

thing jazz-like in the way Guiney embraces the street in her work.

With the birth of her child, Guiney quietened momentarily, and began to experiment with sticky tape and wood shavings. She remains focused on working with non-precious materials: 'Each time you do it, there's something new there.' Guiney's work demonstrates how questioning the hierarchy of precious materials can make an impact on public consciousness.

Honor Freeman

Graffiti has lately been reclaimed as a form of public expression. The 'tagging' popular in the late twentieth century was designed specifically to communicate inside knowledge. To an outsider, tags were ugly scribbles defacing public property. After the turn of the millennium, however, a new art form emerged – that of stencilling. Beautifully crafted and witty stencilled images began appearing on brick walls in alleys. Such graffiti is a fresh and engaging way to bring art into everyday life.

We are beginning to now see the broad influence of this trend in more conventional arts. Stencils are appearing as forms of decoration on ceramics, for instance. This is a welcome, fresh influence in craft but it tames the public spirit of the graffiti art form. More reflective of the revolutionary spirit is the work of an Adelaide artist who has found ways of sneaking the aesthetic into our profane world through a new kind of public ceramics – faux porcelain.

Honor Freeman began with the quest to make an entirely faux porcelain world – a room where every feature would be porcelain. While this dream remains to be realised, a host of individual works have emerged. Freeman's *Milky White Melt* series included *Comfort Cups*, which are thrown forms glazed in a soft satin white with gentle dents for ease of hold. Her *Disposable* series included *White with One*, a reproduction of the most humble of objects – the used polystyrene coffee cup – in precious porcelain. Freeman also produced porcelain sponges – common, disposable kitchen items rendered in lasting form.

As well as everyday objects, Freeman makes work that reflects on common activities such as cleaning. She produced a series of *Boot Polish Beakers* which she decorated using the method her father taught her to clean shoes. While the results resembled abstract landscape painting, she was more interested in the process of mark-making as an expression of our common interaction with objects. A job cleaning a 'dodgy



Honor Freeman in her studio
Photo: Lauren Simeoni

Facing page:
Honor Freeman
On/Off/On (detail) 2002
porcelain powerpoint on
gather outside Jam Factory
Adelaide
Photo: Honor Freeman





people look at public space. She overturns the opposition between precious private and common public. In an age when collective forms of empowerment are rare her work is a gentle reminder of the revolutionary possibility that lies dormant.

Freeman remains true to her upbringing. Honor grew up in Bordertown, where South Australia meets Victoria. Her father was a truck driver who worked for the local abattoirs and her mother was a nurse. Honor remembers her mother always having a tape measure around her neck and a mouth full of pins; she introduced Honor to 'a craft way of making and thinking'.

Honor grew up as an only child. She had much time on her own, which she filled with daydreams, intrigued by ordinary objects around her. 'I remember writing lots of stories about toothbrushes and their adventures down the drain.'

Bordertown did not have much to offer anyone who was not interested in a job at either the road-house or meatworks. Honor remembers her art room at high school as 'an old Nissen hut that was overflowing with weird and wonderful things'. It was in her second year at the South Australian School of Art in Adelaide that Freeman discovered glass and ceramics. The sense of community in the department particularly appealed to her. But it was only in third year that she realised clay suited the way she wanted to make work: it was solitary, quiet and calm.

Freeman continues to support her artistic practice with a job cleaning in a budget motel. This most ordinary of scenes is the inspiration for recent work. Her series of work titled *Shape of a Day* memorialises the stains that are left in a motel room like intimate messages for future guests. As Freeman writes, 'The turnover in a motel sometimes makes it feel like you're sleeping with a stranger or strangers ... the bed is still warm while the next guest checks in ...'. Though not designed for public viewing, this latest series of work continues Freeman's interest in the uncertain boundaries between public and private. In the public domain Freeman has begun placing porcelain versions of the tags used to date packaged bread around the city of Adelaide.

Since Freeman discovered clay, the most common of creative materials, her work has evolved to bring the mystery of ceramics into commodified urban lives. Instead of the slippery nothing of plastic she offers us the hard resonance of high-fired porcelain. It's an almost subliminal effect with the potential to powerfully alter our disposition to the world.



Honor Freeman
Shape Of A Day (detail) 2004
porcelain, cotton thread
Photo: Michael Kluvanek

CONCLUSION

This generation of artists is unique. Their sensibilities can be traced back to the make-do traditions of folk crafts, forged as a response to boredom and necessity. The artists featured in this book have been able to sustain this rural sensibility within an urban entertainment culture – through their personal passion for making and their discovery of a new conceptual base for contemporary craft.

This inventiveness is a rare disposition. In an age when necessity is about the only element not in abundance the artists' commitment to making do with what's available is a self-motivated creative dispensation.

In making the common precious these artists are reversing the relationship between gallery and supermarket. They give meaning to substances that would otherwise be taken for granted as the stuff of consumption – whether it is the grass beneath our



Honor Freeman
White With One 2002
porcelain
24 x 10 x 11 cm
Photo: Michael Kluvanek