

## Peter Hill's The Encyclopaedia of Superfictions

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Ai Weiwei at media conference National Gallery of Victoria, Australia, November 2015. © Peter Hill.

### AI WEIWEI

Ai Weiwei is one of several artists whose work only connects tangentially with the art of the Superfiction. However, like Jorg Immendorff, Group Irwin, and other Heroic Amateur artists, much of his work grows from a political-conceptual background. The Duchampian art object (in Ai Weiwei's case) subverts dogma through poetic fiction. *See profile at [superfictions.com](http://superfictions.com)*

### FRANCIS ALÿS

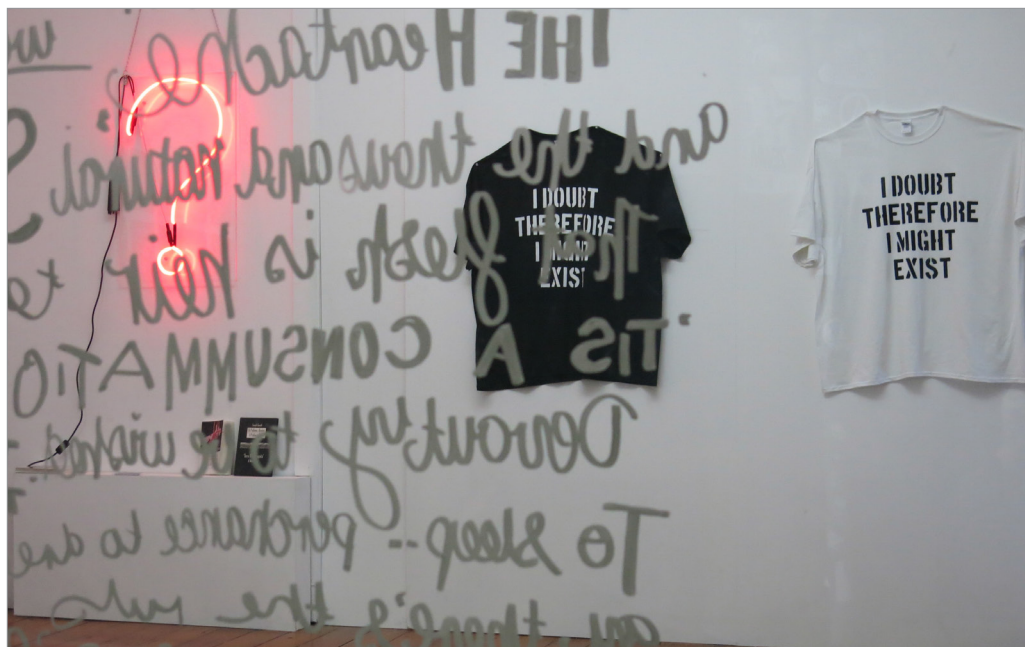
Francis Alÿs uses many Situationist devices of walking, thinking, and doubting, which parallel Superfiction strategies. He exhibited at the 2007 *Munster Sculpture Project* and has been involved in projects and publications in New York, London and Mexico. *Postmedia* provides this brief biography:

“Francis Alÿs was born in 1959 in Antwerp, Belgium, and currently lives in Mexico City. His projects include *Paradox of Praxis* (1997), for which the artist pushed a block of ice through the streets of Mexico City until it melted, and, most recently, *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002), in which 500 people at Ventanilla, outside Lima, Peru, formed a single line at the foot of a giant sand dune and moved it four inches using shovels.”

For more recent projects see Wikipedia.

#### THE AFTER SEX CIGARETTE

See THE ART FAIR MURDERS and THIRTEEN MONTHS IN 1989



### THE MUSEUM OF DOUBT

GLEN CLARKE

JOSH FOLEY

TONY GARIFALAKIS

GRANT HILL

PETER HILL (SCOTLAND/AUSTRALIA)

PATRICK POUND (NEW ZEALAND/AUSTRALIA)

MICHAEL VALE

LOUISE WEAVER

ROBERT ZHAO INSTITUTE OF CRITICAL ZOOLOGISTS (SINGAPORE)

CURATED BY DR PETER HILL

8 JUNE - 3 JULY 2016



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## THE ART FAIR MURDERS

An on-going Superfiction created by Peter Hill in 1995 in Hobart, Tasmania. It is part installation, part novel, and part website. It is set in 1989, the great year of revolutions and world events: Tiananmen Square, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the execution of the Ceaușescu, the release of the Guildford Four. Its structure revolves around Twelve Chapters, Twelve Months, Twelve Murders, and Twelve Cities. It took three contemporary clichés – the serial killer in popular fiction; the overuse of the mannequin in installation art; and the widespread use of the colour orange in the advertising industry. It speculates on what would happen if a serial killer was loose in the art world, killing one art world personality at each of twelve art fairs around the world. The structure of the novel/installation follows the real world diary of international art fairs: January, Miami; February, Madrid; March, Frankfurt; April, London; May, Chicago; June, Basel; and so on though to November, Cologne; and December, Los Angeles.

The viewpoint of the narrative is further complicated by the fact that the novel is supposedly being written by Jacko, a taxi driver in Aberdeen, Scotland. Jacko is an ex-art transporter who was sacked when a small Lucian Freud went missing on a trip to Berlin. He had originally trained at Goldsmiths, three years ahead of the group that would become known as the yBas (young British artists). While waiting in his cab for fares, Jacko passes the time writing *The Art Fair Murders*.

Peter Hill has built “Chapters” of this Superfiction in galleries and museums around the world, including Auckland City Gallery, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, Biennale of Sydney (2002) in MCA, Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne (See AUTHENTICITY...?), Hubert Winter projects, Vienna.

