

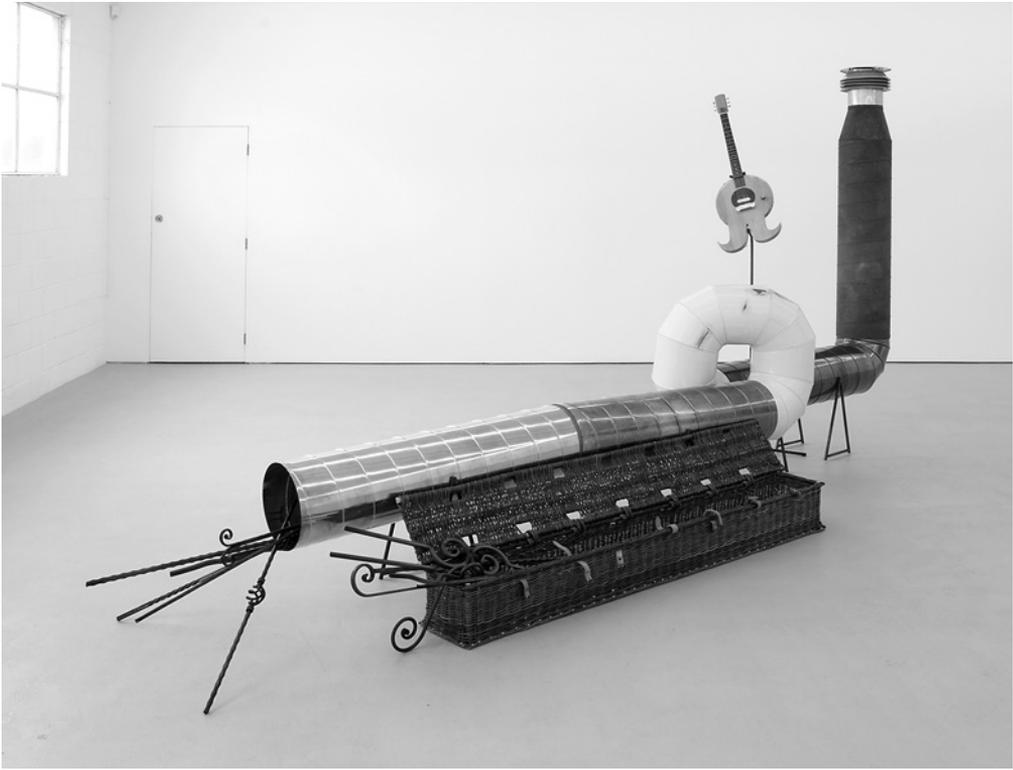
ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE STILL DEAD!¹

ROCKEFELLER is suing Exxon. It's stupefying. The system's rigged. Once a robber baron always a robber baron. New eco clothes can't disguise it.² Take for instance the moment in *1992* (2015), Alessandro Fabbri, Ludovica Rampoldi and Stefano Sardo's TV drama about the ascendancy of Berlusconi, when the advertising executive's girlfriend Veronica sentimentalises his Lucio Fontana. Running counter to our typical assessment of Fontana's radical slash, she suggests instead that the painting's tear echoes the tycoon's own fragility, his need for emotional nourishment. Veronica's assessment not only inverts the aestheticisation of violence, of aggression, that Fontana so banks upon, but it also détournes the series' main protagonist to the extent that he pimps his girlfriend to a movie producer and sells the painting.³ Indeed this agitation of the series' primary agent sends the show awry. Suddenly the narrative is overwhelmed by grief, by trauma, fittingly portrayed in flashback after flashback, inverting a story arc massaged

1. For reasons that ought to become clear this essay is written under the sway of the constant coin tossing in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*. There, the idea that heads keep coming up isn't just an admission of fate, it's bookended. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are living out someone else's plot. They are mechanical. Odds plainly don't work. There is no deviating from the script. You might say the system is rigged. Actually, the system is a script. Which is precisely why they are dead. Which is precisely why Guildenstern keeps flipping that coin. He isn't just hoping to alter the narrative, to find the moment when it will change, but to confirm the absurd structure he and Rosencrantz are trapped in. See: Tom Stoppard, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, (London: Faber, 1967).

