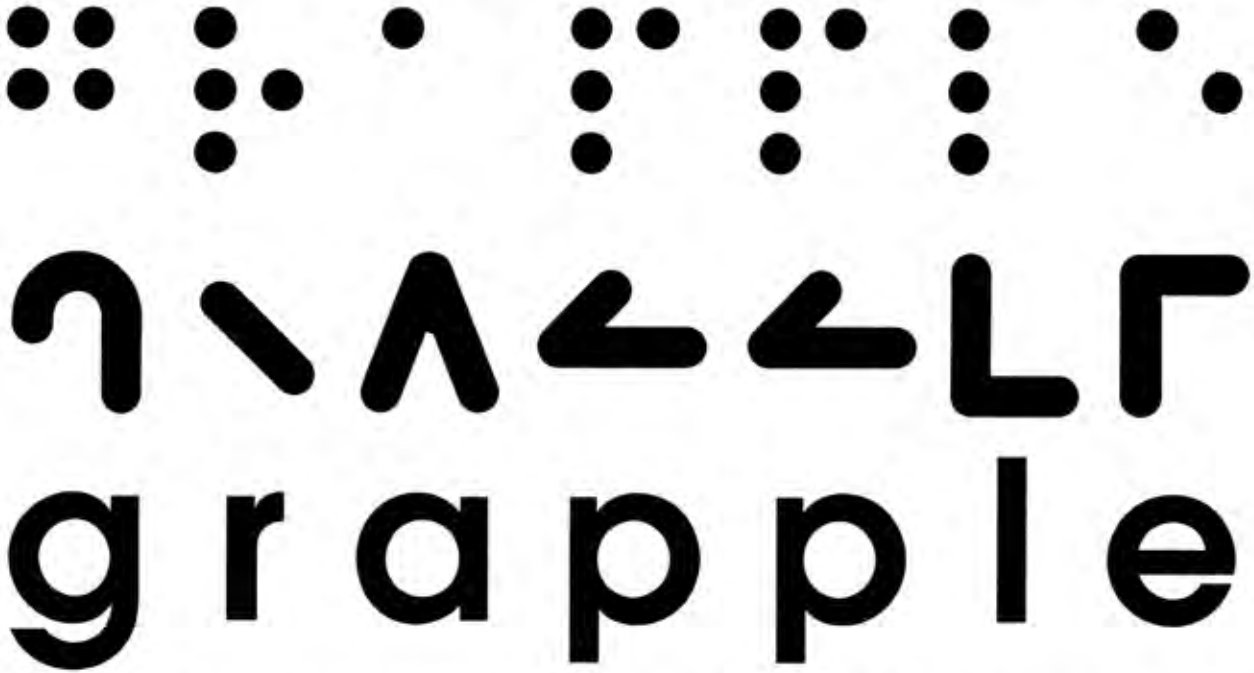

a sensory engagement with contemporary art

A Pinnacles Gallery exhibition
toured by Regional Galleries Association of Queensland

curator's essay

Sight, in most societies, dominates above all the senses. The old adage "seeing is believing", succinctly identifies an almost universal attitude towards this faculty. Sighted people determine truth, if they didn't see it themselves, by asking for eyewitnesses or empirical evidence. The perceptions of people without vision are given little credence.

Those of us with vision tend to rely on little else so our other senses remain under developed. Our intellect, in this regard, is insufficiently engaged as we often look without thinking, and believe what we see. It can be argued that we have allowed our gaze to become lazy under the constant barrage of computers, television and film that tell us what to think and where to look. We have become so accustomed to the ever increasing pace of the Internet, TV advertisements, video and DVD games, that seeing has become a passive occupation. Images may register but knowledge is not always brought to bear.

