

GEOFFREY RICARDO

The elephant has been a great device or armature for me to explore formal concerns. Changing from two-dimensional to three-dimensional and back and around in an almost cyclical fashion. I use it to experiment with, see what happens when I make it bigger, give it two heads, paint it or patinate it, etch the surface, extend the trunk to become something else – a flag pole perhaps. It's a rack to hang an idea on.

Geoffrey Ricardo, June 2012

Over two decades of creative practice the elephant, a much loved and revered creature, has become an engaging visual device for Geoffrey Ricardo, providing a continual focus for the development of his richly dark and potent imagery.

What began as delicious scribbles and whimsical notations on intaglio plates, have resulted in a series of work in the etched and sculptural medium depicting the elephant form supported by human figures draped in pantomime costume. Encouraging the absurd, Ricardo has extended the bizarre by showing the elephant helplessly swathed in patterned lightweight cloth, thereby creating a narrative garnered with pathos. As the son of a seamstress, woven fabric has warm familial associations of love and protection, while the shrouded figures playfully dance with the artist's acerbic wit and farcical view of the human condition.

Gingham, as a visual motif, has since performed a supporting role for Ricardo resulting in this series' first etching *Elephant Gingham* 1990. He now regularly employs the depiction of checked material as a flag waving reminder and warning not to overstep the mark. Increasingly dismayed by the destructive results of man's drive to dominate nature, and a careless attitude towards the preciousness of the natural world, Ricardo implores man to be judicious in the decimation of elephants and other creatures, especially for something as inane as trinkets and potions.

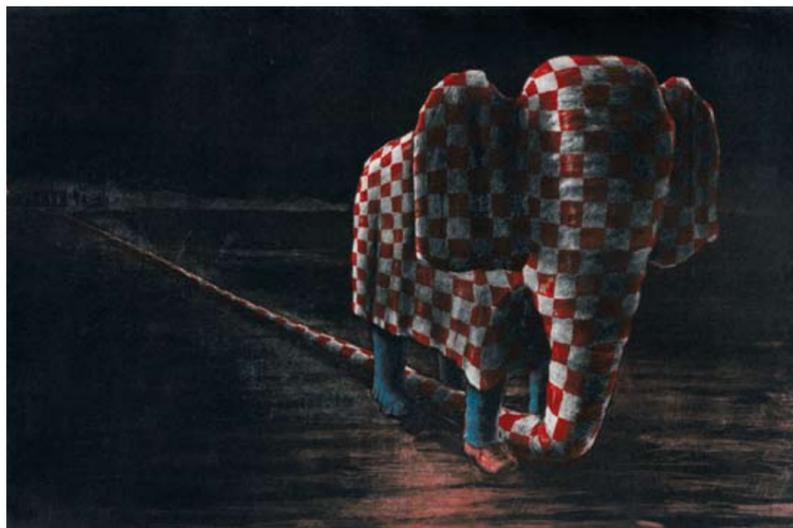
Ricardo enjoys references to the elephant in the common language, exploring themes such as: the elephant in the room, under the rug, the white elephant, elephants don't forget, and elephant man. Developing upon his surreal imagery, the elephant's proboscis is sometimes transformed symbolically into Pinocchio's nose – the tall tale of deception, a representation of the lie, or menacingly manipulated to become the barrel of a gun.

Copper is Ricardo's principle medium. The soft metal not only provides the matrix for his substantial body of work in print, but also for the striking sculptural assemblages that have ensued. It is a malleable and forgiving medium that has streamlined the formal process and presented many creative opportunities for this artist, and in turn influenced the fluid communication of his concerns and ideas.

Caroline Field, July 2012



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Cover: *Obscure* 2012 copper 175 x 115 x 106 cm
Inside cover: Photograph of Geoffrey Ricardo in his studio by Michel Lawrence, 2012

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MELBOURNE ART FAIR 2012
1-5 AUGUST
STAND F33
ROYAL EXHIBITION BUILDING

