in 1973. The complete series (excluded from the book as it includes images of men) makes dramatic use of impressionistic texture and focus. While not well known, this series is arguably Jerrems's first major body of work. Jerrems's cinematic feel for flow and panning, and for the relationship between foreground and background, owes a debt to her art-school teacher, the filmmaker Paul Cox. Jerrems's own filmmaking had also begun by 1974.

*A Book About Australian Women* sold well and was positively reviewed. However, while pictorially strong, it now seems from a distant planet of past feminist high hopes, energy and enterprise. Scuffed and unloved copies abound in second-hand bookshops. Published by Outback Press, an important, short-lived independent publishing group, *A Book About Australian Women* deserves a better fate as it was one of, if not the first, new-wave feminist photography books to be published in the 1970s.

Outback Press was founded by four young men operating out of a grungy terrace in Melbourne's working-class Fitzroy: writer Colin Talbot, entrepreneur and cultural agent-provocateur Morry Schwartz, publisher Alfred Milgrom and rock singer/songwriter Mark Gillespie. Their production values were rough, but their project was in sync with a brash new Australian cultural renaissance. A decade earlier they would have been called beatniks, but their alliance with the energy of the young, the alternative, the working-class and street culture was a product of the swinging sixties. They were seeking an alternative to the dominance of large publishers from the United States and United Kingdom and were awarded five literature grants from the newly established Australia Council for the Arts in their first year of operation.

Outback Press had a nose for the coming generation, and during the 1970s published an extraordinary list of more than 100 titles, backing then-unknown writers, musicians, artists and political issues. They especially championed the new poets associated with the La Mama Theatre in Melbourne. Schwartz has said of the time: "Just getting each book out was hell. We didn't have money for eating. But it was fun to create a culture and be at the centre of it".

It was this milieu that enabled Jerrems's work to be published. Outback Press knew that Jerrems was an outstanding talent. Her work had already appeared in *Circus*, a magazine published by the University of Melbourne Magazine Society, and she had had her first exhibition (with Henry Talbot), "Erotica", at Brummels Gallery of Photography (founded by Rennie Ellis) in Toorak in 1972.

Jerrems was one of a new generation of art-school trained photographers with a clear and impassioned sense of the role photography could play as a social witness. She had confidence in her work and success at an early stage, stamping her student work with the signature "carol jerrems photographic artist" and winning various competitions, including the Walter Lindrum Scholarship in 1968, the Australian Photographers Award in 1970 and a Kodak student photographic competition in 1971. Her student works were the first photographs by a woman to be collected by the National Gallery of Victoria's new Department of Photography, and she was



Carol Jerrems  
Outback Press  
1974

the first woman photographer to have her work exhibited at the Australian Centre for Photography (ACP) in Sydney in 1976.<sup>1</sup>

Only a few images from *A Book About Australian Women* carried over into Jerrems's core body of work as exhibited and published between 1975, when her work took off nationally, and her premature death in 1980. One of the few images from the book to reappear was Jerrems's dramatic portrait of the singer Wendy Saddington. From her next phase of work following the publication of *A Book About Australian Women*, *Vale Street* (1975) is Jerrems's most famous image. This iconic photograph shows a stunning bare-breasted young woman wearing an ankh symbol around her neck. The woman stands in the foreground of the photograph between two "toughs"—like a goddess with her attendant satyrs. *Vale Street* was shown in Jerrems's exhibition at the ACP in 1976 and was used on the cover of the 1979 publication *Australian Photographers: The Philip Morris Collection*, published by the National Gallery of Australia (NGA), Canberra.<sup>2</sup>

*Vale Street* seemed to many people at the time to be the embodiment of the feminist motto "I Am Woman". While the genesis of the image clearly lies in Jerrems's experience assembling and editing *A Book About Australian Women*, it is not a portrait in quite the same sense of portraying a person, but is rather a carefully staged image with the subjects appearing more as types. The nude model was aspiring actor Catriona Brown, who agreed to Jerrems's proposed photographic session in return for prints for her own portfolio. Arriving at the house in Mozart Street, Melbourne, where Jerrems lived, Brown found two young "sharpies", Mark Lean and Jon Bourke, also there. Jerrems had met Lean and Bourke at Heidelberg Technical College where she taught, and had used them as actors in a 16mm film sequence when applying for an Australia Council grant to make a film called *School's Out*.

The negatives in the Jerrems archive at the NGA show the photo shoot unfolding, with Jerrems instructing the boys to take their shirts off and to try various poses. Over the ensuing years, as the image grew in fame, Catriona Brown was vexed by the ludicrous assumptions made about her by reviewers, some waxing lyrical about the image as a modern form of paganism and imagining lascivious sexual rituals. Not that Jerrems, who paraded her sexual liberation and openness to experimentation, would necessarily disapprove of such a scenario. Despite the fact that several other images from the shoot, showing the trio clothed and relaxed, were also exhibited, *Vale Street* was nevertheless regarded for many years as a spontaneous documentary photograph.

*Vale Street* raises interesting questions about Jerrems's relationship to the prevailing personal documentary mode popular in photography of the 1960s and 1970s. Young photographers at the time took a position against photojournalism, which they viewed as being just as commercially driven and controlled by editors as advertising. However, this position may have simply been an unconscious pragmatism on their part, given that the avenues for photojournalism were closing with the demise of *Life* magazine in 1972, and a drastic decline in the commissioned work which had sustained photojournalists of the highest aspirations, such as Henri Cartier-Bresson. Nevertheless, the kinds of personal documentary and street photography much valorised and supported in the 1970s subscribed to many of the notions derived from photojournalism, including the reluctance to stage events for the camera or to excessively crop images.

Jerrems was largely a directorial photographer and her forte was to combine a kind of

classic still photography in a documentary tradition with the particularly energetic off-the-wall 35mm photographic style of the 1960s. The new Reflex cameras were relatively affordable and introduced a generation of younger photographers to eye-level composition and foreground close-ups that implied an emotional closeness to subjects.<sup>4</sup> Jerrems did not on the whole roam the streets on the hunt for pictures; she was not a "master-thief", as Cartier-Bresson described himself. She sought an exposure and an engagement with her subjects in situations of widely different experience and background. Some images in *A Book About Australian Women* (such as her 1972 photograph *Wedding Guests*) show Jerrems taking a side glance at that other great explorer of the fringe—the American iconographer of the 1960s, photographer Diane Arbus. Going into a pub to photograph is always vexatious; going into a tough pub to photograph Aboriginal drinkers is not a simple street activity. Most documentary photographers of this era in Australia worked at a safe distance, or with rather formalist concerns, in their urban wanderings.

Jerrems died in 1980 from a type of blood cancer after considerable suffering in her last two years of life. She had had more than a little measure of success and acclaim, but too little to suggest she had made a lasting contribution or that her work would remain fascinating and appeal to younger generations.

In 2001 the Sydney-based documentary filmmaker Kathy Drayton saw Jerrems's work in "World Without End: Photography and the 20th Century", an exhibition at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney, and was inspired and impelled to retrace Jerrems through her milieu of musicians, filmmakers and spiritual questers of the 1970s.<sup>5</sup> Drayton found that her interviewees gave a picture of Jerrems as someone who didn't necessarily relate all that well to women, nor was she seen as an entrenched "comrade". Rather, Jerrems was regarded as an outsider by those in the causes of feminism, Aboriginal rights and gay rights.<sup>6</sup> Drayton's documentary film on Jerrems, *Girl in a Mirror*, elucidates the communion with people that Jerrems sought from behind her camera.

In the frontispiece to *A Book About Australian Women* Jerrems writes in very new-age language: "There is so much beauty around us if only we could take the time to open our eyes and perceive it. And then share it. Love is the key word". Elsewhere, Jerrems had commented on her concern for people and her role in helping a sick society. Her early sketchbooks and diaries show a leaning towards fantasy and the dreams of the girl-child seeking love, approval and communion, which she felt were denied her.

Gael Newton is Senior Curator of Photography at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Carmel Lonsdale  
Carol Jerrems, Surry Hills  
1973

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> The photography department at the National Gallery of Victoria was established in 1969. In 1976 Jerrems was also the first living Australian woman photographer to have her work acquired by the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. Her 1976 exhibition at the Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney was possibly the first solo exhibition of the work of a female photographer in an Australian public gallery. Jerrems's work had been included in the ACP's publication *New Photography Australia*, Sydney, 1974.

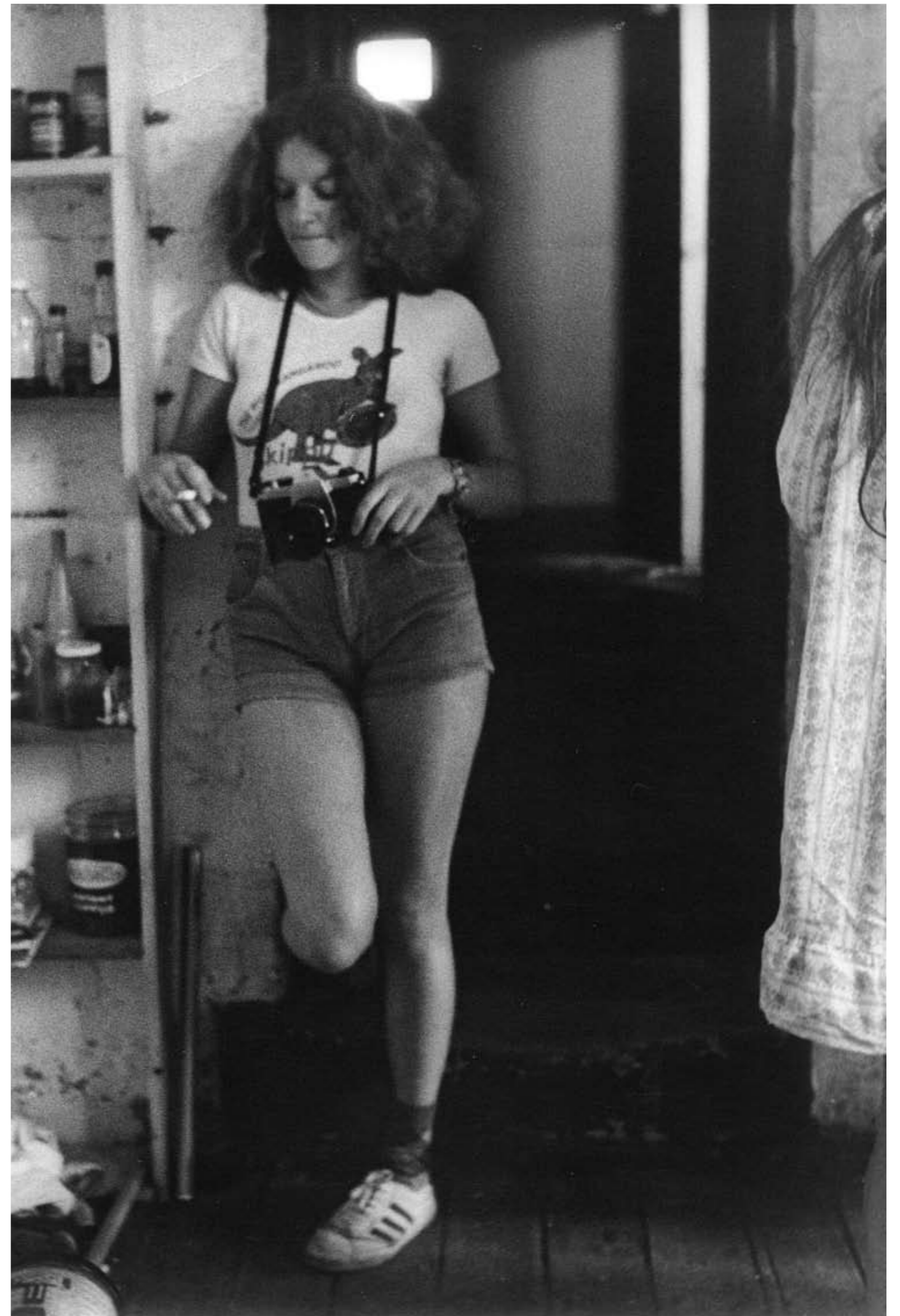
<sup>2</sup> For an account of the Philip Morris collection at the National Gallery of Australia, see Gael Newton, catalogue essay for the exhibition "On the Edge: Australian Photographers of the Seventies", San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Catriona Brown returned to Australia in 2005 to be interviewed for Kathy Drayton's documentary film on Carol Jerrems, *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*. Mark Lean, the young man shown on the right in *Vale Street*, was also interviewed for the film and expressed a certain feeling of having been exploited.

<sup>4</sup> This style is discussed in Martin Harrison's 1998 book, *Young Meteors: British Photojournalism 1957–1965*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> "World Without End: Photography and the 20th Century", Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2 December 2000 – 25 February 2001.

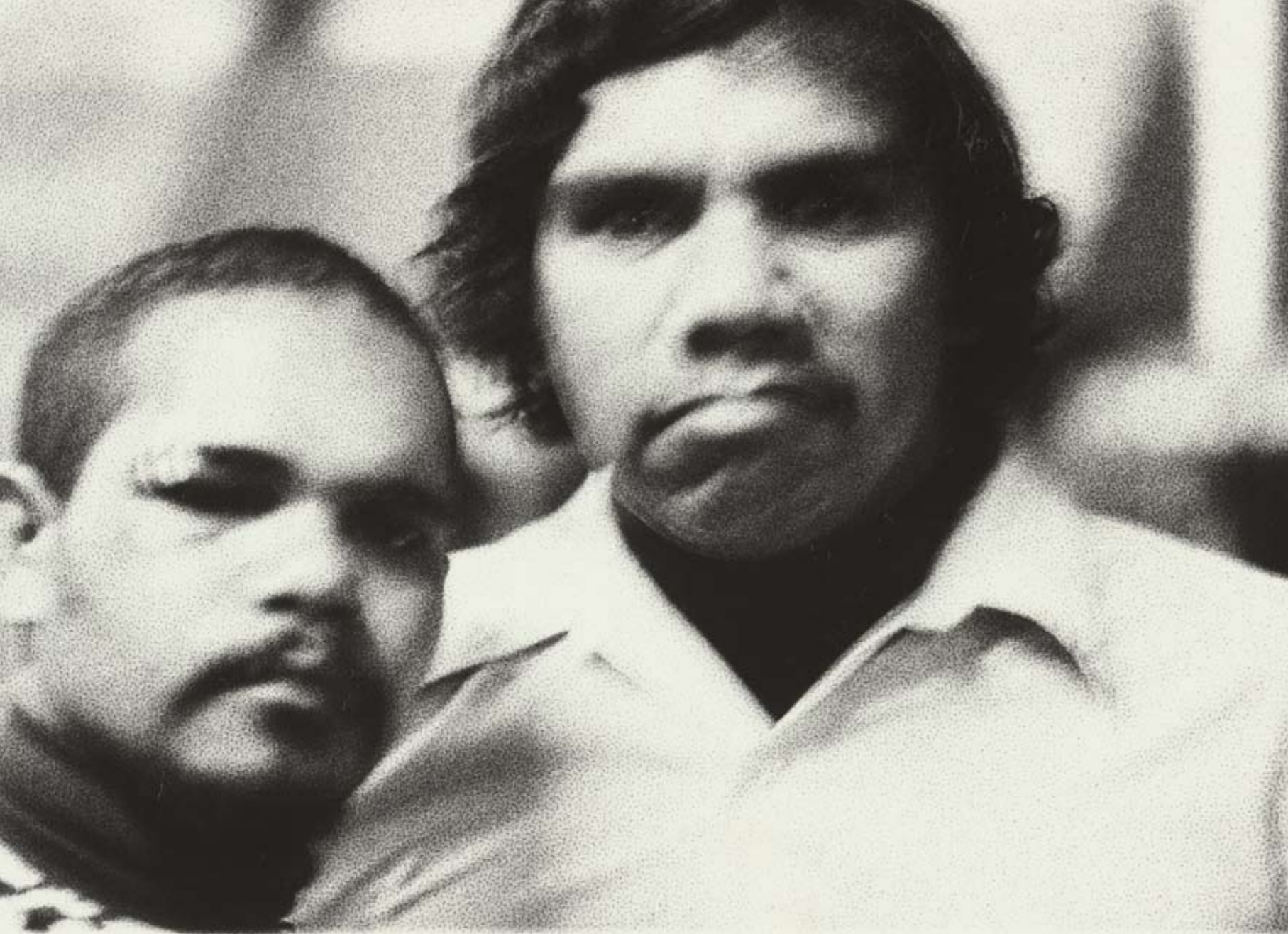
<sup>6</sup> *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems* (produced by Helen Bowden) premiered at the Sydney Film Festival on 16 June 2005. The film drew on the extensive Jerrems archive at the National Gallery of Australia, which was donated to the gallery by the artist's mother, Joy Jerrems, in 1981.





**IF YOUR  
MEM'RY  
SERVES  
YOU  
WELL**  
Djon Mundine OAM

Carol Jerrems  
(Ron Johnson)  
(1974)



From left:  
Carol Jerrems  
Redfern Life, two  
1973

Redfern Life, one  
1973

**If your mem'ry serves you well,  
We were goin' to meet again and wait,  
So I'm goin' to unpack all my things**

**And sit before it gets too late.  
No man alive will come to you**

**With another tale to tell,  
But you know that we shall meet again**

**If your mem'ry serves you well.  
This wheel's on fire, Rolling down the road,  
Best notify my next of kin,  
This wheel shall explode!**

B. Dylan and R. Danko, "This Wheel's on Fire", 1967<sup>1</sup>

**The year Julie Driscoll's hit song "This Wheel's on Fire" summed up the fast life of the 1960s, Carol Jerrems began taking photographs. She said: "I have much to learn".<sup>2</sup>**

Several years later, in 1972, violent protests were taking place around the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra. Following the positive result of the 1967 Referendum concerning Aboriginal people the Whitlam Labor Party had taken the "Aboriginal issue" to voters as a feature of its election-winning policies for change in 1972. As a result, Aboriginal people, our history and our cause became fashionable, even "trendy" public topics. This change had been brewing through the 1960s but the 1970s appeared as a time for real change, or at least a societal shift and a feeling of hope. Women, Aboriginals and migrants set the social agenda of the federal government, in a period that saw the formal beginning of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, the Office of the Status of Women and the Australia Council for the Arts.

The Aboriginal Medical Service and the Aboriginal Legal Services (1971) in Redfern also began at this time, and then expanded across Australia. These institutions resulted from grass-roots actions.

The Black Theatre in Redfern began in 1972. The previous year, Evonne Goolagong, whom Carol would photograph in 1973, won both Wimbledon and the French Open and was named Australian of the Year, only the second Aboriginal person to be so named after the incredibly popular Melbourne personality, boxer Lionel Rose (1968).

According to the Aboriginal Housing Company there were around 12,000 Aboriginal people living in Redfern in 1965, many employed in local factories. In the 1970s lack of affordable housing led unionists, the church and Aboriginals to form the first Aboriginal Housing Company in 1973, centred around houses on Louis Street in Redfern, part of the area now known as "The Block".

By the 1970s a system of financial support allowed Aboriginal students to remain in high school and enter and attend university. I was one of those, as were activists Gary Williams and Gary Foley. As a group we would act more politically and see art expression of all kinds (theatre, poetry, film, painting and performance) as an effective tool to get our messages through to the wider world.

*Ningla A-na!* is Arunta for "hungry land" (or "We are hungry for our land") and was the main slogan of the Ningla A-na Moratorium land rights march in July 1972. It's also the name of an important film that documents the debates and events surrounding the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy on the lawns of Parliament House in that year. Writer Bobbi Sykes was born in Townsville, Queensland, in 1943 but after completing school found herself in Sydney by the mid-1960s. She joined the black rights movement of the time and was involved in the developments in Redfern in the early 1970s and the Tent Embassy. It was at the Ningla A-na demonstration that Carol caught her in a great action moment.

What makes a good photographic portrait? It involves composition, the use of light and, centrally, the capturing of the subject's character. A number of non-Aboriginal female photographers became involved in recording these exciting times, documenting flesh-and-blood activists of real character, social developments and "the movement": Eileen Kitchener (now



Syron) from 1971; Juno Gemes, from 1978 to 2003; and Penny Tweedie from 1978. Their approach to portraiture and documentation varied. Kitchener's approach was to follow everything, every event, performance and meeting that she could, capturing a huge cavalcade of action and the drive of the times, mainly around Sydney. Gemes worked similarly, with more focus on looking for certain human moments and turning points. Penny Tweedie recorded an amazing photographic essay of everyday life in Arnhem Land, then the centre of political action for Aboriginal land rights. All caught particular images of character and moment.

**If your mem'ry serves you well,  
You'll remember you're the one  
That called on me to call on them  
To get you your favors done.**

American art writer Lucy Lippard recalled at a Sydney lecture in 2009 that a young woman had told her that she wasn't a feminist, but could speak up for herself.<sup>3</sup> Lippard replied that being a feminist wasn't about speaking up for oneself but helping others unable to speak for themselves. This could be done through photography. If we were to make or change history, whether feminists or Aboriginals, we needed to document it and influence its perception. The "women's movement" in Australia certainly knew the value of documenting their own actions, no matter how seemingly mundane, in writing, photography and film. New forms of communal or shared living for writers, filmmakers and artists developed from loose forms in the 1960s, to become creative social sites in the 1970s. Helen Garner's 1977 book *Monkey Grip* captured the zeitgeist of these times, as did Carol's *Vale Street* (1975):

***People were stereotyping indigenous people. I think Carol was showing "This is not what it's all about, look, look at the expressions on people's faces—see what they're really feeling."***

Ron Johnson, Aboriginal friend of Carol's<sup>4</sup>

There is a colloquial saying that an Aboriginal family is a man, a woman, a child and an anthropologist (read "photographer"). Conversely every researcher needs a collaborator. Most of Carol's portraits of Aboriginal people were taken in the years 1973 to 1974, possibly after her meeting and relationship with her Aboriginal student Ron Johnson. Until this time Aboriginal people had been largely photographed by anthropologists or exploited by documentary photographers and voyeurs of the under-classes, as the "exotic other", as people "not like us", and rarely just as present-day human personalities. So by the 1970s, despite becoming a popular political cause, and to some extent seeking publicity, many Aboriginal people viewed photographers with suspicion, caution or outright disdain. They are often seen to this day as some form of predator, as "living off the backs of blacks". Carol's posed shots of Ron Johnson's mother and family and later Bob Maza with his family, however, indicate an interest and caring on her part and a warm trust on part of the sitters.



Carol Jerrems  
Ningla A-Na, Black Moratorium, Sydney  
1972

Unknown photographer  
(Carol Jerrems and Ron Johnson, Melbourne)  
1974

In Redfern Aboriginal social life revolved around drinking in pubs and in this case the Clifton Hotel and the Empress Hotel. The Aboriginal people in Carol's *A Redfern Hotel* (1973) and *Redfern Life* (1973) were political activists. In those days, for an Aboriginal person to have a beer and congregate with others (to "consort") was a political act. The pub was a site of violent altercations between the police and Redfern Aboriginals. Much political discussion and planning was done there; the beginning of the Aboriginal Rugby League Knockout started from such a gathering. Michael Edols relates how he and Carol were attacked and chased from a Redfern pub by its Aboriginal patrons who pursued them into the street and seriously smashed their car. Several younger women Aboriginal photographers were, a decade later, similarly driven out from "The Block" after they crossed an invisible line in their attempt to take photographs there, though this time the violence was only verbal.

I cannot remember ever meeting Carol Jerrems, and in conversations while researching this essay I found some people's memory didn't serve them so well. Carol may have identified with the Aboriginal people of Redfern—she may have felt symbolically black. She certainly captured a thoughtful gaze or shy look back at the camera or her, revealing some insight into another side to the subject's character. Artist Richard Bell recently talked of the tension Aboriginal people feel under all the time in this society, which often comes out as anger and an aggressive demeanour. This anger has never been their actual personality but a straitjacket they are forced to wear by society. Carol's photos reveal the real people underneath these masks. In the 1970s there were many general discussions of alliances between the dispossessed: women, feminists, blacks, migrants, and working-class poor. There seemed a fresh collegiality that crossed all sectors. Regrettably this has generally collapsed into self-interest, defensive amalgamations and disparate groups.

Margaret Tucker (1904–1996) was a longstanding political activist for Aboriginal people by the time Carol took her portrait in 1973. She was involved in William Cooper's Australian Aboriginal League that started in the mid-1930s. Her biography, *If Everyone Cared*, published in 1977, was one of the first generation of Aboriginal life stories that challenged the "great Australian silence" about Aboriginals, in white blindfold histories of the nation. A Stolen Generation victim herself, Tucker later starred in the film about this dispossession, *Lousy Little Sixpence*, released in 1983.

***Let no one say the past is dead.  
The past is all about us and within.***

Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker) 1970<sup>5</sup>

As Oodgeroo (1920–1993) recognises, the past isn't just about nostalgia, it's about ideas, principles, and culture. As Kath Walker, she was captured by Carol's camera in 1974 for *A Book About Australian Women*. Her career as a poet was already a decade old by this time. She'd received an MBE in 1970 in recognition of her literary achievements but returned it in 1987 in protest about her people's living conditions. She and her son Dennis took a "Black Power" point of view in the 1970s, wearing blood-red cloth headbands in recognition of the Aboriginal blood shed in the colonisation of Australia. Oodgeroo had purchased some of her own traditional land on Moongalba (Stradbroke Island) in 1972 and was living and teaching there when photographed by Carol in 1974.



Carol Jerrems  
Family Life, one  
1973

Family Life, three  
1973

Birth is not such a celebrated ritual in Aboriginal social customs whereas death draws on every strand of one's life to be in attendance. In 1979 Martha Ansara worked with Aboriginal activist Essie Coffey (1940–2003) from the Goodooga (Brewarrina) region of northwest New South Wales to finish *My Survival As An Aboriginal*, the first film directed by an Aboriginal woman. The film records the mundane but stoic determination of what could be seen as non-romantic, brutal, Aboriginal life on the edge. It's how she constructs and passes on her Aboriginal history, identity and knowledge to the next generation in her family, and about her caring for them and their future, a task that could seem thankless and futile.

