



**RICHARD**

Something to  
offend everyone



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Director and bureaucrat  
Adam Bell

UNHINGED project curator  
Mark Bayly

The estates of Richard Larter and Peter Maloney are represented by  
Utopia Art Sydney

FRONT  
Richard Larter  
*Pat (something to offend everyone)*, c.1970s  
Gestetner print on paper

INSIDE  
Peter Maloney  
*Best men and Trouble*, 2006  
Digital inkjet print on paper, A/P, from *the dark inheritance series*

BACK  
Peter Maloney  
*Untitled*, n.d.  
screen print

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# UNHINGED

## Richard Larter & Peter Maloney

CIVIC ART BUREAU 7.11.24 – 14.12.24

Curated by Mark Bayly

The 'UNHINGED' project opens a conversation dealing with aspects of the close personal and working relationship between two of the Canberra region's most senior artists, Richard Larter and Peter Maloney (both deceased). In doing so, the exhibition examines each artist's relationship with their individual models in serial fashion.

Peter Maloney became a close friend of Richard Larter after providing his strong support to Richard's wife and collaborator, Pat when she initiated an independent art practice following decades of working exclusively with Richard as his partner and model. The interwoven relationships between these three artists, the stories and conversations that ran between them, and consequently with their models, form the foundation ideas behind this exhibition and the works selected for inclusion.

Exhibition curator, Mark Bayly, and gallery director, Adam Bell, are both keen to ensure that all visitors to Civic Art Bureau gain an appreciation for the narratives behind the works on display. This essay aims to provide an understanding of the aesthetic, conceptual and historical contexts for, and background to, both Richard Larter's and Peter Maloney's bodies of work in the exhibition.

Each of the three artists identified above worked closely with a carefully selected, or perhaps 'curated' series of models to follow distinctly different conceptual journeys of discovery. Beginning with the older of the three, Richard Larter began to paint models other than Pat in the early 1990s, following the

couple's relocation from a small farm holding at Luddenham, an inaccessible outer suburb of Western Sydney, to a house in the small town of Yass, under one hour's drive from Canberra.

By this time, Pat was a grandmother and was certainly feeling the vicissitudes of age. Consequently, she no longer felt entirely comfortable with the graphic and provocative images of herself as portrayed by Richard. However, aging didn't affect the centrality of an exuberant sense of adventure, fun and provocation to Pat's own art practice. Her personal sensibilities had been imbued with a highly charged perspective on the interrogation of gender and performative sexuality deriving from decades of working intimately with Richard on the formation of what is now appreciated as a collaborative art practice.

Peter Maloney had initially befriended Richard through his close acquaintance with Frank Watters and his partner, Geoffrey Legge at Watters Gallery, Darlinghurst, Sydney in the early 1990s following his return to Australia from an extended stay in London. The opening of Legge Gallery, Redfern, Sydney, by the Watters Gallery team in 1990, had seen Geoffrey's adult children, Jasper and Zoe undertake management of the new enterprise. Peter began exhibiting there, often simultaneously with Pat, and their friendship flourished during this period of creative ferment.

The two artists found common ground in their shared disdain for conventional mores, middle class values, and a mutual relish for the pleasure to be gained from unconstrained expressions of sexuality. Both also had a mutual enjoyment of underground filmmaking, and edgy, non-commercial rock music. The two artists decided to take the idea of bending boundaries between art and rock music and taking it up a notch by mounting a joint exhibition, titled, 'Pat Larter's Rhythms and Peter Maloney's Blues' at ROM Gallery, Darlinghurst in 1993. The gallery space was just a few steps from Peter's flat off Taylor Square – literally at the crossroads for Oxford St – Darlinghurst's storied 'gay mile', consisting of multiple bars and nightclubs catering to a mostly gay male clientele at the time. Consequently, the exhibition attracted many of Peter's friends and admirers from Sydney's inner-city suburbs, principally, Darlinghurst, Enmore, Newtown, Redfern and Surry Hills.

At the time, Peter was well-known in Sydney art circles for his highly gestural abstract canvases. These works were often produced by the artist during a single session in the studio, working in a heightened state of animation, to a loud soundtrack of punk rock, intoxicated by alcohol and amphetamines. Peter's mood would lead to a climax of excitement as his latest canvas progressed towards realisation.

As her own practice matured in vision and ambition, Pat made the ground-breaking decision to seek to work with an alternate vision of the nude to that of

Richard's – experienced from her female perspective. Knowing of Peter's intimate familiarity with inner Sydney's 'out' and liberated gay male scene enabled her to seek his assistance in the identification of suitable models for her to photograph for application in her paintings. In this way, Peter sought assistance for Pat's project from various good-looking young men from the above locations, including barmen from gay venues, and close mates of his. Employing another collaborative model of art practice, Pat and Peter decided to utilise a selection of Peter's large, gestural abstract canvases, as described above, to act as backdrops, in front of which Pat's models posed and cavorted.