2. No wait, Rockefeller's being sued by Exxon! The Rockefellers are writing screeds about the dishonesty of Exxon over climate change. See: David Kaiser and Less Wasserman, 'The Rockefeller Family Fund vs Exxon', in *The New York Review of Books* (8 December, 2016): 31, 34-35.

3. It's worth pointing out here the daughter's comedic interlude in the following days, adjusting to the disappearance of the girlfriend *and* the painting, when she quite innocently asks if the painting is being repaired.

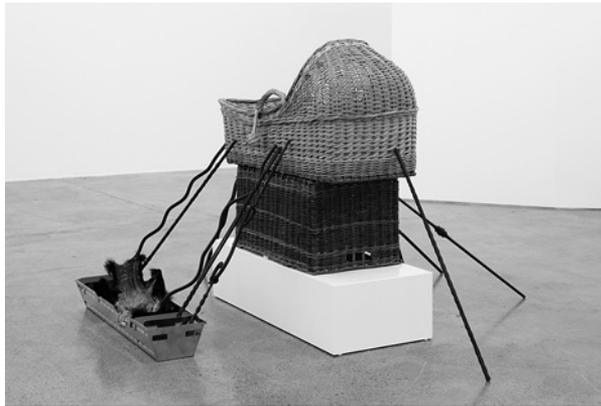


by the sheer pursuit of power, into a consoling therapeutic enterprise. This type of inversion, of narrative being turned inside out, is central to the work of Oscar Enberg. Think how quickly Chris Sharp calls Enberg's practice "refreshingly classical".⁴ Does this characterisation not convince you that Enberg's practice is at odds with the dominant sensibility of the day to expose the historical object, to allow an object's collusion of cultural forces to speak for itself? Running contrary to *those* practices, Enberg tends to overburden narratives entirely, to push complementary and contradictory content together. Take for instance the work *Imagination Dead Imagine (lilt for tenor and Jean Arp electric guitar)* (2015),

4. Chris Sharp, 'Oscar Enberg', in *The Pynchons SozEoz: Slouching towards Dignity*, (Auckland: Hopkinson Mossman, 2014): np.

image: Oscar Enberg, *Imagination Dead Imagine (lilt for tenor and Jean Arp electric guitar)*, 2015, brass, bronze, copper plated, powder coated and rusted steel flue, stainless steel cowl, hand woven willow, wrought iron, custom electric guitar (Fijian kauri, mahogany, rosewood, paua shell veneer), 2000 x 4500 x 1200mm, photo: Alex North

a large amalgamation that combines thick industrial chimney tubing with the petite wonder of a hand built guitar fashioned into a symbolic Jean Arp's style abstraction, all propped up by a wicker basket and wrought iron prods. *Imagination Dead Imagine* isn't just a reprise of Charlotte Posenenske, nor some sort of millennial meme on Luigi Russolo. No, what we have is an apparatus that, like its title suggests, speaks precisely of the tumultuous route culture takes; that it combusts, that it is funnelled, both forwards and backwards, polluting and contaminating as much as promulgating, and yet, always entirely directed, manipulated by practitioners, quite often mercilessly so. This point is reiterated by Enberg's inclusion of the wrought iron prods, that operate as much as props or literal structures of support, as marshalling devices. Such channelling, of Russolo's early noise machines, of Arp's embrace of chance, of imagination itself, isn't so much complexity rhetoric as it is a wiping clean. Indeed, like Veronica's assessment of Fontana's slash, Enberg's overburdening of this narrative, his intervention, sends content we have presumed to understand all too well spinning off in new directions.



