

The Golden Age

CURATED BY RHETT BREWER

DALLAS BRAY, RHETT BREWER, ALLAN CHAWNER,
JO ERNSTEN, DI HOLDSWORTH, JOHN TURIER

HAWKESBURY REGIONAL GALLERY 20 MAY to 3 JULY 2011



“[...] they lived like gods without sorrow of heart, remote and free from toil and grief: miserable age rested not on them; but with legs and arms never failing they made merry with feasting beyond the reach of all evils. When they died, it was as though they were overcome with sleep, and they had all good things; for the fruitful earth unforced bare them fruit abundantly and without stint. They dwelt in ease and peace upon their lands with many good things, rich in flocks and loved by the blessed gods.”

*From the poem “Works and Days”
by the Greek poet Hesiod, 8th Century BC*

*Painting, The Golden Age
by Jean August - Dominique Ingres 1862*

THE GOLDEN AGE

The Golden Age is a wonderfully evocative term that brings to mind Ancient Greece and Rome, the elaborate courts of European cities, or the more recent past (name your decade) where the population lived lives of splendor, peace and luxury - at least in comparison to the present. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, (1516) presents an idealized island where the population live in peace and harmony and perfect understanding. By naming it 'utopia' - 'no place', More is commenting on the unlikelihood of such a place ever being able to exist. This ideal of a perfect land has resonated from the Renaissance to today.

This exhibition has brought together a group of six artists whose work explores the multiple meanings of 'The Golden Age'. They have arrived at a show that has surprising contrasts between an idealized past and a dystopian past, of longing and relief, and which

ultimately calls into question why we find it difficult to see the present in the same rose-tinted glow.

Rhett Brewer as artist/curator, Dallas Bray, Allan Chawner, Jo Ernten, Di Holdsworth and John Turier who are based variously in the Hawkesbury, Blue Mountains and Newcastle have all created artworks that express a personal understanding of 'The Golden Age'. Their collaboration for the Hawkesbury Regional Gallery presents an interesting and philosophically provocative exhibition.

Kathleen von Witt
Director
Hawkesbury Regional Gallery

JOHN TURIER

There are so many possible golden moments in the history of human culture; choosing one particular favourite was not easy. I have by nature an eclectic aesthetic and over the past twenty years of my practice, I've tried to embrace a different approach to each consecutive show. This body of work has largely been motivated by my love of and fascination with the all-encompassing changes that engulfed the world in the middle to late 1800s- the Industrial Revolution. Steel, Steam and Mechanics forever changed the way we live and relate to the world. An explosion of imagination, creativity and production, the Victorian era laid the foundation stones of modernity. The innovation in design, architecture and engineering delivered humanity the ability to produce both heaven and hell on earth. The simple and complex beauty of Victorian machinery and engineering has always deeply satisfied both the poet and the workhorse of my artist self.

