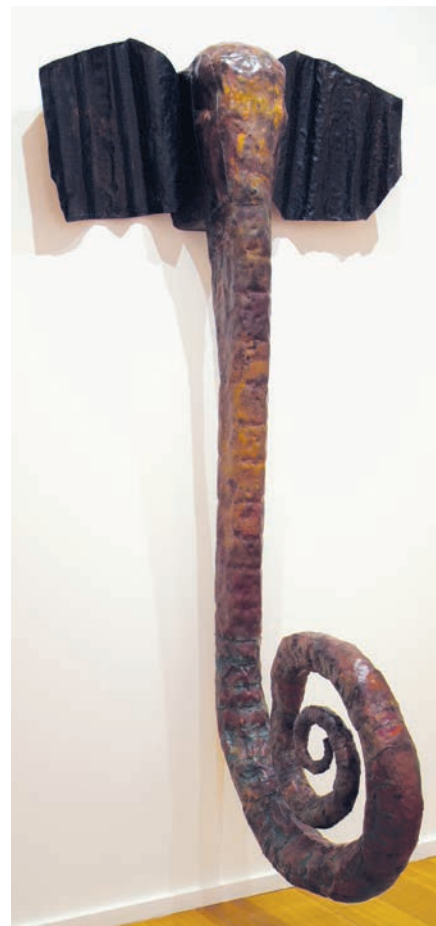




Theodore's long shot 2006 patinated copper 18 x 371 x 5 cm



Longer truths, longer lies (side view of front cover image) 2007 painted copper and stainless steel 254 x 370 x 250 cm



Trophy - the grand spiral 2006 patinated copper 184 x 93 x 77 cm



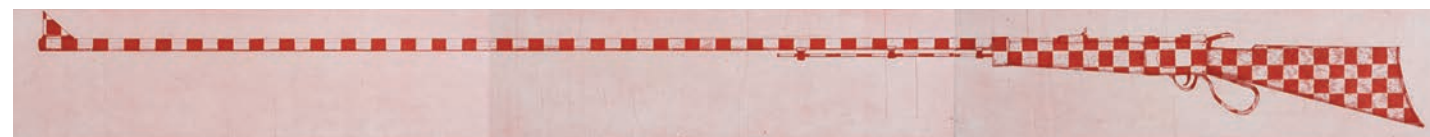
Side by side 2006 patinated copper 57.5 x 138 x 4 cm



The self realiser 2007 patinated copper 35.5 x 136 x 3.5 cm



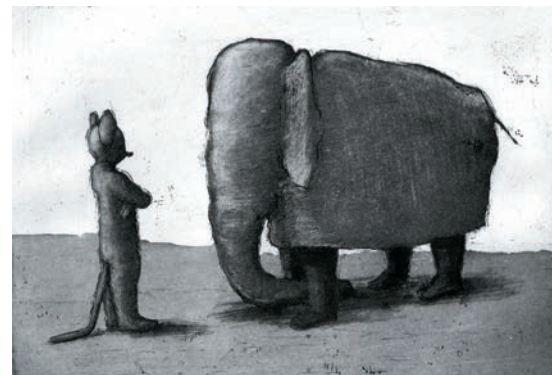
Left to right 2007 patinated copper 39 x 341 x 5.5 cm



Theodore's theorem 2006 intaglio print edition 7 256.5 x 43 cm



Mice and men 2007 intaglio print edition 40 14.5 x 21 cm



Where minds meet 2007 intaglio print edition 40 14.5 x 21 cm



Chinese whispers 2007 painted copper 37 x 119 x 33 cm

Front cover: *Longer truths, longer lies* 2007 painted copper and stainless steel 254 x 370 x 250 cm  
 Design: Suzy Ditterich, Australian Galleries Publishing  
 Photography: Geoffrey Ricardo and Viki Petherbridge  
 Catalogue published by Australian Galleries and Geoffrey Ricardo, May 2007

AUSTRALIAN GALLERIES

**SYDNEY**  
 PAINTING & SCULPTURE  
 15 ROYLSTON STREET [PO BOX 282]  
 PADDINGTON • NSW • 2021  
 T +61 [0]2 9360 5177  
 F +61 [0]2 9360 2361

