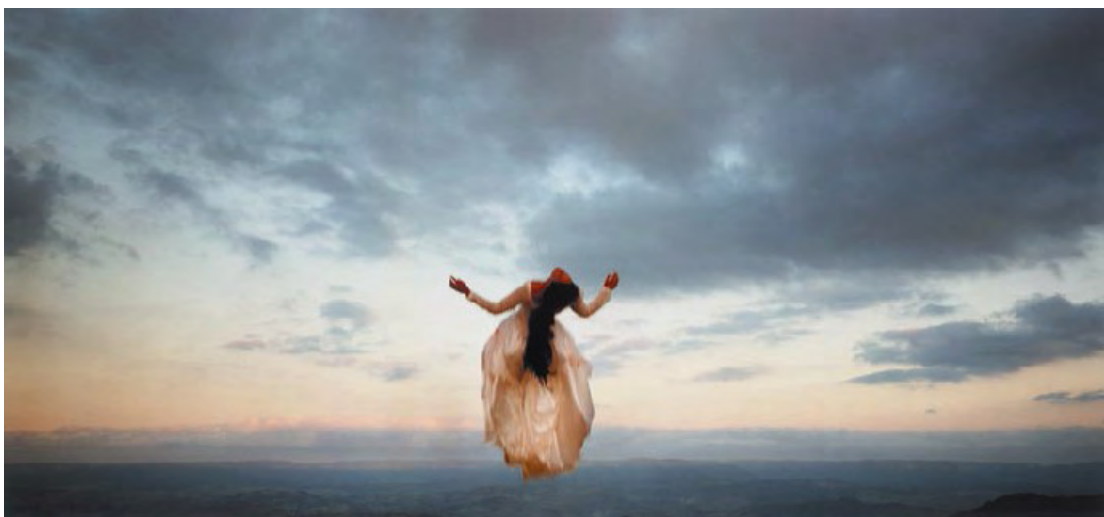


the unquiet landscapes of  
Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

---

**EDUCATION RESOURCE KIT**



Rosemary Laing  
*bulletproofglass #2* 2002  
type C photograph on metallic photographic paper  
120.0 x 253.0 cm  
© the artist

---

the unquiet landscapes of  
Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

---

## Contents

Introduction	page 3
Ways to use this kit	page 3
Exhibition summary	page 4
Education resources and programs	page 4
Highlights of Public Programs and Education events	page 5
Rosemary Laing	page 6
Rosemary Laing at the MCA	page 6
Selected exhibition history	page 7
Exhibition layout	page 8
Study Notes – Summary of key exhibition themes	page 9
Focus questions and activities – Artist's practice	page 18
On Location – the process behind the images	page 20
Artwork Analysis - Year K-6 students <i>groundspeed (Red Piazza) #2 (2001)</i> Knowing about Art, Making Art activities	page 21
Artwork Analysis - Year 7-12 students <i>airport #2 (1997)</i> Knowing about Art, Making Art activities	page 24
Glossary	page 27
Selected further reading and references	page 30
Acknowledgements	page 31

---

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

---

## Introduction

This education resource kit has been produced by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, as supporting interpretive material for the exhibition *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*.

This kit aims to offer an insight into Rosemary Laing's practice as a leading Australian photo-based artist, and discusses key works in the exhibition. Laing's work will be familiar to many education audiences, especially for students of senior secondary Visual Arts and Photography.

This resource is written for use by teachers and students of school and tertiary level, as well as a general guide for those visiting the exhibition in other groups, including ESL/NESB and community organisations. The material is primarily designed for students of K-6 Creative Arts and 7-12 Visual Arts, but will also be appealing and relevant for students of Design, Drama, Australian History and English.

### Ways to use this kit

This kit is designed as a resource which can be used in a range of ways by education groups, and for individual study and research. The material is intended to complement the exhibition catalogue and wall labels, and to become a general classroom resource on Rosemary Laing after the close of the MCA exhibition.

Use the images, activities and ideas to assist with pre-visit preparation, as a guide during the gallery visit and to develop post-visit activities. Teachers are advised to adapt these activities to suit their students' needs or to integrate areas of this resource into existing classroom units of study.

Words in **bold** are defined in the glossary on page 26.

Two images have been selected for further analysis, and provide detailed activities, focus points and learning ideas for Primary and Secondary levels. These ideas can be adapted to suit other works in the series, or for study of a series as a whole.

For senior students, Rosemary Laing is an ideal subject for developing case studies, investigating an artist's practice and looking at recent Australian approaches to photomedia. At HSC level, Laing's consistent dedication to presenting works in series becomes highly relevant to the students' own approach to the Body of Work. The study of her exhibition in the Museum environment during the class visit to the MCA provides a valuable opportunity to look at the Conceptual Framework, and study the Frames through engaging with the works of art.

**For further information, assistance planning classroom units of work, or to book a class excursion to the MCA to see *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*, please contact MCA Education.**

**MCA Education – telephone 02 9245 2484  
or email [education@mca.com.au](mailto:education@mca.com.au)**

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## Exhibition summary

### *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*

23 March – 5 June 2005

MCA Level 3 Galleries

Free admission

*the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing* encompasses a decade of Laing's significant photo-based practice as well as key works from the mid 1990s, with a focus on recent major series and including 'prelude' images that introduce the final series. The selection emphasises the interconnections between bodies of work in order to draw out the broader themes of Laing's practice.

Rosemary Laing is esteemed within Australia, and increasingly internationally, for a career that has produced works of great appeal and cultural significance. Since the early 1980s she has consistently produced project-based series of photographs, often cinematic in vision and always visually stunning.

This first major exhibition of Rosemary Laing at the MCA includes over 40 works, drawn from major series including *greenwork*, *brownwork*, *flight research* and *groundspeed*. The images taken at the former Woomera Detention Centre in 2004 are on show here for the first time.

The Museum of Contemporary Art is very proud to present *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*, curated by MCA Curator Vivienne Webb.

## Exhibition resources and programs

### Exhibition merchandise available from the MCA Store



### Exhibition catalogue

*the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005. A great resource for schools with colour illustrations and essays by Vivienne Webb and Abigail Solomon-Godeau. RRP \$29.95/\$26.95 MCA Members and Ambassadors

See page 29 of this kit for other Laing catalogues available from the MCA.

Greeting Cards - RRP \$2.50/\$2.25 MCA Members and Ambassadors

*flight Research #5* (1999)

*groundspeed (Rose Petal) #17* (2001)

Postcards - RRP \$1.50/\$1.35 MCA Members and Ambassadors

*groundspeed (Red Piazza) #2* (2001)

*one dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape # 2* (2003)

Exhibition poster – RRP \$25.00/\$22.50 MCA Members and Ambassadors

*bulletproofglass #2* 2002

---

the unquiet landscapes of  
Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

---

### Highlights of Public Programs and Education Events

Enhance your knowledge of the artist and the class visit experience by attending these programs. For further details please see [www.mca.com.au](http://www.mca.com.au) or pick up a copy of the *Autumn 2005 Special Events and Term 1/2 2005 Education* flyers from the MCA.

