

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.

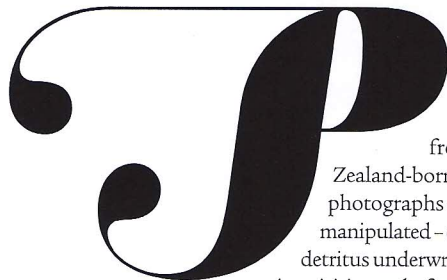
PORTRAIT BY KIRSTIN GOLLINGS



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.



Patrick Pound has long worked to eschew art's inherent arty-ness. 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."

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.

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