That historicity can be revoked, revised again and again, is the subject of another of Enberg's works. In fact, in a show titled *the prophet, the wise, the technician and the Pharisee* (2015), Enberg blatantly makes a joke of such logic, calling a work that is so clearly the nativity scene,

image: Oscar Enberg, *The Historical Gesture*, 2015, hand woven willow, wrought iron, sublimation print on aluminium, copper, brass, chrome and black chromed steel, peacock pelt, 1200 x 1300 x 900mm, photo: Sam Hartnett



Typically, Enberg's practice has been read as a provocation of entropy, of the speculative economy running into error, running into decline. He installs two chimneys in the Auckland Art Gallery's sculpture court only to string up between them a replica of Jean Arp's *Croissance* (1938).⁶ A form caught in wires, a modelling of the vitality of life, of deliberative vitality. Like the gnawing hole at the centre of Veronica's advertising executive, there is a drive, a function of desire, literally a *croissance*. Arp romanticises the idea, gives it a form, abstracts it, bulbous shapes going north. Going growth. And yet, the chimneys are dormant. Better yet, the chimneys are superfluous. They're non-connected. They are symbolic. And yet the entire enterprise, the Enbergian orchestration isn't *just* symbolic; it's the culture industry writ large. So much huff and puff.

6. I'm writing here of Enberg's recent commission for the Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tamaki's Edmiston North Sculpture Terrace, *Troubles de la croissance (der ursprung des pendels)* (2016).

image: Oscar Enberg, *Troubles de la croissance (der ursprung des pendels)*, 2016, patinated bronze, Black Forest cuckoo clocks, blackened steel rod, rusted copper flue, fibreglass, glazed terracotta, aluminium turbine ventilator, cement render over fibre cement board structure, mixed media, 3000 x 10000 x 1000mm, photo: Jennifer French



So much entanglement. So much talking. Writing. Clocking up. The immorality pros deliberating. The smoky fumes of history being written down. So much so we feel the clock ticking. Literally, given Enberg's comic inclusion of Swiss-style chalet cuckoo clocks on the back of one of the chimneys. These face off against the city's clocks. Tick tock, like Captain Hook's crocodile. Perpetually present. Eclipsed only by endeavour. The very noise of the city. Its funk, its propagation. And there you are in the midst of it, staring at it. Two chimneys stringing up replicas from sculpture's history. You're trapped in their overflow. Caught dormant. Suspended at the moment growth stops. Looking around haplessly. Feeling foolhardy. And yet what humour. What consolation. Is this encounter with entropy meant to be therapeutic?

Michel Serres points to two irreversible senses of time. The first, the time of "entropy" "makes us die", literally expends us. The second, "Darwinian evolution", is a time that "perpetuates us, placing hope in

images: details of Oscar Enberg, *Troubles de la croissance (der ursprung des pendels)*, 2016, patinated bronze, Black Forest cuckoo clocks, blackened steel rod, rusted copper flue, fibreglass, glazed terracotta, aluminium turbine ventilator, cement render over fibre cement board structure, mixed media, 3000 x 10000 x 1000mm, photo: Jennifer French

the genius of our daughters”.⁷ That these two times intertwine should go without saying; if we speak of entropy we also speak of evolution, and to speak of evolution is speak of a relation, a relation provoked by the ending of one system and its webbing into another. They all flow into and from the other. Like Enberg’s adaption of *croissance*, the fungible growth strategy, caught between two chimneys. Supported, cherished, hoisted, and yet set to the metronomic beat of times’ clock. Tick, tick, tick. Always defined. No longer caught at the entropic peak, in which the system folds into decline, in which the irreversible body cedes its vitality. Now it becomes precisely about relations. About content. About the suffering of content. No wonder Enberg suffuses his objects with too many directions. Too many capabilities. He extends their relations, pushing precisely this intertwining of the relational, of *croissance*, no longer so simply limited to physical vitality, to the physical limit of the body, but to their extenuated circumstances. As Nigel Thrift points out, the physical body doesn’t stop at the flesh, it extends across a permeable matrix of relational operations. It is contiguous.⁸ Even at its core it is a motley collection of fungible forms interrelating. In Serres’ terminology this is a kind of “Exo-Darwinism”,⁹ no longer just a physical evolutionary dance, but a cultural, semiotic tool-use that always makes us more than one but less than two (to use Donna Haraway’s phrasing).¹⁰