This passive means of viewing and interacting with the world has consequences on the way we engage with art. Bruce James asks: "Are we now so pictorially saturated – through painting, film, video, TV, computers and the multiple new media and screen technologies – that our eyes, and to some extent our hands, crave another kind of stimulation altogether?"[1] He suggests the answer lies in the three dimensionality of sculpture, "its tactility (offering) a palliative for sickened sensibilities". Why stop with one art form and the engagement of one sensory faculty? The "palliative for sickened sensibilities" would surely be immersion in a wholistic sensory engagement with art.

Imagine a room full of art works engaging all the senses, intoxicating the visitor with a sensorium of sights, smells, tastes, textures, and sounds. Even a person with profound sensory impairments would fail to leave unaltered. This is the intention of **Grapple**. Through the activation of all of an individual's learning faculties, **Grapple** enables them to connect with the artwork and with the intentions of the artist. It reaches out to a group within our society to whom galleries and art rarely, if ever, have been accessible – the vision impaired. It endeavours to re-engage members of the general public alienated by contemporary art, and allow works of sensory art to be fully realized within the traditional "look but do not touch" environment of gallery spaces.

The **Grapple** artists invite engagement with their work on various levels. Some ask the audience to suspend thought processes and immerse themselves in a sensory experience. Others ask the audience to use their senses to consider ideas and comments, as well as engage their cognitive skills more consciously. All the artists employ the senses of the audience with purpose – to communicate the intentions of their art making.

Alan Valentine's **Sea Gongs** invite interaction on a tactile, auditory and visual level. Made from a combination of recycled hardwoods, metals and glass, they provide when touched a diversity of temperatures, textures, vibrations and sounds. Organic in shape but mechanical in nature they are the synthesis of man-made and natural materials and processes. Such juxtaposition creates illusion: man–made "natural looking" objects; simple constructions posing as masterpieces of craftsmanship; the veneer of preciousness hiding a robust structure. While primarily sculptural these objects have an interactive function – to be touched, to make noise and to stimulate the senses.

In his artwork, Ryan Dunshea endeavours to create a sensory experience for his audience that moves them beyond the physicality of the object alone.

"It's the pleasure of activating all the senses, of activating your sight, of activating your touch, when you experience an artwork. It's better than just looking at a painting on the wall that you can't touch; you're blocked from the experience. As soon as you're able to touch it, experience it and feel it, it totally changes everything because it's not the object. It's the experience that's more important."[2]

His large rope wall sculptures, entitled **Threads**, are based on a counting system of Peruvian indigenous tribes. They are indicative of his fascination with ancient and modern tactile systems of communication, such as the knot alphabet and different forms of braille and sign language. In capturing an essence of these systems in his artwork, their history and methodologies, Ryan recovers a lost past. In bringing them alive through audience engagement he activates a sense that normally lies dormant when engaging with art. His work reminds us that touch is an important component of communication, albeit one that our society has sought to confine to certain social settings, and that art is a significant form of personal and public communication.

Stephen Weis' "quest", as he calls it, is to give audiences' a sense of empowerment – not by telling them what to do through art, but by showing them they can do it. He describes his art piece **The Soaring Sole Toneaphone** as a scientific experiment in vibration; a sculptural sound piece constructed from the found objects and recycled materials of an engineer's workshop. He considers current art Ideologies and artistic conventions irrelevant to his practice. He strives to move beyond the intellect, seeking a place before contemplation – a place of sensations and creativity. He does this by working intuitively, deliberately throwing his work into chaos, embracing the unexpected results and actively

exploring the creative process. By removing art's rational and intellectual layers Stephen's aim is to demystify it. At the same time, by exposing its creative core, his desire is to reveal its mystique.

Similarly, Candace Miles endeavours to make art increasingly accessible in her installation of **See Stars**. A work of multiples, of limited hues and strong contrasting blacks and whites, silvers and dark greys, it was created specifically for the vision impaired. The overriding symbol in the work is the celestial star, its five-point shape resonating with that of the star fish Candace chose as the basis for her work. In centring her work on these highly textured, sensate and eyeless sea creatures, Candace alludes to their dependence on other senses – senses that human beings either do not share or no longer use. This situation reflects that of the vision impaired, who exist, in a society where, of the senses, vision dominates and there is little regard or value for alternative sensory means.

