

The background of the entire image is a close-up, high-angle shot of water with a vibrant blue color palette. The water's surface is covered in a complex, organic pattern of light and dark blue ripples, creating a textured, almost cellular appearance. The lighting is bright, causing some areas to appear lighter and more reflective, while others are in shadow, emphasizing the undulating nature of the water.

reality check

watching Sylvania Waters

The background of the entire page is a water ripple pattern. The left side is a vertical gradient from white to light blue, while the right side is a solid dark blue. The ripple pattern is most prominent on the left and bottom edges.

reality check

watching Sylvania Waters

10 October – 29 November 2009

Introduction

Michael Rolfe

In many respects *Reality Check: watching Sylvania Waters* has been "in the making" since the early 1990s when, as curator Daniel Mudie Cunningham notes, the Sutherland Shire "went global". Courtesy of a BBC/ABC co-production, *Sylvania Waters* was beamed into the consciousness of television audiences here in 1992 and in New Zealand and the United Kingdom in 1993. Clearly, in the context of Hazelhurst telling local stories, there is none bigger, and certainly none more deliciously composed. Brimful of lifestyle choices and cultural peculiarities, *Sylvania Waters* dragged "the Shire", reluctantly, to a place in television history.

The exhibition includes work by ten commissioned artists/collectives, along with Peter Cooley's 1993 ceramic portraits of Noeline and Laurie Donaher. These artworks are matched with selected episodes from the series, some archival footage and a selection of memorabilia, and reflect a range of art making approaches and media techniques being pursued today.

In looking to connect art and artists to events and stories that have shaped the Sutherland Shire, we see broader opportunities to connect contemporary art with people's experience and knowledge of their everyday. Audience development and community reach remain at the heart of our programming and are extended on this occasion by the production of ABC Television's *Artscape: The Sylvania Waters Project* (airing on ABC1 on 27 October 2009 at 10pm). Directed by Daniel Marsden, this documentary traces *Reality Check*'s development and through conversations with the curator and a selection of artists, it explores ideas, thoughts and featured artworks, culminating in responses and footage from the opening night at Hazelhurst.

As a cultural facility of Sutherland Shire Council, Hazelhurst acknowledges their ongoing support and also that provided by Arts NSW, through their Arts Funding Program. We acknowledge the Hazelhurst Retreat Board, our sponsors, friends and volunteers, and thank ABC Arts & Entertainment for their enthusiasm and wonderful contribution towards the realisation of this project.

Michael Rolfe is Centre Manager/Gallery Director at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre

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Reality Check: watching Sylvania Waters
 Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre
 10 October – 29 November 2009

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 Artists: Mitch Cairns, Carla Cescon, Peter Cooley,
 John A. Douglas, The Kingpins, David Lawrey &
 Jaki Middleton, Luis Martinez, Archie Moore, Ms & Mr,
 Elvis Richardson, Holly Williams
 Curator: Daniel Mudie Cunningham
 Curatorial & Research Assistant: Anna Lawrenson

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PAUL
Sun, surf and a pregnant de facto. Life's dice don't seem to roll Paul's way - and at 26 he still can't cope with Laurie as "Dad."

MICHAEL
Noeline's youngest son. He's having a tough time of it lately - school pressures, Mum, Laurie, and puberty!

MICK
Laurie's junior petrol head, no worries. Loves his wife Yvette's body as much as his and dad's new race car.

DIONE
Dione loves Paul, but what she'd really love is a wedding. Money's tight so maybe after the baby is born.

YVETTE
Mick's wife isn't so keen on her own body and desperately wants to lose weight - or should she just have another baby?

PAT
The neighbour and Noeline's bar room confidant.

LAURIE
Boss Hog (or is he?) Laurie is a mature-age petrol head who loves his toys, and Noeline. Now their castle is built, they plan to marry after 13 years of de facto bliss.

NOELINE
Mum rules the roost - and the bar. As much as she tries to keep her "Brady Bunch" family in harmony, it isn't always so. She loves Laurie.

Could these be your neighbours?

Sylvania Waters AN ENTHRALLING DOCUMENTARY SERIES

AN ABC-BBC CO-PRODUCTION

Ever wanted to know what the neighbours lives are really like? Ever wanted to be a fly on the wall in someone else's home? Well now you can, thanks to a brilliant new documentary series on ABC Television: *Sylvania Waters*. Over a five-month period, a small film crew was able to capture candidly the trials and tribulations of a real family. As you meet Laurie, Noeline and their family, you're not only invited into their homes, you will actually share their lives.

60 YEARS
 ABC TV
 IT'S YOUR NETWORK

PREMIERES TUESDAY 21 JULY 9.30 PM
 IKA/ABC42

"Could these be your neighbours?" [ABC TV *Sylvania Waters* advertisement], *TV Week*, 18 July 1992, p.10
 Courtesy Australian Broadcasting Corporation Library Sales
 Noeline Donaher writes in her book *The Sylvania Waters Diary* (p.52) that this *TV Week* advertisement incorrectly "had my sister Annette captioned as 'Pat the Neighbour'".

Reality Check

Daniel Mudie Cunningham

Reality Check: Daniel Mudie Cunningham

Back in July 1992 when the TV series *Sylvania Waters* first aired on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), the anticipation and excitement stirred amongst my friends and family was unprecedented. It struck a particularly personal chord at the time as I was in my last year of high school and living a mere stone's throw from the affluent suburb of Sylvania Waters – where Laurie, Noeline and Michael resided in their waterfront mansion. In the other direction was Mortdale where Paul and Dione were raising baby Kane in a more ramshackle neck of the woods. My after school job was in a donut shop at Hurstville train station where I caught glimpses of this celebrity world as Paul Baker from the series would buy his regular combo of donuts and coffee, presumably en route to or from his Telecom job. My co-workers and I would do our best not to be wide-eyed with excitement during this recurring low-rent celebrity sighting. (In retrospect, it's tempting to smirk about Paul's homophobic description in episode eight of gay men doing unimaginable things to donuts; clearly as I knew from my then line of work, he enjoyed donuts and had reason to defend them).

Sylvania Waters might have been made for the small screen, but for better or worse it loomed large in the national psyche.

The legacy of *Sylvania Waters* still figured prominently in my mind when I took up the position of curator at Hazelhurst in 2007 – this exhibition was one of the first projects I pitched to gallery director Michael Rolfe while still a new recruit. The Gallery's focus on celebrating artists, stories and historical events of local significance provided the impetus for this sensationally site-specific exhibition examining the impact of *Sylvania Waters* both nationally and internationally. *Sylvania Waters* might have been made for the small screen, but for better or worse it loomed large in the national psyche. It also

figured prominently in the colonial psyche of British audiences, prompting them to reassess their view of Australians, when the show burst onto UK screens in March 1993.¹ In light of the phenomenal global barrage of 'reality' TV shows that have emerged since, *Sylvania Waters* really is a remarkable and unique cultural moment. It is quite possible that this TV show, screened almost twenty years ago, initiated a paradigm shift in how we understand the representation of reality, family, suburbia, class and national identity in contemporary Australian television.

Could these be your Neighbours?

Sylvania Waters came about when the BBC commissioned controversial documentary producer Paul Watson to create a 'fly-on-the-wall' series that documented a modern Australian family, 'warts and all', for a British audience. It was conceived of as a real-life version of *Neighbours* and *Home and Away* – two Aussie soaps that have enjoyed phenomenal success in the UK. The ABC came on board with the BBC as co-producers, assisting in the quest to find the perfect family for the series, and the rest as they say, is history. Five families were shortlisted for the series but the Donaher/Baker clan were ultimately selected after Sylvania Waters housewife Noeline Baker contacted ABC producer Chris Pip to put her family forward. Of the 100 families that applied, clearly the BBC/ABC could see that the Donahers had all the right ingredients for compelling television. On one side was *de facto* couple Noeline and Laurie who resided in their *nouveau riche* canal style mansion and whose hobbies included racing cars and cruising in their luxury boat christened Blasé. They were pitted in contrast to the battler image of Noeline's son Paul and his fiancé Dione, who were expecting a baby any day while making feverish wedding plans despite not being able to afford a fridge. Noeline's cheeky teenage son Michael and the family of Laurie's son Mick were thrown into the mix, along with neighbours and friends as featured extras, and a hit show was born.

What the family didn't think about was how ripe for manipulation they would be in the hands of a documentary producer. The 'reality' of a documentary

is never as real as the unedited banality of life lived off screen and shielded from the voyeuristic scrutiny of a mass viewing public. Surely Noeline didn't expect a Warholian treatment of their lives as seen in *Sleep* (1963) or *Empire* (1964) where Andy Warhol's static, unedited and very long portrayal of a stationary scene comes as close to 'reality' as the real thing? While the Donaher/Bakers were under the impression they would be paid much more money than they were for allowing cameras into their lives for five months, ultimately they agreed to participate thinking the show wouldn't air in Australia and that the portrayal of their lives would be a sunny endorsement of Australian life to the Brits. The family were forbidden from seeing the finished program before it was broadcast nationally on the ABC. They were only granted access to a 20-minute showreel of the series which consisted mostly of crass family feuding. After the screening, Noeline in particular realised how misled she had been for serving her family up for mass scrutiny, ridicule and humiliation.

Having been excluded from seeing the series in advance, the family watched along with the rest of the country when broadcast commenced on Tuesday 21 July 1992. Over the following twelve weeks they witnessed their lives implode in the process. Though Noeline emerged as the star of the series, her fame came at a price as the media consistently ridiculed her. In *The Sylvania Waters Diary* (1993) – Noeline's book-length "apology" for any harm or hurt she may have caused her family or "the people of Australia"² – she remarks that "We had been made the worst spectacle of this century."³ Noeline notes how she was branded a "crass, drunken, loudmouthed, screaming woman" when really she was "just a lanky kid from Inglewood, New Zealand – with big feet, not a big mouth."⁴ This so called documentary was unfolding in the public imagination in sensationalised soap opera terms. "I had to wonder," writes Noeline, "if I had been a character from one of the soaps, would I have received all this criticism?"⁵

Soap Box

The slippage across television genres that occurred with *Sylvania Waters* was further compounded

by the way each member of this real life family had been carefully constructed as 'characters'. As Noeline remarks: "I felt we had been chosen to do a soap series without the actors".⁶ ABC chat show *Couchman* aired an hour-long special about 'soap' on 2 September 1992 where, along with actual Australian soap stars from the time, Paul and Dione were invited to comment about their brush with fame. Ironically, Paul remarks to the live audience how he was often mistaken in the street as the actor who played the character 'Paul' on *Sylvania Waters*.

Andrew Mercado's "Reality Soaps", reprinted here from his book *Super Aussie Soaps* (2004), outlines how *Sylvania Waters* shocked and entertained, at a time when the language of Reality TV had not fully developed. "Reality TV is now a staple on our screens but when it first started, nobody knew quite what to call it" writes Mercado. "Not surprisingly, the first big Aussie reality TV series (*Sylvania Waters*) was called a soap because it had so much in common with its fictional counterparts". Mercado outlines at length how the Donaher/Baker family came to be TV stars, their subsequent treatment by the media and viewing audiences, and the celebrity status they enjoyed for a time after the show first aired.

Academic Joy Hooton believes the series most directly mirrors the domestic sitcom, in that it is constructed "according to a simple, perennially popular outline which often involves nothing more than a 'simple funny "thing"' which happens to a set of characters in an episode".⁷ This structure can be seen in each episode, which is summarised in this catalogue by Anna Lawrenson. Mimicking the popularity of fan-centric episode guides that litter the internet, the 'plot' of each episode is outlined to refresh the collective memory as to what happened each week in the series.

The 'plotting' or 'scripting' of reality, under the auspices of documentary filmmaking, meant that it was difficult to classify *Sylvania Waters* in terms of its genre. At the time, journalists primarily referred to it in relation to soap – classifying it as a 'soapumentary', 'docussoap' or 'kitchen sink drama'. That the family

were repeatedly seen in the kitchen with Noeline ruling the roost, with drink and cigarette in hand from the theatre of the breakfast bar, makes the latter description a perfect fit. The family were often at war with each other, mouthing off racist, sexist, classist and homophobic views on the 'box' in a series confused for a 'soapie', making it the ultimate 'soap box'.

Family Feud

Up until that time a living, breathing Australian family had not been documented on TV in such a way. The show provided cause for heated critique about documentary ethics as well as the politics of representation, seeing that for many, they were being made out to be a 'typical' Australian family for a British audience. The 'fly-on-the-wall' model, upon which *Sylvania Waters* was based, was not however new. In 1973 *An American Family* aired on PBS in the USA, documenting the Loud family from Santa Barbara for several months. When the show finished screening the parents divorced and the son, Lance Loud, came out of the closet.

“The selections... were made on the basis of knowing [Noeline] and of what was on camera. I was the portraitist. I don’t feel guilty about any interpretation we made of her”.

Almost 20 years before Paul Watson produced *Sylvania Waters*, he replicated the format of *An American Family* for UK audiences as seen in *The Family* in 1974. A similar breakdown of that particular nuclear family occurred throughout the course of production and beyond. Fighting against the growing possibility that her own family could derail, Noeline became an outspoken critic of Watson claiming

her family's excessive consumption and constant fighting had been exaggerated through selective and manipulative editing. Watson frequently denied manipulating Noeline and her family's depiction but never denied having an agenda: “[Australia] is the land of opportunity. Let’s look at people who have made their money. After achieving their dream, what happens?”⁸ Elsewhere he is quoted as saying: “The selections... were made on the basis of knowing [Noeline] and of what was on camera. I was the portraitist. I don’t feel guilty about any interpretation we made of her”.⁹ As an “interpretation” surely the truth gives way to creative license, and it seems like Watson knows this better than most despite his reluctance to concede that Noeline might have had a point.

In their scholarly essay on *Sylvania Waters*, Jon Stratton and Ien Ang note: “As television has historically been central to the rhetorical articulation of ‘the family’ in the construction of national imagined community, it is not surprising that it was the perceived (lack of) realism of the series which was the major concern in the reception of *Sylvania Waters* by Australian audiences”.¹⁰ They identify how the Donaher/Baker family are anything but typical because they represent “the explosion of the nuclear family”.¹¹ They are a modern blended family, where two of the three couples were presented living in *de facto* relationships and preparing for marriage. Paul and Dione get married in the second last episode and the final episode concludes with Laurie and Noeline at the airport preparing to fly to Monaco to marry after 13 years of living together.

The constructed character of the family unit and its complex and often explosive interpersonal relationships are based for the most part on class stratification; the supposedly newfound material wealth of Laurie and Noeline and Mick and Yvette is contrasted with the lack thereof for Paul and Dione. But amid the delicious confusion over what the series was saying in terms of genre, ideology, reality and ‘Australian-ness’ the family became paradigmatic of a kind of ‘cultural cringe’ that extends to other excessive or grotesque examples of

Australian popular culture. This was most famously embodied in Barry Humphries’s character Dame Edna Everage, who went on public record in 1992 for being a fan of “Dame Noeline”.¹² That “cringe parties” were held in the Sutherland Shire when *Sylvania Waters* aired, demonstrates that Australians ultimately enjoy laughing at ourselves and how our slipping investment in ‘cultural cringe’ holds more water than mud. (See “Cringe! TV’s *Sylvania Waters* cops heavy flak” from *The St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, reprinted here for comments by Byron Hurst, then Councillor and Chairman of Sutherland Shire’s Tourism Committee and now Chairman of the Hazelhurst Retreat Board, whose views reflected the general attitude felt when the Shire went global via *Sylvania Waters*).

Noeline felt betrayed by Watson, partly because she thought the show would be less concerned with her family's identity specifically. She had been convinced by ABC/BBC executives that the show would be called *The Family* – like the British counterpart – and that their street name, Macintyre Crescent, was not to be divulged. Not only did the media announce their address – which meant their street and private waterways were bombarded with journalists, fans and curious onlookers – the show ended up being called *Sylvania Waters*, which “follows the (predominantly British) soap convention of using the name of a fictional local community to construct a sense of place”.¹³ Clearly *Sylvania Waters* is not a fiction, but its very construction as a canal style “playground for the *nouveau riche*” (as it was repeatedly described in the tabloid media) makes it the perfect stage for the televised blurring of reality and fiction. While the suburb Sylvania Waters is likely to be forever tied to its famous screen portrayal, it has a unique history that is worth briefly outlining because its reclamation during the 1960s as a suburb built around a system of canals was repeatedly couched in terms of how it could construct a particular social class.

The Aquatic Suburb

Developer and builder James Goyen purchased the privately owned Gwawley Bay – the original name

for Sylvania Waters – in 1960, seeing its potential for reclamation as a canal style suburb. The previous owners of the Bay acquired it in 1917 and you can see how the land on Gwawley Bay was subdivided into residential waterside properties in the 1922 Holt-Sutherland House Subdivision map of Sylvania reproduced here. Going further back to colonial times, the Bay’s first recorded non-Indigenous owner was Thomas Holt, a visionary developer and entrepreneur who owned most of Sutherland Shire in the 1860s. Of all his land, Holt saw unique industrial and aesthetic potential in the mangroves of Gwawley Bay, especially for farming oysters in the long canals that he dug in the tidal marshes. Named after the word ‘sylvan’ – meaning “abounding in trees” – Sylvania was thick with trees and scrub that was cleared for the development of a residential suburb that housed Holt’s own 39 bedroom mansion Sutherland House.

If Holt had been alive in the thoroughly modern 1960s instead of the colonial 1860s, it’s certainly possible that he may have shared James Goyen’s more contemporary vision for a canal style residential oasis. Inspired by similar waterway estates in Florida and specifically modelled on the luxurious Florida Keys coast project in Miami, the Sutherland Shire Council approved the plans for the reclamation of Gwawley Bay, with the first sale of some 800 planned homes occurring in 1961. The initial construction of the Bay involved the erection of concrete retaining walls and the use of two million cubic meters of shell-strewn sand to reclaim the mangrove swamps where oysters once grew. Three islands were created: Murray, Barcoo and the horse-shoe shaped James Cook Island with properties that backed out onto privately owned waterways. The suburb, which was now primarily referred to as Sylvania Waters rather than Gwawley Bay, was finished in 1973.

