

GEOFFREY DRAKE BROCKMAN “LOOKING GLASS’

Linton and Kay – 5 May 2016

Opening Speech by Jude Van de Merwe

Thank you Juliana for an inspiring and moving song. The English translation of part of the song *Belas Artes* that I find particularly apposite are:

*In the mirror of the sky
Ballerinas spinning
In spirals and origamis
Petals or diamonds
That open n the air, flying in the air*

Juliana captures the sense of the far-flung strands of a boundless imagination that Geoffrey allows himself to be whisked away on. It's this capacity to give imagination full reign – to stretch his capabilities and to simply wonder *what if* - that results in the works you see around you tonight. And while the works mirror us, Juliana's song mirrors the works and an expansive process is begun.

If you are looking for comfortable art, for nostalgia or overt romance in art, this exhibition may prove challenging for you. Geoffrey's use of bright, hard surfaces and colours that are high on the chromatic scale are confronting. When I went to Geoffrey's studio a few weeks ago to see the work, there were some pieces in the new work that were just plain difficult for me to look at.

For me there's a connection to the op art work of Bridget Riley made in the 1960's, a tradition which is also challenging to look at for any length of time without feeling I may be sucked through that looking glass.

Yet this world of chrome, polished reflective surfaces and mirror is one we occupy and aspire to daily – we are deeply drawn to shiny new objects – cars, computers, apps and household equipment that reflects us, and our every move.

The exemplary West Australian artist Carol Rudyard also used this desire for a mirrored reflection in household objects to good effect in her work, much of which is in public state and national collections.

While we may hope that what we see in the mirror daily is THE REALITY, what we get is a visual distortion dependent on light, angle, surrounding colours and mood. Geoffrey's work is forceful – it pulls you inside – your choice is taken

away – you are induced into the Looking Glass and behind – to a world that defies your notions of reason and self.

These are works for the thoughtful and deliberate collector.

This exhibition is also an unparalleled opportunity to review a career in the making of art. Geoffrey has generously shared with us a history of his making and thought processes as well as a peek at his public work for which he is very well known. And what is plain is that the works made this year build on the works made twenty years ago – there is a clear thought process and making capability.

A re-making of the very well known and highly traveled ‘Counter’ is here tonight.

The work reinforces the deliberation with which Geoffrey wishes to count us all in as participants in the art he makes, and it is this which counts us in and opens the exhibition.