

share their work as part of the *Identity and Emotion* art exhibition

Identity and Emotion

Friday January 29 to Wednesday February 3 - Open Daily

Opening night Friday 29 January 6pm - 9pm

An intimate exploration of Identity and Emotion through paintings, drawings, photography and sculpture. Featuring works by eight emerging Brisbane Artists:

- Isabelle Falconer
- Graeme Gough
- Mia Manson
- Jeremy Saxon Oxley
- Elzunia Rejmer
- Genevieve Robey
- Sally Ryhanen
- Richard Taorei



Circle Gallery, 274 Montague Road, West End, Brisbane.
www.circlegallery.com.au



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Vim Lowenstein <http://www.redbubble.com/people/vimm> Hobart, Australia.

fishbowl eyes

By PJ Ryan

She had rivers of black running down her cheeks.

Her eyes reminded me of the twenty five centimeter fish bowl I once had when I was nineteen and ready for things I wasn't.

When I looked at her, I wanted to stare for too long and tap on the sclera to test the strength of the white of her eyes.

Don't scare the fish.

I saw a shark in her eyes one night. It was circling a memory, its black fin slicing through the calmness and warning threatening schools of thought.

Today, her mascara streams down her face, like leaking octopus ink and I wonder what it tastes like.

Was she an obscure culinary treat or a dangerous creature of spontaneity?

She said things sometimes that made me step backward once or twice, just enough to include safe space. I was never frightened of her, though wary.

Her fishbowl eyes were enticing and sometimes entrancing but I knew there were things trapped within and I wondered how to set them free.

My mother once tipped my two goldfish down the toilet when I was seven and three quarters but she said they'd have a better life and it wasn't fair to keep them in such a small square tank.

I held my breath as I thought about them slurping into the revolts of the S bend, down and away, out through a big underground pipe. Hopefully they found the ocean.

I reach across from me and slide two delicate fingers across my friends cheek, her ink attaches to my skin and for a moment I consider trailing it across my tongue.

She smiles at me and the smudges in her eyes help her to see more clearly.

The view outside often makes her cry.

No one's dying anytime soon

By Duffboy

Footsteps, misteps, falling

debris.

I seek shelter from gospel

choirs.

The politics of truth

gang up on me,

they're not my truths

not my policies.

Bullets stray, voices are raised

guilty parties whose names

are named.

You speak of mortality, joy and I listen.

Yet, I'm afraid.

he was in the habit of breaking things

By Rex Inkpen

he was in the habit of breaking things..

all sorts of things.

he would break plates and wine glasses

especially the good ones

he never actually meant to

the not so good ones seemed immune

they never broke, even when they hit the tiles

he broke figurines and assorted bones

cd's, ipods and mobile phones

he broke his laptop and favourite board

but the worst thing he ever broke

was his heart and her heart

he never actually meant to

that was the problem.

I was darker then

By valentina63

(An ode to Winston Churchills wonderful "black dog" of depression)

The black dog and I were friends long before it was fashionable to walk down the road with a little black spoodle, collar encrusted with diamonds and coat beautifully groomed. My shaggy giant of a labrador and I would sneak out at night and drive around for hours, his head out the window windswept and alive under the accepting gentle blanket of the two am sky, howling as loudly as the wind would allow until early in morning and before the pain of light, we would walk quietly through the door, lying foetal on the couch for hours at a time until again the night's warm embrace beckoned us out. Yes a good friend to have when all others only visit for the smiles.

Being Famous

By Nancy Ames

It must be like opening a new door in a familiar wall, the one with the photograph, the same old photograph but starting to look so strange, just a quick impression and then a flash of final lime-light as the irresistible wind pushes you outside, out into outer space, where the view is always magnificent – nothing but the best death for you, baby – and then falling back down to earth as celestial debris, universal rain...

And all the over-active wave-lengths have to reduce their amplitude and frequency so that light can become a particle again and feed the hungry multitudes with circuses.

The end of a bender

By Vim Lowenstein

the end of a bender
when body's tender
sends a message
confessing
a blessing of intervention
the prevention
of more decay
the memory
washed away
along with wrong doing
and spewing
who's in
who's out
who's shout
you pass out
wallet battered
bar maid flattered
flat line flattened
not sure what just happened
fatigue produced
legally abused
rum stuns your health
as you become someone else
not an out of body experience
more a poisoned interference
choice of adherence
roaming life's clearance
feeling
no one will hear us
drop out of range
not because of our age
but forgetting to
end a bender
that was threatening
life deadening
deny the sedative
to let live
give reprieve
short term leave
of the world we conceive
as a social disease

Permission

By chitrali

It is alright to mark your favourite poems,
In the book of poetry: it's your book.