Charles Foreshaw, the chief surveyor of the Sylvania Waters project, told an open meeting at Cronulla in August 1961 that it was the intention of the company to “maintain the area on a middle or better class level” primarily due to fact that properties on the water were architecturally designed.¹⁴ In the infamous

HOLT-SUTHERLAND HOUSE SUBDN SYLVANIA

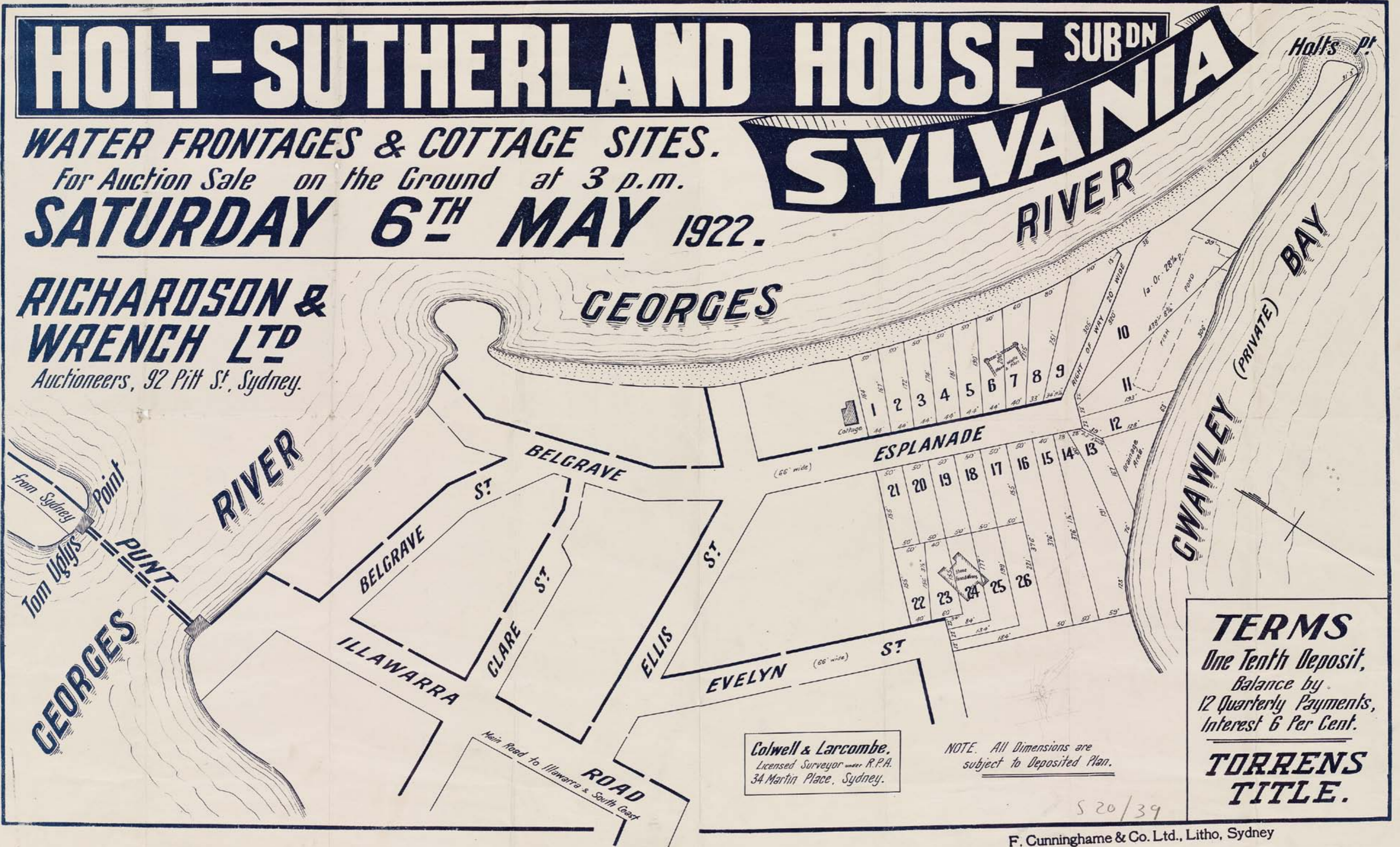
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S 20/39

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Previous page spread: Holt-Sutherland House Subdivision - Sylvania, 6 May 1922 (Call no. Z SP/S20/39)
 Courtesy of Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales
 Above: Unknown photographer, Sylvania Waters, c. early 1960s (Call no. MF1769)
 Courtesy Local Studies Collection, Sutherland Shire Libraries
 Left: Sylvania Waters, Google Earth, 2009

1979 novel and 1981 film *Puberty Blues*, the upper class characterisation of Sylvania Waters made for a memorable pop culture moment. In it the lower class Cronulla kids come to Sylvania Waters to steal the rich kids' milk money, which would be fed into pinball machines at a local milk bar.

Despite the bourgeois standards set by the location, cynics speculated that within 30 years the "aquatic suburb" would become a "slum" as retaining walls occasionally collapsed due to erosion causing cracking in concrete slabs, footpaths, lawns and even the walls of some homes.¹⁵ Thirty years later Sylvania Waters was still intact and about to become firmly ensconced in the public imagination both locally and internationally as the home of the Donaher family. If anything, the "slum" was located on the other side of Tom Ugly's Bridge, where Paul and Dione Baker lived in their less lavish surrounds at Mortdale.

Making Reality Art

The impact of *Sylvania Waters* is undeniable, especially for folks living in the vicinity of the real location, but strangely difficult to measure as it has faded into relative obscurity. It is only occasionally repeated on Australian TV and has never been released on VHS or DVD. Evidence of its impact on TV and film is seen in early sketches of *Kath and Kim*, produced as part of the short-lived sketch comedy series *Big Girls Blouse* (Seven Network, 1994). Through obvious references to *Sylvania Waters*, *Kath and Kim* creators Jane Turner, Gina Riley and Magda Szubanski lovingly caricature the 'bogan' vernacular of Australian everyday suburban life. As Jill Singer writes in the *Herald-Sun*: "the first cashed-up bogans to hit our TV screens were not *Kath and Kim*, but a real-life family featured in ABC TV's 1992 hit series *Sylvania Waters*".¹⁶ (Coincidentally, near Macintyre Crescent in Sylvania Waters is Bogan Street). When *Kath and Kim* was turned into the successful ABC series in 2002, the nods to *Sylvania Waters* were less obvious on the surface. Its use of hand held camera to evince faux doco tableau was everywhere on the small screen as Reality TV had by then fully established itself (the phenomenon of *Big Brother* in Australia only predated *Kath and Kim* by a year).

Another obvious screen homage to *Sylvania Waters* can be found in the popular Australian film *The Castle* (Rob Sitch, 1997), which is narrated by the youngest son of the family in a similarly endearing fashion to Michael Baker's narration of *Sylvania Waters*.

While *Kath and Kim* and *The Castle* are considered classic works of art for many, there are more direct precedents set by visual artists influenced by Reality TV. UK artist Gillian Wearing produced an innovative installation called *Family History* in 2006 that was inspired by the impact Paul Watson's *The Family* and particularly its participant, Heather Wilkins, had on her as child in the 1970s. One part of the installation features a video of talk show host Trisha Goddard interviewing Wilkins about the show and her life after the series. In another room, 1970s domestic life is represented in a video showing a girl cast as young Wearing watching *The Family* on TV in a replica of a dress the artist wore at the time. Another significant UK artist to examine Reality TV is Phil Collins, who for the Turner Prize in 2006 created a project called *The Return of the Real*, where he filmed interviews with Reality TV participants who felt their experience had left them exploited or damaged in some way. Like Noeline Donaher, whose book *The Sylvania Waters Diary* attempted to tell her side of the story, Collins offered traumatised victims of Reality TV a right of reply.

Developed over a two-year period, the exhibition *Reality Check: watching Sylvania Waters* takes its cues from these moments and more. One artwork directly inspired by *Sylvania Waters* at the time was Kathy Golski's portrait of Noeline Donaher, painted for the 1993 Archibald Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. It was well documented in media coverage then that the portrait was not selected for the prize but presented with a "patronising explanation from the gallery, saying that the trustees had not picked the painting but people wanted to see it, '... so here it is'".¹⁷ In a sensational twist, Golski belonged to one of the shortlisted families for the BBC/ABC series that made the Donahers household names. **Peter Cooley** also made ceramic portraits of Noeline and Laurie in 1993, where

like rare specimens they emerge from emu eggs in blackface, in front of a kitsch house decorated with painted media quotes from Noeline. Cooley's ceramics feature in this exhibition along with a maquette of the house (the larger version has since been destroyed). Unfortunately, the whereabouts of Golski's painting is unknown though a reproduction appears in this catalogue.

Ten artists/collectives were commissioned to make new work responding to *Sylvania Waters* and invited to undertake a residency at Hazelhurst throughout 2009 to assist in the development of the work. For research purposes the ABC generously granted access to episodes of the series, as well as archival media material that included news and current affairs segments pertaining to the show. The artistic outcomes interpret *Sylvania Waters* from various perspectives and in ways that reveal how visual arts practice often blurs with popular forms of media and entertainment.

John A. Douglas grew up in the Shire and recalls how his family considered moving to *Sylvania Waters* when he was a child, but they settled in Engadine instead. In *Ask Noeline... (not the ogre)* Douglas revisits his fandom of the series by contemplating Noeline as the first casualty of Reality TV in Australia. Through selective editing he reveals qualities in Noeline that were somehow missed in the series. In reference to *Sylvania Waters* homes being "awash with the swimming pools"¹⁸ as conspicuous status symbols dotting its artificial shoreline when viewed from above, Douglas's video installation depicts Noeline's face like an apparition fading in and out of the chlorinated water accompanied with sound edits that see her as caring mother or advice columnist offering her wisdom and experience with us.

For art collective **The Kingpins**, Noeline is also their point of fascination because they see her as an exemplary figure of "female masculinity". Noeline may be an alpha matriarch at heart, but she also engages in the normative performance of feminine styling needed to keep up one's appearance. The Kingpins pick apart and question the 'realness' of

Noeline's complex gender coding across various media forms through the inventive use of bodily veneers and prosthetics such as false nails and wigs and the brands and logos consumed in the series.

Carla Cescon examines Noeline as a conduit for the way family communication is performed in the series, showing how all information and communication is filtered through her. The installation *Camps and outposts, an exercise with communication* presents a scaled down kitsch (or perhaps 'camp') replica of Noeline in her kitchen, which via a walkie talkie sitting on the shelf, acts as a portal for communication with two 'outposts' situated in the Hazelhurst garden. Both outposts represent Noeline's children, with one being dedicated to Michael and the other to Paul and Dione. Viewers can interact with the outposts by using walkie talkies to communicate with the 'mother camp' located in the gallery.

By observing how family and interpersonal dynamics are constructed in the series **Mitch Cairns** identifies material and behavioural differences between various family members. By wryly referencing Paul's exclusion from family boating trips, Cairns's painting *Big Jobs, Dig Deep* reflects on how Noeline and Paul's relationship is dominated by their perception of labour and how hard one works for what they have. Sculptural work *Lazy Susans/Bistro Foood* refers to the politically incorrect understanding of race relations in *Sylvania Waters*, which during the early 1990s coincided with the emergence of the term 'multiculturalism'. Through an exaggerated stack of masonite Lazy Susans, Cairns reveals how systemic these attitudes still are today.

The Macintyre Crescent mansion in which the Donaher family lived was the key inspiration for **Luis Martinez**. As source material for a meticulously detailed pencil drawing, Martinez photographed the exterior of the house (meeting the current owner in the process) and matches this drawing with another of the Cabramatta house where he resided while the series was on TV in 1992. Martinez also contributes three paintings based on stills from *Sylvania Waters* where the families are

seen watching TV. Martinez shows how television went from being a relaxing activity to a damaging invasion of their reputations and privacy in the media frenzy they endured at the time.

The world's more interesting with you in it by **David Lawrey & Jaki Middleton** re-creates the *Sylvania Waters* house as a miniaturised three-dimensional scale model. Recessed into the gallery wall, the model references anthropological museum display conventions, where important historical events and scenes from the natural world are represented. By rendering the famous house in this way, comparisons are drawn between the voyeurism of the family experienced with the ironic manner in which these constructed worlds are intended to depict animals in their natural environment – but are by design highly manipulated. The artists appear in the work as ghostly figures that intermittently appear and disappear around the house, haunting the implied inhabitants. The 'ghosting' is achieved by employing an effect called Pepper's Ghost where an object is reflected into the scene through the use of reflective glass and specific lighting.

Archie Moore also uses the Pepper's Ghost effect in *Doppelgänger*, a video installation informed by how concepts of reality and representation were contested in relation to the production and reception of *Sylvania Waters*. Through direct participation with a live camera stream, a viewer sees their image manipulated onscreen to grotesque effect. Moore poses questions relating to identity and identity theft, the relationship of public to private, and the debates over the ownership of the individual's image once it has been digitised.

Most contemporary Reality TV shows entertain by incorporating game show elements to force participants into direct competition with one another. 'Reality' it seems is best staged in an arena where the stakes for being a winner are high, as most participants end up losers. **Holly Williams** uses the concept of family as a game by using the iconography of *Sylvania Waters* to create a new version of the popular card game *Happy Families*.

Williams also presents *Family Feud*, where publicity stills of the Donaher/Baker family are incorporated into the found board game box to ironically show how *Sylvania Waters* constantly pitted family members against each other. Paul is not depicted on the box because he always claimed to be excluded from the family.

An exciting aspect of *Reality Check* is that it brings together artworks alongside the very archival material that has helped shape it. **Ms & Mr** (Richard & Stephanie nova Milne) are an artist couple who through "Retroactive Collaboration" manipulate their personal archive to create alternate realities and parallel universes where both artists interact with each other's former archival selves. For this exhibition, Ms & Mr apply these principles of alternate realities by casting one of the families that were shortlisted to star in what became *Sylvania Waters*. The Archibald Family of Glebe become the conduit in Ms & Mr's work to explore what happens when known history collides with glitches from a parallel world.

Delving into personal and media archives also guides the work of **Elvis Richardson**. For the Hazelhurst garden billboards, the artist has created images that reference the popular media format of the time – VHS – as a way of showing how archives are constructed to reflect fact as well as fiction. Anagrams of "Sylvania Waters" are used to title the VHS spines in much the same way you might keep taping over the same program, revealing something about how an archive is never complete and is as self-generating as the self-obsessed stuff we call Reality TV.

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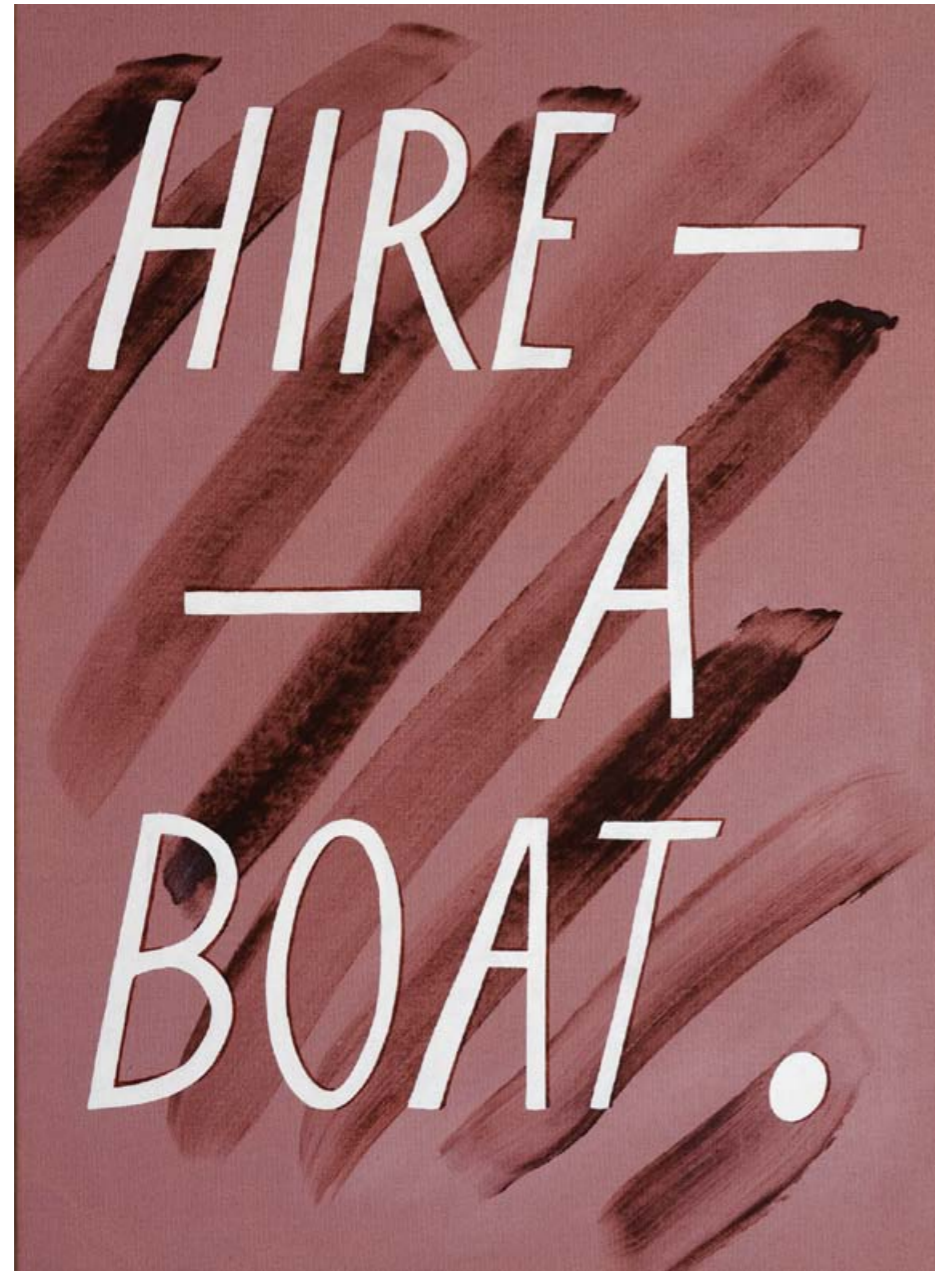
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reality check

watching Sylvania Waters

Mitch Cairns | Carla Cescon
John A. Douglas | The Kingpins
David Lawrey & Jaki Middleton
Luis Martinez | Archie Moore | Ms & Mr
Elvis Richardson | Holly Williams



Big Jobs, Dig Deep 2009
acrylic and ink on linen
84 x 61 cm
Courtesy the artist & BREENSPACE, Sydney
Photo: Silversalt



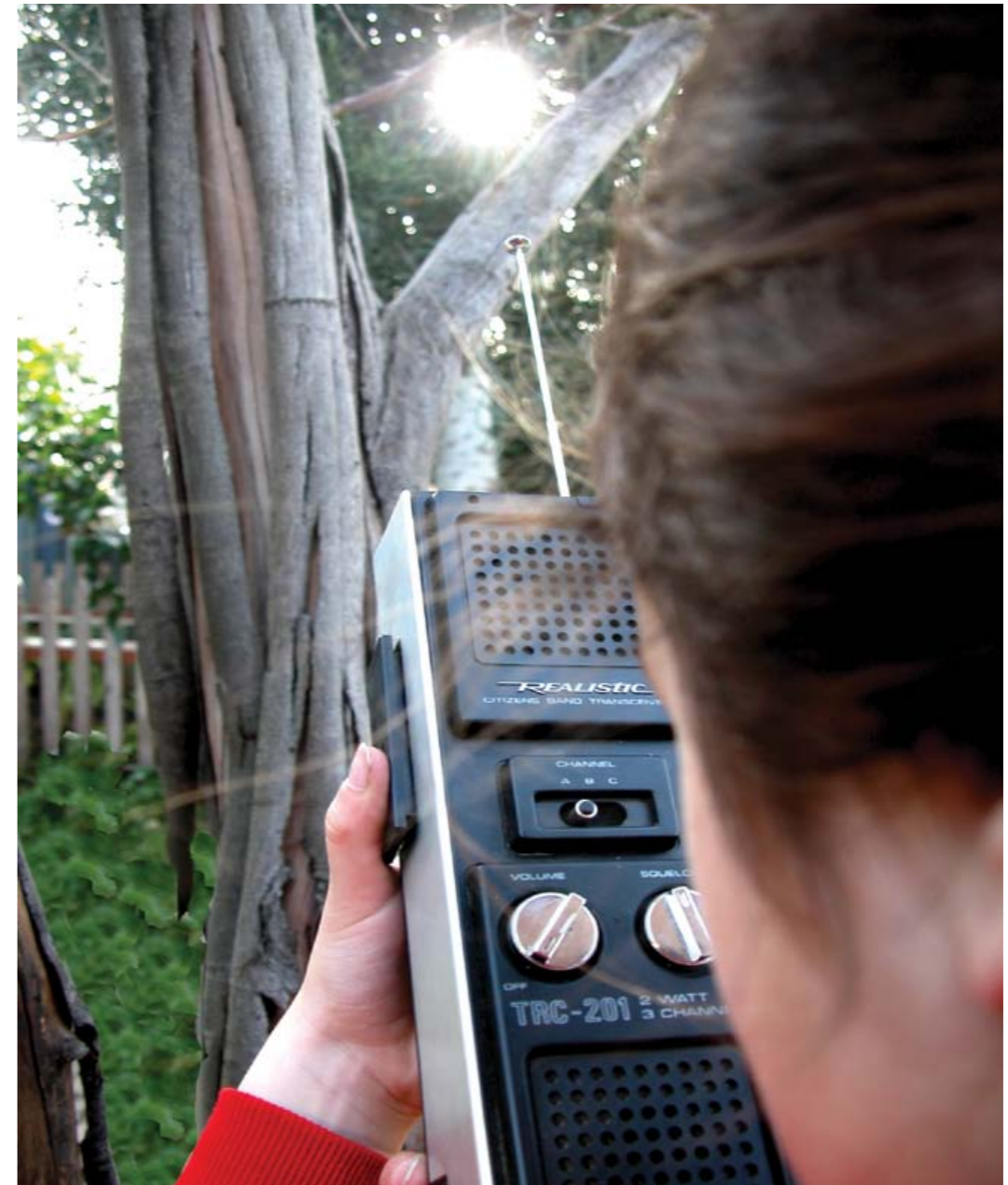
House Sitting 2009
acrylic and ink on linen
84 x 61 cm
Courtesy the artist & BREENSPACE, Sydney
Photo: Silversalt



