

Four artists disembark at the Immigration Museum

The Immigration Museum's latest exhibition, *Embark – Disembark: An exploration of Cultural Dislocation* uses the personal experience of four artists from diverse backgrounds to speak about living within multiple cultures: a state they term "cultural dislocation".

Embark – Disembark features work from artists Tony Scott, Wilma Tabacco, George Alamidis and Catherine Woo, each inspired by their own mixed cultural experience.

Children of immigrant families very often feel the tensions of identifying with two cultures, resulting in feelings both of belonging and disconnection. Such tension can be confusing, unsettling, destabilising and a journey in its own right. Travel also may raise issues of heritage, family and identity, which, in this exhibition, provides material for artists to make sense of their displacement.

The artists featured in *Embark – Disembark* each express their feelings of cultural dislocation in different ways. Catherine Woo, for instance, brings together her Malaysian-born Chinese father's experience as a pharmacologist with centuries-old Chinese mythology, in recounting the myth "Nu Wa mends the sky".

Wilma Tabacco, by contrast, uses colours to express the unsettling feeling of dislocation. Her painted colours both attract and repulse, obscuring "reality", while also stubbornly asserting the bright aesthetics of her Italian heritage.

For Tony Scott and George Alamidis, the sense of dislocation is issued as a challenge: both to the past and to the process of cultural change itself. Scott reveals layers of meaning as he scratches into his images of old and new China, challenging the viewer to find context and understanding.

Alamidis creates his personal histories in the tradition of the best untruths, to leave the viewer wondering where truth ends and lies begin. He presents these dualities through a comprehensive collection of identity cards, issued to every Greek citizen during the post-war period. The artist, however, is also a trickster, encouraging us to believe his untruths.

"While this exhibition allows us to freely choose to enter this world of cultural dislocation, for the artists themselves and those they observe, this dislocated state has not always been so voluntary," explains the Immigration Museum's Imelda Dover. "Yet they have made the choice to identify it, to venture into it, and by so doing, come to understanding and revelation."

Using personal and group histories, *Embark – Disembark* allows us to experience for ourselves the tension and pleasure of cultural dislocation.

***Embark – Disembark* is open until 25 April 2004.**

For further media information, images and interviews, contact:
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The artists and their work:

George Alamidis

Born into 1950s Greece, post-war government propaganda in full swing, George Alamidis is imprinted still by the impact of these official lies. He creates his personal histories in the tradition of the best of lies, containing enough truth to allow for belief if we must, to make us pause. Insecure for a moment as the game sinks in. He documents 'truths' – always himself at the core of the mis-truth.

Tony Scott

Visiting and exhibiting in Beijing for more than 10 years, Scott has observed the great changes that have taken place in the city during that time. Just as his personal story emerges piecemeal from the obscurity of his familial beginnings, Scott painstakingly reveals the changes he is witness to, as he renders obscure, and then works back into, his images of new and old China.

Wilma Tabacco

Arriving at Station Pier from Italy with her mother at age four, Wilma Tabacco disembarked in a foreign country at the end of a long voyage and met her father for the very first time. Tabacco now holds dear to only one memory – the colour of the coat she was wearing at the time. Cyan Blue.

Catherine Woo

Catherine Woo honours the distant ancestors of her Malaysian-born Chinese father, as she identifies and explores her own Chinese heritage. Woo celebrates the Chinese elements of Wind, Water, Wood, Fire and Earth, and articulates how elemental importance and ancestral meanings are embedded within a philosophical system that gives ancient myths contemporary relevance.

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www.immigration.museum.vic.gov.au