The year Carol Jerrems discovered her illness (1979) she began to document its progression and the new social life she was part of at the hospital. Around this time women artists internationally (including Mary Kelly in her *Post-partum Document*) fused politics, feminism and conceptual art through intense formal personal investigations. Documentary photography was being taken in new directions. I think Carol died before reaching the height of her artistic powers. One wonders what the next phase of the now maturing artist was going to be.

By the end of the 1970s a new generation of Aboriginal people were taking their own photographs. Photographer Tracey Moffatt had already begun using polaroid film to create a fantasy photographic record of her family and Mount Gravatt neighbourhood in Brisbane in 1973–74. By the end of the 1970s the still young artist recorded the anti-racism protests during the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane in 1982 before moving to Sydney to extend her work in film and launch her career.

A friend related that “Jerrems was one of the first woman photographers we could name, outside of Olive Cotton; before that they were all men”. Beyond this recognition, what was the effect of the photos taken by Carol—on the subjects themselves, their society—on the outside society? We now recognise the power of the camera and its images that, with digitisation, has grown beyond anything we could have imagined in the 1970s. Carol's *Vale Street* has become an embodiment of the freedom of those times. Yet we also now recognise the need for self-representation, and especially the need of disempowered subcultures to be in control of their own images, perhaps above that of the privileged individual artist. In 2000 at the funeral of Uncle Bob Maza, his son recollected his father's advice “to dare to dream your dreams”.<sup>6</sup> To a large extent you are what you do, not what you say. Carol's appetite for life was something enviable as well as admirable: the common lament “I wish I'd done that” would not have come from her.

Djon Mundine is a member of the Bandjalung people of northern New South Wales and is Aboriginal Curator, Contemporary Art, at the Campbelltown Art Centre, New South Wales.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Copyright Dwarf Music 1967, renewed 1995. Lyrics B. Dylan and R. Danko. Performed by Julie Driscoll, Brian Auger & Trinity.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Jerrems quoted in *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*, a documentary film by Kathy Drayton, produced by Helen Bowden, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Lucy Lippard, “Three Escape Attempts”, lecture at the Power Institute, University of Sydney, 21 April 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Ron Johnson in *Girl In a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*.

<sup>5</sup> Poem first published under the name Kath Walker (now Oodgeroo Noonuccal), in Kath Walker, “The Past”, in *My People*, Jacaranda Press, Milton, QLD, 1970.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted by Djon Mundine, “On a Wing and a Prayer”, in Brenda Croft (ed.), *Michael Riley: Sights Unseen*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2004, p. 125.



Carol Jerrems  
Carol Duncan, Redfern  
1975

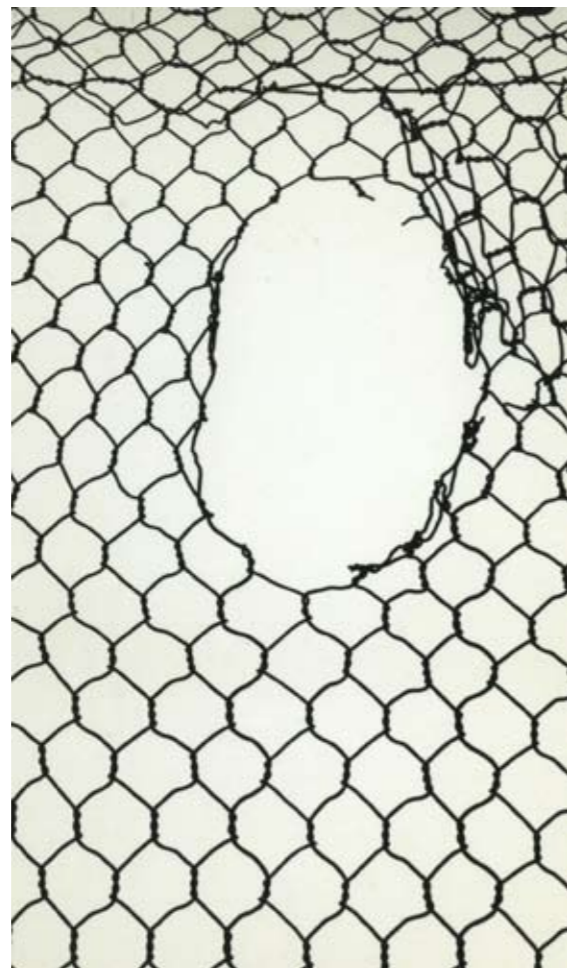
Edols Seeing Gulpilil with a Bucket  
1974



Carol Jerrems  
Kath Walker, 'Moongalba', Stradbroke Island  
1974



Carol Jerrems  
Evonne Goolagong, Melbourne  
1973



Clockwise from top left:  
Carol Jerrems  
J  
from *Alphabet Folio*  
(1968) dated 1969

O  
from *Alphabet Folio*  
(1968) dated 1969

W  
from *Alphabet Folio*  
(1968) dated 1969

# ALPHABET FOLIO

Isobel Crombie

***Alphabet Folio* was taken in 1968 when Jerrems was mid-way through her photography course at Prahran Technical School, College of Advanced Education. Jerrems was a highly motivated student and often produced more photographs than required. Her teacher, Paul Cox, later noted that she had “an extraordinary eye for detail”, and this capacity is certainly in evidence here.<sup>1</sup>**

*Alphabet Folio* was Jerrems’s response to a student assignment designed both to encourage students to explore the world photographically and to learn how to create compositions. Jerrems created a photographic “alphabet” of letters from small-scale twists and turns in found metal, wood or plant forms. The series owes something to the formalist tradition in photography of the time with its emphasis on abstract shapes. However this cool style of observation is tempered in Jerrems’s work by a certain warmth and (on occasion) sly humour that is in keeping with her love of the everyday.

The letter “J”, for instance, is a witty construction in which Jerrems has angled her camera upwards to include a simple, tiny fishhook shape that seems to dangle from the sky. Her image of “W” is even subtler and shows how attuned Jerrems’s eyes were becoming to singling out “letters” from the surrounding urban landscape. Some photographs certainly seem the product of serendipity while others, like “O”, might have been set up. Strangely enough it seems that Jerrems intentionally produced only twenty-five letters of the alphabet: the letter “B” is missing. Perhaps it proved too hard to find or maybe leaving it out was a quirky absence that she enjoyed.

*Alphabet Folio* may seem remote from the work that Jerrems went on to produce but this rare insight into her student years offers an interesting background to her practice. The skills she was refining here came into play later when she produced her documentary studies of people and contemporary life. Being able to catch small gestures or expressions in her subjects required a certain kind of focus that exercises such as this helped to sharpen.

This series is also interesting in terms of the reception it received. It was purchased by the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) in 1971 along with four other student works by Jerrems, and was exhibited in 1974 at the NGV as part of a survey of contemporary Australian photographers acquired for the permanent collection with funds donated by KODAK.<sup>2</sup> It was unusual for student work to enter the public collection: the only other student photographs to be bought by the NGV in the 1970s were by Bill Henson, also from Prahran Technical School. The acquisition was a clear sign of the regard that Jerrems was held in at the time. Curator Jennie Boddington described her as “without doubt one of the more important photographers of the younger generation at work in Australia today”.<sup>3</sup> Jerrems herself seems also to have considered this work significant and later went on to set it as a regular assignment to her own students both at Heidelberg Technical College and the Tasmanian School of Art.

Isobel Crombie is Senior Curator, Photography, at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Paul Cox in Helen Ennis, *Living in the 70s: Photographs by Carol Jerrems*, Australian National Gallery, Canberra, 1990, no pagination.

<sup>2</sup> *National Gallery of Victoria Annual Report 1970–71*, pp. 2–3; *National Gallery of Victoria Annual Report 1973–74*, p. 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Carol Jerrems: Robert Ashton*, exh. flyer, Brummels Gallery of Photography, Melbourne, 1974.

**VALE  
STREET**  
Judy Annear



Precisely at what point *Vale Street* became an icon of Australian photography is not entirely clear but tracing the trajectory of this small gelatin silver photograph suggests that it was not too long after it was first printed and exhibited. Jerrems was twenty-six when she spent an afternoon with a friend and two of her students who were about ten years younger. Looking at the proof sheet leads one on a slow choreographed dance with the three subjects. The unseen Jerrems is the ring-master as they fool about then slowly take off their tops, move into the positions that have become so familiar and, finally, look directly into the camera. The young woman emanates strength through her very paleness: she is right on the edge of the picture frame while the young men flanking her recede into the shadows. The intricate structure of the foliage on the left is echoed in the configuration of limbs, light and dark, and other more particular details such as tattoos, the curves of hair, features, bone beneath skin, the edges of things.

*Vale Street* featured in the 1976 book *Australian Photography* edited by Laurence Le Guay and in 1979 was on the front cover of *Australian Photographers: The Philip Morris Collection* with Max Dupain's *Sunbaker* (1937) on the back. James Mollison, founding director of the National Gallery of Australia was at that time sole selector for the Philip Morris Collection. When the collection was exhibited in the National Gallery in 1983 under the title "A Decade of Australian Photography 1972–1982" it was noted that "Jerrems's best compositions have a casual perfection: *Vale Street* has justifiably become an icon of 1970s Australian photography, yet seems free both of forced formalism and mere chance".<sup>1</sup>

Comparing *Vale Street* with *Sunbaker* or with Dupain's other iconic image *Meat Queue* (1946) is instructive. Dupain was certainly more consciously interested in form than in people per se and his descriptions of how both of these images came about are revealing of his ability to recognise the potential in a composition as it is unfolding before the camera and to use his expertise to capture it.<sup>2</sup>

*Vale Street* was made after Jerrems had put together the photographs for *A Book About Australian Women*. This important document was published in 1974 and included a large number of remarkable portraits, many of which appear to be more spontaneous than *Vale Street*, while others are coloured by the same subtlety and enigmatic qualities. The compelling aspect always is the empathy between photographer and subject and how this translates into the picture and then to us. It is known from Jerrems's statements that this is something she understood to be important and constantly worked toward, for example in 1977 she wrote: "I don't want



Carol Jerrems  
Mozart Street  
1975

to exploit people. I care about them; I'd like to help them if I could, through my photographs ..."<sup>3</sup>

While an engagement may appear to occur more easily in single portraits such as *Caroline Slade* and *Wendy Saddington*, both of 1973, Jerrems was just as capable of capturing the perfect moment with two or more people together. Not as harsh as Diane Arbus, nor as objective as August Sander, Jerrems could create the conditions for even a reluctant subject to move into synchronicity with her and her camera. This is clearly evident in *Vale Street* where there is no reason at all for these three to be together looking out at us and commanding our attention other than Jerrems made it so.

Judy Annear is Senior Curator, Photography, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> *A Decade of Australian Photography 1972–1982: Philip Morris Arts Grant at the Australian National Gallery*, exh. brochure, Australian National Gallery, Canberra, 1983, p. 2 [no author given].

<sup>2</sup> See Helen Ennis, *Max Dupain Photographs*, Australian National Gallery, Canberra 1991.

<sup>3</sup> See *Living in the 70s: Photographs by Carol Jerrems*, Australian National Gallery, 1990. no pagination.





Carol Jerrems  
Vale Street  
1975



Carol Jerrems  
Juliet Holding Vale Street  
1976

## LYNN GAILEY Anne O'Hehir

**Carol Jerrems comes across Lynn Gailey standing alone. She is in the front room of an old mansion on the Bondi Junction end of Oxford Street, which houses the offices of Smart Street Films, the company started by Esben Storm and Haydn Keenan. You can see why she has started shooting though rarely was she without her camera—the light coming in from the window is gorgeous, bathing Gailey in a soft, shimmery light. Four horizontal shots: she looks at the camera, looks away, looks back again slightly smiling, then more serious. Jerrems turns the camera vertically. One shot of Lynn looking down at a writing pad on the desk next to her, then back into the lens of the camera: the last shot on the roll of film.**

Among all the photographic prints, contact sheets, student portfolios and negatives in the archive held by the National Gallery of Australia, there are two drawings that Jerrems made of another photographer's work. Drawings of female nude studies by Imogen Cunningham, they are abstract and formal—intense and sensual—exercises in light and shade. As evidenced in these drawings, the shy, romantic, sensitive Jerrems is everywhere apparent, as is her great, intuitive eye: in this photograph the tactile yet ethereal quality of the light forms a cross on Gailey, and the delicately observed angles and frailty of the body—emphasised by the oddly-fitting vintage dress, almost as if Gailey has been caught playing dress-ups—contrasts with the 1970s tightly cropped hair and ubiquitous cigarette. The beautiful and skilful printing, the background burnt in to create an introspective mood—in which as much is concealed as revealed—emphasises Gailey's isolation and vulnerability.

But then there is Gailey's gaze. Jerrems captures an uneasy apprehension. Not exactly a moment of truth, the mask dropping away, or of losing it, but a moment that comes through of steely assertiveness, of picking up the glove thrown down by Jerrems. Looking through the hundreds of contact sheets in the archive it is clear that this moment when the sitter seems to



Carol Jerrems  
Lynn  
1976

push back against Jerrems—in a moment of annoyance or rebellion or straight out boredom, for whatever reason—is what she was seeking.

Jerrems knew that Gailey did not like having her photograph taken, Gailey's interest in playing up to the camera being non-existent. Also that evoking that tension arising from the complex and fraught act of being photographed—a fluid and complicated exchange of trust, distrust, a holding back, a giving in—can deliver a knock-out punch that resonates with the viewer. A murky and emotional territory; a push and pull between the desire of the sitter to look a certain way and the photographer's own agenda. The viewer is implicated in this negotiation, getting the pay-off without the risk taking. A not very comfortable position.

Portraits are in a sense self-portraits. It is in that moment of assertiveness against the act of being photographed that a paradoxical defencelessness is exposed—a profound understanding arising from Jerrems's own struggles to communicate that we are all toughing it out—everyone, as she said, separated and isolated. It is perhaps this particular blend of bravado and vulnerability which defines Jerrems's vision and makes her photography endlessly compelling.

Anne O'Hehir is Assistant Curator of Photography at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.



Carol Jerrems  
(Lynn Gailey Sewing)  
1976

Overleaf:  
Thirty-eight Buick  
1976





## MIRROR WITH A MEMORY: MOTEL ROOM

Anne Marsh

**The idea of the camera as a mirror with a memory has its genesis in the nineteenth century. In contemporary manifestations it has given rise to visual analyses of the self, specifically the splitting of identities and the performativity of gender roles.**

In this photograph Carol Jerrems appears as an early feminist protagonist. Acknowledging, perhaps, the loftier claims of postmodern feminist theorists such as Laura Mulvey who in 1975 analysed the function of the male gaze in cinema, Jerrems clearly engages with gender identities, the agency of the female artist and the concept of spectatorship. The female photographer (Jerrems herself) stands centre stage: naked with a rumpled bed behind her she shoots into the mirror capturing herself and her lover, Esben Storm, post coitum. Although she is firmly in command as the active maker of meaning, he is symbolically stereotyped as he sits at a desk talking on the telephone and consulting his diary or journal. It's a clever picture, which confounds gender roles—he is distant, engaging virtually with another, off screen, on the telephone, and outside the picture: his gaze downcast. He appears passive and weaker than the female protagonist who stands boldly behind him exposing the full length of her body whilst he is cropped and marginalised. This and the framing tell us that the woman is in total control.

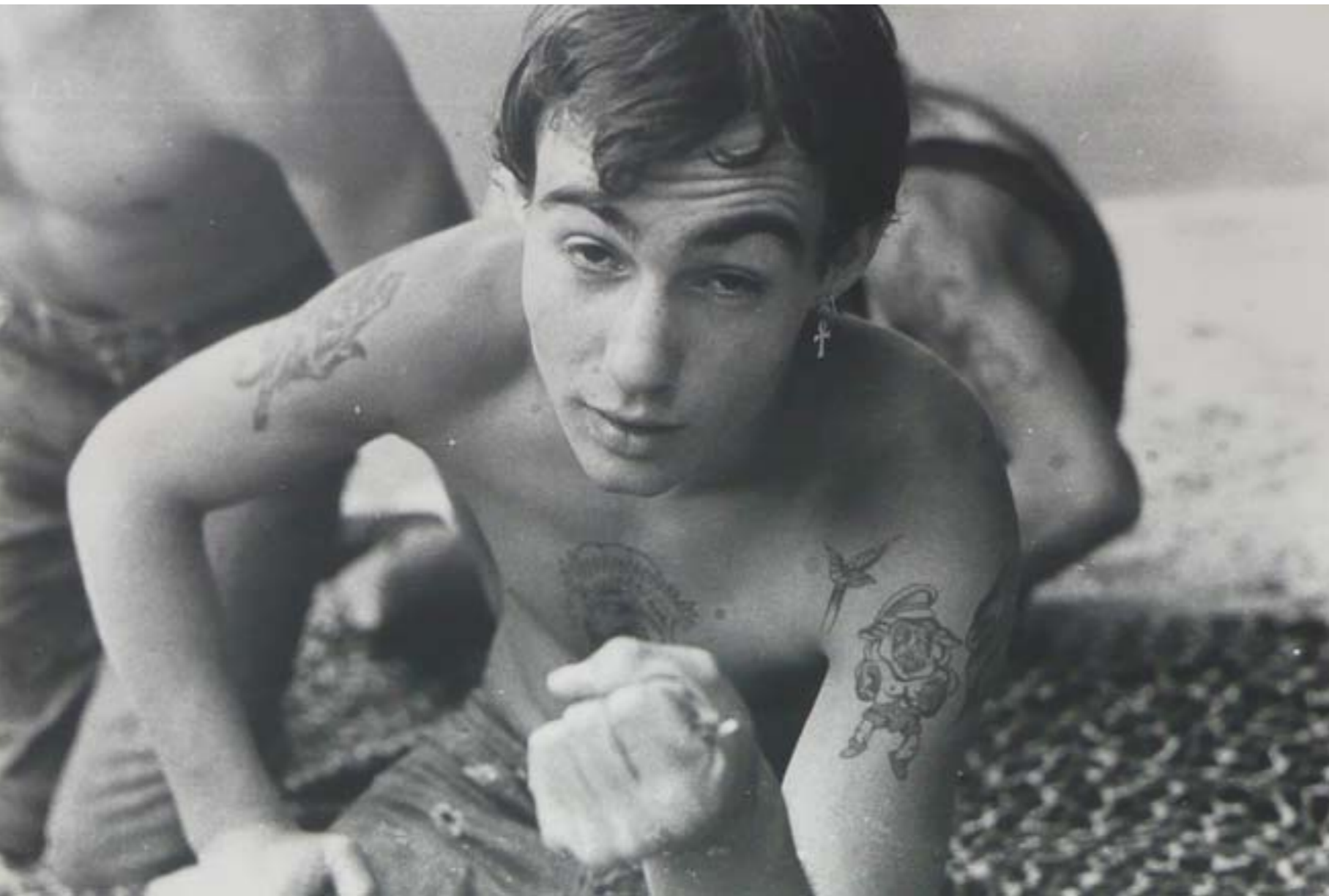
The framing itself plays with the conventions of reproduction. Here we have a picture (the mirror image) within a picture (of the motel room). The doubling of the male figure marks him as a reproduction. His 'real' body, in the room (bottom right), is fuzzy and out of focus, only his reflection is sharply captured. This points to the idea of a split identity, as if Jerrems is saying that only his picture, his image, stands up to scrutiny. This underlines the concept of gender performativity and frames masculinity as a reproducible disguise. I do not think that it is coincidental that Esben Storm is a filmmaker and that Jerrems is mining the metaphors and formal structures of the medium of analogue photography. Although, at first glance, this image could be read as a record/memory of an afternoon liaison in a B-grade motel, it is clearly a meditation on the photographic as both an activity and a system of reproduction and representation.

As a portrait photographer Jerrems often utilised the reflective surface of the mirror as a psychological tool. This is apparent in photographs of herself alone and with lovers, and in her 1978 film *Hanging About*, which looks at rape as a condition of a phallogocentric society. *Mirror with a Memory: Motel Room* is clearly a constructed photograph rather than a snapshot. It stands out as a mature investigation of the medium of photography, an inspired proto-feminist analysis of the gaze and a precursor to a decade or more of performative self-portraits by women artists.

Professor Anne Marsh is Associate Dean of Research, Faculty of Art & Design, Monash University.

Carol Jerrems  
*Mirror with a Memory: Motel Room*  
1977

Carol Jerrems  
Mark Lean: Rape Game  
1975



## MARK'S GAME OF RAPE

Kathy Drayton

**Mark's *Game of Rape* is a print made from the series *Jerrems* photographed of Lean and his friends on the banks of the Yarra River in early 1975. For "Heroes and Anti-Heroes", the exhibition she shared with Rennie Ellis in December 1975, Carol chose to exhibit the more menacing image she took two frames later, underlined by the hard-edged title, *Mark Lean: Rape Game*.**

In taking this photograph, Jerrems moved in closer, framing her subject from a higher angle, emphasising his movement towards the lens. Lean's clenched fist with the ominously suggestive protruding straw, is larger and slightly blurred in bottom center frame. His face above it is leery, eyes narrowed under raised brows, lips parted as he addresses the photographer, and by proxy, the viewer. The boy behind him has risen to his knees in a movement towards the camera, chest filling the entire left of frame, heightening the claustrophobic threat of the image. There is an early print of this image held in the archive of the National Gallery of Australia. Its original title, *The Game of Drawing Straws*, has been crossed out. Written underneath is the new title: *Rape Game*. We can perceive in these decisions Jerrems's formidable talent for evoking heightened emotion and the suggestion of narrative to create strikingly beautiful, powerfully engaging and complex images which hover in the highly charged terrain between documentary and fiction. It is a talent that came to haunt Mark Lean.

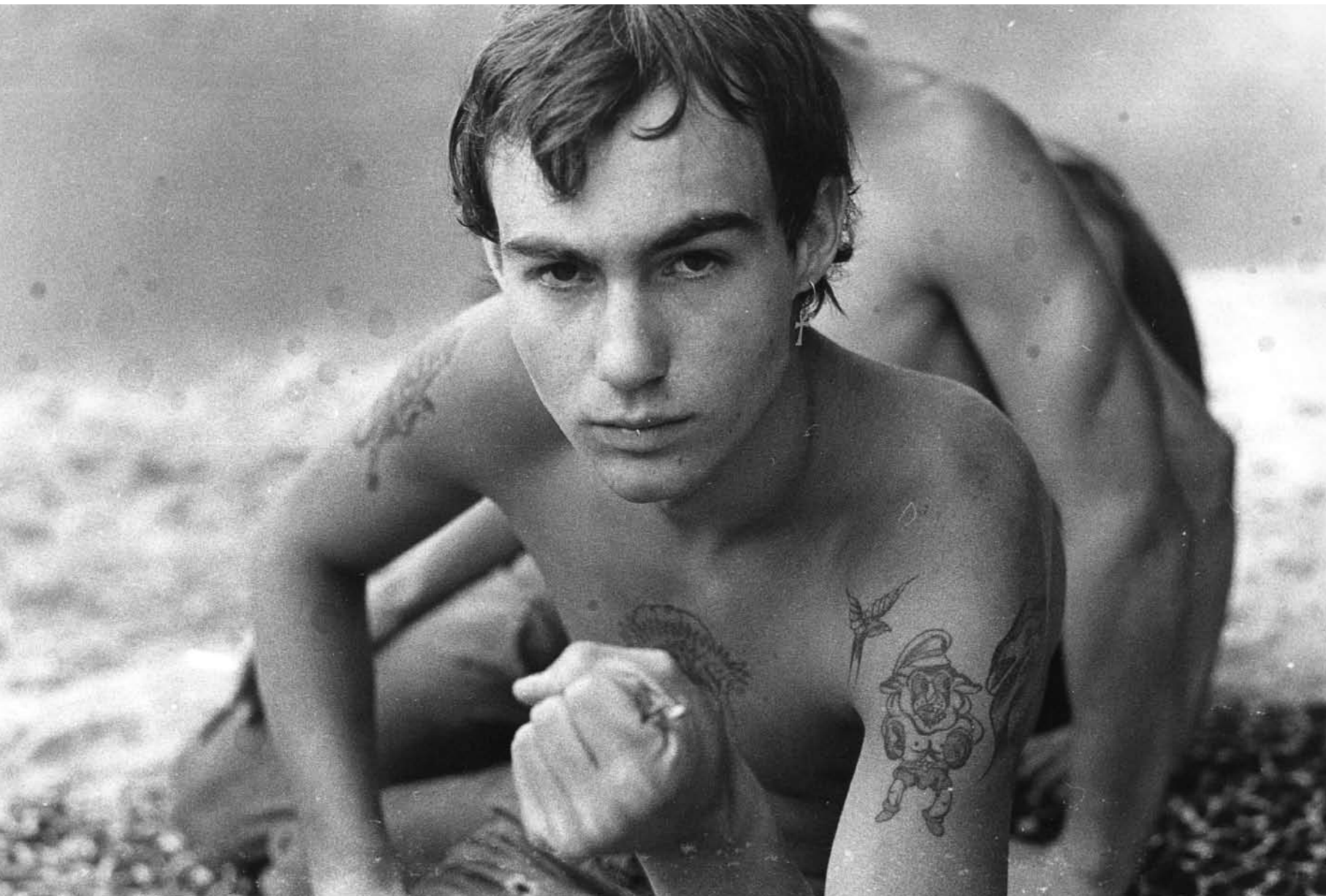
Rape was a significant theme in Carol's work. She also made a short film, *Hanging About*, which examined the impact of rape on a young woman. As I researched *Girl in a Mirror*, I heard a range of stories that Carol had confided to friends about a rape which had occurred in her past: she was raped by a real-estate agent while inspecting a property; she was grabbed and raped in a park at night; she was date-raped by a wealthy man; she was raped by an Aboriginal; and she led many to believe that she had been raped while photographing Mark Lean and his friends.

The variance amongst these stories resonated with some other notable features of the interviews; Carol had a profound and memorable impact upon all those who knew her, and although many of these people felt they knew her intimately and remembered her vividly, the differences in their perceptions of her were surprising, and sometimes completely at odds with one another. This was amplified by a number of instances where Carol had fictionalised important aspects of her life with great dramatic impact on her listeners, some of whom, at the time of interview more than twenty years after her death, remained none the wiser.