Carla Cescon



Michael Outpost/exterior 2009
two way radio, mixed media
160 x 60 x 60 cm
Courtesy the artist



Michael Outpost/exterior 2009
two way radio, mixed media
160 x 60 x 60 cm
Courtesy the artist



Mother Camp/interior 2009
study drawing and digital collage for installation
10 x 15 cm
Courtesy the artist

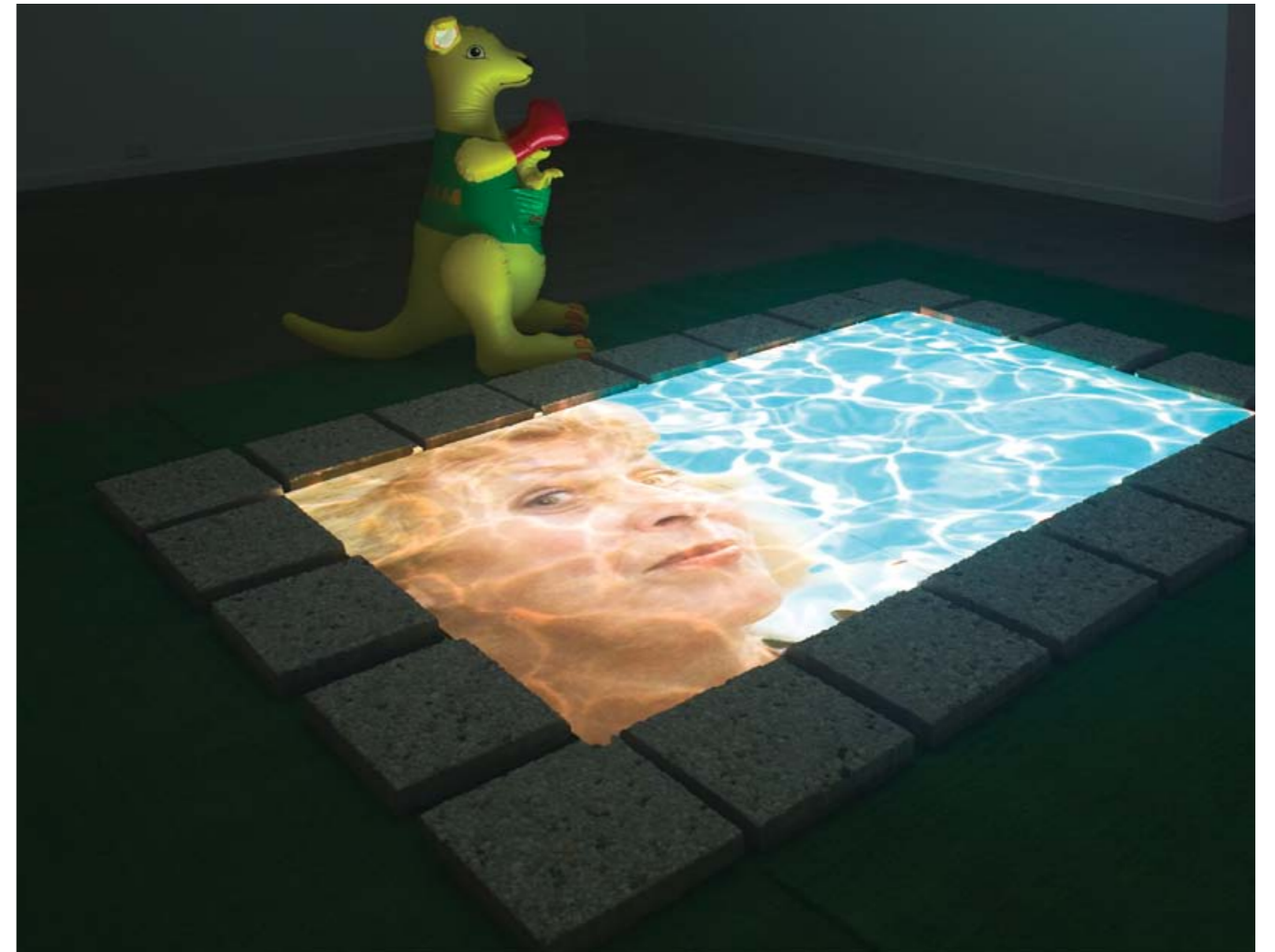


Mother Camp/interior 2009
study drawing and digital collage for installation
220 x 200 x 60 cm
Courtesy the artist

John A. Douglas



Ask Noeline... (not the ogre) 2009
pebblecrete and concrete pavers, artificial grass, inflatable plastic, polystyrene, HD pro res video, sound
8 meters squared (approx)
Courtesy the artist & Chalk Horse, Sydney
Installation photo: Silversalt



Ask Noeline... (not the ogre) 2009
pebblecrete and concrete pavers, artificial grass, inflatable plastic, polystyrene, HD pro res video, sound
8 meters squared (approx)
Courtesy the artist & Chalk Horse, Sydney
Installation photo: Silversalt



The Kingpins



Survival of the fittest 2009
digital illustration
Courtesy the artists & Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



Megadeath (detail) 2007
synthetic hair
dimensions variable
Courtesy the artists & Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



Unstill Life 2009
photographic study for mixed media installation
Courtesy the artists & Kaliman Gallery, Sydney
Photograph: Jordon Graham

David Lawrey & Jaki Middleton



The world's more interesting with you in it 2009
photographic study for installation
Courtesy the artists



The world's more interesting with you in it 2009
photographic study for installation
Courtesy the artists

Luis Martinez



Macintyre Crescent 2009
graphite pencil on Stonehenge paper
45 x 76 cm
Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney



St Johns Road 2009
graphite pencil on Stonehenge paper
45 x 76 cm
Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney



'But that's not the answer either' 2009
oil on canvas
95 x 125 cm
Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney



The artist working in the studio on
'Have you got the TV off for any reason Yvette? It's like a morgue in here' 2009
oil on canvas
95 x 125 cm
Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney

Archie Moore

Doppelgänger 2009
study for installation
Courtesy the artist





Sylvania Wandjina, 2009
study for paper sculpture
Courtesy the artist



Archie Moore

Ms & Mr





Screen Tests 16.08.09 2009
Ms. & Mr. discuss alternate realities, Glebe and 1992 with the Archibalds,
an alternate family who were considered for the show
research photographs
Courtesy the artists & Kaliman Gallery, Sydney



Screen Tests 16.08.09 2009
Ms. & Mr. discuss alternate realities, Glebe and 1992 with the Archibalds,
an alternate family who were considered for the show
research photographs
Courtesy the artists & Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

SYLVANIA WATERS

AREA VASTLY WINS

ANALYSTS WAIVER

NASAL ARTY VIEWS

SAW REALITY VANS

TV ALWAYS IN ERAS

NEWS STAY A RIVAL

ARENAS WAVY LIST

YAWNERS VITALS

AIR WAVES SLANTY

AWARE TV SAYS NH

VAINER LAWS STAY

NAIVE LAWS STRAY

TEARS VAINLY SAW

TV ANSWER AILSYA

YAWN LESS VIA ART

ISWAY TV ARSENAL

ELVIS RANTS AWAY



Family Feud 2009
1989 Family Feud board game box, purchased from St Vincent de Paul, Miranda for \$3
24 x 49 x 6 cm
Courtesy the artist
Photo: Silversalt

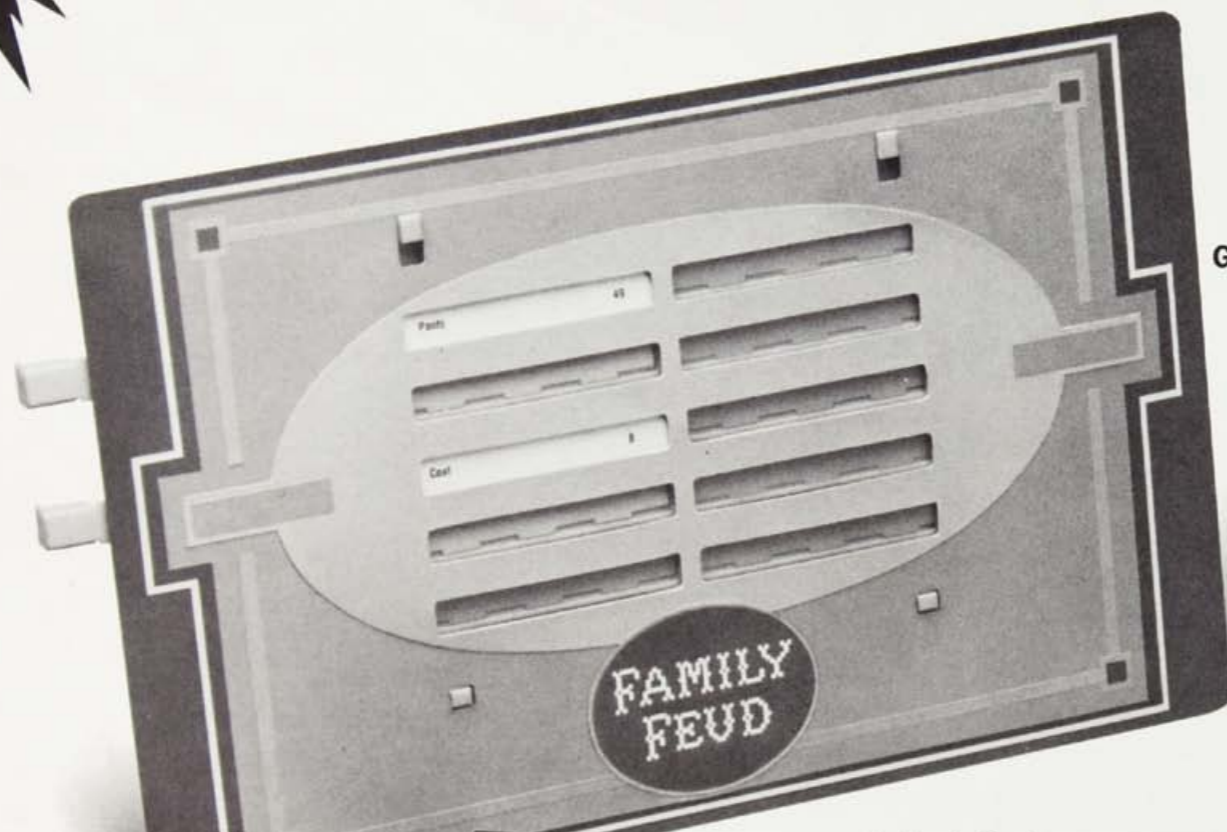
66/3900

FAMILY FEUD™

GAME

Based on the hit TV game show!

Match the most popular survey answers and win!



Game Console

Fast Money Bonus Round Scoring Sheets (Not Shown)

Game Sheet Pad for 60 games in all!

Survey says... fun for everyone! Based on the hit TV game show, the Family Feud home game challenges players to match their answers with the most popular survey answers to win!

One hundred people were surveyed. Their top answers are on the board...

First, there's the *Face-Off* where a question is read to one player from each team. The first player to respond with the most popular answer wins control of the board for their team.

Then get ready for the *Feud* where players try to match all the survey answers on the board so their team can move on to...

The *Fast Money Bonus Round*! Two players from the winning team try and match the most popular survey answers to five questions and win \$5000 in play money!

The player or team with the most money after three games wins!

LOTTO'S \$12 MILLION ANNIVERSARY SUPERDRAW WEEK



Laurie and Noeline help celebrate

Television's most talked-about couple, Laurie and Noeline Donaher from Sylvania Waters, are regular Lotto players.

They are currently featuring in Lotto's new commercial having a heated debate over which numbers to select – number 31 or 32.

Noeline says Lotto has been "part of the family" for years. She has been playing since the game started 13 years ago.

"I nearly own Lotto," Noeline joked. "I spend \$100 a week on two System 9s and two Standard entries.

"Laurie spends \$40 and goes halves in one of the Systems each week."

Noeline says she uses the numbers each week that have been lucky for her over the years. "I got five numbers and a supplementary eight years ago and won over \$3,000. But I'll probably have to add numbers 31 and 32 from now on," she said.

The Donahers are hopeful some Lotto luck will fall their way in the Superdraw.

"After all," says Noeline, "who wants to be just a millionaire when there's \$12 million up for grabs!"

FREQUENCY AND COLOURS

Everyone has their lucky numbers but when it comes to Lotto, number 5 is the most commonly drawn number.

Following is a frequency chart for the top ten numbers drawn in Lotto Monday and Thursday Draws from November 5, 1979 to September 21, 1992 (first six numbers only not including supplementary numbers).

Number	Times drawn
5	192
14	178
25	177
38	173
12, 32, 40	172
3	169
29	168
4	167

On April 24, 1989 Lotto introduced four additional numbers and this is how often they have come out:

41	42
42	43
43	38
44	62

For those of you who have lucky colours, following is a frequency chart for the colours drawn in Lotto Monday and Thursday Draws from November 5, 1979 to September 21, 1992.

Red	1625
Lime	867
Orange	861
Yellow	843
Lilac	799
Blue	793
Green	867

(NB: There are twice as many red balls)

Reality Soaps

Andrew Mercado

Reality TV is now a staple on our screens but when it first started, nobody knew quite what to call it. Not surprisingly, the first big Aussie reality TV series was called a soap because it had so much in common with its fictional counterparts. *Sylvania Waters*, which premiered in 1992, had romance, drama and a bitch everybody loved to hate, and eventually paved the way for other reality soaps such as *Big Brother* and *The Block*. But was it a documentary, soapumentary, docusoap or real-life soap opera?

The Louds of Santa Barbara, California, had become the first family to let television cameras into their homes in 1973. Ten million viewers were astounded at the developments over 12 episodes of *An American Family*. Not only did parents Bill and Pat Loud decide to divorce on-camera, but 19-year-old son Lance became the first gay person to ever come out on American television. Before dying in 2000, Lance famously declared that TV "ate" his family, and in particular, "feasted" on him. Across the Atlantic, documentary maker Paul Watson unveiled his own version, *The Family*, in 1974. Britain was fascinated by the working-class Wilkins family in what was described as a 'fly-on-the-wall' documentary serial. When mother Margaret later split from her husband, producer Watson and the UK tabloids were accused of breaking up her family.

In 1991, still flushed with the ongoing success of *Neighbours*, the BBC decided to make a real-life version of the hit Aussie soapie, so they recruited Watson to head down under and work his magic again. The ABC, at this time trying to be more competitive against Australia's three commercial networks, saw the potential of the controversial BBC idea and came on as co-producers. *Sylvania Waters* researcher Chris Pip would later admit in *The Age* that "the brief was clear. We were making a series to go back to back with *Neighbours*".

The ABC began to advertise for their real-life Ramsay Street saga: "Any dramas in your house? We are looking for ... a lively family with something to say, who are willing to let us into their lives ... better than a soapie, this is real life". Chris Pip even went onto 2KY

to talk up the concept, and it was this interview that proved fateful for one NSW housewife.

Noeline Baker lived in the southern Sydney suburb of Sylvania Waters, along with *de facto* Laurie Donaher, daughter Joanne and teenage son Michael. In her book *The Sylvania Waters Diary*, written in 1993 after the show had been aired, Noeline admitted thinking that her family fitted the bill, especially when she thought she heard "the amount of a million dollars mentioned". She spoke to Chris Pip and suggested they "should be the family to show the British how lucky we were to live in Australia".

Chris Pip arranged to meet Noeline's clan, which also included Noeline's son Paul and his pregnant girlfriend Dione, who lived nearby. Laurie also had a son, Mick, married to Yvette, with two small girls of their own, Kristy and Lisa. After auditioning the family, Pip told the Bakers and Donahers that her bosses were "besotted" with them and Paul Watson wanted to meet them. "Everyone in the family was very intrigued, and yes, a sense of stardom had hit most of us", Noeline wrote. "We were going to be on television! Bear in mind that we thought we would be getting this huge amount of money and become instant movie stars. Oh dear, how stupid and naïve it was when I look back on it now".

**"Any dramas in your house?
We are looking for ... a lively family
with something to say,
who are willing to let us into
their lives ... better than a soapie,
this is real life".**

Paul Watson and BBC directors Kate Woods and Brian Hill took the family out to dinner the night before filming started so they could meet everyone

"Laurie and Noeline help celebrate"
[Lotto's 12 Million Anniversary Superdraw Week advertisement],
Sun Herald: This Week (supplement), 25 October 1992, p.23
Courtesy New South Wales Lotteries

in the crew. The whole deal nearly fell apart when Laurie discovered they were to be paid just \$10,000 (although the family eventually received \$13,999). Laurie's gut reaction was to call the whole thing off, but the others were in too deep (with stars in their eyes) to pull out at such a late stage. After being reminded that the television exposure might help in getting a sponsor for his racing car, Laurie relented and decided to "accept the challenge". Noeline's daughter Joanne remained unconvinced and, demanding never to be seen on camera, packed up and moved away that night. Filming began the next morning, 6 December 1991.

Like lambs to the slaughter, the family faced the constant glare of television cameras for the next five months. They become friendly with the cameramen

“... Meet Australia's new ambassadors: a family whose members are variously materialistic, argumentative, uncultured, heavy drinking and acquisitive”.

and sound guys, and only occasionally objected to having certain incidents filmed, although they later claimed they were reassured such scenes would never be used. At other times they were led to believe the cameras weren't rolling. While they thought their conversations were innocent, history would prove that they were jaw-dropping enough to stop the nation. And to make sure the chit-chat stayed controversial, Noeline wrote later, director Kate Woods "began setting up scenes, which might start with a question to keep the conversation going, like: 'Do you think there are too many Asians in Australia?'" Stupidly, they were only too happy to answer.

Critics would later question whether it had been ethical to describe the series as a documentary, given that the filmmakers "regularly intervened in the family's lives, asking them to do things which they sometimes felt were out of character". Over a hundred hours of footage was filmed before it was all edited down to 12 half-hour episodes. Each show had a theme like 'Sex', 'Arguments' and 'Alcohol', but it soon became apparent these topics would be constantly referred to throughout the entire series.

Although the Bakers and the Donahers requested (and later demanded) to see every episode before it went to air, they never did see one until it screened each Tuesday night, along with the rest of the country. The only footage they were permitted to see was a 20-minute promotional reel, which consisted mostly of Noeline "ranting and raving". To her horror, she also discovered that teenage son Michael had been secretly taping the show's narration from the privacy of his bedroom. As publicity heated up for the series premiere, Noeline learnt that *The Family* was now to be known as *Sylvania Waters*. Finally, the penny dropped. "The show was not going to be what we had expected."

Sylvania Waters exploded across Australian screens on 21 July 1992 at 9.30pm. *The Daily Telegraph Mirror* predicted that by 10pm "the family will probably be cringing in their pastel living room, wondering why on earth they participated. Judging by the scenes of drinking, racism, jealousy and bickering, the welcome mat outside their canal-front home soon will disappear. This is not going to be a glossy portrait of the Australian good life. Rather, it shapes up to be a vicious putdown of the *nouveau riche* – tailor-made for British audiences". Just to make sure that Aussies got the picture, the paper went on to explain that close friend Trish Wick was "puffing on a menthol cigarette at her front door" while defending her next door neighbours.

Richard Glover, writing for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, also felt the British filmmakers were pandering to clichéd Aussie stereotypes. "In Noeline and Laurie, every British preconception about the Aussies

comes alive ... Meet Australia's new ambassadors: a family whose members are variously materialistic, argumentative, uncultured, heavy drinking and acquisitive". Brisbane's *Courier Mail* thought it all simply dreadful: "Big-mouth, bad-taste real soap is really awful".

