

# Matt Ellwood

## Taste the Good Times



**26 February – 21 April 2013**

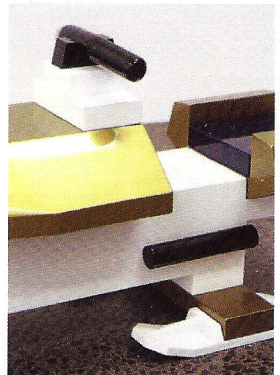
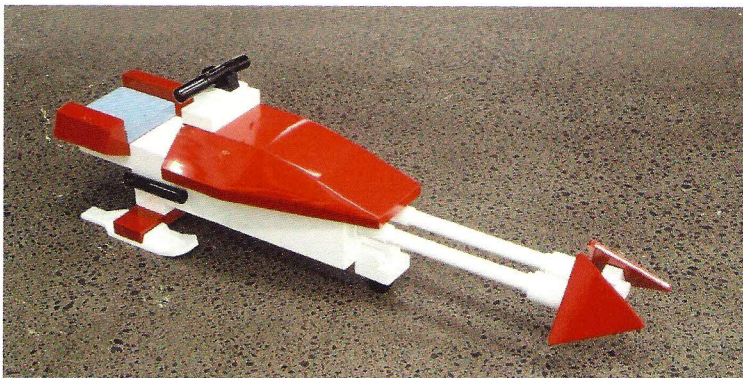
The Pah Homestead, TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre

# Taste the Good Times

Nine years ago as an emerging artist and recent MFA graduate, Matt Ellwood won the Wallace Arts Trust Development Award. At the time the prize included a three-month residency in New York at the prestigious International Studio and Curatorial Program. This experience had a profound effect on his artistic perspective and still resonates within his current practice. In 2011 Ellwood once again entered the Wallace Art Awards winning the Kaipara Foundation Wallace Arts Trust Award, which included a three-month residency in Switzerland at the Altes Spital Cultural Center. This exhibition at the Pah Homestead, TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre, *Taste the Good Times*, refers to the seven years between these two events and is a survey of this particular period of his artistic production. It covers the range of his appropriation-based methodologies from hand-crafted sculptures that appear commercially manufactured; to print imagery that has been either digitally reworked or translated into highly detailed charcoal drawings.

Taking up much of the upstairs galleries of the Pah Homestead, the exhibition consists of 29 key works including the sculptures that won the two awards: the 2004 *Imperial Lights & 20's*, and the 2011 *Unconditional Love*. Each references StarWars Lego with which the artist has an equivocal love/hate relationship – the ideal retrospective partnership from a '70s boy's perspective and yet particularly sinister in regard to structuring the desire of today's children. *Imperial Lights & 20's* conflates this ambivalence with the colour codification of Marlboro cigarettes, adding a subversive undertone that mirrors the cynicism of profit-making. *Unconditional Love*, on the other hand, utilises a craft aesthetic to emphasise the anthropomorphism inherent in the movies' use of robots, twisted with the notion of genetic deformity as a side effect of humanity.

The search for outdated and subsequently banned cigarette advertising as an allegory for ideological censorship and control underpins much of the work from 2004-2011. Finding an abundance of this imagery in 1970s men's magazines led to an offshoot work, *Playboys* in 2005, a 4.7 metre-long charcoal drawing, created during the three months spent in New York City, bringing together six images of self-promotion from the iconic



*Imperial Lights & 20's*, 2004, MDF, dowel, lacquer, 380 x 260 x 1100mm each, Collection of the Wallace Arts Trust.

magazine of the artwork's title. By utilising the text of these advertisements in various ways such as speech bubbles for the models and by subtracting particular features and objects, the already outmoded messages and visuals become even more absurd and ironic. The resulting effect firstly undermines the validity of the six male protagonists' roles as successful, discriminating and desirable, then begins to undermine the idea of creativity and imagination, becoming a reflective critique of the drawing itself.

