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it introduces the idea of the academy and the role it has in forming a discourse around Asia. She says she intended to highlight the way in which academia claims to occupy an impartial position yet is intricately involved not only in the production of 'Asia' in the public consciousness but also has significant business interests in the region. The setting is still desolate and sinister, however: the setting for a thriller - abandoned carpark, dark and dangerous. Alternatively in Standoff and Upshot, images that depict a small area of damp-strained wall, piping and electrically switches, we can easily imagine the setting to be an industrial horror-hole where multitudes of unidentifiable Asian workers are subjugated and forced to work in dangerous conditions. Rather than detracting from the work these multiple readings articulate the way in which we imagine the unknown - the way in which our imaginations collect snippets of information and build a picture of the 'Asian other'.

Bridget Crone
May 2000

1. changeover	digital print/sandpaper/ aluminium	65cm x 120cm	2000
2. standoff	digital print/sandpaper/ aluminium	65cm x 115cm	2000
3. upshot	digital print/sandpaper/ aluminium	65cm x 130cm	2000
4. pushover	digital print/sandpaper/ aluminium	65cm x 120cm	2000
5. backslide	digital print/sandpaper/ aluminium	65cm x 130cm	2000

UNDER WORLD

PENELOPE RICHARDSON

WEST SPACE
 1-17 JUNE 2000

UNDER WORLD

Under world, going under/below/beneath/beyond meanings that lie below the surface, cultural memory, learned and assimilated knowledges that exist in the subconscious waiting for recognition. Untold stories can also emerge from below the surface. These are stories of movement and migration, culture and race, difference, perception and imagination. This is the terrain we enter in Penelope Richardson's Under World.

Under World is an extension of Richardson's Stories from Home project. Stories from Home was developed around a series of interviews focussing on people's experience of the way cultural imagery enters into mass-circulation and comes to influence our perception, imagination and memory. Stories from Home works with personal responses to cultural stereotypes while Under World is engaged in the process of looking beneath the surface. It's work that scratches at the surface and hints at things that are less discernible but nevertheless familiar.

Under World consists of a series of five digital images that are framed by grids of sandpaper in a range of colour and textures. The rough surface and colour of the sandpaper contrasts with the glossy yet dim and shadowy photographs. The strict, regulated, geometric arrangement of the coloured squares signals to the art specific context of Geometric Abstraction, as well as having the purely aesthetic function of offsetting the smoothness of the photographic surface.

The images - Changeover, Standoff, Upshot, Pushover and Backslide - are all set in the cavernous underground carpark at the University of Melbourne. Changeover takes a long range view of the carpark - it looks sinister, like a huge catacomb, or an oppressive, uninhabited industrial space. The middle three



images, Standoff, Upshot and Pushover all show 3m long painted silk banners hung in the carpark. The images, painted by memory from newspaper clippings, are portraits of an unidentified soldier, a general, and a business man. These painted images in Standoff, Upshot and Pushover all seem so very familiar and ghostly as if they have come to represent something about 'Asia' in our cultural memory, but interrogating what and how these images effect us is more difficult. The full extent of the sinister nature of the setting is brought home in Backslide. As if we are caught mid-motion, Backslide is like that frame that flashes up in the middle of the movie-chase - a possible escape route? But what is the blackness beyond? The atmosphere is definitely full of intrigue and backroom dealing.

Who would know that the setting is the underground carpark of a university? The textual background of the role of the academy is lost on all but a few knowing viewers. Richardson says she chose the University carpark as the setting because



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