The celestial star, as a seemingly mysterious and untouchable entity, also informs the philosophy behind the work – the endeavour to reach for that which seems unobtainable. Art has been something of a celestial star to the vision impaired, mostly unobtainable and, to almost everyone, untouchable. Candace endeavours to remove this barrier by creating a work that allows people to touch, smell and be surrounded by art.

Sebastian Di Mauro takes commonplace domestic materials such as carpet underlay, stainless steel pot scourers and Astroturf and transforms them into objects of gentle excitement and fun. **Hide**, **Lair**, **Pump**, **Filter**, **Curl** and **Stretch** are ambiguous friendly shapes that are at once both strange and familiar. Whilst their materials are easily recognizable, when given new forms they become animated, taking on the illusion of new textures and colours. This ambiguity is important as it emphasizes the connection between man-made and natural worlds. From this perspective, art, nature and everyday life are not seen as disparate entities, but as interconnected.

The presence and physicality of the pieces are further enhanced when smell is introduced. In **Grapple**, Sebastian uses carpet underlay in the pieces **Filter** and **Pump** to trigger the olfactory sense. The jute of the carpet underlay represents his interest in natural fibres. It stands as a metaphor for that which is unique and wonderful and lies hidden beneath the ordinary and everyday. The strong musty scent of the jute can trigger memories, reminding audiences of the piece's origin before their extraordinary metamorphosis within the gallery environment.

Christine Prescott also uses smell's strong link with memory as a way of heightening audiences engagement with her artwork. **Ocean Song** has stitched dehydrated strawberries over the armature of

sheep ribs and a fox jaw, bound with beeswax, and human hair. Christine chooses materials that "possess the aura she wants the artwork to express." [3] The materials are chosen as a chef would choose an ingredient for a recipe – the material must blend with other materials and suit the processes employed. Every step is essential to the final smell of the work and how it will be received by the olfactory sense of the visitor. Christine's work also has a medicinal quality and purpose. It has been made to ward off the fear of decay and transience as each of the materials used contains the memory of the creative process. In addition, these materials create new memories through the scents they produce. They are both the keepers and producers of memory – igniting, creating and containing them.

In her work **Think Something Else**, Liz Wood challenges our social attitude to the sense of smell. When human beings evolved to walking on two legs, their noses were no longer close to the ground, and smell ceased to govern the way they perceived the world. Leaving "sniffing" to the animals, our reliance on smell diminished and our dependence on the visual increased. As a "civilized" society we have continued to distance ourselves from our animal origins and its associations with smell. We place little importance on smell, relegating it to the lower echelons of the senses. Perhaps we resent its ability to provoke us into unexpected, often emotional, sometimes instinctive, reactions. We undermine it by repressing and masking natural odours with deodorants, perfumes and cleansers. Liz exposes our hypocrisy with her installation of real and artificial flowers. So real are the artificial that only smell will distinguish the difference. She reminds us that it is not only when our sight is impaired that we are left to rely on smell. In the case of this work, seeing is not believing, it is smell that is the indicator of what is real or true.

In a move away from focusing solely on the sensory, Ross Barber wants audiences to engage in the 'second order of perception" – the meaning of a work of art. " In truth, this second order of perception is the most important, the meaning of a work of art which once made visible tells us its real value – its cultural value," [4] Ross questions the dominance of vision; its ability to divert us from reading art and to exclude certain groups in the engagement and representation of art. He also explores the broader issue of who has representation within history and the cultural value they are accorded. Ross orchestrates these concerns in his work **The Rope** which was inspired by the story of the 1859 suicide of a young assistant of the artist Edouard Manet. Two versions of the tale are told: Manet's version and that of the assistant's mother, whose story within history, as a working class woman, would rarely be represented. One version is told in

braille and the other is spoken. While the braille reader may have access to a version of the story the visual reader doesn't, neither is offered the complete story. Equally, no one has visual supremacy when engaging with the work. With strong lights reflecting off the translucent braille tablets and the embedded objects being distorted, the work is difficult to perceive. By offering only imperfect readings and flawed views of the work Ross alludes to the inconsistencies and malleable "truths" that exist within representations of history and art, creating what he calls cultural blind spots. He raises his concern about our preoccupation with visual encounters and reluctance to engage our intellect. We therefore easily accept flawed versions of history and allow them to inform how we see the world.