I give you permission.

It is alright to move the furniture the way you want it,
In your living room: it's your house.

I give you permission.

It is alright to throw away the things that you don't like:
In your pantry,
In your wardrobe,
In your music collection,
In your garage.
They're yours.

I give you permission.

It is alright to feel the things that you feel:

Your pain,
Your fear,
Your anger,
Your love,
Your joy,
Your laughter,
Your bitterness,
Your smile,
Your sadness,
Your grief.

They exist, they're yours.

You don't need my permission.

Me and my shadow

By valentina63

I know each day I stay
wandering through the shadowlands,
disturbing dusty memories,
unearthing buried bones,
there is a danger I may fall,
stumbling
over the strings of sanity,
spider webs about
so easy to be caught
so hard to come out
to see again the blinding beauty
of a summer's day

The things we lost in the fire

By Shoaib Malik

Today I sung horribly in my car
At the top of my lungs and while some looked scoffing
I thought of a memory when I was young
A remnant the smell of smoke often brings
I was saved by a nameless man who saw a fire
And heard my childish cries and coughing
And in an act surprising to even him, he ran into death
With his arms as his only offering

Today a girl is singing in another part of the world
As loud as she can but doesn't remember it was me that
spring
Who, as fate would have it was late work
And felt like it was just "one of those mornings"
All she remembers is a faceless man who ran in
And the those arms to which she still clings
Because it's after reflecting on what we lost in the fall
That we come to recognize, it was that day we grew wings

Today I feel that the best things in life aren't things; it's the
kindness that others bring
I realized that when I heard 4 alarms ring, and we made it
out with voices that still sing

Learning to love my ground

By Debbie Lee

I'm aware I sometimes
Impose a chip on my own shoulder.
I am quite happy to fall;
If only I could make my soul bolder.

Sadly, I test the people I love.
Whether it's the love of friends,
Or the love of my family,
I know I should make amends.

In a lonely cave hidey-hole
Succulent fruit, unable to grow.
I fear my roots will rot away.
Bark worn thin, my body hollow.

I'm trying to no longer test others,
Or even myself, like a silly hound.
To feel invigorated and alive,
I'm trying to learn to love my ground

Turmoil

By Debbie Lee

I've heard the ties that bind
seem like vanity.
Heartbroken I'm consumed
by insanity.

My mind is a series
of sharp dimensions
and unbroken circles
of swirling tensions.

Decaying demons prey
upon me like vultures.
Contradiction abounds;
I've lost my taste for sculptures.

Patience is a virtue;
Power in a commercial;
Pain as clear as crystal;
Subdued and artificial.

I face lunacy aware
that the purity of all words
are being forsaken to
human cattle, lost and absurd.

For me, perception relies
on a sense of duality.
Poetry next to science;
Beauty begets brutality.

Although my heart is broken,
I pursue another distraction
to ease my mind of sorrow,
lust fuels my action and attraction.

I feel I'm gaining knowledge
that love is just a word for revenge;
some cosmic joke on humans
so we wish and hope for it to end.

I wish the world could change
into a tropical aquarium;
all black hearts would transform
and there'd be no more lack of variation.

But no, my rage has compounded,
I am sunburned yet frigidly cold,
gaping at unsmiling fish blinking
at my sense of suffocation and isolation.

the snake in your throat

By ShadowDancer

There they are

hanging in the space
between you and me
like neon signs, flashing
police lights and siren screams
choking the air from my lungs

they are the words
I've known for a long time but
half expected to never hear

I look at your face
filled with stupidity and arrogance
and reach out to enfold my small fingers