By the next morning, Noeline was being described around the country as "a racist, a drunk and a crass blonde", and those were the nice ones! Noeline had opened the series "ranting" and "raving". "Gawd, strewth, Lawrie, one of these days I'll pack me bloody bags and I'm going out of here. There's more drama living in this house than living out of it!" Drama was certainly the word for it.

Deep family rifts were exposed from the first night. At the core was surfie son Paul who resented, and had never accepted, petrol-head Laurie coming into his mother's life. Straightaway, a social divide had been revealed, accentuated each week with exterior shots of Noeline and Laurie's house (million dollar canal-front mansion) before cutting away to Paul and Dione's house (fibro shack on noisy main road). There hadn't been a juicier comparison since the well-to-do Hamiltons and the working-class Palmers traded barbs on *Sons and Daughters*.

Viewers lapped it up, with the first episode scoring a 20 in the ratings. This was an outstanding result for the ABC and they continued to milk the controversy, particularly through their own current affairs shows, for the rest of the series' three-month run. After the fourth episode had aired, Noeline was horrified to read that she was being described by the press as a "brassy bottle-blonde who watches all the soap operas". Bottle-blonde she could take, but Noeline felt the need to set the record straight in her diary afterwards: "I don't watch this sort of stuff. Laurie and I did watch a few episodes of *Chances* but it became a little bit over the top".

Ironically, the success of *Sylvania Waters* would damage *Chances*' ratings by airing directly opposite Nine's sexy (but struggling) soap. And despite her denials, Noeline now did feel that her "innocent family"

had indeed "been chosen to do a soap series without the actors". *Chances* might have been too over the top for her, but she and Laurie were too down to earth. They were just regular Aussies ... who didn't much care for foreigners.

Night one had revealed Noeline's feelings about Asians ("The dreaded yellow peril! I reckon they should go back to their own country and stay there"). A few weeks later, Noeline hired a "very large, black, Negro stripper" to perform at a party and Laurie could barely contain his disgust ("They smell. They stink"). Surfie son Paul kept his views on non-Aussies to himself, but let it rip about what he thought of homosexuals ("Each to their own, but it makes me sick, it makes me angry. That's where AIDS seems to be spreading at the moment. I think they're punching too many donuts without condoms on").

Just as the second-last episode was going to air, Australia's deputy prime minister and federal minister for health, Brian Howe, dropped a clanger while speaking at a health conference in Canberra: "Noeline admits she has a drinking problem, wants to give up smoking, has a close relationship with the TAB, and is constantly vacillating between Gloria Marshall [weight clinic] and cream-cakes". Noeline was furious and demanded that he apologise. When he did, she scoffed that it was a 'standard' letter of apology and that he should have "apologised to me personally".

The Donahers and the Bakers had now hired former *Neighbours* publicist Brian Walsh to handle their growing media commitments. The Howe incident got Noeline onto Nine's *A Current Affair*, charming host Jana Wendt in the process. Paul and Dione became favourites of ABC youth radio station Triple J and the entire family agreed to allow cameras from *Hard Copy* to film their reactions to the screening of the final episode. Reporter Renee Brack was instructed to get the family to "exhibit every emotion possible",

Viewers lapped it up, with the first episode scoring a 20 in the ratings.

and on cue, Noeline cried as the credits of the final episode began to roll.

Brian Howe's attack upon Noeline was a turning point for the beleaguered mum. For once, the positive letters finally outweighed the negative ones. "I have been watching *Sylvania Waters* from the start", wrote Sheila from Moonee Ponds, "and have become increasingly appalled at the hostility generated at you in particular. I've been prompted to write because of the unbelievable speech by Brian Howe. The Labor Party is supposed to represent the working class, not treat them as a lower species. I believe you are a very typical Australian family who work hard and earn your enjoyment. Of course you haven't got a drinking problem – if you have, then most of the country has".

Moonee Ponds' most famous son (and sometimes daughter) also weighed in on the debate. Barry Humphries, in town to promote his autobiography, told *The Daily Telegraph Mirror* that "Howe's mistake, poor man, is that he didn't know whether he was talking about a real person or Mrs Mangels [from *Neighbours*]. The borderline between fiction and fact is becoming very blurred, particularly in Australia, with the dreamtime in which we all live". Humphries went on to call for Noeline to be included in the next Queen's honours list. "Move over Dame Edna! Here comes Dame Noeline! Edna must look to her laurels with a new housewife megastar in the pipeline, ready to step into her slingbacks".

“Of course you haven't got a drinking problem – if you have, then most of the country has”.

Noeline's 'drinking problem' was blamed on the fact that "the crew came to our house most afternoons at about 4pm, and I do have a drink with Laurie before dinner". Not to mention after dinner, on the boat and at the airport, as the happy couple boarded a plane in the final episode to fly to Monaco and get married. *The Courier Mail* noted that "several fistfuls of drinks are consumed at the airport and ... just in case the unsuspecting

Europeans don't realise Laurie is an Australian, he is wearing an Akubra hat and a green and gold tracksuit top".

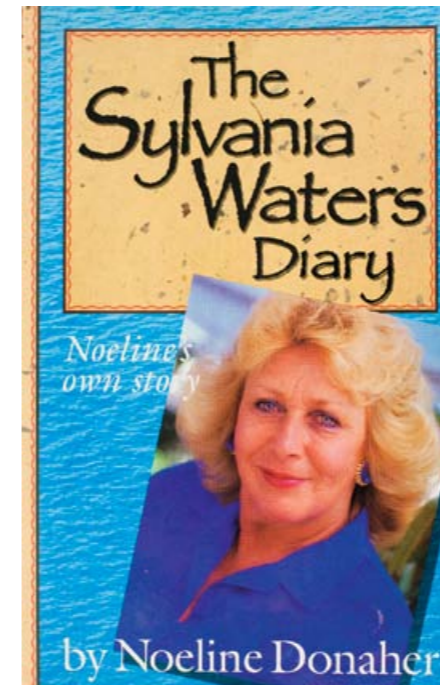
Paul Watson, the filmmaker at the centre of the storm, was a guest on ABC TV's late-night current affairs show, *Lateline*, the night *Sylvania Waters* finished its Australian run. He declared that what his team had produced was "a serious look at contemporary life" through "highlighted, edited editions". In no way apologetic about the end result, he suggested that "you have to be an absolute bastard to be a documentary filmmaker".

According to Noeline, Watson never again had any contact with her family once the series started on air despite "assuring us that they would keep in touch. What a load of rubbish", she later wrote. As the storm slowly abated in Australia, things began to heat up again the following year as the show neared its on-air date in the UK.

In May 1993, Noeline and Laurie travelled to London for the BBC's premiere. Once again, the newspapers tore them to shreds. *The Sun* headlined with: "Meet Noeline. By Tonight, You'll Hate Her Too". *The Guardian* shuddered at "Noeline's bigotry and gruesome materialism", while British TV critic Mark Stein thought it was "like *Home & Away* gone mad – *Home & Away* on drugs!" *News of the World* described Noeline as "the most hated woman in Oz".

When Noeline touched down in London, she vowed to have a face-to-face showdown with the BBC but confessed she had no idea what she'd say or do. *The Daily Mirror* reported that Noeline was also hoping to meet Princess Di. "With what I've been through lately, I've got a lot of sympathy for her. I think she's the most wonderful person. We are the same height and we're both blonde".

When English fans lined up to get her autograph, Noeline was thrilled. "After the fuss in Australia, this is a dream come true". Not only did she have her book *The Sylvania Waters Diary* to flog, Noeline also had a single on the way called *No Regrets*, complete with



an accompanying video shot on Sydney harbour with hunky lifesavers. While in London, she also guest hosted Seven's late-night news/variety show *Tonight Live* in a live satellite cross back to Australia.

It took till August 1993 for Noeline to have her showdown with the BBC, when she returned to the UK on an "all-expenses-paid trip" to the Edinburgh Television Festival. "For the past 15 months, I thought if I could commit suicide or leave my husband it would be better. I thought it was going to be like *The Brady Bunch* but instead our dream of being shown as a fantastic Australian family has been smashed. The editing was absolutely cruel and vicious". *The Herald-Sun* reported that, "as if her tribulations were not enough to bear, Mrs Donaher also was obliged to suffer BBC producer Kate Woods' patronising assurances. Miss Woods said 'By far the most



endearing quality about Noeline and Laurie has been their honesty".

In one particularly contentious exchange, Noeline raged about being seen at the hairdressers while daughter-in-law Dione was giving birth. Claiming the scene was shot days beforehand in an obvious effort to make her look "hard, harsh and unthinking", Woods responded that they were trying to show that Noeline was so proud to be a grandmother, she had to get her hair done to go to the hospital. Paul Watson was a notable no-show.

Watson continued to make controversial documentaries in the UK for years afterwards. There was *The Dinner Party* (1997) where a group of Conservative voters revealed themselves to be just as racist and homophobic as the *Sylvania Waters*

Left: Noeline Donaher, *The Sylvania Waters Diary*, Bookman Press, Melbourne, 1993
Photo: Silversalt

Right: Noeline, *No Regrets*, Festival Records, Australia / Tube Records, UK, 1993
Courtesy Warner Music
Photo: Silversalt

bunch, and *The Queen's Wedding* (2002) which followed the lives of several drag queens planning a gay marriage. In 2003, *The Guardian* described his latest work, *Desert Darlings*, as a “turkey. His signature touches were all over the place: revelatory personal interviews and wide establishing shots, but in all other aspects, *Desert Darlings* was just like any other dreary reality TV show”.

In 2001, Paul Watson appeared on Australian screens again when ABC current affairs program *Four Corners* examined the growing trend of reality television. Looking back on *Sylvania Waters*, Watson thought “the point of it all was, though, that in the end, materialism won over maternalism. And for me that was the subtext of that particular woman and her relationship with that particular family”. When pressed again about portraying Noeline as a drunk, Watson was still unrepentant. “They haven’t been misrepresented. Absolutely and categorically not. Noeline is who and what she is. Um ... we took very little advantage, if that’s the word, of her being drunk”.

Responding to the worldwide phenomenon of reality shows like *Big Brother* and *Survivor*, Watson insisted he was different because he “didn’t make things up. I don’t give people booze or drugs, I don’t tell them lies about one person in order to get a reaction from them. And very many of those techniques are used in these new so-called reality series.”

Also appearing on that episode of *Four Corners* were *Sylvania Waters*’ Mick and Yvette Donaher. When asked if she watched *Big Brother*, Yvette said, “Definitely I do. I’m addicted.” She had to admit that, despite it happening to her, she was still fascinated by it happening to someone else. And she was far from being the only Aussie fascinated by *Big Brother*.

The Australian versions of *Big Brother* are unique because the nightly update show is screened on the Ten network each weeknight in the prime viewing time of 7pm (up against Seven’s *Home and Away*). Everywhere else in the world, *Big Brother* is usually a late-night phenomenon. It was this bold programming initiative, suggested by Ten’s Tim

Clucas during an October 2000 trip to the Dutch headquarters of Endemol, creators of *Big Brother*, that sealed the deal when every Australian network was bidding for the rights.

“Apparently the others had, at one time or another, referred to *Big Brother* as a game show or ‘reality’ show when negotiating with Endemol. That’s not how they saw their program,” says Clucas. “When I said Ten saw *Big Brother* as a ‘real life soap’ and not a game show, their eyes lit up. When I said we [Ten] planned to run it early evening, straight after one of the world’s favourite soaps, *Neighbours*, and make it accessible for the whole family, the deal was all but done. We had been the last Australian commercial network to enter the race for rights to *Big Brother* but we had suddenly become the front-runners ... all because, as the Dutch still say, we ‘got’ the concept.”

Australian *Big Brother* even finishes each night with a cliffhanger ending, just like *Sylvania Waters* did all those years ago. And the line between reality television and soap continues to blur today. *Big Brother*’s first series runner-up, Blair McDonough, went straight into a regular role in *Neighbours*. Nine’s *The Block* – a mix of lifestyle TV and soap (a la *Number 96*) – was the smash hit of 2003 and the format was sold all over the world. Both *Home and Away* and *Neighbours* have reacted to this phenomenon by having their own characters appear on fictional reality TV shows within their soaps.

Sylvania Waters’ Dione Baker was last interviewed by *New Idea* in 1994. She admitted that *Sylvania Waters* had “left her marriage in tatters and sparked a bitter rift with her mum-in-law Noeline Donaher”. She revealed that she had walked out on Paul, after two years of marriage, to bring up son Kane alone.

In 2003, Noeline and Laurie sold their home for a reported \$2.2 million and moved to a smaller mansion (allegedly \$1.5 million) on Queensland’s Sovereign Islands. Once again, they invited the television cameras to film their every move, and once again, they were taken advantage of. *A Current Affair* just couldn’t resist showing Noeline sweeping down her

new grand staircase, in slow motion, to the theme music of *Gone with the Wind*. When pressed to update viewers about her family, Noeline revealed that baby Kane was nearly as tall as she was, while her son Michael was married and expecting his own child.

A decade before, Noeline had finished her best-selling diary with an open letter: “To the people of Australia, I want it known that I did not undertake to do *Sylvania Waters* for notoriety or gain. It was innocently done and I say sorry to those I have offended. I am thankful for the support I have received and will go back to being Noeline Vera Donaher – 5 feet 10 inches tall with big feet, Laurie’s wife and very proud and happy to be her. To my own children, whom I love, I say one final time that I am sorry for any heartbreak I have caused you. To my stepchildren also, I am sorry”.

Poor Noeline has every right to be sorry about *Sylvania Waters*. Today, the show lives on in repeats on subscription television in Australia. It is played, strictly for laughs, on The Comedy Channel.

“... the point of it all was, though, that in the end, materialism won over maternalism”.

Cringe! TV's Sylvania Waters cops a lashing

By SALLY TAYLOR

CRINGE parties were held across Sutherland Shire on Tuesday night as many residents sat glued to their television sets to watch the painful unfolding of Australian family life typified supposedly by the Sylvania Waters family. The chairman of Sutherland Shire's Tourism Committee, Councillor Byron Hurst, lashed out at the 12-part BBC documentary launched on the ABC on Tuesday night, saying it repeated previous English stereotyping of Australian lifestyles.

"Les Patterson came from Sylvania Waters," Cr Hurst said. "They have just repeated the problems of the novel Puberty Blues made later into a film, which depicted all teenagers around our beaches as rebellious drug addicts, and now we have a continuing stereotype thought up by documentary producers who went in on an agenda."

"I'm not making any moral judgments about the people, because it's their lives, but they're not representative of people in Sutherland Shire let alone the rest of Australia, and they shouldn't be presented that way," he said.

State MP for Sutherland, Chris Downy, also sat in to watch the reality television which showed blue collar millionaire couple Noeline and Laurie Donaher reveal the sometimes painful



THE controversial TV couple: Noelene and Laurie Donaher outside their Sylvania Waters home

moments of being a family.

"Look, if you come down to my house you'd hear my wife and I yelling at each other. We all have our blues just like every-

PAGE 3: The morning after in Sylvania Waters

one else, and I'm sure our language is a lot stronger," said Mr Downy, who has three children.

"I'm sure they (the Donahers) are pretty typical of some people who

work their guts out and enjoy the fruits of their labour.

"There are a lot of people like them in the Shire. We're not all holty-toity snobby types. We argue,

we have a lot of fun, and we like where we live."

Another viewer, Sutherland Shire President Ian Swords, said there were about 200,000 people in the Shire and there were

all types people, with different backgrounds, different levels of wealth and so forth.

"There was a fair degree of embarrassment among Shire residents that I've spoken to who watched it," Cr Swords said.

"It was not positive for anyone in the Shire in the sense that it portrayed a fairly hedonistic, racist and unsympathetic lifestyle, but really the family was just a sample shown through heavily edited footage."

Cr Hurst said he

thought the documentary would reinforce an attitude that Sutherland Shire was a nouveau riche en-

clave and completely ignored the region's wonderful characteristics, including its abundance of national parks, beaches, Aboriginal art and heritage, early European history at Botany Bay and other special features.

"To me it's a distortion of the truth which could

INSIDE: The Leader focuses on St George and Sutherland Shire sportsmen and women at the Olympics in a four-page special feature.



THE real life street in Sylvania

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Unlike sands through the hourglass . . . Sylvania Waters stops Stars one day, gone the next!

WHILE the rest of Australia spent Wednesday talking about Sylvania Waters, the TV show — the people of Sylvania Waters were somewhat more subdued. "Amazingly brave" was the popular reaction of the Sylvania Waters neighbours of the Donaher family.

Another neighbour, Diane Hocking, found the program interesting and the family "true to life".

She said she hadn't heard of any cringe parties in the street on Tuesday night.

"It's a bit like Coronation Street with warts and all," she said.

"The North Shore is not necessarily representative of Australia.

"This area is fairly unique, there are many small businessmen who have worked for their money."

She said she'd probably be watching the show for the next few weeks.

But neighbour Diana Hennin found the program disgraceful and said she probably wouldn't be watching the rest of the episodes.

"What a terrible family," she said.

"They're not representative of the people I've met, but I've only been here since March."

Another neighbour who preferred not to be named agreed the program was not indicative of the people who lived in the area.

He said he had lived in the area for the past 18 years and would not be watching the other 11 episodes.

A neighbour of 20 years said he found the program boring and turned it off. Although the street was



THE TV family's next-door neighbour Annette Saletta and, left, Diana Hennin with Rachel and James

Photos: NARELLE CARTER

fairly quiet, the Sylvania Waters beautician's salon was buzzing with activity and discussion of the previous night's program.

This was the beauty shop frequented by the Sylvania Waters mother, Noeline Donaher.

"It was real life not fiction," Image beautician and proprietor Marcia Bougoukas said.

However, consensus at the beauty shop was that

the show should have been named after the family and not the suburb.

"But it's good for business," Ms Bougoukas said.

"Sylvania Waters is one

of the nicest areas of Southern Sydney, it's new and fresh.

Fellow beautician Nicole Wilson said she'd be watching the following episodes.

The real estate office was also a buzz with talk on last night's program.

Property manager Toni Vassilich said she saw



Helen Anderson



Toni Vassilich



Marcia Bougoukas

However, there were a lot of other types living there.

Some had bought their houses years ago when property was cheaper, but with ordinary jobs they could now barely afford the rates, Mr Clark said.

Sylvania Waters also had a fairly large Asian population now, a combination of Indonesian, Malaysian and Hong Kong Chinese, he added.

"We hope it puts Sylvania Waters on the map, it highlights the amenities of the suburb," Mr Clark said.

"I doubt it will affect property values but I wish it would."

The LJ Hooker staff said they'd all be watching in the next few weeks to see what happens.

Annette Galetta lives next door to the Donahers who she said were "nice people".

"I don't know her (Noeline's) family, all I know is they're very nice people," she said.

"They are friendlier with the neighbours on the other side, they also have a boat and they go out together."

Ms Galetta said although they never got in the way, she often saw the cameras next door.

"I don't think they realised how blown-up it would become," she said.

But Ms Galetta who said she liked to see how other people lived, will tune in for the remaining episodes.

The Donahers were not at home when *The Leader* came to visit.

Their neighbours and friends of the Donahers were also not at home.

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Sally Taylor, "Cringe! TV's Sylvania Waters cops a lashing", *The St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 23 July 1992, p.1
Courtesy *The St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* & Fairfax Media

"Stars one day, gone the next!", *The St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 23 July 1992, p.3
Courtesy *The St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* & Fairfax Media

Sylvania Waters

...the story continues

They allowed a film crew to document six months of their lives, little knowing that they would become a cause celebre. But the Donahers of Macintyre Crescent, Sylvania Waters, have become household names and viewers can't wait for the next instalment. Starting today, each week The Sunday Telegraph will tell readers what next to expect from the Donaher waterfront mansion.

SOME locals are said to be still sitting with embarrassment at the unwanted scrutiny their neighbourhood has been attracting since Sylvania Waters hit the small screen.

What happens in the Donaher household, so comfortably enmeshed in its million-dollar waterfront mansion, is — they keep insisting — a far cry from what really occurs in your district Aussie red-bricked suburban home.

Yet it's exactly what transpires within the cottages of Noeline and Laurie's brash and bold establishment that has viewers riveted to their seats like voyeurs at a peep show.