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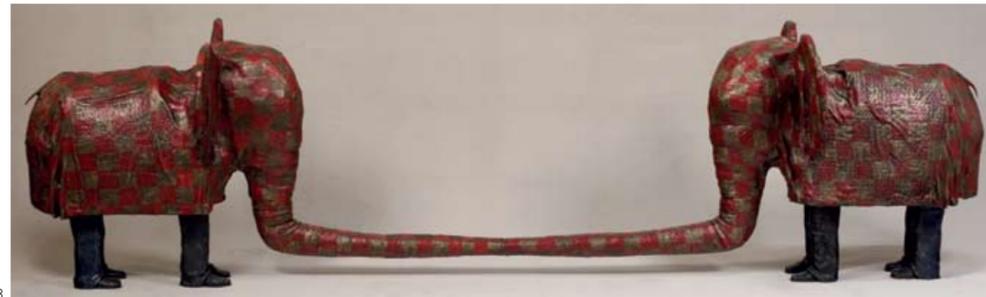
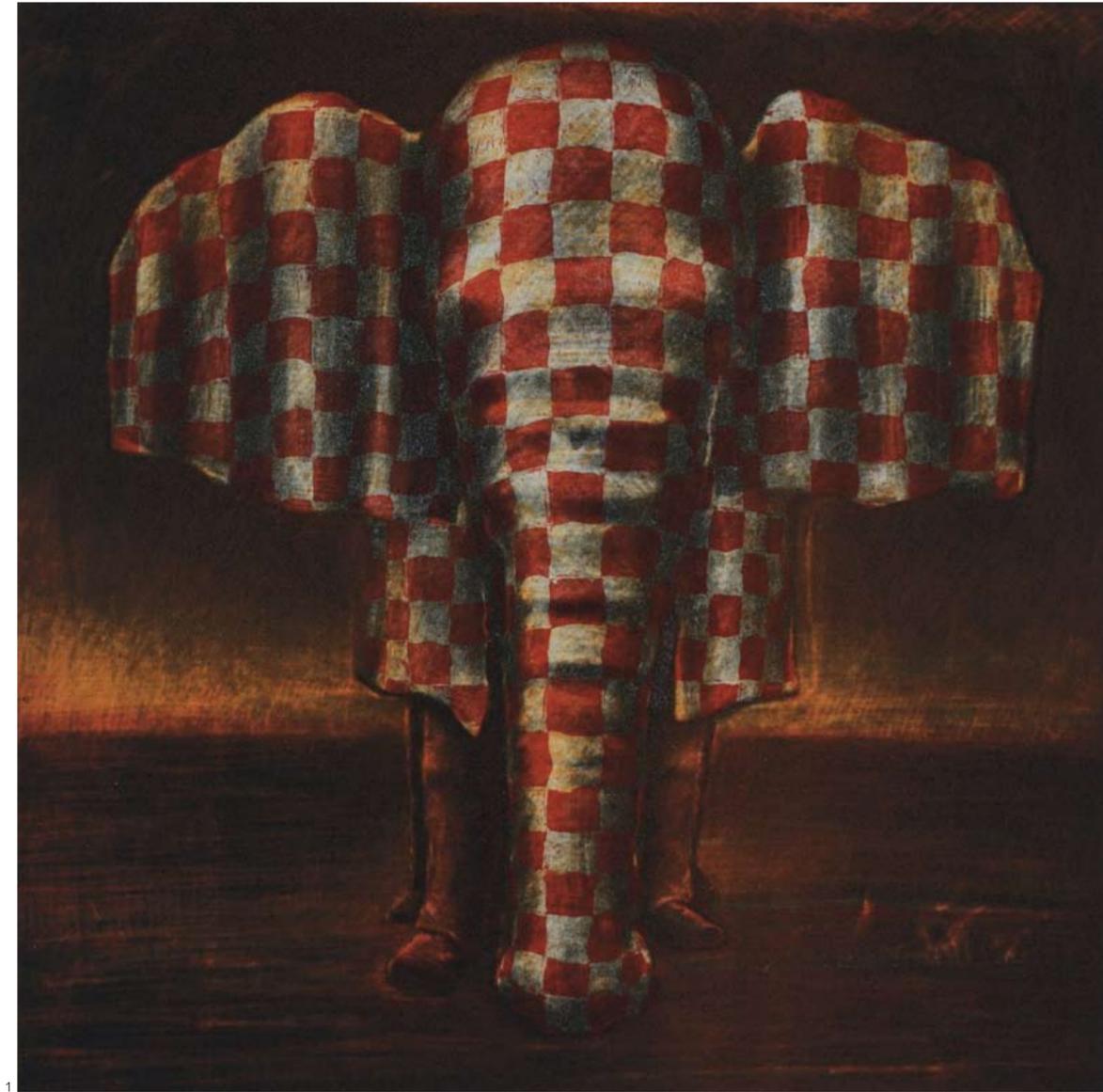
GEOFFREY RICARDO

Melbourne Art Fair 2012
1-5 August
Stand F33

Opening: The Vernissage
Wednesday 1 August
7pm to 10.30pm
Royal Exhibition Building
Carlton Gardens Melbourne

Tickets for the Vernissage available from
Melbourne Art Fair T: 61 3 9416 1516
artfair.com.au

Art Fair hours:
Thursday 2 August 11am to 7pm
Friday 3 August 11am to 8pm
Saturday 4 August 11am to 7pm
Sunday 5 August 11am to 5pm



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|----|-----------------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | <i>Little red lies</i> | 2006 | intaglio print | 44.5 x 44 cm | edition 12 |
| 2 | <i>Headcharge</i> | 2012 | oil on canvas | 71 x 84 cm | |
| 3 | <i>Chinese whispers</i> | 2012 | painting on bronze | 100 x 368 x 90 cm | edition 3 |
| 4 | <i>Front and back</i> | 2007-11 | oil on board | 30 x 83 cm | |
| 5 | <i>The End. The Beginning</i> | 2012 | painting and patinated copper | 290 x 195 x 430 cm | |
| 6 | <i>Tall tales</i> | 2007 | painting and patinated copper | 186 x 103 x 55 cm | |
| 7 | <i>Forwards backwards</i> | 2007 | intaglio print | 30 x 45 cm | edition 75 |
| 8 | <i>Elephant obscurer</i> | 2007 | bronze | 18 x 16 x 18 cm | edition 10 |
| 9 | <i>Longer truths, longer lies</i> | 2006 | intaglio, aquatint and drypoint | 59.5 x 90 cm | edition 20 |
| 10 | <i>Chinese whisper</i> | 2009 | lithograph (diptych) | 56 x 152 cm | edition 15 |