Pretty as you feel

By restlessd

She felt ugly
She hoped the day would come
It hadn't yet.

~~~~~

She caught herself this morning,  
Cursing at herself.  
She said you're ugly, you're so fat,  
She said I hate myself.

She looked into the mirror,  
She didn't like what she saw there.  
She looked away disgustedly.  
Why does she even care?

Yesterday she was happy.  
She thought, today I am ok.  
What could be different, changed,  
From the way she feels today?

What is it in her being that  
Makes her feel this way?  
One day she feels so pretty,  
Then so ugly the next day?

And then she feels so *petty*,  
What difference does it make?  
Larger issues loom daily  
Get over it for heavens' sake!

So then there is the guilt,  
The stupid vanity of it all.  
No one cares, why should you?  
Just curl up into a ball.

Will she ever just be happy?  
Will she ever be ok?  
Will she ever just like herself?  
She hopes, maybe, will it happen today?

around those words of black pain  
to stuff the loud  
blinking screaming hurt back  
where they came from

they crawl into your jugular  
and wrap around your larynx  
squeezing it  
a boa constrictor  
the same way your words  
suffocated the flesh of my hope  
until it was drained  
gagging, and left dusty and grey

I watch as these words of your making  
are soaked into the depths of your lungs  
moving through your aveoli and  
absorbed into your blood  
so that you can feel the toxicity of your  
selfishness seep through  
every part of your body  
the same way that it seeped into  
my every pain receptor, every blood cell

I want you to know the feeling  
of how your sated poison  
traveled throughout my body  
so it will always remind you of  
the words that came out of your mouth  
sliding and heavy, like a snake in old mud  
and that they in fact choked you, bit you, killed you  
this fever of your petulance  
that hissed at me with a languid tongue,  
this manufactured idea that you  
somehow 'deserved' me without effort,  
had 'earned' and 'possessed' me like  
a purchased piece of art that you never  
quite understood so you hid it away  
locked, wilting, gathering dust  
from loneliness and neglect  
and kept it just so you could  
say you owned it

darling, do you feel that flavor of  
metal in your mouth?  
can you taste the weight of the iron  
as it soaks through your taste buds  
and sits fully on the top of your palette?  
this pungency is the taste  
of my blood  
exiting your world  
and the quintessence of your existence  
being purged from my heart,  
like a fever pushing out a sickness  
where the only remnants are the  
exiled drops of death  
left on your tongue, lingering,  
to always remind you that

I was the prey that got away.

## Visitors from another time

by Nancy Ames

We are always,  
as we move through life,  
peeling back layers  
of innocence.

We say to ourselves,  
“How could I ever  
have been so naive?”

Then, as often as not,  
we shed somebody.

Finally, one by one,  
we arrive at our cynical,  
withered, stubborn cores.

To the young people,  
we must look  
something like aliens,  
like visitors  
from another time.

Therefore,  
amid the inevitable  
and continuous  
passage of time,  
recall that eternity  
is also always  
present.

## Fishing

By Shoab Malik

I remember going fishing my very first time  
It wasn't any special day or any special line  
I caught the first fish basically without trying  
But this fish didn't put up any fight so I felt it wasn't mine  
So I threw it back into water and waited for a sign  
What felt like years later and after so much trying  
Another hungry fish bit onto my patient line  
This one flipped sides like it didn't know what it wanted  
And I felt I could do better than a fish without a spine  
So I decided to fish in a bigger sea to find the right fish to be mine  
One that fought hard against me so it wasn't reeled easily by the twine  
One that didn't whine, but its strength came from within and was refined  
And then suddenly I felt a pull when a fish and my hook combined  
I knew that it wasn't my bait that had this one fighting for its life  
So the harder I tried the more I wanted it to be mine  
And we loved – I thought I would keep this one forever by my side  
But once I realized I too was caught, the harder I held to keep it the harder it sighed  
As if it was convinced that having fished before was equivalent to me having lied  
After fighting so much I felt the purpose of catching that fish was no longer right  
And being one not to keep a fish out of water, I felt like I couldn't watch as it died  
For the first time I cried... I felt like fishing wasn't for me as much as I had tried

And the hardest thing I ever had to do was let that fish go that night...

So I packed up all my supplies  
Because I didn't want to fish using lines as lies  
Unable to stand and look into another fish's eyes  
Knowing full well I would cause its demise

I moved on thinking maybe having a fish to dine wasn't how I'd be defined  
So I climbed; and somehow the fish that used to bite learned how to fly

That's how I realized that if you want something real you reach up for it like the brightest star that shines  
And when you aim for the skies that is where you will find, a fish that has fought the sea to love you for all of time

## Platitudes For The Modern Man

by Jim Marshal

I ran into a Mosque and took  
all my clothes off.

I pulled a splinter out of my larynx  
and I drove it back in.

A baby seal showed up in my dreams  
nailed to a red crucifix.

I took him upstairs to bathe in  
his mother's skin.

