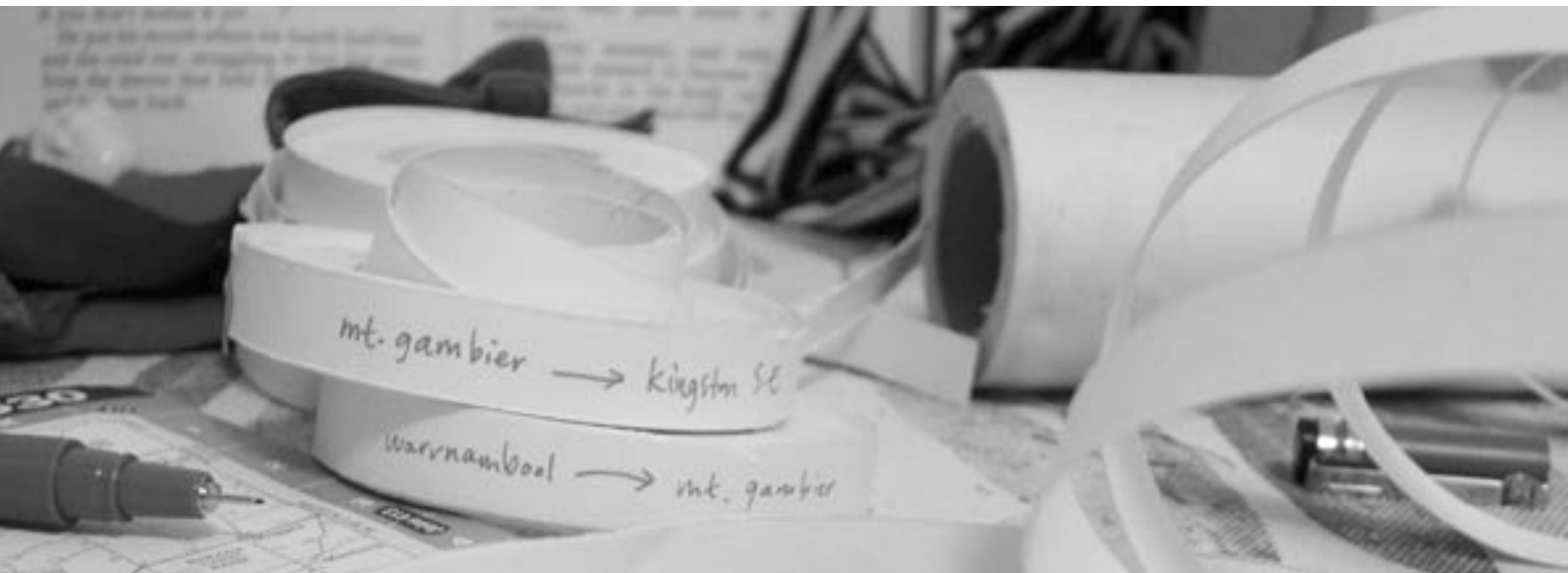


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Am I there yet?

Hayley West



Hayley West

Am I there yet?

Roads are only ever the lines between two points; in one sense solid and immutable, in another almost fluid. They are as long or as short as the journey being undertaken. The short but enormously important stretch of towering concrete that traverses the Yarra River in the form of the Westgate becomes almost insignificant when viewed as merely the opening gambit in a journey to Darwin that will cover 4000km.

Roads have the uncanny ability to assume different characteristics in different contexts. The 300-odd kilometres that divide Katherine from Darwin are incredibly exciting as the culmination of a journey that began in Melbourne. With 3700 kilometres of anticipation and expectation fuelling the imagination, that last stretch is climactic. As a road that has to be travelled twice in a day for a meeting, it is merely a nuisance. Same road, different context. The most familiar roads are those that connect home to work, yet even these change daily. Is it raining or is it dry? Is it light or is it dark? Am I in a hurry or do I have time to admire the frangipanis?

Hayley West has taken the notion of the road, the journey, and made it solid. In a manner reminiscent of Kerouac's famous

On The Road scroll, Hayley's vision is rendered in paper, the spools of her journey spilling onto and into one another. The scale here is not one measured in metres and centimetres, but one that accords significance to particular roads or parts thereof. For Hayley, as it is for many who complete it, the journey from south to north along 'the track' is almost a rite of passage. A movement away from the familiar towards the exotic, from the known to the mythical. Hayley's work gives some insight into that journey, its roads and its meaning.

Rick Rutjens

Since graduating in 1998 with a BFA (sculpture) from RMIT University, Hayley West has been exhibiting in festivals, artist run spaces and public art spaces around Australia in solo, group and collaborative shows. In Melbourne, Hayley was involved in establishing Seventh Gallery Inc, an Artist Run Initiative (ARI). Now settled in Darwin, she is the Administrator of Darwin Visual Arts Association, another ARI.

In 2004 she received an Australia Council 'New Work' emerging artists grant to create 'Am I there yet?' In her previous work she has used unsuspecting third parties, communication breakdowns and cultural misunderstandings to expose the ways public and private selves collide. She is also a rabid St.Kilda Football Club member.

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