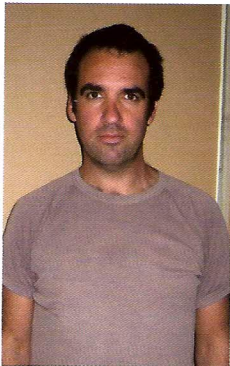


# 25. matt ellwood

Born Wellington 1973  
MFA (Hons) Elam 2003  
PDT ACE 1997  
Lives in Auckland

Matt Ellwood has a love/hate relationship with the 1970s, the first decade of his life. On the one hand, he feels nostalgia for pictorial ephemera aimed at adults from a time before he reached his teens. On the other, he abhors the manipulation of the 'me generation' by advertisers, particularly the cigarette industry. He is interested in the parallels that can be drawn between the 1970s and the present. AIDS and cancer warnings have put paid to free sex and associated social smoking, yet desire and self-indulgent consumption have not gone away, and are still being catered to by advertisers and providers of 'services'. Ellwood ponders whether the advertising of today will be seen in 30 years as being as banal, cynical and exploitative as that of the 1970s. Do we really have control over our reaction/response to advertising? Will the cult of the he-man, bursting out of his open-neck shirt, surrounded by admiring women, or riding his palomino in the clean, green, great outdoors, ever come again? Similarly, he muses on the ironies of health warnings on cigarette packets when our health system appears to be breaking down.

Ellwood's media are sculpture, charcoal and pastel (for drawing, at which he excels), and the digitally scanned and manipulated image. His sources are childhood toys and family photographs, contemporary packaging and adverts torn from magazines such as *Playboy* and *Viva*. Almost all his imagery is appropriated, and is either presented unaltered in carefully selected conjunctions, edited, or digitally altered. His black-and-white drawings are often greatly (and laboriously) enlarged from the original coloured adverts. Some portions of the originals are omitted, leaving narratives inconclusive (cf. McMillan, 64). Where he is working





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