**Please book for these Public and Education Programs by contacting MCA Education on 02 9245 2484 or [education@mca.com.au](mailto:education@mca.com.au)**

#### Educators Preview

**Wednesday 30 March, 5.30pm**

An opportunity for K-12, Tertiary and ESL educators to view the MCA's Autumn season exhibitions, *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing* and *Mona Hatoum: Over My Dead Body*. Refreshments provided.  
Admission: Free

#### National Youth Week Program 2005

**Tuesday 12 – Saturday 16 April, 2.30pm – 3.00pm**

In partnership with The Australian Theatre for Young People, the MCA presents five days of drama in the galleries. Young actors aged 13 and up perform short theatrical pieces exploring the possibilities of creating stories from visual art, responding to the exhibition *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*.  
Admission: Free

#### On Location

**Tuesday 26 April, 6.30pm**

Drawing on his experience as camera assistant to Rosemary Laing, artist Kendal Heyes leads a guided tour of *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing* focusing on Laing's project-based processes and their relationship to the film shoot and the *plein air* tradition of imaging the landscape.  
Admission: Free

#### Rosemary Laing Secondary Study Morning - for Year 11 and 12 Students

**Tuesday 10 May, 10.00am – 1.00pm**

Investigate the practice of Rosemary Laing, through talks by MCA Curator Vivienne Webb, Laing's camera assistants Kendal Heyes and Alex Kershaw, plus exhibition tours and curriculum-focused activities with MCA Educators.

Admission: \$10/\$8 PSFP school students/teachers free

#### Strange Predicaments - Rosemary Laing Exhibition Viewing and Discussion

**Monday 23 May, 6.30pm**

Influential writer and commentator David Malouf joins MCA Curator Vivienne Webb and fellow writer George Alexander, Coordinator, Contemporary Art Programs, Art Gallery of New South Wales, in a discussion about Rosemary Laing's sense of place. Presented in association with the Sydney Writers' Festival

Exhibition viewing 5.30pm – 6.30pm

Discussion commences 6.30pm

Admission \$15/\$10 MCA Members and Ambassadors/SWF Friends

---

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

---

## Rosemary Laing

Rosemary Laing was born in Brisbane in 1959. She currently lives and works in Sydney, Australia.

Originally trained as a painter, Laing holds a Master of Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales, 1996; a Post Graduate Diploma from Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney; and a Diploma of Art, University of Tasmania, 1982. She also holds a Diploma of Art Education from the Brisbane College of Advanced Education, Queensland.

Laing has received several awards and grants, including the 1999 National Photographic Award, an Industry and Cultural Development Grant from the Australian Film Commission in 1998, and several Faculty Research Grants from the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales between 1994 – 1997.

Laing is featured in Australian and international collections. Key public collections which hold artworks by Rosemary Laing include the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; 21<sup>st</sup> Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan; Goldman Sachs, New York, USA and Sydney; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; and the Sydney Airport Collection.

### Rosemary Laing at the MCA

Laing has had a long association with the Museum of Contemporary Art.

#### Laing works in the MCA Collection:

*brumby mound #5* 2003 \*, acquired 2005  
*brumby mound #6* 2003 \*, acquired 2005  
*brownwork #1* 1996\*, acquired 1997

These works are all shown in the MCA exhibition.

#### Laing has featured in these past exhibitions at the MCA:

*Sporting Life* 2000 \*  
*Moral Hallucination* 1999  
*Seppelt Contemporary Art Awards* 1998 \*  
*Photography is Dead! Long Live Photography!* 1996

(\*exhibition catalogue available from the MCA Store)

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## Selected exhibition history

Rosemary Laing has presented her photomedia-based exhibitions extensively in Australia since the late 1980s, and more recently in the United States, Europe and Asia. She has also worked on commissioned projects, including billboards of works from the *flight research* series shown in New York and Melbourne in 2002. Rosemary Laing is represented by Galerie Lelong New York; Galerie Conrads, Düsseldorf; and Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Rosemary Laing*, Domus Artium 2002, Salamanca, Spain, 2004; *one dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape*, Galerie Lelong, New York, United States, and at Galerie Conrads, Düsseldorf, Germany, 2004; *Rosemary Laing: A Survey 1995 - 2002*, Brisbane City Gallery, Brisbane, 2003; *bulletproofglass*, Gitte Weiss Gallery, Sydney, 2002; *groundspeed*, Gitte Weiss Gallery, Sydney, 2001 and *greenwork* at the International Terminal of Kingsford Smith Airport, Federal Airports Corporation, Sydney in 1995.

Laing has participated in significant group exhibitions in Australia and internationally, including these recent showings: *Femina*, Galerie Les filles du Calvaire, Paris, France and Brussels, Belgium, 2004; *Landscape and Memory*, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, Spain, 2004; *L'attimo fuggente fra fotografia e cinema (The Fleeting Moment Between Photography And Cinema)*, Pinacoteca Giovanni e Marella Agnelli, Turin, Italy, 2003; *Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Contemporary Photomedia*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2004; *Defying Gravity: Contemporary Art and Flight*, North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, North Carolina, United States, 2003; and *Face Up: Contemporary Art from Australia*, Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, Germany in 2003.

For an extended exhibition history please see the Museum of Contemporary Art exhibition catalogue *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*.



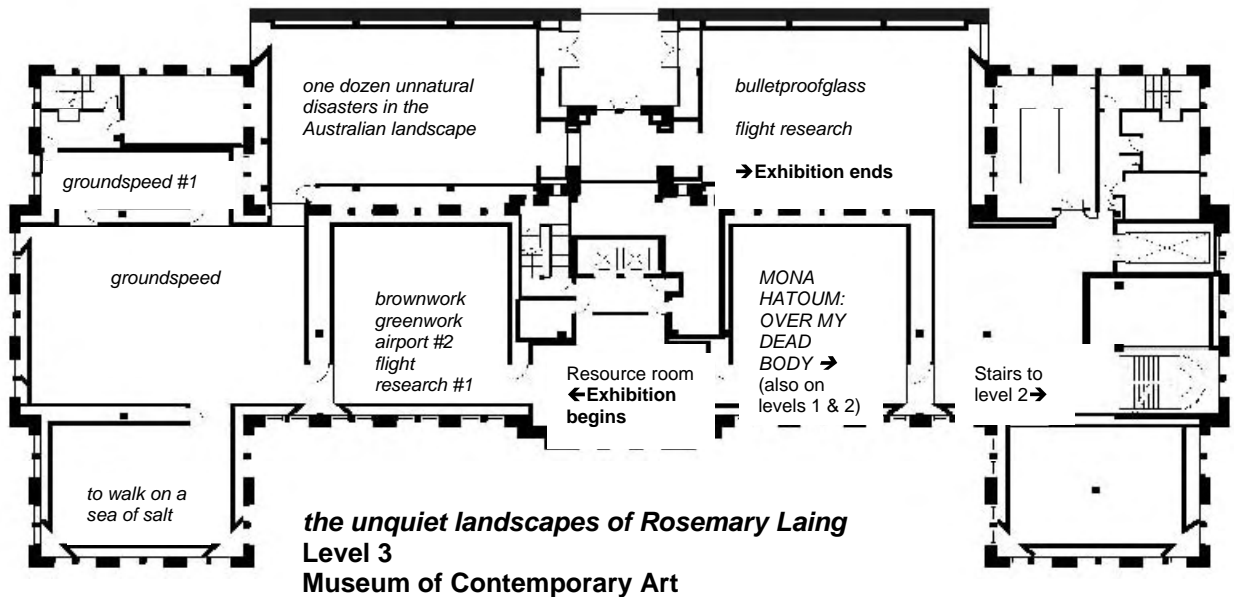
Rosemary Laing  
*one dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape #2* 2003  
type C photograph  
110.0 x 206.0 cm  
© the artist

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## Exhibition layout

This floorplan of the southern end of the MCA's Level 3 galleries locates the position of Laing's major series. Individual works can be identified by the wall labels when in the spaces. This layout will help with planning worksheets or assignments, and assist self-guiding groups in the exhibition.



# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## Study Notes – summary of key exhibition themes

These teaching notes can be used to help analyse the works of Rosemary Laing, to assist with preparing an essay topic or assignment, or as self-guiding notes for the gallery visit. Laing has consistently reworked themes and visual motifs throughout her career so students can add to this table when they discover new connections.

See the end of this table for framing questions and activities which provide further context for considering this exhibition.

This information has been drawn from the exhibition wall labels and MCA Curator Vivienne Webb's essay in the MCA exhibition catalogue *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*, pages 6 -18.

THEME OR ASPECT	DETAILS
<b>Overall theme</b>	Rosemary Laing's concerns in this exhibition are summarised by exhibition curator Vivienne Webb as "how we relate to <b>place</b> and the landscape". Laing is primarily concerned with place in her photo-based works, seeking not only to represent the appearance of the Australian landscape, but also to investigate the relationships between people and the landscape, and to speculate upon how the past intersects with the present.
<b>Two key approaches to making images of place:</b>	In her recent imaging of place, Laing has developed two key approaches to address the present social and cultural situation in Australia. Both aspects of her practice use the juxtaposition of incongruous elements to create relationships which are metaphorical and allusive rather than literal. Both approaches give a strong sense of strangeness, the uncanny, the unquiet.
<b>Constructed images</b>	The first approach is through making photographs which capture dramatic interventions or performances staged within specific environments. Her approach is unique in its use of real-time events, physical installations and performers, rather than effects achieved through digital manipulation. The images are not just documents of a place or space but are, in a sense, records of performances. Series using this approach include: <i>brownwork</i> (1997), <i>groundspeed</i> (2001), <i>flightresearch</i> (1998-2000), <i>bulletproofglass</i> (2002), <i>one dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape</i> (2003).
<b>Documentary approach</b>	The second approach uses a more documentary style. In these images Laing specifically explores the conventions of representation and the photographic medium itself. These images often result from the preliminary research trips to locations, some becoming 'prelude' images which lead in to a following series. The prelude images can be visually quite different to the later images. Examples are <i>groundspeed #1</i> (2001), <i>swanfires</i> (2002-2004), <i>third day of a five day muster</i> (2003), <i>to walk on a sea of salt</i> (2004).

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

<p><b>Working in series</b></p>	<p>Laing has consistently worked in series since she began exhibiting in the mid 1980s. The images unfold like stills in a movie, giving an implied sense of narrative, and allow Laing to explore several visual or thematic ideas in the one body of work.</p> <p>There is a considered progression from series to series, and a relationship exists from one body of work to another. A development, or response, can be seen where parts from the previous series are in some way taken into the next series but altered or developed.</p> <p>Sometimes a theme can be explored in a way which is a visual reaction to a previous series – for instance the contrasting treatment of the theme of disaster seen in the documentary approach of <i>swanfires</i> (2002-2004) (the images were taken in 2002, but not printed until 2004) and the <b>hyperreal</b> beauty of the following series <i>bulletproofglass</i>, taken later in 2002.</p>
<p><b>Collaboration</b></p>	<p>During the production of her images, Rosemary Laing draws on a broad range of expertise. She works with the community from the area of the photoshoot to gather local knowledge, and with professionals from a range of industries—from stunt performers to carpet manufacturers to personnel from NASA and Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney.</p> <p>Laing takes care to acknowledge how she gains access to the landscape - she negotiated with the Wirrimanu Indigenous community in Balgo to take photographs in their country for <i>one dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape</i>. In 2004, Laing undertook a complex process to gain permission to access the site of the former detention centre at Woomera.</p> <p>In 2003, Laing collaborated with the artist Stephen Birch to create the images <i>remembering Babylon</i>, <i>between a rock and a place with no fish</i> and <i>between heaven and belonging</i>, all featuring disembodied heads, cast by Birch from Laing's friends and colleagues, which have lost their connection with the landscape and float in the water or in air.</p>
<p><b>Relationship with the land</b></p>	<p>Rosemary Laing explores our relationship to the land, and evokes a sense of the relationships between people and places through a distinctive and dramatic approach. Laing's work questions and engages with the complex natural, cultural and historical contexts of landscape in Australia.</p> <p>Laing's photographs utilise a unique visual language combining panoramic vistas with events which insert incongruous elements into specific sites to question how we establish a meaningful relationship with the land at this point in time.</p>

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

One way Laing investigates the connections between people and place is by depicting the physical relationship of the figure to the landscape. She used the human figure in full for the first time in the *greenwork TL* series in 1995, relating human activity to the site of the airport. Laing shows the figure in unusual settings and actions in the landscape: diving into and climbing out of the landscape (*flight research*), or becoming part of the landscape (the mask-like cast heads of Laing and friends floating in the bore water in *remembering Babylon #5, a collaboration with Stephen Birch*).

*flight research #1* (1998) is the prelude image to the *flight research* series shot the following year, and the only one showing the figure still visually linked to the landscape. The point of view of the prelude image places the viewer in the plane looking down at a climber trying to raise herself above the forest canopy on a rope ladder. Dressed like a bushwalker, not a bride, the figure appears to be escaping the dense environment but is caught by the camera in an ambivalent moment: Why is she leaving the ground? Where is she climbing to?

In the next images of the *flight research* series the figure has left the lush green bush and hovers above in the cool blue sky. In these images a female figure in a traditional wedding dress is suspended in movement 'mid-flight.' The ambiguity of how the photographs were created (Laing has not revealed how the images were created except to note that the photographs are not digitally altered, but are the results of complex stunts with a professional stuntwoman, on location in the Blue Mountains) undermine any clear concepts of reality and truthfulness. The assumption that photography's role is to record the facts is also questioned.

Another way Laing seeks to represent place is through the introduction of new or foreign elements into a natural scene. These interventions by objects and actions into a location arise out of Laing's sense that new ways are needed to address Australia's past and present social and cultural situation. By inserting strange or foreign objects into the landscape, Laing not only creates compelling images but reflects on the historical legacy of European colonisation, and more recent experiences of immigration and reconciliation.

*brumby mound, burning Ayer, and scrub* (all 2003) are three components from the larger series *one dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape*. These images show European-style furniture mass produced by companies such as Ikea for consumption around the world, blending into the Australian landscape under a covering of red earth.

The title *brumby mound* refers to the wild Australian horses which have escaped captivity to colonise and disperse through the landscape in a chaotic way, like the scattered furniture.

