

Quadrat: Art at Play Within and Across Boundaries of Knowledge

Jeanette Stok and **Michelle Vine** playfully test the epistemological borders that define the seemingly discreet disciplines of science and art. Their focus of inquiry is the process of generating knowledge—not the content inquiry produces. Their exhibition is an invitation to experience the unvalued aspects of scientific practice. From this participation, new engagements emerge.

Jeanette Stok draws upon her own experience as a scientist as she maps the mundane, repetitive practices researchers perform as they “do” science. Stok’s process-based art leads to a consideration that science itself is an embodied practice. Her exhibited work questions the assumption that science is primarily a conceptual and observational practice and opens to a deeper understanding of knowledge-making as an embodied act. Instead of objectifying knowledge, Stok’s work subtly re/forms the scientific gaze by recursively training the focus on the action of bodies in space. As such, the process of science itself becomes the object of focus. Further, observation is democratised in Stok’s work as she applies this process to her

own artistic practice. Stok makes available to us her own process as she performs her art. Her performance is as reciprocal as it is interactive. In Stok’s artwork, scientist and the artist meet in critical and creative ways. Stok’s process led inquiry humanises science as she makes visible the embodied nature of scientific endeavor.

Michelle Vine takes pleasure in visual story telling through practice led research. Her process opens to inquiry into the politics of knowledge, particularly the knowledge of the natural world. Vine’s exhibited works expose the intense beauty of the miniscule and offer an alternative entrance to the natural world. In this way, Vine’s art revalues things often exploited, overlooked, rendered useless, or archived away from public view. Her works in this exhibition developed out of Vine’s fascination with 1860s German Naturalist, Amalie Dietrich. In 2016, and with the support of three Griffith Honours College Research Bursaries, Vine literally retraced part of Dietrich’s historic sojourn in Northern Queensland. As part of this reenactment, Vine collected over 12,000 insects and botani

cal specimens. Her willingness to embody Dietrich’s journey and scientific practices clarified connections to land and culture often obscured in the archive. As a result, Vine’s exhibited works playfully unveil how science intersects with issues of power, ownership, and expropriation. Vine provides gentle incursions into scientific rituals of knowing as she erases the nominal classification of species. Through this erasure, an uncomfortable silence is introduced as the audience is invited to experience her rendering of the real on its own terms. Vine’s process led art offers a way to question the objective nature of science, and to reassess formerly unquestioned frames of knowledge.

Together, Vine and Stok resist anticipating the endpoint of knowledge by excavating the process of knowing itself. *Quadrat* makes visible the hidden and overlooked beauty of movement and archive, and reveals how embodied practices are as creative as the concepts birthed through them.

Amy Hickman PhD

Quadrat

Jeanette Stok and Michelle Vine

27 January - 12 February 2017