I said to a wise man: Did my parents  
not fuck loudly enough?

The wise man cracked open a walnut  
and I bowed.

I laughed when ancient inscriptions  
leapt from the tablet.

I cried when my luminous wife no longer saw  
through my blindness.

I made love to a hammer, but I could not  
secure my life.

And it nailed me twice; once for the anger,  
once for the wife.

## **I Am**

**By valentina63**

In the shiny house that is my family  
I have been  
The spare room receptacle,  
of the superfluous and chaotic.

In the healthy body that is my family  
I have been  
The liver, enlarged and diseased,  
distiller of the toxic.

In the band of miners that is my family  
I have been;  
The caged canary sent in solo,  
singing silent in the darkness.

In the small regiment that is my family  
I have been  
The loyal foot soldier with bayonet,  
bludgeoned out of the trenches and over the top.

In the flock of geese that is my family  
I have been  
Forever flying last in formation,  
tending to the fallen.

But today in the bright epiphany of morning  
I am  
the creator tenderly joining  
each precious jigsaw piece of past,  
and seeing for the first time how  
each piece of who  
I have been  
is essential to my Zeitgeist  
part of who  
I am

## **extinct, i won't forget you**

**By PJ Ryan**

You are a weight sitting just above my collar bone, creeping over my shoulders and radiating down my back. Your tail slides down my spine and slaps against it occasionally.

Camouflaged within my vertebrae, you still remain extinct.

There's no mistaking it when you slide beneath my lumbar; stubborn little penetrator.

Hiding within me, you settle into the places you like best.

You cause me to ache.

Dinosaur, I still miss you.

Do you remember late one night, at a house beside the beach, you called my mobile phone (those things will be extinct one day too) and you pretended to be out of sight in some place far away. You whispered to me until I ached for you (deeper) and then you knocked on the door with a thump, thump, thump of your tail.

You always were full of surprises.

The most beautiful of creatures.

That night, I stepped back from the doorway and jumped into your arms; you carried me down the hallway and into that place again.

We created something that hour, when the moon was low and the tide settled. A little bit of tenderness and a definite amount of appetite seeped into my bones, causing me to never forget you.

You crawled under my skin and settled within; an artifact.

You're gone now, though there are traces of you everywhere within me and all of the time, space and evolution of my self never hides the fossil that continually resurfaces.

I don't go searching for you; I stumble across you on the oddest of days whilst I'm walking through the yesterdays on

## **the secret**

**By rain-dogs**

id like to tell you a secret one that you already know  
it's in all that's ever lived and everything that's grown

in every leaf and flower and every bird that's flown  
in every rock and river and every breeze that's blown

in every cloud that gathers and all the sun that shines  
it's in every heart that rambles and every step in time

in all the rain that's fallen and every star that's born  
it's in every midnight calling to every day at dawn

in every spirit waking and every story shared  
in every friend youve had and every word youve heard

its in all that's ever thought and every smile youve seen  
in every tear you tasted and everywhere youve been

its in all there ever is and everything that's true  
and the one place it lives is inside of you.....

I was a pine tree pricking the sun  
with five o'clock shadow.

route to tomorrow. Those footsteps are obstinate and my feet have grown since I last stood there, but it still feels strangely comfortable.

I will fade away one day and my crumbling bones will settle into the earth, my own relic of the life I have lived. Someone, in some place will feel me pressing in and underneath their shoulder blades, with an ache of lust and love and could've been desire, but it probably won't be you.

It rarely works that way.

Admiration of such a beast is only one sided. A major attraction at a museum. Something to reminisce and wonder about.

You are my dinosaur.

## **The Trade Off**

**By Vim Lowenstein**

with every intake I lose a piece of my soul

as the newly arrived it's your job to show me the world  
I didn't get out much or I wouldn't maintain this stance  
this movement inside leaves little for my appearance

with no asserted plan on how to present myself  
as for concerns of health, I'm concerned I will out live the world  
that's why I burn fossil fuels, progress is secondary  
I let TV burn my eyes and plant morality inside

you extract a good chunk of soul through this  
I'm part to blame, caught up, addicted to bliss  
the escape numbs the pain and dulls out your past and  
your name  
anguish, contempt, a retrieval attempt that's in vain

refer to the past, the ideologies, moral code you held  
but the student can't teach the master until taught the world  
so many outlandish, eccentric are tamed in this fashion  
the simple minds without passion; the mandatory method  
to imagine

capitalism lent us the options but scrutinised our decisions:

*become what you want, be all you can be,  
but you'll only make par on this course,  
when you can be more like me.*

our childhood teachings are void  
it's really money, celluloid, cellulite,  
sell your life  
it's the least you can afford  
that hunger pang is not starvation  
remedied with Lean Cuisine  
It's that bleeding organ  