Those of us with vision will and can enjoy art on a visual level, but by bringing to the fore our other senses, our perceptions are heightened and we partake in an entirely different experience of art. For people without vision there are few options. When it comes to describing artworks to someone who has never seen a painting or a 3D artwork, words can often be inadequate. Occasionally exhibitions have, or galleries supply, support material that caters to the needs of the vision impaired, such as braille catalogues or audiotapes, or, as with the National Gallery, a tactile booklet on works in the collection. Every once in a while an exhibition such as **Grapple** is created that caters to their needs and allows a full engagement with the artworks.

Exhibitions like **Grapple**, however, respond to more than just the needs of the vision impaired. They offer a palliative for the sickened sensibilities of the broader gallery-going public. They give us something real to engage with. We can use our hands, noses, tongues, or ears, as well as eyes when we engage with the work. Therefore, they jolt us out of our passive habits of viewing and force us to engage more consciously with the art. While levels of engagement to this degree are not possible with all artwork, there is a need to rethink the way we produce, exhibit and experience art. **Grapple**, and exhibitions like it, challenge the predominant influence of vision on the way galleries present and audiences engage with art. Most significantly, they stimulate neglected means of gaining insight.

Jacquelyn Murphy,
August 2002

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[1] James B: Review: On The Sculptural in Australian Culture, Radio National, Arts Today, Tuesday 13 November, 2001, quote in **Fathoming: Contemporary Australian Sculpture** ex catalogue, RGAQ Travelling Exhibition 2002

[2] Crocker S.Entering Cantus Brink @ **Artwrite** No.17 p6

[3] Prescott C. Notes from the artist, 2002

[4] Barber R. Notes from the Artist, 2002

artists

Ross Barber

The Rope),a reply to Charles Baudelaire and Edouard Manet, is part of a body of work I have been making since 1990 on the suicide hanging of Edouard Manet's assistant in the studio closet in 1859. Initially the work appeared as works on and in cast paper and as a written reply to Baudelaire's **La Cord**. For **Grapple** this work has a resonance with an ongoing approach to my installation work that invites different viewers or readers if you prefer. The work has evolved into a recorded sound track and a series of 8 cast translucent tablets with an embedded piece of silk cord and bearing the story in braille, brightly lit on transparent plinths.

The lighting is set up to over-light the objects so much that the visual viewer has difficulty perceiving the work because of that excessive brightness. This simply challenges the visual reader's primacy in the visual arts space. The embedded rope fragment is distorted for the visual reader who looks more closely at the work, but encounters an effect something like having cataracts, which continues to subvert visual perception. At the same time there will be a formal consistency in the work that will be aesthetically a contradiction, a reflective beauty.

The braille tablets give the braille reader a layer of the work that is a direct entry to the reply via touch but not entirely complete either. They will get the mother's story only and a history lesson. And the listener will have to listen carefully as the dialogue continues in fragments of contesting views. Only in one part does Manet reflect on his actions but this is part of my further speculation on the story and the ongoing work. So, no reader of the work is really privileged above the other. As with any reading only an imperfect view is possible.

Sebastian Di Mauro

These artworks revolve around touch. The use of the materials is central to the decoding of the sculptures. Each of the artworks explore the close relationship between people and nature.

I have used carpet underlay in my works since the early 1990s. Carpet underlay is manufactured from jute, hence it is a natural and organic fibre. It is placed beneath carpet to cushion and protect, and in these sculptures acts as a metaphor to signify the extraordinary which is hidden beneath the surface.