See [www.superfictions.com/theartfairmurders](http://www.superfictions.com/theartfairmurders)

## AUTHENTICITY...?

Opened on 1st April, 2016 (the holy day of Superfictions) *Authenticity...?*, at Incinerator gallery, Moonee Ponds, was curated by Richard Ennis and built on an earlier exhibition, see SUPERFICTIONS 2: AS IF, at King’s ARI, Melbourne in 2014. Writing in *Art Guide Australia* (May/June 2016), Natalie Thomas said: “Darren Sylvester, Jacqui Shelton, Michael Vale, Patrick Pound, Peter Hill and the DAMP Collective are presently taking some time off from the responsibilities of reality. Instead, these artists seek refuge in the magical mystery of make-believe. They use a range of strategies including humour, satire, mischief and fakery to question the ways authenticity functions within the art world and within the broader cultural landscape.”

In *Authenticity...?* these tricksters ask a range of questions, like what does an authentic artwork look like, and what does the artist who produced, say authentic artwork look like? In this exhibition, curator Richard Ennis has brought together a group of artists interested in the authentic versus the inauthentic.

Take Melbourne-based artist group DAMP for instance. DAMP has had more members than Mark E. Smith’s UK band, The Fall. The revolving door of group membership often illustrates the

difficulties of collaboration. When viewing the shared artistic outcomes of a group of individual artists, it's interesting to ponder what has played out behind studio doors to complete a project. Whose ideas have presented the strongest in the combined work, and are we actually seeing a collaboration at all?

Patrick Pound doesn't even make his own art and yet, he's a much-in-demand artist, his career the envy of many. A productive day at the studio for Pound might entail buying up collections of old photos off eBay and reclassifying the bounty into poetic subgroups. His sleight of hand is so slight you have to look extra hard to even see its trace. Of his practice, Patrick Pound says: "Photography is the medium of evidence, but we are never exactly sure of what exactly. Truth is a little overrated if you ask me. But I wouldn't."

To add, from the catalogue to *Authenticity*...?:

"Darren Sylvester presents a 27-minute, sitcom length, video self-portrait titled *Me*, 2013. Sylvester casts 16 different actors as modern day Adam and Eve style characters, to speak for and about him. The actors, both a male and a female Darren, contemplate the world through that old world performance, conversation. They talk about life through Facebook, Twitter, music, *The Simpsons*, Tupac, the death of MySpace, the death of Friendster, Sarah Silverman, the decision about having kids or not and how we all feel like we're a failure in the eyes of our parents."

"Peter Hill is well known for his Museum of Contemporary Ideas and his Superfictions which function both as artworks and as a testing ground for ideas. The conceptual framework of the works is more important than what the art is made from. Meaning is given precedence over form. Like the other artists within this exhibition, you're not exactly sure what is being sincerely communicated through their art and what is a falsity. Surely an artist wouldn't tell you a lie and keep a straight face, would they?"

#### BANALISTS

See SITUATIONISTS and RALPH RUMNEY

#### BLAIR WITCH PROJECT

The Blair Witch Project was one of the first mainstream Superfictions in which the film's directors and producers created a superfiction that played with the emotions of both cast and cinema audience. See Orson Welles' *The War of the Worlds*.

#### A. A. BRONSON

A. A. Bronson describes himself as being "one of the three member group General Idea between 1969 and 1994." He is the last surviving member. A biography of General Idea can be found at: <http://www.aabronson.com/art/gi.org/biography/biointro.htm>

The following interview with A. A. Bronson was made by Peter Hill at the Basel Art Fair in June 1993:



*Paintforum International: Making Superfictions Real*, by Peter Hill, Blindside Gallery, Melbourne, Australia (2015). © Peter Hill.

Peter Hill: General Idea is a fictional construct that finds its subversive outlets across a range of media including film, performance, installation, video and photography. It is 24 years since the three of you invented it. How close have you remained to your original vision?

A. A. Bronson: I don't think there was anything we would call an original vision as such back in 1968, and we didn't actually use the name General Idea until 1970 when we used it for a particular project. Later we established a programme for ourselves that would last us until 1984. When that date came around we had to decide whether we would continue to work together or whether we would stop. Our original intention was to close the project in 1984.

For the complete interview visit: [www.superfictions.com](http://www.superfictions.com)

#### CAMERON OIL

A fictitious oil company created by Peter Hill in 1989. Within the fiction, Alice and Abner "Bucky" Cameron made their billions from the *Cameron* oil fields in Alaska. They bankrolled New York's Museum of Contemporary Ideas on Park Avenue and their huge egos are loosely modelled on the Paul Gettys and Armand Hammers of this world. In the early 1990s, *Cameron Oil* began a new life on the newly available internet.



#### JANET CARDIFF

Janet Cardiff has, amongst many other projects, made a détournement of the Situationist derive and melded it with *film noir* and pulp fiction. She first came to international attention with her work at the Whitechapel Library, London, *Case Study B*, in which 'spectators' became 'participants', and were sent out into the streets of London with headphones and a CD that gave instructions on where to walk – across busy streets and down dark lanes. An audio equivalent of *trompe l'oeil* was explored when the noise of screeching traffic on the headphones merged with real traffic noises on the street. Much of her work has been made in collaboration with George Bures Miller. She has constructed 'walks' in many parts of the world which often have powerful touristic backdrops such as the Sydney Opera House and the Egyptian Pyramids.

