

## **PAINTING MELBOURNE MUSIC**

"Nobody understands the trouble we're in." Gram Parsons

Two years in the making. This is a collection of works on paper. The idea started in mid-2003 when the Beasts of Bourbon played their first show for quite a while. I took along my trusty old camera. I thought it would be a good idea to take some photos just for fun. Black and white 35 ml – what I shot is what I got. Then the idea arrived, why not do a show about my favourite musicians. Whilst being in exile in the Western suburbs I discovered I could produce a great, fun body of work about sound, words, atmosphere.

Being used to painting on a grand scale I decided to challenge myself by working in a completely different scale and format. The ideas come from many sources. Symbolism and iconography plays a big part in my work. Using my guide as the photo – blow up to A3 size then to start painting over – the whole feel changed, using the image from the camera then paint scrawl, explosive disjunctions of paint and urgent linear scrawls and words, frenetic swirls of colour and text derived from the lyrics of the music I listen to whilst painting (I always work with head phones, not always are the songs from the musicians that I'm painting). I have my favourite tunes by varied artists (Sunnyboys, The Saints, Birthday Party, Boys Next Door, Surrealists, Beasts of Bourbon, X, Crowded House, Split Enz, INXS).

Rock royalty,  
addiction of music,  
the triple peak of the crown.  
You may be glorified  
The musicians  
But also displaced souls  
Floating around Melbourne.

Deliberate use of only certain bands – Models, Beasts of Bourbon, Lisa Miller, Kim Salmon, Ron Peno, Rowland S. Howard, Magic Dirt, Megan Bawden purely because I relate to this music, paint or take a photo of what I like.

Twenty years of going out partying and listening, looking, feeling the atmosphere, watching the adulation of people who make music get, seeing people watching bands such as the first gig back of the Beasts,

people singing along, rushing to get to the front to get a good glimpse of your favourite Rock Star be it Adalita or Tex Perkins to Dave Graney or Brian Hooper listening to the girls and boys swoon over these imposing creatures therefore my trademark symbols come through the wine glass, the heart, upside down bottles – gold paint for glory. The crown, text comes through maybe a photo of the Beasts will have bits of lyrics from what I hear in the crowd to what's going on in my ears (headphones) could be a bit of Pere Ubu, Beachboys Patti Smith, Nick Cave, Gram Parsons, Elvis, Lou Reed, Ramones, Devo, Queens of the Stone Age, The Jam, Punk Rock, REM, Pixies, The Breeders, The Clash, Vapours, Gram Parsons to demo tapes of new Magic Dirt or Brian Hooper, Cathy Green, Ian Rilen, Rowland S. Howard or stuff that I haven't played for a while. Old favourites to get me started, Stones, Pere Ubu, Crime and the City Solution or 'Cut Lunch' (The Models).

This brings it to why music, the passion you feel whilst being among others who will pay their money, wait, drink, talk, then go home and fuck to your favourite tunes. Then the music starts. I take it all in then whilst back in exile again, paint again.

It's the idea of making my own band 'posters' thinking of record covers of my youth of loving to collect band posters of my favourite artists. So why not make my own one offs that fans of these great, talented artists can have no reprints, no computer, no digital imagery except for the enlarging of the actual photo then paints. I may be painting Adalita but be listening to Patti Smith or say Spinal Tap. I like to think of them as happy snaps. It's about the language of the displaced and dispossessed, the extemporaneous markings that might simply read as the Vagrant Artist displaced in exile menacing a clean surface. These works are colourful and fun images of people whom I respect.

It's text about people reading, looking at the images like they are singing back to you – only you. So come along and get your own piece of Melbourne music history whether it be Tex Perkins, Spencer P. Jones, Adalita (Magic Dirt) or Ian Rilen, Models, Dave Graney, Lisa Miller and Moodists.

Inspiration from Hans Hoffman, Man Ray, Jean Basquiat, Tracey Moffat, Lee Krasner, Jackson Pollack, Andy Warhol to graffiti artists Henri Matisse, Camille Claudel, Dali, Jenny Watson, Dale Frank, Howard Arkley, Bill Henson.

Framed works in op shop frames beautiful gold ornate frames filled with

lots of blocks of colour text almost like I'm writing, painting only to the view. Linearity and spontaneously elegantly driven the painted into the written and the written into the painted image of colour linear scrawls and squiggles held together by swirls of paint frenetically put down whilst listening to great music.

This work is a slice of the last two years of the Melbourne music scene. One could say it could be a documentary in my own way expressed in image, symbolism, iconography, text, colour. Maybe it's a paintumentary of the chosen few.