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

	<p>In the <i>burning ayer</i> series, the pile of furniture is set alight and burns to the ground as the series unfolds. Inherent in this act is a heightened sense of time and transformation. The potency of the metaphor leads to reflection about the past and, in the context of Wirrimanu land, its injustices.</p> <p>The artwork title refers to what was known as Ayers Rock, now returned to its Anangu name of Uluru. The shape of the pile of furniture looks like the monolith, a familiar icon of the Australian landscape. The sense of redressing the past is underlined by the Spanish meaning of the word 'ayer' which translates as 'yesterday, lately or in the past'.</p>
<p><b>Impact of colonisation</b></p>	<p>Laing's work is informed by <b>post-colonial</b> perspectives on occupation and ownership of land.</p> <p>Her series speculate on the intersection of past history with present day – the stuntwoman acting as a leaping bride in a old-fashioned wedding dress in <i>flight research</i> evoking out of date approaches to the landscape; the movement of cattle into the landscape in <i>third day of a five day muster</i> suggesting the momentum of settlers taking over the land during colonisation; and references to the European settlement of the land through the use of European-styled floral carpet taking over the scenery in <i>groundspeed</i>. The series <i>remembering Babylon</i> takes its title from Australian writer David Malouf's novel which explores cultural contact during early settlement.</p> <p>Laing also explores current immigration issues, and Australia's treatment of asylum seekers, in her recent series taken at the former Woomera Detention Centre in 2004. The black humour of the titles <i>welcome to Australia</i> and <i>and you can even pay later</i> (a reference to the fact that the Government charges the detainees for the cost of their detention) give strong indication of her opinion on the issue.</p>
<p><b>Journey and exploration</b></p>	<p>Over recent years Rosemary Laing's work can be seen as a process of exploration. This is true in a physical sense, as her locations range from the South Coast and Blue Mountains of her home state of NSW to the centre of the continent. Each project involves a journey of <b>reconnaissance</b> and research before the photoshoot to gain an understanding and sense of the particular place.</p> <p>Laing also delves into early European exploration. She travelled to South Australia in 2003 to shoot the group of works <i>to walk on a sea of salt</i>. The work with the same title as the series, <i>to walk on a sea of salt</i>, references the failed attempt in 1834 by Charles Sturt to locate an inland sea only to discover the dry salt beds of Lake Eyre.</p> <p>In the prelude image to the series <i>groundspeed</i>, Laing records in a documentary style the journey of approaching the land by sea, like a settler seeing the land for the first time with a keen sense of discovery.</p>

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

<p><b>Influence of Art History</b></p>	<p>Rosemary Laing originally trained as a painter. Her photographic treatment of the landscape is informed by studies in art history and theory.</p> <p>The view of green foliage in <i>greenwork, aerial wall</i> (1995), looks like an abstract colour-field painting. This is one of the few works which have been digitally distorted, showing how speed changes the experience of viewing landscape and referencing the blurred shape of the speeding plane in other images in the <i>greenwork</i> series.</p> <p>Laing revisits historical artworks to investigate how images of landscape operate as a metaphor for cultural identity. In the series <i>groundspeed</i> Laing references the painting <i>A view of the Artist's House and Garden, Mills' Plains, Van Diemen's Land</i> (1835) by English-born John Glover, in her laying of floral carpet, evoking English designs, over the Australian landscape (see the analysis of <i>groundspeed (Red Piazza)</i> later in this kit for more details).</p> <p>Laing references two artworks important in constructing a sense of national identity in the images <i>after Heysen</i> and <i>opposite Cazneaux</i>. These are from the group of works <i>to walk on a sea of salt</i>, shot in South Australia in 2004. German-born painter Hans Heysen, and his friend New Zealand-born photographer Harold Cazneaux, journeyed to the Flinders Ranges to produce <b>pastoral</b> landscapes which came to embody the ideals of a young nation.</p> <p>In <i>after Heysen</i>, Laing photographs a landscape view similar to Heysen's well-known watercolour <i>Summer</i> (1909), now in the collection of The Art Gallery of New South Wales. In contrast to the golden tones used by Heysen to capture the Australian light and heat, Laing bleaches the image back to pale tones. The faded or over-exposed appearance of Laing's photograph is in stark contrast to the rich colour of her other photographic series. Laing accentuates our sense of looking at the landscape because we have to look so closely to see the detail. When Laing states her intention to deal with 'the culturally constructed view of landscape and the critical constructions blocking this view' she is referring to how familiar ways of looking at the landscape can block fresh perspectives.</p> <p><i>opposite Cazneaux</i> is a companion piece to <i>after Heysen</i>. For this work Laing visited the site of the gumtree shown in Cazneaux's iconic photograph <i>The Spirit of Endurance</i> (1941), an image which became a symbol of the Australian national character at the time of World War II. The site of the actual tree has now become a tourist attraction. Laing literally and metaphorically turns away from this tree to take her image of the ignored scrub and trees behind her, offering an alternative view to the familiar image.</p>
--	---

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

	<p>The resulting image is a visual echo of the stands of trees in <i>groundspeed</i>, where she has blocked the view through the image to the horizon. Laing investigates how standard ways of photographing the landscape lead to conventional and habitual ways of looking at Australia's history cultural and identity.</p> <p>Other works contain references to art genres or the act of picturing the landscape. In <i>brumby mound</i>, the furniture is scattered through the landscape like ancient classical ruins in an 18<sup>th</sup> century European painting. The bleached-out colour of <i>to walk on a sea of salt</i> looks like an old sepia-toned photograph.</p>
<p><b>History of landscape photography</b></p>	<p>Rosemary Laing's landscape imagery draws on but also can be seen as a critique of Western European traditions of depicting landscape, as well as the particular ways in which the landscape has been photographed and painted by non-Indigenous artists. Her work explores these conventions of representation, the medium of photography, and landscape as a photographic genre.</p> <p>From its inception as a category of photography in the 1840s, landscape has been photographed to provide topographical information for the purposes of war, exploration and trade. In art history, there are many connections between the development of the Western European tradition of rendering landscape and rapidly expanding knowledge and mapping of the world by European explorers.</p> <p>Artistic renderings of the landscape and nature order it and make it familiar. Devices such as single point perspective which organised vistas of strange lands into unified and cohesive images can be seen as an artistic accompaniment to European colonisation.</p> <p>The main subject areas of historical landscape photography were historical sites, topographical images of colonial territories, and tourist scenery. These are referenced by Laing in works such as <i>opposite Cazneaux</i>, <i>groundspeed</i>, <i>to walk on a sea of salt</i>, and <i>burning Ayer</i>.</p> <p>Photographic depictions of the landscape were also shaped by the conventions of European easel painting. Devices such as a clearly defined foreground, middleground and background; a balance between compositional arrangement and general mood; and the siting of human and architectural details in the landscape were taken up by photographers. Like easel paintings, photographic images were intended for the parlour wall, and were scaled and elaborately framed accordingly.</p> <p>For a detailed discussion of the history of the conventions of landscape photography, see the essay by Abigail Solomon-Godeau in the exhibition catalogue (pages 36 to 46).</p>

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

<p><b>Influence of cinema</b></p>	<p>Laing has a great interest in telling stories. She sees cinema as the storytelling device of our time, especially when it comes to <b>narratives</b> of the Australian landscape. The tradition of journey and personal discovery in the road movie is also important to Australian film (see the suggested activities section below for some relevant movies).</p> <p>Her work processes, involving researching the proposed photoshoot site and assembling a team to work on the shoot, can be likened to those of a film director in the <b>auteur</b> tradition.</p> <p>Laing's images are also <b>cinematic</b> in their scale, her use of the <b>panoramic</b> vista format, and their investigation of the visual, compositional and narrative conventions of cinema.</p>
<p><b>Relationship between humans and technology: flight, movement and speed</b></p>	<p>Laing explores our relationship with technology by visually depicting the sensation, mystery and mechanics of flight.</p> <p>Her two earliest series, <i>greenwork</i> (1995) and <i>brownwork</i> (1996-1997), with their location of the airport and their visual investigation of our physical relationship with speed and machine, explore how our lives are affected by technology. The experience of flight continues as a theme in the series <i>flight research</i> (1999) and <i>bulletproofglass</i> (2002).</p> <p><i>greenwork</i> and <i>brownwork</i> explore the airport as a location, an anonymous space which buzzes with constant activity and global movement.</p> <p><i>greenwork TL</i>, the earliest series in the exhibition, is an exploration of the relationship between speed and the landscape. Taken in Sydney and Canberra, this series used the location of the airport, to explore the sensation of movement, and how Australians overcome the 'tyranny of distance' through air travel within our large continent and to the rest of the world. The images investigate not only how movement is articulated and represented but also how we experience the landscape through the journey by air.</p> <p>The TL in the title of the <i>greenwork</i> series stands for '<b>time lapse</b>', a photographic technique showing a very different representation of air travel by illustrating the actual movement of the aircraft. While air travel has now been seamlessly integrated into contemporary existence, the actual movement of an aircraft through space is given little thought. What remains here is a depiction of the speed of the machine rather than the physical object itself.</p>