WORKS ON PAPER  
 24 GLENMORE ROAD [PO BOX 282]  
 PADDINGTON • NSW • 2021  
 T +61 [0]2 9380 8744  
 F +61 [0]2 9380 8755

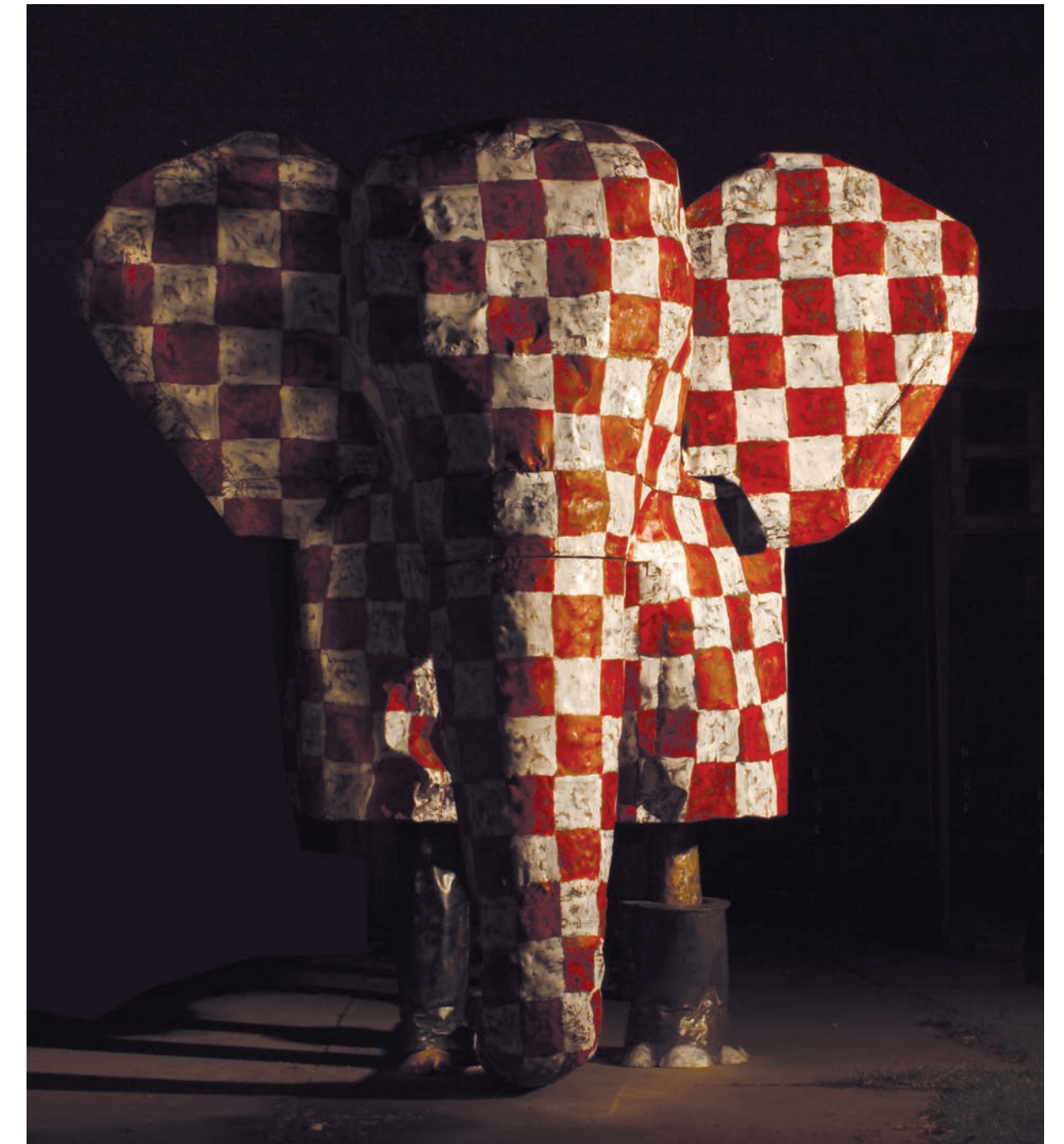
**MELBOURNE**  
 PAINTING & SCULPTURE  
 35 DERBY STREET [PO BOX 1183]  
 COLLINGWOOD • VIC • 3066  
 T +61 [0]3 9417 4303  
 F +61 [0]3 9419 7769