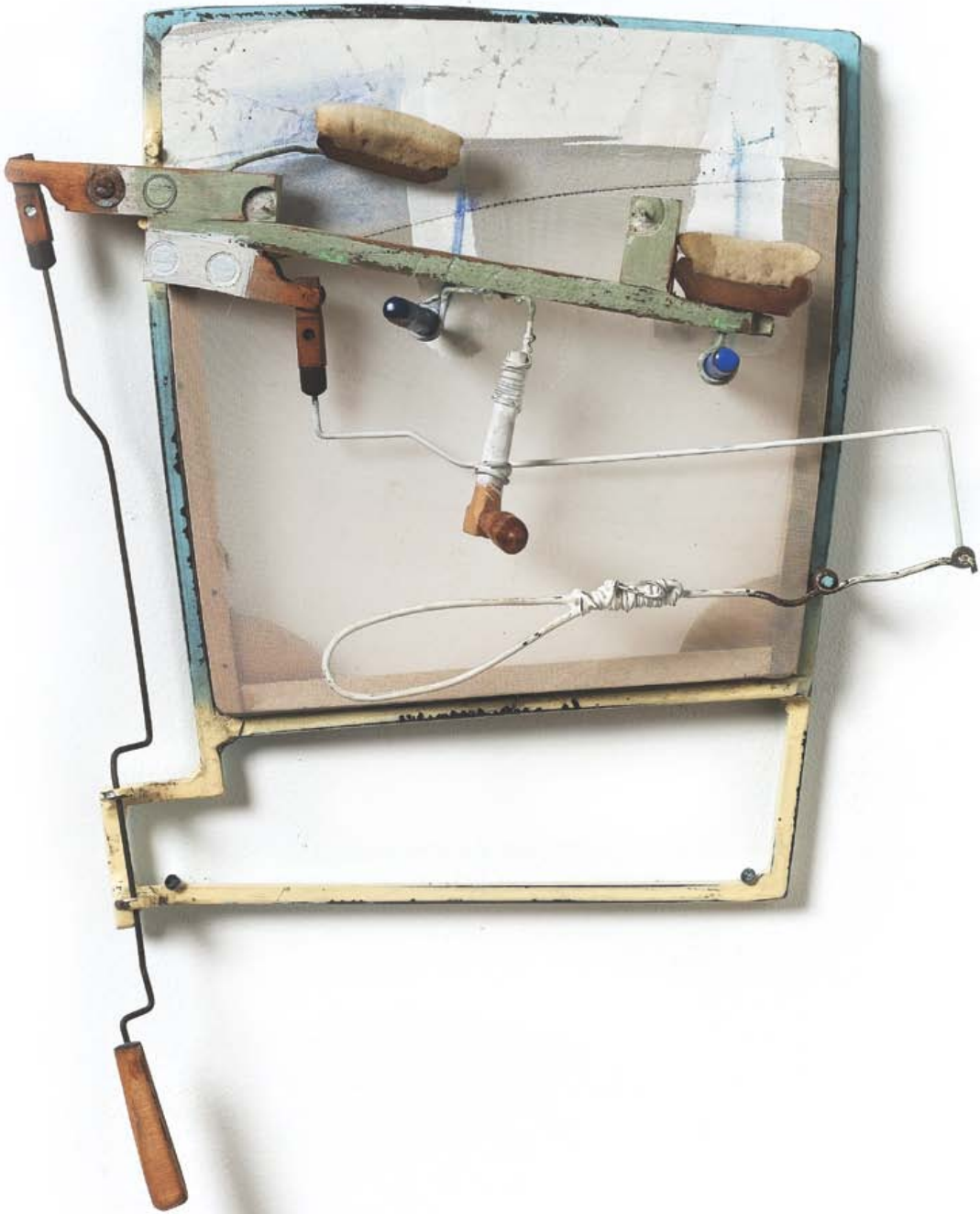
'The Never Need Artists Again Machine' is a visual poem addressing an expectation and ultimate disappointment with the machine. I set out to construct a machine that could accurately produce a relaxed and sloppy drawing, as if it had been rendered by a three year old child. The machine needed to be like a Victorian prototype, accurate but cumbersome, functional but still clumsy enough to turn out inconsistencies, so that each individual drawing has its own authenticity.

The other works are combination of steel, silk, drawing and mechanics. I see them as three dimensional drawings.















ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

RHETT BREWER

Rhett Brewer is an artist and curator whose practice is based on painting although he has also exhibited drawing, printmaking, sculpture and photography. He has consistently exhibited his work in Sydney since the first of his eleven solo shows in 1981, as well as in Melbourne, Brisbane, Newcastle, Budapest, Prague and Haifa. He has been an artist in residence in Newcastle Lock-Up and the Bundanon Trust. He has been in many group and project shows including as a finalist in the Sulman Prize (twice). His work can be found in public and private collections in the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia.

Rhett Brewer also taught various art disciplines as an academic at Nepean CAE and then the University of Western Sydney from 1982- 2006.

DI HOLDSWORTH

Di Holdsworth is an artist currently working in the medium of assemblage using hand-made mechanics and music-box movements to create movement and sound in her work. Holdsworth's most recent solo exhibition was *Fly Me to the Moon*, at Damien Minton Gallery, Sydney in 2010. She has had 6 solo exhibitions and participated in many group shows including the Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, 2010, and the 15th Annual Miniature Sculpture Show, Defiance Gallery, Sydney, 2010. Her work can be found in national and international collections.