#### GARY CARSLEY

Gary Carsley's work creates a Superfiction from a range of cultural and technical tropes including post-colonial history, industrial production methods, and the idea of the "draguerrotype." In 2009, when Peter Hill asked him about his recent project for the Singapore Biennale, curated by Fumio Nanjo, and his subversion of IKEA flatpacks into works of art, he said:

"I had been looking for a way to critically re-engage with the conceptually playful positions of the early 1960s. It was a radical moment, full of radicalising potential and IKEA's flat pack is similarly idealistic, particularly in the way in which it co-opts the spectator in a form of expanded, collaborative authorship similar to the way FLUXUS artists like Yoko Ono were then doing."

#### DAMP

Writing about DAMP in *Photofile 59*, in a section called 'Encyclopaedia of Photofictions,' Peter Hill described some of their projects up to 2000:

"DAMP: A collaborative art group based in Melbourne. They have been working together since 1995. They meet once a week in twelve-week blocks, usually in the TCB studios in Port Phillip Arcade. Established with Geoff Lowe, DAMP has developed into an independent collective with an extensive membership. Their work seems to work simultaneously with and against the media in a similar way to the UK's latest tabloid art stars The Leeds 13. Peter Timms gave a good introduction to their work in *The Age*, Wednesday 18 August, 1999, when he wrote: "Apparently things got a bit out of hand at 200 Gertrude Street a week or so back. During an exhibition opening, when the gallery was packed with people, a young couple started arguing. It was unpleasant, but at first didn't cause too much disruption, apart from the odd disapproving look. Then the dispute got louder and more insistent and one or two others became involved. A young man had a glass of wine thrown in his face, then the shoving started. Glasses and bottles were knocked over and smashed, and a girl was pushed through the wall. The installation work in the front gallery, by a group of artists calling themselves DAMP, was almost completely wrecked. Only gradually did people start to realise that DAMP's installation was not being destroyed but created."

JACQUELINE DRINKALL

Jacqueline Drinkall works across a range of conceptual and installation art, some of which grew from her time when she worked as an assistant to Marina Abramović, others growing from her investigations into art and telepathy. The project which came closest to a Superfiction involved employing the services of a psychic, at Sydney's Circular Quay and instructing him to contact the spirit of Marcel Duchamp. The outcome of this meeting of minds was a series of drawings made by Duchamp channeled through the Australian medium.

IAN HAMILTON FINLAY

Ian Hamilton Finlay's creation of *The Saint Juste Vigilantes* (a "real" Superfiction) and his battles with both the Hamilton Rates authorities and the French government were explored in an interview with Peter Hill in *Studio International*, No 1004, 1983 (London):

Peter Hill: Before we speak about the problems you have had to face over the past year or so it might be worth speaking about the philosophy behind your garden temple at Little Sparta. As one of the most beautiful collaborations between man and nature that I have ever seen, I wonder how it all began?

Ian Hamilton Finlay: Every question can be answered on different levels, or, that is, has a number of different answers. As a building the garden temple began as a cow byre which we converted into a gallery and then, over a period, into a garden temple, or as we at first described it 'Canova-type temple' – referring to the temple built by the Italian neo-classicist. This was not to equate our garden temple with Canova's temple but to explain it by means of a precedent: a building which housed works of art but which did not present itself specifically as an 'art gallery'. But in another way one could say that our garden temple began because we had a garden, and we have a garden because we were given a semi-derelict cottage surrounded by an area of wild moorland. This moorland represented a possibility, and produced our response. (I say 'our' to include Sue Finlay who has been, from the beginning, my collaborator on the garden).

For complete interview visit: [www.superfictions.com](http://www.superfictions.com)

JOAN FONTCUBERTA AND PERE FORMIGUERA

Using taxidermy and sepia photography, these Catalan artists created the supposed zoological discoveries of Dr. Peter Ameisenhaufen who died in a car crash north of Scotland. Joan Fontcuberta has since gone on to create numerous superfictions, usually photographically and through analogue and digital techniques.

CHRIS CHONG CHAN FUI

Malaysian artist, Chris Chong Chan Fui, created *BOTANIC* (2013) which comprises eight large digital prints on paper (each 152 x 213cm). According to the catalogue of the 2013 Singapore Biennale: "Malaysian artist, Chris Chong is most commonly known for his work in film, but his most recent work and Singapore Biennale 2013 contribution, *BOTANIC*, is a series of drawings. These drawings follow the style of traditional

botanical illustrations, an approach that is still used today to capture the image of a plant for scientific purposes. Botanical illustrations are traditionally made from observation of natural flowers, where the form, colour and details of the plant are rendered in great detail for referencing and understanding plant species. However, Chong's illustrations, while depicting similar qualities, are derived from artificial flowers instead. At first, a viewer might not realise that the images are based on non-living plants, but closer looking will reveal unnatural textures and shapes to the array of plants illustrated. As an artist who commonly makes use of digital media, Chong's process of hand drawing demonstrates a return to a more basic form of art making as he focuses upon observational drawing. These drawings are a reflection of the artificiality that is often found in contemporary culture today. The artist is critical of the fact that such artificiality is so widely accepted as a replacement for nature. Hence, he uses his drawings of artificial plants to capture an example of a commonplace substitute."

#### RODNEY GLICK

An Australian artist based in Perth (WA), Glick has created many Superfictions, notably "the Glick International Collection" and the work of the philosopher Klaus. Klaus had a ten-step programme for reaching enlightenment and every year Klaus would announce the next step. Eventually he was due to disclose the 10<sup>th</sup> step at the United Nations in New York, but failed to appear at the appointed hour. Several weeks later, Glick was found by a gardener wandering in a garden in Bethlehem. Glick revealed the 10<sup>th</sup> step to the gardener, which was "Start again".