Stainless steel pot scourers are used to clean and remove grime. The notion of cleansing is particularly significant and signifies the concept of cleansing the soul. The wiry looking yet soft to the touch pot scourers convey a dynamic sensual and visual quality.

Astroturf is an attempt by humans to copy and replicate nature. The irrepressible human desire to replicate and improve on natural forms is a key theme to these two artworks. It also alludes to the Australian time-honoured weekend pastime of lawn mowing as well as to the traditional European art of topiary, which has been embraced by many Australian gardeners in the pursuit of a manicured, formal garden.

For me, art needs to directly relate to everyday life. Much of the artwork I produce includes the use of ready-made household and commercial products. I am interested in the process of the transformation of ordinary materials and objects into something poetic and metaphoric. The power of this sculpture lies in its ability to transport the viewer beyond the ordinary into the extraordinary.

(Artworks courtesy of Dianne Tanzer Gallery)

Ryan Dunshea

Thread is based upon the Incan system of Quipu, a decimal system represented by knots. The quantity of knots and their positioning on the strand denoted a particular numerical value, and strung together formed clerical records. The Quipu as an indigenous tactile text system is comparable to the Bulli in Ancient Mesopotamia where markings on clay pieces denoted agricultural indices and values.

The three objects exhibited here in **Grapple** do not just replicate this Incan system, but also reference the natural world of waterfalls, webs etc. The objects become organic within the gallery. **Thread** is intended as an evocative title, referencing the tracing of history, the methodologies of knot making, the action of the audience interacting with the work.

Thread has evolved from my ongoing interest in texts based on tactile or physical systems. Previous projects have included braille, images of sign language, and raised tactile surfaces. The Trace exhibition, created in collaboration with members of the Royal Blind Society of NSW, was part of the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Arts Festival at Object Galleries, and investigated the history of tactile communication systems that rivalled or were the contemporaries of braille.

The three pieces in this exhibition continue my interest in creating artworks that include a tactile element – artworks that break the invisible barriers of the gallery. My work is not just to be looked at but to be felt. The audience is encouraged to throw away the DO NOT TOUCH sign and play.

Candace Miles

My experiences with reef and sea environments have formed the central theme to my art practice - the textures, sights, sounds, smells and tastes become an integral part of my life and my artwork.

I have deliberately restricted my work for the **Grapple** exhibition to the sole form of the starfish. I have also excluded the use of colour and concentrated on texture, tone and contrast. These are restrictions known by many people who have vision impairment. As a sighted artist, however, the visual cannot be ignored - the high contrast of blacks, whites, greys and glittering silvers is intended to dramatise and attract attention, as does the use of multiples of a theme.

The choice of the starfish is metaphorical in more than one aspect. These sea creatures have no dependence on vision – they have no eyes to see, so they must rely on other senses. Texture is very much a part of the sea creature and by using a variety of materials to portray different texture, the intention is to evoke interest and invite tactile experience.

Even though starfish can have numerous limbs, it is the star shape that is its most recognised form. This star symbol is synonymous with the five-point shape of the celestial star. The concept of the work is also symbolised by the celestial star – seen as untouchable – which is associated with well known adages such as to "reach for the stars". It has implications of extending oneself beyond the norm and to strive to reach further. I have changed the name from sea to see, meaning that by using the sense of touch these stars will be 'seen' more clearly with the hands.

Christine Prescott

I create using a recipe of taste, touch and smell. My practice is grounded in process, each element containing a memory specific to the work. It is a weak attempt to deny the inevitability of decay as we forget and forge our own memories, reconstructing our existence. To the memory, smell is the most faithful of the senses. This work has crafted its dialogue from scents; it is at once metaphysical, medical and poetic.

