

SFA Press and Ingo Kleinert are pleased to announce the monograph *Two Decades*, to be launched by Professor John Clark, Australian Research Council Professorial Fellow, Sydney University, 7pm Thursday 29 July at the opening of *Rejoining the Land*.

Rejoining the Land is positioned at the intersection between cultures where corrugated iron can speak of multiple histories. Beautiful and troubling, iron's global democratic reach extends from the leaves of iron gracing contemporary architecture to the roofs and walls of self-built shelters. Discarded, it reflects its history of use: scarred, marked, rusting and burnt it is retrieved and recycled.

Jennifer McFarlane writes, 'The earth that is framed is the landscape that birthed the iron and to which the iron returns.' In this series the riveted iron refers to the repair and renewal of the environment stitching fragile fragments together in the process of *Rejoining the Land*. These works acknowledge the need to replenish and rebuild the land and our shared responsibility for its future.

Ingo Kleinert, June 2010

On launching Ingo Kleinert's book with a text by Jenny McFarlane, *Two Decades*, Lyneham, SFA Press, 2010
By John Clark, Professor of Asian Art History, University of Sydney

I have known Ingo Kleinert and his work since Canberra in 1989 and followed several of his exhibitions since then in Sydney. I discovered in him then all the sensibility I came to associate with a particular Australian type of artist, the sometimes peripatetic European or Asian immigrant, aware of world art, who identified with the Australian, light, landscape, and sometimes, when they allowed it, with its people. For those such as myself who liked Australia and eventually became its citizen, it was an immense relief to find parts of a trajectory in common, one also found in others at the Canberra School of Art, like Jörg Schmeisser.

Ingo has sometimes been unjustly marginalized by the shadow of other artists who also worked with found materials, such as Rosalie Gascoigne, with whom he had been friends since the 1970s. The Australian art world, in my observation now over 21 years, often selects for prominence and market advantage a single artist out of what is a quite broad cohort of artists working within similar discursive trajectory or materials, rather than positioning them as a

particular kind of tendency within which more than one are prominent. I have always found Ingo's work to be immensely worked through, formally coherent, and often playfully conversational through its materials. He does not propound grand theories or name his work with catchy but apparently intellectually appealing literary tags. Maybe the practice of an art discourse is in itself insufficient to gain due attention for artists or their works in Australia when these other labels are missing. Such features of Australian art life could be due to an insufficiency of art critics, the relative shallowness of critique in what mass media will accept from such critics [who might themselves want to go deeper], or the over prominence of some commercial art galleries who from their own self-interest maximise the prominence of only a few artists.

This book is a very useful and insightful addition to the literature on an important artist and Jenny McFarlane has provided an excellent introductory essay to Ingo's work with a chronology which allows us to read his development. She points out the origins of some of his conceptions in Process Art, the analogous relationships between weathered corrugation and photographic surface, the removal of the auteur-like mark maker status in favour of that of one maker amongst others, some of which are nature's impact on materials. Nature, like another actor, in fact has a cosmogenic function in Ingo's work being that complex of unnameable forces which cause the colour variations, striations, indelible corrugations with which he then works.

I particularly admire Ingo's wooden box assemblages of 1989-92 which hint at the subtle cross-actions of texture, colour, and outline of small physical motifs which runs through his later metallic sheet compositions. The subtlety and grandeur of the colour combinations which runs through his large metal sheet works cannot really be described in writing since their appreciation so much depends on the marginal qualities with which the relatively uneven surfaces are endowed by original corrugation, oxidation, and peeled paint zones.

For an artist who has not visited Japan, I was also enthralled by the physical and colour-field immensity of his early 2000s Kimono Series which lifted off the wall into a lightness and erotic tenderness which made one almost feel the textile forms from which his metallic expressions derived. They showed culture could be appreciated at a distance but still authentically.

His later Arafura Series of 2003-2006 and Joining the Land Series of 2009-2010 with their dotted lines derived from indigenous art joining swathes of differentiated iron and aluminium sheets bring what perhaps only a sensibility schooled in European

*cosmopolitanism could allow for, a re-envisaged Australian land:
that cultures are joined, and joined indissolubly, it is where and how
they join that constitutes their illimitable potential when constituted
together, and in a brown, austere joy, to point at this for others.*