

TODD ANDERSON-KUNERT  
*the situation we're in*  
FEBRUARY 21 - MARCH 22

*The Situation We're In*  
**Todd Anderson-Kunert**

I'm never bored. That's the trouble with everybody. You're all so bored. You've had nature explained to you, and you're bored with it. You've had the living body explained to you, and you're bored with it. You've had the universe explained to you, and you're bored with it. So now you just want cheap thrills and plenty of 'em... and it don't matter how tawdry or vacuous they are as long as it's new... as long as it's new, as long as it flashes and fucking bleeps in different colours. Well, whatever else you can say about me, I'm not fuckin' bored.

- Johnny in *Naked* by Mike Leigh

The character of Johnny in Mike Leigh's film *Naked* probably doth protest too much, but he has a point. We're bored. Everyday life has become an annoying yet necessary habit, a repetition of objects and events that feed a constant desire for new ones. And, as Johnny points out, the quality of the new thing appears to matter less and less. We don't notice the vacuousness and banality of the new because we need it to fill the void left by our boredom with the old and familiar.

There is a sun shade in the windscreen of a car parked in the suburbs in one of Todd Anderson-Kunert's images. The sun shade bears an image of silhouetted surfers in a peaceful sunset beach scene. The sun shade doesn't fit comfortably across the windscreen, and the irony of its idyllic 'sundrenched' tropical image is reflected in the title, *It Stops the Sun Getting In*. The unconscious adoption of this kind of imagery in the banal utilitarian objects of suburban life is symptomatic of an unconscious desire we have for other places. The sunshade doesn't simply stop the sun getting in, it transforms the bad sun that heats up cars to child-killing temperatures into a good sun that gives you a gentle cancerless tan and sets romantically every night. It is the

sun of romance novels, travel brochures and Madonna's *Holiday*, "just one day out of life... it would be so nice." This song, like the sun shade image, points elsewhere, away from the boredom of wherever you are. But this mythic sun doesn't exist. It is the same sun that kills children in cars that sets romantically over the ocean, and that refracts through the lens of Anderson-Kunert's camera and creates an image on film. It is this same sun that lights up the situation we all are in, that is, if we are willing to look.

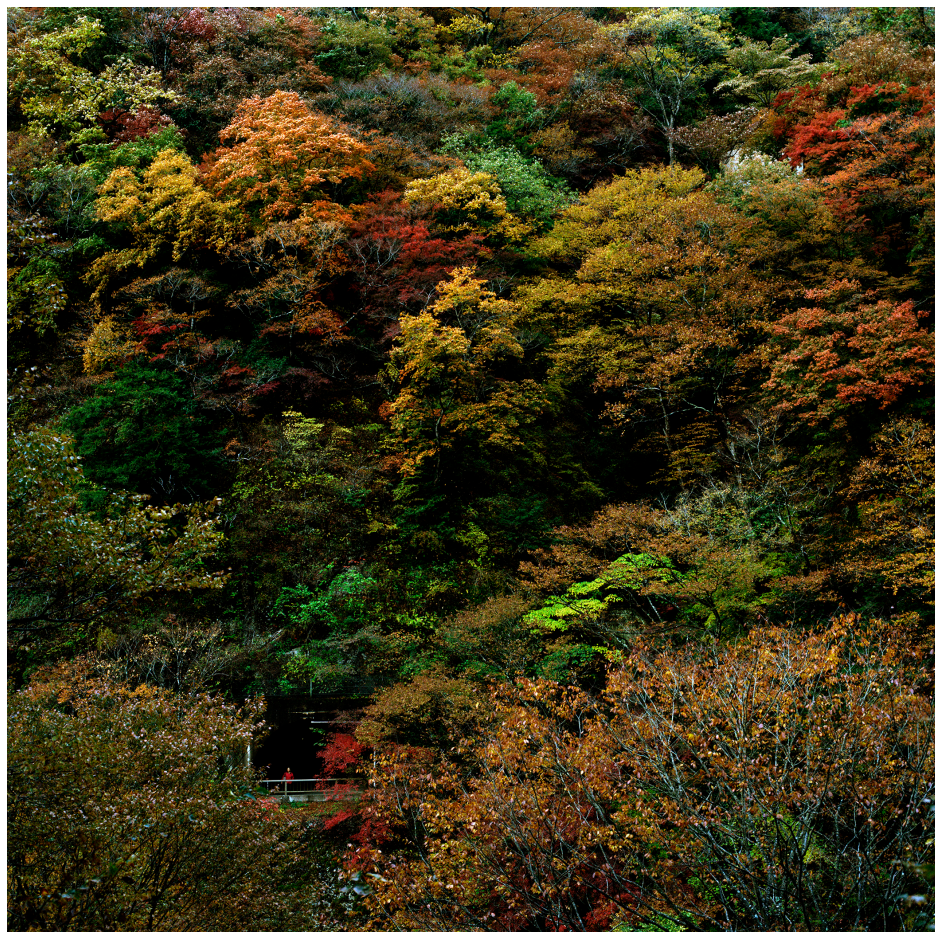
This is really Johnny's point. We've had the universe explained to us and we're no longer interested in the minutiae of experience that animates our lives, we've forgotten how, or we're no longer willing to look at everyday life with sufficient attention to detail so as to arouse a sense of wonder, and make it anything but boring. Anderson-Kunert's images do exactly this. *Almost Identical*, frames two 'almost identical' marks on a wall, resembling a vague kind of punctuation. They're marks that would ordinarily go unnoticed or, if they were noticed, be filled and painted over. What does it mean to do the reverse then and make this mark the central focus of an image? And then to pour over and caress a similar blemish on the door of a car as in *I Wonder How*? The contrast between these two images pivots on an uneven sense of wonder. The story of how the car was damaged evokes more interest and even more of a sensual and experiential response than the lightly damaged wall. But what Anderson-Kunert's isolation of the 'almost identical' marks does is suggest the possibility of a narrative, it evokes imaginings of what kind of object created them, and how, and in what circumstances. An accident or an act of violence? Wonder is imbued where there was none.

