

Hello.

This is a further look into the themes explored in my 2020 artwork *Dead End. Brilliant.* and also topics explored in the 2001 movie *Crocodile Dundee III: Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles*.

In *Dead End. Brilliant.* I play the character of myself, but in a way where I am experiencing, simultaneously, the plot of my own life and that of *Crocodile Dundee III: Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles*. The sound you hear throughout this work is mostly constructed of layered field recording from Melbourne International Airport, from February 2020. I was on my way to Los Angeles, flying Qantas, much the way Mick Dundee did in *Crocodile Dundee III: Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles*. During this time, and in the creation of this work, it was as if we were existing on parallel timelines, whose walls at certain moments became very thin, almost convening. Making it hard to tell which feelings, thoughts, and memories belonged to me, and which belonged to Mick Dundee, Crocodile Hunter.

So I thought it prudent here to dissect what I know to be true, what I know to be a construct, and what I feel to be grey zones within this work. However, as the crocodile's eyes open to inform us that a new adventure is about to begin, my eyes have opened to the knowledge that nothing is ever certain. To begin, I admit, that with hindsight, and with the awareness of facts, it is clear to me now that I am not and have never been, romantically involved with the daughter of a media mogul, and no one has ever asked me to fill in as the editor of one of their newspapers. I did however find myself in LA, surrounded by people with distinct plans, but without a distinct plan for myself. I watched *Crocodile Dundee III: Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles* on my first night in LA. I was struck that while Mick Dundee experiences Los Angeles with the company of his young blonde son, I was set to experience Los Angeles, for the most part, alone. Travelling the freeways in Ubers and Lyfts, I did not have the luxury of my own Subaru Outback to remind myself of home.

As an artist, I was eager to visit the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, however I found most of the gallery spaces closed for major renovations. It felt strange to me to be there at that time, to see a moment of further architectural flux at a gallery whose buildings and entranceway had already changed considerably since Mick Dundee set foot inside them in 2001. Mick speaks to curator Nicholas Hammond who was also Friedrich von Trapp in the sound of music. Mick was looking into prop artworks from the set of the movie *Lethal Agent 2*, trying to ascertain genuine works of art from forgeries. I myself have been interested in issues of truth within art, though Mick's situation is slightly different. Mick was mounting an investigation into the death of Tom Zetland. Through this, he discovered that the paintings used on set were actually real and stolen, with the production company using the filming of *Lethal Agent 2* to smuggle them out of Europe, into America, and eventually onto the blackmarket. However, as the one of us with hindsight, I don't believe that Mick's investigation into the truth behind these paintings went deep enough, so I will continue it for him here.

Nicholas suggested that these paintings must be fake because the real ones were lost during the NATO bombing of Belgrade, which places Crocodile Dundee III in a very specific time at the end of the Kosovo War. It was an incredibly violent period with ongoing effects, and with continued searches for justice for human rights abuses, including thousands of rapes and assaults against women. There was also a massive loss and destruction of cultural heritage during this time. While Nicholas suggests that the loss of these old masters paintings was a “tragedy for the art world”, the actual loss of art and artists in that time was greater and deeper than the loss of a van Gogh or a Rembrandt.

In 2018, I was studying in Kosova, and ended up in the forest house of a friend watching a lunar eclipse. In the years after the war her father and a group of his friends started a documentary and short film festival called Dokufest. To begin, the group financed the festival with their own money, and twenty years on, the festival is internationally renowned and a key cultural event. When I asked him recently about starting the festival, he said that they had wanted to create a place where people would come together and learn new things after the war.

Crocodile Dundee III is a time capsule for the physical structures and sensibility of Los Angeles as a city pre-September 11, 2001 (having been released in April 2001). However, it’s narrative also hangs on real events which are never fully discussed. Whether or not it’s true, Crocodile Dundee III focuses on the looting of European masters. However, during this same time period, Dokufest was beginning as a method of artistic survival and of rebuilding culture after war in a way that, as a documentary festival, is also actively involved in the search and promotion of truth and justice.

It was in these ways that the paths crossed for Mick and I. One static and the other an active participant in time. Mick always exists within the canon of the Crocodile Dundee franchise, in which he has conducted several similar, questionable investigations. At the end of Crocodile Dundee III: Crocodile Dundee in Los Angeles, Mick jokes that he should become a private eye. I understand jokes, but I don’t think he should.

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