



ROOTS

SEBASTIAN DI MAURO SPEAKS OF HIS RECENT GEOMETRIC ASSEMBLAGES AS REFLECTIONS ON THE SURROUNDING RITUALS AND REALITY OF AUSTRALIAN SUBURBAN GARDEN LAWNS. THIS INDICATES, TO ME, THE ASSOCIATIVE POWER OF ABSTRACTION – A FORCE TO BE CELEBRATED – AS I FIND THE WORKS IMBUED WITH OTHER, DIFFERING AND MULTIPLE REFERENCES THAT DYNAMICALLY JOSTLE FOR ATTENTION.

On record as a frequent user of AstroTurf! In recent years, Di Mauro's favoured material (he prefers Wimbledon Unreal Grass), positions his sculptures within the qualities of a 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde' character. On the one hand gloriously reflecting its synthetic composition, the bright olive polyurethane pile remains rooted in its purpose as an aesthetic and functional model of grass, a replica of, and replacement for, the real thing.

Di Mauro's sculptural practice is the product of a critical philosophy, productively reflecting the tensions between contemporary matter and ideas. His works provoke speculation on scientific and social developments within the biological and chemical worlds. In their precise and equally-sized rectangular components, the Suburban Abstractions are his most geometric sculptures. Hence, the inflections of mathematical as well as regulated, constructed life with which they are imbued.

SEBASTIAN DI MAURO
SUBURBAN ABSTRACTIONS
 OPENING SATURDAY 31.07.04

Equating suburbia with ordered plots and lawns, Di Mauro signals the evolving state of our grass roots, both future and past. In evoking mown grass and its associated sensory pleasures or the aesthetic pattern of the cut lawn and the weekend family rituals or childhood sites of play, these building blocks of suburbia can reflect the changing experiences of lived space. For every new outer metropolitan housing development, promoted on the basis of space, fresh air and security are multiple urban apartment blocks pitched to offer garden-free, low maintenance, high density environments. For anyone with a desire to avoid gardening while having green lawns year round, AstroLawn, Real Turf, Evergreen, 1st Turf, Novagrass, Green Tech and many companies like them can make your dream come true. Technology supplies lawn for all styles; faux grass in an attractive green with a soft feel to blend with the neighbors garden or the more refined and luxurious looks that come at a higher price. Where reputations must be earned, try Turf Turf, guaranteed to withstand backyard football and rioting children and pets.

While synthetic lawn gains increasing credibility and a contemporary relevance in locations like Australia where water scarcity is intensifying, the material itself is not a recent innovation. Its primary application has been in sports fields, where it offers a consistent surface in all weathers and uses compared to grass. Side effects, such as the very qualities of toughness and resilience that are casual factors in sporting injuries, influence further research to develop the "improved, better-than-ever" product.

Perfect grass! No mowing! No Fading! No Fertilizers! No Pesticides!
Coming soon: homeowner water tax credits!

In our capability to replace and 'improve' on nature, a Soylent Green tenor surfaces within Suburban Abstractions. The grim,

out of control, slippage of humankind and cities into a future dystopia, where water, food and accommodation are rarities, is contrasted in this 1973 film with the now-extinct natural beauty of the earth and its wildlife. Ultimately, reliant on synthetic food and driven to a loss of morals and ethics, society falls into a fatal, nightmare scenario. The film and 'artificial grass' share a similar temporality, synthetic grass arriving on the domestic market in the early 1970s.

There is another, historical potential within Suburban Abstractions to operate across the binary of utopian/dystopian effects, residing in the nature of geometric abstraction. The potential for creating meanings, in both the multifarious forms and possible contents of geometric abstraction, has its roots in the arrival of modernism, and new understandings of human existence in freshly industrialised, urban western cities. Unlike many aspects of the modern, abstraction in visual art, potentially due to its receptivity to interpretation, continues to hold potential for the contemplation of being; of the perfect and imperfect, empirical and intuitive or natural and unnatural life.

Today, we realise there can be no unspoilt nature, no place that has not been exposed to the effects of humanity, no organic or biological form that exists unaltered in post-industrial society. Abstraction also is not pure, but its history and perversion has become an integral part of its meaning, and its contemporary attraction. In Australia, we have also entered a time when not everyone will desire or achieve a front yard or mow the nature strip or experience cut grass. Surroundings cannot be taken for granted; adaptation, change, replacement, evolution are all unstoppable in biological realms, in the nature residing in the green spaces in cities and suburbs, and in the world we experience. Just look how many years synthetic grass is guaranteed for 'no fade' now!

Zara Stanhope

1. It was at the moment of the development of synthetic grass in the late 1960s that American artist Dan Graham was photographing the minimal-type forms and structures he recognised in his local suburban landscape, to indicate the subjective nature of minimalism and its social relevance.



ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS

- 1993-1996 Master of Arts (Visual Arts), Monash University
1987 Bachelor of Arts, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane

Sebastian Di Mauro is a senior lecturer at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2004 *Suburban Abstractions*, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
Pivot, Umbrella Studios, Townsville, Queensland
Turf Sweet, Maroonah Art Gallery, Melbourne
2003 *Turf Sweet*, Dianne Tanzer Gallery, Melbourne
Pivot, Herring Island Gallery, Melbourne
Pivot, Shepparton Art Gallery, Shepparton, Victoria
2002 *over and over*, gallery 482, Brisbane
Pivot, White Box Gallery, Griffith University, Queensland
2000 *Spill, Tuft and Lure*, Global Arts Link, Ipswich
floccus, Brisbane City Gallery, Brisbane
1999 *Respire*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
1998 *Pane e Zuccherò*, Cairns Regional Gallery, Cairns
Manifestations, Beatty Gallery, Sydney
SKIN, Ipswich Regional Art Gallery, Ipswich
Pagine dal Libro Muto, Grahame Galleries, Brisbane
1995 *Pagine dal Libro Muto*, Beatty Gallery, Sydney
1994 *Underlay*, Beatty Gallery, Sydney
1993 *Præparatio Physica*, Omniscient Gallery, Brisbane
evanescence, Space Plentitude, Brisbane
Recurrence, Magazine Space, Brisbane
1992 *Mbalance*, Ipswich Regional Art Gallery, Ipswich
1991 *Transference*, Above the Apothecary, Brisbane
1990 *being-BECOMING*, Roz MacAllan Gallery, Brisbane
1989 *Passage*, Roz MacAllan Gallery, Brisbane Gallery, Brisbane

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2004 *Melt*, British School at Rome Gallery, Rome, Italy
Temperature: Contemporary Queensland Sculpture, Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane
2003 *The McClelland Survey and Award 2003*, McClelland Gallery, Langwarrin, Victoria
The Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award, Werribee Park, Victoria
Montalto Sculpture Prize, Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove, Red Hill South, Victoria
2002 *Sculpture by the Sea*, Mark's Park Bondi, Sydney
Robert Jacks Drawing Prize, Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo
Grapple, Pinnacles Gallery, Thuringowa, Coloundra Regional Art Gallery, Caloundra
The Shape of Air, Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart
Transit/Narratives, Centro per la Cultura e le Arti Visive, Villa Letizia, Treviso, Italy
2001 *National Sculpture Prize & Exhibition 2001*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Woolahra Sculpture Prize and Exhibition, Woolahra Municipal Council, Sydney
2000 *Against the Grain*, Brisbane City Gallery, Brisbane

COLLECTIONS

Queensland Art Gallery; James Hardy Collection, State Library of Queensland; Woolahra Municipal Council, Sydney; Mackay City Library, Mackay; Museum of Contemporary Art, Brisbane; Logan College of TAFE, Queensland; Artbank; Brisbane City Gallery; Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Brisbane; Allied Queensland Coalfields Ltd; Art Gallery of Western Australia; Gadens Ridgeway; University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba; Attorney General's Department, Queensland; Downlands College, Toowoomba; Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery; Australian Construction Services, (Department of the Arts and Administrative Services), Brisbane; Sly and Weigall Solicitors, Brisbane; Queensland Cement Limited, Brisbane; Global Arts Link Ipswich; Griffith Art Works; Corrigan Collection; Private and Corporate collections throughout Australia; Woolahra Municipal Council; Montalto Winery

AWARDS

- 2003 Finalist, *The McClelland Survey and Award 2003*, McClelland Gallery, Langwarrin, Victoria
Finalist, *The Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award 03*, Werribee Park, Victoria
Winner, *Montalto Sculpture Prize*, Montalto Vineyard and Olive Grove, Red Hill South, Victoria
2002 Awarded Australia Council Residency, British School at Rome, Italy
2001 Winner, *Woolahra Sculpture Prize*, Sydney
Finalist, *National Sculpture Prize and Exhibition*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Winner - *Woolahra Sculpture Prize*, Woolahra Municipal Council, Sydney
2000 Recipient - *Parks Victoria Residency* (awarded through the Gold Coast Art Prize)
1999 New Work, project grant, Australia Council
1997 Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery Acquisitive Award
1996 Project Grant, Arts Office, Queensland
1991 Aberdere Art Prize, Ipswich Regional Gallery, Ipswich
1990 Logan Art Award, Painting
1989 Artist of the Year Queensland Symphony Orchestra

COMMISSIONS

- 2003 Brisbane Magistrates Court, Public Artwork, Queensland Government
2002 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane, Major Public Artwork, Queensland Government
2001 175 Eagle Street, Brisbane, Major Public Artwork for entrance - completed
1989 Queensland Symphony Orchestra Master Concert Series

dianne tanzer gallery

Opening Saturday 3pm
31.07.04
until 28.08.04
Tuesday - Saturday
12.00 - 5.00pm

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