

THE [RE] ORDER OF THINGS

THE ART OF ANDREW HAZEWINKEL

JANE DEVERY

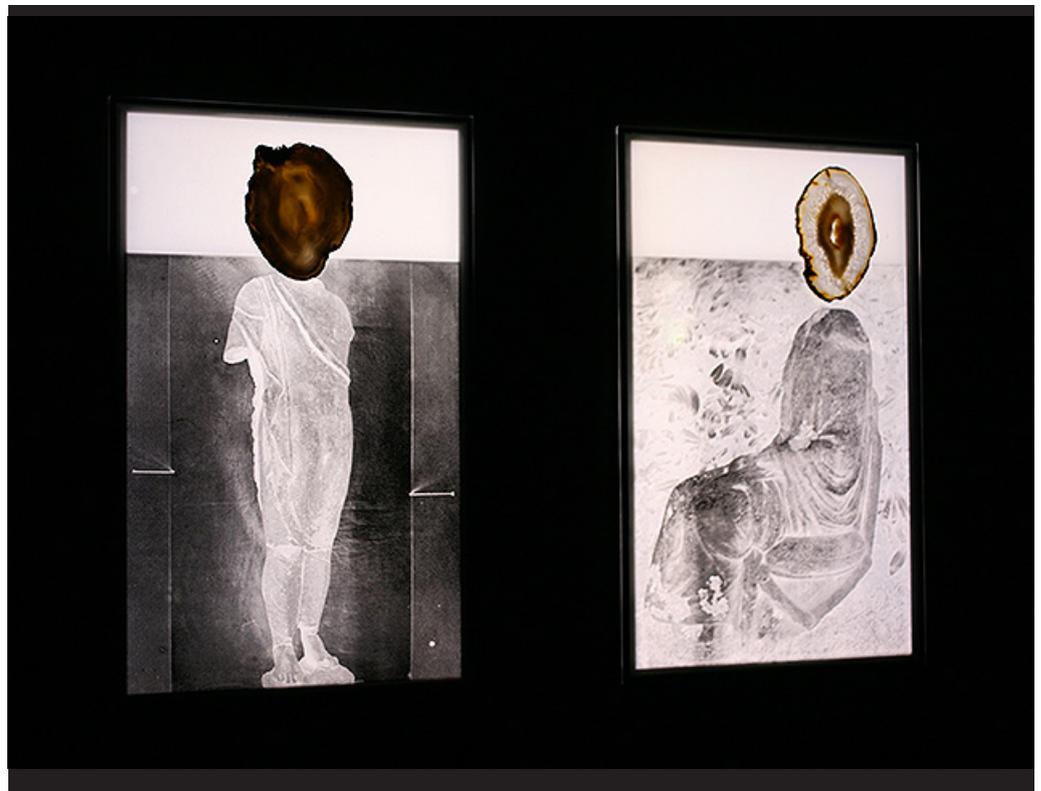
Silver, copper and aluminium leaf, sandpaper, wax, leather, gemstones, mirrors, carbon, found photographs and glass plate negatives, electroluminescent light panels, industrial ropes and recycled ship engine oil. These are some of the materials and objects that appear in the work of Andrew Hazewinkel. The Melbourne artist, who has exhibited in Australia and Europe for more than a decade, has an uncanny ability to intuit the potential of things and draw out their hidden meanings. Borrowing from museological, archival and archaeological practices and fields as diverse as geology, anthropology and Surrealism, his largely photographic and object based works are striking for their strange arrangements of repurposed materials that unearth unexpected associations.

Andrew Hazewinkel
HEAD REPLACEMENT THERAPY
[PLUNDERED # 6.] 2012

HEAD REPLACEMENT THERAPY
[PLUNDERED # 3] 2012

Screen printed image on 6mm
sanblasted low lead glass, cut agate,
electroluminescent light panel
79 x 48.5 cm

Archival image source:
Marshall Collection
The British School at Rome



Objects caught in unusual states of transformation course throughout the artist's work. In the single channel video installation *Turbulence* 2007, for example, plastic bottles and abandoned footballs caught in an eddy of a river form a deluge of unexpected beauty. In the larger *Aqua Alta* project 2006-09 of which this video was a part - an ambitious set of spatial interventions staged across four architectural sites in Rome and Melbourne - found objects estranged from their everyday contexts formed part of a complex web of interconnecting ropes. Some formed anchor points while others were suspended mid air like debris left by a high tide. Elsewhere in video projections, ordinary objects seem to take on unusual significance, whether a half submerged tree branch in a swollen river, or lengths of bunting fluttering in the wind. In a photographic component of the project, images of makeshift shelters found in present day Rome were combined with nineteenth century photographs of the flood damaged city, paired together with the artist's eye for material traces of destruction and survival that span across time.

In more recent works, Hazewinkel draws on strategies of collage and the readymade. Part sculptural and part photographic, the ongoing project *Head Replacement Therapy* 2012 consists

of a series of hybrid objects that appear to be governed by an uncanny logic. In its most recent presentation in 2012 at Melbourne's Centre for Contemporary Photography in the exhibition *On the Nature of Things, Head Replacement Therapy: (plundered #1 - #6)* 2012 consisted of six 'portraits' comprised of images of Greek and Roman sculptures screen-printed onto sandblasted glass plates, each 'completed' with a slice of agate in the place of a missing head. Superimposed onto electroluminescent light panels and presented in a darkened exhibition space, these softly glowing unusual aggregates take on a spectral presence, as if retrieved from another time and place.

