



REVIEW

seminar 3 - september



INSPIRATION BREAKFAST SERIES 2011

So, what do you get when you have two creative identities in the one room with a bunch of budding industry folk ready to absorb? An engorged design focused sponge oozing with caffeine and sleep deprivation. And welcome, to the 7am start of the DIA's Bubble and Speaks third breakfast seminar for 2011.

KT Doyle is an artist and designer...and my friend, but be warned, I show no favour to anyone that I review! Stephen Cameron from Hassell and Bubble seminar 01 knows this, as does his socks – or lack thereof, as it seems.

Jump on KT's fantastic web page and you can see it from the start, this gal knows a thing or two about creating a brand identity. The quirky graphics combined with a joy-to-navigate web page complete with online store and regularly updated design blog show how she has successfully made the transition from "starving artist" to Emerging Designer. It all seems so effortless, which as people in this industry know, really means it's been a hard, long, slow slog for KT to get where she is today. And boy, aren't we glad she finally arrived.

Travelled widely, KT began the Bubble and Speak slot with a collection of images that introduced us to who she was – a lover of all things ordered, with a preference for categories and a methodical approach to life and work. Essentially the world's most organised artist. A misnomer really – what we had in front of us was the bones of an ANTI-artist.

However, as KT was discussing how travels influenced whom she is and what she does and how storytelling features largely in her works, the beginning of her own story was being woven graphically in front of us. It was here a gorgeous black and white image of twenty something KT street performing in Paris introduced us to a cheeky, unknown side of this collected, centered woman. And with a slew of awards, exhibitions and commissions rolling over the pages of her CV, these achievements (and the Parisian photo) are testament to this designer who will go to great lengths for the sake of art.

Walking us through her artistic days with beautiful pieces such as "Where the roses fit, wear them" featuring 2000 handmade satin roses, which took 8 grueling months to complete, the commitment and detail to the work that KT does is phenomenal. And it is through this, the showing of her early works and journey to today, that we see just how beautiful and refined the process behind KT's works are.

A constant through her work, nature appears to be intrinsic to her being. It appears somewhat unavoidable, as most of her work shows a constant link with flora and the evolution of these natural elements over time. This led to KT's first wallpaper collection titled 'Falling Leaves', and the success of this work resulted in her exploring Australian themes such as gum leaves and coral as resident wallpaper designer with respected label Moore and Moore. Combine all this with a psychedelic bespoke "1920's meets Tim Burton, Beetle juice, Alice in Wonderland" wallpaper for haptic Brisbane bar Larouche and her most recent solo exhibition Collected Patterns - The Botany of Walter Hill, all are testament to the rigour, research and detail that KT feeds into these creations. And what emerges after, are beautiful conversations of natures in an assembly of contemporary artistic pieces.

You get a mixed box of presenters at Bubble and Speak, just like the contents of Cadbury Milk Tray. You get the 'Caramel Charm' the quiet unassuming designer that woo's you with their humility. The 'Fudge Tastic', those confident, brash architects that know you can't deny yourself their luxury. And then you get the 'Melting Moment' – or KT Doyle as I will now call this chocolate; and I quote from a reputable chocolate blog... "A lovely designer (chocolate) that does exactly what it says, leaving a long and lasting aftertaste, a nice one at that".

And that's our KT. There's only one melting Moment in the pack, and that's the way we like it.

Quote of the day: "I'll give anything a red hot crack" - KT talking about her process and a subtle nod to her Parisian street performing days – Je l'aime!



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Small, gremlin like and so damn cute you just want to grab him by the collar, stuff him in your bag and run away before anyone notices. And that people, is what I want to do with Ariel B, one small and hipster hairy part of Pandarosa. As Ariel took to the mike, he acknowledge the other half of this dynamic duo, Andrea B, shy and unassuming, present in the room but not on speaking duties today, and for the next 30 minutes we escaped to the world of the Panda's.

Returning to Brisbane after four years in Berlin – The Panda's blur boundaries. They are graphic designers, artists, branding agents, designers, consultants, surface designers, installation artists and simply awesome. The last one being the top credential in my books.

They are best known for their work at the iconic Hotel Fox in Copenhagen where their designs are alongside renowned international artists, rubbing shoulders with other humble Australian graphic design collectives like Rinzen. It was here in 2005, that Ariel spoke of the Panda's temporary home in this 'art camp' painting at 4am in the morning, with crazy artists bob sledding card board vessels down stairs, and generally creating kickarse interiors with their mind blowing graphics. Hotel rooms, a lobby space, the building's façade, sunshades and later restaurant were transformed from sterile white rooms to environments of escape. All at the hands of Andrea and Ariel and some keen helpers.

After graduating university, the Panda's realised quickly that works on paper didn't really interest them. But once these images were put on walls, ceilings and floors, their work came to life and people began noticing them. This opened up some interesting opportunities and commissions most importantly, one's where they actually got paid!

Working on a large-scale format, varying works from paste up's to detailed hand renders and collage based applications, the Panda's are not just applying a picture for the sake of prettiness. They're all about creating a mood and changing a place for the viewer – achieved through playing with the notion of thresholds to define spaces and creating a journey through their environments.

Printing on fabrics, newspaper and PVC sheeting, the duo push boundaries (and the tempers and machinery of their favourite print houses) to set them aside from the other graphic cowboys out there. It's this hand's on approach that makes their work accessible and relatable.

As a mind boggling amount of images race across the screen , Ariel takes us on their time from early graduated Monash University days, to setting up their practice, to moving overseas and then back to Melbourne again. You can actually see their work grow and evolve over time, mature through the years as processes become more refined and the duo grows closer artistically. Recent works such as Vanilla Cup Cake store show a thorough approach to the design process, with thinking not restricted to a mere company logo, but extended via identity branding through menus, vinyl graphics, cards, and the interiors. The Panda's are diversifying and all grown up, but undoubtedly still big kids at heart.

For those outside the graphic industry, generally people don't recognize the designer behind the works as the works are often branded for a particular client. However, you could sense the crowd recognising certain pieces of work here and there, and putting two and two together as the Panda-penny dropped. But in saying that, the Panda's have such a unique, intelligent visual language that it's unavoidable to miss their work.

Ariel mentions that people's interpretation of the works is his favourite part. Friend to Ariel looking at work: "Man, I really like that whale in that work". Ariel to Friend: "What whale – there is no whale!?!?" And it's this oddball, individual connection to their work that make it all worthwhile.

Ariel's effortless enthusiasm, high-pitched laugh, humorous anecdotes and super cool Chilean accent are hard to not like. His constant referencing to Andrea ("she's the arty one, I'm the graphic one") makes it pretty easy to see these guys are only going to go onto bigger and better things, which is great considering they call Australia home.

So if KT Doyle is the 'Melting Moment' of the Cadbury Milk Tray – what does that make the Panda's? I'd say they are the 'Strawberry Kisses', the quirky centered, brightly coloured explosion of flavour, which makes you feel like a kid experiencing something new and exciting for the first time, always wanting more after you've finished. Guess this just means that Cadbury Milk Tray will have to put two Strawberry Kisses in their box now. VICTORY!

Quote of the day: "I pay the bills, Andrea just sits there and paints" Ariel and his one sided view on how the team works. Oh woe is you Ariel – good score Andrea!

The Bubble and Speak series is rad. You should come. The next one is Thursday October 20th. Come be tired with me, but totally inspired after.