

Heimlich Unheimlich|2021

Heimlich Unheimlich by **Sieglinde KARL-SPENCE** (visual images) and **Hazel SMITH** (text), is an installation of collages and poetry that explores through family photographs the post-World War II period, personal and historical trauma, belonging and migration. It is composed of digitally printed polyester chiffon banners, a multimedia video, and hand-stitched objects reminiscent of body parts. The ambiguous relationship between heimlich and unheimlich (homely and unhomely) underlies the piece, which fictionalises the contrasting childhoods of Sieglinde Karl-Spence (German-Australian) and Hazel Smith (British-Jewish).

Gallery25

Exhibition dates: 6 May - 20 May 2021
CREAtec floor talk: 19 May 2021 12.30pm - 1.30pm
Gallery opening hours: Tuesday to Friday 10:00am - 4:00pm
Building 10, 2 Bradford St, Mount Lawley

For all sale enquiries of works please contact the artists directly via:
hazel.smith@westernsydney.edu.au and karl.spence@optusnet.com.au

ECU Galleries



Sieglinde KARL-SPENCE

spent her childhood years in her native Germany before emigrating to Australia with her family in 1953. She lives in Sydney. Sieglinde trained as a jeweller, graduating in Jewellery and Silversmithing from Middlesex Polytechnic, London in 1978. Since the late 1980s her practice has focused on installation and performance, including works of a site-specific, transitory nature such as Healing Mandala – 365 offerings, Mildura Arts Festival, 1996 and Red Bead Seed Offering, Botanic Gardens, Darwin, 1997.

Sieglinde has exhibited extensively in Australia and internationally, including in the shows Unfamiliar Territory, 1992, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, and Crossing Borders: History, Culture and Identity in Australian Contemporary Textile Art, a major survey of Australian textiles that toured throughout the United States of America. In 2002 Sieglinde was again part of the Adelaide Festival of the Arts, collaborating with chef Gay Bilson to produce the Edible-lei Project at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Adelaide. Sieglinde has taken part in many artist-in-residency projects in Tasmania, often working with the local community. Recently, Sieglinde has focused on making small transient mandala installations. Her work is represented in most of the major galleries in Australia including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, NT; Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania and Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, Sydney, N.S.W. Her website is at <http://sieglindekarl-spence.com.au/>

Hazel SMITH

is a poet, performer and new media artist. She has published four volumes of poetry including The Erotics of Geography: poetry, performance texts, new media works, Tinfish Press, Kaneohe, Hawaii, 2008 (with accompanying CD Rom) and Word Migrants, Giramondo, 2016. She has also published three CDs of poetry and performance work and numerous collaborative multimedia works, including motions, with Will Luers and Roger Dean, selected in 2016 for the Electronic Literature Organisation Collection 3. She is a member of australYSIS, the sound and intermedia arts group, has performed and presented her work extensively internationally, has been commissioned by the ABC to write several works for radio, and has been co-recipient of numerous Australia Council for the Arts grants. In 2017, her multimedia collaboration with Will Luers and Roger Dean, novelling, was shortlisted for the Turn on Literature Prize, an initiative of the Creative Europe Program of the European Union. In 2018 novelling was awarded First Prize in the Electronic Literature Organisation's Robert Coover Award.

From 2007 to 2017 Hazel was a Research Professor in the Writing and Society Research Centre at Western Sydney University where she is now an Emeritus Professor. She is the author of several academic and pedagogical books including Hyperscapes in the Poetry of Frank O'Hara, difference, homosexuality, topography, Liverpool University Press, 2000, The Writing Experiment: strategies for innovative creative writing, Allen and Unwin, 2005 and most recently The Contemporary Literature-Music Relationship: intermedia, voice, technology, cross-cultural exchange, Routledge, 2016. With Roger Dean she co-authored Improvisation, Hypermedia and the Arts since 1945, Routledge, 1997 and co-edited Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts, Edinburgh University Press, 2009. Hazel previously pursued a career as a professional violinist. Her website is at <http://www.australysis.com>

Artist Statement

Heimlich Unheimlich consists of polyester chiffon banners digitally printed with collages and poetry. It also contains hand-stitched objects reminiscent of body parts: these are made of hessian and muslin and are partly wrapped in digitally printed cloth. The exhibition incorporates a multimedia video work, 'Heimlich Unheimlich', created by Sieglinde Karl-Spence, Hazel Smith, Roger Dean and the sound and intermedia group australYSIS.