#### RICHARD GRAYSON

Richard Grayson is an artist, curator, writer, and director of the 2002 Biennale of Sydney, (*The World May Be*) Fantastic. Many of the artists included in this event created work that could be described as Superfictions. In the introduction, he writes: "The traffic between 'the real' and the 'not real' is of course osmotic. Sir John Manderville published *Manderville's Travels* at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. To us, it is a work of fiction and fable, with its reports of one-eyed people in the Andaman Islands and dog-headed people in the Nicobar Islands – Manderville also locates paradise, but rather charmingly says he cannot say any more about it as he has not yet been there. Certainly by the 16<sup>th</sup> century 'to Manderville' had become a colloquialism for lying and exaggerating. However Columbus planned his 1492 expedition after reading the book, Raleigh pronounced every word true, and Frobisher was reading it as he trail blazed the northwest passage. So the 'false' maps gradually segue into the maps we now accept, but these too are open to constant revision."

See also ALEKSANDRA MIR, SUZANNE TREISTER, JANET CARDIFF and PETER HILL.

#### GUILDFORD PUB BOMBINGS

The release of the Guildford Four in 1989 after 14 years of wrongful imprisonment was instigated by revelations of acts of fabrication by the police, as complex as any Superfiction. For one of the best overviews of this case see Ronan Bennett's lengthy article in *The London Review of Books*, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1993.



#### IRIS HÄUSSLER

One of Iris Häussler's best-known projects, *The Legacy of Joseph Wagenbach*, begins with a series of "views" expressed by, in turn: "the visitor"; "the archivist"; "the protagonist"; "the artist," and "the curator." The first of these begins: "We left the Field Office to walk towards Wagenbach's house, wearing white lab coats. The archivist knocked on the door before turning her key. We squeezed inside. Stale air. Dim light. Shapes formed in corners and shadows that I would have never imagined [...]" while the last one reads: "Approximately two years ago [...]" Iris told me about an idea for a work titled *The House of the Artist*; however she had not yet developed it due to the scale, intensity and logistics of the project. [...] Basically that was it, a single idea of immense proportions. I immediately knew we had to make this happen and that it would be an extremely significant project."

#### AMANDA HENG

In 2006, Amanda Heng created a fictitious travel agency that promoted a tour of four Chinese-Singaporean cultural collections that were notionally re-sited in the region, outside Singapore. The artwork, *Worthy Tour Co (S) Pte Ltd*, was first shown at the inaugural Singapore Biennale (City Hall building). This artwork has been recreated within the new National Gallery Singapore, halfway up the wide internal flight of stone stairs. According to the wall text: "These collections reveal the cultural intersections between Singapore and the rest of Asia, and also considers the place of these cultural materials within museology." There are interesting parallels between this project and Urich Lau's *The End of Art Report* (2013) exhibited at the 2013 Singapore Biennial



*Plato's Cave: Linking Drinking With Thinking, the bar in the basement of The Museum of Contemporary Ideas (1989 – continuing). © Peter Hill, 1989.*

#### PETER HILL

Peter Hill is a Glasgow-born Australian with dual nationality. In 1989, he launched New York's Museum of Contemporary Ideas, supposedly the world's biggest new museum and the first

of many Superfictions he created (see *The Art Fair Murders*). Hill originally coined the term to describe the work of a number of artists operating independently in the late 1980s. These include Res Ingold (Switzerland) and his fictitious airline; SERVAAS (Netherlands) and his fictive world of deep sea herring fishing; the Seymour Likely Group (Netherlands); David Wilson's Museum of Jurassic Technology (USA); Rodney Glick's (Australia) theories of Klausian Philosophy; and Joan Fontcuberta's and Pere Formiguera's (Spain) creation of the German zoologist Dr. Peter Ameisenhaufen.

Since 1989, Peter Hill has gone on to create his *Encyclopaedia of Superfictions* which documents many more Superfictions artists and art groups, most recently The Bruce High Quality Foundation University (BHQFU) based at Cooper Union, New York (see *Art in America*, March 2010, pp59-64), and numerous Singaporean artists including Amanda Heng, Adeline Kueh, Ulrich Lau, and Robert Zhao.

When Peter Hill's first Press Release for the Museum of Contemporary Ideas was mailed out in 1989 to newspapers, news agencies (Reuters/Associated Press), art magazines, critics, and artist friends, the German magazine *Wolkenkratzer* (Skyscraper), edited by Dr. Wolfgang Max Faust, believed it to be real and printed a story about the generosity of its benefactors Alice and Abner "Bucky" Cameron who made their billions from the *Cameron Oil* fields in Alaska. The article was written by Gabriela Knapstein (now curator at Berlin's Hamburger Bahnhof), and as a result Wolfgang Max Faust was asked to chair a meeting of German industrialists and curators to see if Frankfurt could build a museum based on the model of Hill's Museum of Contemporary Ideas.

See [www.superfictions.com](http://www.superfictions.com) for complete Encyclopaedia, artist interviews, and exegesis of Peter Hill's studio-based PhD on "Superfictions."

#### PIERRE HUYGHE

Pierre Huyghe was born in 1962 and trained at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs. In 2001 Huyghe represented France at the Venice Biennale, where his pavilion, entitled *Le Château de Turing*, won a special prize from the jury. In 2002 Huyghe won the Hugo Boss Prize from the Guggenheim Museum, and exhibited several works there the following year. In 2006, Huyghe's film *A Journey That Wasn't* was exhibited at the Whitney Biennial in New York, and at the re-opening of ARC/MAM and Tate Modern. He is represented by the Marian Goodman Gallery.

