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ARTWISE 2

VISUAL ARTS 9–10

SECOND EDITION



Glenis ISRAEL

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Alasdair MACINTYRE

[b. 1970 in Brisbane, Australian]

FORMS

sculptural tableaux or dioramas, small-scale sculptural models, enlarged figures

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ELESSON: INTERVIEW WITH ALASDAIR MACINTYRE

Alasdair Macintyre offers insights into his work and inspiration. A transcript of the full interview is also available in your eBookPLUS.

SEARCHLIGHT ID: ELES-0727

FRAMES

Postmodern in the way he challenges us and warns us of the future, often reinterpreting art and artists from the past; *Cultural* in his subjects

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The audience is intrigued by Macintyre's miniature interpretation of issues relevant in his world.



Jab 2009

polyurethane resin, polymer clay, wood, cardboard, inkjet print, acrylic paint, plastic acrylic

23 × 38 × 24 cm

Courtesy of the artist and

Sullivan + Strumpf Fine Art, Sydney

CRITICAL STUDY

In *Jab* the artist is being given an injection of 'postmodern angst', a serum to help him get over his artist's creative block (just as writers experience writer's block, when they find it hard to start writing, to be creative). The humour is obvious here, but as in all of Macintyre's works there are various symbols to be deciphered to understand the intellectual layering of references as well as the personal concerns of the artist. The diploma on the wall has been awarded by South Splatville Art Academy. The label on the serum reads, 'Postmodern Angst. To be inoculated by Postmodern experts only'. Another sign asks, 'Want longer lasting Art? Cerebral injection technologies available'. As with many of his works, the imagery and signage continue on the 'back'.

CRITICAL STUDY

Although *Monkey Business* (opposite) appears as a simple joke on the world of art galleries (curatorial team and acquisition policies), as in much of his work Macintyre is using satire to convey his views — in this case, a wry criticism. The drawing on the whiteboard, for instance, references research done in the 1950s on chimpanzees' 'drawing' in an attempt to study their intelligence levels.



Monkey Business 2009
 polyurethane resin, polymer clay, wood,
 inkjet print, cardboard, paper, felt, acrylic
 paint, plastic acrylic
 24.5 × 21.5 × 28.5 cm
 Courtesy of the artist and
 Sullivan + Strumpf Fine Art

The miniature magazines all have personal significance to the artist: *Art Collector*, *50 most collectable artists* is a reminder of a goal the artist has yet to achieve, while the Australian art encyclopedia is open at the page of Macintyre's own entry. Every fine detail has a purpose and leads the viewer to solve the puzzle of the artwork's multiple meanings and to appreciate his humour when commenting on his personal involvement with the artworld.

Signifier/Signified references not only politics — the figure (glasses and stance) is an obvious model, or rather caricature, of former prime minister Kevin Rudd — but also the recent art debate on censorship around the photography of Australian artist Bill Henson.

CRITICAL STUDY

Alasdair Macintyre's artworks are unique.

ARTIST'S PRACTICE

Relatively small-scale, they engage the viewer, who not only appreciates the fine detail of his figures and objects but tries to decipher the narrative he constructs through the positions of the figures and the symbolic meaning of the objects. The miniature 'rooms' or 'events' he creates are diverse in their references and inspirations. His artworks often refer to mass culture (the Smurfs, Batman's 'Joker', U2 band members) or the artworld (his works on artist Ian Fairweather, Jeff Koon's 'Puppy', the art critic and historian Robert Hughes, and himself as artist), as well as to his own quirky slant on contemporary life. Some are more intellectual in their message than others, but all are amusing and demonstrate Macintyre's wit — for instance,

Signifier/Signified 2009

polymer clay, polyurethane resin,
 inkjet print, paper, acrylic paint, cardboard
 19 × 15 × 14 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf Fine Art



Alasdair MACINTYRE