

Lost & Found

Patrick Pound's collecting habits were initially a form of research, but now his vast collections of found photographs have become the work itself. **Dan Rule** speaks to him about the up-cycling of his archives.

PORTRAIT BY KIRSTIN GOLLINGS



1.



“He had put together a collection of photographs of people reading books, or with books, for us to look through and even use as props,” photographer Kirstin Gollings comments on her photoshoot with Patrick Pound.



P

atrick Pound has long worked to eschew art's inherent artiness. Gathering, compiling, honing and curating collections from his wider archive, the New Zealand-born artist's quiet throngs of found photographs – some ever so slightly altered or manipulated – compositions of objects and street detritus underwrite a logic that shoulders both the inquisitive and a fascination with the narratological. His work sidles a forensic and subtly poetic bent.

“One thing I’ve often thought about over the years is that I want to resist falling into *art*,” he offers with a laugh. “It sounds kind of weird, but I just don’t want to *artify* it.” Another chuckle.

Indeed, it may seem an odd assertion, but it’s exactly this anomaly that makes Pound’s practice – which finds its nexus in the vast archive that dominates his studio in Brunswick in Melbourne’s inner north – so engaging and even poignant. That vernacular images and objects are his mode of research and expression gives his work an irrevocably intimate, nostalgic and unassuming air.

“It’s anti-mannerism basically,” he muses. “I’m not interested in mannerism ... I just want to be really straight and methodical about things, because it’s a sentimental process already and an expressive form, so you really don’t have to say anything. When it comes to painting, everyone can recognise someone who possesses that lightness of touch with a brush, like **Édouard Manet** or someone. I like the idea that in conceptual art you can show a lightness of touch like that as well. You can be just as thorough and saturated, yet light.”

It is a statement that speaks volumes about Pound’s practice, which essentially takes the form of an expanded list-making process. His gatherings – or puzzles as he puts it – of seemingly esoteric vernacular images are strung together via simple cues, parameters and rules. His *Portrait of the Wind*, which is showing at Stills Gallery in April, comprises an enormous collection of found portraits of people “who happened to be in the wind”, while his much-celebrated *Crime Scene* series from the same year features photographs in which the subjects appeared to be deceased (the majority of them were sleeping). *Woodside Road 2001–2011*, which showed as part of a group show at Melbourne’s Sarah Scout in early 2012, comprised objects found on the street in which he grew up in New Zealand, anything from chintzy jewellery, an asthma inhaler, a shuttlecock and a cassette mix-tape to a toy camera and a clump of human hair forming an arcane but somehow affecting tableau, the detritus somehow forging a connection and shared experience between the street’s fleeting inhabitants.

Pound describes his more recent work as “compiling and constructing evidence” and posing the world “as if it were a puzzle and it could be solved”.

“It works on the premise that meaning might be

1.
Patrick Pound, *The Photographer's hand II*, 2011. Giclée print on archival paper, framed, 63 x 62cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND MELANIE ROGER GALLERY, AUCKLAND

2.
Patrick Pound, *The Missing #2*, 2013. Giclée print on archival paper, 35 x 36cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND MELANIE ROGER GALLERY, AUCKLAND

3.
Patrick Pound, *The Missing #1*, 2013. Giclée print on archival paper, 35 x 36cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND MELANIE ROGER GALLERY, AUCKLAND

found in the accumulation of details, as if the world's just some vast series of overlapping lists and if we can find the last piece we'll solve the puzzle," explains Pound, whose work is held in the National Gallery of Victoria, National Gallery of Australia, Auckland Art Gallery, Te Papa Tongarewa the Museum of New Zealand, Christchurch City Art Gallery and numerous private collections. "So in a way, it's a bit of a folly. Like so many artists, I started collecting to inform the work. Then the collections became the work, essentially because I found things that were more meaningful than anything I could make ... and I say that unashamedly."

Pound will be showing *The Photographer's Shadow* at Melanie Roger Gallery in Auckland throughout June, a series that compiles vernacular photographs in which the photographer's shadow has made an incursion into the frame and follows recent works such as *The Missing* in which he has deleted people from postcards and photographs via Photoshop, teasing out strands of humour and menace in equal measure.