I labour this overlapping because I think it’s a useful way to read Enberg’s preoccupation with entropy. Indeed, what could be more defunct than the nativity scene? And yet in calling it the ‘historical gesture’ Enberg’s practice not only renews the narrative, making it a kind of inversion in which one can be reborn, but also exposes the structural equilibrium of that narrative. This is explicitly seen in another of Enberg’s works, *Cut No. 10 or According to the laws of chance* (2014–2015), that takes as its subject a portrait of Genie the

7. Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence Schehr (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007): 186.

8. Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008): 10.

9. Michel Serres, *Malfaisance: Appropriation Through Pollution*, trans. Anne-Marie Feenberg-Dibon (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011): 37.

10. Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University Minnesota Press, 2008).



‘Wild Child’; a girl found in her California home at the age of 13, forcibly excluded from society and unable to speak. Like *les enfants sauvages* that so fascinated an earlier era, Genie once again offered a demonstrable moment, in which, as Giorgio Agamben points out, the concerted effort to cultivate these “uncertain and mute beings” openly demonstrates the very “precariousness of the human” (that such standards needed to be maintained).¹¹ And yet Genie offered no such value; her speech impediment was not easily overcome. To reinforce the perversity of this ‘refusal’ Enberg frames, alongside Genie’s portrait, an automatic text by Jean Arp transcribed into International Phonetic Language, again a sort of demonstration of the universality around assuredly human values, systems that prolong or safeguard the precarity of the human, an entirely flexible category, that we should note, is only defined as it proceeds.¹²

11. Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004): 30.

12. As Agamben points out, Linnaeus catalogued man according to no specifying trait “other than the ability to recognise himself”. She must be defined “through his self-knowledge”, becoming, “the animal that must recognise itself as human to be human.” *The Open*: 26.

image: Oscar Enberg, *Cut No. 10 or According to the laws of chance*, 2014–2015, hand dyed linen tapestry, iron nails, carved swamp kauri, stain, wax, framed archival digital print and ink on paper, *passé partout*, 1000 x 600 x 150mm

Genie's failure to prove the logic of language acquisition, to become a suitable mechanism for a system that was so willing to incorporate her, is precisely Enberg's point. Genie slips from the confining narrative, but inadvertently so, like a deviation that is already part of the fabric. This logic, or type of resistance, is echoed in the elongated repetitions of the Arp's tapestry, a sequence we might presume to be the subject of this abstraction, their haphazard chance-like formation. But no, in Enberg's hand the subject is just as equally the spaces in between, the medium upon which chance occurs, upon which the bulbous morphing of objects, of narratives, takes on form. That is, the background is always there, not just as noise, but as the carrier of the narrative and its interruptive agency. Which is why Enberg will so often return again and again to restless historical figures, ones that slip in and out of narratives. After all wasn't the colonial parvenu John Court not just larger than life, but a force to be reckoned with, a shaper of history, particularly of Karangahape Road, a road overly familiar to the audience of the gallery where that work was first shown. Likewise, Jean Arp's *Croissance* isn't just trapped in suspension, but left to its own devices. It stands not just as an articulated object, literally webbed into Enberg's assemblage, but also as a historicised object, that is a subject in its own right, in its own shaping of history. Both of these subjects are materials in which Enberg crafts larger stories, larger edifices, spurring deviations within the downward stream of history.