Whereas Richard photographed the models he worked with as a technique of objectification towards their further depiction in paint, Pat elected to apply her photographs to her modulated paintings on board as discrete elements in themselves. Pat's photographic sessions with her male models took place inside Peter's flat, at his studio, and occasionally at times at Legge Gallery. Among the young men represented in her work in this way are some whom she photographed more regularly than others. These included Brett, a handsome, lithe and muscular young man who often sported black leather fetish wear, including harness, chaps, and peaked cap, as seen in, *For Frank (Jan.)*<sup>1</sup>, 1994. Pat loved the effect – for its undoubted performative element, plus the suggestion of subversive sexuality that Brett's appearance generated. Brett was also photographed by Peter multiple times, due to their close personal friendship, and these images entered his own practice in a variety of ways.

Following Pat's death due to terminal illness in 1996, Richard was grief-stricken and unwell himself. He moved to Narrabundah, located in inner Canberra, where his photographic collaborations with a loose ensemble cast of his own models, including Julie, Kathy, Peta, and Tracey continued. Occasionally, Peter introduced female artists to Richard, one of whom was Nell, who also modelled for him. The series of his portraits on display in 'UNHINGED' were a generous gift from Richard, late in his life, to Peter in reciprocal thanks for the assistance and support he had earlier provided to Pat when she began to exhibit at Legge Gallery.

Over time, Peter developed similar friendly relationships with a limited number of young men who posed as models for him. This process was initiated in 1996, while he was living in Brisbane, and was awarded the Denise Hickey Studio, at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris. While there he began meeting young men in the gay bars of the Marais district, before inviting them back to his nearby studio for a posing session. He brought the resulting films back to Brisbane and began the process of combining figurative colour photographs of his models with photographs of completely pedestrian street scenes and other neutral, if strangely charged and perplexing imagery.

When he relocated to Canberra in 1998 as Artist in Residence in the Painting Workshop, School of Art, Australian National University (ANU), at the invitation of Ruth Waller, Peter continued his photography practice. At his studio on campus, Peter began to construct visually arresting environments as backgrounds to his photographic sessions, using cardboard boxes and a trail of webbing made from masking tape. At this time Peter began to work closely with several young men as his models, including at the time, David and Stevie, before he began working regularly with Jean and Greg – both students of his at the time. At this point, it's important to acknowledge the influence this core group of young men had on Peter as an artist, as he began to acknowledge that in turn, the poses they undertook at his suggestion were informed by the conversations they had with him. In retrospect, this loose group of individual models took on the form of an ensemble cast for the artist to interact with, as he increasingly took on the role of director.

A singular influence on Peter's practice came about due to his experiences in New York in 2002, after being awarded the Australia Council studio in Greene St, SoHo. Upon his arrival in the city, Peter quickly became friendly with a cohort of men working in creative industries there. As a result of these introductions, Peter met Mieke, an unusually attractive young man of Eastern European heritage with prior experience as a photographic model. The two began working together in the Greene St studio with galvanising effect. Although Peter photographed several other men while in New York, it was Mieke's uncanny sense of assurance in front of the camera, and his ability to fold his body into unexpected poses that unequivocally made him Peter's favoured model. Shortly after his arrival back in Canberra, Peter met Jasper, yet another young man of extraordinary appearance, who became Peter's model of choice for some months. Peter's photographs of Jasper, Mieke and others were transformed into works of widely diverse media, using photocopy, screen prints, and collage.

In 2006, Peter was invited by Nancy Sever, then director of the Drill Hall Gallery, ANU, to participate in the Canberra Drawing Biennale, to be held at the gallery. His choice of expressive material was unusual and challenging to some, because he elected to utilise photo media – which had increasingly become his artistic focus at the time – rather than conventional drawing tools, with which he was certainly very familiar. The series of six works he produced employed a variety of means of expression, including photographic reproductions of the male body, collage in various modes, including snatches of watercolour, type-writer text, plus doodles and revisions in pencil. The artist's use of masking tape webbing appears occasionally, trailing across the picture plane like tactical camouflage. Some conservative critics believed these works not to be drawings, however to her


enduring credit, Ms Sever remained trenchant in her support for Peter as artist, his chosen media, and of the entire exhibition. Late in his own life, Peter decided to give the suite of inter-related works the title of *The dark inheritance*.

While the entire series is striking, a couple of the works merit close attention. *Best Men*, 2005, catalogue #3, suggests that 'THE BEST MEN LOOKED LIKE I DID TWENTY YEARS AGO'. The scrap of text takes on the identity of another type of conversation in this artist's work, as he speaks falteringly to himself, but also to the onlooker. This idea, taken together with the work's date invites us to reflect upon the transition of time, back to the mid-1980s, when young homosexual men residing in Sydney's inner suburbs were routinely stricken with AIDS. Since Peter's own death last year, I've suggested time and again, that much of the imagery in his work reflects a strong autobiographical tendency. He IS one or more of the young men so depicted, and they BECOME him through the time machine operated by the opening and closing action of the photographic lens.

