

a new adaptation



Natural Selection

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Thank you and congratulations for downloading and printing out, or otherwise getting your hands on this, the first monster issue of *Natural Selection*. We apologise for any waiting for downloads, technical hitches, your printer running out of ink, and to your loved ones who will now have wait until you have finished this lovely magazine to read it. We have put this magazine together out of our genuine feeling that the world (especially our corner of it) needed a magazine that gave a voice to the arts community and the huge (if a little unwieldy) response is a testament to this.

Charles Darwin never said evolution was a matter of the survival of the fittest, which, as a clarification, is a good thing for those who exercise infrequently. Instead he said that survival depends on the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. *Natural Selection* was conceived out of a perceived lack of vehicles for art reviews publishing in Australasia. As far as we could make out, there were a lot of benefits in a free-press, non-financial approach to criticism in terms of interfering with the evolution of the art world.

Towards this first issue, we drew on our existing networks of artists, writers and people involved in the artist-run scene in a wider sense, and have, from there, turned it over to blind chance. Rather than dictating contents we left it up to writers to come forward with their choice of subject. We hope that new writers, both friends and strangers, will continue to step up as we want *Natural Selection* to be a community-based publication that will take on a life of its own.

We are intending to hand the magazine over to guest editors at some point in 2004, maybe even with #2, to make things changeable editorially – we hope to alternate editing between Australia and New Zealand – and to spread the work around. One day we hope there will be a friendly or even hostile takeover. We just wanted to set it up, you know...

We encourage writers to engage in direct art criticism, or to take the review brief more loosely. We have also encouraged writers to be as nepotistic and/or self-reflexive as they want – write about strangers, your friends and/or yourself. Pseudonyms are OK too. We gladly receive unsolicited material, but we only run it if we think it is interesting.

We also don't mind if people take a good while to write things up. These fast-paced times do not always lend themselves to the development of considered and well-incubated ideas. (Backlogs too can also harbour gems – we also welcome such period-pieces.) Although this is not to say that we don't like off-the-cuff responses too. You will find examples of both these methods, and many in-between, in this issue.

We never really liked web-zines as reading off the screen is horrible. That is one reason we have decided to present the magazine as PDFs for you, dear reader, to print off at your leisure, hopefully at your place of work. The craft project that is involved in getting a hard copy will, we hope, have slowed capitalist time for you.

Finally, we would like the opportunity to wholeheartedly thank all the contributors for *Natural Selection's* first issue. Our writers were so great about only having December to write – what a crazy self-imposed deadline Christmas Day was. I mean really. Which brings us to the word for the summer quarter: *Cacoethes* – the strong desire to do something ill-advised (from the Greek).

Dan Arps and Gwynneth Porter