Similar tensions exist between other images like the monumentalised bun of a woman's hair in *It Needs Re-doing*, against the miniaturisation of a figure

amongst a huge mass of autumnal foliage in *We're Here*. In the smallest of details and the simultaneous realisation that we are the details, we are indeed here. But part of this experiential awareness requires an awareness of mortality, not just our own but that of everything we come into contact with. *I Know It's Bad* freezes a woman's exhalation of cigarette smoke, as a man contemplates a medical specimen jar with static intensity. In *Stuck Here* a fly finds itself stuck in the now hardened wax of a candle which itself is suspended in a perpetual lurch toward the ground, this tragic scene is then inverted in the poetic adaptation of *It Felt Like Home*, where an insect has made its cocoon to fit the flower petal pattern of a lace curtain. We all have our own relationships with health, mortality, nature, the universe, and the traces of ourselves we leave in various forms, but we rarely pause to think about how these relationships and traces come to form meaning for us, how our identities are, consciously or not, shaped by them. We often fail to see the beauty, the absurdity, or the poetry generated by our interaction with things. But Anderson-Kunert is happy to offer us that pause.

The sound piece exhibited with the images uses rhythmic and textural devices to add an atmospheric dimension to the images. The atmosphere has the effect of drawing the images into a tacitly felt narrative, a sense that there is a story somewhere, a story that we, as an audience, are part of. The sound emphasises the fractured rhythm of the events depicted in the images and those occurring in real time as we listen. Despite the efforts of capitalism and scientific classification, everyday life does not follow a linear rhythm or order, or at least doesn't have to. To some extent, we expect sound played through speakers and photographs hung on walls to have a certain structure and quality, but Anderson-Kunert challenges us to look, to hear, and to think in ways in that we may not be used to, and in the process uncover experiences that we may not be used to having.





Todd Anderson-Kunert

*We're here*

2014

80 x 80 cm

Between the banal rituals and rhythms of life, even within them, there is tragedy and there is magic. Nature, people, and the universe are so infinitely complex that we should never settle at just one explanation. Todd Anderson-Kunert's work addresses this complexity but does not attempt to explain it... that would be boring. Instead he delights in this complexity, the miniscule, the massive, fascinating, the futile. It is the world I know, but a world I'm seeing for the first time. And I'm not fucking bored.

*Ashley Whamond*

Feburary, 2014

Ashley Whamond is a writer and artist and teaches art theory at Southern Cross University, Lismore, NSW.

© 2014

STRANGE NEIGHBOUR

395 GORE ST FITZROY AUSTRALIA 3065

[WWW.STRANGENEIGHBOUR.COM](http://WWW.STRANGENEIGHBOUR.COM)

[INFO@STRANGENEIGHBOUR.COM](mailto:INFO@STRANGENEIGHBOUR.COM)