

# Stephen Bevis arts



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## Nature calls for a double take

### VISUAL ARTS

**Flatland:** Anna Louise Richardson  
PS Art Space

**Imposter Syndrome:** Elizabeth Pedler  
Moana Project Space

REVIEW LAETITIA WILSON

Sometimes the same thoughts bubble up and pop at the same time in different heads in different places. Right now, across several Perth art galleries there is a keen interest in the double, the mirror image, or the doppelganger. We are witness to a curious artistic onomatopoeia of sorts.

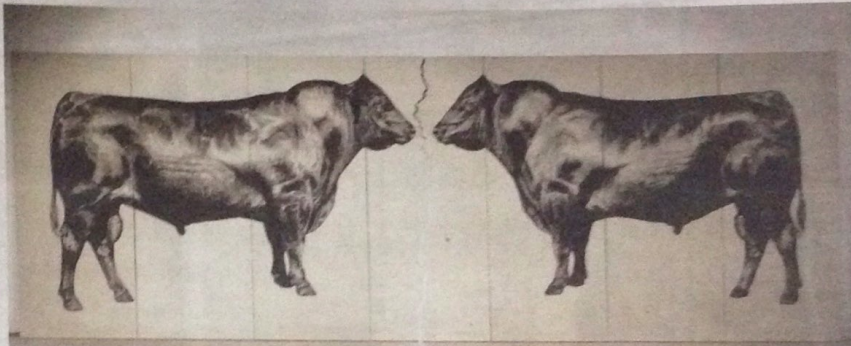
At PICA an entire exhibition, *Dead Ringer*, is devoted to the unsettling nature of the double.

At Moana Project Space in the Hay Street Mall, Elizabeth Pedler's exhibition *Imposter Syndrome*, sees her act as others and others impersonate her. Then at PS Art Space in Fremantle, Anna Louise Richardson plays on the idea of the double in relation to rural Australia.

In her exhibition *Flatland*, Richardson presents new works across large-scale drawing, installation and video. The exhibition is sparse, with five works scattered around the expansive warehouse. This adds to the sentiment of the show, echoing the flat stretches of Australian country.

Subtly slicing through the room are two fences, mirroring one another. Their wooden posts are weathered and they immediately recall the thousands of kilometres of fencing delineating vast expanses of land.

When such an iconic rural structure is removed from its environment and reconstructed here, it acts symbolically as a testament to defining territory,



Rural experience: *Struck*, one of five works by Anna Louise Richardson.



Depth: Richardson's *Post* invests a fence post with presence and, top, *Flatland*, a two-channel video.

containing livestock and preventing undesirable animals from passing. It tells of a country shaped and cordoned off by wood and wire.

A single post, this time drawn on card in a pool of darkness yet glowing in bright light at night, is literally lit up by the headlights of a car shining on it. This pulls the two-

dimensional drawing into the three-dimensional space of the fence posts, investing it with greater depth and presence.

One of the most striking images of the show is an exquisite drawing of two bulls, head to head but separated by a cut in the card on which they are drawn. This cut makes for a lightning-like shard between

them, from which light shines. The bulls are ripped and gleaming, prize livestock if ever there was.

This exhibition is confident and sensitive; it refers to the artist's personal experience of rural Australia and explores ideas of flatness and dimensionality, place and disconnection.

By contrast at Moana, Pedler's art is more about the process. What we see in the gallery is the resulting documentation of art as collaborative research project. The artist asked friends and colleagues to exchange their clothes and swap their life with hers for a short time.

They were photographed posing as her and she as them; they went about being in Pedler's art studio, doing what they thought she would do, while being closely surveyed (video). In the outside world Pedler acted as them.

The stuff generated from their time as Pedler is crammed on a wall as a cacophony of text, drawing and objects, adjacent to which is a number of photographs of Pedler and her cohorts dressed in each other's clothes.

The double here, though referred to as an impostor, is a known entity, Pedler herself and invited in by Pedler. Yet the actions undergone by the individuals are unpredictable, affording Pedler an element of surprise and unique insight into herself through the lens of others acting as herself.

It is a relational project, where the point of interest is in the experience had by Pedler and the participants. In the process it triggers myriad questions around the perception and misperception of what it is that artists do all day and also around the question of identity and what actions, gestures and interactions define us as truly us and no one else.

■ *Flatland* is at PS Art Space, 22-26 Pakenham Street, Fremantle, until December 19. *Imposter Syndrome* is at Moana Project Space, 1st floor, 618 Hay Street, Perth, until January 31.