The exhibition title, 'UNHINGED', refers to the virtual genius for cultural subversion and transgression that both Richard Larter and Peter Maloney enjoyed, and which consequently flourished in their individual practices. The idea of being 'unhinged' speaks equally to the ways in which the lives of these two artists were closely connected, yet the individual modes of artistic expression of each remained quite separate. The ways in which individual models became central to the practices of both Richard Larter and Peter Maloney is the focus of the conversational model behind this exhibition. Yet, conversations aren't possible without language, and the dialogue inherent in conversations moves back and forth between speaker, interlocutor, and back again, one after the other. This remains an incontrovertible truth about human communication.

As curator, most of the historical information in this essay arises from my first-hand knowledge of the artists and their relationships with each other. It's imperative that I point out that I was partner to Peter Maloney for almost 30 years prior to his death in 2023. I was present when Richard made the generous gift of the portrait canvases in the exhibition to him. Following over twelve months of grieving for Peter, it now feels right to share these paintings with others to enjoy as their own.

**Mark Bayly**



THE BEST MEN LOOK LIKE I DID TWENTY YEARS ~~XXX~~ AGO ✓

I DONT CARE WHAT THEY SAY SIZE ~~XXXX~~ MATTERS WHEN WE TALK ~~CD~~ counts ✓



IN TROUBLE

SOME SAY I GOT DEVIL SOME SAY I  
GOT ANGELS BUT I'M JUST A GIRL  
IN TROUBLE

They all say I should have taken  
a better care of her

**1. Richard Larter**

*Nell #16*, 2008

synthetic polymer paint, glitter,  
binder medium on board

76 x 58cm

\$4500

**2. Peter Maloney**

*Million*, 2005

digital inkjet print on paper, A/P,  
from the *dark inheritance* series

91 x 68cm

**3. Peter Maloney**

*Best men*, 2005

digital inkjet print on paper, A/P,  
from the *dark inheritance* series

91 x 68cm

**4. Peter Maloney**

*Trouble*, 2006

Digital inkjet print on paper, A/P,  
from the *dark inheritance* series

91 x 68cm

**5. Peter Maloney**

*Thinner*, 2005

digital inkjet print on paper, A/P,  
from the *dark inheritance* series

91 x 68cm

**6. Richard Larter**

*Pat (hey ho!)*, c.1970s

Gestetner print on paper

NFS

**7. Richard Larter**

*Pat #9*, 2009

synthetic polymer paint, glitter,  
binder medium on canvas

69 x 63cm

\$4500

**8. Peter Maloney**

*Untitled (Stevie)*, n.d.

screenprint, A/P

128 x 97.5cm

\$3500

**9. Peter Maloney**

*Well*, 2006

digital inkjet print on paper, A/P,  
from the *dark inheritance* series

91 x 68cm

**10. Peter Maloney**

*Never News*, 2005

digital inkjet print on paper, A/P,  
from the *dark inheritance* series

91 x 68cm

**11. Peter Maloney**

*Head (David)*, 2014

screen print, A/P

83 x 58cm

\$2500

**12. Peter Maloney**

*Untitled*, n.d.

screen print, A/P

83 x 58cm

\$2500

**13. Peter Maloney**

*Model (David)*, c.1998

screen print and synthetic polymer paint on canvas

46 x 46 cm

\$4000

**14. Richard Larter**

*Gina #13*, 2009

synthetic polymer paint, glitter, binder medium on canvas

51 x 76cm

\$3000

**15. Richard Larter**

*Peta #22*, 2009

synthetic polymer paint, glitter, binder medium on polyester

76 x 56cm

\$4500

**16. Richard Larter**

*Tracey #23*, 2009

synthetic polymer paint, glitter, opal dust, binder medium on canvas

60 x 50cm

\$4500

**17. Richard Larter**

*Tracey #21*, 2009

synthetic polymer paint, glitter, opal dust, binder medium on canvas

76 x 51cm

\$4500

**18. Richard Larter**

*Kathy #17*, 2009

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

76 x 61cm

\$4500

**19. Richard Larter**

*Kathy #16*, 2009

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

76 x 61cm

\$4500

**20. Richard Larter**

*Pat (something to offend everyone)*, c.1970s

Gestetner print on paper

NFS

**Curated by Mark Bayly**

**Please note**

the *dark inheritance* series #2, #3, #4, #5, #9, #10 is offered for sale as the complete suite only, by negotiation.

The estates of Richard Larter and Peter Maloney are represented by Utopia Art Sydney.