Given this dominance of the relation, this tendency to play the position, might we not align Enberg's practice with Serres' invocation of the joker; that blank, interchangeable card interjected into a game, into a system? Especially given Serres' comments on bricolage, a characteristic so central to Enberg's practice of assembly:

*The joker is a logical object that is both indispensable and fascinating. Placed in the middle or at the end of a series, a series that has a law of order, it permits it to bifurcate, to take another appearance, another direction, a new order. [Indeed] the only describable difference between a method and bricolage is the joker. The principle of bricolage is to make something by means of something else.*¹³

13. Serres, *The Parasite*: 160.

And yet isn't Serres' major figure the parasite? That "element of relation", that figure involved wholeheartedly in abuse value.¹⁴ What ramifications might this have for the explicitly postcolonial situation of Enberg's new film *Red Beryl and crocodile, Opal (Irrational Exuberance in the White Man's Hole)* (2016–2017) set in the opal mining settlement of Coober Pedy in the Australian 'outback'? Might we not simply read this extension of abuse value as a continuation of the colonial logic of legitimation, an apologist rhetoric in which the victors take according to their needs? Let's hope not.

In Serres' terminology abuse is less a vindictive exploitation of the other, than a general principle, a vector, what he calls the "single arrow" the "relation without a reversal".¹⁵ Indeed:

*Abuse appears before use. Gifted in some fashion, the one eating next to. Soon eating at the expense of... the host is not a prey, for he offers and continues to give. Not a prey, but the host. The other one is not a predator but a parasite. Would you say that the mother's breast is the child's prey? It is more or less the child's home. But this relation is of the simplest sort; there is none simpler or easier: it always goes in the same direction.*¹⁶

Moreover:

*Everything begins with what I call abuse value. The first economic relation is of abuse. But when the arrow does not kill, when abuse does not pass the point of no return, the relation can evolve toward another equilibrium.*¹⁷

Enberg foregrounds this complicated relation in the opening of *Red Beryl* by adopting Mireille Rosello's notion of the postcolonial encounter as one between host and guest, necessitating "the uncomfortable and sometimes painful possibility of being changed by the other".¹⁸

14. Serres, *The Parasite*: 185.

15. Not that Serres actually calls it a principle, indeed; it is a "one-way relation, where one eats the other and where the second cannot benefit...the exchange is neither principle nor original nor fundamental; I do not know how to put it: the relation denoted by a single arrow is irreversible, just takes its place in the world. Man is a louse for other men. Thus man is a host for other men. The flow goes one way, never the other. I call this semiconduction, this valve, this single arrow, this relation without a reversal of direction, 'parasitic'". *The Parasite*: 5.

16. Serres, *The Parasite*: 7.

17. Serres, *The Parasite*: 165.

18. Mireille Rosello, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

These words are spoken by Enberg's protagonist Red Beryl, the film's interlocutor, a sort of explorer, navigator figure drawn to Coober Pedy's infamous resident, Crocodile Harry; an archetype much like John Court, a colonial figure with drive. Only far more seamier, more risqué if you will.

And yet, preceding this brief monologue of Red Beryl's, Enberg's establishing scene is of an Umoona woman (the aboriginal people of Coober Pedy) who stands in front of an abandoned spaceship prop, delivering the Jean Arp automatic poem, *The Hyperbole of the Crocodile's Hairdresser and the Walking-Stick* (1919). Calmly reciting Arp's excess of associative imagery, her impassive tone only heightens the often grotesque and vindictive language the poem vomits forth. This contrast quietly pushes aside the poem as riddle, to expose its vice of aggression. Like the slash in Fontana's painting, such a reading unsettles its presumed narrative, deliberately transporting this aggressive fissure into another dimension. Literally so, given her recitation isn't strictly limited to the colonial settlers, the miners who came to extract the opal, but also to the subsequent colonisation of the area by Hollywood's simulacra machine that transposed this land into so many different locales, from *Mad Max* (1985) to *Pitch Black* (2000) and beyond. Indeed, Hollywood's overwriting extends the subterranean excavation of the initial miners, demonstrating a general callousness to constantly displace this disposable surface, this blank *terra nullius*, this 'outback'. Consequently, the verbiage of Arp's poem isn't just to say that out here anything goes, but that out here nothing ever settles. Consequently, this shot of the Umoona woman in front of the abandoned prop reading aloud the hapless, distorted language of Arp isn't just a proliferation of threads, of associations, it is the skewing of history's narrative entirely. Deadpanned, quietly invoked, she plays the generic role of the 'indigenous'; to bear witness to colonial aggression, to anchor our indignation, our frustration, much as Iron Eyes Cody, the 'crying Indian' of the 1970s 'Keep America Beautiful' campaign, was supposed to. And yet. Really? The stoic indigenous witness! Stuck outside of time! Reciting the Arp's poem like some sort of settler-songline? Yeah, "the pure products of America go crazy" too.¹⁹

