

# POSTMASTERS

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For immediate release:

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## **SALLY SMART** **"The Exquisite Pirate"**

Postmasters Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition **"The Exquisite Pirate"** by Australian artist Sally Smart. This will be Smart's first solo show in the US. The exhibition will open January 28 and will be on view until February 25, 2006. The opening reception is planned for Saturday, January 28 between 6 and 8 pm.

Sally Smart is one of Australia's most significant contemporary artists. She is known for creating large-scale collages from painted felt and other materials applied directly to one or more walls. Her wall assemblages, often comprise of silhouettes of figures, objects, and architectural structures, are narrative and sometimes surreal, layered with philosophical references to identity, feminism, psychology, literature, Australian culture and more. Smart graduated from the South Australian School of Art, Adelaide, earned an MFA at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne. She is the first woman artist to be a trustee at the National Gallery of Victoria, a position through which she advocates for contemporary art and artists.

***The Exquisite Pirate*** 2004 -2006 was recently shown in "Surface Charge," an exhibition curated by Sabine Russ and Gregory Volk at Anderson Gallery of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA.

Smart describes the origins of the project:

*"The Exquisite Pirate develops my ideas about the woman pirate as a metaphor for contemporary global issues of personal and social identity, cultural hybridity and immigration. The project initiated from a simple question – Were there any women pirates? A google search revealed several historical women pirates and from there my research and interest grew. Parallel to this was the seemingly huge growth in popular culture imagery connected to Pirates and reference of the word **pirate** daily in the media for cyberspace activities.*

*In contemporary and historical Australia the boat and ship have loomed large around immigration issues and for me have become expressive, powerful images for post colonial discourses.*

*In 1995 I also saw **Pussy King of the Pirates** performed in Melbourne by Kathy Acker, the year before she died. The performance still resonates and the book, which I have subsequently read, has informed some of this work.*

*I was also interested that **The Exquisite Pirate** be located in Oceania, which lead me to the boats of the region and the scarification of the body in tattoo and as decoration. The idea of cutting magnified through the cutting of the materials I use. The small pirate figures are based on the shadow puppets of the region."*

In a forthcoming catalog essay for the Smart's exhibiton at Contemporary Commonwealth National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne (2006), Jason Smith writes:

***" The Exquisite pirate brings forth resistance to the politics of fear of the other, the totalizing force of globalisation and a global sweep of conservatism, the***

woman pirate, for Smart, is the model on which to build a discourse on subversive activities that seek another space.

Other intellectual models include Foucault's treatise on the heterotopia, in which as a space 'outside of all places' and a phenomenon 'capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible'. In Foucault's heterotopia, 'the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea that from port to port...goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens.'

Colonial histories and current realities collide in **The Exquisite Pirate's** listing flotilla, assembling as it does a skeletal, motley and slightly monstrous crew that owe their physiognomies to the dada of Hoch and the bizarre collages of Ernst, and that act as metaphors for fortune and folly of colonial endeavour and the horrors of contemporary human conflicts and refuge seeking. Without glorifying the lawlessness and the tyranny of the historical woman pirate, Smart proposes a figure of indeterminate identity as a way of thinking about the post-colonial and globalised world, and the necessity for stridently held alternative opinions and cultural actions..." (Michel Foucault, *Des espaces autres*, in *Architecture / Mouvement / Continuite*, Paris, October 1984)

Shown in the second gallery will be another group of Sally Smart recent works - **Painting in the Dark** series. These too, explore the physical layering of Smart's collage process, and recurrent use of silhouette forms.

"The forms and figures that occupy them are informed by art historical and personal stories. As such, a surrealist element pervades Smart's imagery, articulated by shadowy human and natural motifs that hover on nebulous backgrounds rendered in shades of dark. Yet these are not passive dream-like works: they are confronting both in their raw and visceral fabrication, and in their intensely intimate portrayal of mnemonic and melancholic psychological states. There is an uncanny sense of inhabitation in these works – a sense of being inextricably bound into intimate stories and complex environments that intersect physically and psychologically in our individual and collective memories."

Felicity Fenner **Painting in the Dark** (excerpt) exhibition catalogue essay, Sydney 2005

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Sally Smart currently lives in Melbourne Australia. She has been the recipient of numerous awards, fellowships and prizes.

Notable solo exhibitions include: **Painting in the Dark**, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney (2005); **Shadow Farm**, Wollongong Art Gallery, Wollongong, (2003); **Shadow Farm** Bendigo Art Gallery, Bendigo; and tour (2001 –2003); **Design Therapy**, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide (2002); **Femmage**, Galeria Baro Senna, Sao Paulo Brazil (2001); **Family Tree House** Project Space, Arco, Madrid Spain (2000) **Parameters Hea :A La Ronde** Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide (2000); **Femmage Shadows and Symptoms**, Fukuoka Art Museum, Fukuoka, Japan (1999); **Femmage Frieze** Robert Lindsay Gallery, Melbourne(1999); and **The Unhomely Body** The Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide (1996).

Sally Smart has participated in more than fifty group exhibitions - these include:

**2006 Contemporary Commonwealth**, The Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2006); **Surface Charge**, VCU arts Anderson Gallery, Richmond Virginia, USA (2005); **Where the wild things are**, University of Technology Sydney Gallery, Sydney (2005); **Architypes**, (tour) Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver, Canada; Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney, Australia; Canadian Embassy Gallery, Tokyo, Japan (2004-2005); **Painting in the Dark**, Arco 2005, Greenaway Art Gallery, Madrid (2005); **see here now**, Ian Potter Gallery, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia (2003); **Fieldwork: Australian Art 1968 - 2002**, The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne (2002); **Arid Arcadia: Art of the**

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**Flinders Ranges**, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (2002); **Tales of the unexpected: Aspects of Contemporary** Australian Art, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2002); **Re-empplace**, (**Sally Smart and Suzann Victor**) Earl Lu Gallery, Singapore (1999) and John Curtin Gallery, Curtin University, Perth (1999); **Unhomely**, Sonje Museum of Contemporary Art, Kyongju and Seoul, Korea (1998) **Pusan International Contemporary Art Festival**, Pusan, Korea (1998)

*Postmasters Gallery, located in Chelsea at 459 West 19th Street (corner of 10th Avenue), is open Tuesday through Saturday to 11 - 6 pm. Please contact Magdalena Sawon at 212-727-3323 with any questions or image requests. e-mail: [postmasters@thing.net](mailto:postmasters@thing.net) <http://www.postmastersart.com>*