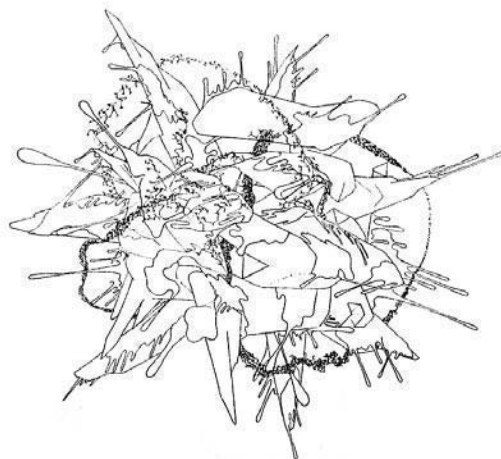


I'm fifteen and I'm on a family trip to Fiji to stay at this resort island called Castaway Island. The important things for me to remember, in order to make it through this holiday, are smokes and booze and how to get money for smokes and booze. They've also got this shit called kava and I try it one day. I'm told it's supposed to trip me out. It doesn't and I'm told that you need a lot of it. I find out that I can buy kava powder from a villager's house on the other side of the island. I start hanging out with this Kiwi guy and he agrees to come with me to get kava. He was up for tripping out as well and we discussed the possibilities of snorkeling soon after we've had some. We get it and then mix the kava in the sink of the resort hut he was staying in; we drink close to 50 cups each of kava in about an hour. The stuff tastes like muddy water and leaves your mouth feeling a little numb after every cup. I'm a little light headed but I'm not sure if that was just because of the excess water I've just drunk combined with running to and from the toilet and having to piss all the time. We eventually get the snorkeling apparatus together and head for a part of the reef we have found that has crazy colored tropical fish cruising about. The colors seem a bit more intense than usual but still I feel like I'm trying to convince myself that I was high.

A couple of nights later the Kiwi and I organize to go to the bar and get drunk by entering this beer-drinking competition. We get to the bar to sign up and they've changed the game because not enough people have entered. Instead, the game is musical chairs and the winner receives a bottle of white wine. I have no money so I've got the blinkers on to win this bottle. I'm playing like a competitive little shit and win because of it. The Kiwi and I go down to the beach with my wine and find there's another bunch of Kiwis who are hanging out. I get the bottle open after a bit of struggle. I'm thinking I'll feel rude if I don't offer some to the others, but it's wine and the kids aren't into it, so I drink the whole bottle myself and am now off my face.

Eventually I end up back at the bar after trying to pick up a Kiwi chick on the beach with no success. It's getting late and there's this 40-plus Yank chick sitting at the bar whose smoking these long skinny brown cigarettes that I've never seen before. I'm curious and ask her for one. She lights it up for me and asks if I would like a beer. So I'm smoking what's called a More cigarette, because I'm guessing you get 'More' and drinking at a bar with this woman whose probably just a bit older than my mother and I think she's trying to chat me up. I play along a bit because there could be more freebies and then I feel a tap on my shoulder. It's my Dad and he asks me with his usual sarcastic grin if I'm having fun. On the way back to our room he tells me that Mum's asleep and doesn't need to know about this.

Twelve years later I'm sitting in Dave Keating's studio looking at the works he had in a show at TCB gallery

