

VISIBLE HUMAN BODIES

PETA CLANCY

presented in association with thirtyseven degrees - Contemporary Fine Art Gallery, Sydney

Visible Human Bodies was developed during an artist residency in the Cell and Gene Therapy (CAGT) laboratory at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI), Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne. In the laboratory Peta Clancy worked alongside scientists who are investigating ways of treating genetic disorders through the use of gene therapy. In such experiments bacteria are used as 'factories' to produce and modify DNA. This modified DNA is then used for a range of purposes including gene sequencing (as in the case of the human genome project), determining the function of particular genes and in the development of gene therapies.



Using various needle-like instruments and working with different strains of pathogenic bacteria (those that cause disease) the artist drew the outline of the human figure onto the surface of agar in a Petri dish. Thus prepared, the dishes were incubated for several days, during which time the image materialized in a curious echo of photographic development.

Working with pathogenic bacteria is, of course, dangerous; requiring the observation of strict protocols. While making the work the artist was acutely aware of her own vulnerability and in the

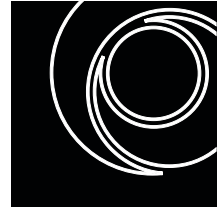
finished work the culture growing on the dish becomes a metaphor for the fragile, transient, mutable and constantly changing nature of the human body - created from the very organisms that threaten its survival.

Peta Clancy would like to thank Panos Ioannou

Peta Clancy was born in Melbourne in 1970. She studied Fine Arts at RMIT University, Melbourne and the University of Tasmania (BA Hons) and Media Arts at RMIT (MA). She is currently a PhD candidate at Monash University Faculty of Arts and Design.

Received a number of public grants and awards including the Australia Council London Artist Residency.

ROOMNOTES



australian centre for photography

Exhibiting since 1993 with more than 25 shows in Australia and Europe including Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne; Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, England; Gallery 5020, Salzburg, Austria; Next Wave festival 2002, Melbourne and the International Congress of Genetics 2003, Melbourne.

IMAGE © Peta Clancy *Untitled* from the series *Visible Human Bodies* (detail) 2005 Courtesy of thirtyseven degrees - Contemporary Fine Art Gallery, Sydney



Australian Centre for Photography is supported by the NSW Government through Arts NSW, the Australia Council, the Australian Government's arts funding and advisory body, and the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.