By the time I came to interview Mark Lean and his close friend, Jon Bourke, I had become skeptical about the claim that they had raped Carol Jerrems thirty years ago.

Mark and Jon remembered Carol affectionately as a zany, outrageously dressed art teacher at Heidelberg Technical School in 1974. Heidelberg Tech was a tough underprivileged boys' school, and Carol was one of the few women on staff. Her youthful, feminine energy was appreciated as she opened many doors for her students; teaching photography, running morning yoga classes for the entire school, setting up a drama program and using her connections to bring Skyhooks, the hottest Australian band of the 1970s, to perform at the school dance.

Carol Jerrems  
Mark's Game of Rape  
1975



The violent and uniquely stylish sharpie subculture that was erupting in the working class suburbs of Melbourne in this period had taken hold in Heidelberg, and as boys from the Housing Commission area, Mark and Jon became part of the movement. Undeterred by the attitude of her peers who dismissed the sharpies as a dangerous bogan phenomenon, Carol, with her uncanny intuition for a vital subject, became increasingly fascinated with photographing Mark and Jon and their friends. At first she photographed them at school during art classes, but soon began meeting with them outside, driving them around and buying them beer in exchange for photographing and filming them.

On the day that the *Rape Game* photographs were taken, Carol bought the boys a case of beer and they whiled away the next twenty-four hours on the banks of the Yarra.

It had become increasingly obvious that Carol was smitten with Mark, and the boys contrived a game to push them together, the game of drawing straws. Whoever drew the longest straw would go off with Carol. It was a challenge, and she shocked them by agreeing to it. The boys made sure it was Mark Lean who drew that straw.

From the account of Mark Lean and Jon Bourke, and from the writings that I found amongst Carol's personal papers, it seems that the repercussions from this incident were somewhat troubling for all parties. This was a game that had been pushed too far, unsettling the relations of power between student and teacher, younger boy (sixteen) and older woman (twenty-five). But its impact did not destroy the trust or the creative relationship between the photographer and her models. A few months later Carol Jerrems photographed Lean and Bourke with Catriona Brown, to create what was to become the iconic image of Australia in the 1970s: *Vale Street*.

As I worked on *Girl in a Mirror*, I came to understand Carol Jerrems as a character with a remarkable chameleon-like capacity for reinventing herself in relation to others. She had a keen sense of the psychology and social tensions that underpinned her own life and the lives of her subjects, and she played upon them daringly and provocatively, especially when armed with her camera. In the act of photographing, Jerrems challenged herself and her models to extend themselves in a mutual game of improvisation and exploration, facilitated by the presence of her camera. This created an intimate frisson between herself and her subjects which is clearly registered in the most powerful of her portraits, and especially in those from the *Rape Game* series.

One can only hypothesise about why rape was so significant a theme in Carol Jerrems's life and work. My suggestion is that it reflects a vulnerable aspect of the photographer's persona, conflicted by the competing and contradictory demands urged upon women in the name of liberation during the 1970s. On the one hand, women were called to adopt an active unencumbered sexuality as part of the sexual revolution; on the other, they were rallied by feminist challenges to the unreconstructed misogyny that underpinned so much of masculine response to this revolution.

It is a conflict that can be seen here in the photographer's gaze upon the dark allure of Mark Lean's pretty features and ornate tattoos, and her foregrounding of the vaguely obscene threat of the straw in the boy's clenched fist. His straw challenges her camera, his gaze consumed by her lens. Sexual tension electrifies the image. This is a dark game, but it is a game both subject and photographer elected to play, and it's one that Jerrems in the end had the power to name.

Kathy Drayton is a writer, documentary filmmaker and editor, based in Sydney.



**WARD 3E**  
Helen Ennis

“

Don't put that camera down for too long, Keep photographing. Keep developing ...

Carol Jerrems, 14 July 1979<sup>1</sup>

”



Carol Jerrems  
(Self Portrait in Bathroom)

All photographs in this essay were taken by Carol Jerrems in 1979 at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania, and printed by Roger Scott in 2004.

**The photographs taken in the Royal Hobart Hospital by Carol Jerrems are more ours than hers, for we have had the time—and indeed, the inclination—to make something of them. For Jerrems herself, there was no possibility of developing the negatives or making prints; her illness and lack of access to darkroom facilities prevented that. She asked her friend, photographer Roger Scott, to process the negatives for her and many years after her death he made the prints you see here.<sup>2</sup> This explains their “look”: the prints are small, grainy and modest, with none of the quality or resolution of the photographs printed by Jerrems herself.**

While Jerrems apparently intended to exhibit some of the photographs from the hospital series (our title, not hers), once she had recovered, there is no record of which images she was considering.<sup>3</sup> Any selection made from her negatives is therefore a function of curatorship rather than Jerrems’s own authorship. There is also no way of knowing which size the prints might have been or how they might have been presented—singly, in a linear narrative or a grid. Whether they would have been framed, in aluminium, wood, or not at all?

Then there is the fact that we read the hospital series retrospectively, with knowledge Jerrems could never have had herself. She died within a few months of the photographs being taken and death, her death, is written all over them. We also know that this was the last body of work the thirty-year-old photographer created, the tragic conclusion to her truncated and compressed career. This is what gives meaning to the photographs, especially in relation to the growing field of death studies in which art works dealing with dying and death are the subject of analysis.<sup>4</sup>

While we have made something of Jerrems’s last photographs there is still more to be done. Not so much by looking through the photographs into Jerrems’s future and her death, but by looking backwards instead; first to the photographs’ own time, their present tense, and then further back still to the work that preceded them. The purpose in doing so is to contextualise the hospital series within Jerrems’s practice, to enunciate the links to her earlier work and to flag its similarities as much as its differences.

During her hospitalisation for an illness that was yet to be diagnosed Jerrems kept a diary in a school exercise book. On its cover she wrote “The Patient” beside the Subject heading, and the numeral “1” beside the Year. She thought that she might destroy the diary, her “book”—“I will burn this book on completion, probably” (15 September)—but fortunately did not. Jerrems wrote regularly. She described her symptoms (severe and often debilitating), her treatment, her encounters with doctors—some chauvinistic and enraging, others charming and prompting erotic fantasies—and elaborated on her innermost thoughts and feelings. Her dreams, fears, doubts, her uncertainty about whether her illness would be fatal. On 12 June she noted that during her first eleven weeks as an inpatient four people she knew by name had died and doctors had confronted her with the bald fact of her own mortality:

*For a while, the doctors led me to believe that I was next. It’s quite a mouthful to accept, that one may die, but once digested it becomes like everything else, a matter of fact, an other experience, no big deal.*

Elsewhere in the diary she expressed hope that she was recovering, rallied positive thoughts, outlined her ideas for a short film and wrote about her practices of yoga and meditation.<sup>5</sup>

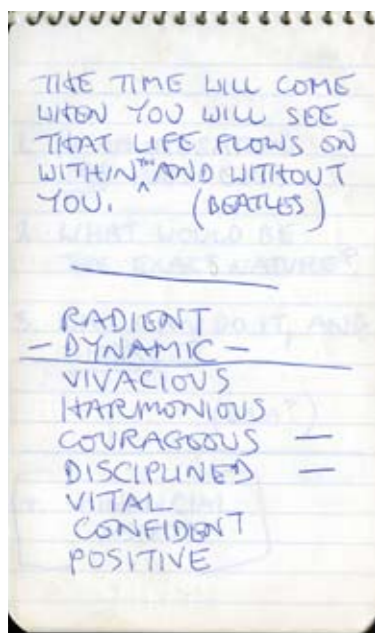
Taking photographs and writing during her three months in hospital were obvious ways of contending with prolonged inactivity and isolation from family and friends who lived in Melbourne and Sydney. But photography meant much more than that to Jerrems—it was work and she dedicated herself to it. In this regard she recognised that she was driven. More recently, the late artist Sue Ford and late poet Dorothy Porter continued to pursue their creative lives until it was no longer physically possible; Porter composed her last poem in hospital a few days before she died. On 2 September 1979 Jerrems wrote: “My work is very important to me. Without it, I can’t really be happy. I’m incomplete”.

How might the hospital photographs be understood in relation to the work that had come before them? As “The Patient”, Jerrems photographed the hospital environment, including her immediate surroundings, and events such as the doctors’ rounds and the arrival of her mother Joy—“my best, and dearest friend” (11 August). She employed three inter-related modes of practice, documentary photography, portraiture and self-portraiture, the latter being the most performative.

Jerrems’s return to documentary after her superb directorial work of 1975–76 can be attributed in part to her circumstances. She was constrained to work with what was around her. What is clear from the resultant images is that she is the outsider, the use of third person in the diary’s title is replicated in her photography. This is strikingly obvious in the photograph taken looking through the window into the office where staff members have gathered for a briefing, the glass forming an invisible barrier between them and her. Another image showing a young nurse drawing curtains around the bed in a flurry of action reinforces the sense of separation. Jerrems and the nurse are about to be lost to each other’s view with Jerrems left on her own once again. Separation is there too in the photograph of her mother; through the camera eye Jerrems watches Joy come towards her, as if in a scene from a film.

She felt her aloneness keenly but considered it an intrinsic part of being an artist: “the price of being an artist is loneliness, but if the art is worthwhile, the bargain is fair” (14 July). And, on 2 September 1979, she summed up her situation in the following way: “I am completely alone, with no father, no friend, no teacher, no guru. There is only me, my energy, and my work”. As time passed, her spirituality, “which soothes the ache of loneliness” (16 September), grew in importance.

Jerrems used the camera as a shield (in contrast to the Susan Sontag concept of it as a weapon). It gave her a means of preventing, delaying or controlling contact with other people. She recognised that she hid behind it, which she attributed to her shyness and her discomfort being with others. “Being a photographer is not easy. One needs to question why one is doing what one is doing ... I am a voyeur because I am shy” (3 September).



Left:  
Notebook belonging to Carol Jerrems,  
1979

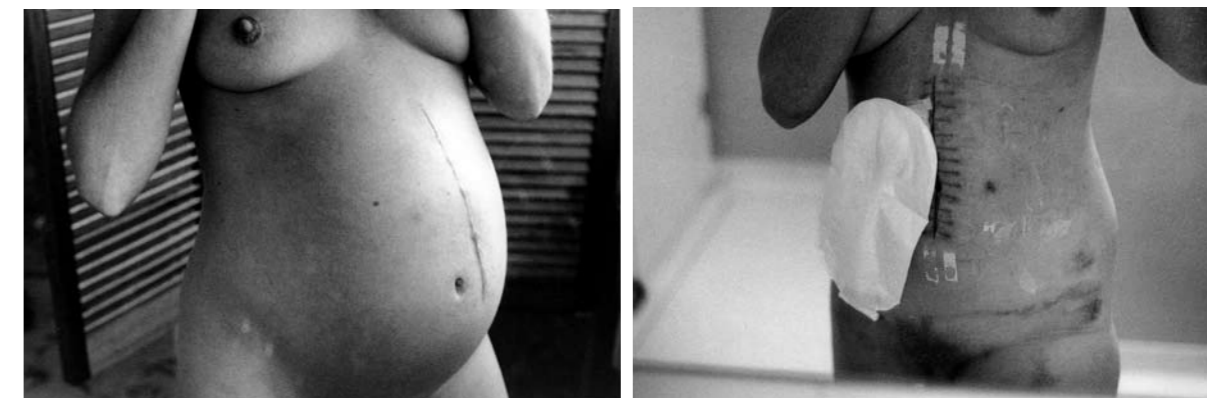
Opposite:  
Carol Jerrems  
(Self Portrait)  
(Self Portrait After Surgery)

In the hospital series documentary photography also has a literal and at times forensic function, enabling Jerrems to document and attempt to understand what was happening to her. Nowhere is this more evident than in her eviscerating self-portraits taken after major surgery. She presents herself clothed, then with her shirt unbuttoned and undies on, and lastly completely naked (in two separate sessions, very soon after the operation and later when her wounds had begun to heal).

Jerrems had taken self-portraits in mirrors before, notably with Ambrose Campbell in 1973 and with Esben Storm in *Mirror with a Memory*. However, these earlier works can be read as stories about her relationships with lovers, both of whom were included within the frame. In addition, they speak of the erotic, sexual dimension of a counter culture lifestyle. Jerrems resolved the early self-portraits as exhibition prints whereas the hospital self-portraits were presumably made for her eyes only. In contrast to the late self-portraiture of English photographer Jo Spence and German artist Hannah Wilke, public exposure was not necessarily intended. Jerrems's images are in a raw, unmediated state.

This helps explain why the self-portraits are so hard to bear. Not simply because we are null—irrelevant as viewers—but because we are faced with what Jerrems saw. There she is, having secured the relatively private space of a nondescript hospital bathroom (she was in a shared ward), photographing herself in the mirror. Her face is emotionless and her gaze is unflinching; her body is revealed as being awfully damaged by surgery and illness. The compression of space, in the bathroom and in the image, contributes to the claustrophobic effect. Why would she want to photograph herself in this condition, how could she bear to see herself like this? No allegory, no metaphor, just what appears to be an excess of information.

In their hard-hitting realism the self-portraits can be seen as a continuation of Jerrems's radicalism. They are deliberately self-assertive acts, examples of a patient's "bad", even perverse behaviour. In her diary she wrote about her anger at being belittled as a patient, about not being listened to by some of the doctors involved in her treatment, and her determination to counter their chauvinism. After a "hateful" encounter with two doctors she declared on 20 July:



***This means war! I'm sick of being pushed around by men.  
A doctor is a person in a position of power. Patients liberation!  
I'm not going to take it anymore. I'm going to fight.***

The mirror self-portraits are also complex in their multi-layering of reflection and representation. This arises from the interplay between the subject, mirror, camera lens, negative and print. Where does Jerrems "herself" exist in the doubling and splitting that occurs—between Jerrems the photographer and "The Patient", between herself and her body, between herself and her reflected and photographed image?

The hospital series is an extremely brave, unforgettable group of images which Jerrems tragically did not live to realise in final form. While there are links with Jerrems's previous practice the photographs differ in one fundamental respect. We may claim them as our own—because Jerrems could not—but they extend no invitation to the viewer. There is no place for us.

Helen Ennis is an independent photography curator and writer  
and is Associate Professor, Art Theory, at the ANU School of Art, Canberra.

#### Notes

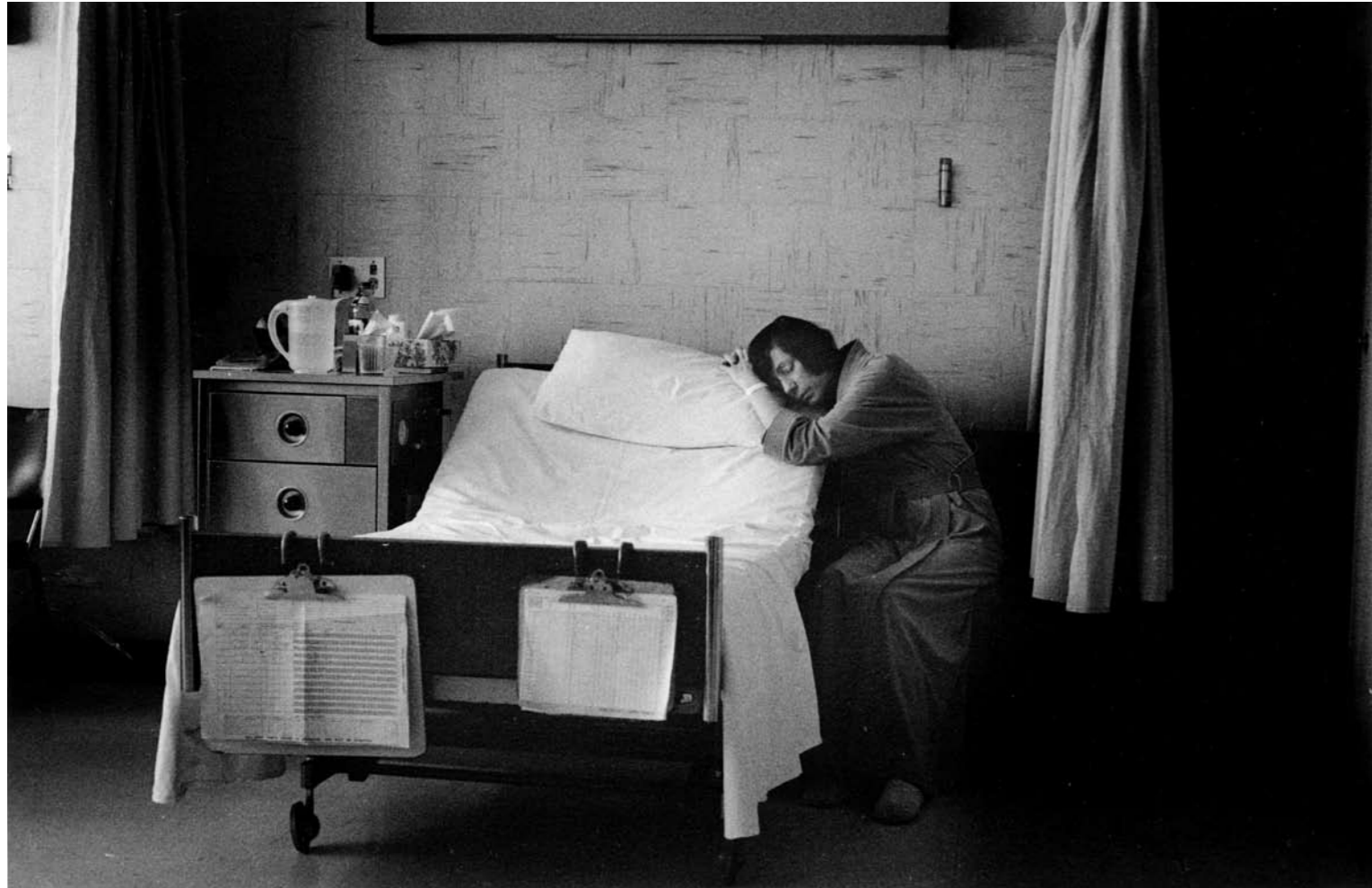
<sup>1</sup> All quotes by Carol Jerrems are from her diary entitled "The Patient", 1979, private collection, and are referenced by the date of entry. I would like to thank Ken Jerrems and the late Lance Jerrems for providing access to Jerrems's work, and also Kathy Drayton and Natalie King for generously sharing their research with me.

<sup>2</sup> This was at the request of Kathy Drayton as part of her research for her film *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*. A selection from the same group of prints was subsequently included in the exhibition "Reveries: Photography and Mortality", curated by Helen Ennis for the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, 2007. The hospital photographs were first shown publicly in a documentary segment on Jerrems for ABC television.

<sup>3</sup> She may have intended to take portraits, as noted on 14 July 1979: "Portraits. Start with those doctors, and then other people, as you meet them", pp. 24–25.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Chris Townsend, *Art and Death*, IB Tauris, London, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> In her diary Jerrems explained that her second spiritual name was Savitā, which meant "to become more positive".



From left:  
(Patient, Royal Hobart Hospital)

(Medical Staff Briefing)





From left:  
(Nurse and Curtains)  
(Joy Jerrems)





From left:  
(Self Portrait)  
(Empty Corridor)



(Moon through window)



# PAUL COX REMEMBERS CAROL JERREMS

**Natalie King** How did you first come to know Carol Jerrems?

**Paul Cox** I was asked to teach in the photography department at Prahran College by Lenton Parr who was instrumental in making Prahran the Australian Bauhaus. Well nobody called it that at the time but it turned out to be a fairly important change in art education in Australia. He asked a lot of creative people who had never done any teaching or were certainly not qualified in a formal sense to come and teach and I was one of them.

Carol came in with a lot of funny hair everywhere. She was very quiet and quite shy. When we had simple assignments that were sort of cooked up, like simply photographing a tree, or making images based on the alphabet, she would always come up with fairly brilliant reactions. She was a very good student who was also totally unorthodox and original. I was making little films on the side and, like a lot of students, she always wanted to be part of them. I made an exception for Carol because I knew she had a lot of talent and I also liked her company. She was quite bizarre.

**NK** In what way?

**PC** She was an original. I had this standard joke for instance. If somebody didn't know a composer or the name of a particular photographer or whatever, I used to make a little joke. The name must be Ron Barassi, the footballer. It was nonsense but we thought it was quite funny at the time. Then, when she had an exhibition and she said, "Well who shall I ask?" I said, "Ask Ron Barassi", as a joke again. So she phoned him and Ron came to her opening. Carol had a sense of the absurd. She was quite a free spirit and she became more outspoken and more direct as time went on.

**NK** What was on the syllabus during these years?

**PC** We just made it up as it came along. There were no rules or regulations at all. For instance, I would teach music at the same time as photography because I've always thought that music was important. I thought, if people wanted to be artists they had to know about music. Very few had ever been introduced to classical music. So I used to have classes once a week in which I put on music and we'd discuss it. If there were people who were protesting I would lock the doors so they couldn't get out. It was organised chaos.

**NK** You once wrote of your first encounter with Carol when she approached you and said "I'll show you mine if you show me yours".

**PC** It would be something like that. She was very provocative.



Clockwise from top:  
 Carol Jerrems  
 Paul Cox  
 1972  
 "Paul Cox, Film Maker Season" poster,  
 1972  
 Carol Jerrems  
 (Self Portrait with Paul Cox)  
 1972



**NK** *The Alphabet Folio* from 1968 was part of her student work. Do you recall this series of hers and your impression of it?

**PC** Carol had a unique eye for details. Only people who can actually see properly—that use their eyes—can respond to an assignment like that. Hers was definitely the best, in the way that it was presented too, like a little book.

**NK** Were you all working from a darkroom at Prahran?

**PC** There were a few darkrooms there. We thought of photography as a fine art and felt there were very few people who had a proper, solid photographic background here in Australia, because everything was done rather commercially. We went right back to the basics where people had to learn how to retouch and so on. I thought that was very good schooling. You must have control over the medium. Carol became a good craftswoman, but now, with the digital revolution it's not necessary anymore and all that craft has gone.

**NK** What about her emotional disposition? A lot has been said about her fragility and depression. Were you aware of this or is this a myth?

**PC** Well there's always a little exaggeration. Carol just needed a good kick in the arse. Of course, anybody who is dedicated and sensitive suffers more from depression than the average. She also knew great joys and could be very funny.

**NK** Tell me about her role in your early films *Skin Deep* (1978) and *The Journey* (1972). How did you cast her and see her role?

**PC** Oh we didn't work on that sort of level of casting. The film was an organic situation. It sort of made itself and we just went along. So, in a way, we served the film.

**NK** In the films, Carol seems to take on quite different characters. In *The Journey* she's jovial and animated and yet in *Skin Deep* she's intense and ponderous and has a very direct gaze. Were you trying to draw out different kinds of emotional states in her?

**PC** I had no idea what I was doing. I had no understanding or respect for the characters and I was not interested. It was only much later that I realised that the actors are the ones that give the film value and direction but I didn't realise this at that point. It was all experimentation but Carol loved doing it. We had lots of fun. They were good times.

**NK** I've been looking closely at Carol's publication, *A Book About Australian Women*. There is an almost cinematic flow in the way they have been compiled.

**PC** The book seemed to be more a recording of events than a reflection on individuals. Except for some images like where the woman in the picture looks very self-conscious, or you have an idea that the portrait speaks. The photographs speak about the times they were taken in, rather than the individual.

**NK** Do you see them as documentary in style?

**PC** Yes. I think Carol and I had some discussions about documentary styles. I remember at some point that she was playing a dangerous game with her teaching.

**NK** When she was at Heidelberg Tech teaching the sharpies?

**PC** She was right on the edge. It turned out to be alright in the end but she did come to see me once after they had threatened her and she was scared, but she had also provoked it herself. She felt that she should do the Diane Arbus business totally.

**NK** You mean get close to her subjects?

**PC** Experience what you photograph. You can't just be an outsider. You have to be an insider. That's something to do with it.

**NK** Was Arbus an influence at the time?

**PC** I would say so, yes, I mean, Carol was interested in that era.

**NK** Did she mention other photographers or a key exhibition she might have seen?

**PC** No, she wasn't that sort of artist you know. The inspiration came more from writing or other things. In that respect she was more than a photographer. In a way, photography can be very limited because the medium itself is still.

**NK** Were you involved in Carol's film making, for example with *Hanging About* (1978)?

**PC** I helped her with editing. I remember that she never listened so then I told her to do it herself. I gave her the use of my equipment though. I think if she'd continued in film, well I don't know where that would have led to because she was often seduced by a single image and then it stopped there.

**NK** Do you recall any of Carol's exhibitions at Brummels Gallery, for instance the two-person exhibition "Erotica" with Henry Talbot?

**PC** Henry Talbot was a very sophisticated photographer who, many years before, had started his commercial studio Talbot Newton in the city.<sup>1</sup> But he also wanted to come down to our level and find a bit of reality with people like us. Carol liked the idea of being a part of this. Rennie Ellis ran the show at Brummels Gallery of Photography in Toorak Road, South Yarra, which opened in 1972 and I had my own little photographic gallery nearby in Punt Road.

**NK** Was Carol involved in your gallery, the Photographers' Gallery?

**PC** We had a solo exhibition of hers, that's when Ron Barassi came, and she was in combined shows too.

**NK** I'm wondering who took this photograph of you and Carol together, from 1972?

**PC** Maybe we took it ourselves. I don't know, but I think it was done on a self-timer.

**NK** It has a lot of tenderness, the shaft of light and the way your faces are joined.

**PC** It's quite interesting. You see I came here loaded with European sensibilities and Carol slotted into that very well. It was almost bizarre. I didn't see her as a woman from the suburbs of Melbourne. That didn't seem to make much sense. Carol would have thrived in the 1920s in Europe or Berlin.

Paul Cox is a filmmaker living in Melbourne.

-----  
Interview by Natalie King, 24 April 2009  
-----

<sup>1</sup> Henry Talbot opened a studio with fellow photographer Helmut Newton (formerly known as Helmut Neustädter), also a German-born Jewish refugee, in Flinders Lane, Melbourne in 1946. Both became well known for their pioneering nude and fashion photographs, Newton leaving Australia in 1957 to pursue an international career.