With a horn
retrieved from my jingling pockets
I construct methodologies of hope.
Works are absent,
leaving the form to make love
to my linguistic mind.
Holds me lost and salty.
I can hear that nothing.
It knows what I want and teases
the tip of my tongue.

b "It has always spoken, it will always speak of things that don't exist, or only exist elsewhere."
W "My mouth on yours forms words I do not know."
b "My mouth it wouldn't have much to say."
W "The word and the kiss are one."
b "Yes, I was never silent, whatever I said I was never silent."
W "Delicate words. Words of the spirit forced into flesh."
I put the words into a flask and flung them in the sea.

imaginary dialogue between the words of Jeanette Winterson and Samuel Beckett

Alan Valentine

Sea gongs are sound sculptures that first appeared at the 2001 **Strand Ephemera** exhibition in Townsville. They are round-bodied five legged animals capped with steel discs and central plungers that invite intellectual, visual, tactile and aural stimulation in response to the form and function. To operate a sea gong all that needs to be done is to push the plunger or big button down to hear its bell like sound.

An invitation to touch and operate these sculptures along with the suggestion they might actually do something has proven to be popular amongst all types of people of all ages. The cool and warm surfaces, bumps and hollows combined with the sound and the sensation felt when touching the vibrating metal, are experiences that seeing without touching could never fully perceive.

Unlike earlier inter-active sounding sculptures that emphasised the mechanics and the relatively straight lines and toughness of Australian building hardwood, the **Sea gongs** evolved into a distinct organic/ mechanical form with the intention they be complementary to the landscaped foreshore of Townsville's Strand.

As these sculptures were designed for unsupervised public inter-action, safety was a major consideration as was vandalism. This demanded a concealed mechanism for sounding the sculpture and a very robust construction method that would withstand the rigors of being jumped on. Some of these design constraints actually helped enhance the overall form; an example being the necessity to overlap the carved components to create a robust structure.

The making of these sculptures was most rewarding. Carving the multiple configurations of five hardwood segments and five legs for the construction of each piece required extensive use of hand tools such as a wood rasp, files and sand paper and of course, the most important tool of all, the sense of touch.

Stephen Weis

The Soaring Sole Toneaphone is a toy with the inherent potential of an instrument.

The interactive experience is my primary concern. Any apparent commentary on the world at large is in the perception rather than the intention.

These days my work is composed principally of discarded, waste or rejected materials that are reincarnated into a context far from their origins. They find their way into the sculpture through their sense of collusion with the mystique rather than through rational constructs.

I use the creative process as a personal gestalt, both to uncover unconscious sensation and also to promote aspects of "self" through symbolic gesture. This process employs conscious actions as well as a high level of intuitive activity deeper than reasoning.

During the past four or five years my work has been concerned primarily with considerations of the "unknowable" as opposed to the alliteration of the "known". In this sense I work in creative "openness" without attachment to conceptual planning.

The sense of vibration is primary to my process. While I maintain a perception of light and sound as vibration, I include and often focus more specifically on my intuitive and instinctive vibrational responses to the products of daily life. They are often chosen for their challenging aspect as opposed to their ease of inclusion.

Tensions and harmonies evolve from the juxtaposition and interrelation of formerly irrelevant components. Through such tensions in their varied forms, I seek animation in both context and engagement. They bring to the work the receiving and expressing faculties. The sculpture absorbs stimulus and responds in its own language.

This enables a dialogue that is not entirely predictable. This, for me at this time, emulates my experience of life in all its unpredictable glory.

Liz Woods

I first became fascinated by smell as an undergraduate student. It was suggested that I read the book **Perfume** by Peter Suskind. This has subsequently become an area of investigation for me over the last 12 years – what is smell and why do we all smell and react to olfactory senses differently?

Throughout the course of our everyday life we encounter a wide variety of olfactory senses. These senses unwittingly help us to explore the deeper socio-economic issues of our society.

Smell informs us, smell reminds us, smell pleasures us, smell cautions us.

