

WE ARE A MOVIE



*for Sal & Lil*

Kurt Brereton



This collection was produced to coincide with the *Coalcliff Days* exhibition at Wollongong City Gallery, April - June 2011. For details of the exhibition go to: [www.coalcliffdays.com](http://www.coalcliffdays.com)

Many thanks to Ken Bolton and Kate Rowley.



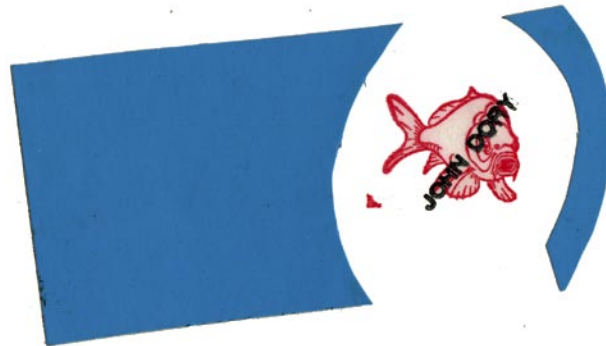
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signed by the author.



This collection of artist books brings together for the first time eight one-off publications produced largely for friends and family as gifts. The exception is *We Are A Movie*, first published in *Magic Sam* #6, 1981. The time frame is between 1979 and 1982. *Alternate Returns*, produced for my sister Sal in 2001, is stylistically continuous with the earlier works, and on those grounds, demanded to be included.

The overtly handmade DIY aesthetic that characterised these books was a part of a loose anarchistic punk philosophy I wallowed in at the time, and in my Johnny Rotten moments, still do. A small group of Sydney artists, musicians, theorists and poets came together in various crazy-pattern ways to generate a diverse range of creations – from small press poetry and art magazines, to performance installations, exhibitions, left wing theatre collectives, underground film festivals and earnestly serious post-modern conferences.

We had little money and made do with whatever was close at hand. The staple gun & safety pin aesthetic made use of high-jacked photocopier machines and low tech binding theory. I was working at Sydney College of the Arts in the Information Resource Centre and magazines, books, photographs and films by students and staff rolled out the door. The art schools were young and the students hungry for new models and ideas.

Politically, we were reacting against the increasingly slick glossy art, publishing and music industries. The triumph of advertising was sweeping the world like bird flu. A nuclear apocalypse seemed imminent. International cultural climate change had hit the parochial Australian coast. In the face of diminishing resources and expanding carbon agendas, eco-politics, post-feminism, polysexuality and postmodernism gathered momentum.

Today, DIY recycling politics is taking on a renewed glow. The '70s punk archives are back on the street, pogo dancing with a new eco-generation who want to cut up the rule book.

Kurt Brereton – born 1955, grew up in New Brighton on the far north coast of NSW. Graduated in art Alexander Mackie CAE, 1978. Produced first artist books *Charlotte Morman* and *Gross Specimens* in 1978, followed by *16 Postcards* - a collection of photographs in 1979. After a stint in political street theatre and busking as a fire-eating magician, landed a job as an assistant to the Amazing Mr Rooklyn before joining Pipi Storm Theatre as an actor 1978-79. Ran away from the circus and worked as an audio-visual technician at Sydney College of Arts 1979-81. First photographic exhibition at Bondi Pavilion in 1981.

Designed book covers for poetry magazines (Muse, Aspect, Island in the Sun) and books (Denis Gallagher, Alan Jefferies, Tom Thompson and Sal Brereton). Co-ordinating Editor of *Photo-Discourse: Critical Theory & Practice in Photography (SCA 1981)* and later *Third Degree* publications (UTS). Published photos and graphics in *Magick Sam*, # 5 & 6 as John Dory. Began to exhibit his films – *Greetings from Sydney*, *Party Tricks* and *The Coalcliff* (with Kate Richards) screened at the first and second Super 8 Festivals in Sydney and at ICA London, 1980-82. Lived in England from 1981-83, teaching, writing and exhibiting. Director of King St Gallery in Bristol. Invited to Adelaide Arts Festival and Artspace to show *Natural Histories* exhibition and performances with Kit Edwardes. Collaborated with George Alexander for Foreign Bodies and Futur\*Fall conferences.

From 1985-2001 worked in universities and colleges in Australia and overseas lecturing and supervising postgraduate students. Resigned 2001 to focus on art career. *Survey 1999-2009* shown at Wollongong City Gallery. *Luscious* 2008 at Rivergarden Gallery NJ USA. Recent publications include *Hyper-Taiwan: Art, Design, Culture* (Art & Collection, 2005), *Luscious* (Lakeside Press, USA, 2008).

Joint curator (with Ken Bolton and Sal Brereton) of *Coalcliff Days* exhibition and publishing project in 2011. Currently, Brereton is Adjunct Professor at University of the Sunshine Coast and part-time art teacher.

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