The following is a description of the work Huyghe made for the 2008 Biennale of Sydney, directed by Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, director of the 2012 *documenta*:

"At the Sydney Opera House a unique experience occurs throughout the course of a day and a night. An event with no beginning and no end, no division between stage and public, no specified path to take – it is a theatre liberated from rules. From the stalls to the circles to the stage, a forest of trees has

grown and spread throughout the entire Concert Hall. The light of dawn barely shines on this valley obscured by clouds. This is an in-between reality, an image of an environment, a fact that appears for a brief moment just before vanishing.”

#### RES INGOLD

Ingold Airlines is the fictional creation of Res Ingold. His early work appeared only in business plans. And like the advertisements of SERVAAS and the press releases of Peter Hill, the work used only “spot colour” to sustain the illusion and to keep production costs to a minimum. Ingold logos appeared on executive jets flying in to Documenta 1X in Kassel. Through fiction he predated (in 1989) many innovations in 21<sup>st</sup> century intercontinental flight such as the use of gymnasiums and cocktail bars on long-haul flights.

#### INSTITUTE OF CRITICAL ZOOLOGISTS

See ROBERT ZHAO

#### INSTITUTE OF MILITRONICS AND ADVANCED TIME INTERVENTIONALITY

See SUZANNE TREISTER

#### ADELINE KUEH

See LULU

#### URICH LAU

In his installation *The End of Art Report* (2013) with three single-channel videos (duration 1:30 mins each), Malaysian-born Urich Lau (based in Singapore) asks the question: “When art is in the news, how does the media influence and inform our perception of it? Can I influence the perception that viewers have of art when it is coming through the media?”

To make this work, he persuaded former news reader Duncan Watt to deliver fictitious news reports about the closure of three of Singapore’s leading museums: National Art Gallery, Singapore, Singapore Art Museum (in which his installation was placed during the 2013 Singapore Biennale), and National Museum of Singapore. According to the Biennale catalogue, “*The End of Art Report* seeks to raise the awareness of Singaporeans about the possibility of the loss of national cultural institutions, so as to create a debate over the need to ensure the long-term viability of these institutions beyond being instruments of economic value. In recent years, independent art spaces in Singapore such as Plastique Kinetic Worms (1998-2008), p-10 (2004-2007) and Post-Museum (2007-20011) had to give up their spaces due to rising rents and the pressure of maintaining the premises and running programmes with limited resources. Will the national cultural institutions face a similar fate when resources become limited? Following Marxist theory, are cultural institutions in Singapore merely the superstructure to the economic base?...The public responses to the fictional news reports could range from those who believe in the veracity of the reports to those who are either skeptical or do not believe in it.”

#### THE LEEDS 13

“The Leeds 13 first gained notoriety when they leaked to the British tabloid newspapers that they were using university money to go on holiday to Spain. In fact, the 13 art students



Adeline Kueh, *Love Hotel* (Installation view in *What it is about when it is about nothing* at Mizuma Gallery, Singapore), LED Lights, aluminium, acrylic, sex appeal, Dimensions Variable, 2015. Photo courtesy of Tan Hai Han.

from Leeds University stayed in hiding for a week, spent none of the money and fabricated holiday photos on a nearby beach in Scarborough. A few weeks ago the Leeds 13 presented their final degree show, made up entirely of work by other artists, ranging from Rodin and Damien Hirst to Marcel Duchamp. How do university degree examiners assess such a submission? Should it get a first or a third? It is not the first time such problems have arisen. Not so long ago, identical twins Jane and Louise Wilson submitted identical projects at different art schools in the UK. They are now candidates for the 1999 Turner prize. The Leeds 13 is just the latest batch of artists to create a superfiction that plays with the media and with the viewer's ability to correctly read visual material. It goes beyond the notion of a "hoax." Instead it illuminates, to paraphrase Picasso, how "art is a lie that can reveal the truth."<sup>1</sup>

From an article by Peter Hill in the *Times Higher Education Supplement London*, 6th August, 1999. Google: Superfictions

#### LULU

"Lulu" is the alter ego of Singapore-based artist Adeline Kueh. Through Lulu, Kueh explores the projected sexuality of an Asian woman. In *Love Hotel*, Lulu appears within the series of videos, photographs, installations & durational performances that take on the complexity of our desire for connection in an age of contemporary urban living. Having failed as a movie star, Lulu now runs a Love Hotel for a living. With *En passant*, Lulu's chance

encounters in transitory spaces are manifested. By looking at the gamut of emotions and issues surrounding our relationships to the city, acquaintances and even strangers, the works question experiences of isolation in the search for love as well as our expectations of what makes up these liminal spaces of intimacy.

#### MADE IN PALESTINE MADE IN ISRAEL

A fictitious team of artists created by Peter Hill as part of his ongoing Superfiction *The Art Fair Murders*. One artist is Israeli, the other Palestinian, though neither ever reveals his or her true name. For over 30 years they have been photographing artists and curators around the world at events such as The Venice Biennale, dOCUMENTA, the Munster Sculpture Project, and the Sydney Biennale. Double portraits are then produced under the name, “Art World Fan Club,” with one portrait designated “Made in Palestine” and the other, “Made in Israel.” Peter Hill originally decided which artist would represent “Palestine” or “Israel” by the throw of a dice (see THE DICE MAN) – but now he invites the real artist to throw the dice. These works can appear in various scales from postcards to billboards. Artists so far included: Martin Creed; Marina Abramović; Dennis Hopper; Martin Kippenberger; Joseph Kosuth; Hermann Nitsch; The Ramingining Artists and Burial Poles; James Lee Byars; John Armleder and Sylvie Fleury; Res Ingold, Callum Innes, Fumio Nanjo, and Heri Dono.