a signal for the need  
of a unique soul you've never seen

## **his body leaked tears**

**By Rex Inkpen**

He woke up every morning and most mornings he woke in a state of mind he identified as happy. Some mornings this feeling was tempered by a gnawing dread but he did not know what caused this and could not pin it down. He determined that he would try and forget about the gnawing.

The happiest mornings of all for him was when he was wrapped firmly in the loving bosom of the ocean. He was happy then especially but he did not really know why. He felt somehow welcomed by he heaving mass of wet salty fluid and he was addicted to its mood and vitality.

The days passed and he was unaware that the gnawing feeling that beset him some days was becoming increasingly insistent. He found less pleasure in the simple things and became more anxious and unsettled. The realization for him finally emerged one day when the unexpected death of a close friend prompted an immediate and ultimately cathartic review of his own unextraordinary life.

He listened more closely to the gnawing feeling that he now realised had come to dominate his subconscious. He opened himself to the intensity of the subliminal swell and he let his thoughts be washed and cleansed by the irresistible and loving force that had surrounded him all along.

He floated in the ocean later that day and his body leaked tears. Salty tears flowed from his body into the ocean without impediment. His salt and the oceans salt became one as he floated in the silent gentle waves. He felt an overwhelming sense of relief at finally being at one with something and everything.

# Valentines Day in the Early 1970s

By Diana-Lee Saville

A boy at school loves me. Today he gave me a Valentines Day card. It's all red and blue with little pop-out windows hiding little cartoon pictures. I've hidden it under my dressing table so Mum can't find it.

Roger is cute and he has brown hair. He is tall as well; a lot bigger than the other boys in grade two. I love it when he walks arm in arm with me around the school ground. The other kids laugh and point, but I don't care.

I just took the card out to read it. I'm good at reading for seven years of age. Last week I took some of Mum's special notepaper and made a storybook about a magic ant. I drew pictures as well, it took me hours, and I even missed The Flintstones! I showed Mum. She was quite cross and threw it away. I was very sad. She then said, "Stop wasting my paper."

Again I read the card. Inside it has a silly printed message, but what was above it and under it was the most important.

"To Diana – love from Roger", with some xxxooo. I want to marry Roger, he is so kind and caring, not like Mum and Dad who yell and scream at me all the time. Today also my bestest friend Sharon and me learnt the words to our favourite song, 'Devil Gate Drive'. Suzie Quatro sings it; Mum likes it too. I watch her dancing around the living room while I hold the record cover, studying the words.

"To Diana – love from Roger." I'll think about it all night, I look over to where it is hidden. I creep out of bed to get it and cuddle it."To Diana – love from Roger." I love those words, even more than Devil Gate Drive. Now that song will stick in my head and I'll never get to sleep!

## Saturday

I woke up this morning unhappy. My pillow was wet from tears. I remembered it was Saturday, I wouldn't see Roger for two whole days.

All morning I sat in our treehouse with my precious card. I heard Mum call. I climbed down to see what she wanted and guess what! There was Roger! Mum wouldn't let me play with him on my own so my sister had to hang around. I showed Roger our treehouse and Mum's records; I told him I knew the words to Suzie Quatro by heart. He told me to prove it, so I had to sing it in the treehouse. Roger laughed. He told me I was a good singer. Maybe now I will be a singer and travel around the whole of Victoria!

I said goodbye to Roger and he blew me a kiss. I hope Mum didn't see.

## Sunday

I said the "F" word today while Mum was making tea. I was just curious to see what she would do if I said it. She dragged me into the bathroom and washed my mouth out with soap. YUK!!

*'So come alive, come alive down on devil gate, down on devil gate, down on devil gate drive.'*

## Monday

I couldn't find Roger today, he was at school but at morning playtime I couldn't find him. My bestest friend Sharon was not to be found neither. I wanted to tell her about Roger visiting me and how he blew me a kiss.

At lunchtime I ate alone. I took out my precious Valentines Day card and read it over and over. On my way to the breezeway toilets I saw Roger and Sharon with their arms linked coming towards me. They both stopped and laughed at me. 'Hi Saville', they said. No one had ever called me Saville before! I walked away; I was hurt. My heart broken.

For the rest of the day I was very sad. Now I had no boyfriend or bestest friend. I then started to get really angry, so you know what I did then? I took out my precious Valentines Day card and soaked it in water from the toilet. Then I ripped it up into tiny bits and scattered them all over the school. I hate Roger, I thought. Another girl in my class came up and said hello. She told me a funny joke about chickens. I laughed so much I forgot about Roger and Sharon and I didn't care anymore.

Sophie and me skipped home together side by side. I asked her if she knew the words to 'Devil gate drive'. She said she did so then we sang at the tops of our voices.

*'Down on devil gate, down on devil gate, down on devil gate drive.'*