Carol Jerrems  
Roger in a Sydney Café  
1976

## REFLECTIONS ON CAROL JERREMS

Roger Scott

I met Carol around 1974 at the Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney. I had one of the first exhibitions there and she came up from Melbourne because her boyfriend at the time, Esben Storm, had moved to Sydney and he was making a film called *In Search of Anna* (1977). She was very outgoing and to the point. Carol was definitely a feminist. We were close friends. I often thought maybe she just liked my company because I was a bit different to the other people, not quite as intense. I used to pick her up and take her to some of the beaches over on the north side in the summertime. In 1976, I went to Europe with an Australia Council grant. Carol got a travelling grant at the same time but she never used hers as she was busy making a film.

She always used a Pentax Spotmatic with a 50mm lens. She liked Diane Arbus's photographs, especially the way that Arbus found all of these different kinds of people and photographed them. When we were together we hardly ever talked about photography but she was very serious about her work. When she was living in Sydney, we would meet at least once or twice a week and go to the movies, a restaurant or a café. She had her own darkroom when she was in Melbourne and when she came to Sydney; she used my darkroom to do some prints such as her famous ones like *Vale Street* (1975).

I was in the darkroom with her for *Vale Street* (1975) because my enlarger was completely different to what she had ever used. It was a Durst enlarger that handled film formats from 35mm up to 7 x 5 inches. She didn't like messing around with the photographs at all, apart from just doing the normal dodging and shading, burning in areas. Basically her prints were straight. She always liked printing on Agfa warm tone, matt paper or semi-matt paper. She didn't like her prints to have too much contrast. I remember she used to keep darkroom notes and write on the back of some of the prints exposure times, the kind of developer that she was using and the kind of paper.

Carol wanted things to look as honest as when she actually took them. When we were making photographs back in the 1970s, photography had no status. We just did it because we liked taking photographs and we wanted to record the times.

To my recollection, Carol never printed her photographs all that large. I think her largest was on 16 x 20 inch paper and she would have done an image area of 16 x 14 inches, something like that. Photographic paper is still quite expensive and when Carol was printing she was teaching part-time at Hornsby Tech with my old photographic teacher George Young from the School of Graphic Arts, where I went in late 1969 and 1970. He got her a job up at Hornsby around 1977. Then she got a job teaching in Hobart.

When she was ill, Carol sent her negatives up to Sydney for me to process because she was photographing people and herself in the hospital. She trusted me so I made the contacts and sent them back to her. I also processed the stills from *In Search of Anna*. I had them all here and when she died her mother came and picked them up.

Once we went to Manly for a Skyhooks concert and we went for a swim. She raced off and went backstage with them. I didn't. She was spontaneous. We never actually went out taking photographs together because I didn't like going to those sorts of dives that she liked.

The portrait of me, *Roger in a Sydney Café* (1976), was taken in a café in George Street. We had just been to see a movie. We were having a coffee before I took her home. She pulled out her camera and was making jokes and she took my photo. She liked confronting people with her camera and also without it. We stayed in contact and she returned to Sydney in 1979 as she was on an Australia Council assessment panel for photography. Carol was staying at Noah's Northside Gardens Hotel in North Sydney. My wife, Christine, and I went down to see her and go out to dinner. Then, she showed us her stomach and said "Oh look at me, I'm pregnant". But she wasn't. That was the first time I knew that she had a tumour and the last time I saw her.

22 October 2009, from a conversation with Natalie King

Roger Scott is a documentary photographer.

# CAROL JERREMS CHRONOLOGY

Compiled by Natalie King



a.

**1949**

On 14 March Carol Joyce Jerrems is born, the third child of Victorian-born parents Eric Alfred Jerrems (1917–1970), an accountant for Edward Trenchard and Co., Stock and Station Agents in Collins Street, Melbourne and his wife, Joyce Mary (née Jacobs), known as Joy (1922–1993). Her older brothers are Ken (1944–) and Lance (1946–2007).

Joy worked as a seamstress from home, before opening the shop Joy's of Ivanhoe in Ivanhoe Parade. She also became a hobby painter and watercolourist.

Jerrems lives at the family home, 13 Athelstane Grove, Ivanhoe.

**1955–60**

Attends Ivanhoe Primary School, Melbourne.

**1960**

Jerrems is given “a grey-white, thirteen year old, thirteen hands pony mare”<sup>1</sup> and attends riding school in Banyule on Sundays. Eric Jerrems builds a stable in their suburban backyard.

**1961–66**

Attends Heidelberg High School, Melbourne.

**1967**

Full-time photography course established at Prahran Technical School.

Jerrems begins a three-year Diploma of Art & Design (Honours) at Prahran Technical School, majoring in Photography (Honours), with a minor in Cinematography. Other students include Ross Hannaford, Robert Ashton, Ian Macrae and Linda Jackson.

Eric Jerrems builds his daughter a darkroom at their home in Ivanhoe.

**1968**

The 1968 Prahran Technical School handbook announces new Art and Design building to house workshops, drafting rooms and film laboratories. Courses include printing, fashion design, graphics, film and television. In the late 1960s, Prahran Technical School became Melbourne's most innovative art school and embraced the latest technological media. It was “charged with the breathlessness of 1960s and 1970s youth culture (and its optimism)”.<sup>2</sup>

Jerrems awarded Walter Lindrum Scholarship.

Appears in *Skin Deep*, a mood piece involving two lesbian lovers and a disturbed young man contemplating suicide, directed by her teacher at Prahran Technical School, Paul Cox.

The inaugural photography exhibition is held at the National Gallery of Victoria: The Photographer's Eye, a landmark touring exhibition organised by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, comprising 150 photographs with an accompanying book by MoMA's director of photography, John Szarkowski.

**1969**

Completes *Alphabet Folio* as a Prahran Technical School assignment, a work acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria in 1971.

**1970**

As part of a Prahran Technical School assignment, produces a bound photographic essay on *Hair: The American Tribal-Love Rock Musical*, performed at the Metro Theatre at Sydney's Kings Cross, featuring Reg Livermore, John Waters and Jim Fields.

Wins the Institute of Australian Photographers Award.

Germaine Greer publishes *The Female Eunuch*.

Eric Jerrems dies.

**1971**

Awarded Equal First Prize, Kodak Students Photographic Competition.

Jerrems graduates from Prahran Technical School and completes a Diploma of Education, at the State College of Victoria, Hawthorn, Melbourne.

Moves into 11 Mozart Street, St Kilda, with Ian Macrae and Robert Ashton. Jerrems has a piano in her bedroom and sets up a darkroom.

Ian Macrae directs *Fly Wrinklys Fly* for Channel 9 under Clyde Packer featuring Carol Jerrems and a soundtrack by Deep Purple, *Hard Lovin' Man*. This experimental film was shot at Macrae's home at Mozart Street at two frames per second—he slowed down the film to get a stepping, blurred action: “Ian will probably tell you about the collapse of “Fly Wrinklies Fly” the film he made of me that was in the first show, which was on T.V. the day that Lance & Tamara got married in my mother's backyard, was a knock-out. It was three minutes long and really clever ... zappy silhouettes, I could not describe it”.<sup>3</sup> Macrae also filmed Jerrems for a Qantas advertisement.



b.



c.



d.

The Department of Photography at the National Gallery of Victoria acquires works by many Australian photographers, including Paul Cox, Geoffrey Smith, Max Dupain, John Cato and Carol Jerrems.<sup>4</sup>

Andy Warhol releases his film *Women in Revolt*, about transgendered superstars who form a women's liberation group; Jerrems keeps reviews of the film in her files.

**1972**

The newly elected Whitlam government reconstitutes the Australia Council for the Arts to comprise seven boards across different art forms with a significant financial allocation.

Kath Walker publishes *Stradbroke Dreamtime*, a collection of illustrated poems; Jerrems later photographs Walker for *A Book About Australian Women*.

Appointment of full-time curator Jennie Boddington to the department of photography at the National Gallery of Victoria, the first photographic curatorial department in Australia.

Jerrems appears in Paul Cox's film *The Journey* a bleak film about a middle-aged, sensitive man taunted by sexual dreams and visions. In it she sits in a train holding hands with a woman with her dog, Free, nearby.

Ellis establishes Brummels Gallery of Photography as a not-for-profit enterprise above a coffee lounge at 95 Toorak Road, South Yarra, in Melbourne, with assistant director Robert Ashton. Ellis selects Jerrems for their inaugural exhibition *Two Views of Erotica: Henry Talbot/Carol Jerrems*, from 14 December 1972 to 21 January 1973.

Beatrice Faust reviews the exhibition in *Nation Review*. “There is no reason why photographs cannot be sold like prints, in numbered editions, and the trend to do this is worldwide. New York's Museum of Modern Art has had a section for photographic art for years, and a couple of these have found their way to Melbourne's National Gallery, which is the only one in Australia to have a department of photography ... The Jerrems pictures are all intensely personal, and they have a youthful evocative quality”.<sup>5</sup>

**1973**

Jerrems teaches art to secondary school students at Heidelberg Technical School, which is attended by Aboriginal and disadvantaged children, many of whom lived in nearby housing commission flats in the former Olympic Village.

Australian Centre for Photography (ACP) is established in Sydney, with support from the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council providing a permanent, public gallery for the continuous exhibition of photographs. Graham Howe is the inaugural director, with an executive committee comprising David Moore, Wesley Stacey, Laurence Le Guay, Peter Keys, Daniel Thomas and Craig McGregor.

Jerrems's photographic series *Redfern Life and Family Life* are included in the Ilford Photographic Competition.

Holds joint exhibition with Lorraine Jenyns (ceramic sculpture) at Chapman Powell Street Gallery, Melbourne.

Participates in the exhibition *Womanvision*, at Sydney Filmmaker's Co-op.

Jerrems's photographs appear on the front and back covers of the *Mighty Kong* LP, by her friends Ross Wilson and Ross Hannaford.

Three series by Jerrems, *Hanging About, with Pearl, Hanna and Michael's Swim*, appear in the summer issue of the quarterly magazine *Circus*, edited by Alfred Milgrom at the University of Melbourne.

Produces publicity and production stills for Nindethana Theatre Group.

**1974**

Jerrems completes production stills for Ian Macrae's film *Bloodlust*.

Greg Macainsh from Skyhooks makes a film about Melbourne sharpies at a Lobby Loyde and Billy Thorpe concert at the Melbourne Showgrounds; Jerrems is given access to this footage for her unfinished film on skinheads, *School's Out* (1975).

Jerrems exhibits *Alphabet Folio* at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, November.

Lives with Mirta Mizza at 71 Harp Road, Kew. Mizza remembers Jerrems preparing *A Book About Australian Women*: “[she] labours in a large bedroom—like a ballroom—assembling images for her book”.

Henri Cartier-Bresson exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria; Jerrems photographs Jennie Boddington and Melanie le Guay for her book at this exhibition.

John Szarkowski tours Australia.

ACP publishes two books: *New Photography Australia: A Selected Survey* and *Aspects of Australian Photography*, edited by Graham Howe. Jerrems is included in the former, which describes her as “interested in art and yoga and ... presently photographing the Australian aborigine”. For Howe, Jerrems and her peers heralded “a sensibility for ambiguity and new subject matter. These photographs are personal self-motivated statements coming from the photographer's vision, feeling and experience of things and also from the cumulative tradition of the medium over the past century and a third”.<sup>6</sup> The ACP is officially opened by Margaret Whitlam, wife of Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, at 76a Paddington Street, Paddington, Sydney.



e.



f.

Jerrems continues teaching at Heidelberg Technical School where she meets and befriends a group of sharpies, especially Mark Lean and Jon Bourke, as well as student Ron Johnson. She photographs the sharpies in Banyule Reserve on the banks of the Yarra River.

Teaches Hatha yoga at Preston Institute, where she is a guest lecturer in photography; begins to study the martial art of Kung Fu.

*A Book About Australian Women*, published by Outback Press, is launched at the Arts Council Gallery in Sydney by Elizabeth Reid, the first Women's Advisor to the Federal Government.

Exhibits thirty-two images from *A Book About Australian Women* at Brummels Gallery of Photography in December, alongside Robert Ashton's images from *Into the Hollow Mountains*.

Jerrems's series *Trentham Blues* appears in the summer issue of *Circus* magazine, University of Melbourne, edited by Mark Gillespie and Alfred Milgrom.

#### 1975

International Women's Year (IWY).

Jerrems lives at 102 Brunswick Street, Brunswick.

Ingeborg Tyssen and John Williams, in association with Rod McNicol and Paul Cox, establish The Photographers' Gallery and Workshop at 344 Punt Road, South Yarra, Melbourne. A photograph by Jerrems appears on back cover of Anne Summers book *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Penguin Books.

Exhibits two photographs—*Jane Oehr, Film-makers Co-op, Sydney* (1973) and *Margaret Tucker, with Rosslyn Johnson, Aboriginal House, Melbourne* (1973)—in "Woman", an exhibition and publication by the Young Women's Christian Association of Australia for IWY. Images were selected and edited by Jennie Boddington, who observed "a remarkable maturing of style and approach brought about by the awakening interest in serious photography in this country". Jerrems adopts Boddington's mantle of "a wide, and also intimate, view of human beings, of life, without bias towards factional interests".<sup>7</sup>

Jerrems teaches photography, filmmaking and yoga at Coburg Technical School, Melbourne.

Awarded overseas Travel Grant, by the Visual Arts Board, Australia Council. Though Jerrems application stated: "I have reached a stage in my development where I have to travel. I wish to meet other photographers, in London and New York, visit galleries and show my work", she was unable to use the grant because there was an insufficient living allowance.

Receives Experimental Film Grant, from the Creative Development Branch, Australia Film Commission for her film *Hanging About*. "This film is based on a true story and is serious in that it is saying that a woman is exposed to rape and abuse from men at any time, because of her physical weakness and the male chauvinistic structure of this society, and such an experience can cause great psychological harm, but the treatment is light-hearted and comical, with exaggerated facial expressions and movements, tending towards melodrama".

*Skyhooks: Million Dollar Riff* by Jenny Brown published by Dingo Books; Jerrems provides most of the accompanying photographs.

Exhibits 44 photographs including *Vale Street* (priced at \$45) in the exhibition *Heroes and Anti-Heroes*, with Rennie Ellis, at the Photographers Gallery, Melbourne, from December to January. Jerrems invites football coach Ron Barassi to the opening: "When a football hero can understand the meaning of art, and realise that the tool of expression can just as validly be a camera as it could be a paintbrush or chisel and that the painting/sculpture/poem or whatever is simply an expression of the artist's spirit, a piece of communication from the heart, to be shared, coming from a painful sensitivity to life's experiences which cannot be held inside, then that's really something".<sup>8</sup>

Starts working on *School's Out*, a 16mm black-and-white film (unfinished) featuring 15-year-old skinheads: "The particular 'skin-head' cult in Melbourne is unique to Australia; this film portrays the life-style, values and attitudes of seven adolescents who are part of it. The main actor I know well, having taught him drawing and photography last year at Heidelberg Technical School".<sup>9</sup>

#### 1976

Jerrems moves to Sydney to live with her boyfriend Esben Storm at 19 Second Avenue, Willoughby, Sydney, in a shared household with Kate Grenville and Michael Edols.

Solo exhibition at ACP, Sydney, in February. Melanie le Guay exhibits concurrently.

Conducts photography workshop at ACP.

Philip Morris Arts Grant starts assembling a collection of Australian photography for the Australian National Gallery, Canberra.

Jerrems's photograph appears on the front cover of *Refractory Girl*, Everywoman Press.

#### 1976-8



g.



h.



i.



j.

## She'll crusade with a camera

**C**AROL Jerrems, of East Kew, is a busy, 25 year-old ultra-modern Ms.

She teaches general art, photography, and "sort of teaches film making," at Heidelberg Technical School.

During lunch breaks she leads a class of teachers and a few students in Yoga classes.

"On Tuesday nights Carol studies the martial art of Kung Fu.

In her spare time she is busy checking final proofs of a book by Virginia Fraser that Carol has illustrated with photo-prints. It is "A Book About Women in Australia," to be published by Outback Press next month.

Although some of her subjects are pro-Womans Lib, and despite her activities, Carol is uncertain of her attitude to the movement. "I used to say I was for it, but now . . . I don't know," she said.

She is more interested in using her camera skills, which have won her inclusion in many exhibitions and a place in the National Gallery, for what she calls "photo-realism".

"The world is in a mess," Carol explained. "You either drop out or help to change it."

"I want to focus on the under-dogs, the under privileged of Australian society and all the things that people don't want to talk about or know about."

She does this by concentrating on faces. "A face tells the story of what a person is thinking. The eyes reveal the suffering," she said.

Carol has refused to follow the current trend of nude photography. "I leave that to the men. They are more interested in nudes than women are," she explained.

She admits she would pose in the nude for a male photographer . . . providing he is a friend.

Carol, who says that teaching is her means of earning a living because few people can exist on the money to be earned as an artist, is planning her next project. She intends to devote a book of photographs to aborigines.

So far as she is concerned they are the biggest under-dogs and the most under-privileged people in Australia.

Beyond this Carol will crusade for wider recognition of photography as an art, taking its place alongside paintings and sculptures.

"When this happens people will buy photographs to hang in their homes," Carol said.

And when this happens she will, no doubt, find yet another cause for which to fight — using her camera as a weapon.



CAROL JERREMS . . . "The world is in a mess"

WORDS: Geoffrey Radcliffe

PHOTOS: Carol Jerrems



Female impersonator, Sydney, 1974



Bobbi Sykes, Sydney, 1974



Kathi Walker, Stradbroke Island, 1974



Syvanna Doolan, Sydney, 1974

Teaches photography, Hornsby and Meadowbank Technical Colleges, Sydney.

1977

Phillip Adams opens Sarah Moon exhibition at Brummels Gallery of Photography and announces the renaming of the gallery to the Pentax Brummels Photography Gallery, Melbourne.

Joyce Evans establishes the Church Street Photographic Centre in Richmond, Melbourne.

Jerrems is selected by Macquarie University to produce a folio of six black-and-white photographs of campus life: "They were to have the highest creative and technical quality, and were to express a part of the spirit of the University".<sup>10</sup>

Jerrems provides a detail of *Vale Street* for the cover of Craig McGregor's novel *The See-through Revolver*, published by University of Queensland Press.

Participates in a group exhibition at Hogarth Gallery, Sydney.

American photographer Diane Arbus exhibits at the Australian Centre for Photography in Paddington, Sydney, from 28 September to 29 October.

Paul Cox and Athol Shmith exhibit at the Australian Centre for Photography in Paddington, Sydney from 2 November to 12 December. The first issue of *Light Vision*, an Australian international photography magazine, is launched with articles by Ralph Gibson, Rennie Ellis, Athol Shmith and Philip Quirk. Editor and publisher Jean-Marc Le Pechoux wrote: "Austral Spring 1977, downunder in Australia. A large international corporation has recently compiled a collection of works by Australian photographers. In Melbourne alone during the last few months the public could have seen the works of J. M. Cameron, E. J. Belloca, Jan Saudek, Lee Freidlander, Ralph Gibson or John Cato. National Galleries are collecting photographs. Colleges, public and private art schools and workshops provide varied avenues for the study of photography and many bookshops are importing and retailing fine books on the medium. A national conference on photography will be held in Sydney this month and finally, in Melbourne, the first dealer gallery of international standing to open doors in this country was inaugurated last month".<sup>11</sup>

Jerrems's photographs appear in Esben Storm's feature film *In Search of Anna*, a road-movie and love story starring Richard Moir, Judy Morris, and Gary Waddell, shot over seven weeks on the road from Melbourne to Surfers Paradise.

Conducts photography workshops on Thursday nights for eleven weeks at the ACP, Sydney; gives her students an assignment to "photograph 'letters' of the alphabet, as shapes found in natural and man-made forms (without cheating), using depth of field to advantage", referencing the *Alphabet Folio* she had made under the tutelage of Paul Cox. American photographer Ralph Gibson visits Australia; Jerrems photographs Gibson with John Williams and Bill Heimerman.

1978

Lives in Sydney at 42 Ormond Street, Paddington, Sydney, with Esben Storm, Sally Campbell and Brian Bangsrove; Wendy Saddington lives across the road. Teaches photography at Hornsby and Meadowbank Technical Colleges, Sydney, and yoga in Newtown.

Visits and photographs Mangrove Mountain when her yoga studies took her to the Satyananda Ashram in New South Wales.

Two images—*Caroline and Esben and Dusan, Cronulla*—appear in the publication *Australian Photography—A Contemporary View*, edited by Laurence Le Guay, Globe Publishing.

Jerrems exhibits with Christine Godden, Christine Cornish and Jenny Aitken in "Four Australian Women" at The Photographers Gallery, South Yarra, Melbourne, from 18 May to 11 June. Beatrice Faust reviews the exhibition: "We are brought face to face with the walking wounded of our society—all young in years but old in suffering".<sup>12</sup>

Photographs commissioned by Macquarie University are exhibited at the University photographs of friends and strangers".

Holds solo exhibition at the ACP, Sydney, from 1 November to 2 December. Her accompanying artist statement explains: "Photography is an art form, but most Australians still cannot realize this. Change is a slow process. I started photographing people in 1968, and have much to learn. The more one knows the more there is to know ..." A Harry Callahan retrospective is held concurrently; Jerrems exhibits twenty-five photographs including *Lynn and the Buick* (1976) and *Sharpies, Melbourne* (1976) "arranged in sequential order", price \$75 framed.

Completes film *Hanging About*.

Teacher Jacque Braun interviews Carol Jerrems, as a teaching resource for her art students, filmed by Ian Macrae.

1979

Awarded Yoga Certificate for studies in Anatomy & Physiology, Psychology, Teaching Method and Introductory Sanskrit.

Teaches photography at the School of Art, Tasmanian College of Advanced Education, Hobart.

Admitted on 12 June to Ward E, Medical Unit A, Royal Hobart Hospital with an undiagnosed illness, later confirmed as Budd–Chiari syndrome, a rare condition affecting the liver. During her hospital stay of three months she writes an 81-page diary called "The Patient" and makes a book of collages dedicated to her mother, Joy.

On 15 August, stays at Noah's Northside Gardens Hotel, Sydney, in order to attend a Visual Arts Board photography assessment panel for the Australia Council with Bill Heimerman.

On 19 November, Jerrems is admitted to the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne.

1980

Moved from Tasmania and was readmitted to the Alfred Hospital in Melbourne.

Dies at 2:25am, Thursday 21 February, the Alfred Hospital, Melbourne.<sup>13</sup>

Ashes scattered on banks of Yarra River at Warringal Park, also known as Banksia Park, where she used to go with her horse, Bonnie, and dog, Free.

Film *Hanging About* selected as a finalist in Sydney Film Festival.

Jerrems's photographs are exhibited alongside those by Robert Besanko, Bill Henson and Grant Mudford in *Aspects of the Philip Morris Collection: Four Australian Photographers*, selected by James Mollison (Director, Australian National Gallery) at the Australian Embassy, Paris, from September to November, followed by a tour to regional Australia.

1981

Archive of Jerrems's photographs and negatives is donated to the National Gallery of Australia by Joy Jerrems.

1990

*Living in the 70s: Photographs by Carol Jerrems*, an Australian National Gallery travelling exhibition, is curated by Helen Ennis and Bob Jenyns.

2005

*Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*, a documentary film by Kathy Drayton, is produced by Helen Bowden.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> All quotes are from Jerrems's diaries, personal files and notebooks.

<sup>2</sup> See Judith Buckrich, "The Best Time of their Lives", *The Journal of Public Record Office Victoria*, no. 5, September 2006, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Carol Jerrems to Robert Ashton, December 1972.

<sup>4</sup> See Isobel Crombie, "Introduction", *2nd Sight: Australian Photography* in the National Gallery of Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2002, p. 9. For an overview of photography in Australia see Gael Newton, *Shades of Light: Photography and Australia 1839–1988*, William Collins, Sydney, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> Beatrice Faust, "Erotica", *Nation Review*, 16–22 December 1972, p. 288.

<sup>6</sup> Graham Howe, *New Photography Australia. A Selected Survey*, Australian Centre for Photography, Paddington, NSW, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Both quotes from Jennie Boddington, Introduction, *Woman*, Young Women's Christian Association of Australia, Melbourne, 1975].

<sup>8</sup> Carol Jerrems, A True Story: "The Night Joybelle's Dream Came True", 23 December 1975, unpublished.

<sup>9</sup> Carol Jerrems, unsuccessful application to the Australian Film Commission, 24 March 1975.

<sup>10</sup> *Macquarie—A Folio of University Photographs* by Carol Jerrems, exh. brochure, Macquarie University, 14–23 June 1978.

<sup>11</sup> Jean-Marc Le Pechoux, "Editorial", *Light Vision*, Australia's international photography magazine, Issue 1, September/October 1977, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Beatrice Faust, "Fragments of a world as women see it", *The Age*, 27 May 1978.

<sup>13</sup> Information courtesy of Peter Frawley, the Alfred Hospital Archive, Melbourne.

- a. Unknown photographer, Carol Jerrems, c.1951
- b. Unknown photographer, Carol Jerrems horse-riding, Eltham Pony Club, Victoria, c.1960
- c. Carol Jerrems, E (1968) dated 1969, from *Alphabet Folio*
- d. Carol Jerrems's photographic stamp
- e. Henry Talbot, Carol Jerrems (1972)
- f. Redfern Life, three 1973
- g. Carol Jerrems, Kung Fu Party 1974
- h. Carol Jerrems, Margaret Tucker with Rosslyn Johnson, Aboriginal House, Melbourne 1973
- i. Pages from Jenny Brown, Skyhooks: Million Dollar Riff, Dingo Books, Melbourne, 1975
- j. Carol Jerrems, (Self Portrait with Esben Storm) 1975
- k. Carol Jerrems, Swami Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati, Mangrove Mountain 1978
- l. Rennie Ellis, Carol Jerrems and Beatrice Faust, Brummels 1975
- m. (Medical Certificate) from a series of photographs by Carol Jerrems taken in 1979 at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania.
- n. "Small Homage" exhibition poster, 1980

k.



l.



n.