19. William Carlos Williams, *To Elsie*, 1923.

Like so often in his practice, Enberg's film revels in the absurdity of history. It is not content to be contained by pure politics of cause and effect. Anyone looking for an answer to the vexatious question of settler complacency, or commensal relations, misses the point. History here isn't merely a case of tidying up the loose ends, but rather proliferating an asymmetrical flow. Enberg extends the jokers, making the film more delirious, interjecting noise, quite literally. In one scene Red Beryl passes by a drummer's rock solo, or later, the noisy splashing of a man practising his aqua jogging/calisthenics in an indoor pool. Is it not telling that the underground pool, the site of relaxation and relief in such an alienating environment, becomes instead an exasperatingly therapeutic site, in which one must work at one's recuperation, something made plain by the man's frustration, his flailing limbs, his emphatic torment? This isn't so much an entropic overflow but a demented limbo, a twinning of two times, of entropy and its extension into cultural evolutionary challenges.

In Enberg's film we encounter a confession of child abuse, images of cross-species bestiality, dangling sex trophies, all variously attributed to the figure of Crocodile Harry, Enberg's loosely adaptive, furtively embraced icon of indigeneity not just for the here and now, but for the perversely adaptive realm of settler opportunism. Cruelly then, we find a pure sign of abuse becoming a parasitical exchange, an asymmetrical flow of exploitation and adaption, of the host adapting to the guest, of the guest blurring the relation of exploitation, creating a rupture, creating a new equilibrium that, in so many ways, maintains the structural equivalence it always supposed.

This isn't the first time Enberg has focused on this accommodation of disruption, this manipulation of abuse. Take for instance his suite of work surrounding Macau's Grand Lisboa Casino that hybridises both the accentuations of wealth and the mechanisms through which it is accumulated. Nothing could be more apt than his use, in *Silk Road Community Chest* (2015), of a ball and claw foot corkscrew (carved in ebony and ivory) to fix to the wall the artist's own donation to the Hong Kong Community Chest. Mimicking the Grand Macau's notorious proprietor Stanley Ho's own annual charity donation, Enberg's gesture here echoes the accumulative, paternalistic charities (like that of Bill Gates) that give with one hand only to siphon away our options with the other.



This is echoed in Enberg's use of the bronze horse head, hoisted on a platform above the table in *Robuchon au Dôme or Qing Dynasty Junket Room* (2015), a crushed version of the controversial Qing dynasty horse sculpture in the casino's foyer, but also the screaming horse of *Guernica* (1937), and the infamous bargaining chip from *The Godfather* (1972). It is entirely fitting that Enberg conflates Ho's prized sculpture with historical emblems of blunt coercion; *Guernica* resulting from the Luftwaffe's demonstration of total war, the other of the Mafia's 'offer you cannot refuse'. No wonder then that Enberg's fixation on casinos as mechanisms of chance revels in the structural equivalence that this systematic exploitation of abuse entails.