She has a Bachelor of Visual Arts/Fine Arts, with distinction, from The University of Western Sydney, 1988, and a Masters of Creative Arts from The University of Wollongong, 1991, receiving an Australian Post Graduate Course Award.

Di Holdsworth has taught drawing, painting and interdisciplinary studies since 1989. She currently teaches drawing at The Western Sydney Institute, Nepean TAFE and has also taught at The University of Western Sydney and The University of Sydney.

ALLAN CHAWNER

Allan Chawner is a Conjoint Associate Professor of Fine Art at the University of Newcastle, Australia. His photographic artwork has been based around notions of sense of place and investigates urban and cityscapes including portraiture and landscape. Allan's work is a response to identity, both of the self and of the communities. Allan has exhibited major works internationally and his work is part of several public gallery collections in Australia. Recent work includes video and projected pieces in collaboration with composers.

JO ERNSTEN

Jo Ernten was born in Christchurch, New Zealand. After moving to Holland in her late teens she lived in London for 8 years, working as a decorative painter. Jo settled in Australia in the late eighties. She completed her Fine Arts Honours degree at The University of Western Sydney in 1997 and now works as Head of Printmaking at the Western Sydney Institute, Nepean TAFE Fine Arts department. She shows both nationally and internationally, including participation in recent exhibitions in USA, New Zealand, Canada, China, England and Malaysia. Jo's practice is interdisciplinary, incorporating installations, sculpture, printmaking and painting.

DALLAS BRAY

Was born in Moree NSW in 1961 and studied at Newcastle C.A.E He was Newcastle Artist in residence in 1987, and lived and worked in Melbourne for a few years including a period as artist in Residence at Melbourne Grammar school 1989. In the early 1990s he moved to the Hawkesbury, living and working in the Bilpin area. Longing for the sea, he then returned to Newcastle, where he is currently teaching Painting and Drawing at Newcastle TAFE.

He was awarded the Kilgour Prize for figurative art in both 2008 & 2010.

JOHN TURIER

John Turier is a sculptor who works in a variety of mixed media including steel, bronze, wood, silk, drawing, paper and found objects. He also teaches sculpture in the Hunter Institute in Newcastle.

He has held thirteen solo exhibitions, including *Songs from the Night Train*, a major survey of his work at the Newcastle Regional Gallery in 2008. He has also been invited to exhibit in many group and project exhibitions in cities across Australia as well as in Germany and Japan.

He was awarded the William Fletcher Trust memorial Scholarship in 1990 and he is the creator of Foundation Seed, Newcastle's best known public sculpture in the nature strip of King Street at Newcastle's downtown city entrance. His *Drawing Machine* sculpture featured in *I Walk the Line*, a survey of New Australian Drawing at the MCA in Sydney in 2009.

THE GOLDEN AGE

all works courtesy the artist's unless otherwise stated
all measurements in centimetres: height x width x depth

cover
Allan Chawner
A Golden Age (video still) 2006
digital video
duration 6:40 mins