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

	<p>The aircraft becomes a streaming blur on the landscape, tracing the transiting of global citizens. The representation of an aircraft is usually as a static, identifiable object floating in space – as Laing shows in her following series <i>brownwork</i>.</p> <p><i>brownwork</i> continues the theme of airports as a space, and a non-place, from <i>greenwork</i>. As the title indicates, the visual lushness of <i>greenwork</i> has given way to a focus on mechanical objects and the study of physical properties. Laing reproduces the techniques of movement, and re-enacts the process of flight with a javelin and a ball.</p> <p>In <i>brownwork #1</i> (1996) the javelin thrower performs an act which, if continued, would mimic the action of the aircraft. The image reflects on human participation in air travel. The parallel between human movement and mechanical transportation is highlighted in the deliberate structural composition of the photograph where the yellow on the javelin is repeated in the markings on the top edge of the ramp and the rails. The figure is dwarfed by the scale of the aircraft, as we are overwhelmed by the scale of technology in an airport.</p> <p>The open nose of the plane makes it look like it is about to engulf the athlete – giving the scene a sense of tension. The viewer is also privileged with a view of the plane, and the working area of the airport, that would not usually be seen in our limited engagement with the space of the terminal. The image leads us to contemplate the relationship passengers have to airports as places of transition, movement, arrival and departure.</p> <p>In <i>flight research</i> Laing explores the paradox of trying to depict movement through a figure frozen in time in a photograph. There is a sense of freedom in the images, inspired by Laing's aspirations for a new millennium and hopes for a fresh start. The images have a joyous feeling of being unhindered by gravity, of being able to dive freely in and out of the landscape. This documentation of action is paradoxically shown in a static image like a movie 'still'.</p>
<p><b>Natural and unnatural disasters</b></p>	<p>The impact of disasters upon Australia and the lives of those living in the landscape is explored by Laing through both documentary photographs and spectacular interventions. Laing describes the series <i>one dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape</i> as evoking a sense of "movement and momentum across the landscape in order to set up a sensibility for the invasive activity that comes with the occupation of the land through colonisation".</p> <p>In the <i>bulletproofglass</i> series Laing depicts a disaster on a poetic level, as a response to a series of events including the failure of the Republican referendum, the aftermath of the 2002 New South Wales bushfires (an event explored in the documentary approach of her series <i>swanfires</i>), and the events and ongoing consequences of September 11, 2001.</p>

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

	<p>In <i>bulletproofglass</i> the female protagonist of <i>flight research</i> (a professional stuntwoman) returns to continue her foray in the sky but in the aftermath of a violent act. The optimism of the earlier series changes to a feeling of disappointment and disaster. The injured bride, set against a glorious skyline, plummets and reels from the force of gunshots.</p> <p>The dramatic images portray a theatricality and visual beauty which give a sense of the fantastical rather than the real, reminding the viewer that this is an event constructed for the camera. The social assumptions of virtue traditionally associated with an innocent bride lead us to assume that this is an unprovoked and senseless act.</p>
--	---

## Focus questions and activities – Artist's Practice

### Pre-visit

#### Primary K-6

Collect as many different images of Australian and European landscapes as you can from books, magazines, posters, old postcards, family photographs. Make two columns with word lists of the features from the Australian and the European images – look at the different colours, sky, flora and fauna, light and topography. Bring this into the exhibition and tick off which features you can see in Laing's photographs.

Discuss as a class what types of photographs you take on a regular basis. Are they snapshots of family and friends, tourist-type photos from holidays? What type of photographs do students have in their family photo albums at home – old black and white images or professional colour studio shots of carefully posed family, or photographs of tourist icons in the landscape? Bring in some photos and display them on the walls for discussion before coming to the MCA.

#### Secondary 7-12

Discuss as a class how you think Australians develop a meaningful relationship to place. How do we personally picture the landscape? How does the background and culture of the students impact upon their responses to Australian landscape?

Why do you think Laing uses lower case for her titles? Discuss the effect this has on suggesting more open, less didactic, readings of her work.

Laing's main approaches to image-making evolved from her sense of inability to picture the landscape in a way which addressed the present social and cultural situation in Australia. What methods are used by other contemporary Australian photographers to consider political situations? For instance Derek Kreckler, Tracey Moffatt, or Darren Siwes.

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

Read exhibition curator Vivienne Webb's essay in the exhibition catalogue (or extracts from the essay in this kit). From this essay, list some key points about the practice and issues raised in Laing's work which have been explored by the curator in this exhibition.

## During the gallery visit

### Primary K-6

In groups, choose a Laing photograph featuring the figure and role play what it would be like to be inside her landscape. What is your role in the picture? What is your background story? What is your connection with the landscape – do you work there or live there or have you just settled there? Perform a short piece standing in front of the photograph for the class.

### Primary and Secondary

After viewing key images in the exhibition catalogue, and through other resources, describe how the experience of viewing the actual works of art differs from your expectations. Write down or discuss with a classmate your immediate response. What impact does scale, colour, surface, lighting, framing, other surrounding works, and the labels, have on the experience of engaging with these artworks in a gallery context?

### Secondary 7-12

What strategies does Rosemary Laing employ to help us to develop new perspectives on our relationship with and reliance on technology? How do you think Laing's most recent series, especially the images of the former Woomera Detention Centre from 2004, can inform our responses to the current cultural and political situation in Australia?

During the gallery visit, look carefully at the work of art. Digital technologies allow artists to create worlds and invent realities. Our reading of Laing's images is affected by our knowledge

that she does not use digital effects in her series, relying on real-time performances and interventions. How does this knowledge affect how you respond to the mystery and beauty of the images? Does it enhance your appreciation of Laing's photographic processes?

How do you think the general audience will read the exhibition when they first walk into the galleries? Discuss from your observations of the audience how you think the audience first responded to the work. How long does it take before the viewers start to notice that there is something strange or altered in Laing's treatment of place? What are some of the works that are the most subtle in this way? Which works give the biggest immediate clue to Laing's concerns with imaging the land?

## Post-visit

### Primary K-6

Write a review of the exhibition for the school paper. Look at reviews in the newspaper and online to get an idea of what art critics look at and discuss, and a range of approaches. Keep a clipping file in the classroom on Laing, students can add to it every time they find something on the artist.

### Secondary 7-12

Write a critical response to the exhibition, using the key themes and artwork examples you identified in your pre-visit research and during the gallery visit. This critical response could be developed into a more subjective response like a poem or short story or a narrative film or photoseries.