Enberg chooses to show the way abuse value can be organised, that rather than being disruptive it can in fact be accounted for, scheduled to appear before the card is played, and this logic similarly resurfaces in his focus on an Australian opal mining town. Opals function as a perversely iconographic token within the settler narrative of Australia, inverting the systematic colonisation of the country in order to pose a

image: Oscar Enberg, *Silk Road Community Chest*, 2015, ebony, ivory, stainless steel, sterling silver, receipt for Hong Kong Community Chest donation, 120 x 300 x 120mm, photo: Alex North

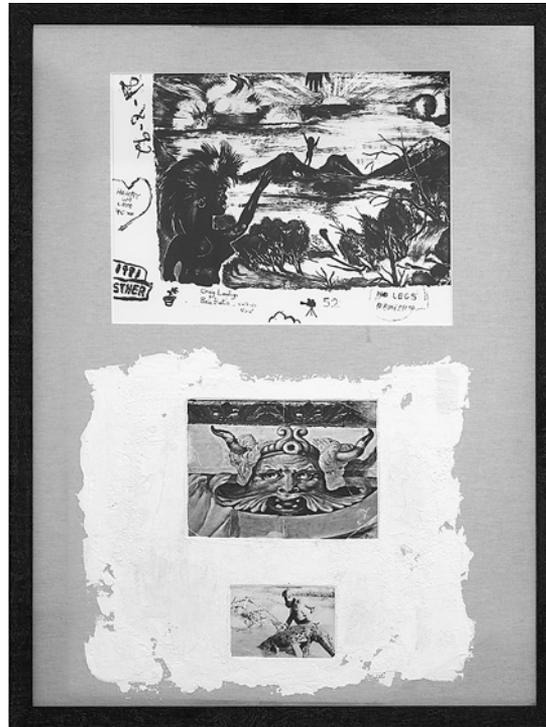
image: detail of Oscar Enberg, *Goodluck for Thomas, Antoine and Louis*, 2014, ash, kauri, mahogany, Aladdin Casino gaming token, brass fitting, 440 x 365 x 185mm, photo: Alex North

gradual awakening of the settler to his own indigeneity, his own blessed becoming in the ‘lucky country’. Such a history deliberately erases the indigenous population through an act of obfuscation that makes this particular ruse all the more exploitative.²⁰ Ted Murphy prefaces his opal history, *They Struck Opal*, with a hundred pages of outback life, of a conventional settler narrative, infusing his biographies, as outback settler, as opal dealer, as one continuous line of place-making. This mirrors an oft-repeated narrative in New Zealand in which settler identity consolidates around a purposeful place-making, less an exploitive extraction than an industrious conversion, a proprietorial adjustment that allows the settler to ‘become indigenous’, conjuring what Alex Calder calls an oxymoronic “Pakeha tūrangawaewae”.²¹ This settler conversion winds so much through the opal trade of the early twentieth century that it seems entirely fitting that in a postcolonial era actively seeking redemption (especially given its tendency to mask new forms of the settler indigeneity complex as commensal inhabitants) that Australia’s opal market would collapse. Indeed, Coober Pedy seems to be largely a historical site, relying on its history to sell imported opals; precisely the sort of cruel joke that Enberg gravitates towards.

Never content to simply play one joker, Enberg introduces into this malign perversion of history an overlap between Crocodile Harry’s grotto and Nero’s infamous Domus Aurea. This conflation is signalled early in Enberg’s film when Red Beryl first steps into shot, holding up an image from Nero’s mythopoetic pleasure palace, now a subterranean excavation site. Red Beryl holds up this photograph saying she is looking for both Crocodile Harry and the moment in which a guest might become a host, a host a guest. Here it’s important to note that the Umoona named this area Kupa Piti (white man in hole) a pitying kind of nomenclature describing the necessity for original settlers

20. But don’t take my synopsis for granted, listen to the first-hand account of Ted Murphy, an important early Australian opal buyer: “I want Australians to realise that opal is an Australian industry: that it gave employment to thousands of people, directly and indirectly before the War and brought an immense amount of money in Australia... That it is Australia’s ‘National Gem’ and I want them to be proud of it, as they have every right to be.” E.J. Murphy, *They Struck Opal*, (Sydney: Associated General Publications, 1948): 98.

