

MINING IN THE FIELDS OF INTEREST

Kenneth Merrick

In many ways, my approaches to image-making and research are akin to the archaeological dig. By clawing, gnawing and drawing in the ever-expanding media junkyards, I am able to make sense and nonsense of the world around me, and my place within it.



Figure 1. Kenneth Merrick, *Conjure* (2012), mixed media on paper, 150 x 210 mm.



Figure 2. Kenneth Merrick, *Us and Them* (2011), mixed media on vinyl, 2400 x 3200 mm.

Through the various processes involved with image-making, I am continually trying to challenge, test, and further my understanding of a variety of visual languages that are constantly in flux. By negotiating the variety of push-pull contingencies that are present in drawing and painting, I attempt to loosely describe the nature of the materials used and any relevance these materials might have to an evolving nebulosity of subject matter:

I often work quickly, at various scales and in series. In this way, possible thematic currents that present across numerous bodies of work can be tracked. At times, these currents can be difficult to trace, especially when dealing with individual works that may have been generated in staggered succession over a long period of time.

Actively assessing how individual works relate to each other helps me to build on potential compositional applications. More often than not, these are only starting points, which never offer up formal solutions but rather prompt further questioning. Adopting this

Figure 3. Kenneth Merrick, *Hail the New Hail* (2012), paper on board, 120 x 160 mm.





Figure 7. Kenneth Merrick, *Homo Heroica* (2012), mixed media on board, 1100 x 1600 mm.

type of approach enables me to forge connections with internal and external impulses, broadening my understanding of how each is manifest in the connective narrative threads and relationships between each image.

The work I have made over the past five years has largely been underpinned by pre-existing imagery. The majority of this imagery stems from a wide range of digital and physical resources. During the ongoing activity of collection, I try to stay open to the possibilities of the image, as any number of qualities might catch my attention. My recognition of these qualities often occurs a little while after the immediacy of the moment has faded, and my engagement with the processes of drawing and collage begin.

As a lifetime hoarder, I have always looked for narrative connections and associations between the disparate media and objects that I have accumulated. Since returning to study, I have continued to develop interests in narrative forms and visual storytelling. In turn, this has recently led to areas of research that examine how *transmedia storytelling* might be employed in today's vastly expanding multi-platform world.

Kenneth Merrick is in his final year of the Bachelor of Design and Visual Arts programme at Unitec, Auckland, majoring in painting. As a Pacific-heritage student, he was selected for the 2011 Tautai Tertiary Exhibition at St Paul St Gallery, Auckland. In 2009, a change of tack saw him enroll in the Certificate of Design and Visual Arts program at Unitec. Before this, he graduated with a Bachelor of Music (majoring in composition) from the University of Auckland, School of Music, in 2004, and in 2005 he completed a Diploma in Audio Engineering at SAE Institute, Parnell, Auckland. He continues to work in AV and live sound in a variety of settings.



Figure 8. Kenneth Merrick, *Afterglow* (2011), mixed media on card, 900 x 1070 mm.