The *Citizen K* suite of drawings, created during Ellwood's most recent residency in Switzerland, is exhibited here for the first time in New Zealand. These works display a definitive shift away from earlier work, responding instead to the responsibilities of fulfilling the residency, but more specifically to the reality of inhabiting an apartment with the accumulated 'junk' of numerous previous residency artists.

One particular magazine, *Citizen K* (Paris), Winter 07/08, drew specific attention as it had been scrawled in by the previous artist's five year old daughter. Her perhaps unwitting creation of readymade social critiques on fashion, beauty and consumerism were the inspiration in producing this series of couture advertising based drawings.

In the Boardroom is the *Germaine Greer Series*, a body of work exhibited in a solo show called *Alabama Song* at The General Store for Contemporary Art in Sydney, 2011 and, like *Citizen K*, until now unseen in this country. Inspired by the 40th anniversary of Greer's criminal conviction in New Zealand for the use of obscene language during the promotion of her ground-breaking book *The Female Eunuch*, Ellwood reproduces, in charcoal, the nine adverts that appeared throughout her *Playboy* interview from the previous year. The advertisements are predominantly cigarette- and alcohol-based, obviously aimed at men, but are heavily undermined by the message Greer is trying to put across in the text. The artist addresses this ideological disjuncture and accentuates the New Zealand context by blacking out or censoring each advertisement's text. The interview itself was amusingly laden with her expletives, which became the source for Ellwood's limited edition artist book called *Holiday Anniversary Issue* where all the non-swearing content was removed leaving a kind of accidental formalist potty-mouthed poetry.



*Playboys*, 2005, charcoal on paper, 840 x 4680mm.

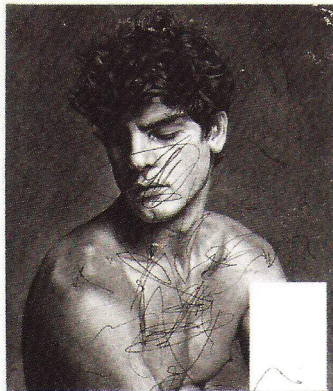
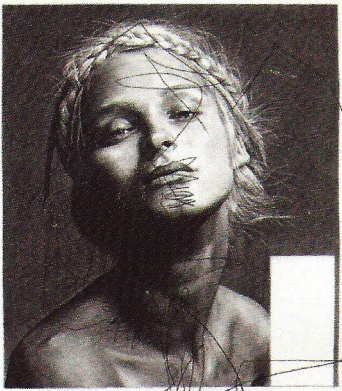
Matt Ellwood was born in Wellington 1973. He completed his BFA in 1996, has a PgDip in Education from the Auckland College of Education, 1997, and a Master of Fine Arts (first class honours) from Elam School of Fine Arts, 2003. He currently lives and works in Auckland, where he is a Senior Lecturer in the Fine Arts Department at Whitecliffe College of Arts and Design. His website is [mattellwood.co.nz](http://mattellwood.co.nz).