**LARRY  
CLARK  
AND  
TULSA**

**Christopher Chapman**



**Larry Clark's black-and-white photographs of young people taken in the 1960s and 1970s are characterised by trauma and intensity.**

A young woman whose face is bruised looks up to her female companion for solace. A young man holds his head in his hands, the arch of the back of his neck smooth-skinned. These pictures are quiet, not violent. Lying on a bed clothed, a young man draws upon a cigarette and gazes beyond the edge of the photograph into the room; only the baby resting across his lap looks up at the camera. On New York's 42nd Street a young hustler gazes steadily and plainly at the camera. A boy in a bathtub looks up at the photographer. The bravado has dissipated; the boy seems to be seeking out a deeper connection.

Larry Clark's work has always been received with trepidation—even though since 1971 he has produced six books of photographs, five feature films, and his work has been shown in more than sixty solo exhibitions in North America, Europe and Asia. "Here was this artist, then," the art-writer Jim Lewis has confided, "and here was this work, and no one seemed to know quite how to look at it, and I suspect most people still don't."<sup>1</sup> In New York in 2005 a survey exhibition of Clark's work was shown at the International Centre of Photography. In the slim publication that accompanied the exhibition, the curator Brian Wallis wrote about the powerful themes that have driven the artist's work for over forty years. For Wallis, Clark's work exemplified "the destructiveness of dysfunctional family relationships", explored "masculinity and the roots of violence", analysed "the links between mass imagery and social behaviours", and examined "the construction of identity in adolescence".<sup>2</sup> The casual frankness with which Clark addressed these issues was shocking to many viewers. His reportage was without judgment. Jim Lewis suggests that Larry Clark's work exists outside a system of moral or art-historical obligation. He says the work involves "an account of the ethics of sheer attention" and that it "starts to take on a tone of very personal shamanism".<sup>3</sup> These are intense demands for what at first may appear to be straightforward photographs.

Larry Clark was born in 1943 in the USA central-south city of Tulsa, Oklahoma. The small city then had a population of 150,000. An oil town resting on forested undulating plains smudged by lakes and cut through by the Arkansas River, Tulsa prospered in the first half of the twentieth century and in the 1950s was named America's most beautiful city by *Time* magazine. Clark's mother sometimes worked as a baby photographer and young Larry helped out from the age of thirteen. But by age sixteen he was shooting amphetamines with a close-knit group of kids and from age twenty he began to document his milieu with a camera, producing the intimate black-and-white photographs that would comprise the photo-book he titled after his hometown. Clark self-published *Tulsa* in 1971, and it has been reprinted four times since in

Larry Clark  
No Title (Father and Child): from the portfolio *Tulsa*  
1963

New York and Japan. Photographs taken in Tulsa in the early 1960s also appeared alongside other photographs from New Mexico and New York City in his follow-up, self-published photo-book *Teenage Lust*, of 1983.

Clark's photographs are uncompromising in their rawness. They have been described in relation to the culture of the outsider, the outlaw, and the criminal. Art writer Philip Monk has written that the outlaw "is one of the defining myths of American culture".<sup>4</sup> He chose to exhibit Clark's work alongside that of American artists Nan Goldin, Cady Noland and Richard Prince in his 1996 Toronto exhibition "The American Trip". For Monk, Clark's work evoked a vicarious pleasure: "We display a certain tolerance towards outlaws as mythic figures; larger than life, they act out forbidden desires we cannot fulfill in our daily lives".<sup>5</sup> Monk perceived Clark himself as a classic outlaw, a reflection on Clark's life as a youth in Tulsa and his experiences of prison, drugs and crime. In his 1995 photo-book *The Perfect Childhood* Clark included a photograph of a typewritten note, a quote from the Canadian philosopher and media theorist Marshall McLuhan: "the criminal, like the artist, is a social explorer".<sup>6</sup>

Clark has consistently explored the representation of American youth with the precision, fascination and empathy akin to that of a psychologist. "I always wanted to make the teenage movie that I felt America never made—the great American teenage movie, like the great American teenage novel," Clark told filmmaker Paul Schrader in 1995, the year Clark's first feature film *Kids* was released.<sup>7</sup> Clark had been adamant in his pursuit of a unique vision. Three years earlier he told Jutta Koether that he was "just afraid to look at anything, because I didn't want any ideas".<sup>8</sup> Clark's initial feature film *Kids* (1995) was a breakthrough for the artist. It established him as a serious contemporary film director whose movies about adolescence and youth continue to court controversy. Clark's feature film *Ken Park* (2002), for example, was refused classification by the Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification Board for its offences against "standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults". And following a submission by the Sydney Film Festival to review the classification, it was upheld.<sup>9</sup> The film is a frank portrayal of emotionally intense relationships between teenagers.

The rawness of Clark's work, from *Tulsa* onwards, reflects the empathy and identification that Clark has with his subjects, particularly the male youths he photographs. "When I was photographing my friends [in Tulsa]," Clark confessed to artist Mike Kelley in 1992, "I wanted to be my friends—anybody but myself,"<sup>10</sup> continuing, "I'm a tag-along guy who looks real, real young; who's fifteen and looks twelve ... I remember sitting in the bathroom when I was fifteen and looking down at myself and saying if I don't get some hair on my dick by next summer I'm going to kill myself."<sup>11</sup> Clark understands youth masculinity to be highly complex and not reducible to stereotypes. His work challenges stereotypical, dominant modes of representation in its acknowledgement of the co-existent toughness, sensuality and vulnerability of his subjects. Writer Catherine Liu has described the complexities inherent in Clark's approach to the representation of youth masculinity:

***The eroticism of Clark's photographs lies in their almost incidental quality; the radical lack of artifice and mise-en-scène exposes his subjects as they expose themselves. When their gaze meets that of the camera, they are completely open, cocks and all. The intimacy of Clark's photographs is overwhelming. These are not your average porno shots of big dicks; these teenagers almost look like they can't live up to their hard-ons. They are terrifyingly exposed and indifferent at the same time.***<sup>12</sup>



Larry Clark  
No Title (Man with Head in His Hands): from the portfolio *Tulsa*  
1963





From left:  
Larry Clark  
New York City—42nd St.  
1979  
  
Tulsa, Grove Press, New York,  
1971



Larry Clark  
No Title (Woman with a Black Eye Lying in Bed) :  
from the portfolio Tulsa  
1971

The subject matter of youth has remained constant in Clark's work, as the artist himself has grown older. In 1992, close to the age of fifty, Clark reflected upon his relationship to his younger photographic subjects: "My wish would be to go back and be that age and be one of those normal kids".<sup>13</sup> When interviewer Mike Kelley further questioned Clark's relationship to his adolescent subjects by suggesting that "the object of desire is to be the kids, not to have them," Clark responded clearly, "Right, it's to be them."<sup>14</sup> Clark's highly individual examination of youth—in particular youth masculinity—became an increasingly powerful tool of artistic analysis in his work from the 1990s onwards. His artist book titled *1992* controversially explored the subject of teen male suicide. The photo-book incorporated photographs of adolescent males posed with a handgun and noose, taken in Clark's studio. The book was met with critical silence and half of the 1,000 copies printed were reputedly destroyed.<sup>15</sup> In his artist books of the 1990s Clark developed a highly unique visual lexicon that enabled him to explore subtleties of sexual ambiguity and eroticism inherent to contemporary male adolescence and youth.

Alongside his continuing practice of taking photographs and presenting them in a traditional manner as singular images, Clark has used the visual capacities of collage as a means to explore identity. "*Tulsa* is very formally laid out," Clark explained to Paul Schrader in 1995, "but then the books get more complicated, with the collages and letters—more film-like, I think."<sup>16</sup> Clark incorporates images from newspapers and magazines alongside his own photographs, using collage as a means to challenge the assumptions and normative definitions of youth culture. Pictures of dominant, athletic, innocent, corrupt, sexualised, incomplete, violated, and idealised versions of youth masculinity are presented side by side. The collages reflect the disjunctive, unpredictable, and inherently paradoxical nature of contemporary youth masculinity as Clark sees it.

Bravado and vulnerability, toughness and emotional pain, beauty and longing—the tensions and contradictions of emotional life—have been a focus of Larry Clark's work from the start. "I think a lot of the work ... has to do with the loss of innocence," Clark has said, "innocence lost and what happens."<sup>17</sup> These qualities, which imbue the photographs Clark took in Tulsa fifty years ago, continue to exert a powerful effect on artists, scholars and viewers today.

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Jim Lewis, "What Are You Looking At?" in *Larry Clark*, ed. Brian Wallis, International Centre of Photography, New York, 2005, p. 20. This is a revised version of Lewis's essay "Larry Clark: What is this?", *Parkett*, no. 32, 1992.
- <sup>2</sup> Brian Wallis, "Larry Clark", in *Larry Clark*, ed. Brian Wallis, International Centre of Photography, New York, NY, 2005, p. 10.
- <sup>3</sup> Jim Lewis, "What Are You Looking At?" in *Larry Clark*, op. cit. p. 20.
- <sup>4</sup> Philip Monk, *The American Trip: Larry Clark, Nan Goldin, Cady Noland, Richard Prince*, Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery at Harbourfront Centre, Toronto, ON, 1996, p. 15.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Larry Clark and Walter Keller, *The Perfect Childhood*, Scalo Verlag AG, Zurich, 1995, unpaginated.
- <sup>7</sup> Larry Clark interviewed by Paul Schrader, in Paul Schrader, "Babes in the Hood", *Artforum*, vol. XXXIII, no. 9, May 1995, p. 77.
- <sup>8</sup> Larry Clark interviewed by Jutta Koether in *Journal of Contemporary Art* online, <http://www.jca-online.com/clark.html>, originally published in 1992.
- <sup>9</sup> See Australian Government, Classification Review Board Decisions, under "Ken Park, 6 June 2003", [http://www.classification.gov.au/www/cob/classification.nsf/Page/ClassificationinAustralia\\_Whoweare\\_ClassificationReviewBoardDecisions\\_ReviewBoarddecisions-2003](http://www.classification.gov.au/www/cob/classification.nsf/Page/ClassificationinAustralia_Whoweare_ClassificationReviewBoardDecisions_ReviewBoarddecisions-2003)
- <sup>10</sup> Larry Clark interviewed by Mike Kelley, "In Youth Is Pleasure", *Flash Art*, no. 164, 1992, p. 84.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Catherine Liu, "Larry Clark", *Artforum*, vol. XXIX no. 4, December 1990, p. 136.
- <sup>13</sup> Larry Clark interviewed by Mike Kelley, "In Youth Is Pleasure", p. 85.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> The book *1992* by Larry Clark was co-published in New York, NY and Cologne, Germany by Thea Westreich and Gisela Capitain galleries, 1992.
- <sup>16</sup> Larry Clark interviewed by Paul Schrader. Paul Schrader, "Babes in the Hood", op cit., p. 77.
- <sup>17</sup> Larry Clark interviewed by Jutta Koether in *Journal of Contemporary Art* online, op. cit.

Opposite:  
Larry Clark  
New York City—42nd St.  
1979

Overleaf:  
Larry Clark  
Untitled  
from the series Teenage Lust  
1983





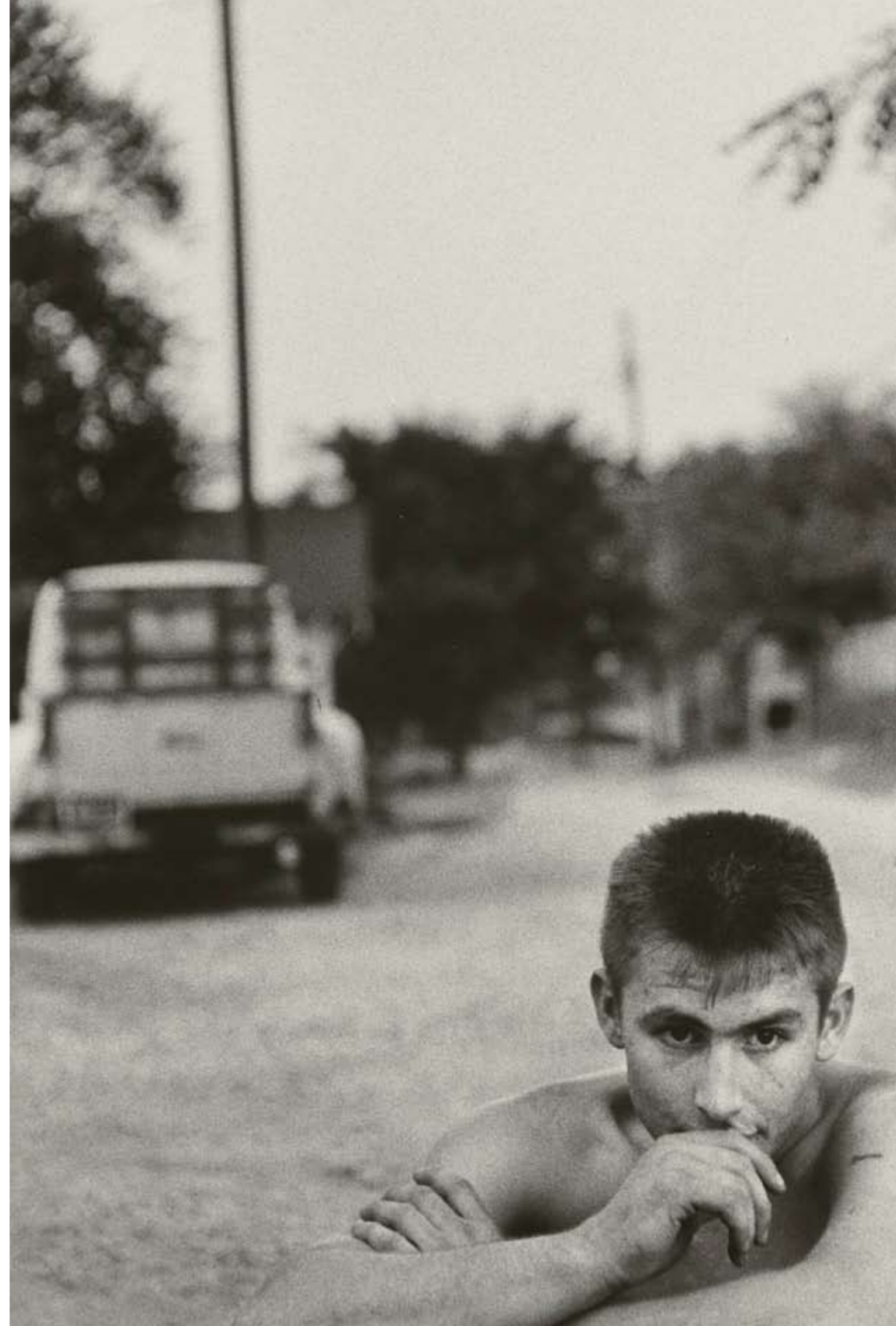


Above:  
Larry Clark  
No Title (Woman in a Room with Patterned Curtains and Lightshade): from the portfolio Tulsa  
1963

Opposite:  
Larry Clark  
No Title (Seated Man Pointing a Gun): from the portfolio Tulsa  
1971

Opposite:  
Larry Clark  
David Roper  
1963

Overleaf:  
Larry Clark  
No Title (Billy Mann): from the portfolio Tulsa  
1963





# BIOGRAPHY: LARRY CLARK

Larry Clark was born in Tulsa, OK, USA, in 1943. Clark did not formally study photography, but from the age of thirteen worked in his mother's photographic business which specialised in baby photography. At sixteen, Clark began photographing his friends and peers who were using amphetamines, as he was, and over the next few years produced a body of candid images documenting their drug use, violence and sexual activity. Many of these images were later included in his self-published book *Tulsa* (1971), a work that defined his distinctive style of subjective documentary and the types of challenging subject matter that would characterise his oeuvre. Clark's second self-published book, *Teenage Lust* (1983), was subtitled *An Autobiography of Larry Clark*. Though not autobiographic in a conventional sense the work includes family snaps of Clark's own youth together with graphic images of other teenagers engaging in sex or hustling in Times Square. In 1964 Clark had moved to New York and was drafted at the end of that year. He moved back to New York after his army service in January 1967.

American teen subcultures and marginalised youth within an urban environment have remained the focus of Clark's work throughout his career as a photographer and filmmaker. In addition to publishing his images in book form, Clark exhibits his photographic series in galleries and art museums. His first solo exhibition, "Photographs from the book Tulsa by Larry Clark", was in 1971 at the San Francisco Art Institute, CA. In 1979 he exhibited in Melbourne, Australia, at the Photographers' Gallery and Workshop. To date, he has held over 80 other solo exhibitions in the USA, Europe, the UK and Japan, including in "Photographs by Larry Clark" at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI, in 1982; in "Larry Clark—Photographs" at the Fotografiska Museet i Moderna Museet, Stockholm, in 1986; in the "Larry Clark Retrospective" at the Groninger Museum, Groningen, Netherlands in 1999; "Outtakes and Additions from the Permanent Collection" at MoCA at the Pacific Design Center, Los Angeles, CA in 2000; "Larry Clark is Tulsa" at the Toledo Museum of Art, OH; "punk Picasso" at the Watari Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, in 2004; "Tulsa 1971" at the Groninger Museum, Groningen, The Netherlands, in 2005; "Teenage Lust by Larry Clark" at the Preus Museum, Horten, Norway, in collaboration with Galleri S.E., Bergen, Norway in 2007; and in "Retrospective", at the Centre for Contemporary Art, Warsaw in 2009.

Clark has also participated in numerous important group exhibitions including the "Whitney Biennial" at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY, in 1981; "The Young Rebel in American Photography 1950–1970", at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 1992; "Pictures of the Real World (in Real Time)" at Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Le Consortium, Dijon, France, in 1994; "Féminin-Masculin: Le Sexe de l'Art" at the Centre Pompidou Paris, in 1995; "Pictures from Within: American Photographs 1958–2002" at the Whitney Museum of American Art and Sondra Gilman Gallery, New York, in 2003; "Destricted", at the Tate Modern, London and Galerie Kamel Mennour, Paris, in 2006; "Americans: Masterpieces of American Photography from 1940 until Now" at the Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, in 2006–7;

"Darkside—Photographic Desire and Sexuality Photographed", Fotomuseum Winterthur, Zurich, Switzerland, in 2008; and "So Be It: Interventions in Printed Matter" at the Andrew Roth Gallery, New York.

Since *Tulsa* and *Teenage Lust*, Clark has produced several other photographic books, including Larry Clark (1992) published by Thea Westreich, New York, and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne, Germany; *The Perfect Childhood* (1993) published by Scalo, Zurich, Switzerland; *Kids* (1995) published by Grove Press, New York and Faber & Faber in London; *punk Picasso* (2003), published by AKA Editions, New York, and *Larry Clark: Los Angeles 2003–2006* (2007), published by Luhring Augustine, New York and Simon Lee Gallery, London.

After three decades of still photography, Clark made his debut as an independent filmmaker with the feature film *Kids* in 1995. Set in New York, the film controversially examines the behavior of urban youths and their attitudes towards sex and drug-taking and, as in all of Clark's films, has a cast of untrained actors. *Kids* was followed by *Another Day in Paradise* (1998), *Bully* (2001), *Teenage Caveman* (2002)—a movie for television, and *Ken Park* (2002), co-directed by Ed Lachman. Portraying the lives of several skateboarders and their friends and showing explicit scenes of teenage sex and suicide, *Ken Park* was banned from screening at the Sydney Film Festival in Australia in 2003, sparking heated debate on censorship laws. More recent films by Clark are *Wassup Rockers* (2006), the story of a group of Latino, skateboarding punks from South Central Los Angeles; the short film *Impaled* (2006) which looks at the impact of pornography on adolescent sexuality, part of the film project *Destricted*, involving seven short erotic films by seven filmmakers; and *Chavo* (2009) a film of 42 seconds duration based on the idea of a dream commissioned by 42Below vodka as part of their film festival "42x42".

Clark's photographs are widely represented in public collections in the USA and Europe and are also held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

Larry Clark lives in New York, where he is currently working on a new film project *Savage Innocent*, aka *Wild Child* and on a retrospective exhibition at the Musée D'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, scheduled for 2010.

Larry Clark is represented by Luhring Augustine, New York and Simon Lee Gallery, London.



# NAN GOLDIN: THE BALLAD OF SEXUAL DEPENDENCY

**Juliana Engberg**

Opposite:  
Nan Goldin  
Thomas Shaving, Boston  
1977

Overleaf:  
Kenny in His Room, New York City  
1979







Nan Goldin  
Käthe in the Tub, West Berlin  
1984

**The works of Nan Goldin position themselves between film and photography.** Originally conceived as slideshows with accompanying music, her photographs of friends and frequenters of the lower Manhattan club scene in the late 1970s and 1980s have become famous and immortalised as a set of images translated into book and print form. From day one, however, they had the more ephemeral purpose of documenting and dissolving. They had the sensibility of fleetingness and the mimetic qualities of mortality.

Goldin's aesthetic approach and philosophy is *vérité*, and counters the 1980s ascendancy of staged, directed and appropriated photographic works that came to be associated with postmodernism and the "Pictures" artists brought into focus by Douglas Crimp in an exhibition of that title in 1977. The "Pictures" artists were using photographic means to critique the notion of originality, and promote a semiotic discovery of the power of mass-produced images. For instance, Sherrie Levine famously reshot key iconic images such as Walker Evans's dust-bowl farmers, Louise Lawler used photography to examine museological hierarchies and stylistic collisions; John Baldessari, Barbara Kruger and Richard Prince made high art from a combination of low-art advertising, cinema and photographic references. By contrast, Goldin remained more closely affiliated to the idea of photography as a document. She is anthropological rather than forensic in approach.

*The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, a show of up to 700 slides, evolved out of smaller episodic accounts by Goldin of herself and her circle of friends, whose cyclical ubiquity in the works establish them as a cast of characters, whose lives and loves, highs and lows can be followed. Long before they obtained captions in a book, or labels in a museum, the audience for Goldin's slideshows became familiar with her "players": they became her version of Warhol stars. Down at the Mudd Club on the Lower east side of Manhattan from the late 1970s to early 1980s, Goldin's slideshows would play out alongside poetry readings, music, talk and a bar culture that embraced difference and social defiance. In those days, Goldin's "players" were also her viewers who relived their lives through her lens.

We too become familiar with, and recognise, for instance, Suzanne with her long face, perpetual sadness and fragility. She becomes a kind of Madonna of Sorrows figure throughout Goldin's sequence. We get the James Dean-ness of Brian, Goldin's bedmate, whose coif and scowl have a dangerous cinematic allure, even while we witness the brutality and stand-offishness of his dis-affection, which, for Goldin, is compulsively, precariously sought. We follow Cookie, Kiki and Maggie; Mark, Kenny and Dieter and the assortment of other sub-cultural clubbers, bed-fellows, roommates, occasional sex partners and drug users who make up Goldin's family of friends and acquaintances.

Goldin takes her viewers into the lives of her people. We look at beds: unmade, laid upon and over. We witness sex as solitary or embracing, as fornication and play. We hang out at beaches, picnics and weekends. We go to parties, see people dancing in living rooms; getting ready for clubbing. We enter bathrooms, look in mirrors and see people looking at mirrors,

and look in mirrors reflecting people who cry, stand mute, shave and preen. Nothing much is off limits. Maybe nothing is off limits. Goldin's battered face with bloodied eyes and bloated bruising looks out at us, bearing witness to her own vulnerability and survival.

In a lot of ways Goldin's works are no more interesting than any other collection of random snaps and Kodak moments. The kind that you or I might have taken during our post-teen, early adult lives, of parties, days at the beach, scenarios of embarrassment, out-of-it moments—shonkily framed and aimed inauspiciously at sunlight, lamplight and no light, so that they are vaguely hopeless, yet true documents. One or two of which might make it into your own version of posterity, but mostly the kinds of photos destined to lie discolouring in drawers, or dissolving under corrosive plastic, in 1980s ring-binder albums that destroy memories you might as well forget.

In a lot of ways, but not all. This is because Goldin's approach is informed by forerunners, and accepts the status of photography, defined by Pierre Bourdieu as existing between the aesthetically vulgar and noble, and follows the bizarre rules of invented realism that remains the photographic paradox. In Goldin's purposeful realism the stylistic precedents of Weegee (Arthur Felling), Diane Arbus, Larry Clark, Helmut Newton; and the films of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, John Cassavetes and Pier Paolo Pasolini can be seen throughout her episodic storytelling.

Skinheads wrestling and posing in front of unimaginably profuse floral wallpaper seem to step right out of Arbus's catalogue of domestic oddities. Goldin's images of tatty, faded bedrooms and tiled bathrooms could be cut from the celluloid of Fassbinder and Cassavetes; her subcultural club scenes and street life attach to the legacy of fashion grunge and seedy nightlife that characterised early fashion shoots by Newton. Larry Clark's pictures of teen culture made with black-and-white frankness to produce raw, "honest" exposés precede Goldin's own versions of tell-it-like-it-is photographic chronicles.

It is not, however, just the fact of Goldin's knowing use of stylistic and subject precursors that divides her work away from the merely amateur albums and photographic memoirs taken by you or me. Working through her stylistic heroes, and the common catalogue of "life", she develops her own unique aesthetic signatures.

Colour becomes a defining and arresting quality in her work. Saturated reds, greens, blues and yellows pull her subjects from commonality to uniqueness. In these photos, where a solitary figure stands amid a wash of intense colour, it is as if Goldin moves between the photographic, cinematic and painted aesthetic to arrive at a newer practice. Goldin's eye works before the fact of the shot in these instances, while her assuredness of technique means she retains the fleet- ingness of the moment by welcoming movement and haphazardness.

The use of colour also distances Goldin from the documentary realism of photojournalism and earlier photographers. Black and white delivers an aesthetic of reality because of its association with early photography and cinema. For Goldin though, the use of colour refers to a newer photographic form born of domestic cameras and easy drug-store printing. Goldin's use of colour asserts the familial documentary that made everyone famous for fifteen seconds, created from the instamatic potential of new colour developments and cheap technology, even while she is using high-end slide and 35mm film in the sophisticated cameras of auteurs. Goldin's aesthetic is chosen and deliberate, even while it seems accidental and instantaneous.

