

the
cameo project

louise sadgrove

a matter of time

21 july – 24 august 2003

a matter of time

Sue Gardiner

Louise Sadgrove's exhibition, *A Matter of Time*, was triggered by her intense study of the human experience of time and its manifestation in the arts. Her observations arose initially out of her pressing need to negotiate a workable timetable as a parent, businesswoman, artist and adult student. They then developed through her studies for a Bachelor of Fine Arts at Whitecliffe College of Art and Design, culminating in her graduating exhibition in 2002.

Time, Sadgrove explains, is an abstract concept – a phenomenon that is nebulous, amorphous, ineffable. In our daily lives, we personally experience time in differing ways. In some circumstances, there is never enough time as it speeds by demanding we keep up. On other occasions, time passes at an agonising and slow pace, bearing down on us like an inescapable weight. Yet humanity, through established structures of measure and control, attempts to rule such a chaotic and indescribable world.

However, in this series of work, Sadgrove's representation of time is strangely quiet – it is a gentle, flowing, poetic, musical, fluid state she has created which celebrates rather than fears the void, the gap, the pause. There is no scream of chaos, no dramatic collision, no sense of time lost or of potential nightmare.

To achieve this point of departure, the artist begins with the grid. The grid, as theorist Rosalind Krauss writes, is a visual device to free the artist from language, promoting silences hostile to narrative.¹ It is, Sadgrove says, reassuring and knowable – a fundamental unit. Her first use of the grid came from an awareness of the power of the calendar as a defining structure. 'Each square', she explains, 'represents a day in a life that is non-returnable, it is linked to the very human need to know what day it is.'²

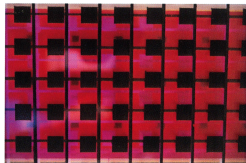
With the grid, Sadgrove could then peel back layer upon layer of symbolic readings we have historically placed on a human experience of time – the metaphors, the preconceptions, the assumptions, interpretations and structures created.

From there, she was able to develop a visual patterning of time – one that suggests endless possibilities and has the potential for continuous renewal. To do this, she began to duplicate, repeat, change, connect and enlarge her grid units, creating visual 'sentences' of light and space. The multiplied grid sequences bring her back full circle to her starting point as she then rebuilds the resonance of structures we are familiar with – musical notation and rhythm, the links between time and space, changes in light and shadow, presence and absence and the phenomenon of sequence and time recording.

The interest in musical notation, rhythm and syncopation is evident. Sadgrove's groupings, the repetitions and irregular placements of grid panels, in particular, emulate a musical score, with modifications of rhythm, connecting sequences and changes in beat. Each individual piece represents a moment in time while the overall sequence signifies progression.

Expressing interest in early forms of measurement using the natural length of a person's breath and rate of heartbeat for time keeping in music, Sadgrove also points to polyphonic music, where two or more melodic lines of music could be played or sung simultaneously. Using this method, multi-layered rhythms could co-exist in a regular and rhythmic construct. She applies these principles, along with the notion of syncopation, to her work. Her vertical layering of the perspex panels strongly conveys these ideas. The *syncopie* signals a rhythm by describing a delay and it is the absence of the beat, the void or interval that Sadgrove uses visually to express a rupture or halt in time. In the horizontal compositions, she is looking for the disruption of sequence, the moment when time slides quite literally sideways into a dream like state.

Light and shadow are used dramatically in this series and are most effective where two intersecting shadows, created through the manipulation of light upon the perspex grid units, result in an entirely new form; creating something, in fact, that is not there, a process the artist feels carries great significance in the study of time. The development of the Western



calendar attests to this – historically the impact of creating then abolishing days in the year, for example, led to significant economic and financial implications to human society at the time. More recent protests by farmers on the impact of daylight saving are another example of the effect that an alteration to the structure of time management has on human perception.

For Sadgrove, the outcomes of her interventions with light and shadow signify a fourth dimension and she refers to Einstein's theories of relativity in which time and space are bound together in a four-dimensional whole. Time becomes another dimension of space. Of course, notions of the fourth dimension lead on to contemplation, in the modern digital age, of the concept of hyperspace. Time in this context is thrown into a state of flux, changing our vision of reality completely.

In the digital world, the instantaneity of communication renders our experience of time into a succession of instants – hyperspace is a realm committed to the denial of the body and therefore, humanness, *a shadowy world without form*. So it is that Sadgrove's delicately colour-coded time sequences and shadows can also be read as symbols of time beyond the human experience – we become dissolved in space to exist only through a continuous series of transforming connections and changes.

1. Rosalind Krauss, 'Grids', in *The Originality of the Avant Garde and other Modernist Myths*, MIT Press, 1985.

2. Artist's dissertation notes 2002.

louise sadgrove

- 2003** te tuhi – the mark Cameo Project
- 2002** Group Show, Urban Arthaus, Parnell
- 2002** Bachelor of Fine Arts, Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design
- 2001** Professional Diploma Fine Arts
- 2000** Diploma in Art and Design, Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design
- 1999** Winner Iris Fisher Art Award
- 1997** Solo Exhibition, Iris Fisher Members Gallery – ‘New Works in Watercolour’



arts - culture - community

13 Reeves Road, P O Box 51 222, Pakuranga, Manukau City,
Aotearoa New Zealand. Phone (09) 577 0138, Fax (09) 577 0139

Director: Candy Elsmore, Curator: Rhoda Fowler
Design: Jacinda Torrance / Verso Visual Communications
© te tuhi – the mark 2002. ISBN: 0-908995-29-6