"Over the years I've sort of come to the conclusion that I'm really collecting towards a logic of documents," says Pound, who never discards or sells original images or objects from his archive. "It's really about gathering your thoughts through things."

"Everything I look at and am interested in is kind of redundant ... I'm just putting them back to use for myself and other people." A chuckle. "It's really just a big up-cycling project."

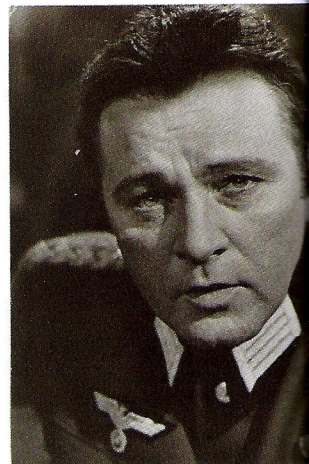
“...meaning might be found in the accumulation of details, as if the world’s just some vast series of overlapping lists and if we can find the last piece we’ll solve the puzzle.”

New work by Patrick Pound will be exhibited at Melanie Roger Gallery in Auckland from 5 June to 29 June 2013. Pound's *Portrait of the wind* will be exhibited at Stills Gallery in Sydney as part of the group show *The Big Picture* from 17 April to 18 May 2013.









Dr Kyla McFarlane

ASSOCIATE CURATOR, CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY

“Patrick Pound is significant, for one, in the expansiveness of his practice. He’s incredibly intelligent with materials and objects, and while his work is utterly contemporary, it also possesses this theoretical depth in his awareness of the history of photography and the way the idea of the collection works. Another fascinating aspect of his practice is that it’s ongoing. The idea of the collection and the archive that he’s working with is a broader project throughout his practice, so his work has a really interesting consistency about it, but also a freshness. It’s almost auteur-ish in a sense.

“The question of, What is the artist?, that his work poses is also of interest. He’s one of the few people doing something really different with that line of enquiry, and in a very subtle way.

“You can look at the work as quite light, but in other ways it’s very dense and considered in an emotional sense and also very broad in terms of its interests in the way objects sit in art history. He’s deeply knowledgeable about photography, but you don’t necessarily need to know that when you look at the work.

“Something that Patrick manages to achieve in his work, which is very hard to do, is juxtapose that lightness – that very smart, witty and dry sensibility – with an aspect that can be really touching. It’s almost a sense of pathos in our affinity with objects, photographs and things more generally.”

Dan Rule



Melanie Roger

DIRECTOR, MELANIE ROGER GALLERY, AUCKLAND

Patrick Pound’s new Auckland dealer Melanie Roger believes that his June exhibition arrives with ample anticipation. “This will be Patrick’s first solo exhibition in Auckland since 2007, so there is considerable interest from both private collectors and public collections. His work has been included in curated group shows at Melanie Roger Gallery including *Metroland* in 2010. Last year his solo exhibition *Bank Jobs* at Hamish McKay Gallery in Wellington was very well received, so now it’s Auckland’s turn!”

For Roger, the anticipation came as little surprise. “Patrick’s work has been included in over 70 curated group exhibitions,” she said. “Most recently, his work was featured in the exhibition *Liquid Archive*, curated by Geraldine Barlow for Monash University Museum of Art, and he was an exhibiting finalist in the 2012 14th Basil Sellers Art Prize at The Ian Potter Museum of Art in Melbourne. Successful recent solo exhibitions have also included *Collected Works: Telling Things* at Fehily Contemporary, Melbourne in 2011, and *Soft Archive* at Grantpirrie Gallery, Sydney in 2010.

While the secondary market has been slow of late in New Zealand, there have been some solid auction results. “There have not been a lot of secondary market sales of Patrick’s work in recent years, but the few works that have come through New Zealand auction houses have held their value well.”

Dan Rule





4.

Patrick Pound, *Portrait of the wind*, 2011. Giclée print on archival paper, 127 x 230cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND MELANIE ROGER GALLERY, AUCKLAND

5.

Patrick Pound, *Studio Nazis*, 2013. Giclée print on archival paper, 30 x 150cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND HAMISH MCKAY, WELLINGTON.

6.

Patrick Pound, *The Photographer's Shadow*, 2011. Giclée print on archival paper, 127 x 259cm.

COURTESY: THE ARTIST AND HEILY CONTEMPORARY, MELBOURNE

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