Goldin has many times repeated her dictum that "If I want to take a picture, I take it no

Overleaf, clockwise from top left:  
Nan Goldin  
Kim and Mark in the Red Car, Newton, Mass.  
1978

Suzanne with Mona Lisa,  
Mexico City  
1981

Nan After Being Battered  
1984

Skinhead Dancing, London  
1978

matter what". Goldin's determination to take the shot, whatever the circumstances, means that she owns the amateur mistake, and creates a deliberate aesthetic choice from it, so that glare and blurring become purposeful: used to enhance her realistic quest. Goldin's framing moves from studied to practised and instinctively right, to produce the photographic punctum. When looking at the images in which Goldin herself is present, it is always worth remembering that she has already set up the opportunity of the shot; she either holds the trigger or has set the timer. Goldin's presence in her own work doubles the *vérité*. I was here and I am a part of this, her face tells us in its availability to be scrutinised and judged.

By putting herself into her photographs, Goldin also diminishes the opportunity for criticisms of voyeurism, which inevitably accompany fly-on-the-wall, documentary and socially observed photographic practice. We know from statements Goldin has made that she wanted to distance herself from the critical gaze of detached photographers, and saw herself as a kind of restorer of dignity to people who became Arbus's "freaks". Goldin somehow manages to avoid the accusation of exploitation even while her access to people in states of inebriation, sleep, and altered states of mind means that she is in a position of control and power over subjects who lack awareness.

Because she is so prepared to bare all of herself she seems to have obtained a licence from others and viewers to pursue her subjects with honesty. Honesty and reality can be confused here. It is worth remembering Pierre Bourdieu's advice that "only a naive realism sees the photographic representation of reality as realistic: if it appears objective, it is because the rules defining its social use conform to the social definition of objectivity".<sup>1</sup> By putting herself into the pictures, Goldin plays with concepts of objectivity and subjectivity to produce a suite of works that remains compellingly between these contradictory definitions.

Ultimately, there is much to critique and think about when looking at Goldin's works. By exhibiting her photographs as a slideshow she manages an interesting illusion and introduces a tempo, transition and ephemerality that restages the elusiveness and passing of social histories. The slide-shows also have the quality of cinematic emotion; tremendously added to by the mood-setting musical soundtrack that gives a storyline to images that could be everyone's and anyone's, but are not. They are *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* by Nan Goldin: a knowing, artful and crafted document of its times.

Juliana Engberg is Artistic Director of the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1965, p. vi.





Nan Goldin  
Suzanne in the Green Bathroom, Pergamon Museum, East Berlin  
1984



From left:  
Nan Goldin  
Brian in the Hotel Room, Merida, Mexico  
1982

Suzanne in Yellow Hotel Room, Hotel Seville, Merida, Mexico  
1981

26

27



Nan Goldin  
Nan and Brian in Bed, New York City  
1983

# BIOGRAPHY: NAN GOLDIN

Nan Goldin was born in Washington DC, USA, in 1953. She grew up in Boston, MA, where she attended Lexington High School and later Satya Community School, an experimental school in Lincoln, NE. A major life event was the suicide of her older sister in 1965, when Goldin was eleven years old. “When I was eighteen I started to photograph”, Goldin wrote in her introduction to the book *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. For her, photographs were a way of holding on to memories and keeping a record of day-to-day life. Her first solo exhibition was in 1973 at Project, Inc., Cambridge, MA, in which she displayed black-and-white photographs of drag queens. This was followed in 1977 by a joint exhibition (with her friend David Armstrong) at Atlantic Gallery, Boston. Her work of this period included images depicting the gay and transsexual communities introduced to her by Armstrong.

In 1974 Goldin undertook studies at Imageworks in Cambridge, MA. She also attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Tufts University, Boston, where she learned the technique of colour photography, graduating in 1977 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. In 1978 she received a 5th Year Certificate from the same institution. Following graduation, Goldin moved to New York, NY, where she began documenting the post-punk, new wave scene and gay and hard-drug subcultures, particularly located in the Bowery. She began to create the images of her friends, family and lovers that became part of *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1979–96), a slide projection work she describes as “the diary I let people read”. The work was also published as a book and exhibited at Burden Gallery in New York in 1986. Between 1983 and 1987 Goldin travelled through Europe, showing *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* in museums, cinemas, film festivals and clubs. Her work of this period portrayed her intimate connection with communities in New York as well as various European cities. In 1989, Goldin curated “Witnesses: Against Our Vanishing” at Artists Space, New York, a group exhibition exploring the devastating impact of AIDS on her community in that city. The exhibition gained some notoriety when the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) withdrew its funding on the grounds that the exhibition was too political.

In addition to *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, other slide projections by Goldin include *The Other Side: 1972–92* (1994); *Trio to the End of Time* (1994–5); *All By Myself* (1992–6); *Heartbeat* (2001); and *Chasing a Ghost* (2006). These have been exhibited widely in galleries, museums and film festivals in the USA, Canada, and Europe. Goldin has also made a number of films including *I’ll Be Your Mirror* (1995, with Edmund Coulthard), *Dire Aids* (2000, with Aurele Ricard), *Contacts* (2000, directed by Jen Pierre Krief), and *Sister Saints and Sibyls* (2004), a work presented as a three-screen DVD projection. She has published a number of her photographic series as books, including the *Cookie Mueller* portfolio (1991), which records her close friendship with Mueller up till her death from AIDS in 1989; *The Other Side* (1992), comprising photographs of transvestites and transsexuals taken over a twenty-year period; *Vakat* (1993), with Joachim Sartorius), a series of hotel room interiors; *Tokyo Love* (1994, with Nobuyoshi Araki), which documents Tokyo’s youth; and *A Double Life* (1994, with David Armstrong), which depicts her and Armstrong’s mutual friendship group over a 25-year period.

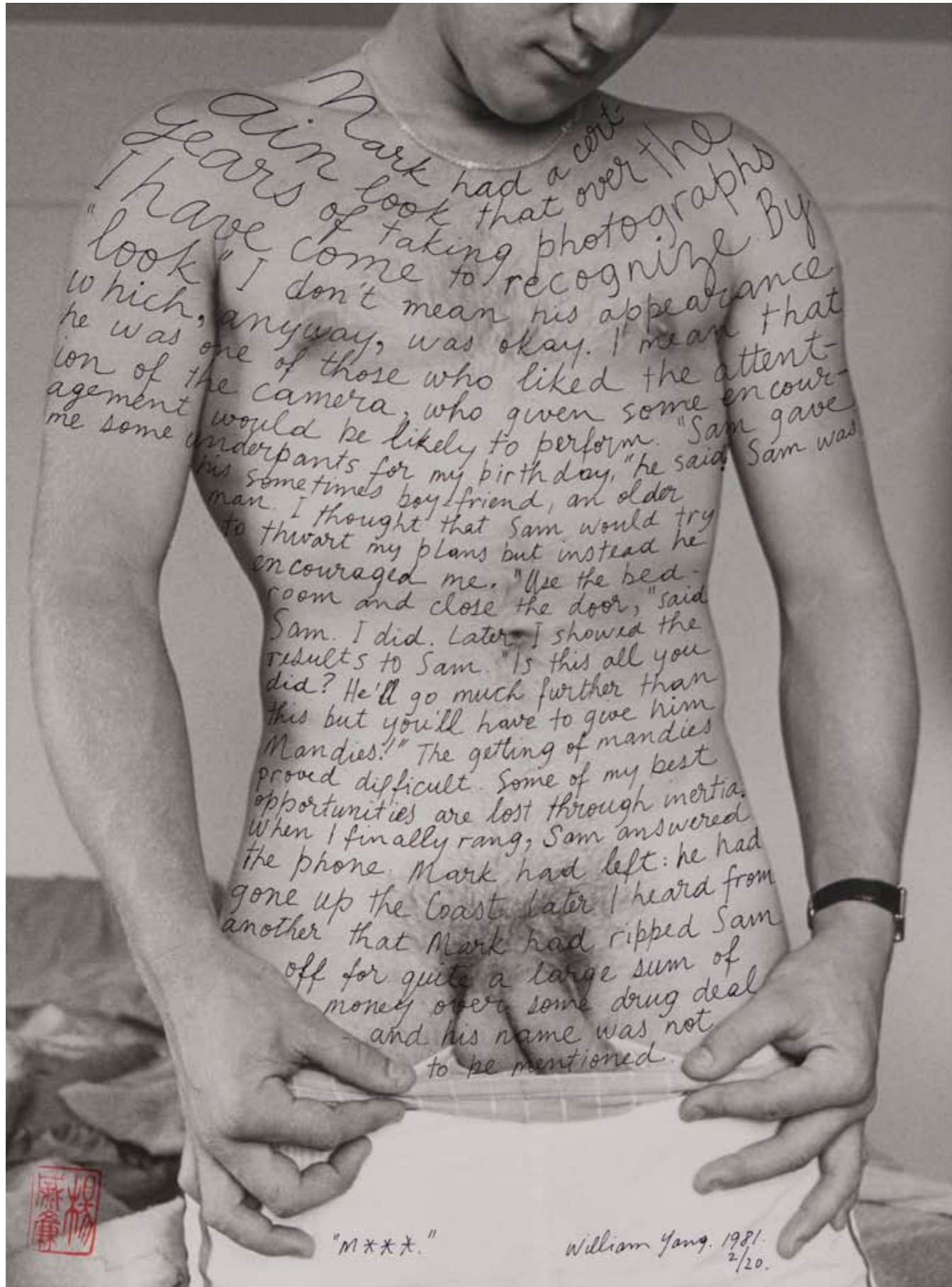
Since 1973, Goldin has held over 130 solo exhibitions throughout the USA and Europe and in Canada, the UK, Japan and Brazil. Major solo exhibitions have been held in museums including the Museum Folkwang in Essen, Germany, in 1991; the Fotografiska Museet, Moderna Museet, Stockholm in 1993; the Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich, Switzerland, in 1994; the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, in 1994; the Yamaguchi Prefectural Museum of Art, Yamaguchi-city, Japan, in 1998; the National Gallery of Iceland, Reykjavik, in 1999; Castello di Rivoli Museo d’Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy, in 2003; and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki, in 2008. Major solo travelling exhibitions include the mid-career retrospective “I’ll Be Your Mirror” at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in 1996, which travelled to five other venues including the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and the National Museum, Prague; “Le Feu Follet”, a major survey exhibition, at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris in 2001, which travelled as “Devil’s Playground” to the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; and “Fantastic Tales: The Photography of Nan Goldin” at the Palmer Museum of Art, Pennsylvania State University in 2005, which travelled in 2006 to the Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA, and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence. “Nan Goldin”, a selective retrospective exhibition, was held at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, QC, Canada, in 2003.

Goldin has also been included in numerous group exhibitions worldwide, including “Times Square Show”, with Collaborative Projects (Co-Lab), Times Square, New York, in 1980; the “Whitney Biennial” at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in 1985, 1993 and 1985; “The Indomitable Spirit: Photographers and Artists Respond in the Time of AIDS” at the International Centre of Photography, New York, and the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, in 1990; “Puber-Alles (Why am I who I am?)” at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; “Pictures of the Real World (In Real Time)” at Paula Cooper Gallery, New York and Le Consortium, Dijon, France, 1994; “10th Biennale of Sydney: Jurassic Technologies Revenant”, Australia, in 1996; “Moving Pictures” at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York and Bilbao, Spain, in 2002; “Faces in the Crowd: Picturing Modern Life from Manet to Today” at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, in 2005 and “Shout: Contemporary Art and Human Rights”, Glasgow Museum of Modern Art, Scotland, in 2009. Her works are widely represented in public collections in the USA, UK and Europe.

In 2001, Goldin moved to Paris and for the next three years lived between Paris, London and Luxor, Egypt. She currently lives between New York and Paris.

Nan Goldin is represented by Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.





# WILLIAM YANG: DIARY OF A DENIZEN

Russell Storer



"New Years Eve Party"  
William Yang 1980 1/0

**William Yang's position in Australian photography is unique and intriguing.** Despite being collected by many state institutions and receiving two retrospective exhibitions over a three-decade career,<sup>1</sup> there is remarkably little written on his photographic work, particularly within broader contexts. There could be several reasons for this—Yang's prominent work as a performing artist, his involvement in the community and media spheres, his apparently casual snapshot aesthetic, and his deeply personal approach, each of which sets him apart from the more consciously formal or critical stances of his peers. His inclusion in "Up Close", therefore, offers a welcome opportunity to connect Yang with concurrent photographic practices in Australia and the United States, and to reflect upon his significant contribution to the medium in this country.

Yang's work with photography began out of financial necessity. Although he had been taking photographs while at university in Brisbane, his primary creative pursuit on moving to Sydney in 1969 was as a playwright. He began freelance photography as a means to earn a living in 1974, initially taking portfolio portraits for actors via his theatre connections, and then social photographs for Sydney publications such as *Mode*. A failed attempt at fashion photography—"I was terrible at it—I couldn't cover up the flaws"—confirmed that his primary interest was people in real-life situations:

***I was better at covering parties and events. The arena suited me; it was more theatrical. Even as a playwright I'd always thought that real life set up better situations than you could ever think of yourself.***<sup>2</sup>

Yang's photographs from the 1970s and early 1980s focus upon several distinct yet overlapping Sydney scenes. These included the artistic circles around theatre, film, visual arts, and literature; the "high society" of politicians, wealthy socialites, fashion designers, and media personalities; and the gay scene, based in the inner-city suburb of Darlinghurst. Many images from this period are featured in Yang's books *Sydney Diary* (1984) and *Friends of Dorothy* (1997), which organise them into categories such as "Sydney Paparazzi", "Theatre Circles", "Artistic Circles", "Queerlit Circles" and so on, with their dense format and recurring subjects suggesting tightly interconnected worlds. While they envisage a broad sweep through Sydney society, there are also deeply personal links and motivations—besides his commissions for magazines, these are images of Yang's friends, and reflect his theatrical background, interest in the visual arts, and his own homosexuality, which living in Sydney enabled him to explore and accept.

As he wrote in *Friends of Dorothy*, "In Sydney, in the early seventies, it was easy to come out ... There was never any conscious decision, rather I was swept out by the circumstances of the time. All my friends were gay, it was taken for granted".<sup>3</sup> The early 1970s were a turning point in Australian gay liberation, with the establishment of activist groups such as CAMP (Campaign against Moral Persecution) Inc. and the Australian Lesbian Movement at the beginning of the decade. Publications such as *Gay Times* emerged, and an expanding number of gay venues offered points of contact and supported a growing public profile.<sup>4</sup> Yang has observed that "during gay liberation people became visible, people became politicised, and there was a Mardi Gras [beginning in 1978] that was a symbol of the movement".<sup>5</sup>

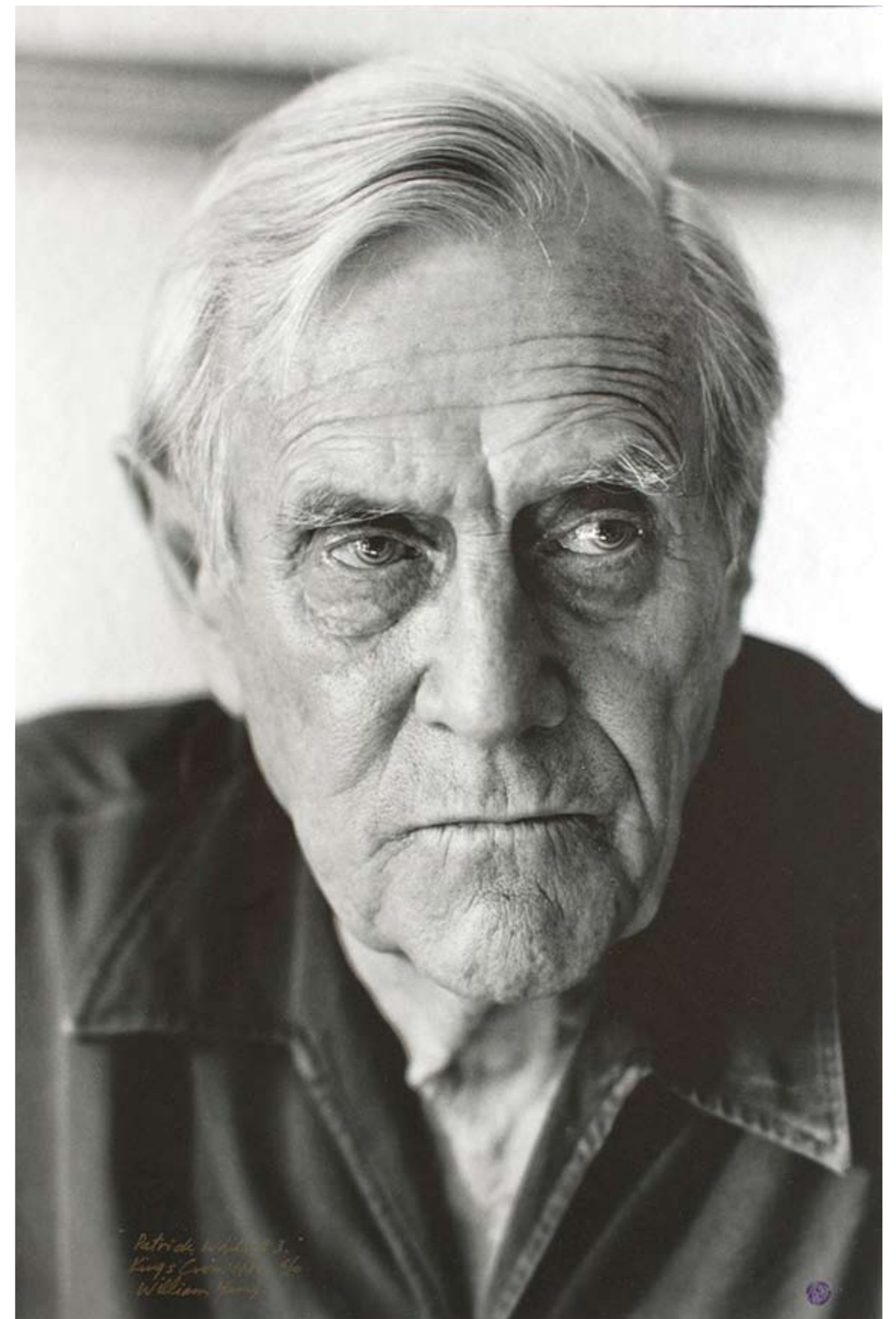
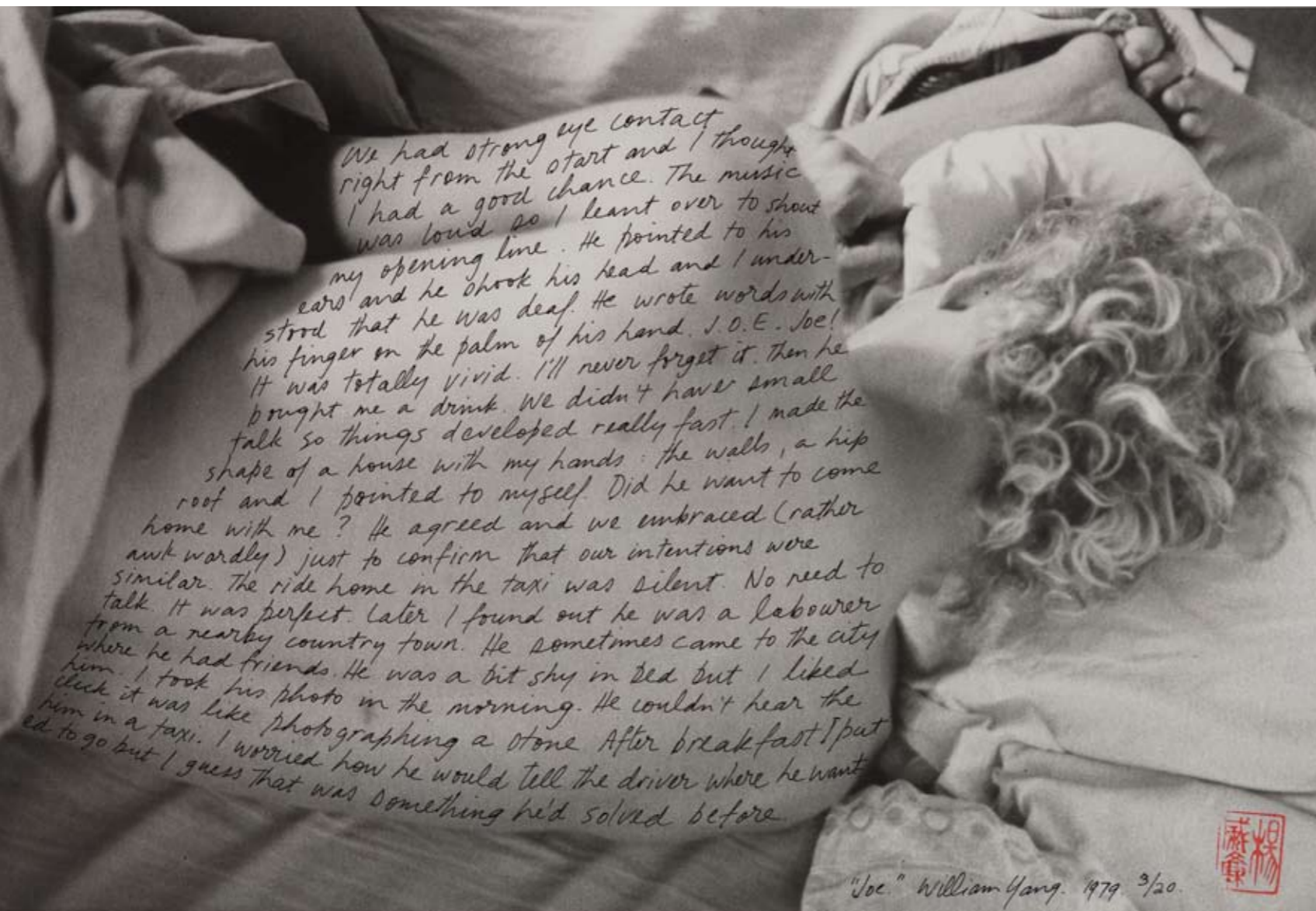
This shift was part of a greater transformation taking place in Australia at the time. A newly affluent baby-boomer generation was coming of age, more mobile, educated and financially independent than their parents.<sup>6</sup> The feminist, anti-war, Aboriginal rights and gay rights movements of the late 1960s, as with similar movements around the world, found a base within an expanding university system and a growing middle class, and began to be translated into real political change. The election of the Gough Whitlam-led Labor government in 1972 ushered in a wide-ranging progressive social and cultural agenda, including the withdrawal of Australian troops from Vietnam, reform in the areas of Aboriginal rights, health and women's affairs, free university education, and the establishment of the Australian Film Development Commission, the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, and the Australia Council. The artistic community attained a new level of confidence, with unprecedented financial and institutional support for cultural activity. This support was intertwined with an increasingly complex and assertive Australian identity, evident in the growing emphasis on local narratives and forms in literature, visual art, theatre, music, film, television and dance.<sup>7</sup>

Yang's images of the period clearly reflect these developments. The four-page "Sydney Paparazzi 1974–1978" section of *Sydney Diary*, for example, features dancers from the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre, fashion designers Robert Burton, Stuart Membery and Linda Jackson, future contemporary art dealers Roslyn and Tony Oxley, photographers Grant Mudford and Sandy Edwards, scientists Margaret and Christine Wertheim, film director Philip Noyce, actresses Anne Lambert, Abigail and Jacki Weaver, models Sue and Joy Smithers, and gay identities David McDiarmid and Sylvia and the Synthetics.<sup>8</sup> All are young, attractive and bathed in a glow of glamorous exuberance, conveying the sense of a culture extending in numerous directions. The fact that Yang was recording this nascent cultural landscape as something of interest says something in itself; that this was a subject worth documenting, publishing and exhibiting. Photography was also being taken seriously in Australia as an art form for the first time; photography courses were springing up in art schools, and specialised departments were established at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1972 and the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1974, the year that the Australian Centre for Photography opened its doors in Sydney. The ACP gave Yang his first exhibition, titled "Sydneyphiles", in 1977. As he describes it:

***I showed social photos, a genre that hadn't been shown much before. It also depicted scenes from the [local] gay community which had never been shown before in a public institution. It attracted big crowds and was considered controversial, mainly because of the gay content. The sex.***<sup>9</sup>

Below:  
William Yang  
Joe  
1979

Opposite:  
Patrick White #3  
1980





William Yang  
The Morning After  
1976 2/10



Above:  
William Yang  
The Morning After  
1976

Opposite:  
Untitled No 1  
1977



William Yang  
Danny & Chris' Whale Beach Party  
1977

These latter images, some of which are included in “Up Close”, are of gay parties in share houses—then more commonplace, given that young people were leaving home earlier—as well as organised events in bars, sex venues, galleries and community centres around the city. Many of Yang’s photographs feature groups of naked bodies draped across each other, slumbering or passed out after a big night. Some are even more intimate, depicting individuals Yang slept with, was about to sleep with, or at least desired; as he writes across one image, entitled *Grant*:

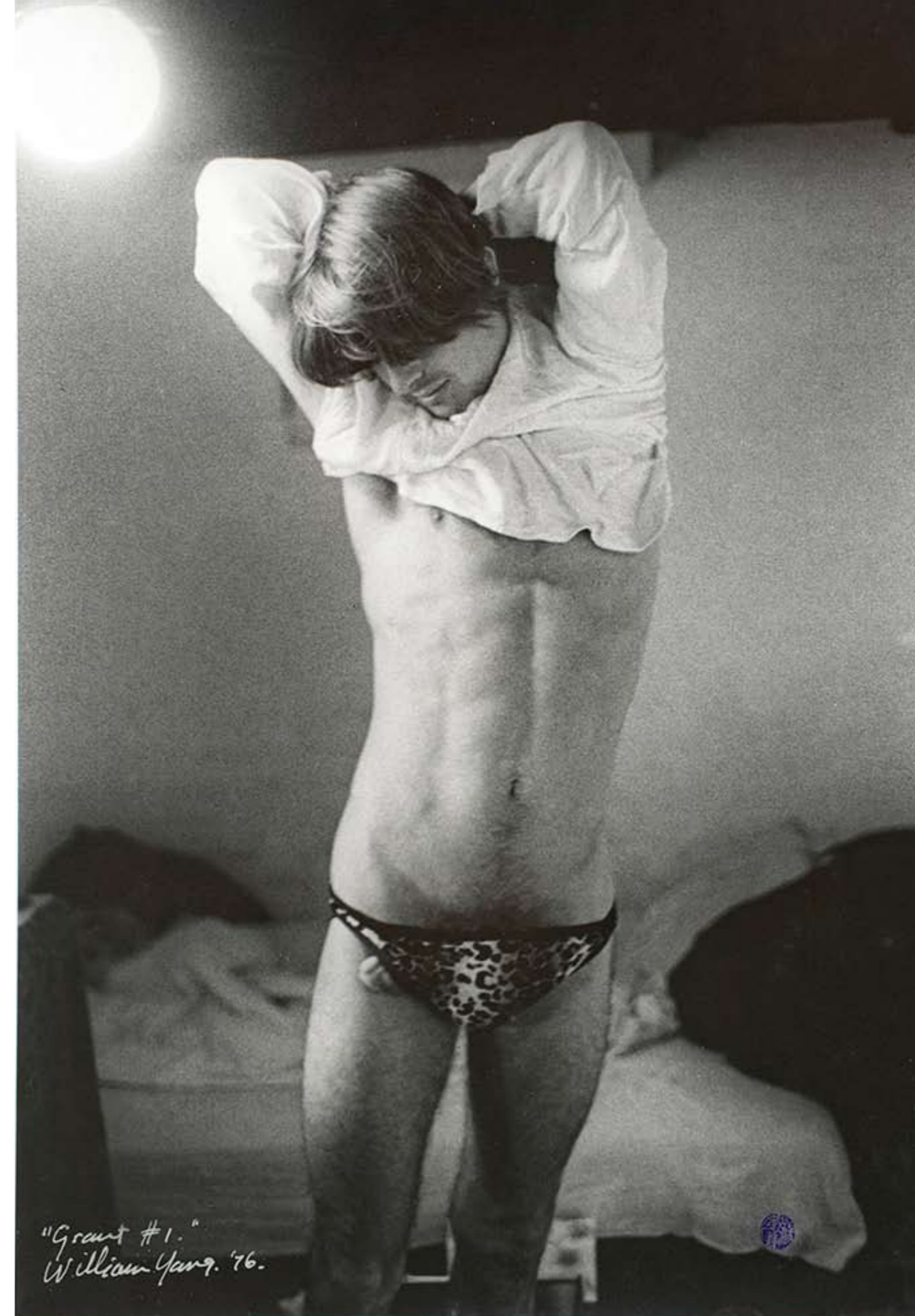
***... he wouldn't have sex with me which was the main reason I'd come: so I took photos instead. Coming back from Whale Beach I felt disappointed and unhappy, but looking back now, after he died, I'm glad to have the photos.***<sup>10</sup>

Although this photograph was taken in 1976, Yang didn’t start writing onto his pictures until the 1990s. This hindsight and recontextualisation is typical of Yang’s employment of photographs as a form of diary, which reaches its most refined form in his performance works, which began with *The Face of Buddha* in 1989. In these works, Yang presents his images as projected slides, accompanying a scripted monologue that generally draws upon his own life—family history, the search for cultural roots in China, domesticity and travel, and the loss of friends—like Grant—to AIDS.