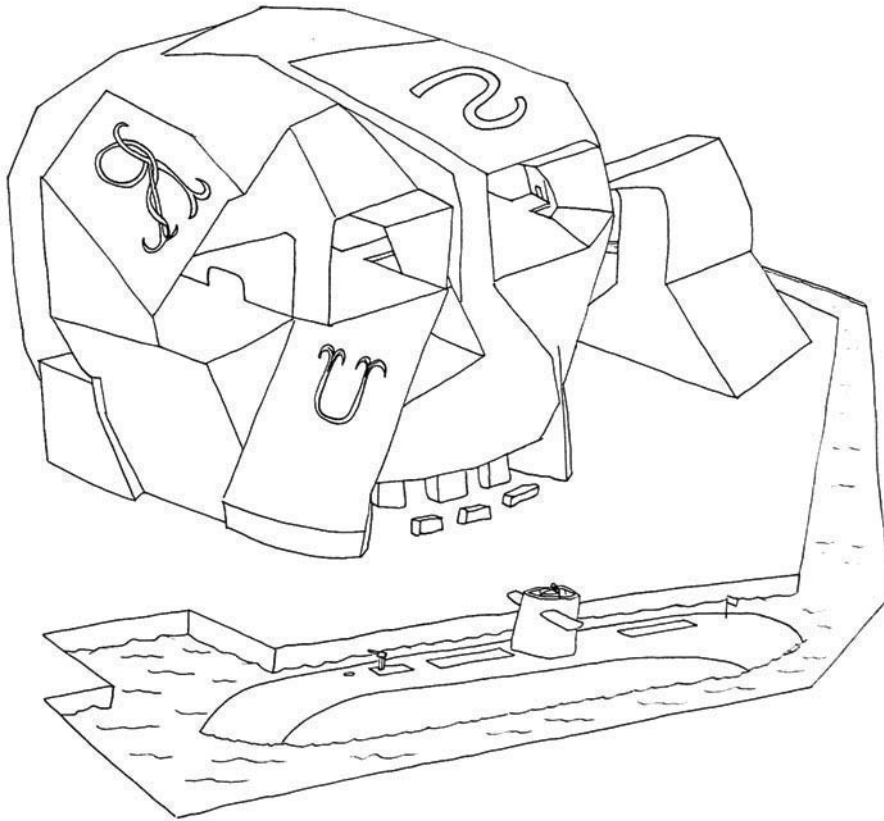


David Keating, *Anti-gravitational Dwelling*, ink on paper, 49.5cm x 49.5cm, 2003. Image courtesy of the artist.

in Melbourne last year. I get into his island drawings. In one particular drawing there is a huge skull theme park style dwelling on the island surrounded by fallen palm trees. They spell out the word "Sleepy" on the ground and it's getting the dreamy thing happening for me. It makes me think about debauched times in crazy places like my trip to/at Castaway. The skulls, cigarettes, islands, song titles and the morphing of environments are enough to drag anyone back to those days – when getting another look at things from being high and traveling is a way to escape what seems to be your boring suburban reality at home. The pictures are drawn with fine lines made from felt tip pens on white paper with minimal rendering – they're read like moments. Whether they are purely invented moments or enhanced moments of the past they arouse the same feelings I get from reminiscing about that intoxicated holiday when I was fifteen.

In his drawings he drenches information and imagery associated with his wild times and culture from the past and combines it with his idealistic view of how the place he's constructing could be better. All are drawings of three-dimensional places. In the company of his other drawings, they show that there is no need to construct these places in a three dimensional form. Working in three dimensions slows the making process down. New things start to stimulate causing ideals to change quickly and as a result another drawing can be quickly produced.

When I first read about Fluxus and its founder George Maciunas wanting to build a utopian community and was buying an island to make his world better,



David Keating, *Subterranean homesick blues*, ink on paper, 45cm x 35cm, 2003. Image courtesy of the artist.

I pictured it looking something like Dave's drawings. After reading more I think he had a different image of utopia than me. I agreed with some of his ideas at the time but why can't utopia be a place where you just get high and it looks like one enormous theme park? I don't think George would have been into it. Then again, maybe if George was feeling good on the day he would make some allowances for me and we could work out a compromise.

While Dave and I are looking at his images scattered on the floor, we decide to enhance the experience by drinking beer and smoking joints. I realize I'm still taking the time to travel back to when I was fifteen. By this time I am feeling pretty good and the dialogue about the works is jumping all over the place. It becomes the perfect time to get out the notebook and scrawl some nonsensical notes. Everything starts to make sense. I start imagining the tiny white triangular flags on toothpicks that were scattered on the walls during the show, sticking into the floor with the laid out images and it makes me think of a game I played a lot when I was younger called 'Journey through Europe'. Not only did I get into it because it was a game none of my friends had heard of and I could strategically kick their asses, but also because

it could offer a virtual escape to other places where crazy festivals go on. Dave's drawings make it easy to imagine that in his constructed places craziness and absurdity are the staple activity. I'm enticed to travel to places like this, especially when they don't exist, but I suppose it may also not be so hard to get there depending upon what you're on at the time.

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**Ry Haskings is a Melbourne-based artist, member of DAMP, and is the guitarist for the infamous Melbourne pub/art rock band Teenwolf.**