

very thoughtful catalogue essay.

I would like to salute Malcolm for so successfully using the opportunity provided by the Fellowship to create this physically and conceptually large installation and for agreeing to show *Minus Reason* in Objectspace. I would like to acknowledge makers Christine Thacker and Lee Elliott in their collaboration with Malcolm and others who have assisted him. And our special thanks are extended to distinguished writer and applied arts curator – and long time friend of Malcolm’s – Laurence Fearnley for her

society and they will generate many readings.

Malcolm has said that one of the departure points for *Minus Reason* is Francisco Goya’s etching *The Dream of Reason Produces Monsters*. This etching, from the Caprichos, a cycle of 78 works in which Goya, through a series of fantastical images, comments upon the human condition and the society in which he lived. In talking about *Minus Reason* Malcolm has said “The beginnings and origin of this work was governed by reason, not mindless passion”. Like Goya’s works, these works by Malcolm

creative project he has undertaken.

Less than a year later it is a great pleasure to welcome visitors to Malcolm’s *Minus Reason* installation, a very large body of new work that he has created since 2004, which he has said, has been the hardest

experimental and innovative objectmaking.

in a brand new, Creative New Zealand supported, venue dedicated to prestigious award and it was exciting that the announcement took place makers; it was a milestone for the craft/object sector to have such a

acknowledgement of his stature as one of New Zealand’s leading number of counts; for friends and supporters of Malcolm’s it was an at Objectspace in June 2004. This was a wonderful moment on a inaugural Creative New Zealand Craft/Object Art Fellowship was made

The announcement that Malcolm Harrison was the recipient of the

Introduction



“The second half of the Caprichos is introduced by a haunting master-piece that has intrigued, challenged, disturbed, and tantalized viewers for generations; the dream of reason produces monsters,” This print has had as many interpretations as the Indignant Eye, 1989. Malcolm Harrison



Even now, I can recall the pleasure I experienced upon first discovering codes, secret messages, semaphore and invisible ink. One of the main attractions of the code, for me, was the thrill of creating a private language – one that was able to convey all one’s thoughts and ideas and yet was able to be understood only by a few; those selected to share the secret. Of course, given that everyone in my family grew

Minus Reason



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Objectspace is a dedicated centre for innovative craft and design that puts objects into play in the culture

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are able to witness, once more, Malcolm’s mastery of two powerful tools: contradiction and contrast. Reality contrasts with fantasy, humour with sadness, the straightforward narrative given a nasty twist: the hunter sets a trap and captures himself,

What’s doubly intriguing is that in *Minus Reason*, he’s using his own forms of communication to explore issues of truth and dream, nightmares and mirror images. Yet he’s using these alternative forms of communication to explore issues of truth and dream, nightmares and mirror images. Yet he’s using these alternative forms of communication to explore

of such language is an act of use. For him, I think, the use appears to gain pleasure from its by my use of such a language, he And, whereas I was often isolated, corresponds in and creates with. jokes; it is the language he speaks, uses coded language and private characteristics is that he frequently his most marked – and appealing –

I have always regarded Malcolm Harrison’s work as similarly – but more successfully – coded. This is interesting because Malcolm is, I believe, a story teller and stories, for the most part, tend to be simply told rather than conveyed through a private language. When I think about Malcolm, however – and I first met him nineteen years ago – it seems to me that one of



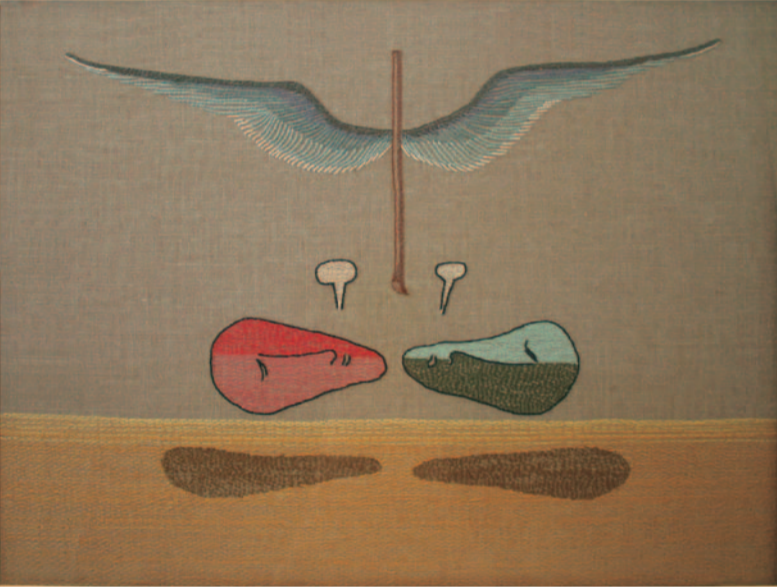
List of works

Warning – content may offend

- 1. Trap – a hunter caught in a trap of self-making**
2005
linen/stitched
- 2. Blue Room – death and destruction remain outside, until...**
2004
silk/stitched
- 3. Taking Sides – you only fight for the same beast**
2004-05
cotton/linen/stitched
- 4. Facing the Enemy – an enemy is only a reflection**
2004-05
linen/stitched
- 5. The Negotiators I**
2005
canvas/wool
- 6. The Negotiators II**
2005
canvas/wool
- 7. The Negotiators III**
2005
canvas/wool
- 8. Clashing with Cultures – modern weapons always**
2004
linen/hemp/stitched
- 9. The Silence – a lull before terror strikes**
2004
linen/cotton/pottery/wood/silk
- 10. Four Drawings – Myths stay Or reason wipes Altered according to politics Best not to create future ones**
2004
linen/silk/stitched
- 11. Requiem – a portable campaign altar**
2005
silk/linen/stitched/wood
- 12. Body count - a prayer stool for the dead**
2005
canvas/wool/wood
- 13. A poverty of language – we TXT. No need to reason any more**
2005
linen/stitched
- 14. Conceal conflict - monsters of the mind are free to roam within a house**
2000-04
linen/stitched
- 15. Minus Reason Christine Thacker with Malcolm Harrison**
2005
pottery

A poverty of reason, a poverty of language. Only an articulate – and knowing - artist can explore such issues with confidence. I’m curious though, to see, what remains hidden.

the person looks for his enemy and sees himself, the peaceful silence is about to be destroyed by the storm. Stylistically, we see three dimensional realism next to the doodled line – and only the most skilled of practitioners can doodle with needle and thread – large scale works contrasting with small, intimate detail; and the flawlessly constructed piece contrasting with the cracked and broken.



© 2005
The dream of reason produces
monsters (detail) 1100

Trap - a hunter caught in a
trap off self-making (detail) 2005

Photography: Alicia Dowsett
Design: Inhouse Design

NO need for reason any more 2005
A poverty of language - we TXT.
RIGHT: Trap - a hunter caught in a
trap off self-making (detail) 2005