WORKS ON PAPER  
 50 SMITH STREET [PO BOX 1183]  
 COLLINGWOOD • VIC • 3066  
 T +61 [0]3 9417 0800  
 F +61 [0]3 9417 0699

ARCHIVE • DESIGN • PUBLICATION  
 BASEMENT • 50 SMITH STREET [PO BOX 1183]  
 COLLINGWOOD • VIC • 3066  
 T +61 [0]3 8415 1524  
 F +61 [0]3 8415 1526

E enquiries@australiangalleries.com.au W www.australiangalleries.com.au

MEMBER OF AUSTRALIAN COMMERCIAL GALLERIES ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED



HERD

SYDNEY  
 PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

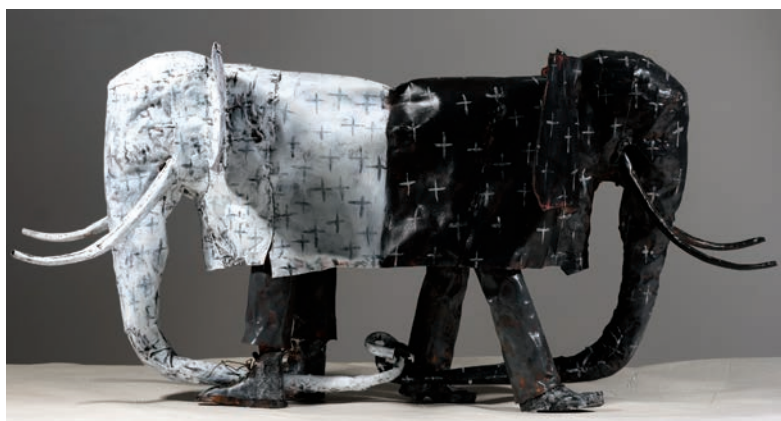
15 MAY - 2 JUNE 2007

AUSTRALIAN GALLERIES





Elephant obscurer 2007 bronze edition 10 18 x 16 x 18 cm



Forward backward 2007 painted copper 41 x 41 x 85 cm



Elephant gingham 2002 intaglio print edition 75 30 x 38 cm



Trophy - long red white 2007 painted copper 212 x 43 x 20 cm

**GEOFFREY RICARDO**

HERD



Where minds meet 2007 bronze 6.5 x 20.5 x 7 cm

**A CHECKERED HISTORY**

"In the not too distant future many animals could be extinct, and the only thing left for humans will be to dress up as animals of our choice."<sup>1</sup>

Geoffrey Ricardo's recent works comment on the sad results of man's drive to dominate nature. Developing upon imagery of freestanding human figures wearing elephant costumes like trophy heads, their crude and mocking humour and a lurking sinister message warns of boundaries being pushed too far. Ricardo yearns for the majesty of what has been destroyed in the process, and mourns the risk of destruction. As viewers, we are left with pathos, and its urgent message.

These potent works are a reminder of our primordial roots, and are a statement of the human condition. They embody a desire for an imaginative and responsible dialogue with our environment and its co-inhabitants. Sadly it acknowledges that what remains is a travesty of dignity and power. It is surely a wry comment that the men depicted by Ricardo, who feel the need to reconstruct their victim, are so much smaller than it.

Whilst previous imagery included depictions of crossbred kangaroos and emus with human limbs attached, Ricardo has now centred his focus on the regal splendour of the elephant. The elephant evokes awe, and its seemingly docile nature, graceful movements and doleful eyes have always fascinated mankind. They are much loved and revered creatures and constitute an appealing visual device for Ricardo, allowing him to develop his theme of elephants which have been unwillingly co-opted to serve man.

In stark contrast to India's caparisoned elephants, however, we see none of that beauty. The tawdry gingham armoury presents only pathos and a reference to pedestrian domesticity. To Ricardo, red and white check squares serve as a flagging, warning mechanism.

