



**3<sup>d</sup> X 5**

**LIONEL BAWDEN**

**JOHN NICHOLSON**

**KIRSTEEN PIETERSE**

**GEMMA SMITH**

**KARL WIEBKE**

Bathurst Regional Art Gallery 2 October – 15 November 2009

The idea for a recent sculpture, *Stealth* (2009), came from Nicholson thinking about pixels as standard units which translate digital information into light. "I wanted to give light a shape in the form of a chunk of information" he says. While the single-colour face of the sculpture was made to match the format of a standard wide-screen TV, the edge reveals a dense slab of brightly pigmented bands of Perspex. These plastic strata, seamlessly adhered together using polymer binders, give the impression of a cross section of data. The bar-coded motif is also reminiscent of scientific images of the electromagnetic spectrum.

Earlier works such as *Solid Light Extraction (interrupted)* (2007), reveal Nicholson's interest in "what light might look like if it were fossilized or if remnants of it were extracted." By representing light in this opaque physical way, Nicholson is creating what he describes as "core samples of light."

John Nicholson is represented by Sarah Cottier Gallery Sydney, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne and Ryan Renshaw Gallery, Brisbane.

## KIRSTEEN PIETERSE

"The impetus for much of my work came from an image of a ruined pier which collapsed under heavy seas" says Pieterse.

Indeed, the power of Pieterse's sculpture comes through the implied presence of natural forces such as dramatic cataclysms or gradual erosion and how human projects are decisively undone by them.

It's not surprising to learn that she has an abiding interest in the paintings of Casper David Friedrich, whose landscapes are characterised by ships buckled in ice, ruined cathedrals in the half light and solitary figures facing storms coming over the sea. "I am fundamentally interested in the 'immense' and implying this to the viewer" she says.

"To me the implied monumentality inherent in my sculptures references things bigger than us, the open, wild, and 'Romantic' landscape and the lack of control we have over things like weather events and the impact of time."

While subverting the tradition of the architectural model, Pieterse also uses it to great effect to achieve a sense of monumentality. Her signature use of the iconic cross-brace motif heightens our sense of scale because we are, as she puts it, "accustomed to seeing this visual motif on architectural and engineered structures in the landscape." This is true as much for ambitious 19th century engineering which brought us the Eiffel Tower as it is for the cranes and scaffolding we see on a daily basis in the urban environment.

But where architectural models sell ideas of progress and success, Pieterse's project pulls the rug. There is a poetic quality that is absent in architectural models. "The already broken, 'failed' form of the sculpture is where the distinction lies" says Pieterse, highlighting how she has shifted the focus.

Whereas works such as *Ridge* (2005) depict human constructions doomed in the face of natural forces, Pieterse's body of work also includes broken and fractured trees, highlighting our impact on the environment. Works, such as *Methuselah* (2006) and *Subsist* (2009), were informed by her visit a few years ago to the Tarkine rainforest region, located in north-western Tasmania. "This experience has supported my practice ever since" she says, describing the beautiful, yet complex sensation of moving through a previously undisturbed wilderness.

Kirsteen Pieterse is represented by Martin Brown Fine Art, Sydney



02

“ I like the idea of pseudo-science and using that in artistic practice. I like representing scientific information in a visual form. ”