



ZOE SADOKIERSKI

Type Horses

2011 | *Sydney Design 2011*, Blank Space Gallery

The exhibition was part of Sydney Design 2011, an annual two-week festival produced by the Powerhouse Museum and sixty other cultural institutions. The festival aims to foster meaningful dialogue around design issues. The work in this exhibition is part of my ongoing research around visually communicating the creative process. The exhibition reflects on the ways practitioners work in the early stages of the creative process through the exploration of the relationships that famous writers have with their typewriters. Of all creative practitioners, writers - with their verbal communication skills - are best suited to articulating this rough and usually private process. I studied the practices of forty-five writers, and chose three 'case studies' to research in more depth. This research is visualised as a series of 45 illustrations, collections of large format posters (stencil and offset printed) and 2 artist books (see images).

Supplementing the research, two workshops were held at the gallery during the exhibition period - one open to the public, the other by invitation. Participants reflected on the materiality of the writing process by typing on manual and electronic typewriters, as well as writing with other tools (various pens, pencils, brushes and quills). Participants provided written feedback and reflections, which I will incorporate into future research in this area.

The research visualised through this exhibition expands on the research presented in my doctoral thesis (2010) and a previous exhibition, 'Hand, Writing' (DAB LAB, 2011) into the way creative practitioners work. The UTS library purchased an artist book and my process book for their permanent collection.

Interior photograph of exhibition space



Exterior photograph of exhibition space



1.



2.



3.



4.

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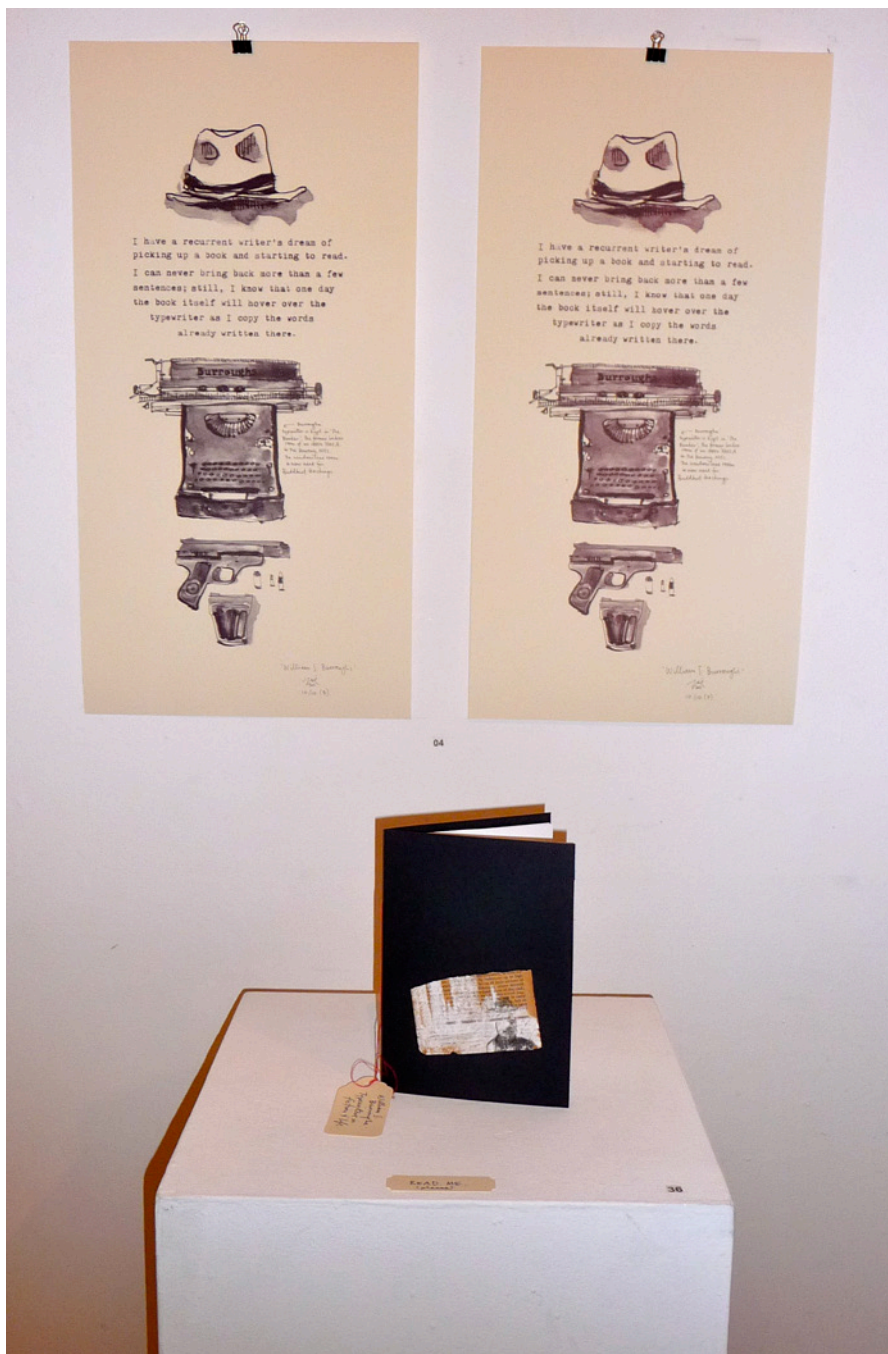
1. Interior photograph of exhibition space