21. Alex Calder, ‘Blending and Belonging: Blanche Baughan and Scenic New Zealand’, in *Journal of New Zealand Literature* 23.1 (2005): 174–175. Pakeha is the Maori word for a white New Zealander, tūrangawaewae is a Maori concept often translated as ‘a place to stand’.



to live below ground due to inhospitable desert temperatures. Such ambivalence, be it sympathetic, derisory, or both at once, is precisely why the Umoona woman's recital of the Arp's text in the opening scene can play out like a kind of settler-songline, not only recalling the motivations of the settlers to carve out their own space in someone else's land, but to escape the cyclical abuse of their own homelands. And yet, as Enberg's doubling of Nero's palace and Crocodile Harry's 'lair' reminds us we can't *not* take our history with us. So, of course Crocodile Harry's 'nest' functions as the 'outback' version of Nero's Domus Aurea, especially given Harry's bouquet of sexualised mementos, the hanging bras, the scrawled equivocations of lust. Does this not allow a parasitical overlap, one taking from the other? Nero's grotto becoming Crocodile Harry's grotto, becoming also the grotto that underwrites so many desires. A hole, like the slash in the Fontana painting that Veronica so sentimentalises, that impels an arrogantly decisive closure.

image: Oscar Enberg, *The very precondition of hospitality*, 2017, unique lithograph, properties from *Red Beryl and crocodile, Opal (Irrational Exuberance in the White Man's Hole)*, zebra stone marmorino render on passé partout, frame, 950 x 720 x 190mm, photo: Alex North

So, like the pimping of that girlfriend, Enberg casts his protagonist loose, questing for a figure no longer there, one we glimpse goose-stepping across the stage of history now as farce. Against the flow of history, Enberg embraces a Nazi sympathiser and then, just as quickly, embraces Crocodile Harry as Hollywood's prototype of Crocodile Dundee. This, then, is a figure simultaneously outside sanctioned history as much as he invokes its resurrection. Crocodile Harry, the uranium miner turned Opal digger turned sex-tourist host, is the emblematic, contradictory figure upon which Red Beryl's quest turns. No wonder Enberg finishes his film with a shot of Harry's burial site in Coober Pedy. That is, of the white man (finally) in his hole.

And yet, surely this isn't the end zone? The entropic folly as a repetition of history's stasis? Did Nero not say that the Domus Aurea allowed him to finally feel like he was housed as a human? Isn't it fitting given this overlap of narratives that the pleasure palace is the kind of tacky void at the centre of the story. Is it not the baroque, incandescently sullied container, the soiled nest, literally scrawled upon by so many passing tourists, so many desires to write down their own history, their own presence amongst this continual overwriting of place? No wonder Enberg tacks on Greenspan's infamous phrase "irrational exuberance" into his title in an act of bricolage that causes the entire narrative to swell. Abuse follows abuse, in a cyclical linear exchange, operating much like the corkscrew motif that saturates Enberg's practice. In fact, in one of the more lucid moments of dialogue in Enberg's film Red Beryl asks if you would rather be fucked by a corkscrew?! Should it surprise us then that the other white man in a hole is seen arms flailing, tormented by introversion, stuck on loop, making one noise after another. Is it not fitting that Red Beryl, the ruby, is found only in the Wah Wah mountains of America?! From one noisy site to another... Look at another instance of a previous era's opal exuberance, the Velázquez portrait of Antonio Eusebio de Cubero, the governor of New Mexico, who so proudly displays his opal as a sign of good fortune, of foresight, so that he might hold together the tumultuous politics of another colonial era, of another parasitical order.²² How quickly history upturns. How quickly fortunes change. Abuse follows abuse. Exxon's suing Rockefeller!

22. See: Ion Idriess, *Opals and Sapphires*, (Sydney: Angus and Roberston, 1967).