Looking back, Yang’s hedonistic images of the 1970s gay scene mark a seemingly innocent, and exquisitely fleeting, moment. As Edmund White recalls in his memoir of the period in New York:

***[Susan] Sontag once said to me that in all of human history, in only one brief period were people free to have sex when and where they wanted—between 1960, with the introduction of the first birth-control pills, and 1981, with the advent of AIDS ... in 1981 all that came to an end. Gays of my generation were especially unprepared to accept the new reality since for us ... gay liberation and gay culture still meant sexual access and abundance.***<sup>11</sup>

Yang’s photographs of the time embody the slogan “the personal is political”, which came out of feminism but applied equally to gay liberation. Like his Australian contemporaries Carol Jerrems and Sue Ford, Yang’s mixture of portraiture and social documentary builds a picture of “heterogeneous collectivity”; forming a community out of diverse circles and scenes.<sup>12</sup> As with Jerrems and Ford, the politics is as much in individual expression and choice as it is in collective, civic activity—although Yang recorded this too, in his photographs of Mardi Gras, CAMP Inc. meetings and street demonstrations. There were difficulties involved in this process, for photographer and subject alike—being visible as homosexual was still fraught with danger, physically and socially—but it constitutes a crucially important document, from a time when, as Yang says, “very few photographs were taken”.<sup>13</sup> They trace an inner-city Sydney that is now gentrified and prohibitively expensive, a gay scene that has now dispersed into the suburbs and congregates online, personalities who are now ageing, and, in too many cases, dead. Douglas Crimp’s recent tribute to Yang’s American contemporary Alvin Baltrop, who documented



the gay denizens of the New York piers, could equally apply to Yang and his adopted city:

***... the complexity of Baltrop's legacy resides not only in the record his photographs provide of utopian and dystopian occurrences, but also in their evidence that the moment in Manhattan's history when we could so thoroughly reinvent ourselves was as precarious as the places where we did it.***<sup>14</sup>

Yet rather than being caught up in nostalgia for the past, Yang continues to go out constantly, photographing events and the life around him—places, friends, family, lovers, and recently, himself. He continually recombines old images to create new stories, offering us fresh insights into them and their time as he grows older and wiser. We are lucky to have him.

Russell Storer is

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> These retrospectives were "Diaries: A retrospective exhibition: 25 years of social, personal and landscape photography", organised by the State Library of New South Wales in 1998, and "William Yang: Selected Photographs 1968–2003", organised by the Wollongong City Gallery in 2003 and touring regional galleries around Australia.

<sup>2</sup> William Yang, *Sydney Diary 1974–1984*, James Fraser Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1984, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> William Yang, *Friends of Dorothy*, Macmillan, Sydney, 1997, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Garry Wotherspoon, *City of the Plain: History of a Gay Sub-Culture*, Hale and Ironmonger, Sydney, 1991, p. 168.

<sup>5</sup> William Yang, in conversation with Russell Storer, *The China Project*, exhibition catalogue, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2009, pp. 261–3.

<sup>6</sup> Wotherspoon, p. 140.

<sup>7</sup> See Donald Horne, "Creating a new Australia" in *The Lucky Country Revisited*, JM Dent Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1987, pp. 201–213.

<sup>8</sup> Yang, *Sydney Diary*, pp. 16–19.

<sup>9</sup> William Yang, *Diaries: A Retrospective Exhibition*, exhibition catalogue, State Library of New South Wales, 1998, p. 8.

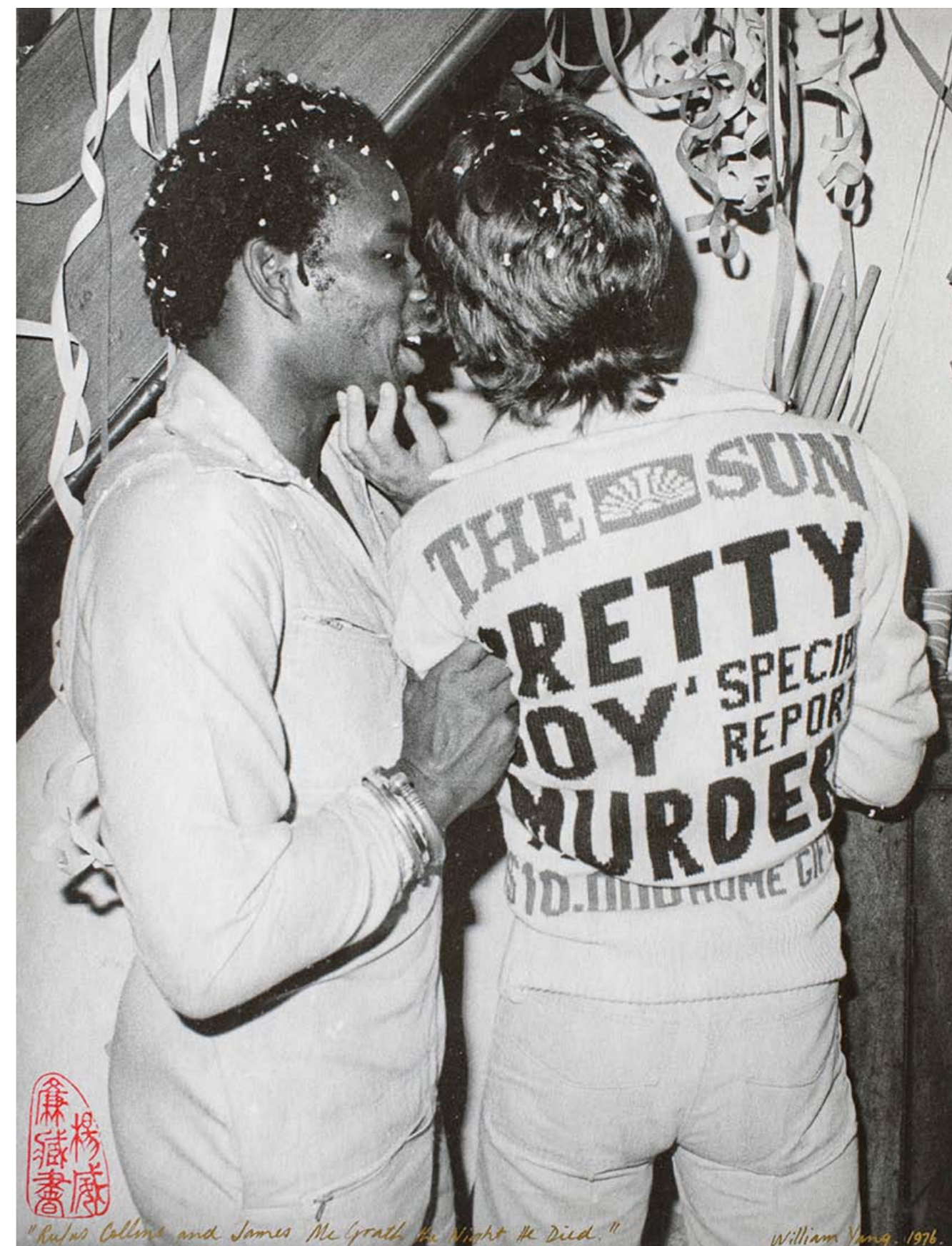
<sup>10</sup> William Yang, *Grant* (1976), ink on silver gelatin photograph, 35.5 x 24.4 cm.

<sup>11</sup> Edmund White, *City Boy: My Life in New York During the 1960s and 1970s*, Bloomsbury, London, 2009, pp. 285–6.

<sup>12</sup> Catriona Moore, *Indecent Exposures: Twenty Years of Australian Feminist Photography*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1994, pp. 38–9.

<sup>13</sup> William Yang, conversation with Russell Storer, p. 267.

<sup>14</sup> Douglas Crimp, "On Alvin Baltrop", *Artforum*, vol. XLVI, no. 6, February 2008, p. 269.



William Yang  
Rufus Collins and James McGrath the Night He Died  
1976



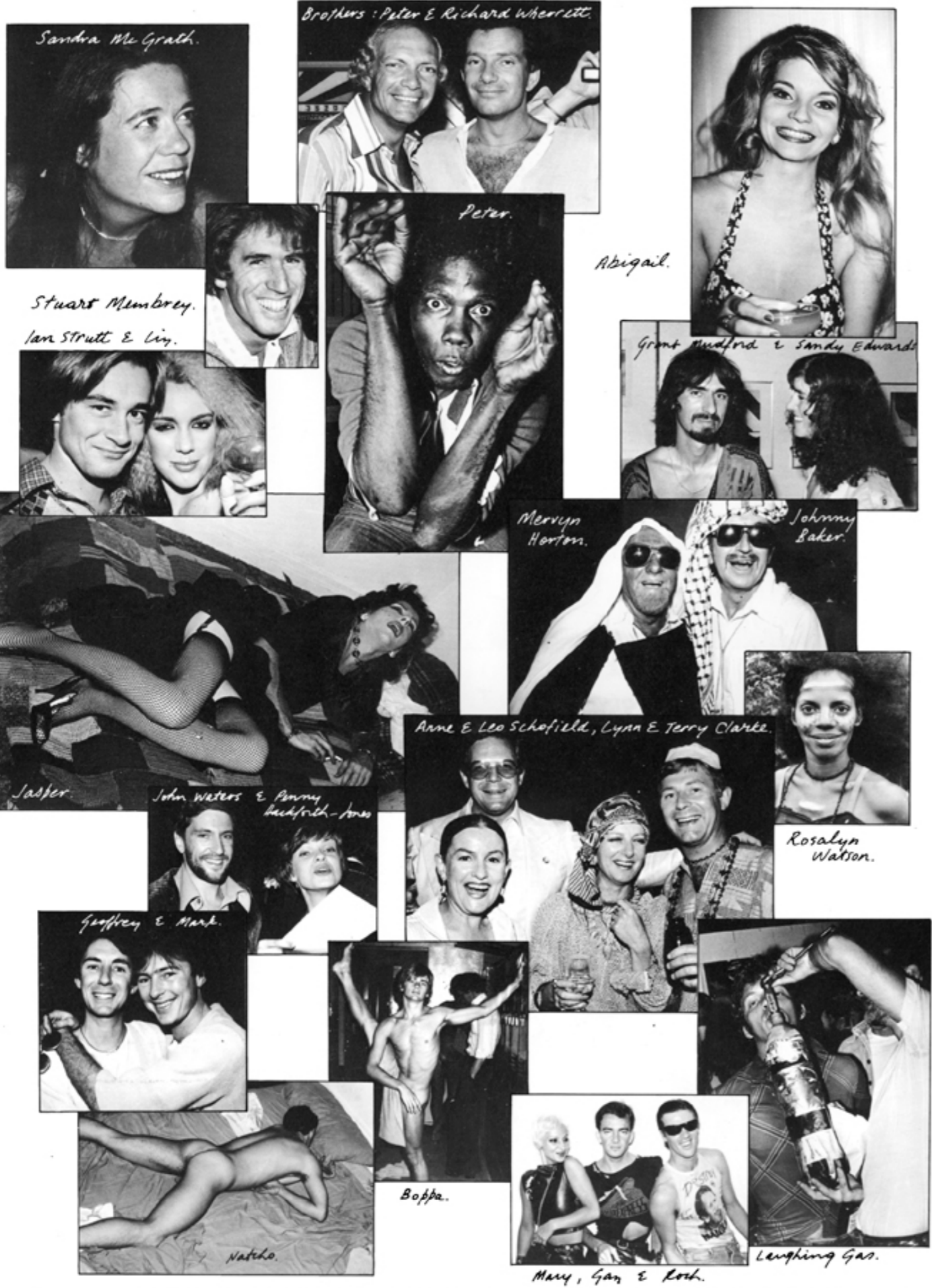


Overleaf:  
William Yang, book pages from Sydney Diary: 1974-1984

Opposite:  
William Yang  
Peter Tully  
1981

Below:  
William Yang  
Flamingo Follies  
1975





# BIOGRAPHY: WILLIAM YANG

William Yang was born William Young in Mareeba, on the Atherton Tableland in Far North Queensland, Australia, in 1943. His grandparents had emigrated from China to northern Australia in the 1880s. Yang grew up in nearby Dimbulah and attended high school in Cairns. In 1962 he moved to Brisbane to complete a Bachelor of Architecture at the University of Queensland, graduating in 1968. It was during this time that Yang began to explore his interest in theatre and photography. In 1969 he moved to Sydney to become a playwright, working with the experimental theatre group Performance Syndicate, and began work as a freelance photographer, documenting Sydney's social life and the sub-cultural gay community. The emergence of the Gay Liberation Movement in the 1970s enabled Yang to live openly for the first time as a gay man.

Yang held his first solo photographic exhibition, "Sydneyphiles", at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney, in 1977. It caused a minor sensation because of his frank depiction of the Sydney gay and party scene. In 1984 these photographs became part of a larger exhibition, "Sydney Diary", at Hogarth Galleries, Sydney, which was published as a book of the same title. Following this project Yang became less interested in documenting the social scene and moved into more personal imagery, photographing friends, landscapes and everyday objects. He had also started to research his family history and that of the Chinese in Australia, which led him to change the spelling of his surname in 1983.

In 1989 Yang integrated his skills as a writer and visual artist, and began to perform monologues with slide projection and music in the theatre. He created his first performance piece, *The Face of Buddha*, that year. Its success led to the development of *China Diary* in 1990 and *Sadness* in 1992. *Sadness* received wide acclaim and was published as a book in 1996 and adapted into an award-winning documentary film in 1999, screening at film festivals around the world. Further monologues included *The North* in 1996; *Friends of Dorothy* in 1998, drawing on material published in the book of the same title; and *Blood Links* in 1999. In 2002 Yang was commissioned by the Perth, Adelaide and Sydney Festivals to create *Shadows*, which premiered at the Sydney Opera House. In 2003 he performed a retrospective of his monologues, "The Journeys of William Yang", at Sydney's Belvoir Street Theatre, where he had staged his first performance. Since then he has developed *Objects for Meditation* in 2005 and *China* in 2007. In 2008 he was commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, to create *My Generation* for the opening of its new building. Over the last twenty years, Yang has toured his performances regularly to festivals and art museums throughout Australia, Asia, Europe, the UK and USA.

Although Yang considers his monologues his main work, since 1977 he has presented over twenty

solo photographic exhibitions throughout Australia and in Belgium, China, Germany, Japan and the UK. In 1998 his acclaimed retrospective, "Diaries: A Retrospective Exhibition: 25 Years of Social, Personal and Landscape Photography", opened at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney. In 2002 the travelling exhibition, "William Yang: Selected Photographs 1968–2003", was organised by the Wollongong City Gallery, New South Wales and toured to regional galleries around Australia in 2003–6.

Yang has also participated regularly in important group exhibitions in Australia and overseas. During the 1990s he was included in major photographic exhibitions such as: "Don't Leave Me This Way: Art in the Age of AIDS" at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra in 1994; "Sydney Photographed" at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, in 1994; and "On the Edge: Australian Photographers of the Seventies" at the San Diego Museum of Art, CA, in 1998. Since 2000, significant group exhibitions have included: "World Without End: Photography and the 20th Century" at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, in 2000; "Federation: Australian Art & Society 1901–2001" at the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, in 2001; "Home" at the Chinese Arts Centre, Manchester, UK, in 2004; "In a New Light: Australian Photography 1930s–2000" at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, in 2004–5; and "The China Project" at the Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, in 2009. Yang's photographs are represented widely in state gallery and public collections in Australia, and internationally in Japan.

Yang has been the recipient of numerous awards for his photographic and performance works and selected on many occasions as a finalist in Australian photographic prizes. In 1993 he was awarded International Photographer of the Year at the Higashikawa-cho International Photographic Festival in Hokkaido, Japan. In 1997 his solo exhibition "Friends of Dorothy" at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery won Outstanding Visual Arts Event at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. In 1998 Yang was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters from the University of Queensland for his services to photography, and in 2007 he received the HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship at the Australian National University, Canberra.

Yang currently lives and works in Sydney, travelling often to Queensland and China.

William Yang is represented by Stills Gallery, Sydney and Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane.



# AFTERWORD

I'm the last one in the line, so it's probably fitting I write this Afterword and I'm honoured to do so.

My kids knew Carol as Auntie Carol, and defend all she stands for. But of course they didn't really know her as I did.

Who needs a sister? Lance, my late brother, and I were relatively happy until Carol arrived. She was a girl! And we were typical boys, obviously. The impact of Carol's arrival would change everyone's lives, forever.

Lance and I were squeezed into a single bedroom, making room for a new-comer, in my old room! Not a good start.

Lance and I made Carol's early life hell, something I regretted, but made up for later. Carol was petrified of moths, this we exploited on many occasions, along with sending many potential boyfriends off, saying 'Carol is not home'.

There was one exception, Esben Storm. He was into film, and as their relationship evolved, Carol was able to further her skills in photography shooting many of the stills in Esben's film, *In Search of Anna*.

There's no doubt that Carol picked up her artistic skills from mum, or Joy, as she preferred to be called, and her record keeping skills from Eric, our accountant father.

As Carol entered her teens, it became apparent that Carol and Joy were destined to be in conflict. Joy was a fiery redhead and Dad was the exact opposite, and kept balance. Balance finally meant that Carol got her horse, a horse in a backyard in Ivanhoe, and a darkroom! Mum's potting shed was transformed.

Dad, who had absolutely no idea about hand tools, sought my help to fit out the potting shed with blackout lining, sinks, running water and power. My chance to make amends!

Carol and I were never really close, we were four years apart; while I was off getting married, Carol was off to Prahran Tech, to fine-tune her art. I was as straight as a die, Carol was the exact opposite, exploring every avenue of life.

I often ask myself what distinguished Carol's work from others. While I'm not qualified to comment on her artistic skills, I can say this: Carol was out there, making herself known with exhibitions and books of her work. She worked very hard to become known, and succeeded.

Carol became ill in 1979, while working as a part time teacher in Hobart. She contracted a very rare disease called Budd-Chiari Syndrome. Despite every effort to arrest her illness, she passed away in the Alfred Hospital in 1980.

On the morning following Carol's death, I had the sad duty to inform Carol's friends.

I rang the couple in Tasmania where Carol had stayed for some time.

After conveying the news, Carol's woman friend said, "yes, we know". Carol's spirit had visited them the night before and stood at the foot of the bed, to say goodbye.

Carol was into all sorts of spiritual things, so while slightly shocking, her reply did not entirely faze me.

Ken Jerrems

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ken Jerrems and Linda Sly, on behalf of the Jerrems family, extend warm thanks to Natalie King for her enthusiasm for Carol's works and her commitment to the research for this book.

Thank you to Jason Smith, Director of Heide Museum of Modern Art and his staff for their support of both Natalie and the Jerrems family and also for the work involved in putting the exhibition together.

## Curator's acknowledgements

Natalie King's research has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



My interest in Carol Jerrems was piqued when I saw Kathy Drayton's remarkable documentary *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems* in 2006. Soon after, I approached Heide Museum of Modern Art who embraced this project from its inception and welcomed the opportunity to present Carol's work alongside her American and Australian peers. I extend my sincere thanks to all the staff at Heide for the enormous pleasure of working with them, in particular: Jason Smith, Director, for his unwavering support and leadership; Linda Michael, Deputy Director/Senior Curator, for her calm precision with every aspect of this publication; Sue Cramer, Curator, for her attention to all facets of the exhibition and ongoing encouragement; Zara Stanhope, former Deputy Director/Senior Curator for her early commitment; Katarina Paseta, Collection & Exhibitions Manager, for assistance with incoming material; Linda Short, Assistant Curator, for her invaluable work preparing photography requests, biographies, captions and so much more; Samantha Vawdrey, Public Programs Coordinator, for developing a riveting program of events; and Stacy Jewell for cataloguing.

Heide is the perfect location for "Up Close", given Carol grew up in neighbouring Ivanhoe and later taught photography at Heidelberg Technical School. Carol travelled with her students in her VW beetle to the banks of the Yarra River where they were photographed and filmed. I have spent the last four years uncovering Carol's world and I am immensely grateful to many people who have been part of this journey. I have learnt about the different facets of Carol through the candid reminiscences of her friends and peers who I interviewed. They include: Robert Ashton, Catriona Brown, Paul Cox, Haydn Keenan, Peter Kelly, Ian Macrae, Rod McNicol, Mirta Mizza, Roger Scott, Esben Storm, Robert Adair Westfield and John Williams.

I am indebted to Carol Jerrems's family for allowing me comprehensive access to her personal papers and for patiently answering my numerous questions, in particular Ken Jerrems and Linda Sly, and more recently Emma Risvanis. Nicole Freeman kindly catalogued material in the family's possession in New Zealand.

Thanks to our publisher Morry Schwartz for his vision in 1974 by publishing *A Book About Australian Women* (by Carol Jerrems and Virginia Fraser) and now, for believing in this book. To John Warwicker for embracing the 1970s with flair in his book design.

I thank all the brilliant writers who contributed to this publication with insight: Judy Annear, Isobel Crombie, Christopher Chapman, Paul Cox, Kathy Drayton, Juliana Engberg, Helen Ennis, Virginia Fraser, Ken Jerrems, Anne Marsh, Djon Mundine, Gael Newton, Anne O'Hehir, Roger Scott and Russell Storer.

Numerous colleagues have provided invaluable advice, support and assisted with research: Helen Ennis, Associate Professor, ANU School of Art, The Australian National University, Canberra; Gael Newton, Senior Curator of Photography, Anne O'Hehir, Assistant Curator of Photography, Simon Elliott, Assistant Director, Curatorial and Educational Services, Sara Kelly, Associate Registrar, Loans & Exhibitions, Rose Montebello, Coordinator, Collection Study Room, Sharon O'Connor, Volunteer, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra;

Isobel Crombie, Senior Curator, Photography, Maggie Finch, Assistant Curator, Photography, Kelly Gellatly, Curator, Contemporary Art, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Rhonda Davis, Senior Curator, Macquarie University Art Gallery, Sydney; Judy Annear, Senior Curator of Photography, Natasha Bullock, Curator, Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Manuela Furci and Kerry Oldfield Ellis, Directors, Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne; Sandy Edwards, Stills Gallery, Sydney; Josef Lebovic, Josef Lebovic Gallery, Sydney; Siobhan Dee, Reference Services Officer, Christine Eccles, Collection Access, National Film & Sound Archive, Melbourne; Antony Catrice, Deakin Archives, Melbourne; Jane Gillespie, Program Officer, Visual Arts Board, Australia Council, Sydney; Alistair McGhie, Publications and Merchandise, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; Josie Matthieson, ABC TV; Nicholas Hose, Gallery Assistant, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney; Nick Gleghorn, Record Keeping Manager, Screen Australia, Sydney; Peter Frawley, the Alfred Hospital Archives, Melbourne; Peter Green, Public Relations, Skyhooks; Kyra Cox; Milton Harris; Polixeni Papapetrou; Phil Quirk; Kathy Temin; Douglas Wilkie. I am especially grateful to Kathy Drayton for generously sharing her research and Virginia Fraser for her astute feedback and friendship.