Discuss as a class the challenges involved in curating an exhibition where the artist's practice is series or project-based. What considerations would a curator have to make to select individual images to represent a series of work? Work in small groups to brainstorm the decisions and processes the MCA, and the exhibition curator, would have to

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

make to display this exhibition. Discuss aspects such as access to the galleries; flow from space to space; relationship between each work and series of works; interpretation including banners, signage and wall labels; colour of walls; lighting of artworks and labels; and how the works are displayed.

In the 1980s there was a strong emergence of contemporary photographic practice in Australia and New Zealand which relied on more constructed approaches to making an image. Discuss Rosemary Laing's work in the context of this development. Key artists include Farrell and Parkin, Tracey Moffatt, Jackie Redgate, Julie Rrap, and Anne Zahalka, and New Zealand artists Megan Jenkinson, Anne Noble, Fiona Pardington, Boyd Webb and Christine Webster.

How does the work of Rosemary Laing contribute to new representations of the Australian landscape and our post-colonial history? How have other photomedia artists contributed to this dialogue?

Use the knowledge gained in prior study and from viewing the exhibition at the MCA to develop other versions of a Rosemary Laing survey exhibition. Students should explain their curatorial decisions in a short statement.

Europeans have attempted to represent and respond to the Australian landscape from colonial times to the present day. Research colonial and contemporary responses to Australian landscape (and the Australian urban cityscape) for your VAPD.

Watch DVDs or videos of Australian movies which deal with our relationship to the landscape, such as *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975), *The Well* (1997), *My Brilliant Career* (1979), *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (1994) and *Japanese Story* (2003). What connections do these approaches to place have with the work of Rosemary Laing?



Rosemary Laing  
*burning Ayer #1* 2003  
type C photograph  
85.0 x 135.7 cm  
© the artist

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## On Location – the process behind the images

Rosemary Laing's body of work is the result of a complex process more akin to producing a film, with Laing acting as the film director. The developmental stages differ for each series, and Laing likes to keep some of the final details mysterious, but the process behind the finished series often follows this sequence of events:

- 1) Prior research, selection of a theme or issue.
- 2) **'Recce'** to find a suitable location. This prior research visit needs to happen to make sure the photoshoot goes smoothly. Factors to consider include what the weather is like, the tracking of the sun, access to the area and gaining permission if it is private land. 'Prelude' images are sometimes taken during this initial journey.
- 3) Developing ideas for what will happen in the selected location through drawing. This could be at the same time as the recce, the two processes are interlinked.
- 4) The **photoshoot**. A team is assembled. The team could number anywhere from 2 to 10 people, depending on the requirements of the shoot. Members could include:
  - Producer – in charge of logistics like food, transport (drivers may also be needed), accommodation.
  - Camera assistants – take light readings, clean and set up the cameras, take compass readings, record shoot information such as the time of day, the **f-stop** and shutter speed.

- The 'talent' – actors, stuntpeople – often sourced through professional outlets or agencies.
- Director – the artist, Rosemary Laing. Sees the process through and communicates it to the team: from concept, to practice, to artwork. Rosemary Laing takes the photos/snaps the shutter.

Other things to take into account during the shoot include sourcing props, the time waiting for ideal lighting or setup. The actual "taking" of the photograph is likely to be quick, the setup takes the most time.

- 5) Back to the studio:
  - Forming the series through selecting images.
  - Printing **proofsheets** and testprints. Many photoartists outsource the printing aspect.
  - Making final prints.
- 6) The exhibition. A series is not necessarily developed with a particular exhibition in mind, but images may need to be resized or reselected to suit the space and concept of the exhibition.

---

the unquiet landscapes of  
Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

---

**Artwork analysis**  
**K- 6 students**

***groundspeed (Red Piazza) #2***  
**(2001)**



Rosemary Laing  
*groundspeed (Red Piazza) #2* 2001  
type C photograph  
110.0 x 205.0 cm  
© the artist

This image is part of the 2001 series *groundspeed*, shot by Laing at the Morton National Park on the New South Wales South Coast. 'Red Piazza' is the name of the carpet pattern and is reminiscent of carpet designs from Laing's childhood. Laing worked with a team to painstakingly place the carpet over the forest floor, even using carpet underlay.

In a reversal of the common habit of hanging photographs or paintings of the Australian landscape on our walls at home, Laing's image literally places the home into the forest. While the carpet seems out of place it also creates a feeling of warmth and comfort, and makes the wild scenery seem domestic. The scene brings to mind European settlers gradually making a home in the Australian landscape.

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

The patterns of the carpet are floral, so real nature has been replaced with artificial nature. This bright carpet is obviously an artificial intrusion into the scenery, but in *groundspeed (Rose Petal)* the colours of the carpet blend to become part of the forest floor, confusing our sense of reality. This process is suggestive of the destruction, or overtaking, of natural habitat and the introduction of foreign plant and animal species into the Australian environment.

The *groundspeed* series references the history of landscape painting and photography, and the way Europeans have tried to make sense of the strange Australian landscape. A significant reference point for Laing is the painting *A view of the Artist's House and Garden, Mills' Plains, Van Diemen's Land* (1835) by the British artist John Glover, who settled in Tasmania in 1831. The painting shows Glover's cottage-garden, with introduced plant species, in between the artist's house and the Northern Tasmanian landscape. The painting attempts to recapture the **pastoral** landscape of England, and imposes **Arcadian** perfection on the Australian bush. In her image, Laing removes the house and the ordered foreground, middle ground and background spaces of Glover's painting and integrates her carpet more fully with the Australian flora. The sense of distance turns into a closed up space — we feel like we are walking straight into the scene.

## Knowing about Art

1. *groundspeed (Red Piazza) #2* was created without the aid of digital manipulation. Ask younger viewers how they think the carpet was placed in the image – do most of them think it was a digital process? Why? Discuss how the knowledge that it has been created in 'real time' changes the way students think about the work.
2. Students can make word-lists or brainstorm the connections and differences between the John Glover painting discussed above (see page 12 of the MCA exhibition catalogue) and the *groundspeed* series. This discussion can also be opened up to an investigation of 'traditional' landscape images and recent approaches to landscape, including differences between composition, media, subject matter, scale, surface and colour. Also look at the importance of aspects such as horizon, focal points and perspective in traditional landscape scenes. In Glover's painting the scene is calm and easy to look at - where is your eye led in Laing's photo? Is there one focus or several? What has happened to the horizon?
3. During the gallery visit, study the *groundspeed* series. You will notice that different carpets have been used in the shots, sometimes in more 'organic' ways, sometimes in cutout circles. The different colours and patterns have different effects – some almost blend in, some definitely look out of place. Discuss how the various patterns in the carpet operate differently in each image. Talk about ideas of taste – is the carpet Laing uses seen as 'old-fashioned' and fussy, like something in Grandma's house? After the gallery visit ask students to bring in objects from home, or find items at school, where artificial pattern imitates nature, and discuss as a class. Students can also research different carpets or vinyl and report back to the class on what clues the different types of floorcovering give about where they are placed and the age of the building.
4. Read the information on page 19 of this kit about Laing's work processes, and view the work during your visit to the MCA. Brainstorm in a group, then write a list or

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

make a coloured chart to outline what could be all the steps involved in taking this image from concept to exhibition stage.