Noeline, 44, the brassy bottle-blonde, who bleats constantly about the sacrifices she's made along the way before securing a lavish lifestyle, is an irresistible character. Her performance — apparently natural and uncoached — deserves a gold Logie.

It's as if she's stepped straight out of one of those soaps she's watched over the years. She even instructs her hairdresser to sculpt her bleached locks the way Madge wears hers in Neighbours.

Noeline and Laurie make an unlikely pair but obviously have a lot in common — they like their tipples and chops and chips for dinner.

In fact, much of the footage is shot in the Donaher kitchen with Laurie propping up the bench and a framed Elvis Presley looking down from on high. This is the Donaher ring-side where Noeline's youngest son Michael always gets a roasting, where Laurie is called upon to assert authority and where Noeline likes to sound off about all that niggles her.

And it's here in the kitchen, where Noeline in the forthcoming instalment, gives vent to her concerns over Laurie's expanding gut.

While son Mick hits the paddock with the boys for some emergency fitness rituals, Laurie is determined to pass his second fitness test that will allow him to race.

Meanwhile, young Paul and Dionne become doting young parents to Kane and do some serious talking about where they're headed financially — which is nowhere fast. As always Noeline is at hand with some sage advice — none of it appealing to Paul.

Then there is Michael Baker, Noeline's 16-year-old son from her first marriage, who just never seems to be able to win approval from his mother and step-father.

Already young Michael is winning some favourable attention from the young girls and it won't come as a surprise that within time he'll be touted as the next leading light on some teeny favourite like Home And Away.

But then what of the disgraced neighbour?



Noeline, Michael and Laurie Donaher: the family's antics are now public knowledge

Donahers still make the neighbours blush

We all know that Laurie and Mick, his son from a previous marriage, are petrol heads with expensive tastes. They've spent a veritable fortune on acquiring a red sports number which they hope will lead to great victories at Eastern Creek.

Problem is, our Noeline holds grave doubts about the cumulative effects of the beer and her fried and heavily-sauced offerings have had on her Laurie's overall fitness.

He has failed a medical and his doctor has insisted he cut down on the consumption of beer and fatty foods. Noeline, in her inimitable style, methodically sets about putting Laurie on the straight and narrow.

Fitness

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Well, first they squirmed with humiliation — not so much because Sylvania Waters got a plug but because Noeline and Laurie aren't quite the ambassadors they had in mind.

John Oreg, a prominent real estate agent in Sylvania Waters who specialises in waterfront homes, feels the embarrassment is fast waning.

"I can tell you we're beginning to see some good things happening because of the show. There has been an enormous awareness created by the series. For 22 years I have been devoted to promoting Sylvania Waters because I felt it was the best-kept secret in town.

Now we're getting all this publicity for free and it is the greatest thing ever. I even had a Blackhurst architect who came in here last week inquiring about a waterfront home. He had planned on retiring to the Gold Coast but after seeing Sylvania Waters came to investigate for himself. He wants a place on the water where he can keep a boat."

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Yvette and Mick with children Lisa and Kirsty



Paul and Dionne with their new baby, Kane: plagued by financial worries

SYLVANIA WATERS—AND THE STORY CONTINUES WITH



This burly black stripper was a popular lad at Noeline's 'hans' party — but Laurie was less than impressed

'Laurie, I think

It's saucy, sexy stuff at the Donahers' this week when Noeline lays on a bit of light-hearted amusement at a girls-only bash.

Before long, the bush telegraph in Sylvania Waters does its stuff — and the men aren't overly impressed. LIZ VAN DEN NIEUWENHOF reports:

Striptease caper leaves menfolk underwhelmed

THE tongues are working overtime in Sylvania Waters after a naughty knees-up at Noeline and Laurie's.

Problem is, Laurie is nowhere in sight when Noeline invites some of her female friends over for a festive bash. Entertainment is provided by a beely black stripper who has the girls whooping with his saucy antics.

Noeline, never backward in coming forward, gets things going nicely.

Before long, we have a dancer simulating sex, doing the most amazing things with his bulbous peck, and women queuing up for a bit of cheek-to-cheek with the G-stringed musclem.

It's all hilarious stuff — with every bit of action documented by a camera-brandishing Noeline, who just can't seem to get enough of her outrageous entertainer.

Later, after her inebriated friends have gone home, Noeline has some

rapid explaining to do. While she gets Laurie to pour her a small glass of port out on the terrace, she gives it to him straight.

"Laurie, I think I'd better tell you something before you hear it from someone else," comes the opening gambit. Then she launches into an unapologetic appraisal of the day's events.

"Geez, Laurie, we had this large negro stripper. He was beautiful. Noeline exclaims between loud siffaws.

Laurie, in turn, doesn't quite know what to make of this.

knowing how else to respond, he censoriously blurts out: "They smell!"

Noeline, however, won't be deterred: "And he didn't have a hair on his body!"

Laurie looks dismayed: "Wouldn't you like a white man with the same body?"

There's a slight pause and then, not able to resist, Noeline wickedly parries with: "But Laurie, you can't get them like that."

Before long, every nosey possum in the neighbourhood seems to be privy to the scuttlebutt.

Even Noeline's sons, Paul and Michael, get to

NOELINE'S GIRLS-ONLY PARTY

I'd better tell you something'

hear of the outrageous goings-on at Macintyre Crescent and have their say.

Paul, of course, hears it all from girlfriend Dionne, who had been invited to the girls-only romp.

He seems unsurprised by his mother's high-jinks. "She's a typical blonde," he mutters disparagingly when told of the stripper.

But there's more talk of sex when Paul and Dionne launch into a discussion about how the arrival of young Kane

has affected their bedroom exploits.

Dionne coyly admits to sister Megan that they've disregarded her doctor's advice to abstain from sex for six weeks after Kane's birth.

"Paul is such an animal — he makes it hard for me," she squeals.

Young Michael, meanwhile, is being rather subdued. Although somewhat disapproving of all the goings-on, he's reluctant to make an issue of it.

Instead, he seems content to play the piano — and withdraw to his room, where he desperately tries to conceal some perfumed letters he's received from a friend in England.

Then, just as you think the Donahers are about to slip into a kind of normal family mode, Noeline springs another surprise.

This one's a whopper — and we won't spoil it for you. You'll just have to wait until Tuesday.



Noeline: 'he was beautiful'

Ansett Australia's Spring Saver Fares.

Liz Van Den Nieuwenhof, "Sylvania Waters — the story continues with Noeline's girls-only party", Sunday Telegraph, 23 August 1992, pp.18, 19
Courtesy © Newspix / News Ltd

Sylvania Waters: the story continues

There is some festivity in the air at Sylvania Waters this week, but the bonhomie fizzles rapidly when Michael gets caught — once again — in some heavy domestic crossfire. LIZ VAN DEN NIEUWENHOF gives a sneak preview:

Michael's birthday blues



It's all smiles for this Donaher family shot but the tensions are not far below the surface

It's a big week for young Michael Baker who is hell-bent on making his 16th birthday the social event of the year.

Noeline and Laurie, who prize their polished possessions in a manner befitting the nouveau riche, are somewhat wary of the impending bash. And they're getting increasingly nervous as Michael keeps adding more names to the invitation list.

Although Noeline is reluctant to deprive Michael of his dream party she starts to have grave doubts when her headstrong son lets slip he's asked Paul to be the bouncer.

Suddenly Laurie thinks matters have got way out of hand when the guest list hits 40 and he promptly blows his stack.

Before long, Noeline's pristine kitchen becomes an ugly battleground with Michael getting more and more dejected. After he storms out of the kitchen, saying he'd rather cancel the whole thing than put up with the quarrelling, Noeline lets Laurie have it: "Struth Laurie, one day I'll pack my bags and I'm out of here!"

And why Laurie gets cranky and blows his stack!

Laurie seems impervious to the spiralling tension and while Noeline does her diva-in-distress act at the kitchen sink he infuriatingly flicks through a car magazine.

Matters don't improve much when Noeline and Laurie have their neighbours over for a drink and conversation turns to politics and the economic plight of the country.

"It's about time you got off your arses and did something about your country rather than bellyaching," storms New Zealand-born Noeline.

Meanwhile back at Paul and Dione's the mood is a lot more harmonious.

The young couple are seriously considering making their commitment more formal.

But Paul is adamant he wants a wedding minus all the fuss and expense.

The topic is raised on Michael's birthday which had been downgraded from a social event to a small family gathering.

And no one is more surprised than Michael at how relaxed and happy the night turns out to be.

No voices are raised and even Paul and

Laurie abide by the temporary truce.

Noeline wants Dione to consider holding the wedding ceremony out on her lawn overlooking the water.

"I always wanted to be a bride... have everything just perfect... but it never works out that way," she says with just a touch of melancholy.

And while the party goes its merry way, Dione sneaks off unnoticed to Noeline's neighbourly to try on a trilly confection of a wedding gown.

It's a touching moment with the normally level-headed Dione on the brink of tears.

No matter what Paul's protestations may be, she decides there and then she's going to be a traditional bride on the day.

Meanwhile, back at the Donahers, Michael feels honoured that his birthday turned out to be the best and most peaceful family gathering in three years.

He may not have had his rowdy best mates around to help celebrate the occasion but just having his family bury their differences for the night turned out to be a surprise birthday gift.

Maroney swim delayed

THE Maroney family's slim chance of attempting a

DISCOUNTS ON CTP GREEN SLIPS IF YOU HAVE OUR CAR INSURANCE.

SYLVANIA WATERS — the story continues

Battling the bourbon

By LIZ VAN DEN NIEUWENHOF

WE'VE been served generous helpings of just about every problem that could possibly visit a suburban family since our first introduction to the Donahers of Sylvania Waters.

And just as we've been lulled into the belief — mistakenly I hasten to add — that there is just nothing left to keep us titillated, up pops Noeline with a singer.

She has, we're told, a certain unhealthy affinity for bourbon and Coke — sometimes eight glasses a day. Now she doesn't think she has a drinking problem, only an unquenchable need to blot out some of the many hassles that dog her life.

"Up until 15 years ago I didn't drink," she confides in Pat, her long-suffering neighbour, over some potent-looking sundowners. "Then I met Laurie and started drinking bourbon and Coke. But it's easier to drink and blot it all out."

"I don't think I'm a drunkard but I think that at times alcohol doesn't agree with me."

That's a bit tough considering that Noeline is the first to admit that alcohol features rather prominently in all her and Laurie's socialising and entertaining. To give it up would simply be too difficult to contemplate.

With that, we're treated to some footage of Noeline and a friend concocting some mean daquiris on board Laurie's boat.

Later, while Noeline and Laurie are seen parting with \$100 notes following some hot horse-racing tips, young Paul and Dione face the daunting prospect of having to live off \$60 for two weeks.

Dione sums up their plight rather colourfully: "What a stress out!" she exclaims. The situation takes on a more ominous tone when Dione sorts through their mail only to be confronted with a whopping electricity bill.

Meanwhile, Mick Laurie's son, is faced with some rather embarrassing problems of his own. We've seen him look in admirable control behind the wheel of his sleek red racer at Eastern Creek but what we discover is that a petrolhead is not necessarily the kind of man a woman would find indispensable around the house.

For starters, Mick is an absolute no-hoper when it comes to some DIY chores. He's trying to build an extension to his garage but apparently hasn't the foggiest when it comes to trowels and cement.

That's not the worst of it. While a friend of his slaves away under the hot sun laying the

Dione and Paul face a financial disaster

bricks Mick volunteers to make them a cuppa. Back in the kitchen, however, he can't seem to figure out how to turn on the kettle or jiggle a teabag. Subsequently there are some urgent telephone calls to Yvette, his wife, who gives him a quick step-by-step guide.

With that we're returned to Macintyre Crescent where Laurie and Noeline are having, you've guessed it, more drinks with friends. Conversation is rowdy and rises another decibel when religion and politics come under fierce discussion.

Laurie obviously can't seem to get his point across and is seen storming out the room shouting: "Never discuss religion or politics... it always ends in problems."

Noeline, a wee bit bleary-eyed if you ask me, launches into another one of her "woe is me" soliloquies about the travails of motherhood and problem children — something she's convinced only she has the misfortune of enduring.

"I haven't done a good job," she dreads. "Maybe I should have stayed alone until all the kids have grown up."

Noeline and Laurie seem convinced Michael is either drinking or smoking dope surreptitiously.

Man on cocaine charge



Noeline in her kitchen problems with parenting

"I don't think I'm a drunk but I think that at times alcohol doesn't agree with me"



Mick Donaher

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An angry Noeline and Laurie Donaher with the faxed letter from Brian Howe

Howe will apologise to Noeline in person

DEPUTY Prime Minister Brian Howe has promised to meet Noeline Donaher, the "star" of Sylvania Waters, face-to-face to apologise for calling her a drunk.

Noeline's manager Brian Walsh said today Mr Howe's office had contacted him to arrange a meeting with Noeline.

"Mr Howe's spokesman said Mr Howe feels he owes it to Noeline to apologise personally," Mr Walsh said.

Yesterday a fuming Noeline said she was offended by a letter, sent by Mr Howe after he blamed her drinking on her working-class origins.

"It's not like he's retracting anything at all," said Noeline.

"It looks like a standard apology letter. It's got the date stamped on it and

By ADRIENNE RIDDELL

they just shot my name up there at the top."

The Sylvania Waters housewife said she will only accept Mr Howe's apology if "he says it to my face".

"I'm not a drunk. He was saying I'm a second-class yobbo and a second-class citizen."

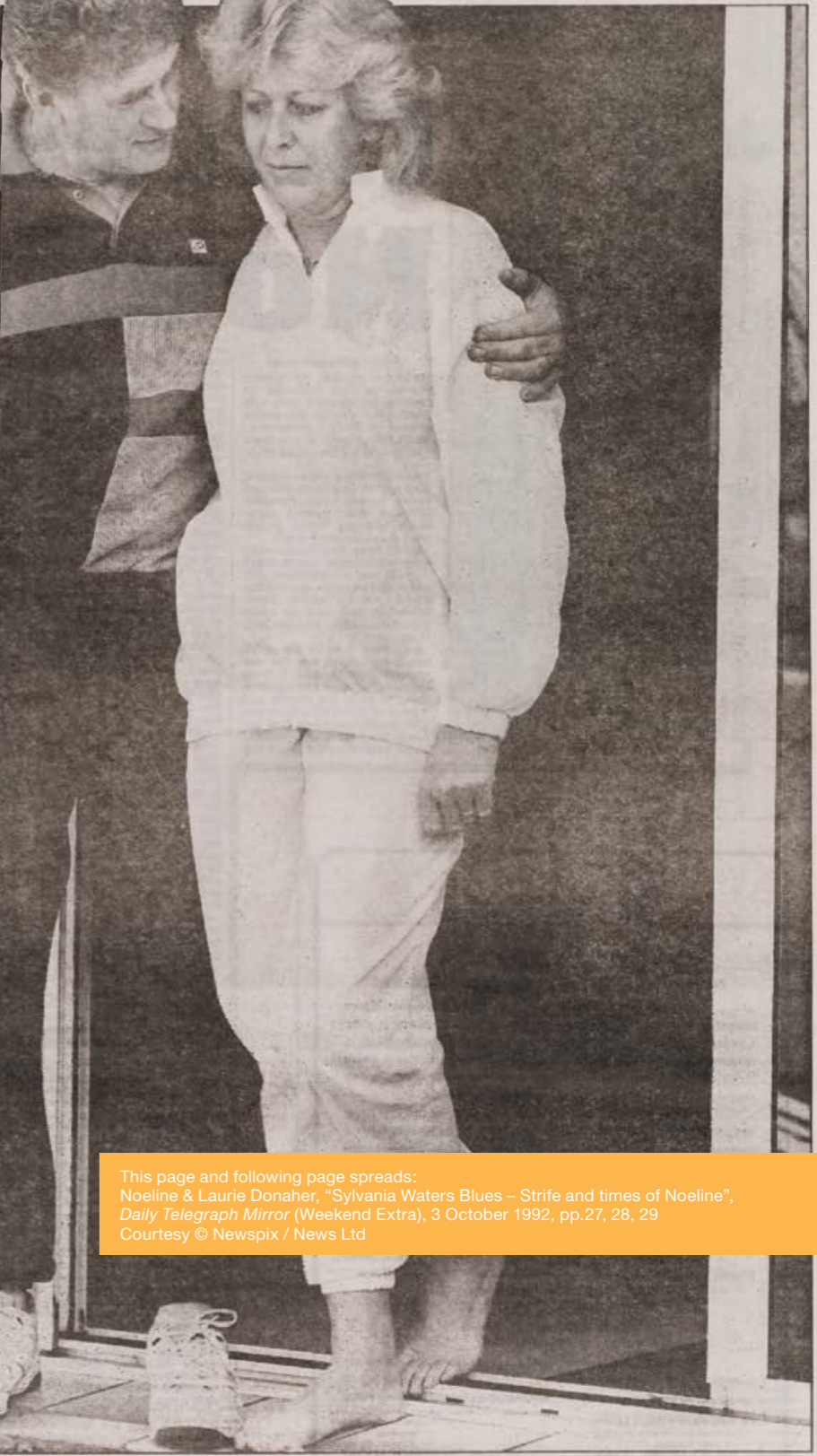
Mr Howe told a health conference in Canberra on Monday: "Noeline admits she has a drinking problem, wants to give up smoking, has a close relationship with the TAB, and is constantly vacillating between Gloria Marshall (weight loss clinics) and cream cakes."

Mr Howe stood by his comments yesterday, saying they were intended to "apply more generally".

Adrienne Riddell, "Howe will apologise to Noeline in person", *Daily Telegraph Mirror*, 1 October 1992, p.2
Courtesy © Newspix / News Ltd



Cartoon by Warren, *Daily Telegraph Mirror*, 1 October 1992, p.12
Courtesy © Newspix / News Ltd



This page and following page spreads: Noeline & Laurie Donaher, "Sylvania Waters Blues - Strife and times of Noeline", *Daily Telegraph Mirror* (Weekend Extra), 3 October 1992, pp.27, 28, 29
Courtesy © Newspix / News Ltd

Sylvania Waters Blues

THE LAST episode of the ABC-TV series *Sylvania Waters* screens on Tuesday night. Its principal subjects, LAURIE and NOELINE Donaher, now tell for the first time in their own words the impact of the series on their lives.

NOELINE: We were at work the day after the first episode went to air. The lady that was cleaning the house rang me to say that there were people everywhere, all around the house and out on the front lawn. Alan next door rang to say he was getting Channel 9 out of the side of the house. They'd come by boat even. Someone told them we had a little factory out at Carlton and they descended on us there. When we had to go down to Michael's school

Continued next page

'I was horrified when I saw the first program. It really

Strife and times of Noeline



Noeline Donaher with her son Michael

From previous page

we had to get out, try to keep the media from following us because we couldn't walk into Newington with all this media behind us. They'd go berserk! Then I rang Brian Walsh (their agent) and he organised security.

LAURIE: They were trying to find out who we were. Who are these people from Sylvania Waters? Just normal questions, nothing nasty, people were just interested in us.

NOELINE: The streets were lined with people and it didn't stop. It was a nightmare. For days. And so much was written about us. I don't think Madonna has had as much publicity as what we have had. It was solid.

LAURIE: A lot of the series has been unfair. For the last episode Noeline and I were here and we were just about to leave to go to the airport and Paul and Dione (Noeline's son and daughter-in-law) had arrived. They had been fighting about something and Paul was

saying he couldn't afford to go to the airport and have a drink. You can bet your bottom dollar the ABC is going to show that and us taking off to go to Europe and Paul and Dione here not being able to afford a drink at the airport. That's what they will show. We haven't seen that last show but that is the scene they will show. It should have been called "The Rich and the Poor". For some reason that's what they are trying to get across. They really are pitting one against the other.

NOELINE: And there is none of that in our family. Paul and Dione are as much loved by Laurie and I as Mick and Yvette. They are just as important, if not more so, because they are battlers. But we assist them wherever we can. But I can't live their life for them. They have to live a life of their own. But this series has stretched the friendship with Paul and Laurie, definitely.

