

Swoon



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Kate Daw
Maria Griffin

Curated by Natalie King

9-19 August 1995

the building 40 project
co-ordinated by Rozalind Drummond
School of Design, Department of Visual Arts
RMIT, 4th floor, 123 Latrobe Street, Melbourne

Introduction

Swoon brings together the work of Kate Daw and Maria Griffin around the idea of rapture and romance. Their respective practices take up the emotional and the sentimental amidst an array of colour photocopies, found photographs, collected greeting cards and paintings. An interest in the everyday is combined with images that are at once whimsical and excessive. Floral motifs, images from women's magazines and personal treasures form part of the source material used by both artists. The textual and the pleasurable are laid across a gauze of clichés and stock literary references. Here are luscious gardens, the repeated pattern of cherry wallpaper and the scent of gardenia.

Personal and romantic, Daw and Griffin take excerpts from the everyday that are inscribed as text or refigured from found images. Daw's voice-texts of inflamed hearts are accompanied by reworked colour copies of earlier works such as her painting *Crimson Hotel Room* and a detail of a photo of a gold mango tree. These images and texts are placed on cherry wallpaper, recalling domestic interiors and furnishings.

Like Daw, Griffin adopts reprographic technologies with copies of greeting cards alongside stencilled wall texts. Flushed with sumptuous colours, private and endearing moments are mechanically reproduced, allowing an element of objectivity to be contained within the headiness of floral images. Griffin reveals notions of intimacy through passages from women's writings and love letters, mediated by the use of mechanical media. *Swoon* inhabits a gendered world of joyful and languid images.

Natalie King

...one day in winter, on my return home, my mother, seeing that I was cold, offered me some tea, a thing I did not ordinarily take. I declined at first, and then, for no particular reason, changed my mind. She sent for one of those squat, plump little cakes called "petites madeleines," which look as though they had been moulded in the fluted valve of a scallop shell. And soon, mechanically, dispirited after a dreary day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of cake. No sooner had the warm liquid mixed with the crumbs touched my palate than a shudder ran through me and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary thing that was happening to me. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, something isolated, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory - this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it *was* me. I had ceased now to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I sensed that it was connected with the taste of the tea and the cake, but that it infinitely transcended those saviours, could not, indeed, be of the same nature...

And as soon as I had recognised the taste of the piece of madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-blossom which my aunt used to give me (although I did not yet know and must long postpone the discovery of why this memory made me so happy) immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like a stage set to attach itself to the little pavilion opening on to the garden...

Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, Volume One: Swann's Way, Penguin Books, reprinted 1984, p. 48, p. 51.

Proposal of Marriage.

5 Asher Street,
Bickton,
6th July, 19

My Dear -

I hardly know how to express myself. However, I will begin by assuring you that I am writing in real earnestness in regard to my long and delightful acquaintance with your sweet self, which has developed into a passionate love. You are always in my thoughts, although I hear of you so seldom.

I cannot wait longer without placing my love and devotion at your feet. My greatest desire of life will be to look after you always, and provide you with as many necessities and luxuries of life as possible, and to make you the happiest of girls.

Can you spare me just a little love, and will you consider allowing me to make a home for you to share with me as my wife?