In his work *Longer truths, longer lies*, Ricardo's use of a copper costume as a gingham cloth covering what appears to be a life-size battle-wearied elephant, reveals itself to be two men in an elephant suit. The suit is constructed of patinated copper sheets, covering a stainless steel armature. In Ricardo's words: "The legs of the animal are human, revealing the deception and the pretence taking place. The two figures dressed as an animal almost get away with their lie."<sup>1</sup> The work examines in an absurdist yet poignant way the effect humans have on elephants – the elephant foot-umbrella stand, drives home the creature's humiliation.

The pantomime continues in other related copper sculptures. *Chinese whispers*, on a smaller scale, introduces the polarity of two elephants conversing. They are almost symmetrical and are movingly attached to one another, within a linear sequence. In contrast to this tender image, in *Forward backward* the conjoined elephants are arranged in an opposing sequence with proud protruding tusks. Their monochromatic decoration – black versus white - is at deliberate odds, threatening to pull asunder the entity and reveal the concealed hoax: one pair of legs firmly planted, while its counterpart is determinedly striding in the opposite direction. The power of opposites, temporarily set in balance.

The enigmatic work *Where minds meet* initially appears to be a humorous standoff between man masquerading as mouse, and man masquerading as elephant. The stance suggests mouse goading elephant. This is also articulated

in a related etching from a series of works on paper also included in this exhibition. The nuggety bronze *Elephant obscurer*, with its coarse organic texture, depicts the human element unable to observe the world through the eyes of the elephant.

In *Left to right*, and *The self realiser*, the extended barrel of a hunter's gun is the expressive component – creating a new context for the weapon and a further dimension to the elephant theme. The barrels resemble elephant trunks as they curl back upon themselves and are self-defeatingly aligned.

The series of wall-mounted trophies makes macabre reference to the hunt and the hunted. Elephants here are not inanimate or deceased animals; bizarrely, they are living aesthetic mask-like forms and symbolic representations based upon the cranium of an elephant – a sad indictment on man's need to capture the spirit and freedom of his conquests, in a grotesque display of superiority.

In essence, Geoffrey Ricardo is paying homage to the inherent beauty and structure of the elephant within many surreal variations. Is it a proud rather than pathetic celebration of the animal – or perhaps a sad remnant?

Caroline Field  
April 2007

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Ricardo, Artist's statement, March 2007

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Ricardo, Artist's statement, March 2007

**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES**

Born 1964, Melbourne, Victoria

- 1989-90 Graduate Diploma (Fine Art), Printmaking, Monash University
- 1987-89 Printing Assistant at Bill Young Studios, editioning intaglio prints
- 1988 Full-time Studio Technician at Printmaking Department, Chisholm Institute of Technology
- 1984-86 Bachelor of Art (Fine Art), Printmaking, Chisholm Institute of Technology

**SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

- 2004 'Recent work', BMG Art, Adelaide
- 2003 'The Rapunzel Suite and Other New Works', Australian Works on Paper, Sydney
- Galleries 'Recent works', Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 'Recent works', Cowwarr Art Space, Cowwarr
- 2002 'The Rapunzel Suite', Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Melbourne
- 'Strange Games', Australian Galleries Works on Paper, Sydney
- 1999 'A Dark City Narrative', Australian Galleries, Sydney
- 'A Dark City Narrative', Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- Cullity Gallery, School of Architecture and Fine Art, University
- 1998 Delaney Gallery, Perth
- 1997 Chapman Gallery, Canberra
- BMG Art, Adelaide
- Australian Galleries, Sydney
- Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 1995 Australian Galleries, Sydney
- Australian Galleries, Melbourne
- 1994 University of W.A. of Western Australia
- Graham Galleries and Editions, Brisbane
- 'Wishful Thinking', Prints and Sculptures, The Lawrence Art Gallery,
- Wilson 1992 'Prints, sculptures and watercolours', Australian Galleries, Melbourne and Sydney
- 1990 'Prints, paintings and sculptures', Australian Galleries, Melbourne