This project grew from the post-traumatic stress Peter Hill experienced after witnessing the Guildford Pub Bombings (1974). In the aftermath of the trauma he experienced, he reduced his agnostic response to “No Idea Is More Important Than A Human Life.” Hill has since sent hundreds of ‘Made in Palestine, Made in Israel’ postcards to world leaders, religious leaders, journalists, and social commentators, with this phrase scrawled across the back of the card. Sometimes, alternative phrases are used, including “STOP THE KILLING NOW,” and “You Lied, You Said There Would Be A Ceasefire.”

#### ERN MALLEY

The Ern Malley hoax, which Peter Hill sees more as a Superfiction than a hoax, has parallels with the fictive Scottish poet ‘Ossian,’ created by James Macpherson who supposedly discovered him in ancient Gaelic texts. For those wishing to read about these ‘real’ poems by a fictitious poet (Ern Malley), the best starting place is Michael Heyward’s book on the subject.

#### ALEKSANDRA MIR

For profile and interview with Aleksandra Mir in *THE BELIEVER*, San Francisco, December ’03 / January ’04 see [www.superfictions.com/encyclopaediaofsuperfictions](http://www.superfictions.com/encyclopaediaofsuperfictions).

#### MISS GENERAL IDEA

See A.A. BRONSON

#### MONA (MUSEUM OF OLD AND NEW ART)

The creation of polymath and multi-millionaire gambler David Walsh (whom Peter Hill describes as “an artist who choreographs the work of other artists. Who thinks and acts like an artist”), Mona is perhaps the world’s most astonishing



museum. It is situated just outside Hobart, the capital of Tasmania, Australia's island state. In 2011, Hill introduced its newly opened galleries, which are mostly underground, and its first exhibition "Monanism" to a French audience, in the pages of *Artpress* magazine, Paris:

"Far away, in an island state previously known as Van Diemen's Land, an eccentric 49-year-old mathematician and gambler has just opened one of the world's strangest museums, The Museum of Old and New Art (MONA). His name is David Walsh and his collection includes ancient Egyptian mummies and priceless coins, as well as an altered Porsche by Erwin Wurm, Wim Delvoye's *Cloaca Professional*, and Chris Ofili's *The Holy Virgin Mary*. So far, he has spent over \$200 million dollars on this "campus" and his annual running costs will be in excess of \$7 million (admission is free). In a soundproof room, a 30-channel video installation by Candice Breitz shows fans of Madonna singing *a capella* tributes from her *Immaculate Collection* album. Two visiting American artists, Tora and Rya, are invited to perform real and telephone sex in an unadvertised cleaners' cupboard (most people miss this – look for the red fire extinguisher and open the door beside it). Elsewhere, an underground tunnel leads to Anselm Kiefer's bookcase of lead and glass books, and close to that is an on-going project – an autobiography, if you will - by Christian Boltanski, documenting every day of the rest of his life and paid for every 24 hours. Daily video links flash between the artist's studio in Europe and the museum in Australia. The longer Boltanski lives, the more Walsh has to pay for the artwork. What are the odds? Ask Walsh – he's the professional gambler.

Welcome to Tasmania, once known as Van Diemen's Land. For my money, it is one of the most remarkable, beautiful, and dangerous places on the planet. I lived there for eight years and I go back as often as I can. Errol Flynn was born here and his swashbuckling history is still alive in its pubs and clubs. Many people first encountered this astonishing island, and its capital Hobart, through the writings of Jules Verne: "Dumont d'Urville, commander of the *Astrolabe*, had then sailed, and two months after Dillon had left Vanikoro he put into Hobart Town."

#### PHANTOM LIMBS

See ALEXA WRIGHT

#### PIGVISION

*PigVision* is a Superfiction created by Swiss artist/scientist Raymond Rohner while he was studying at the Centre for the Arts, Hobart, Tasmania. He asks the question: "Do Pigs See in Colour?" The project sometimes takes place in galleries, sometimes at agricultural fairs or in scientific meetings. The text on his website (<http://www.artschool.utas.edu.au/PigVision/pigvision.html>) begins:

"Paul Feyerabend, a foremost 20<sup>th</sup> century philosopher of science, became known for his claim that there was, and should be, no such thing as the scientific method."



*Babyface* fictional cosmetics company, Eve Anne O'Regan, 2000. Photo courtesy of Eve Anne O'Regan. © Eve Anne O'Regan.

#### EVE ANNE O'REAGON

Creator of the *Babyface Cosmetics* Superfiction. The artist uses graphic design and elements of advertising in her gallery-based work.

#### KARL POPPER

Karl Popper's teachings on "sophisticated methodological falsificationism" relate to Superfictions in terms of how we approach different visual truths. We can sight any number of white swans, he tells us, but we will never be able to say "all swans are white." Whereas the single sighting of a black swan does allow us to say "not all swans are white." Thus we *approach* the truth through falsificationism rather than verificationism. See also Thomas Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend.

#### ORLAN

Orlan's best-known Superfiction is her own body and the changes she has put it through. Her aim is to change her physical appearance through plastic surgery until it resembles the male Renaissance artists' view of the ideal woman. Also known as Saint Orlan since she baptised herself with that name in 1971.

#### OSSIAN

'Ossian' is the narrator, and the supposed author, of a cycle of poems which the Scottish poet James Macpherson claimed to have translated from ancient sources in the Scots Gaelic. The

furor over the authenticity of the poems continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and as such here are parallels with the Australian Ern Malley.

