



8 – 26 NOVEMBER 2011

CHINA DE LA VEGA

RIDING FENCES

The Emperor I, 2011,
ceramic & mixed media,
88 x 17 x 30cm



Lady, 2011,
ceramic & mixed media,
48 x 9 x 9cm



The Emperor II, 2011,
ceramic & mixed media,
53 x 12 x 15 cm



Dear Molly, 2011,
ceramic & mixed media,
40 x 16 x 16cm



Wishing Woman, 2011,
ceramic and mixed media,
23 x 20 x 19cm



The Apology Tree ...we sleep easy in numbers lined edge to edge like a stretched out beast and looking like one too, should some one come through in the night looking for some thing of theirs to take back. Maybe some thing we've stolen for ourselves without even knowing the truth in it. Or we might know too but just got cheeky one time and this is good luck turned angry teaching us to keep it clean and on an even kilter. It's hard to tell some times with the world so full of people swapping stuff all over. The moving moves so fast you forget who gave what to whom first and for how much so you might muck up and find yourself scared in the night the way we might be scared now, but not tonight anyway you see it's noisy and nice. Noise isn't much good for the creeps who likes things quiet and more spooky that way. It's how the engine works too to damp it all out between the places we do business, or have a little talk with the people we're just trying to get used to for the time that's there. Because we leave pretty quick on most days - just pick it up in the next place having thought it all through a little in between. Like this one time - when I saw a little boy all torn up, well not really, but in the midday just around the side of some house - coloured as a light green soup with a red wheeled toy belonging to a baby brother, and above his head a couch where his daddy might sit most afternoons as it goes. And he's standing there poking that paddle pop stick in the crack between the boards, with no ants out to get at even in this dry weather - he's just poking at it for being nothing much at all maybe - or might be for the hell of everyone and every god damn thing that hadn't happened to him so far that year. And the

company drives past looking out and he looks up for the sound of what we might happen to be. A car full of questions poor bugger, when he sees me and me him and there's nothing in that old front yard to stop it from happening exactly this way. Oh sure there's a bucket kicked, that red wheeled toy, a hanging tap high, short grass, but just a boy really and a paddle stick sucked dry with a pushed back end, or getting nearly there. Nothing good for us. Nothing real clean to take or give back, to start and end it all right there. There's a look, and then the thinking on it that follows. The hard trying it takes to understand that small fellow and the way he has of just pushing through the time. Like where's his mummy anyhow and that little bloke who should be having that truck and then it's all too much but the company keeps moving as I look out behind, stick another bit of salty lump under my tongue to make it hurt just a bit for fun. And there you have it. We're feeling better now that boy and me. It's not so hard after all. A straight stick and a salty plum and two kids with a family each. Four wheels on me and four for him too, light green square shape, one white coloured moving shape, smaller true, but covering ground so that counts for something different and makes it up to being right. And we're on the road and the country looks good and there could be sticky sleep coming in the car if luck will have it for me that way. The company and me - body cracks and corners - swaps and shorter stories - beef bellies and a soft car boot - the company and me on our way past an apology tree...

Riding Fences The solo exhibition 'Riding Fences' had its beginnings in 2010 when China de la Vega, along with six other selected Australian artists, were immersed into Chinese art and culture with a tour on 'hard sleeper' provincial trains that culminated in a resid-ency and exhibition at the Red Gate Gallery in Beijing.

She stayed on after the 'Imagine Australia - the year of Australian Culture in China' project and set up her own studio space. The material used for this series of ceramic sculptures, 'Riding Fences', was sourced in China and assembled in Australia.

China de la Vega has exhibited at the Damien Minton Gallery since 2008, and is known for her mixed media assemblages created from found materials, usually collected on her drives to and from the Northern Territory where she visits and works with Aboriginal Artists, namely her friends in the remote Barkly Region community of Epenarra. Using the same eye and ability to source aesthetically interesting material, she visited the city of Jingdezhen - the ceramic capital of China.

"It was heaven. I stopped the taxi on the way in from the terminal, bought a shovel and a red bucket and some gloves, stole some hessian bags, and spent the following fast six days in the old, though still very much in use, sculpture and ceramic factory areas.

The ceramic pieces were dug up from the ground and picked over in tips. The broken bits have been washed wrapped filed re-fitted and fixed - pulled in and out of countless boxes, of boots and bags, slow trains and planes."

The result is a mature step forward in her practice which will establish her as an artist developing a unique visual language.

The title for the exhibition, 'Riding Fences', she explains, comes from the song 'Desperado', which has been... "sung to me on several uncanny occasions, and therefore the lyric to this latest period of time. As in the song, at times I feel I would like to be a cowboy - a demonstration of the actual meaning of my christian name, which comes from the Argentine 'la china' as opposed to the country or the material. The name China is given to the companions of the Argentine Gauchos, the traditional cattlemen who ride the Pampas and who they say are neither loved nor ruled by anyone - as in the song.

La China rides horses, mends clothes and looks after the children. She grinds the corn and enjoys smoking like the men."