## Making Art

1. In Rosemary Laing's work the familiar is often made strange. In this scene, Laing takes a familiar object and transforms it by placing it into a totally different environment. Have you ever taken a precious or familiar object into a strange place to make yourself feel comfortable? For this exercise sketch a plan for a photograph where you place an object from your domestic environment and place it in a natural environment. This could also be a performance piece where the class takes objects from one part of the school and experiments with placing them in new contexts – students could observe the reaction of others in the school.
2. Laing sometimes 'storyboards' a series of images to help plan her work. Imagine this image is the first in a series. Classes can start by brainstorming as a group what could happen: maybe an animal comes and lies down on the carpet, maybe people come and inhabit the forest like a home, maybe the carpet starts to take over until it covers the whole landscape. On paper marked out with large squares as cartoon cells, each student can storyboard a picture narrative imagining what happens next. Write short captions below. Discuss the outcome with the class. This could be developed into a short video, or acted out in the class using props, or turned into a series of photographs.
3. In order to produce her work Laing often enlists the help of producers, camera assistants, stunt people, and various technicians. Students can discuss the differences between how Laing works in the mode of a film director and how they think photographers or artists traditionally work, and the influence they think this has on the authorship and production process of an artwork. To explore this way of working further, students can plan a photograph or make a drawing or collage artwork which involves the help of classmates or family and friends. Use a cheap disposable panoramic camera to get the format as close as possible to the wide-screen cinematic effect of Laing's image.
4. In the works for *groundspeed*, carpet has been cut into templates and mapped onto the forest floor, rather like the European explorers mapped out the land in order to 'conquer' it. Mapping is also a way to transform an unfamiliar environment into something you can understand. On your next class excursion, perhaps during your visit to the MCA to see this exhibition, draw a map of places you come across which are new to you and include a key to the images or sites you note down. When you get back to school do some research about the community there. During the Museum visit, with the assistance of the floorplan in this kit, make your own map of this exhibition, drawing sketches or adding symbols to note things of particular interest to you.

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## Artwork analysis Year 7-12 students

### *airport #2 (1997)*



Rosemary Laing  
*airport #2* 1997  
type C photograph  
122 x 263 cm  
© the artist

This image is from the series *brownwork*, shot by Rosemary Laing in 1998 at Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney. This series of work began not long after Laing moved into Petersham, a suburb under the flight path that crosses Sydney's inner-western suburbs. This work encapsulates Laing's concern with the relationship humans have to technology, how it mediates our movement both limiting and propelling us at the same time. The title refers to the more industrial, mechanical themes of the series in contrast to the lushness of the preceding series *greenwork*. Laing has said that the title alludes to the colour of the earth, and also to the process of labour.

The work also references Laing's ongoing concerns with movement. In this image, a game of catch foregrounds a Qantas 737 taking off in the background. The careful composition of the image, and the captured movement leave both ball and machine engaged in flight, with the arc of the ball mimicking the trajectory of the plane, and the red of the ball becomes a visual echo of the the plane's red tail. The simplicity of a game of catch seems to defy the complexity and energy involved with lifting a heavy aircraft off the ground.

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

Airports are a location which everyone has visited or travelled through, but the behind-the-scenes view of this series adds a sense of strangeness to the familiar scene. Airports are rarely a place we stay at long enough to study in detail. They experience huge flows of human and mechanical traffic. The sensation of such movement is often de-emphasised in global travel as one experiences an airport not as a unique site reflective of a specific culture but as a repetitious transportive space reproduced the world over. Airports the world over look the same, they are spaces rather than places.

The white kangaroo on the tail of the Qantas plane identifies the space of the airport as Australian rather than the architecture of the airport itself. The locating of this scene at an Australian airport further opens the work up to associations with the regular travel Australians take to other countries, and how this informs our cultural identity.

## Knowing about Art

1. A feature of Rosemary Laing's practice is how she reworks elements or concerns from earlier series into future projects. After *brownwork*, Laing's next series of work was *flightresearch* (1998-2000) which continued her studies of flight. For *flightresearch* Laing's intention was to remove the technical trappings of flight, seen in the airport setting of *brownwork*, and place the body in flight above the earth. Compare and contrast the two series during the exhibition visit.
2. Complete a visual analysis of this image, or a sequence of images in the *brownwork* series. Examine the following aspects: light, tone, colour, grain, composition including key angles and horizon lines, format and scale of the image, scale, positioning and relationship of objects or

figures within the image, and depth of field.

3. Research other artists, such as Marcel Duchamp, Patricia Piccinini and Stelarc, or art movements such as Italian Futurism and Russian Constructivism, with similar interest in relationships between humanity and technology, and nature and artifice. Compare and contrast an artwork by one of these artists, or from one of these movements, with a photograph by Laing.
4. In Marc Auge's book *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, the airport is defined as a place of supermodernity, marked by an absence of identity and history. Research this book on the internet and discuss its ideas in relation to the work of Laing. A class trip to an airport, or other location of modes of transport, for a photoshoot could be taken before or after the gallery visit.

## Making Art

1. Investigate what particular technologies influence various environments such as your house, your school and other destinations. Another method could be mapping travel to and from school, and noting the technologies involved in each stage of the trip. Through collage or a preparatory sketch plan a photographic image that examines how the technology you have identified changes your relationship to the world and influences your sense of place.
2. Laing's work records the combination or collision of the natural and the artificial. Stage your own intervention, using a domestic material or object inserted into a particular scene or landscape and document it with a camera. Considering how you could use this intervention to develop a deeper understanding of your relationship to the chosen location for an

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

---

audience. You could record the reaction of the public to this intervention, through writing or photography, as an extension to the artwork.

3. Use a SLR camera to investigate Laing's concern with speed and travel by taking colour time lapse images of cars on busy streets, or fast-shutter speed images of people playing sport, or moving around. Colours in the *brownwork* series are carefully composed, linking humans and technology, so pay attention to colour in your images.

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## Glossary

**This glossary explains the words listed in bold in this kit, and gives definitions for general art concepts and technical terms which are useful to know in the study of Rosemary Laing's practice.**

**ambiguity:** open to more than one interpretation, having a double meaning; unclear or inexact because a choice between alternatives has not been made.

**arcadian:** relating to an ideal rustic paradise, in Greek mythology the home of Pan.

**auteur:** a filmmaker who clearly leaves the mark of his or her distinctive personal style upon the film process, in the way an author does on a book, rather than the film being in a studio style or a vehicle of the actors. French term from the 1960s meaning 'author'.

**cinematic:** visual or thematic qualities from film; the experience of being immersed in an image like when viewing films.

**collaboration:** the process where two or more separate individuals or organisations work together, or combine resources or ideas, to produce one outcome.

**curator:** person responsible for the care, collection, interpretation and display of artworks, or objects, in a museum or gallery. The term is also used in parks and zoos – for instance the Curator of Reptiles. Curators in contemporary museums liaise with artists directly, write catalogues and labels, and work with other departments in the museum, or to arrange installations and public projects, as well as exhibitions in the gallery spaces.

**depth of field:** the area of sharp focus on a photograph. This can be controlled by

changing the aperture and focal length of the camera.

**editing:** in photography, a process of reducing, cutting, correcting or arranging a series or collection of images to produce a final image or series.

**exposure:** refers to the process where film (analogue) or a CCD chip (digital) is exposed to light over time.

**f-stop:** markings around the camera lens denoting when the focal length of the lens is divided by the diameter of the aperture. The f-stops are marked in a series f5.6, f8, f11 etc. The larger the f-stop, the smaller the amount of light. To go from f8 to f5.6 is to open your camera lens twice as much, and introduce twice as much light.

