

# Parergon

This issue marks two years of publication of *di'van* | A Journal of Accounts. The journal's philosophy, in critically evaluating the contemporary, the art historical and art theoretical, from West Asia, to East and Southeast Asia, and to the Asia-Pacific, apropos to what might be deemed Australia's present socio-cultural condition, has sought to establish a crucial link between these 'zones of contact' and advance an additive perspective to the wider art world through the reflective and retrievable analogue platform of ink on paper, not necessarily a redundant agency despite the propensity for the digital. Its particular *raison d'être* — 'History underscores The Contemporary' — draws attention to the long-fuse, slow-burn that actuates cultural endeavour and the unequivocal markers of registration and interrelationships in these regions.

Within this context repeating dynamics ensue and commingle: the politics of representation and identity, post-truth and fakery, and the polarisation of political culture; reimagined or revisited anniversaries and commemorations; future-imperfect historical and regional positionings and departures; shifting and reinterpreted narratives; and the unassailable constant of recurring histories. Backgrounding these scopic perspectives, amongst others, is an intriguing artworld construct, of a prevailing fixation cultivated by the lodestars of contemporary art, international biennales and their equivalents, from the apogee of Venice to the boundary riders, through the challenging hypotheses of title and rationale, with the artistic director or curatorium functioning as seer or forecaster, and the artist as advocate or champion, avidly declaring a collective appriorism that this art will redeem us, from apathy or ignorance, neutrality or complicity, of the world's travails; art as panacea, remedy and atonement.

The archetype of this approach in 2017 was *documenta 14: Learning from Athens*, which called attention to Europe's economic, migration and democratic crises, proposing exhibitions in both Athens and Kassel that acutely identified the hegemony of Germany within the European Union and its browbeating of Greece over its economic vandalism and political obstinacy (and perhaps to confirm its anti-capitalism badge, effecting from an extravagant budget a sizeable deficit in the process). Following in its wake the 10th *Berlin Biennale—We Don't Need Another Hero*, assertively repudiated 'unyielding knowledge systems' and historical narratives that contribute to the creation of 'toxic subjectivities'. Less sermonic though no less equivocal was the *Istanbul Biennial's A Good Neighbour* which focused on multiple notions of 'home' as an indicator of diverse identities and 'neighbourhood' as a micro-universe exemplifying the current challenges of co-existence, Turkey's domestic political turbulence and regional power plays notwithstanding. Their Euro-cohort, the 57th *Venice Biennale* celebrated mankind's ability to avoid being dominated by the powers governing world affairs; art as an act of resistance, liberation and generosity. Elsewhere, the 2018 *Shanghai Biennale: Proregress—Art in an Age of Historical Ambivalence* posits the role of art as a witness of current global ambivalences, struggles and anxieties, while the *Gwangju Biennale—Imagined Borders* responds to the current times of change and uncertainty within today's political and planetary crises. *Et alia*.

This dynamic, of art in a world of crisis, presents an expansive platform for pervasive and compelling discourse seemingly for some time to come.