LAURIE: I don't see Paul that much at the moment. Paul doesn't come around here. I don't particularly want him here at the moment. His ideas are wrong as far as I'm concerned. Paul in the past has had a lot of help from Noeline and I and whatever we've done has just been wasted. It's gone nowhere and he seems to blame Noeline and I for his situation. But I don't want to go too far into what's happened there.

NOELINE: He's still very much loved and cared for but he will come right in his own time. It's best left alone. Time will make things right.

LAURIE: The series has made it worse because of the way ABC has created this. They obviously saw a riff there and they have really played on it and it hasn't helped anything.

NOELINE: I was horrified when I first saw the program. It wasn't us at all. The producers had edited out what was our normal life and only screened in the media the bad parts. For two weeks I wouldn't go anywhere. I went to work, went inside the office, got into car, came back here, to my house. I would drive in here, shut the house door and that was it. I was embarrassed.

LAURIE: She doesn't like people pointing at her. It worries her when people stare and point. She used to do the shopping every Wednesday at Southgate and I think she has probably been there in the last five months about six times. Used to go every week.

NOELINE: A few weeks ago I felt a little bit better about the whole thing, the newspapers were reading a bit better and I went into Southgate and it was as if I was back to normal. But now with this Brian Howe thing, it's back the other way. You've got some people saying



Dione Baker



Paul Baker

'Great, good on you, go for it', and you've got other people looking at you like they really, really hate you.

LAURIE: A lot of people are jealous, too. They're envious. I don't know why but they are. Maybe they think it should be them that's doing it.

NOELINE: 'There's nothing we can do. We just have to weather it.'

LAURIE: When Noeline goes shopping on her own it isn't so bad. But when we go together people notice us more. The other day we were driving through Sussex Street in the city and there was a group of 50 schoolkids and all of a sudden I hear 'Laurie, Noeline. How are you doing?' It was funny.

NOELINE: I was instantly recognisable after their show started. I think it was the fact of the drinking and the smoking and the loud mouth and crass things... people always remember that sort of thing.

LAURIE: We went to walk past the grandstand once at a game of football where Michael was playing. It was full, mostly of North Shore people - not that there is anything wrong with North Shore people - but they probably take a dim view of us over here. But when we walked past you could have cut the air with a knife. Then you could hear them all whispering

... 'That's Laurie and Noeline, look at them...'

NOELINE: But Michael has not had one problem. You know why? He's 16 years old and he thinks 'Oh, go to hell, who cares?'

LAURIE: He says the kids at school have been fantastic. They have hardly said a word to him. We thought he might have problems at school, but he hasn't.

NOELINE: You know the people who don't like you. On Saturday or Sunday they come up through the canal here out the front of the house. And if we walk out there, instantly they turn their head to look the other way. They try to act like they weren't looking, but they were! Those who like us will wave and yell out. At the front of the house, too. I wish I had toll gates in McIntyre Crescent, Sylvania Waters. We'd make a fortune with the number of cars that just come here to look at the house.

LAURIE: Sometimes on Sundays we go out on the lawn and sit and have a beer. Noeline will have a Bourbon, and we just yahoo and make sure we can't be seen. It's interesting to see how people react to that. We've had no one come up face to face and criticise us or anything. We've had letters obviously but anyone who comes up to us, they say they like it. The ones who don't like it write the letters, they won't come up face to face.

NOELINE: We have had letters full of hate. Absolute hatred. People absolutely leashed me, loathed me. And the worst of it was that a letter came to the office last Wednesday address to (our business). I opened the letter and instantly Ron (the office manager) had given it to me he said 'I don't think that's going to be very nice'. It was from the Brownes, in Sylvania Waters. Ron took exception to it, so he said 'Right you find me their number or I'll find it, go through 013' and finally he got the phone number. So he rang and that kind of uninformed judgment is just so wrong.

LAURIE: Yvette's very sensitive.

NOELINE: I have been hurt, very, very hurt with things that have been said.

LAURIE: Noeline doesn't even want to see herself on TV. If someone says something bad she really gets upset. What they see on TV is a little part, bits and pieces, not what she is about or like.

NOELINE: We have received a lot of mail, some very good, some very bad and just nasty.

LAURIE: We haven't had that many of those bad ones. I would have thought we would have got heaps of them. There has only ever been about half a dozen. There was one which was pretty nasty, shook us up a

wasn't us at all... they only screened the bad parts'



Picture of misery... Laurie and Noeline console one another as they consider what the TV show Sylvania Waters has done to their lives. Picture: GEOFF HENDERSON

past. Things he'd done in his young days which people in the family really didn't know about and there was no reason for them to know about it. What Laurie had done in his early life was perfectly accepted, I'd still love him. Then another media person called me up and accused me of being a madam... owning a brothel... it got to the point where it was ridiculous and pathetic. It got to the point where I needed more than sympathy. You know we run a business and it hasn't helped us. But they, the ABC or the BBC (co-producers of the series) didn't care about that either. We have to pick up our lives again. You know Yvette went to Eastgardens shopping with friends, they walked in doing their shopping and a lady kept on staring at Yvette and Yvette stared back and the lady said 'You're absolutely hopeless on the show, why haven't you been sacked? Yvette's very sensitive and that kind of uninformed judgment is just so wrong.'



In happier times... Noeline gives Laurie a kiss and a hug

bit. It shook me up a lot. We'd been away and it was in the letter box.

NOELINE: It was crude, full of obscenities. Saying things about the episode where there was the male stripper. It was full of rude talk about us... about all of us. And then there have been other letters, good letters. One lady, from Avoca Beach, said she just wanted to tell me that they have worked hard for what they have, that our children are just going to be fine.

LAURIE: Nothing much is going to change here, after Sylvania Waters. We will be going on exactly the same. It's up to the public what will happen in our life. I'm sure people will sort of let it die off a little bit now, I don't think we'll even if and when it is shown in Britain... hopefully there will

be no problems. I'm sure that we won't have the reaction there that we've had so far in Australia. Okay, we might get a few newspaper reports but I don't really think that there will be that much feedback from Great Britain.

NOELINE: I feel it won't get away from us. I reckon when it goes to Britain that people will still write about us here. I don't know what it was, perhaps they just didn't like the look of me, the colour of my hair or didn't like what we had done. I don't know what it is but I just feel we are not going to get away from it. I don't think it is going to go away. Somebody else is going to print a nasty story about Laurie which hurts us all deeply. The series hasn't represented us fairly and it hurts. I'm sensitive to it. Even when I was in school if girls

crowded in a corner and talked about me, I would get hurt. So I am probably a very sensitive person. To do something like this, a television show, was a bit way out for me, wasn't it? Really! To be the centre of attention is not me at all. This week has been the worst. I could cry, I want to go to sleep. I like to stand tall, but it's been hard.

LAURIE: Let's be realistic about it. If we were getting millions of dollars for it, it wouldn't matter so much, but we are getting nothing for it. There's no pot of gold at the end of the rainbow sort of thing. I think you can put up with a lot of things if you are being well paid for it.

NOELINE: The night we went over to watch the promotional tape at the ABC (just prior to the series starting) they gave us a list of agents, managers... they knew, obviously, it was heating up at that stage. About two weeks prior to it coming onto television, they (the ABC) gave us a list of managers to have. Perhaps they already knew, that's their business. When I think back now, there are nights when I don't sleep at all and I think to myself 'well, they must have known, that's why they gave us that list of agents, why did they insist on giving us this list of agents and managers?'

NOELINE: Joanne did not want to be a part of it and for many reasons I will not discuss that.

LAURIE: Steven does not come here a lot.

'You've got people looking at you like they really, really hate you. They're envious'

'You've got people looking at you like they really, really hate you. They're envious'

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

NSW Commuter Council NOMINATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The NSW Commuter Council advises the Minister for Transport on issues of concern to commuters and ensures commuter input into overall transport planning in NSW.

Nominations are sought from interested individuals to fill the vacant position on the Council which represents the CBD/Inner West/Eastern Suburbs region.

Selection will be based on merit and the member will be appointed by the Minister for the current term of the Council. The current term ends in June, 1993.

Nominations should be sent to Transport Co-ordination Branch, Department of Transport, GPO Box 1620, SYDNEY, NSW 2001 by Monday, 19 October, 1992.

Inquiries: Ms. G. Mirkova (02) 268 2855.

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NSW DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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FEE-FOR-SERVICE SOCIAL WORKERS ADOPTION ASSESSMENTS AND POST PLACEMENT SUPERVISION

The Department of Community Services is interested in hearing from non-government agencies employing suitably qualified social workers or social workers in private practice throughout NSW to undertake the assessment of adoption applicants, to provide post placement supervision to children placed locally and from overseas and to prepare reports for the Supreme Court on natural parent and relative adoptions on a fee-for-service basis.

It is expected that the work will be carried out within a time frame and under requirements stipulated by the department and involves interviews in the applicants home and at a place mutually convenient to the client and social worker. The department will arrange appropriate orientation, ongoing education and the opportunity for consultation. The work is performed within a geographical area and is subject to an agreement, which inter alia requires the social worker to maintain accreditation and attend six monthly training seminars in Sydney organised by the department.

Eligibility for membership of the Australian Association of social workers is essential. Expressions of interest are to be sent to:

The Adoption Co-ordinator
Adoptions Branch
Department of Community Services
PO Box 3485 Parramatta 2150

Information packages detailing the requirements of the position are available by contacting Bruce Valentine on (02) 689 5938. Applicants will be considered on the basis of related experience followed by an interview. Closing date: Friday, October 30, 1992.

THE NEW SOUTH WALES GOVERNMENT
Putting people first by managing better.



Barry Humphries yesterday... The Labor Party has always been snobs' Picture: BOB BARKER

EMBATTLED Noeline Donaher of the real-life TV soap Sylvania Waters has found a new champion — the world's best-known housewife, Dame Edna Everage. "She might even become a character in Sylvania Waters who visits and gives glamour tips to Noeline," said

By SUE WILLIAMS

Dame Edna loves Noeline

Barry Humphries, creator of the jet-setting Moonee Ponds megastar. "Noeline", she'll say, "my son Kenny will design a few frocks for you."

Humphries, in Australia to promote his autobiography, sat up all night watching tapes of the show.

And now he's entered the spat with the country's deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe on Noeline's behalf.

"I think Howe's mistake, poor man, is that he didn't know whether he was talking about a real person or Mrs Mangel," said Humphries.

"The borderline between fiction and fact is becoming very blurred, particularly in Australia, with the dream-time in which we all live."

"It is a strange turn of events where a Labor politician is making disparaging remarks about the working class. No Liberal politicians would say such a thing. The Labor Party has always been snobs."

Humphries called for Noeline to be included in the honours list. "Move over Dame Edna! Here comes Dame Noeline! Edna must look to her laurels with a new housewife megastar in the pipeline, ready to step into her slingbacks."

Noeline takes over — Page 34

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Noeline weeps as show ends

AS Noeline Donaher watched the last episode of Sylvania Waters last night she cried "tears of relief", grateful that the warts-and-all documentary series had ended.

Noeline and husband Laurie threw a barbecue to celebrate the last episode with 20 family and friends. But as she watched the credits roll for the last of the 12 weekly ABC-TV programs, Noeline became emotional.

"I was crying tears of relief," she said. "I wouldn't do anything like that again unless I had full editing control of what was finally shown on television."

The squabbling Donahers filmed a Lotto commercial yesterday, in which Noeline and Laurie argue over whether it was "number 30 or 31" which came from the Lotto wheel during a draw.

The commercial is expected to be shown from October 16.



Noeline Donaher

Above: Phil McLean, "Noeline weeps as series ends", Daily Telegraph Mirror, 7 October 1992, p.9
Courtesy © Newspix / News Ltd

Left: Sue Williams, "Dame Edna loves Noeline", Daily Telegraph Mirror, 6 October 1992, p.7
Courtesy © Newspix / News Ltd

Right: New Idea Magazine, 5 December 1992
Courtesy New Idea Magazine & Pacific Magazines
Of all the articles in the tabloid media, Noeline writes in her book *The Sylvania Waters Diary* (pp.170-171) that this New Idea Magazine article "hurt me very deeply... I am not a monster - I am a mere woman... Perhaps now is the time to let sleeping dogs lie".

Following page spread: Ben Mitchell, "Sylvania Waters — the sequel", TV Soap, December 1992, pp.14-15
Courtesy TV Soap & nextmedia

78 SUPER GIVEAWAY \$500,000 OF HEALTH PRODUCTS \$2.00 DECEMBER 5, 1992

New Idea

WIN A CAR

SYLVANIA WATERS SAGA CONTINUED...

The first Mrs Donaher tells: "Noeline stole my husband! I should have punched her eyes out!"

EXCLUSIVE

MARGARET FULTON'S CHRISTMAS BAKING

WINDSOR CASTLE BURNS

...shock pics



Fugitive tycoon Mike Gore, broke & surviving on charity



SYLVANIA WATERS

—THE SEQUEL

Neighbours, Home and Away and E Street gave new meaning to British soap opera. Now we're sending 'em Sylvania Waters!



The Donahers and the Bakers, the cast of Australia's real-life soap.

BRITONS who missed out on the old 10-pound immigration scheme have lost nothing by staying in their cosy gas-filled bedsitters and homes with coal-filled baths. For as the frozen fingers of winter begin to grasp the British Isles, push up sales of hot chestnuts in Piccadilly and light up more windows with the blue glow of TV, all eyes are turning away from Coronation Street and even Ramsay Street, Summer Bay and Westside, to a hardcore ABC-BBC kitchen sink drama called Sylvania Waters that put Laurie and Noeline Donaher and their

suburban Sydney family under a British microscope. This was the life those Poms could've had: sun, booze, kitchen sink dramas, booze, family squabbles, booze and arguments. And booze. Now they can only watch and wonder what life would have been like for them as Laurie and Noeline. But how do the Donahers feel about their show taking on Coronation Street? Are they ready for international fame? Do they regret being led astray by the British producer who told them he wanted to make a straight documentary about an average Aussie

family? Why does Noeline want to get her hands on the guy that made her a star anyway? Will Noeline and Laurie ever be the same again? And what will Kane, Paul and Dione's nine-month-old boy (born on the show) make of it all when he grows up and is made to sit in front of the telly and watch the Bakers and the Donahers going at it hammer-and-tong? With these questions in mind plus a still camera, TV SOAP went along to the MacIntyre Street home of the Donahers to shoot Sylvania Waters: The Sequel.

Sylvania Waters, the breathtaking heartland of average Australia, sits imbedded like an opal between typically Australian-sounding Kangaroo Point and James Cook Island. This is the where your typically average Aussie family lives, eats, drinks and fights. This is the new face of Australia, the one to be etched in concrete for millions of British viewers in for an Aussie fest called Sylvania Waters when it screens there in coming weeks. The real-life cast of typical Aussies includes Noeline and Laurie Donaher, formerly married to other people, and their kids, Paul Baker and his wife, Dione, and baby Kane; Michael Baker and his wife, Yvette, and their girls, Lisa, three, and Kirsty, six; Noeline's sister, Annette; Alan and Pat from next door; Dione's sister, Megan; Dawn and Neil; and other average Aussies. It was an average day at the Donahers'. Friends and neighbours hoed into a publicised sausage sizzle on the road while Laurie sat on his porch, typically surrounded by a team of 2 Day-FM breakfast announcers. As per the Aussie lifestyle, TV cameras followed Noeline around the front lawn like pet terriers. Her son, Paul, posed for TV SOAP and, naturally, there was an average Australian puppet, this one called Agro, telling a child which was petting its rain-soaked head: "See ya' later, kid. I'm going back into me bag!" Enough to make an average Aussie homesick.

For Noeline Donaher nee Baker (she tied the knot with Laurie after the show was finished earlier this year), her starring role had given her mixed emotions, ranging from regret ("I'd like to get my hands on that producer!") to optimism about the book she intends write, the fees for media interviews and a life-sized oil painting that's being done of herself as the average Aussie housewife. We found Paul — who came out of the series as an heroic New Age father who cried while his girlfriend-now-wife, Dione, gave birth to his son — keeping his family dry under a big umbrella.

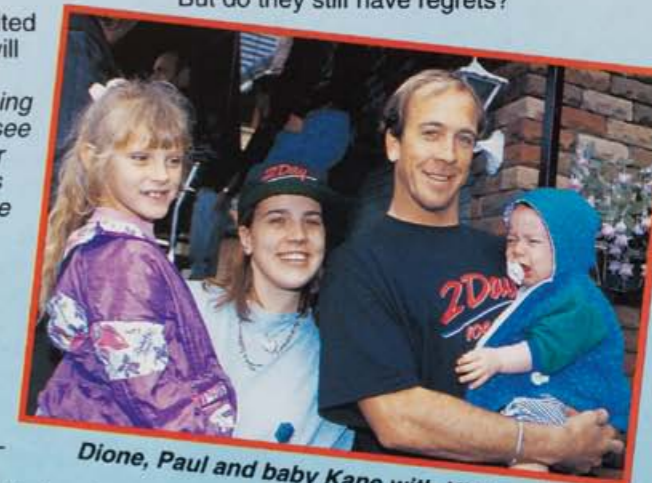


Agro helps himself to a little of Laurie's and Noeline's reflected glory.

Any regrets about the way you were depicted?
 Paul: They had to make a story. You can't just have an Australian version of The Brady Bunch. No-one's going to watch that.
 How did your mates at Telecom react to your TV performance?
 Paul: The guys down at the depot were pretty good about it. But they've got a new name for the show — "Muddy Waters"!

With the documentary edited into a soap opera, what will baby Kane make of it all?
 Paul: He'll see himself being born; not many kids can see themselves that blue after the first couple of minutes after birth. And he can see his father being married.
 Noeline had no qualms about her family being delivered up to the Poms. Or that their MacIntyre address would rival the Rovers' Return as a Down Under version of Coronation Street's watering hole. Sylvania Waters has divided the family. But today at the Donahers', they reunited for a TV SOAP family portrait, their smiles hiding the wounds and scars of an editor's knife.
 Laurie: On the positive side, when the show screened on ABC-TV earlier this year we got heaps and heaps of fan mail.
 Noeline: There were only three bad letters.
 Still, Laurie reckons the filmmakers got away with murder.
 Laurie: The other 80 hours they got

we haven't seen — you could make a good show out of that!
 Noeline turned up in the radio station's T-shirt and cap. Does she watch soap operas?
 Noeline: Only one. The Young and the Restless. I watch it every day.
 Laurie: I can honestly say I've never watched Neighbours or E Street. The only one I see is the one Noeline watches.
 But do they still have regrets?



Dione, Paul and baby Kane with Kirsty, six.

Noeline: I'd like to challenge someone who knows about editing to edit some more of the tape to show what it should have been all about.
 Laurie: They made us out to be someone we're not. That's why we want to do these sorts of interviews. So you can see we're normal.
 Noeline: Totally normal.
 But it isn't over yet for the Donahers... there's all that fan mail and publicity still to come from Britain.

— BEN MITCHELL

Young Sylvania Waters star talked his way out of Ugandan massacre



In good spirits and coming home ... Michael Baker pictured in 1992 with his mother, Noelene Donaher.

By ED O'LOUGHLIN
in Kampala, and agencies

The *Sylvania Waters* star Michael Baker was one of six tourists who talked their way to freedom as Rwandan rebels slaughtered eight other foreigners after a terrifying forced march through a Ugandan forest.

Mr Baker, 23, known to millions as the narrator and youngest son of Noelene Donaher and stepson of her husband, Laurie, in the 1992 ABC documentary, was recovering in Kampala last night, shocked that his companions had been hacked and beaten to death by Hutu rebels.

Mr Baker's former fiancée, Ms Sarah Patton, said last night

that she had spoken to Mr Baker by telephone in Kampala where he is recovering.

She said that Mr Baker, who remains a close friend, was traumatised but "in good spirits and is coming home soon. I'm looking forward to seeing him".

"He told me what happened, it's horrific," Ms Patton said, but declined to recount what he had described.

Ms Patton, a Sydney nurse, said she first learnt he was among the tourists attacked when she returned home from work on Tuesday night, but by then he had been rescued.

She said she had spoken to Noelene Donaher and that

they were both relieved at his survival. The Donaher family were not available for comment last night.