**gaze:** to look or see with fixed intention. The 'gaze' is a term used in art history and theory referring to the relationship between the viewer and the subject, suggesting a position of power by the viewer over the subject.

**grain:** a term describing the quality of a photograph. It refers to the size and density of silver compounds (called silver halide crystals) on film and the size of these compounds in the final print. Grain has a direct relationship to film speed. The higher the film speed the larger the grain. Common film speeds are 100, 200 and 400.

**hyperreal:** exaggerated in comparison to reality; extremely realistic in detail.

**landscape:** the visible features of an area of land; a space defined by the presence of natural elements; a picture of the landscape. Landscape is also a genre in painting and photography, subject to historical and

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

contemporary conventions and traditions.

**location:** the exact place where a photographic shoot is undertaken. This place is marked not only by an exact longitude and latitude but also has a history and memory of events that have taken place there.

**metallic photographic paper:** a particular type of photographic paper produced by Ilford. The name originates from the paper's ability to render large fields of colour as though they were composed of some base metal. For example, the white of a cloud may look like the texture of a pearl.

**motif:** a distinctive, repeating or dominant idea or visual feature.

**narrative:** a spoken or written account of connected events; a story; a story contained or implied in an artwork. Artworks sometimes contain an implied or deliberately disrupted narrative rather than a conventionally chronological narrative.

**NASA:** abbreviation for National Aeronautics and Space Administration, United States.

**painterly:** qualities in any artwork which are like that of a painting, especially texture, colour and mood.

**panoramic:** a photographic term used to describe a space where the angle of view is wider than what can be seen with human eyes. This angle is always wider than 50 degrees. Also a cinematic term for a wide-screen film.

**pastoral:** in literature or art this refers to an idealised version of country life; associated with living on a farm or on country land.

**pixels:** the elements that make up a digital photograph. They are the shape of squares and mapped onto what is called the Cartesian grid. Each pixel has an x and y coordinate

which positions it on the grid and is assigned a value delineating its particular hue or colour.

**photoshoot:** refers to the days, or the result of a journey, when all the preparation and planning is put into practice and a photographic image is made.

**place:** refers to a particular site or location which is significant to an individual or a community.

**post-colonialism:** a set of political theories, or study, dealing with the legacy of 19<sup>th</sup> century European colonial rule, the impact of this rule on the landscape and Indigenous peoples, and the dilemmas of developing a national identity in the wake of colonial rule.

**practice:** an artist's method of working, their body of work or career development.

**proof sheet:** (also known as contact sheet) one page of photographic paper with negative-size images of all photographs from the film. Photographs are selected for enlargement from this proof sheet.

**reconnaissance:** (commonly referred to as 'the recce') the research visit to a selected location prior to the photoshoot.

**sequence:** related events, items or images which follow each other in a particular order in a set or group. A sequence can be incorporated into a series, but not the other way around.

**series:** a set, number or sequence of things, events or images of a similar or related nature which come after each other in succession.

**sublime:** a concept or scene of such grandeur it inspires a viewer to awe; 'the sublime' refers to a European intellectual tradition of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, in which images of the landscape are

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

---

imbued with solemn ideas and intense emotion.

**survey:** an exhibition curated around one theme or aspect or period of an artist's work. *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing* is a survey exhibition not a retrospective (a career overview of an artist's work).

**time lapse:** a technique used in photography and film. The camera is placed on a tripod then the shutter speed of the camera is opened for a longer than usual time (faster than 1/60th of a second) rendering anything moving in the frame as blurred, and everything else that is stationary as sharp.

**type C photograph:** a photograph printed from a negative (the developed film that contains a reversed tone image of the original scene).

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## Selected further reading and references

The resources listed below provide opportunity for further study on the artist and her practice. There is a full list of print references in the MCA exhibition catalogue. Education groups can add to this resource list as they locate further reference material.

### Catalogues

*brownwork*, exhibition catalogue, Annandale Galleries, 1998

*groundspeed*, exhibition catalogue, Gitte Weiss Gallery, 2001

*Rosemary Laing*, exhibition catalogue, Domus Artium 2002, Fundación Salamanca Cuidade Cultura, 2004

*Rosemary Laing, a collaboration with Stephen Birch*, exhibition brochure, GrantPirrie Gallery, 2004

*rosemary laing - a survey 1995 – 2002*, exhibition catalogue, Brisbane City Gallery, 2003\*

*the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*, exhibition catalogue, Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005\*

\*= denotes available from the MCA Store.

### Other publications

Marc Auge, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, Verso, London, 1995

Michael Fitzgerald, "Suspension of Disbelief", *TIME Magazine*, June 12, 2000

Deborah Hart, "Rosemary Laing: Flight Research", *Tales of the Unexpected*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Australia, 2002

Ron Radford, "Et in Arcadia Ego (I too once lived in Arcady)", *Creating Australia, 200 Years of Art 1788-1988*, Art Gallery of South Australia, 1988, pages 78-79

Zara Stanhope, *Hothouse: The flower in contemporary art*, exhibition catalogue,

Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2003

Susan Stoops, *Staged!: Contemporary photography by Gregory Crewdson, Rosemary Laing, and Sharon Lockhart*, exhibition catalogue, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts, United States, 2001

### Internet Resources

<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/visarts/globe/issue6/rltxt.html>

<http://www.galerie-lelong.com/indexen.php>

[http://www.grantpirrie.com/GRANTPIRRIE/Rosemary\\_Laing\\_2005/](http://www.grantpirrie.com/GRANTPIRRIE/Rosemary_Laing_2005/)

<http://www.kodak.com/global/en/consumer/glossary/glossaryContents.shtml> (photographic terms)

[http://www.kunstmarkt.com/pagesprz/rosemary\\_laing/i70594\\_d70803\\_r70609/show\\_praese\\_nz.html](http://www.kunstmarkt.com/pagesprz/rosemary_laing/i70594_d70803_r70609/show_praese_nz.html)

<http://www.mca.com.au>

[http://www.zeroland.co.nz/new\\_zealand\\_photography.html](http://www.zeroland.co.nz/new_zealand_photography.html)

# the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing

23 March – 5 June 2005

## Acknowledgements

Exhibition organised by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney  
Curated by Vivienne Webb

The MCA would like to express sincere thanks to Rosemary Laing for her assistance with this project.

Published March 2005 by the Museum of Contemporary Art Limited, Sydney, Australia  
©The Museum of Contemporary Art Ltd, the artists, authors and photographers. All rights reserved. The publisher grants permission for this education kit to be reproduced and/or stored for twelve months in a retrieval system, transmitted by means electronic, mechanical, photocopying and/or recording only for educational purposes and strictly in relation to the exhibition *the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing*.

Education kit written by Justine McLisky, Education Coordinator (Youth and Outreach Programs). Artwork analyses, glossary contributions by Alex Kershaw, MCA Educator. With assistance from Jasmin Stephens, Senior Manager Education and Access, and Vivienne Webb, Curator.

***the unquiet landscapes of Rosemary Laing***  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney  
23 March to 5 June 2005

Supported by



The Museum of Contemporary Art gratefully acknowledges the ongoing funding and support of the New South Wales Government and 'Key Organisation' grant funding from the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. The MCA was established by the University of Sydney through the JW Power Bequest, with assistance of the New South Wales Government.