



Media Release

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Pirates come to Washington: Australian artist presents “exquisite” figures in collage

The Embassy of Australia welcomes “The Exquisite Pirate by Sally Smart” – an exploration of immigration, feminism and globalization through large-scale collage pirate ships – from February 6 through April 3.

In conceptualizing this exhibition, renowned Australian contemporary artist Sally Smart posed the question, “Were there any women pirates?” Background research revealed that there were indeed several women pirates in history. Smart was inspired to use these figures not only to explore femininity and sexuality in a traditionally male domain, but also as a broader metaphor for personal and social identity, cultural hybridization and immigration.

“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,” says Smart. “Without glorifying the lawlessness of the historical woman pirate, my work proposes a figure of indeterminate identity as a way of thinking about a globalized world and the need for strident, alternative opinions.”

This discussion occurs, of course, in the context of the vast popularity of pirates and pirate imagery in popular culture. Smart references not only the pirate stories that are so beloved in film and literature, but also the broader context of “piracy” as it relates to multimedia, cyberspace and intellectual property.

“The Exquisite Pirate” is an ongoing body of work initiated in 2004. It has been exhibited as wall installations of varying dimensions and is constructed primarily from felt, canvas and everyday fabrics.

The collection was first displayed as a large-scale assemblage installation at the VCUarts Anderson Gallery in Richmond, Va. Since then, it has moved through various galleries across the globe, including the Postmasters Gallery, New York, N.Y. (2006); the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia (2006); the Jacob Karpio Gallery, San Jose, Costa Rica (2006); and other exhibition spaces in Germany, China and Indonesia. In 2009-2010, work from this series will be included in “Zhongjian: Midway”, touring China and Australia.

WHO: Sally Smart

WHAT: “The Exquisite Pirate,” a collection of large-scale collage images

WHERE: The Gallery at the Embassy of Australia, 1601 Massachusetts Ave NW

WHEN: February 6 through April 3, 2009