In the psycho–semiology of olfaction we organise our olfactory sense to caution us. We can smell protection, love, hate, death, and filth. We smell before we see.

Some people smell what other people do not. People find happiness in smell that others find repulsive. It is at this point that we begin to research the social aspects of smell. We all smell differently, however, with the urbanisation of olfactory we have come to depend on deodorants, perfumes, soap powders etc. and we all begin to smell alike. The semiology of olfactory can trick us.

So can the olfactory be trusted?

Can the visual be trusted?

What do you see?

What do you smell?

list of works

Ross Barber

The Rope} a reply to Charles Baudelaire and Edouard Manet 2002
Installation: 8 cast polyester braille embossed tablets on perspex plinths, rope, text, audio player and speakers
80 x 40 x 500 cm variable

Sebastian Di Mauro

Shimmer Suite
Curl 2002
Stainless steel pot scourers, aluminium 50 x 70 x 30cm
Stretch 2000
Stainless steel pot scourers, aluminium 80 x 30 x 127cm

Astro Suite
Lair 2002
Polystyrene, 55mm astro turf 65 x 92 x 62cm
Hide 2002
Polystyrene, 55mm astro turf 90 x 100 x 30cm

Pillow Suite
Filter 2002
Carpet underlay, acrylic fibre, sisal rope 90 x 100 x 30cm
Pump 2002
Carpet underlay, acrylic fibre, sisal rope 35 x 120 x 120cm

Ryan Dunshea

Thread 2002
Rope, metal brackets, pins, fastening materials
3 works of variable dimensions up to 150 x 150 cm

Candace Miles

See Stars 2002
Installation: woven cloth, papier maché, glass beads, mirror, plastic, metal, acrylic paint, silicon and clay
2.5 cubic metres, variable

Christine Prescott

Ocean Song 2002
Dehydrated strawberries, sheep ribs, fox jaw, hair, beeswax,text 35 x 60 cm (variable)
Prelude to Ocean Song 2002
Installation: honeycomb, beeswax, perspex, glass bowls, wooden sticks 23 x 30 x 150cm (variable)

Alan Valentine

Sea Gong I 2001
Hardwood and metal 38cm x 115cm diameter (variable)
Sea Gong II 2002
Hardwood and metal 45cm x 80cm diameter (variable)

Stephen Weis

The Soaring Sole Toneaphone 2002
Metal, plastics and sound equipment
200 X 130 x 40cm (variable)

Liz Woods

Think something else 2002
Installation: Type C photograph, fresh flowers, artificial flower arrangement 60 x 150cm (variable)

grapple a recollection

The following words are about the beginnings of **Grapple** and its first project staged at Pinnacles Gallery in 1998.

Historically, people with a disability have been non-gallery visitors and non-participants in the visual arts in Australia. In a regional environment where fewer people equate with fewer facilities, the needs of people with disabilities are irregularly met. In a regional area art and non-art community networks are more readily connected. In 1998 the Townsville and Thuringowa community of vision impaired people and advocacy groups, in conjunction with Pinnacles Gallery, implemented a series of workshops resulting in an exhibition of artworks that relied on senses other than sight.

Art galleries not only assume the ability to see, but their business is to present some of the most developed and sophisticated products for vision. In the last twenty years and particularly over the past ten, contemporary arts practice has investigated other ways of experiencing and interpreting art. In **Grapple** 1998, the usual art practice of the artists utilised senses other than sight. Each artist worked in small collaborative teams with people with vision impairment. Marion Gaemers and her collaborators created a series of screens which utilised skills such as weaving and bead-making with a variety of natural, found or recycled materials, to explore notions of space. Liz Woods and company created **Smelling Cups** which involved pickled and preserved foods, sheets of braille script and fruit leather sheets. This work utilised the senses of taste, smell and touch and resulted from seemingly simple aspects of everyday life. The video and sound work by New Zealand artist Yuk King Tan was based on communication with collaborators. The work presented differing levels of vision and the issues between labels of "sighted" and "non sighted". Lynn Scott Cummings and her collaborators created a tactile environment inspired by the sea, its myths and inhabitants.