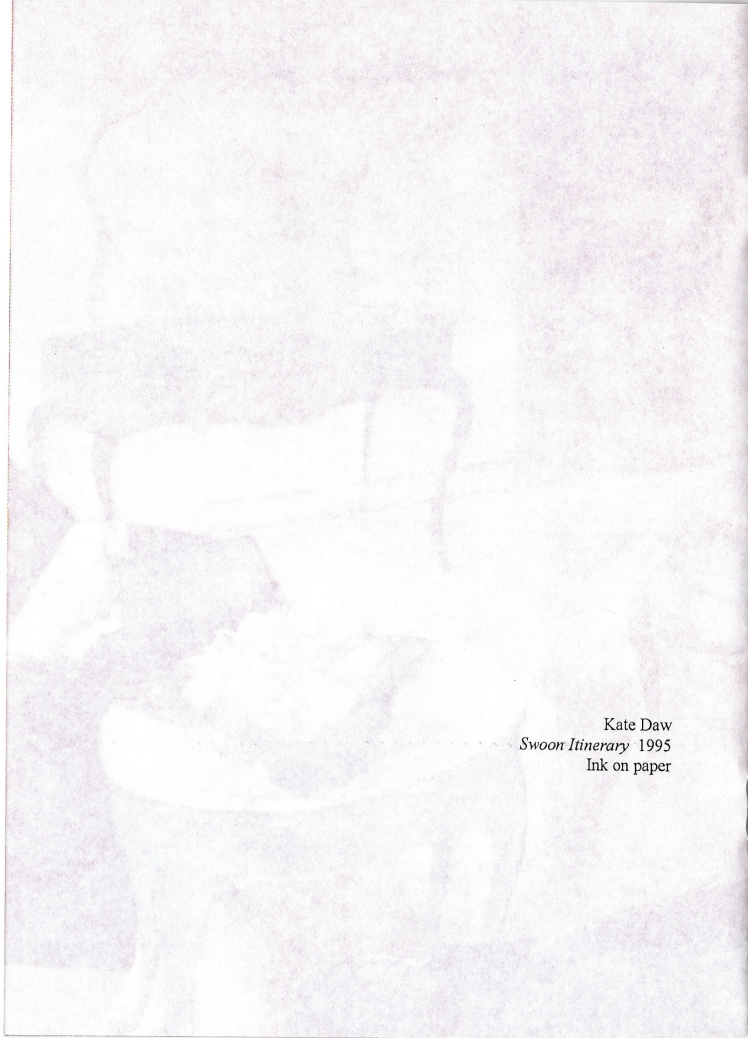
I shall anxiously await your reply, and, believe me, were I free at the moment, I should make a personal visit instead of writing.

I shall be free next month, and will be able to pay you a visit, if you will take pity on a lone bachelor, and allow me to remain,

Yours devotedly,

W. H. Henry, *The Modern Letter Writer*, Ingleson & Fullwood, Melbourne, 1927, p. 88.





Kate Daw
Swoon Itinerary 1995
Ink on paper

Swoon itinerary

K.Mansfield, "scent of gardenia.."

Back cover of 'Never Marry A Virgin Stanly' (red cherries on red/pink background)

Green garden painting

Crimson Hotel Room

Z Fitzgerald, "buying flowers"

Detail photo, gold mango tree, National Museum, Delhi, India

Black & white cherry image with butterfly

Answer Accepting.

'Glen Innes,'
10th July, 19

My Dear-

I am so excited after reading your nice letter and the expressions of devotion, for which Cupid must be blamed. From all I know of you, I am sure your affection is sincere, and something seems to whisper to me that I should be happy in your care.

I cannot say more in writing, but I shall be overjoyed to see you as soon as you can manage to get away.

In the meantime do not despair, and accept love

From
Katie Riche.

W.H. Henry, *The Modern Letter Writer*, Ingleson & Fullwood, Melbourne, 1927, p. 89.

Kate Daw is an artist based in Melbourne. She has been an Asialink resident in India. She will undertake a Masters of Fine Arts at Glasgow School of Art having received a Samstag Scholarship. She is represented by William Mora Galleries, Melbourne.

Maria Griffin is an artist based in Melbourne. She has exhibited at the artist-run space 1st Floor. She participated in *Intimate*, Linden, part of the Next Wave Festival, 1994.

Natalie King is a curator and writer based at Monash University Gallery, Melbourne. She contributes to publications including *Art and Australia*, *Art and Asia-Pacific*, *Art & Text* and *Photofile*. She is a Melbourne editor of *Real Time* magazine.

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RMIT, 4th floor, 123 Latrobe Street, Melbourne
Wednesday - Friday 12 to 5 Saturday 12 to 4

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Images

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