

CHRIS BOND

Chris Bond presents the viewer with a visual conundrum. Is it a painting? Is it a photograph? Exploring the possibilities of process as content the answer lies somewhere in between. The increase in quality and the accessibility of printed reproductions, has positioned realist painting as increasingly obsolete or incongruous and Bond's interest in this shifting paradigm maximises the formal language of painting to represent the multi-dimensionality of the photographic medium.

For most of us the photograph is representative of truth and reality. In these works Bond is not trying to reproduce photographic imagery as truth, but to represent something of the actual physical qualities of photography. Issues of aging, scale, and surface are as equally important in his representations of photographs as the imagery itself. While so many artists work diligently to define a separation between photography and painting, Bond deliberately works to blur the distinction between them.

Bond selects imagery that depicts the archetypal rather than the specific. He likes to source reproductions of paintings that have a familiar feel. The viewer is able to recognise the subject but is puzzled by the representation of it. In *Lost (Louis Buvelot)*, Bond used an old frame found at a market and inserted a print of a Buvelot painting. He then hung the framed print on the wall and photographed it from an angle. From the photograph the 'photorealistic' painting on linen is painstakingly created and mounted behind glass back into the wooden frame. The frame provides the image with both a further sense of the genuine and added uncertainty. The frame is a marking device, signifying artistic value while also bringing closure to the work's edge. When faced with the realisation that the frame around the real object is the same as the frame depicted, the viewer is led to speculate whether the depicted landscape ever existed as a real painting or whether Bond falsified the image.¹

The Buvelot print was then discarded - the image in its original state, no longer exists. What remains is a painting of a photograph of a reproduced print of a landscape painting. The illusion is complete, whereby the viewer looks beyond the materiality of paint on linen and really does believe they are looking at a photograph.

1. Conversation with the artist, November 2002

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biography

Born Melbourne, Australia 1975. Lives and works Melbourne. Completed Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting) Honours, RMIT, 1997 Solo exhibitions include: *44x*, TCB Art Inc, Melbourne (2000); *The Cutting Room Floor*, La Trobe Street Gallery, Melbourne (2000); *Typecasting*, 1st Floor Artists and Writers Space, Melbourne (2001); *Still Life*, idspace, Melbourne (2002); *The Hitchcock/Feldmar Affair*, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne (2002). Group exhibitions including: *Review '99 - Curators' Choice*, Gallery 101, Melbourne (1999); *A Brush with Death*, La Trobe Street Gallery, Melbourne (2000); *In the Mind's Eye*, Next Wave Festival, Linden Gallery, Melbourne (2000); *Glacier*, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne (2001); *Undercurrent*, idspace, Melbourne (2002); *Light Trap*, Bus Gallery, Melbourne (2002). Included in private collections in Australia and South America.

► image: Chris Bond, *Lost (Louis Buvelot)*, 2002, oil on linen, timber frame, glass, 47.5 x 57.0 cm

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