Heim in German means home, so *Heimlich Unheimlich* can translate loosely as *Homely Unhomely*. However, heimlich more usually means secretive or hidden, while unheimlich means uncanny, so the connotations of the two words can overlap. This relationship between heimlich and unheimlich (discussed in Sigmund Freud's essay 'The Uncanny') underlies the piece.

The installation uses the contrasting childhoods of Sieglinde Karl-Spence and Hazel Smith as a starting point. It focuses on two characters who have names related to different kinds of cloth. One is Hessian, a German girl born towards the end of the Second World War, whose father fought in the German army. She migrates with her family to Australia when she is still a child and eventually becomes an artist. The other is Muslin, who is born into a Jewish family in England after the war. She is a violinist who subsequently becomes a poet and migrates to Australia as an adult. Her parents live in the shadow of the holocaust and are unforgiving of Nazi Germany. Both Hessian and Muslin are shaped by, but also rebel against, the cultural environments in which they grow up.

Heimlich Unheimlich suggests strong crossovers between Muslin and Hessian, intertwining and reconciling their different childhoods. Through the enigma of family photographs, the installation explores the post-war period, the blending of personal and historical trauma in the post-war generation (what Marianne Hirsch calls 'postmemory'), the bonds of ethnicity, belonging and migration.

The exhibition employs photographs from the family albums of Sieglinde Karl-Spence and Hazel Smith. Claire Grocott and Claire Letitia Reynolds were technical assistants and collaborators in the making of the visual images. The graphic design was by Claire Grocott. The artists are grateful to Myra Woolfson and Inge Stocker for their assistance with the translation in 'Walk to the End of Whistling' from English into Yiddish and German.

The photograph 'Boar Lane, looking east, 1951' used in 'Mill of Memory' is reproduced by kind permission of Leeds Libraries, UK, www.leodis.net

The installation was previously exhibited in the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, Gympie, Sydney from October 31st to November 17th, 2020.

- 1** **From Rubble to Reliving**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, 4 banners (read from left to right) polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950*
- 2** **The White Rose**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, 3 banners (read from left to right) polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950
- 3** **The Oriana: From Bremen to Sydney 1953**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950

- 4 **Archive of the Evergreen**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950
- 5 **The Vengeful, Directive Angel**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950
- 6 **Muslin's Lament**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950
- 7 **Mill of Memory**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, 5 banners (read left to right) polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950
- 8 **Gathering**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950
- 9 **Walk to the End of Whistling**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950
- 10 **Heimlich Unheimlich**, 2020, 1.3 x 3m, polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text, \$950
- 11 **Heimlich Unheimlich**, 2020, video combining spoken poetry, visual collages and music with computer processing of the voice and image.

This video includes live audio recorded when australYSIS premiered the piece at the MARCS Institute, Western Sydney University, in 2019, with a studio rendering of its image animation and montage. Many aspects of the piece are variable and are different in each performance: this video represents only one version of the piece. The creators of the work are Sieglinde Karl-Spence (visual images), Hazel Smith (text) and Roger Dean (musical composition and image processing). The performers are Hazel Smith (text), Roger Dean (image processing), Sandy Evans, (saxophone), Phil Slater (trumpet) and Greg White (electronics). The video is available online at the Electronic Literature Organisation's 2020 Virtual Exhibition website:

<https://projects.cah.ucf.edu/mediaartsexhibits/uncontinuity/Smith/smith.html>

- 12 **If**, 2020, body parts made of muslin and hessian hand-stitched with red thread, draped and wrapped in polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text. Dimensions variable. Body parts \$650 and 1.3 x 3m polyester chiffon cloth printed with digitally manipulated images and text \$950.

*The entire set of 20 hangings for Heimlich Unheimlich is \$19,000.

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