2. Photograph of opening night

3. Photograph of August 3 workshop

4. Photograph of July 31st workshop

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1.

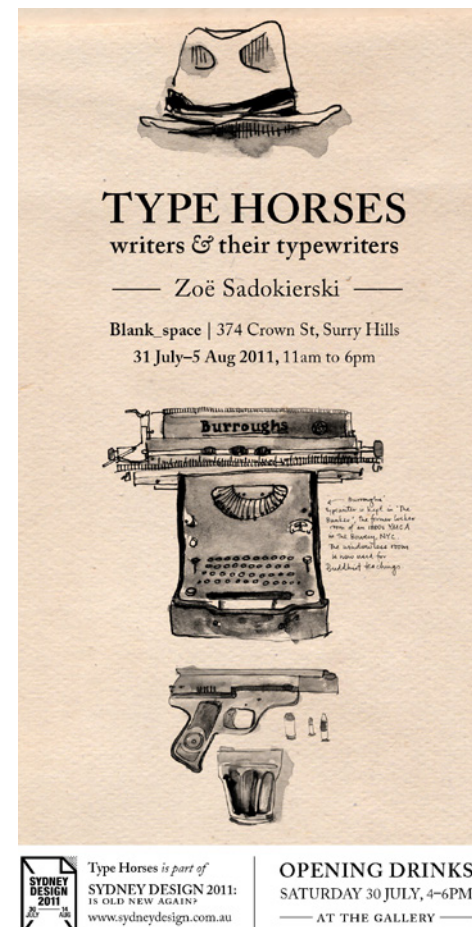


2.

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1.



2.

Prue Gibson discusses the collision between tradition, innovation, heritage and experimentation in this year's Sydney Design theme.

is old new again?



Objects, old and new, antique and contemporary, have always piqued our collective interest. The relic, whether handmade or created with the latest technology, holds mythical appeal and allows space for new narratives. It is part of human nature to covet objects as signifiers of social, historical, economic, intellectual and aesthetic change. And yet, why are so many Sydney designers, artists and writers turning to face the past for inspiration and relevance? Is old really new again? Or have we reached the end of our intellectual and creative evolution, so that the only direction for us to find new information and innovation is via the backward glance?

Scientist Nick Bostrom from the University of Oxford has hypothesised that, should evidence of extinct life forms be discovered on other planets within our observable universe, it is highly probable that Earth, too, is heading towards a time in space of extinction. There seems to be an overwhelming sense of fear played out in contemporary society about the possibility of extinction, not just of animals but of humans. In response to anxiety about the world's sustainable future, many areas of culture have started to turn towards more frugal ways of living and creating, in a kinder atmosphere. It is inevitable that this attitude be expressed through visual art, literature, architecture and design.

Australian designers are dabbling with ideas of the fake and the remake. Fictitious copies of old technologies abound. The Powerhouse Museum's Sydney Design 11 (SD11) festival reflects this interest in old objects and much-loved relics from the past. Audiences want to see artists,