Witness reports from Monday's massacre in western Uganda suggest that the Hutu guerrillas were motivated by a volatile mixture of politics, ethnic hatred and the lust to loot goods and money.

Eight Western tourists, including two New Zealanders, four Britons and two Americans, were killed in the raid while six others were freed unharmed after being abducted and marched across the Congolese border.

A New Zealander, Mr Mark Avis, is staying with fellow

massacre survivors in a backpackers' hostel in Kampala as he waits to fly home with the body of his wife, Rhonda.

The Australian High Commissioner for Kenya and Uganda, Mr Philip Green, said Mr Baker had joined four other Australian tourists who were among 17 other Westerners captured in the initial raid but who either escaped or were left unharmed at the scene.

"They are in as good a condition as can be expected," he said. "They are all grieving, because they all lost people that they knew."

Among those first captured

Continued Page 2
Editorial: Hutu terror - Page 16

Sylvania star talked his way out



Survivor . . . Mr Mark Ross, centre above, in Kampala. Below, a wedding photo of Rob Haubner and Susan Miller. Photographs by AP

From Page 1

was France's Deputy Ambassador to Uganda, Ms Anne Peltier, who said she had spoken to her captors in French and negotiated the release of all the French and some of the Australians.

In Kampala, the Ugandan President, Mr Yoweri Museveni, said Uganda would pursue the murderers and "kill them" if they were caught. There would be a further military deployment in the area where the killings took place.

The survivors have already received counselling and Mr Baker has been treated for foot injuries received during the long march through the rainforest.

It was expected that some or all of the Australians would leave Kampala late last night to return to either Australia or Britain.

Mr Green said none of the Australians was keen to speak to the media, but interviews with

two US survivors and other reports suggested the survivors were lucky to have been with the Hutu leaders, who seemed more politically motivated than many of their followers.

Those who were murdered had either fallen behind or been selected as hostages by two other splinter groups from the fleeing 150-strong rebel force.

A spokesman for the Ugandan Tourist Ministry, Mr Shaun Mann, said the surviving group, which included Mr Baker, was freed inside the Congolese border on Monday evening after being marched along a rainforest track from Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, where the raid took place.

Their captors told them that their aim was to destabilise the government of President Yoweri Museveni and punish English-speaking countries for supporting Mr Museveni and his allies in the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Government.



It was only as the freed group trekked back into Uganda and came across the bodies of some of their fellow captives that they realised anyone had been killed.

The group's leader, US pilot Mr Mark Ross, told journalists that the bodies he saw appeared to have been bludgeoned and hacked to death and that one dead woman appeared to have been raped.

The manner of the killings echoed the frenzied 1994 genocide in Rwanda, when 800,000 minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates were slaughtered by bands of extremist Hutu peasants and militiamen.

Ugandan sources say Monday's raid was a well-planned and co-ordinated assault which clearly mixed political objectives with the desire to loot the four safari camps in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, one of only two remaining habitats for wild mountain gorillas.

Mr Mann said that a Ugandan army battalion charged with guarding the camps had been lured away by a small diversionary attack on a nearby village, leaving the safari camps guarded only by a handful of armed game rangers.

The rangers had opened fire on the attacking Hutu force and wounded four before they were overrun.

SYLVANIA WATERCOLOURS

EXCLUSIVE



Noeline, left, and Kathy with the unfinished portrait.

A strange twist of fate gives Noeline Donaher another brush with fame

THE ABC's controversial TV series *Sylvania Waters* didn't exactly paint a pretty picture of Noeline Donaher and family – but artist Kathy Golski is set to rectify that.

Kathy is putting brush to canvas to create a portrait of Noeline – as contender for the Archibald Prize.

While that fact is interesting in itself, there's an extra little twist to this story. Kathy is the mother of the family which missed out on the dubious privilege of

being the focus of the cameras. Kathy's clan was rejected, while Noeline's went on to become TV "stars".

"I am definitely not upset about not having been chosen," says Kathy, 50, a professional Sydney artist.

She admits she was not a devotee of the show, though she did try to catch it whenever possible. "I'm not a great television watcher at the best of times."

Kathy says her decision to paint Noeline was an "obvious" one. "I see in her an important subject," she declares.

"Noeline is a very powerful person who plays many roles in life. She is a lover and wife to Laurie, she struggles to put food into the mouths of her children, runs her house *and* the business.

"Noeline is very pivotal to the whole thing – the others hang on her."

Kathy, quite sensibly, will not say anything derogatory about her subject.

But she does reveal a rather surprising fact about Noeline.

"She is actually quite shy," Kathy says. "She has received a lot of bad feedback from being on TV and that has made her feel terrible. But she is flattered by me asking to do her portrait. She was really pleased."

Kathy believes that Noeline was very brave to be so open while the cameras were rolling.

"She hasn't hidden anything. I don't know whether I'd have been that brave."

Kathy is quick to point out that, had her family been the subject of the series, we'd have seen a different household.

"We live in a small house, all cramped in together. Sure, you would have seen me yelling at my kids, too – but probably with less effect than Noeline!"

Story: Annette Allison

Picture: Neil Holbrook



Kathy Golski
Noeline Donaher at *Sylvania Waters* 1993
oil on linen
200 x 175 cm
Courtesy the artist

Left: Annette Allison, "Sylvania Watercolours",
Woman's Day, 19 October 1992, p.5.
Courtesy *Woman's Day* & ACP Magazines
Photo: Silversalt

Peter Cooley



Noeline (left) & *Laurie* (right) 1993
earthenware and underglaze | 80 x 30 x 30 cm each (approx)
Courtesy the artist & Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney



Peter Cooley was born in 1956 at Murwillumbah, NSW and lives and works in the Blue Mountains, NSW. He has been exhibiting since the early 1980s at spaces including Ray Hughes Gallery, Gould Galleries, Mori Gallery, Wollongong City Gallery, The Delmar Gallery, Hawkesbury Regional Gallery, Tin Sheds Gallery, Casula Powerhouse, and Ivan Dougherty Gallery. He has been collected by the National Gallery of Victoria, National Gallery of Australia, Philip Morris Collection, Allens Arthur Robinson, Macquarie Bank, and Artbank.

Installation view: Girgis & Klym Gallery, Melbourne, 1993
Courtesy the artist & Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney

Episode Guide

Anna Lawrenson

1 – “It’s more drama living in this house than living out of it” – Noeline Baker

Noeline Baker booms onto the scene squawking at her *de facto* partner Laurie Donaher about her son Michael’s birthday party. Michael, who narrates the series, guides us through the complicated terrain of the Donaher/Baker clan. His mum Noeline says we’ll see her throughout the series as she “truly” is. Laurie, Noeline and Michael live in a million dollar waterfront mansion in the Sydney suburb of Sylvania Waters. They have a large boat called Blasé moored at their back door and spend their weekends on the water drinking and having fun. Despite their lavish surrounds Noeline insists that they started out with nothing when they met thirteen years ago. In contrast, Michael’s brother Paul lives with heavily pregnant girlfriend Dione in their rented dilapidated house; Noeline thinks they need to buckle down and save money so that they can buy something of their own. Laurie’s son Mick and his wife Yvette – who have two young daughters – do own their own house and business, and have a penchant for fast expensive racing cars. The big announcement of the episode: Noeline and Laurie are planing to get married in Monaco with their neighbours Pat and Alan by their side.

2 – “Let bygones be bygones” – Laurie Donaher

It’s Christmas and, like most Australian families, the weeks around Christmas and New Years Eve are marked by overindulgence, frivolity and a good deal of stress. Paul’s uneasy relationship with Laurie is threatening the success of the festive gathering at the Donaher/Baker household and we learn some of the causes of friction between them through Paul’s candid confessions. Noeline wonders why there is such tension between Laurie and her children and muses on how she could have raised them differently. Paul and Laurie patch things up just in time for Christmas and everyone enjoys the day swimming in the pool, drinking, eating and being merry. Laurie and Noeline frolic on their new jet ski with the festive mood pausing only for a teary phone call from Michael who is spending Christmas in the UK on a school football trip. On Boxing Day Noeline and Laurie head up to Sydney Harbour with Mick, Yvette and their kids to watch the start of the Sydney to Hobart yacht race. They hit the Harbour again for a spectacular New Years Eve party, this time with friends. Noeline says goodbye to the worst year of her life with a bombshell revelation: “We’d like to have a little baby”.

3 – “They’ve got to learn to save” – Noeline Baker

Paul and Dione are filled with excitement and anticipation about their impending role as parents while Laurie and Mick think about becoming joint owners of an expensive racecar. Michael’s school report arrives and it’s not good news. Luckily for him, he’s still overseas which delays disciplinary action. Noeline is also worried about Paul and Dione after paying her first ever visit to their run down rented house and believes they aren’t trying hard enough to save their money and improve their circumstances. Laurie and Mick, on the other hand, are trying to save as much money as possible to put into their new racecar and try selling off some existing vehicles to finance the venture. Laurie’s doctor has some major concerns about his health and fears that he’ll probably have a heart attack if he doesn’t change his lifestyle. Noeline makes him promise to stick to a good diet. Michael finally arrives home to an emotional Noeline delighted to have him back in the country. The joy doesn’t last long and he is soon confronted with his school report. Dione checks into hospital to be induced and Michael is thrilled that the baby will arrive soon – he’s got a \$100 bet with the neighbour that they’ll have a boy.

4 – “Oh my god – hello beautiful” – Dione Baker

Noeline breezes in from the hairdresser with a bottle of Dom Pérignon to help Paul and Dione celebrate their healthy new addition – Kane Alex Baker. As thrilled as she is, Noeline’s still worried about their financial situation: they don’t budget and she doesn’t even think they’ve tried! Paul and Dione bring Kane home to a house full of flowers and love, but this doesn’t help them buy the new fridge they desperately need. Another cause for celebration is Mick and Yvette’s daughter Lisa’s third birthday. Her party brings the family together, including Laurie’s first wife, and Mick’s mother, Judy. Relations between Judy and Noeline are strained but they manage to maintain their civility at the party. Maintaining composure with Michael, however, is becoming increasingly difficult for Noeline. He is a different person since his overseas trip – he even refuses to wash his hair! Laurie and Mick go ahead and buy their racecar – it’s got an oil leak but it should be easy enough to fix. Paul is having trouble adjusting to fatherhood but Noeline is proud of his hands on approach. Michael’s bad school report still haunts Noeline and she decides to confront him about it, Laurie butts in, and a yelling match around the breakfast bar ensues.

5 – “Laurie? Mate, he’s overweight, a drunk, disorderly, stresses out...” – Alan, the neighbour

Laurie’s hedonistic lifestyle is catching up with him and Noeline forces him to diet and cut down on the booze. If he doesn’t pass his physical he won’t be allowed to drive the racecar. Noeline offers him a scotch and soda as a healthier alternative to beer – she’s mystified by his lack of regard for the doctor’s orders. Mick also decides to get in shape and diet in preparation for his debut as a racing car driver. He even gets Yvette to buy him some fruit! Laurie sees a different doctor and finally scrapes through his physical with the help of a sedative and some massaging of the truth. Diet’s over and the celebrations begin with a slap up dinner and drinks. Michael continues to argue with Noeline and Laurie over just about everything. Amid the Baker dramas the Donahers have finally got their car out on the racetrack with Mick behind the wheel. A mechanical problem forces them out of the race and everyone is devastated. Not as devastated as Paul, whose car has blown a head gasket, he has to take out a loan to fix it and is so upset that Dione thinks he’s suicidal.

6 – “Oh Laurie I’d love to show you a photo. He was the most magnificent thing I’ve ever seen” – Noeline Baker

Sex it seems, is on the minds of all of the family at the moment. Dione coyly discusses her sex life post pregnancy. Noeline hosts a girls only party with a stripper as entertainment. She is agog when a strapping black man turns up. Later that night, Noeline confesses to Laurie about the stripper. He thinks its harmless fun but is put off because of his skin colour. Noeline concedes that she’d never ever go to bed with a black man but admires his magnificence. The stripper is the hot topic of conversation the next day out on the boat. Everyone is there except for Paul and Dione who are upset at not being invited. Back on dry land, and after the alcoholic haze has cleared, Noeline drops a clanger – she and Laurie are looking into adopting a child through the welfare agency Barnardos. Laurie thinks a little Chinese girl would be nice while Noeline thinks she might have to go to Alcoholics Anonymous in order to be approved as a foster carer. Dione doesn’t think Laurie will cope with a child messing up the house, Paul thinks Noeline will forget her real children but Michael doesn’t care because it’s his sixteenth birthday soon and he’s going to have a great party.

7 – “For god’s sake Laurie he can have a bloody party” – Noeline Baker

Michael’s party plans are in full swing but things come to a head when he suggests that they might need a bouncer to keep out any unwanted guests. This sets Laurie off on a tirade about the number of people coming and the fact that a bouncer might be required. Michael thinks it’s a good idea to help avoid any potential trouble. After a lengthy slanging match Laurie caps the guest list at forty friends and threatens to call it off if trouble erupts. The argument continues and Michael gives in and foregoes his party. Noeline is at her wits end and, in a moment of reflection, admits that she’s probably been too soft on Michael, as the baby of the family – from now on she’s going to be tougher. Paul and Dione plan their wedding, to be held at Laurie and Noeline’s with a celebrant, family and friends. Michael’s birthday arrives and in lieu of the cancelled party, all of the family gather at the house that evening for a private celebration. Dione steals away from the party to the neighbour’s house where she tries on a dress that she can borrow for her wedding – she says she feels like a princess in it and Noeline hopes that they will live happily ever after.

8 – “I haven’t got enough money to buy a friggin’ tube of toothpaste let alone go out and get pissed.” – Paul Baker

Happily ever after feels like a long shot for Paul and Dione at the start of this episode. Dione is nagging Paul to organise his buck’s party but he can’t see the point in wasting his money on booze. Dione finally wears him down and he agrees to go out with a couple of his mates. Dione and Paul watch the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade on TV and Paul outs himself as a homophobe. Over at Sylvania Waters Noeline and Laurie discuss the details of their European holiday with Pat and Alan who will also serve as witnesses at their wedding ceremony in Monaco. They are having second thoughts about fostering a child with a difficult past. Michael’s bad attitude continues to trouble Noeline and she asks Alan to have a word with him. Laurie and Mick’s racecar is costing a lot more money to run than anticipated and Yvette and Noeline are not happy. Noeline wonders why Laurie hasn’t offered to help fix Paul’s car, when he knows how little money they have; if it was Mick’s car she knows all hands would be on deck to help out.

9 – “Sometimes I think I’d be better off in a mental asylum” – Noeline Baker

Noeline feels torn in all directions: between the needs of her children, Laurie and herself. She is constantly worried about when the next argument will start and how it will end. In a major revelation, she admits to using alcohol to blot out her problems – sometimes it’s just easier to drink. Noeline hasn’t always had such a close relationship with alcohol – 15 years ago she didn’t drink at all. Now she drinks up to eight bourbons a night and knows that she causes household fights when she’s on a bender. While Noeline doesn’t actually think that she is an alcoholic she admits sometimes the drink controls her. Another major revelation is that Mick can’t work out how to turn the kettle on to make a cup of tea and phones Yvette for instructions. Paul is still worried about his lack of money while Noeline throws hers away at the TAB, Dione is just excited to be getting married in a proper dress and Michael is happy enough being a teenager stirring up his parents and hanging out with his mates.

10 – “I’d leave, I couldn’t handle him, if I was you, I couldn’t live with him” – Michael Baker

Noeline asserts she’s going to stop drinking bourbon – but only on weekdays. Once that’s under control, she has also decided to give up cigarettes. An unexpected consequence of her weekday sobriety is more fights with Laurie, who dismisses her shot at sobriety. They continue to bicker like cats and dogs to the point that Noeline breaks down and declares to Michael that her relationship with Laurie is not working regardless of how much she loves him. Michael reckons Laurie has anger management issues and Noeline resolves to leave him if there is another feud that evening. The wedding plans continue and all the Donaher/Baker women pitch in to organise the food and drinks. Even though Paul thinks the wedding is out of control he is happy that everyone is pulling together and helping them out. Dione parties with the girls until 5am for her hen’s night while Paul’s buck’s night is a more casual gathering at home with his mates. Amidst the flurry of wedding activities Noeline has an epiphany; she’s taking her life back and is going to do exactly what she wants to do: drink, smoke and marry Laurie.

11 – “She’s just the best chick I’ve met” – Paul Baker

Paul and Dione are finally going to tie the knot. Paul clears his head with a quick surf before the ceremony, while Dione prepares hair, make-up, dress and veil. Everyone else is at the house furiously preparing for the big event. Noeline is having second thoughts about eloping – maybe they should have a small celebration in the backyard before they leave instead. Laurie doesn’t want to get married at home and Noeline thinks Laurie has cold feet. After a few frantic final touches to Dione’s outfit she jumps aboard Blasé – her wedding carriage – and has a calming glass of champers while cruising around waiting for the celebrant who arrives late because he thought the ceremony was meant to be two hours later. Dione makes her grand entrance shuffling teary eyed down the gangway and into Paul’s arms. Finally they are hitched.

12 – “I think she loves everything about me” – Laurie Donaher

Laurie and Noeline are fighting again because he doesn’t want her family to stay in the house while they’re not there. In spite of their constant arguing, both agree they are perfectly happy together. Newlyweds Paul and Dione are also arguing, which is a first for them as a married couple. Laurie and Noeline bounce back from their barney in true style with a trip to the races. Noeline thumbs her nose at the stuffy people in the members lounge by defying their rules and standing up to cheer on her horse – she is rather chuffed at making a scene. Noeline and Laurie consider selling up and moving north when they get back from their trip. Laurie doesn’t want Mick to drive the racecar while he’s away and Mick is pissed off. He has a \$40,000 car sitting there and he can’t use it! Finally Noeline and Laurie host their own farewell gathering on Mother’s Day. Just when everything seems to be feud-free Paul storms in with Kane, and without Dione. She joins the party later and both are visibly upset and not talking to each other. Noeline is absolutely beside herself – why are they bringing their problems into her house on today of all days? They patch things up enough to go to the airport and say farewell amid lots of tears, photos and drinks. As their plane flies off Noeline wonders if her children will miss her.

reality check

watching Sylvania Waters

The Contributors
Exhibition Checklist
Artist Biographies

The Contributors

Daniel Mudie Cunningham is the Curator & Exhibition Coordinator at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre. He has curated over 15 exhibitions in Sydney since 1995; is a practicing artist whose last solo show was *Oh Industry* at MOP Projects in 2009; has written art criticism for *Art & Australia*, *Art Monthly Australia*, *Photofile*, *Eyeline*, *Artist Profile*, *runway*, *Artlink*, *Open Manifesto* and *Heat*; has written catalogue essays for the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Blacktown Arts Centre, Performance Space, Casula Powerhouse, MOP Projects, Firstdraft Gallery, Gallery 4A, VCA Gallery, Melbourne, and Metro Arts, Brisbane. He has a PhD in visual and cultural studies from the University of Western Sydney.

Andrew Mercado is the author of *Super Aussie Soaps* (Pluto Press, 2004) which devoted a whole chapter to *Sylvania Waters* – reprinted here with kind permission from the author. He is also a movie reviewer for *Mornings with Kerri-Anne*, hosts a TV review show on Foxtel's Showcase called *The Playlist*, writes a regular column for *TV Week*, supervises the release of classic Aussie TV series onto DVD for Umbrella Entertainment and blogs daily on his own website www.mercadotv.com.au

Anna Lawrenson has a PhD in Australian Studies from the Australian National University. Her thesis considered how Australian artists have subverted narratives of colonisation through the use of appropriation. In addition to pursuing her own research and writing projects Anna also manages a commercial gallery in Sydney with a focus on representing the work of contemporary Australian artists. In 2009 Anna was appointed as a casual curatorial and research assistant at Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre via the Emerging Curators grant from Arts NSW.

