



Steven Holland - Aadge Bruce: *Of No Fixed Address*

When I was a kid every new school year began with an excursion into town to the shoe shop. My splayed surf-board feet were made to fit black leather school shoes designed for narrow white English feet that never saw the sun let alone a beach.

Reading images can be a bit like making your object of study fit the shoe of meaning. The shoe-horn and rhetorical device both work in a similar fashion. My childish comedy of errors in the local shoe shop has laid out the psychoanalytic and semiotic road that I now find myself walking, squeaking and limping along when it comes to shoe art. These are some of the meanings I tried on for size.

It simply tells the story of foot fetishist who finally got what the heart desired. Or Edward Munch meets Meret Oppenheim in Perth and gets a public commission. No! What about a playful Fluxus happening thing from the sixties. Too good to be true! Well if the truth be told it's a stack of lies. A creative clutterbuster for the Imelda Marcos garage sale - "Walk a mile in my shoes," the slogan reads. How do I know this? I used the Roland Barthes linguistic cobbler method: my tools of trade being the *studium* and the *punctum*.

The *studium* carves out the broad cultural upper and subjective sole meanings - here a story about some lost shoes in the annual city-to-surf race. The more pointed *punctum* tool fashions the brogue detail - found in this photo about two thirds up the cairn of shoes directly below the shouting person. You can see a carefully placed pair of white high heels, the kind both Oppenheim and Marcos went for in a big way. Here was the signifier that begged for a pair of feet. Who's foot is being fitted now?

Those pointed heels are turned inward to the core or central chamber of the secular minaret from which the prayers for endless consumption are projected. Inviting the hopeful and the hapless to step into these shoes. Who's shoes who cares. Warhol would've loved to sniff 'em then leave 'em. What is truly disturbing about this semblance of a firesale however is the almost complete lack of interest from the target market found wandering around in the background, deaf to the spruiker for Public Art Events outside the Gallery. All except young Duchamp in the dark sun-glasses and Man Ray sporting those new Doc Martens. It had to be Perth cause if it was Sydney all those shoes would've been gone by the morning. Those street kids would've added their own interactive high art/popular culture statement and answered with their feet.

Kurt Brereton

