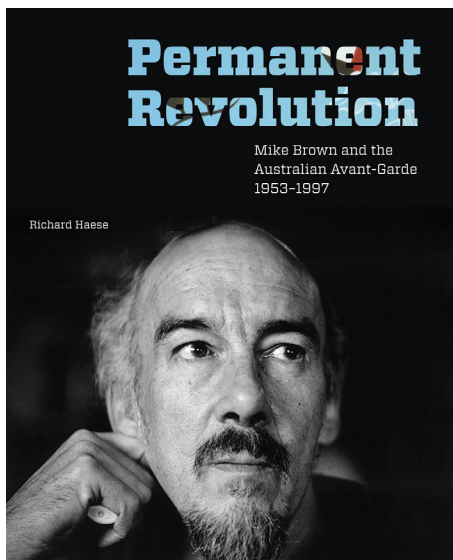


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Richard Haese will be available for interview throughout November.

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PERMANENT REVOLUTION Mike Brown and the Australian Avant-Garde 1953-97

by Richard Haese

In 1961 the 22-year-old Mike Brown joined the New Zealand artist, Ross Crothall, in an old terrace house in inner Sydney's Annandale. Over the following two years the artists filled the house with a remarkable body of work. Launched with an equally extraordinary exhibition, the movement they called Imitation Realism introduced collage, assemblage and installation to Australian art for the first time. Laying the groundwork for a distinctive Australian postmodernism, Imitation Realism was also the first Australian art movement to respond in a profound way to Aboriginal art, and to the tribal art of New Guinea and the Pacific region.

By the mid-1960s Brown was already the most controversial figure in Australian art. In 1963 a key work was thrown out of a major travelling exhibition for being overtly sexual; a year later he publicly attacked Sydney artists and critics for having failed the test of integrity. Finally, in 1966-67, Brown became the only Australian artist to have been successfully prosecuted for obscenity.

Brown spent the last 28 years of his life in Melbourne, where his reputation for radicalism and nonconformity was cemented with his multiplicity of styles, exploration of themes of sexuality, and transgressive commitment to the ideal of street art and graffiti. Against a background of the counter-culture and the social and political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, Brown's art and remarkable life of personal and creative struggle is without parallel in Australian art.

Permanent Revolution is the first full-scale account of Mike Brown's life and work. It is also a ground-breaking portrait of one of the most vital, disputatious and creative periods of Australian art.

Richard Haese is an art historian and is currently an honorary research associate in the School of Historical and European Studies at La Trobe University. He is the author of *Rebels and Precursors: The revolutionary years of Australian art*, which won the NSW Premier's Award for non-fiction in 1982. He curated *Power to the People*, the retrospective exhibition of the work of Mike Brown at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1995.

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