Exhibition Checklist

Mitch Cairns
Big Jobs, Dig Deep 2009
 acrylic and ink on linen
 84 x 61 cm
 Courtesy the artist & BREENSPACE, Sydney

Mitch Cairns
Loungeroom Painting (Sylvania Waters) 2009
 acrylic and ink on linen
 84 x 61 cm
 Courtesy the artist & BREENSPACE, Sydney

Mitch Cairns
House Sitting 2009
 acrylic and ink on linen
 84 x 61 cm
 Courtesy the artist & BREENSPACE, Sydney

Mitch Cairns
Lazy Susans/Bistro Fooooood 2009
 masonite, timber and steel
 100 x 90 x 90 cm
 Courtesy the artist & BREENSPACE, Sydney

Mitch Cairns
Untitled (Gate) 2009
 steel, enamel
 90 x 190 x 1.5 cm each panel,
 total dimensions variable
 Courtesy the artist & BREENSPACE, Sydney

Carla Cescon
Camps and outposts, an exercise with communication 2009
 two way radio, mixed media
 gallery installation: 250 x 200 x 60 cm;
 two exterior outposts positioned in Hazelhurst garden: 160 x 60 x 60 cm each (approx)
 Courtesy the artist

Peter Cooley
Noeline 1993
 earthenware and underglaze decoration
 80 x 30 x 30 cm (approx)
 Courtesy the artist & Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney

Peter Cooley
Laurie 1993
 earthenware and underglaze decoration
 75 x 30 x 30 cm (approx)
 Courtesy the artist & Ray Hughes Gallery, Sydney

John A. Douglas
Ask Noeline... (not the ogre) 2009
 pebblecrete and concrete pavers, artificial grass,
 inflatable plastic, polystyrene,
 HD pro res video, sound
 8 meters squared (approx)
 Courtesy the artist & Chalk Horse, Sydney

The Kingpins
Blond Ambition 2009
 synthetic hair and wire
 dimensions variable
 Courtesy the artist & Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

The Kingpins
Unstill Life 2009
 mixed media installation
 dimensions variable
 Courtesy the artist & Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

David Lawrey & Jaki Middleton
The world's more interesting with you in it 2009
 installation
 dimensions variable
 Courtesy the artists

Luis Martinez
'But that's not the answer either' 2009
 oil on canvas
 95 x 125 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney

Luis Martinez
'Have you got the TV off for any reason Yvette? It's like a morgue in here' 2009
 oil on canvas
 95 x 125 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney

Luis Martinez
'It's all they have' 2009
 oil on canvas
 95 x 125 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney

Luis Martinez
St Johns Road 2009
 graphite pencil on Stonehenge paper
 45 x 76 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney

Luis Martinez
Macintyre Crescent 2009
 graphite pencil on Stonehenge paper
 45 x 76 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney

Archie Moore
Doppelgänger 2009
 Installation
 dimensions variable
 Courtesy the artist

Archie Moore
Sylvania Wandjina 2009
 paper sculpture
 42 x 30 x 8 cm
 Courtesy the artist

Ms & Mr
Alternate Realities 1992/2009
 video installation
 dimensions variable
 Courtesy the artists & Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

Elvis Richardson
SYLVANIA WATERS / ELVIS RANTS AWAY I 2009
 inkjet on vinyl stretched on wooden frame
 300 x 450 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide

Elvis Richardson
SYLVANIA WATERS / ELVIS RANTS AWAY II 2009
 inkjet on vinyl stretched on wooden frame
 300 x 450 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide

Elvis Richardson
Television Guide August 4 1992 2009
 inkjet on vinyl stretched on wooden frame
 300 x 450 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide

Elvis Richardson
Television Guide August 4 2009 2009
 inkjet on vinyl stretched on wooden frame
 300 x 450 cm
 Courtesy the artist & Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide

Holly Williams
Family Feud 2009
 1989 Family Feud board game box, purchased from St Vincent de Paul, Miranda for \$3
 24 x 49 x 6 cm
 Courtesy the artist

Holly Williams
Happy Families 2009
 250 decks of playing cards
 Courtesy the artist

Mitch Cairns

Born 1984 in Camden
Lives and works in Sydney
Represented by BREENSPACE, Sydney

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2008: *Written & Recorded by Ringo Starr*, BREENSPACE, Sydney.
2008: *Slow Dancing*, Locksmith Project Space, Sydney.
2008: *hey, hey, hey, my, my, my gone, gone, gone*, MOP Projects, Sydney.
2007: *I want my pants ripped off by someone wild*, MOP Projects, Sydney.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Video Time*, curated by Abigail Moncrieff, MOP Projects, Sydney.
2008: *30th Anniversary*, Wollongong City Gallery, Wollongong.
2008: *Rimbaud/Rambo*, Neon Parc, Melbourne.
2008: *Stupid Little Dreamer*, Inflight, Hobart.
2008: *I am a Good Boy*, curated by Elise Routledge, Firstdraft, Sydney.
2006: *Plastic Myth*, curated by James Steel, Firstdraft, Sydney.

PUBLICATIONS:

- 2008: Shane Haseman, *Written & Recorded by Ringo Starr*, catalogue essay.
2008: Anneke Jaspers (guest editor), *Runway*, 11, Conversation.
2008: Kerrie Davies, "New Work", *Art World*, 1.

Carla Cescon

Born 1966 in Wollongong
Lives and works in Sydney

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Last dance, a close reading*, Institute of Contemporary Art Newtown, Sydney.
2009: *Untitled* with Mikala Dwyer, Hamish McKay Gallery, Wellington, NZ.
2008: *Bury the hatchet*, Institute of Contemporary Art Newtown, Sydney.
2008: *we three*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra.
2007: *Night crawlers + shapeshifters 100 days and nights in search of the Ramones*, Artspace, Sydney.
2006: *just checking what condition your condition is in*, Loose, Sydney.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *the good the bad and the muddy*, Mori Gallery, Sydney (an Australian Ceramics Triennale exhibition).
2009: *Sesto Quinto*, Ocular Lab, Melbourne.
2008: *girls, girls, girls*, The Carlton Hotel, Melbourne.
2007: *a Looseproject connection*, Taylor Square public art project, Sydney City Council, Sydney.
2006: *you show something to someone*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra.
2006: *Tomorrow again*, video performance/screening, a Scott Donovan Project, Artspace, Sydney.

PUBLICATIONS:

- 2009: Scott Donovan in conversation with Carla Cescon, "Wake up your dead!", *Runway*, February.
2008: Alex Gawronski, "double screen", *Column* 1, Artspace.
2007: "The Program", interview, ABC/JJJ Radio and Website.
2006: *Cones of Zontact* published by Loose, Sydney.
2006: *when you show something to someone*, exhibition catalogue, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra.

John A. Douglas

Born 1960 in Sydney
Lives and works in Sydney
Represented by Chalk Horse, Sydney

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2008: *Screen Test (Australiana/Americana) – Fragments & Stills*, Chalk Horse, Sydney.
2007: *Screen Test (Australiana)*, West Space, Melbourne.
2007: *James Dean Jesus*, Chalk Horse, Sydney.
2006: *Screen Test (Australiana)*, Firstdraft, Sydney.
2005: *Screen Test #3 (Americana)*, Blank_Space, Sydney.
2005: *Screen Idol (Americana)*, Artbox, Sherman Galleries, Sydney.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Australia?*, curated by Brendan Lee and Kristian Haggblom, Mildura Arts Centre, Regional Art Gallery, Mildura.
2008: *Neo Gothic: Back In Black*, curated by Alison Kubler, Queensland University Art Museum, Brisbane.
2008: *Australian Gothic*, curated by Shaun Wilson, Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, Perth.
2008: *PIXEL International*, curated by Damien Quillia, Academy Gallery, Launceston.
2008: *Southern Panoramas*, Videobrasil 16 Festival Internacional de Arte Electronica Valencia University Gallery, Spain.
2008: *After Cinema*, Directors Lounge 08, Berlin, Germany.
2007: *Video Brazil 2007: Panoramas of the Imagination*, d/Lux/MediaArts screening program.
2006: *Approaching Intimacy: Contemporary Miniatures*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, 1/2 Dozen Project, Sydney.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- 2009: Artscape, ABC TV, Broadcast, October.
2008: Andrew Frost, "Westworld" (Interview), *The Art Life*, 13 May.
2007: Brendan Lee, "More Video Art Please", *Artlink*, 27:3, September.

The Kingpins

Angelica Mesiti born 1976, Técha Noble born 1977, Emma Price born 1975, Katie Price born 1978
Live and work in Sydney
Represented by Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Cat of Nine Lives*, Wollongong City Gallery, Wollongong.
2009: *No Problem I'm a Material Girl in Touch with Life*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney.
2008: *Conversation Piece*, The Kingpins & The Gossip, performance, Art Basel Miami Deitch Projects Party, Miami, USA.
2007: *The Great Undead*, Fiac Art Fair, Paris.
2007: *Psychic Rehab*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris.
2007: *Radiomobile*, Art Basel, Switzerland.
2006: *The Great Undead*, Nuit Blanche, Parquet Pajol, Paris.
2005: CCB Performance event, Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney.
2005: *Rhapsody Happens*, Artspace, Sydney.
2005: *Versus*, Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, Newcastle.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2008: *Artspace 24/25*, Artspace, Sydney.
2008: *Leading Lights*, Ivan Dougherty Gallery, Sydney.
2008: *Fierce or Friendly: humans in the animal world*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart.
2006: *O.V.L. by REC.*, MIACA: Moving Image Archive of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.
2006: *New Acquisitions 2006*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.
2005: *Dress Code*, curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, MOP Projects, Sydney.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- 2009: Craig Judd, "The Kingpins", *Art World*, 8, April/May.
2009: Daniel Mudie Cunningham, "Queer today, gone tomorrow", *Art and Australia*, 46:4, Winter.
2008: *Current: Contemporary Art from Australia and New Zealand*, Edited by Art & Australia, p164-167.

David Lawrey & Jaki Middleton

Lawrey born 1973 in Melbourne
Middleton born 1979 in Sydney
Live and work in Sydney

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Time Trap*, Firstdraft, Sydney.
2008: *The wayback machine*, MOP Projects, Sydney.
2006: *The sound before you make it*, Wollongong City Gallery, Wollongong.
2005: *The sound before you make it*, Phatspace, Sydney.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Three of a Perfect Pair*, curated by George and Ron Adams, MOP Projects, Sydney.
2009: *Abandon Normal Devices*, Foundation for Art & Creative Technology, Liverpool, UK.
2009: *New Acquisitions 09*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.
2009: *Vertigo*, Gosford Regional Gallery, Gosford.
2009: *Experimenta Playground: International Biennale of Media Art*, Albury Library Museum, Bendigo Art Gallery, Victoria.
2008: *Play++ at ISEA2008*, Sculpture Square, Singapore.
2008: *Experimenta Playground: International Biennale of Media Art*, Performance Space, Sydney (touring).
2007: *Re:Staged Works*, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, Lake Macquarie.
2006: *Eyes Lies and Illusions*, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- 2009: Rachel Kent, "MCA Collection: New Acquisitions 2009", July 2009.
2008: Daniel Mudie Cunningham, "The Wayback Machine", catalogue essay, MOP Projects.
2007: Justine Khamara, "Eyes Lies and Illusions", *Artlink*, 27:2.
2007: Angela Ndalianis, "A Panesemiotic Cornucopia", *Realtime*, 77, February-March.

Luis Martinez

Born 1981 in El Salvador
Lives and works in Melbourne
Represented by Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2007: *Recent Works by Luis Martinez*, Wallspace Gallery, Sydney.
2006: *West: New Landscape Works by Luis Martinez*, Blacktown Arts Centre, NSW.
2005: *B-grade, Love and some other stuff*, Mori Gallery, Sydney.
2004: *Works by Luis Martinez*, Margot Hardie Gallery, NSW.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2008: *Frenzy*, MOP Projects, Sydney.
2008: *Landscape*, Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney.
2007: *Because You're Worth It*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Arts, Melbourne, MOP Projects, Sydney.
2007: *Grounded, Art, Activism, Environment*, Campbelltown Art Centre, NSW.
2006: *Originals*, Wallspace Gallery, Sydney.
2006: *Work In Progress*, curated by Sophia Kouyoumdjian, Blacktown Arts Centre, NSW.
2006: *Great Dividing Range*, curated by Lisa Byrne, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra.
2005: *Friends and Neighbours*, curated by Kathleen von Witt, Hawkesbury Regional Gallery, NSW.
2005: *Western Front*, curated by Janine Fenton Sager, Parramatta Heritage Centre, Braemar Gallery, Penrith Regional Gallery, NSW.
2005: *Exploration of Landscape*, curated by Sophia Kouyoumdjian, Blacktown Arts Centre, NSW.

PUBLICATIONS:

- 2007: Daniel Mudie Cunningham, "The Architecture of Dreams", catalogue essay for *West: New Landscape Works by Luis Martinez*, Blacktown Arts Centre, NSW.
2005: Jacqueline Millner, "Satellite of Love (I like to watch things on TV...)", *Runway*, 6, Watching.

Archie Moore

Born 1970 in Toowoomba
Lives and works in Brisbane

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Club*, Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane.
2006: *Depth of Field*, Ryan Renshaw Gallery, Brisbane.
2005: *New Flames Residency Exhibition*, Fire-Works Gallery, Brisbane.
2003: *Nympholepsy – A survey of 'Love' works*, Palace Gallery, South Brisbane.
2002: *Words I Learnt From The English Class*, Black Peppers Gallery, Brisbane.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Colliding Islands*, CAST Gallery, Hobart.
2009: *Making it New: Focus on Australian Contemporary Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.
2008: *les autres / the others*, Tjibaou Cultural Centre, Nouméa.
2008: *Greatest Hits/Previously Unreleased Tracks*, University of Sydney Gallery, Sydney.
2008: *Biennale of Sydney Online Venue*,
2008: *L'Aboriginal Festival Avignon*, Avignon, France.
2008: *The Revenge of Genres – Contemporary Australian Art*, Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France.
2007: *The Revenge of Genres – Contemporary Australian Art*, Les Brasseurs, Liège, Belgium.
2006: *Turrbal-Jagera*, University of Queensland, Brisbane.
2005: *Con:text*, Metro Arts, Brisbane.
2005: *Crossings: A Gathering of Artists*, SomArts Gallery, San Francisco Bayenalle, San Francisco, USA.
2003: *Prospect Portrait Prize Exhibition*, Prospect Gallery, Prospect.
2003: *One Square Mile*, Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane.
PUBLICATIONS:
2003: Rachael Langford, "Nympholepsy – A survey of 'Love' works", *Courier Mail*, 28 March.
2002: *Indigenous Law Bulletin*, 5:20, October.
2002: "Smart Art for under \$2000", *Australian Art Collector*, 22, October-December.

Ms & Mr

Stephanie nova Milne born 1980 in Sydney
Richard nova Milne born 1977 in Toronto
Live and work in Sydney
Represented by Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *There There Anxious Future*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney.
2009: *Physics is Pate*, Physics Room, Christchurch, NZ.
2007: *Heavy Sentimental*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney.
2004: *The Woman Who Mistook Her Husband For Art*, Francis Baker-Smith (Wren), Sydney.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Song of Sirens*, curated by Bala Starr, The Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne.
2009: *Vertigo*, curated by Jaki Middleton & Holly Williams, Gosford Regional Gallery.
2009: *Three of a Perfect Pair*, curated by George and Ron Adams, MOP Projects, Sydney.
2008: *Primavera 08*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.
2008: *Music Makes the People Come Together*, Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery, Lake Macquarie.
2008: *Show Me Your World*, curated by Hannah Mathews, Gitte Weise Gallery, Berlin.
2008: *Looking Out*, Macquarie University Art Gallery, Sydney.
2007: *Video Brazil 2007: Panoramas of the Imagination*, d/Lux/MediaArts screening program.
2007: *Projector: A screening of video works by Australian artists*, Broadstone Gallery, Dublin.
2007: *Multiple Personality*, curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, MOP Projects, Sydney.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- 2009: Adam Jasper, "Primavera", *Art & Australia*, 46:3 Autumn.
2009: Bec Dean, "The Fall of the Great Pink Wienie and Other Attractions", *Runway*, 12, Make-Believe, Summer.
2008: Jacqueline Millner, "Australian Video Art Since the 1980s", *Video Logic*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.
2008: *Current: Contemporary Art from Australia & New Zealand*, edited & published by Art & Australia, Sydney.
2007: Joanna Mendelssohn, "Heavy Sentimental: Ms & Mr", *Artlink*, 27:3.

Elvis Richardson

Born 1965 in Sydney
Lives and works in Melbourne
Represented by Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide.
- 2009: *HOUSED*, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.
- 2009: *Illume*, building projection, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Campbelltown.
- 2008: *Now 7 Years Later*, Fremantle Arts Centre.
- 2007: *Slide Show Land*, Canberra Contemporary Art Space, Canberra.
- 2007: *Impossibility of losing in the mind of someone winning*, James Dorahy Gallery, Sydney.
- 2005: *Hoddle Street Massacre*, Ocular Lab.
- 2004: *Welcome to Slide Show Land*, University of Alabama Gallery, Alabama, USA.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *I Walk the Line: New Australian Drawing*, curated by Christine Morrow, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.
- 2009: *Photographer Unknown*, curated by Kyla McFarlane, Monash Museum of Art, Melbourne.
- 2008: *Dream Home*, curated by Mary Pridmore, Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart.
- 2007: *Clip Art*, curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, Firstdraft, Sydney.
- 2007: *Drawing Show*, curated by Tamsin Green, Edith Cowen University, WA.
- 2007: *Ocular Notes*, George Patton Gallery, University of Melbourne, Melbourne.
- 2006: *If You Leave Me Can I Come Too*, curated by Bec Dean, ACP, Sydney.
- 2006: *Tomorrow Again*, curated by Scott Donovan, Artspace, Sydney.
- 2005: *Predictive TXT*, curated by Hany Armanious, Hamish Mackay Gallery, NZ.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- 2009: Christopher Heathcote, "Wrong Gear? The Basil Sellers Art Prize", *Art Monthly*, 221, July.
- 2009: Daniel Mudie Cunningham, "Elvis Richardson: scaling second hand mountains", *Eyeline*, 68.
- 2008: Marijke Davey, "Elvis Richardson: The Basil Sellers Art Prize", *Trouble*, August.
- 2006: Daniel Mudie Cunningham, "eBay and the Traveling Museum: Elvis Richardson's *Slide Show Land*", in *Everyday eBay: Culture, Collecting and Desire*, NY: Routledge.

Holly Williams

Born 1974 in Auckland, New Zealand
Lives and works in Sydney

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS:

- 2007: *Dissolution*, MOP Projects, Sydney.
- 2005: *Combinatoria*, SCA Galleries, Sydney.
- 2001: *Looking for the Ground*, Exporuimte MORGEN, Rotterdam.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS:

- 2009: *Vertigo*, Gosford Regional Gallery, Gosford.
- 2008: *The Shadow Theatre*, MOP Projects, Sydney.
- 2007: *Vertigo*, PICA, Perth.
- 2006: *Sometimes I might*, Townsville.
- 2005: *Elastic Archive Show*, Cross Art Projects, Sydney.
- 2005: *Tag Team Tournament*, Firstdraft, Sydney.
- 2004: *Puff 'n' Swallow*, Phatspace, Sydney.
- 2004: *Hold the Pickle, Lettuce takes on New Meaning*, Firstdraft, Sydney.
- 2003: *What the world needs now*, Phatspace, Sydney.
- 2003: *Me and my Coma*, Firstdraft, Sydney.
- 2002: *Queue Here*, Canberra Contemporary Artspace, Canberra.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

- 2006: "Editorial", *Runway*, 8, Trash, October.
- 2005: "Hanging out to Dry", *The Artlife*, <http://artlife.blogspot.com/2005/10/hanging-out-to-dry.html>.
- 2004: Sarah Rawlings, "Puff and Swallow", *Eyeline*, 55, Spring.
- 2004: Dominique Angeloro, "Puff 'n' Swallow", *Sydney Morning Herald: Metro*, June.
- 2003: "The Constructed Order of Our Daily Lives", *Runway*, 3, Chance, April.
- 2003: "Mapping the Trivial", *Runway*, 2, Collection, October.
- 2002: "Queue Here", *Artlink*, 23:1.

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