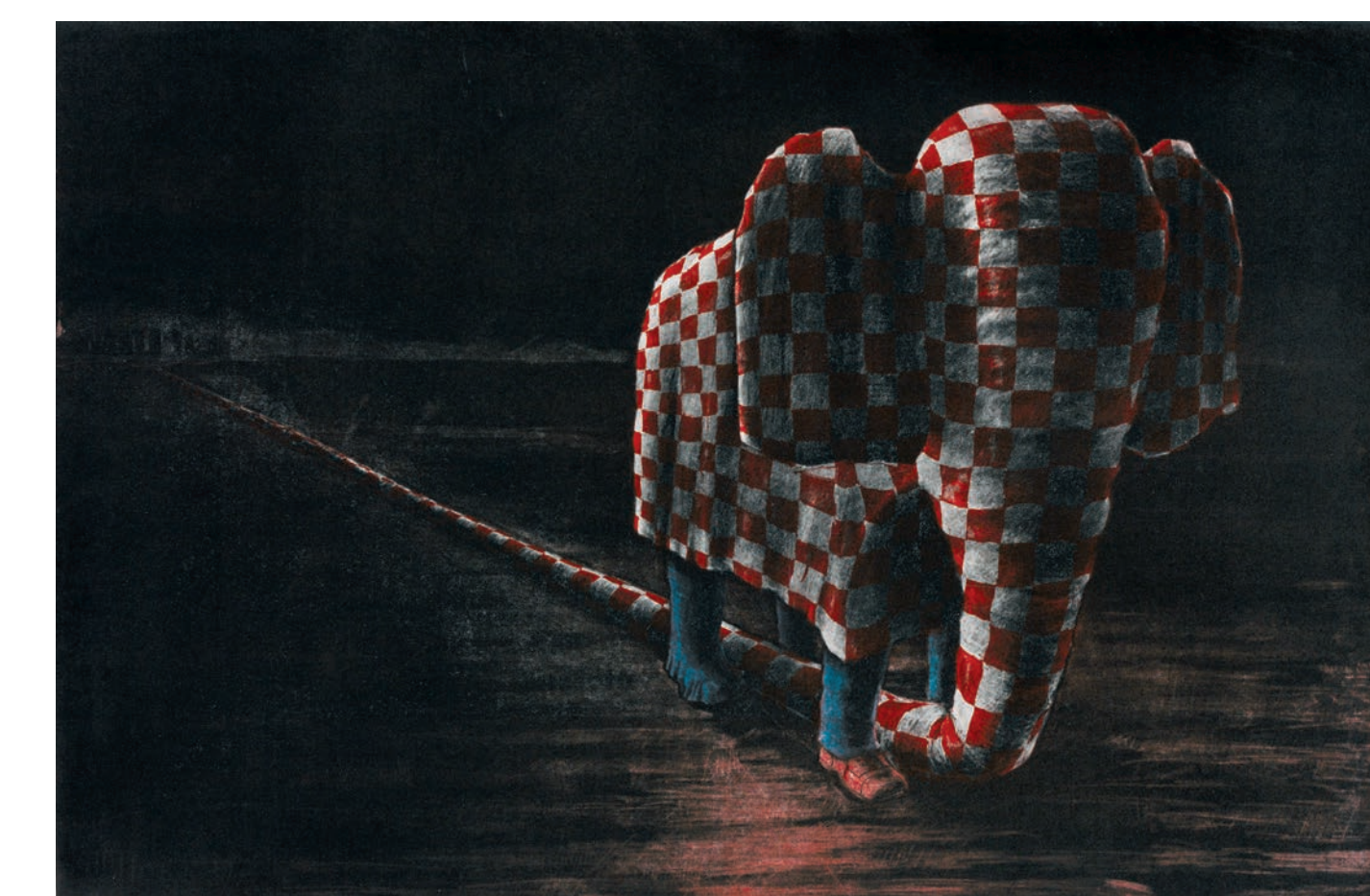
Trophy - sight 2006 patinated copper 133 x 20 x 49 cm



Trophy - leftsided rightside 2006 painted copper 150 x 65 x 88 cm



Trophy - coil 2006 patinated copper 100 x 52 x 64 cm



Longer truths, longer lies 2006 intaglio print edition 20 59.5 x 90 cm