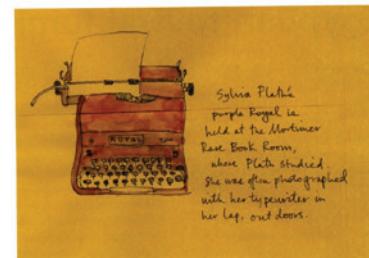
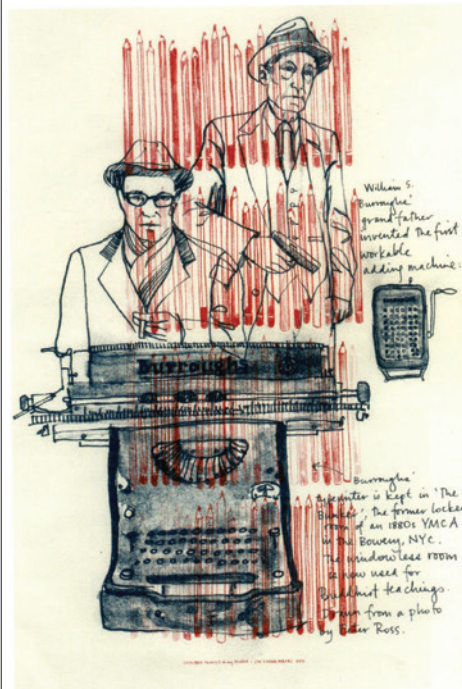
designers and artisans who work with sentimental materials, who create new objects using traditional techniques and who utilise fair and honestly acquired materials and products. This attitude reflects slow living and slow observing, coupled with a speedy appetite for the latest in technology, research and product development.

One of the participating exhibitions in SD11 is *The Paper Attic*. Organised by Kate Ford at Object: Australian Centre for Craft and Design, this installation by paper engineer Benja Harney will fulfill our desire for something old and something new. Harney will re-create objects you might find in an attic, such as discarded toys, a spider's web and an attic window. Ford says the show will invoke 'the attics of our imagination—machines of inventors past, dusty suits of armor and your grandfather's favourite paintings—forgotten treasures rediscovered.'

Harney says: 'I find old things inspiring. I think of the attic as filled with wonders. I think of old treasures and of my grandfather who was an antiques dealer. But I also use a computer to make work. I use Illustrator to draw out templates. I can do it many times. While there is a lot of fear about technology, it is also really amazing. I think materials such as paper are in vogue because they are tangible and nostalgic and represent a yearning.'

Another participant is Zoe Sadokierski, a lecturer at UTS. Design work and research for her PhD informed her new installation for SD11. *Type Horses* is an exhibition which is the culmination of her passionate interest in the materiality of the tools we write with. As a former book designer for Allen and Unwin

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Publishers, Sadokierski became curious about the raw stage of early writing and of those creative processes never seen by the reader or viewer. Many writers still use a typewriter or hand-write their first drafts and, through her research, Sadokierski discovered that using a typewriter slows down the author's pace.

The exhibition will include typewriters, hand-written notes, 'mind maps' and six different versions of her PhD thesis, the 80,000 words of which she hand-wrote. There will also be photographs of writers and their beloved typewriters from history (such as Sylvia Plath's plum-coloured typewriter). Contemporary writers such as David Malouf have been interviewed for the purposes of the exhibition, and his poem, 'Typewriter music' greatly inspired Sadokierski.

So what inspires this return to old equipment? Sadokierski says: 'Fear. We are aware perhaps that our end is nigh. We tend to think: if only we could jump back in time. Also the rapid pace of technological change is terrifying. With a typewriter, at least I know it only has to type my words.'

But it is not just the ability to react against the galloping progress bearing down upon us. It is the aesthetic beauty of these old machines and objects that is alluring: 'I hate the look of new cars and new computers. Old typewriters are beautiful.'

SD11 will also incorporate a series of analog drawing machines located around the city to react to natural phenomena such as rain, dust and traffic flow. The curators Nadia Wagner, Sam Spurr and Tega Brain explain that 'Through the design and use of simple analog drawing machines to document the city, we hope to show that 'old' humble forms of making still have the potential to give us rich information and experience.'

By making the old new, Australian designers are creating new myths; new ways of making sense of our lives here on earth. Creative folk have an uncanny ability to flag the many and diverse changes in global emotional wellbeing. The participants in this year's design festival also have a formidable facility to find pragmatic solutions and to find meaning, succor and hope in unusual places and in inventive ways.

OPPOSITE PAGE: BENJA HARNEY, DETAIL FROM THE PAPER ATTIC. IMAGE COURTESY OF OBJECT GALLERY. THIS PAGE FROM LEFT: BURROWS 2011, ZOE SADOKIERSKI, PEN AND INK ON ENVELOPE, UNDERWOOD, 2010. ZOE SADOKIERSKI, PEN AND INK ON PAPER, FROM THE EXHIBITION TYPE HORSES: WRITERS AND THEIR TYPEWRITERS.

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Supporting evidence

Weblink:
www.dhub.org/articles/1379