

**Author****JOHN VELLA****Trust: site - specific art**

Title:

*Poleposition* in Trust

Category:

Original Creative Work

Publication Year:

2009

Publisher:

Ten Days on the Island, Tasmanian International Arts Festival, University of Tasmania

Place of Publication:

Clarendon, Evandale, Tasmania

Funding:

Australia Council for the Arts

Curator(s)/Artist(s) involved:

Curators: Noel Frankham, Paula Silva, Delia Nicholls  
Artists: John Vella, Martin Walch, Lucy Bleach, Mary Scott, Ruth Frost, Pat Brassington, Julie Gough, Michael McWilliams

James Cox and his contemporaries were colonial actors on an antipodean stage. Superimposing their cultural artefacts and practices on the indigenous landscape, they sought to create social hierarchies; imposing their titles and estates onto the land, like props on a theatre set. Extensions of their aspirations to status and power, building facades and surfaces were choreographed to project the utmost respectability, whilst camouflaging their own often tainted heritage and the dark underbelly of living as a foreigner, in white man's *Terra Nullius*.

*Poleposition* is a full-scale column designed and installed to be part of the Clarendon House facade. However, sited immediately in front of the doorway, *Poleposition* reveals itself as artifice – an anomaly, whilst also acknowledging a recent scientific discovery – that placing a vertical pole in an entranceway allows for 'a smoother and faster flow of crowds through an exit.'<sup>1</sup> In this context, the extra column serves to increase access to Clarendon's interior, thereby shuffling the, *everyone in their place*, decks of hierarchy.

As an honest fake, *Poleposition* then strives to slyly challenge the veracity of our first impressions, thereby highlighting the contrived, yet universal illusions of class and its associated mechanisms.

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<sup>1</sup> 'If you've ever been caught in the crush of a crowd at a sports stadium you'll have wondered if there is a faster way to get people out of an exit. ... A collaboration between an insect scientist and engineers has found that... placing a post in front of and set back slightly from the exit is the answer. Whilst it seems counter-intuitive, the post slows people down slightly, allowing a smoother and ultimately faster flow of the crowd through the exit.'

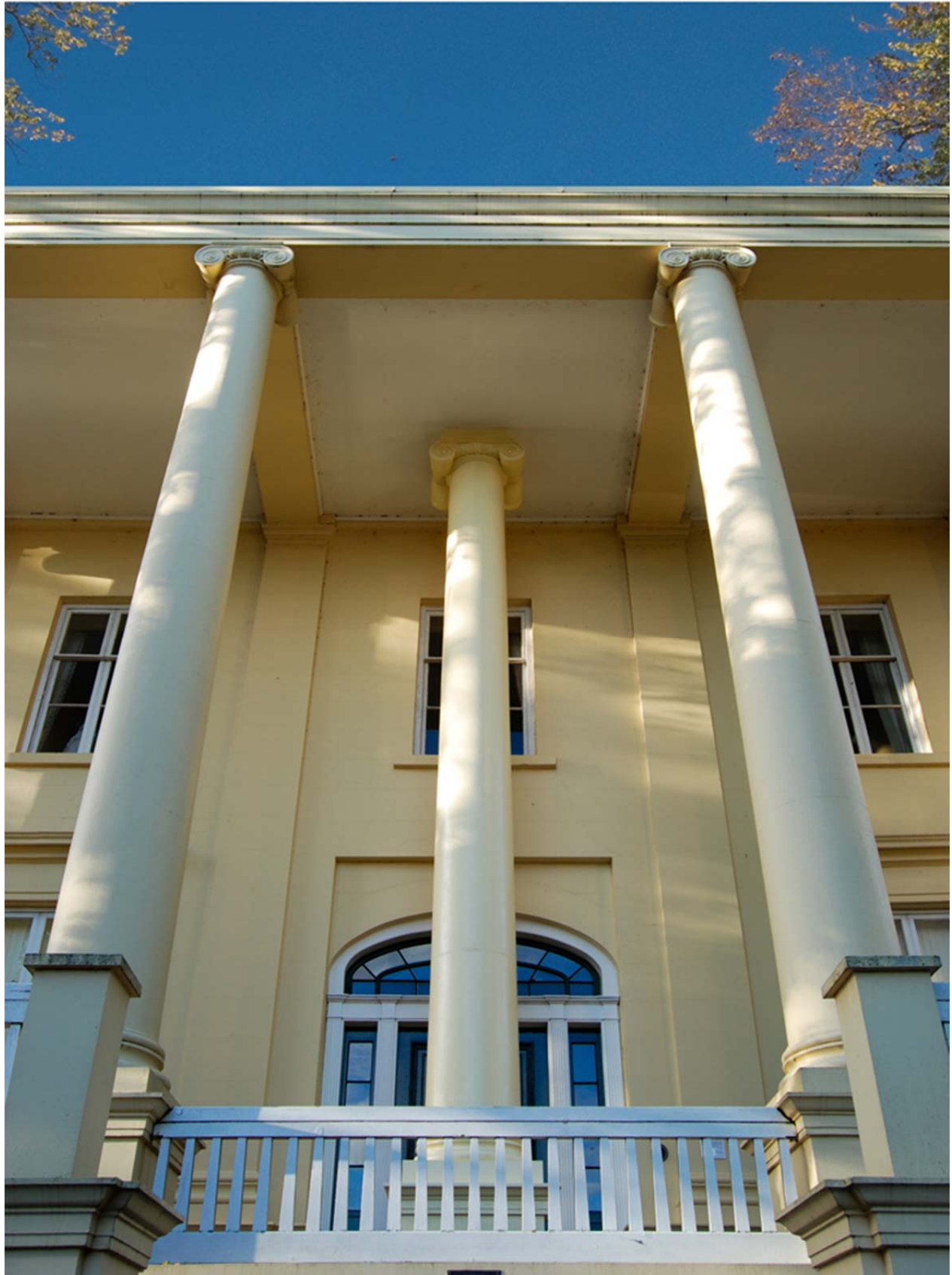
<http://www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/2008/04/03/2207179.htm>

PANIC DYNAMIC (03/04/2008)

Images



Clarendon House, Evandale prior to installation



*Poleposition* (Installation view)

2009

Polystyrene, medium density fibreboard, dressed pine,  
plywood

950 x 130 x 130 cm



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### **List of Works**

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