For Larry Clark's images thanks to Caroline Burghardt, Director of Publications & Archives, Luhring Augustine, New York.

For Nan Goldin's astonishing work, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, I thank Grazia Quaroni, Curator, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris; Jeffrey Peabody, Director, Matthew Marks Gallery, New York; Mark Hughes, Director, Galerie Lelong, New York; Rachel Kent, Senior Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Ian de Gruchy for his masterful technical prowess; Laurent Langlois for technical advice and expertise in the preparation of Nan's work for exhibition; Nan's studio in New York for assistance with images.

Thanks to William Yang for allowing us to revisit his photographs from the 1970s and Stills Gallery, Sydney.

Thanks to the lenders for allowing us to borrow their precious works: Robert Ashton; Pat Corrigan; Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne; Paul Goldman; Ken Jerrems and estate of Lance Jerrems; Peter Kelly; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Ian Macrae; John Williams; William Yang.

Finally, to my family—David, Lilly, Coco and Woody Weissman—for inspiring me with so much support, love and acceptance of my world and my work.

**Natalie King**

## Heide Museum of Modern Art acknowledgements

Thank you to all Heide staff and volunteers for their work on the exhibition which this book accompanies, and to the staff who provided material for this book, particularly Deputy Director/Senior Curator Linda Michael, for managing its production and copyediting the texts; Assistant Curator Linda Short, for compiling artist biographies and organising images and permissions; Collection & Exhibitions Manager, Katarina Paseta, and project volunteer, Stacy Jewell, for cataloguing Jerrems material from private collections; Registrar Jennifer Ross for managing loan material; and Sue Cramer for compiling artist biographies.

Heide gratefully acknowledges the support of Assistant Curator of Photography Anne O'Hehir, National Gallery of Australia, for her help with the correct attribution of material from the Carol Jerrems archive; Olivia Lyon, Gollings Photography, for her assistance with arranging photography; and Rights & Permissions Officer Nick Nicholson, National Gallery of Australia, for his assistance with imaging.

The exhibition is proudly supported by:



# IMAGE CREDITS

## FRONT COVER

**All works gelatin silver photographs unless otherwise specified**  
**Measurements are image size not sheet size**  
**All measurements height before width**

**FRONT COVER**  
Carol Jerrems  
*Vale Street* 1975  
edition 7/9  
20.2 x 30.3 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of the Philip Morris Arts Grant, 1982

**BACK COVER**  
Nan Goldin  
*Nan and Brian in Bed, New York City* 1983  
from the series *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* 1982–1995  
Image courtesy of Nan Goldin Studio, New York; reproduced courtesy of the artist

William Yang  
*Patrick White #3* 1980  
edition 6/10  
50.7 x 33.5  
Collection of the artist  
Image reproduced courtesy of the artist

Larry Clark  
*New York City—42nd St.* 1979  
31.4 x 20.6 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Purchased in 1980  
Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; reproduced courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.

**ENDPAPERS (FRONT)**  
Carol Jerrems  
*(Self Portrait in Front of Wall with Australian Centre for Photography Exhibition Posters)* 1974  
24 x 19.4 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**ENDPAPERS**

**page vii**  
Rennie Ellis  
*Carol Jerrems* 1970  
Type C photograph  
50 x 34 cm  
Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne

**INTRODUCTION**  
**page xiv**  
Rennie Ellis  
*Pensive, Carol Jerrems, Mozart Street* 1970  
Type C photograph  
22.9 x 15.2 cm  
Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne

## FRONT COVER

**All works gelatin silver photographs unless otherwise specified**  
**Measurements are image size not sheet size**  
**All measurements height before width**

**Images of photographs by Carol Jerrems held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Macquarie University, Sydney, have been provided courtesy of the respective institutions. Images of photographs by Rennie Ellis have been provided courtesy of the Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne.**

**page 4**  
*Patrisha Backstage [at Pussy Galore’s, Kings Cross]* 1975  
edition 1/9  
15.2 x 10.2 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**pages 6–7**  
Stephen McNeilly  
*Carol Jerrems, Daylesford, Victoria* 1973  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
19 x 24 cm  
Private collection

**pages 8, 9**  
frames from contact sheets c.1975–6  
Private collection

**pages 10–11**  
*Marilyn Monroe* 1972  
edition 3/9  
10 x 15.2 cm  
Collection of Ian Macrae, Melbourne

**CAROL JERREMS: LIVING IN THE 70s**
**NATALIE KING**

**page 12**  
“Moon. Not Cat Stevens ...”  
poem by Carol Jerrems, 18 March 1972  
Collection of Ian Macrae, Melbourne

**page 14**  
“*Sandy*”: *Yarra River* 1975  
edition 2/9  
10 x 15.2 cm  
Collection of Ian Macrae, Melbourne

**page 16**  
Athol Shmith 1976  
23.2 x 15.5 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Presented through the Art Foundation of Victoria by the Shmith family, Governor 1996

*Robert Ashton*  
From left: Carol Reed, Peter Crowe, Carol Jerrems and Richard Muggleton, Prahran Technical College c.1970  
19.7 x 24.3 cm  
Private collection

*A* (1968) dated 1969  
from *Alphabet Folio*  
gelatin silver photograph on cardboard  
19.1 x 11.5 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Purchased 1971

**page 19**  
David Porter  
*(Carol Jerrems with Camera)* c.1968  
25 x 19.5 cm  
Private collection

**page 20**  
one untitled photograph from the series *Hanging About* 1972  
28.7 x 19.2 cm  
Private collection

**pages 22, 23**  
four untitled photographs from the series *Hanging About* 1972  
19.2 x 28.7 cm; 19.2 x 28.7 cm; 19.2 x 28.7 cm; 18 x 28.7 (irreg.)  
Private collection

## FRONT COVER

**All works gelatin silver photographs unless otherwise specified**  
**Measurements are image size not sheet size**  
**All measurements height before width**

**page 24**  
*Trentham Blues, Image Three* 1972  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
24.3 x 16 cm  
*Trentham Blues, Image Five* 1972  
24.4 x 16.4 cm  
Private collection

**page 25**  
*Trentham Blues, Image Six* 1972  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
28.4 x 18.9 cm  
Private collection

**page 26**  
Rennie Ellis  
*Carol Jerrems, Brummels* 1975  
22.9 x 15.2 cm  
Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne

**page 27**  
“Roderick McNicol and Carol Jerrems”, Pentax Brummels Gallery of Photography poster, 1978  
Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne

*Rennie Ellis and Robert Ashton* 1976  
25.4 x 17.8 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

Rennie Ellis  
*Brummels Interior, Carol Jerrems Exhibition* 1974  
15.2 x 22.9 cm  
Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne

**The following photographs (pages 28–45) all appear in *A Book About Australian Women*, published by Outback Press, Melbourne, in 1974. That same year Jerrems mounted many of these photographs onto composition board for inclusion in an exhibition of the same title.**

**page 28**  
Carol Jerrems  
*Syvanna Doolan, National Black Theatre, Sydney* 1974  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
16 x 24.3 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 30**  
Carol Jerrems  
*Grace Cossington Smith, OBE, Turrumurra, NSW* 1974  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
16 x 24 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 31**  
Carol Jerrems  
*Caroline Slade* 1973  
edition 5/9  
25.3 x 17.8 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of the Philip Morris Arts Grant, 1982

**pages 32–3**  
*Wendy Saddington, Melbourne* 1972  
25.2 x 37.3 cm  
Private collection

**pages 34–5**  
*Enid Lorimer, Gordon, NSW* 1974  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
16 x 24 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 36**  
*Jenny Bonnette, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney* 1974  
*Jenny Bonnette with Sandra Leveson, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney* 1974  
gelatin silver photographs on composition board  
each 16 x 24 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

## FRONT COVER

**All works gelatin silver photographs unless otherwise specified**  
**Measurements are image size not sheet size**  
**All measurements height before width**

Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981  
**page 37**  
*Jenny Bonnette with Sandra Leveson, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney* 1974  
*Jenny Bonnette with Sandra Leveson, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney* 1974  
gelatin silver photographs on composition board  
each 16 x 24 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 38**  
“*Lady Ruth*”, *Daylesford, Victoria* 1972  
*Eileen Regan, Kings Cross, Sydney* 1973  
gelatin silver photographs on composition board  
each 24 x 16 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 39**  
*Sandy Mitchel, Clifton Hill, Melbourne* 1973  
*Carmel (Lonsdale) Behind Glass, Surry Hills, Sydney* 1973  
gelatin silver photographs on composition board  
each 24 x 16 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 41**  
*A Redfern Hotel, Sydney* 1973  
21.7 x 29.7 cm  
Private collection

**pages 42–3**  
*Bobbi Sykes, Black Moratorium, Sydney* 1972  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
16 x 24 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 45**  
*Flying Dog* 1973  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
17.3 x 26 cm (image); 37.5 x 30 cm (overall)  
Private collection

**page 46**  
*Vale Street* 1975  
cropped version by Carol Jerrems  
24.5 x 19.3 cm  
Private collection

**pages 48–9**  
contact sheet for *Vale Street* 1975  
22.2 x 25.3 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 50**  
*Sharpies* 1976  
17.8 x 25.2 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of Christine Godden, 1991

**page 51**  
*Mark and Flappers* 1975  
edition 4/9  
20 x 30.2 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne  
Gift of James Mollison, 1994

**page 52**  
*Macquarie University: Forest* 1977  
30 x 20 cm  
edition 1/8  
Collection: Macquarie University, Sydney  
Commissioned 1977  
© Macquarie University, Sydney

**page 53**  
Carol Jerrems  
*Macquarie University: Library Lawn* 1977  
*Macquarie University: Two Men, ETA* 1977  
edition 1/8  
each 30 x 20 cm  
Collection: Macquarie University, Sydney  
Commissioned 1977

## FRONT COVER

**All works gelatin silver photographs unless otherwise specified**  
**Measurements are image size not sheet size**  
**All measurements height before width**

© Macquarie University, Sydney  
**page 54**  
*Macquarie University: Corridor, W6B* 1977  
edition 1/8  
30 x 20 cm  
Collection: Macquarie University, Sydney  
Commissioned 1977  
© Macquarie University, Sydney

**page 55**  
*Macquarie University: Library Stairs* 1977  
*Macquarie University: Students, C4* 1977  
edition 1/8  
each 30 x 20 cm  
Collection: Macquarie University, Sydney  
Commissioned 1977  
© Macquarie University, Sydney

**page 56**  
*Ambrose Campbell* 1973  
edition 4/9  
30.2 x 20.1 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of the Philip Morris Arts Grant, 1982

**page 58**  
*Living in the 70’s* 1975  
15.9 x 23.8 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 59**  
*Butterfly Behind Glass* 1975  
edition 2/9  
17.8 x 25.3 cm  
*Boys* 1973  
edition 6/9  
15.2 x 20.3 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 60**  
*Esbén and Dusan, Cronulla* 1977  
artist’s proof 2/2  
15.5 x 23.3 cm  
Private collection

**page 61**  
(“Bud” John Ley and Rod McNicol) 1978  
10.6 x 15.8 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**pages 62–3**  
*Esbén Storm* 1976  
20.2 x 30.4 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**pages 65–7**  
stills from Carol Jerrems’s unfinished film *School’s Out* (1975), black and white, 16mm.  
Compiled by Kathy Drayton for her documentary film *Girl in a Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*

stills from Carol Jerrems’s film *Hanging About* (1978), black and white, 16mm.  
Stills for both films sourced from *Girl In A Mirror: A Portrait of Carol Jerrems*, a documentary film directed by Kathy Drayton, produced by Helen Bowden, 2005. Reproduced courtesy of Kathy Drayton and Helen Bowden

**page 68**  
*(Self Portrait)* 1979  
from a series of photographs taken by Carol Jerrems in the Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania  
23.9 x 15.9 cm  
Printed by Roger Scott, 2004  
Private collection

**pages 70, 71**  
“*The Gem*”, a letter/story by Carol Jerrems for Joy Jerrems, 1979  
Private collection

“*The Patient*”, a diary kept by Carol Jerrems, Royal Hobart Hospital,

## FRONT COVER

Tasmania, June–September 1979  
Private collection  
**page 75**  
Henry Talbot  
*Carol Jerrems* (1972)  
47 x 36.5 cm  
Private collection

**page 77**  
front cover, *A Book About Australian Women*, Outback Press, Melbourne, 1974  
Reproduced courtesy of Morry Schwartz

**Page 78-91**  
selected double-page spreads from *A Book About Australian Women*, Outback Press, Melbourne, 1974  
Reproduced courtesy of Morry Schwartz

**page 92**  
back cover, *A Book About Australian Women*, Outback Press, Melbourne, 1974  
Reproduced courtesy of Morry Schwartz

**MAD CONFIDENCE: A BOOK ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN**  
**VIRGINIA FRASER**

**page 97**  
Photographer unknown  
*(Carol Jerrems and Virginia Fraser, Melbourne)* 1974  
16.5 x 24.8 cm  
Private collection

**page 100**  
*Maya and Bala Shuddhananda, Kew, Melbourne* 1973  
from *A Book About Australian Women* (Outback Press, Melbourne, 1974)  
Reproduced courtesy of Morry Schwartz

**CAROL JERREMS IN 1974: A BOOK ABOUT AUSTRALIAN WOMEN**  
**GAEL NEWTON**

**page 102**  
Toni Schofield  
*Carol Jerrems, Sydney* 1973  
from *A Book About Australian Women* (Outback Press, 1974)  
24.5 x 16.5 cm  
Private collection

**page 105**  
*Outback Press* 1974  
gelatin silver photograph on composition board  
edition 1/9  
15.3 x 33 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 109**  
Carmel Lonsdale  
*Carol Jerrems, Surry Hills* 1973  
24.5 x 16.5 cm  
Private collection

**IF YOUR MEM’RY SERVES YOU WELL**
**DJON MUNDINE**

**pages 110–11**  
*(Ron Johnson)* (1974)  
19.3 x 24.5 cm  
Private collection

**page 112**  
*Redfern Life, two* 1973  
22 x 30 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 113**  
*Redfern Life, one* 1973  
21.8 x 29.8 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra  
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 117**  
*Ningla A-Na, Black Moratorium, Sydney* 1972  
16.3 x 24.6 cm  
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

# IMAGE CREDITS

## 1960s

Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

Photographer unknown
(*Carol Jerrems and Ron Johnson, Melbourne*) 1974
16.5 x 24.7 cm
Private collection

**page 119**
*Family Life, one* 1973
22.8 x 31 cm
*Family Life, three* 1973
22.9 x 31.3 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 121**
*Carol Duncan, Redfern* 1975
edition 1/9
13.4 x 19.9 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

Carol Jerrems
*Edols Seeing Gulpilil with a Bucket* 1974
reject print
11.9 x 17.9 cm
Private collection

**pages 122–3**
*Kath Walker, 'Moongalba', Stradbroke Island* 1974
gelatin silver photograph on composition board
16.2 x 24.2 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**pages 124–5**
Carol Jerrems
*Evonne Goolagong, Melbourne* 1973
gelatin silver photograph on composition board
16.1 x 24 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**ALPHABET SERIES ISOBEL CROMBIE**

**page 126**
*J* (1968) dated 1969
*O* (1968) dated 1969
*W* (1968) dated 1969
from *Alphabet Folio*
gelatin silver photographs on cardboard
20 x 10.4 cm; 19.7 x 11.1 cm; 19.7 x 10.4 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased 1971

**VALE STREET (JUDY ANNEAR)**

**pages 128–9**
*Waiting* 1975
13.3 x 19.9 cm
Private collection

**page 131**
*Mozart Street* 1975
edition 2/9
20.2 x 30.3 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the Philip Morris Arts Grant, 1982

**pages 132–3**
*Vale Street* 1975
edition 7/9
20.2 x 30.3 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the Philip Morris Arts Grant, 1982

**page 135**
*Juliet Holding Vale Street* 1976
artist's proof
22.7 x 15.2 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

## 1970s

**LYNN GAILEY (ANNE O’HEHIR)**

**page 137**
*Lynn* 1976
25.3 x 17.7 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of the Philip Morris Arts Grant, 1982

**pages 138–9**
*(Lynn Gailey Sewing)* 1976
19.2 x 24.1
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**pages 140–1**
*Thirty-eight Buick* 1976
artist's proof
17.8 x 25.4 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Christine Godden, 1991

**MIRROR WITH A MEMORY: MOTEL ROOM ANNE MARSH**

**page 142**
*Mirror with a Memory: Motel Room* 1977
Type C photograph
edition 2/9
23 x 18 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**MARK’S GAME OF RAPE (KATHY DRAYTON)**

**page 144**
*Mark Lean: Rape Game* 1975
edition 1/9
10.2 x 15.3 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 146**
*Mark’s Game of Rape* 1975
15.7 x 23.4 cm
Private collection

**WARD 3E HELEN ENNIS**

**All photographs in the following section are from a series by Carol Jerrems taken in 1979 at the Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania. Printed by Roger Scott, 2004. All are held in a private collection.**

**page 149**
*(Self Portrait in Bathroom)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 152**
Notebook belonging to Carol Jerrems, 1979

**page 153**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm
*(Self Portrait After Surgery)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 154**
*(Patient, Royal Hobart Hospital)*
15.7 x 23.9 cm

**page 155**
*(Medical Staff Briefing)*
15.7 x 23.9 cm

**page 156**
*(Nurse and Curtains)*
15.7 x 23.9 cm

**page 157**
*(Joy Jerrems)*
15.7 x 23.9 cm

**page 158**
*(Self Portrait)*
23.9 x 15.9 cm

## 1980s

**page 159**
*(Empty Corridor)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 161**
*(Moon through Window)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**PAUL COX REMEMBERS CAROL JERREMS INTERVIEW BY NATALIE KING**

**page 162**
*Paul Cox* 1977
edition 1/9
17.7 x 25.3 cm
Collection of Ian Macrae, Melbourne

“Paul Cox, Film Maker Season” poster, 1972
Collection: Robert Ashton, Melbourne
Reproduced courtesy of Paul Cox

Carol Jerrems
*(Self Portrait with Paul Cox)* 1972
15.4 x 23.7 cm
printed by Barry LeLievre, National Gallery of Australia Imaging Resources Unit, 2004, from a negative in the Carol Jerrems archive, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

**REFLECTIONS ON CAROL JERREMS ROGER SCOTT**

**page 166**
*Roger in a Sydney Café* 1976
reject print
15 x 22.5 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**CAROL JERREMS CHRONOLOGY**

**page 168**
Photographer unknown
Carol Jerrems, c.1951
Collection of the Kelly family, Melbourne

Photographer unknown
Carol Jerrems horse-riding, Eltham Pony Club, Victoria, c.1960
Collection of the Kelly family, Melbourne

*E* (1968) dated 1969
from *Alphabet Folio*
gelatin silver photographs on cardboard
19.8 x 10.8 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased 1971

Carol Jerrems’s photographic stamp
Private collection

**page 169**
Henry Talbot
*Carol Jerrems* (1972)
30. 2 x 20.5 cm
Private collection

*Redfern Life, three* 1973
21.8 x 30 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 170**
*Kung Fu Party* 1974
edition 1/9
10.2 x 15.3 cm
*Margaret Tucker with Rosslyn Johnson, Aboriginal House, Melbourne* 1973
24.4 x 16.3 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

page from Jenny Brown, Skyhooks: *Million Dollar Riff*, Dingo Books, Melbourne, 1975
Reproduced courtesy of Jenny Brown

*(Self Portrait with Esben Storm)* 1975
artist's proof

## 1990s

9.7 x 14.6 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

**page 171**
“‘She’ll crusade with a camera”, *Sunday Observer Magazine*, 14 July 1974
Private collection

**page 172**
*Swami Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati, Mangrove Mountain* 1978
20.2 x 30.5 cm
Collection: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Mrs Joy Jerrems, 1981

Rennie Ellis
*Carol Jerrems and Beatrice Faust, Brummels* 1975
15.2 x 22.9 cm
Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne

**page 173**
*(Medical Certificate)*
from a series taken by Carol Jerrems in the Royal Hobart Hospital, Tasmania in 1979
16 x 23.9 cm
Printed by Roger Scott, 2004
Private collection

“Small Homage” poster to Carol Jerrems, 1980
Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Melbourne

**page 174**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**LARRY CLARK**

**LARRY CLARK AND TULSA (CHRISTOPHER CHAPMAN)**

**All photographs in the following section are by Larry Clark and held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, purchased in 1980, unless otherwise specified. All images provided courtesy of the National Gallery of Australia and reproduced courtesy of the artist and Luhring Augustine, New York.**

**page 176**
No Title (Father and Child): from the portfolio *Tulsa* 1963
31.7 x 20.9 cm

**page 179**
No Title (Man with Head in His Hands): from the portfolio *Tulsa* 1963
20.7 x 31.1 cm

**page 180**
*New York City—42nd St.* 1979
31.4 x 20.5 cm

page from Larry Clark, *Tulsa*, Grove Press, New York, 2000

**page 181**
No Title (Woman with a Black Eye Lying in Bed): from the portfolio *Tulsa* 1971
30.5 x 20.2 cm

**page 183**
*New York City—42nd St.* 1979
31.4 x 20.6 cm

**pages 184–5**
*Untitled* 1972
from the series *Teenage Lust*
Private collection, courtesy of Josef Lebovic Gallery, Sydney

**page 186**
No Title (Seated Man Pointing a Gun): from the portfolio *Tulsa* 1971
30.5 x 20.1 cm

**page 187**
No Title (Woman in a Room with Patterned Curtains and Lightshade): from the portfolio *Tulsa* 1963
20.6 x 31.1 cm

**page 189**
*David Roper* 1963
31.1 x 20.6 cm

## 2000s

**pages 190–1**
No Title (Billy Mann): from the portfolio *Tulsa* 1963
20.9 x 31.4 cm

**NAN GOLDIN**

**NAN GOLDIN: THE BALLAD OF SEXUAL DEPENDENCY (JULIANA ENGBERG)**

**All photographs in the following section are by Nan Goldin and from the series The Ballad of Sexual Dependency (1982–1995). All images provided courtesy of Nan Goldin Studio, New York and reproduced courtesy of the artist.**

**page 194**
*Thomas Shaving, Boston* 1977

**page 196–7**
*Kenny in His Room, New York City* 1979

**page 198**
*Käthe in the Tub, West Berlin* 1984

**page 202**
*Kim and Mark in the Red Car, Newton, Mass.* 1978
*Skinhead Dancing, London* 1978

**page 203**
*Suzanne with Mona Lisa, Mexico City* 1981
*Nan After Being Battered* 1984

**pages 204–5**
*Suzanne in the Green Bathroom, Pergamon Museum, East Berlin* 1984

**page 206**
*Brian in the Hotel Room, Merida, Mexico* 1982

**page 207**
*Suzanne in Yellow Hotel Room, Hotel Seville, Merida, Mexico* 1981

**page 209**
*Nan and Brian in Bed, New York City* 1983

**page 210**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 211**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**WILLIAM YANG**

**WILLIAM YANG: DIARY OF A DENIZEN (RUSSELL STORER)**

**All photographs in the following section are by William Yang and in his collection unless otherwise stated. Images of photographs held in the collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, have been provided courtesy of the museum and all images are reproduced courtesy of the artist.**

**page 212**
*M\*\*\** 1981
ink on gelatin silver photograph
edition 2/20
49 x 40 cm
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Purchased 1999

**pages 214–5**
*New Years Eve Party* 1980
edition 1/10
27.5 x 40.3 cm
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Purchased 1999

**page 218**
*Joe* 1979
edition 3/20
ink on gelatin silver photograph
50 x 40 cm
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Purchased 1999

**page 219**
*Patrick White #3* 1980
edition 4/10
50.7 x 33.5 cm

**page 22**
*The Morning After* 1976

## 2010s

edition 2/10
38 x 50 cm
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Purchased 1999

**page 221**
*Untitled No 1* 1977
edition 1/10
40.6 x 51 cm
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney
Purchased 1999

**pages 222–3**
*Danny & Chris’ Whale Beach Party* 1977
edition 1/10
26.8 x 40.3 cm

**page 225**
*Grant #1* 1976
35.5 x 24.4 cm

**page 227**
*Rufus Collins and James McGrath the Night He Died* 1976
38.3 x 29.2 cm

**page 228**
*Peter Tully* 1981
edition 2/10
40.4 x 27 cm

**page 229**
*Flamingo Follies* 1975
edition 2/10
31.9 x 48.

**pages 230–1**
William Yang, *Sydney Diary.* 1974–1984, James Fraser Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1984
Reproduced courtesy of William Yang and Public Pictures, Sydney

**page 231**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 232**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**AFTERWORD (KEN JERREMS)**
**page 234**
Photographer unknown
Clockwise from back left: Eric Jerrems; Joy Jerrems, Lance Jerrems, Carol Jerrems and Ken Jerrems
Private collection

**page 235**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 236**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 237**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 238**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 239**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 240**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**page 241**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

**Effy Alexakis, Photowrite:** pages 52, 53, 54 & 55.

**John Gollings:** back cover [bottom right]; front endpaper; pages 8, 9, 10–11, 12, 14, 16 [top right], 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 32–3, 41, 45, 46, 60, 68, 70, 71, 75, 77, 92, 97, 102, 109, 110–11, 117 [bottom], 121 [bottom], 128–9, 149, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 161, 162 [top & bottom right], 168 [bottom], 169 [top], 171, 173 [top], 184–5, 219, 225, 227, 228, 229 & 234.

**Paul Green:** pages 212, 214–5, 218, 220 & 221.

**page 242**
*(Self Portrait)*
15.9 x 23.9 cm

**PERMISSIONS**

Images by Rennie Ellis © Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive
Images by Carol Jerrems © Ken Jerrems and the Estate of Lance