## Matt Ellwood Selected Exhibitions

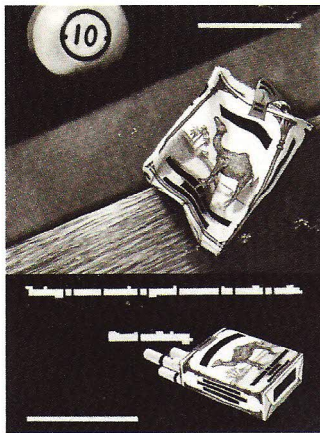
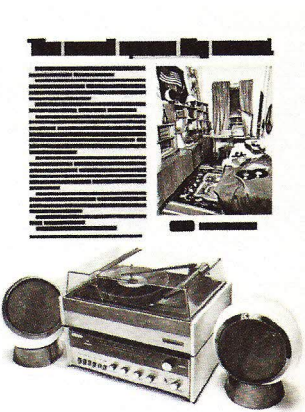
**Solo Projects and Collaborations:** **2012** *Sweethearts*, Gow Langsford Gallery Window, Auckland; *Citizen K*, Altes Spital Cultural Centre, Solothurn, Switzerland. **2011** *Alabama Song*, The General Store for Contemporary Art, Sydney; *Wall Drawing* (collaboration with Jason Lindsay as AFTERWORK), Te Tuhi Gallery drawing wall, Auckland. **2009** *Negotiations & Love Songs*, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland. **2007** *Girls & Boys* (with Steve Carr), Silvershot Gallery, Melbourne. **2006** *Tastes Good*, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland; *Libation City* (collaboration with Jason Lindsay as AFTERWORK), Rm 103 Gallery, Auckland. **2005** *Playboy*, ISCP, New York; *Pleasure. Satisfaction.*, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland. **2004** *Start Walking*, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland. **2002** *Incidental*, RM 401, Auckland. **2001** *Some of my best friends are brown*, Artstation, Auckland.

**Group Shows:** **2013** *Headlands Sculpture on the Gulf*, Waiheke Island, Auckland. **2012** *Play*, The Pah Homestead, TSB Wallace Arts Centre, Auckland. **2011** *The Wallace Art Awards*, The Pah Homestead, TSB Wallace Arts Centre, Auckland and Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt (Kaipara award winner); *Into the light, works from Aotearoa*, Montclair MFA Gallery, New Jersey. **2010** *Everything is near and inflorescent, forever and present*, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland. **2009** *Trust Waikato National Contemporary Art Award*, Waikato Museum, Hamilton. **2008** *Trust Waikato National Contemporary Art Award*, Waikato Museum, Hamilton. **2007** *Group Show*, Michael Lett Gallery, Auckland; *Trust Waikato National Contemporary Art Award*, Hamilton. **2006** *Trust Waikato National Contemporary Art Award*, Waikato Museum, Hamilton; *Michael Lett in Wellington*, 7 Hawker St, Wellington; *Melbourne Art Fair*, Michael Lett Stand, Melbourne. **2005** *NADA Art Fair*, Michael Lett Stand, Miami; *Artists On Their Way*, Wallace Trust Gallery, Auckland; *Duets II*, Rm 103 Gallery, Auckland. **2004** *The Wallace Art Awards*, Wallace Trust Gallery, Auckland, Dowse Art Museum, Lower Hutt (Development Award Winner); *New Zealand Art*, Canary Gallery, Auckland; *Duets*, Ramp Gallery, Waikato. **2002** *Break*, Biennial, Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth.





Top: *Narciso*, 2012, charcoal on paper, 740 x 560mm; *Rodriguez*, 2012, charcoal on paper, 740 x 560mm, Collection of the Wallace Arts Trust. Centre: *Germaine Greer Series*, 2011, charcoal on paper, 690 x 510mm – *Germaine Greer Series*: Pg 67; *Germaine Greer Series*: Pg 73; *Germaine Greer Series*: Pg 79. Bottom: *Unconditional Love*, 2011, Plywood, Beeswax, 900 x 1100 x 1500mm, Collection of the Wallace Arts Trust.



Cover image: *Taste the Good Times*, 2006, digital print on aluminum,  
465 x 1040mm, Collection of the Wallace Arts Trust.



Published on the occasion of the exhibition *Taste the Good Times*, by Matt Ellwood, 26 February – 21 April 2013.

© 2013 by The Wallace Arts Trust, Auckland, New Zealand

All works are published courtesy of the artist and The Wallace Arts Trust.

All rights reserved. No part of this catalogue may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

**The Pah Homestead, TSB Bank Wallace Arts Centre** 72 Hillsborough Road, Hillsborough, Auckland  
Tues-Fri 10am-3pm, Sat and Sun 10am-5pm T: 09 639 2010 [www.tsbbankwallaceartscentre.org.nz](http://www.tsbbankwallaceartscentre.org.nz)