Grapple 1998 included education and public programs: audio catalogue, education kit, sensory trail activity, video sessions, artists' and collaborators' talks. In addition to the scheduled programs, visitors could tour the exhibition using vision altering devices or audio catalogue.

There are many ways of developing exhibitions. The inclusive development and community committee management of **Grapple** 1998 was a fundamental aim of the exhibition. The inclusion of people outside the industry in the decision making of exhibitions is one method whose time has clearly arrived.

The core **Grapple** 1998 group continued to meet at Pinnacles Gallery and in their homes to create artworks for public display and initiated a community exhibition entitled **Feastival** in 1999. Since the staging of **Grapple** in 1998, Pinnacles Gallery has developed other exhibitions that particularly involve people with a disability such as **Artability** and **Visability** and the contemporary 2002 **Grapple**.

For support and wisdom during **Grapple** 1998 many thanks to Lyn Tyson, the Grapple committee, Jacquelyn Murphy, Candace Miles, Bill Perrier, Neal Price and Access Art, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Royal Blind Foundation, Umbrella Studio, RADF and Arts Queensland.

Allison Gray
Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, July 2002

Pinnacles Gallery

Linking art and the community in North Queensland

The City of Thuringowa, situated in the "dry tropics" of North Queensland, covers a total area of more than 1,872 square kilometres. Located adjacent to Townsville, Thuringowa is approximately 4 hours drive north of Mackay and 4 hours drive south from Cairns. Although established over 100 years ago, Thuringowa is one of Queensland's most recent cities. Granted city status in 1986, Thuringowa is now one of the fastest growing cities in the North.

Pinnacles Gallery, which forms part of the Thuringowa Civic Centre, is a purpose built exhibition space which was opened in March 1996. The Gallery was established to provide a space for the display of a diversity of art, social history and educational exhibitions to serve the needs of Thuringowa's residents and visitors. It continues to have a strong community and educational focus, involving various community groups and local individuals in its programmes.

Tour Dates

Pinnacles Gallery, Thuringowa	23 August – 21 September 2002
Caloundra Regional Art Gallery	9 October – 1 December 2002
Global Arts Link, Ipswich	15 February – 6 April 2003
Grafton Regional Art Gallery	4 June – 13 July 2003
Gallery Hinchinbrook, Ingham	12 August – 20 September 2003
Gladstone Regional Art Gallery	4 October – 1 November 2003
Hands on Art, Brisbane	December 2003 – January 2004

Catalogue and invitation design – Adrienne Cerutti, Graphic Artist (07) 4775 7885

Grapple

A sensory engagement with contemporary art

The aim of the **Grapple** Project is to challenge vision's predominating influence on the way galleries present and audiences engage with art. **Grapple** is a multifaceted exhibition project with both a contemporary art and community cultural development focus. It is an exhibition of interactive sensory art that explores and engages the use of senses other than sight and seeks to develop new gallery audiences as well as increasing the general public's awareness of issues concerning the vision-impaired community. An integral part of the **Grapple** Project is the involvement of artists and the exhibition partners in workshops and residencies at each tour venue.

Pinnacles Gallery is proud to present its first touring exhibition, and welcomes feedback. Comments and enquires can be emailed to **pinnacles@thuringowa.qld.gov.au**

For more information visit our website at **www.thuringowa.qld.gov.au**

Bronwyn McBurnie
Pinnacle Gallery Director, August 2002

(The catalogue cover features the word "grapple" in 2 tactile languages – braille and moonscript.)

Acknowledgments

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The Grapple exhibition and tour has been developed by Pinnacles Gallery, City of Thuringowa, North Queensland, in partnership with Regional Galleries Association of Queensland, Access Arts, the Royal Blind Foundation and Hands on Art. Major funding for this project has been provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and also Arts Queensland and Disability Services Queensland.

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