'Ossian' was supposedly the son of Fionn mac Cumhail, a character from Irish mythology. See Wikipedia for further clues.

#### PATRICK POUND

Patrick Pound is a New Zealand-born Australian based in Melbourne. He has created many Superfictions, often submitting his fake identities to *Who's Who of Intellectuals* and the *Who's Who Hall of Fame*. Pound frequently uses a black and white photograph of East European soap carver Lester Gabo in place of his own. Pound also uses the name Simon Dermott, particularly for book reviews (See *Photofile No 59*, p 61 and p 63)

#### RALPH RUMNEY

Ralph Rumney was the founder of the English Psychogeographical Society and later a founder member of the Situationist International. Always one to back out of the limelight, he does not appear in the group photograph of the Situationists, taken in Cosio *because he took them*. Ralph Rumney was a painter who gave up painting (and has returned to it); an artist who regards artists as generalists whose primary function is to question, he has had a career in which both possibilities have been lived through. The interview is one



Cindy Sherman, photo taken in Queensland Art Gallery Press Office, Australia, by Peter Hill, April 2016. © Peter Hill.

aspect of his art, as is his conversation, as are the *derives* on which one might find oneself in his company, as are his writings.

For a three-way discussion between Ralph Rumney, Peter Hill, and Alan Woods see: [www.superfictions.com](http://www.superfictions.com). Also see SITUATIONISTS

#### CINDY SHERMAN

Cindy Sherman's early film stills, portraying herself in various roles - hitchhiker, babysitter, waitress - place her firmly at the forefront of female artists who question identity through the use of fragmented narrative. Her project continues, most recently at the Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA) in Brisbane (June 2016), Australia, where she adopts the persona of ageing women, often in outlandish clothing and heavy makeup.

#### SITUATIONISTS

The Situationist International evolved from a synthesis of various pan-European art movements and revolutionary philosophies including the College of Pataphysics; COBRA; the Lettriste Movement; the Lettriste International (LI); the International Movement For An Imaginary Bauhaus (IMIB); Asger Jorn's Institute for Comparative Vandalism; Group Spur; and Ralph Rumney's Psychogeographical Society. Its key members included Guy Debord, Ralph Rumney, Michele Bernstein, Alexander Trocchi, Asger Jorn, Isidore Isou, Gianfranco Sanguinetti, Raoul Vaneigem and Wolman. However, it was always a loose alliance of people and movements and many others were involved. Guy Debord is now regarded as the leader of the group, although it is debatable whether such an anarchistic conglomeration could ever allow itself to be 'lead'.

#### THE SORBONNE CONFERENCE

A landmark conference in Paris (2006) organised by Dr Bernard Guelton on the theme of Art, Fiction, and the Internet (*les arts visuels, le web, et la fiction*). Artists and theorists who presented papers included: Jean-Marie Schaeffer, Jerome Pelletier, Kendall L. Walton, Jacinto Lageira, Marie-Laure Ryan, Peter Hill, Alexandra Saemmer, Monique Maza, Yannick Maignien, Andy Bichlbaum, Lorenzo Menoud, Jean-Pierre Mourey, Alain Declercq, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreidge, Eric Rondepierre, Melik Ohanian, Yann Toma.

For more conference details see: [www.superfictions.com](http://www.superfictions.com) and the conference publication: ISBN 978-2-85944-636-9

#### SUPERFICTIONS

A term coined by Peter Hill to describe new uses for fiction in the contemporary visual arts using all media including the internet and the postal system. See other listings in *The Encyclopaedia of Superfictions*.

#### SUPERFICTIONS 2: AS IF

This exhibition of global *Superfictions*, curated by Peter Hill (Scotland/Australia) and Adeline Kueh (Singapore) was held at Kings ARI, Melbourne, from 26th September 2014 to 18th October 2014. It brought together the work of 11 artists:



Adeline Kueh  
Cameron Bishop  
Grant Hill  
Jacqueline Drinkall  
Michael Vale  
Nathan Coley  
Neon Kohkom  
Patrick Pound  
Peter Hill  
The Institute of Critical Zoologists  
Urich Lau

*As if*, curated by Peter Hill (Aus/Sco) and Adeline Kueh (Singapore), brings together 11 artists whose work explores fictive narratives through painting, sculpture, video, and installation. These range from Turner Prize finalist Nathan Coley's collaboration with Cate Blanchett – a meditation on the laneways and dark alleys of Melbourne and Glasgow – to Melbourne painter Grant Hill's images of suburbia that look “as if” they are something else. Several contemporary artists have,



*Aesthetic Vandalism* Robert Nelson, art critic for *The Age* newspaper (Melbourne), suddenly slashes a canvas by Peter Hill's fictive artist Herb Sherman, during the opening of the exhibition *As if: Superfictions 2* at King's ARI, curated by Peter Hill and Adeline Kueh, Australia (2014). © Peter Hill.



in recent years, investigated the animal and plant kingdoms, but few so poetically as the Singapore-based *Institute of Critical Zoologists* (aka Robert Zhao), represented in “As if” by a complex artists’ book. This is a celebration of the strange forking paths that confront our imaginations in the garden of Superfictions.

See AUTHENTICITY...?

#### SYNTHETIC MODERNISM

In the early 1980s, Peter Hill became frustrated with the (over) use of the terms modernism and post-modernism that seemed to go head-to-head like sporting teams in an unhelpful binary opposition. He coined the term “synthetic modernism” to cover the grey area between modernism and postmodernism and found it useful as a way of describing the art of the *Superfiction*.