DALLAS BRAY

page 5
Island 2011
oil on canvas
168 x 107 cm

page 6
High road 2011
oil on canvas
40 x 50 cm

page 7
The crossing
oil on canvas
45 x 60 cm

page 8
Golden Age
oil on canvas
50 x 60 cm

page 9
Sleeper
oil on canvas
61 x 107 cm

RHETT BREWER

page 17
Micky Mavros - The Greek Elvis 2010
oil on board
30 x 35 cm

page 18
The athlete's village 2010
oil on board
30 x 35 cm

Rockin at the Town Hall 2010
oil on board
30 x 35 cm

page 19
Linda the waitress 2010
oil on board
30 x 35 cm

Billy and Max meet the Russians 2010
oil on board
30 x 35 cm

page 20
Down empty streets 2010
oil on board
64 x 46 cm

page 21
Towards the Golden Fleece 2010
oil on board
30 x 35 cm

page 22
Sweet Leilani - the Polynesian Princess 2010
oil on board
30 x 35 cm

page 23
Fire and Strife 2010
oil on board
30 x 35 cm

ALLAN CHAWNER

page 25
Puebla Cathedral (Mexico) (detail) 2006
digital print
110 x 150 cm

page 26
A Golden Age (video still) 2006
digital video
duration 6:40 mins

page 27
Puebla 3 (Mexico) 2006
digital print
110 x 150 cm

page 28
Puebla 1 (Mexico) 2006
digital print
110 x 150 cm

page 29
Taxco Cathedral, Sculpture (Mexico) 2006
digital print
110 x 150 cm

JO ERNSTEN

page 35
Portrait 1 2011
solar plate print, coloured pencils & acrylic
9 x 9 cm

Portrait 2 2011
solar plate print, coloured pencils & acrylic
10 x 10 cm

Portrait 3 2011
solar plate print, coloured pencils & acrylic
9 x 9 cm

page 36 - 37
Landscape 1 2011
acrylic on paper
19.5 x 13 x 5 cm

page 38
Seascape 1 2011
linocut
36 x 26 cm

Seascape 2 2011
linocut
36 x 26 cm

Seascape 3 2011
linocut
36 x 26 cm

Seascape 4 2011
linocut
36 x 26 cm

page 40
Airscape 1 2011
linocut & acrylic on paper
50 x 33 cm

page 41
Airscape 2 2011
linocut & acrylic on paper
50 x 33 cm

DI HOLDSWORTH
all work courtesy the artist & Damien
Minton Gallery, Sydney

page 43
Fly Me to the Moon 2010
music-box assemblage
33 x 30 x 13 cm

page 44
The Carnival Day 2010
music-box assemblage
24 x 54 x 20 cm

page 45
Abduction of Europa (after Rembrandt) 2010
music-box assemblage
19 x 18 x 15 cm

Chasing Eternity 2010
music-box assemblage
22 x 26 x 17 cm

page 46
Squibb's Milk Sugar 2011
music-box assemblage
22 x 13 x 11 cm

Girls Can Fly 2010
music-box assemblage
38 x 19 x 13 cm

page 47
Tropical Fish 2011
music-box assemblage
15 x 7 x 7 cm

Love Makes the World Go 'Round #3 2010
music-box assemblage
14 x 7 x 7 cm

page 48
The Player (detail) 2010
music-box assemblage
35 x 23 x 15 cm

page 49
Briteway 2011
music-box assemblage
17 x 12 x 12 cm

The Banking Giant 2011
music-box assemblage
16 x 9 x 6 cm

JOHN TURIER

page 51
Infinite sex 2008
steel, silk, timber, porcelain, graphite, paint
45 x 60 x 12 cm
courtesy the artist & King Street Gallery,
Sydney

page 52
Jack 2008
steel, silk, timber, aluminium, paint, ink
45 x 60 x 10 cm
courtesy the artist & King Street Gallery,
Sydney

Petit mort 2008
steel, silk, ceramic tiles, timber, paint,
graphite, ink
45 x 60 x 8 cm
courtesy the artist & King Street Gallery,
Sydney

Love cat (far right) 2008
steel, slate, timber, wire, pencil
28 x 20 x 6 cm
courtesy private collection

page 53
Nice food 2008
steel, timber, piano parts, scrabble bits,
wire and buttons
25 x 45 x 10 cm
courtesy private collection

page 54
Not before coffee 2008
steel, silk, stone, wire, felt, pencils, paint
courtesy private collection

page 55
Rose 2008
steel, silk, timber, ink, graphite
25 x 60 x 8 cm
collection Gerry Bobsien

Only you 2008
steel, silk, timber, paint, graphite
45 x 60 x 10 cm
courtesy the artist & King Street Gallery,
Sydney

page 56 - 57
The never need artists again machine 2005
steel, timber, wire, china graph, paper, brass
450 x 400 x 150 cm
courtesy the artist & King Street Gallery,
Sydney

HAWKESBURY REGIONAL GALLERY



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Weekdays 10am - 4pm
(closed Tuesdays & public holidays)

Weekends 10am - 3pm

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Marketing & Audience Development: Prue Charlton
Volunteer Coordinator: Rebecca Turnbull
Education & Public Programs: Adrienne Richards
Installation Team: Ruth Maittlen, Taryn Leahy,
Jason Abbott, Emma Williams
Volunteers & Members
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