Hazewinkel's unusual artefacts play with junctures between artifice and nature, the illusory and the real. They confront us with our anthropomorphising impulses and our need to find meanings in images. Considered in this way, the artist's use of agates and other geological matter - one might call them 'natural readymades' - suggests an affinity with the work of Roger Caillois (1913-1978), a one-time friend and collaborator of Andre Breton, and lesser known Surrealist who formulated a theory on the visual language of geological formations. In his book *The Writing of Stones*, a poetic investigation into the images found in stones, Caillois speculated that hidden meanings lay hidden within their structures and that with the aid of the human imagination they could unlock the secrets of the cosmos.¹

There's a humorous side to Hazewinkel's misshapen forms but also a violent beauty. They call to mind the disfigured imagery in the collages of Dada artists Max Ernst and Hannah Hoch, but equally reference the game of chance exquisite corpse favoured by the Surrealists. There is something severe and almost surgical about seeing dismembered forms of classical sculptures lit up like medical X-rays, and the sub title 'plundered' accompanying these works certainly suggests a violation. The images of classical sculptures that appear in this work were drawn from the Marshall Collection, a little known archive of nineteenth and early twentieth century photographic documentation of antique sculptures that Hazewinkel discovered in 2006 while he was artist in residence at the Australia Council's studio at the British School at Rome. His repeated use of material found in the collection throughout his works opens a window onto the role of early photography in the burgeoning international trade of antiquities in the nineteenth century, inviting a reading of archaeological and museological practices as forms of systemic cultural violence.

Hazewinkel draws parallels between his own artistic processes and the archaeological and archival practices his materials have been subjected to. Reflecting on the multiple layers of burial and retrieval that are embedded in the objects he works with, he has commented, 'the documented objects that I am looking at have been excavated at least twice. First the stone is cut, as raw material; then if chosen, worked, usually followed by a slow process of forgetting and the slow re-burial by time, faded value or conflict. Next comes the second exhuming, the modern discovery, and subsequent archaeological activities. I also participate in this layered cycle of burial and exhumation. I bring them back to the surface from the limbo of a forgotten archive and rework them, with no interest in 'restoration' rather reconsidering them and allowing them to ... speak.'²

The ghostly imagery that developed from the artist's research in the Marshall Collection resurface in *Portrait of the Living and the Dead #1 - #6* 2010-11, a series of monumental works on paper. Responding to photographic negatives he uncovered of sculpted heads of Roman and

Greek antiquities, these delicately rendered drawings built up in layers of silver and aluminium leaf on fine black carborundum sandpaper, appear like apparitions emerging from a dark sparkling ground. An important feature of Hazewinkel's artistic project is a conscious referencing of materials that link to the methods of production of his source material. Sandpaper, for example, is used by Hazewinkel to full illusory effect, but also references the work of the sculptor. Silver leaf creates a mysterious shimmering presence in these works, but are also emblematic of photographic processes, as curator Dr Kyla McFarlane has noted: 'Hazewinkel's material references points are consciously elemental here; his is a sculptural response to the raw elements of nineteenth century photographic documentation – gelatin silver, glass plate and, more broadly, its base elements of light against dark.' ⁱⁱⁱ

The *Material Collision* project shown at the artist run space Westspace in late 2012 represented a distillation of ideas and material associations that run throughout the artist's work. Photographic, sculptural, archaeological, geological, cosmological, art historical and bodily references multiply through a series of two- and three-dimensional hybrid experimental forms. In *Material Collision #1 (we are all star stuff)* Hazewinkel picks up on the visual language of Minimalist sculpture in the restrained gesture of pinning a single piece of leather to the wall, however the title inflects this work with a heightened atmosphere, alluding to the idea that everything in the universe - whether flesh and blood or stone - is ultimately comprised of the same matter. Reinforcing this idea and in a poetic invocation of the night sky, sections of the gallery space were covered with the artist signature material of carborundum sandpaper, a readymade substance rich with allusive and illusory potential. In the sculpture *Material Collision #2 (mantle plume)* 2012, columns of molten wax and sliced agate allude to ancient geological transformations but also hint at bodily associations, a theme that also plays out in *Material Collision #3 (staring together into night)* 2012. In this large photographic screen-printed onto the same sparkling surface that runs throughout the entire installation, we see the sculpted head of a classical Greek sculpture of a young man. In this intimate portrait of a forgotten ancient sculptural object, the skilled craftsmanship of the ancient sculptor is accentuated. Hazewinkel brings the fine stylized form into crisp focus, enlarged and screen-printed from a digitized image taken from a nineteenth century glass plate negative. Yet in spite of the close encounter with a fragment of antiquity this work allows us, the overall sense of contemporaneity is striking. The relationship between viewer and object is also interesting here: only the reverse of the subject's head is revealed to us, implying that we share the same gaze. Thousands of years might separate our experiences yet together we face the darkness beyond. Sensual and vulnerable, it is a work of considerable poetic force.

Andrew Hazewinkel is alert to the shifting values and meanings of materials over time, and their potential to open windows to a range of associations. His hybrid structures and photographic objects consciously reference the material culture and processes of archaeology, photography, archival practices, museum displays and modernism, drawing attention to histories and stories that might otherwise be lost. His magical transformations of materials and re-animation of archival objects stir up multiple associations that all seem to revolve around the question of our relationships with things. How might objects and materials unlock secrets between the living and the dead, the contemporary and the ancient, the future and the past? Hazewinkel's art comes close to providing an answer, but leaves the question open for now.

Jane Devery is a Melbourne based curator, she is currently Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Victoria.

i. For further discussion on Callois see M,Werner, *The Writing of Stones*, Cabinet, Issue 29 Sloth, Spring 2008. <http://cabinetmagazine.org/issues/29/warner.php>. Accessed 21 January 2013.

ii. Artist notes provided to the author, January 2013.

iii. K, McFarlane, *CCP Declares: On The Nature of Things*, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne 2012, p4.