#### BOONSRI TANGTRONGSIN

Boonsri Tangtrongsin is a Thai artist currently working in Scandinavia. She is the inventor of “Superbarbara” a non-archetypal heroine that takes the form of an inflated sex doll. *Superbarbara* was exhibited as a single-channel video made up of 11 episodes in the 2013 Singapore Biennale. According to the catalogue: “Although much of *Superbarbara*’s encounters are allusions to social realities in Thailand, at the heart of these works are philosophical conundrums that are universal in human existence. By transforming *Superbarbara* from a sex toy into a saviour, yet positioning her as both victim and valiant hero, the artist reflects on the potential of ordinary people to play the role of heroes.”

Boonsri Tangtrongsin and Superbarbara were curated into the exhibition *Faux Novel* at RMIT Project space by Peter Hill and Anabelle Lacroix, from 26<sup>th</sup> September to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014.

#### THIRTEEN MONTHS IN 1989

See THE ART FAIR MURDERS and THE AFTER SEX CIGARETTE

#### TORCH GALLERY

This Amsterdam Gallery run by the late Adriaan Van Der Have was pioneering in its support of artists working with Superfictions including: Guillaume Bijl, Res Ingold, SERVAAS, Seymour Likely, Gary Carsley, and Peter Hill.

#### SUZANNE TREISTER

Suzanne Treister is the founder of the Institute of Millitronics and a widely exhibited artist, including in the 2002 Biennale of Sydney (*The World May Be*) *Fantastic*. One of her most endearing creations has been the time travelling Rosalind Brodsky who is like a cross between Dr. Who and Woody Allen’s Zelig (she mysteriously appeared on the set of *Schindler’s List* alongside Ben Kingsley).

Treisters’s book *No Other Symptoms: Time Travelling* with Rosalind Brodsky is described in the catalogue to the 2002 Biennale of Sydney (*The World May Be*) *Fantastic*: “Loosely resembling an adventure game, the story is set in 2058, at an institute of esoteric advanced technology. The facility is crowded with paraphernalia through which visitors can explore

Brodsky's life and adventures...In the bedroom a large *Introspect* TV screen shows excerpts from Brodsky's career as a television cook, where she loftily disregards the laws of physics with a recipe for converting gâteau into Polish pierogi dumplings."

MICHAEL VALE

Creator of many Superfictions, Vale is perhaps best known for his *Smoking Dog* series of works, including the award-winning video set in various locations including Venice and Paris.

DAVID WALSH

See MONA

ORSON WELLES

Orson Welles' U.S. radio adaptation of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* was one of the earliest and most successful Superfictions. Across the country, listeners tuned in to what many believed to be an invasion of Earth from outer space. Sadly, there was at least one death caused by the panic on the streets and freeways.

FRED WILSON

By commenting on the place of African Americans within U.S. museums – and his projects often position them working as gallery attendants or cleaners, rather than customers and spectators – Wilson has caused many museum directors and curators to re-think their programmes and attitudes. He has also commented on the content of colonial paintings and their depictions of both slavery and domestic interiors. For one influential project, he dressed as a museum attendant himself and 'lived' in the gallery for a week – approaching white middle-class couples and interpreting the paintings for them.

ALEXA WRIGHT

Alexa Wright works across many areas from installation to photography and social commentary. Perhaps only one of her projects really fits the notion of the Superfiction. In it, she photographed a number of people who had lost limbs in car and motorbike accidents, in their homes. Through computer manipulation, Wright documented the slowly disappearing phantom limbs that each experienced for some months after their accident. These works were presented in panels of three photographs. In one instance a man has his hand, wearing his wedding ring, resting on the table. However, there is a gap between the wrist and the elbow where he feels nothing. In the next image the hand has disappeared entirely and the finger with the wedding ring now grows out of the stump of his arm. (See STRANGER THAN TRUTH)

XU BING

Creator of a fictional language that in its visual form, closely resembles (to foreigners) classical Chinese script. He has exhibited globally in events such as the Venice Biennale, the Asia Pacific Triennial (Brisbane, Australia), and is currently director of the Central Academy, Beijing.

ROBERT ZHAO

Robert Zhao is a Singapore artist who created *The Institute of Critical Zoologists* in 2008. His work is both poetic and scientific,



Robert Zhao Renhui  
*Last Cat On Christmas Island*, 2016  
60cm x 40cm, Diasac, 2016  
[www.landarchive.org](http://www.landarchive.org)  
[www.criticalzoologists.org](http://www.criticalzoologists.org)  
Courtesy of the artist.

dealing seriously, and at times humorously, with the fragile ecologies of our planet. In the 2013 Singapore Biennale, he exhibited *A Guide to the Flora and Fauna of the World*, described in the catalogue as: “an installation which seeks to document and reflect on the myriad ways in which human action and intervention are slowly altering the natural world. Based on the evolutionary premise that all living things constantly change and adapt to cope with and respond to their changing environments (or risk extinction), Zhao’s *Guide* presents a catalogue of curious creatures and life-forms that have evolved in often unexpected ways to cope with the stresses and pressures of a changed world. Other organisms documented in the installation are the results of human intervention – mutations engineered to serve various interests and purposes ranging from scientific research to the desire for ornamentation. Several specimens in this installation are based on fact; others are works of fiction. The line between the two is often an indistinct one, as scientific advances in the last half-century have made possible what was previously believed to be impossible.”

In 2016, Zhao exhibited a major research project in the 20<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Sydney (Carriageworks). This examined the flora and fauna of Christmas Island and linked its colonial past to both Australia and Singapore. It was a beautifully poetic analysis of a fragile ecosystem.