

Lebre's village is near Mt. Matebian, where the souls of the dead gather and he is sculpting an allegorical model of his village, and simultaneously of Mt Matebian, in the garden of Villa Harmonia. Each of his sculptures is on his history and is made to express Solidarity and Friendship.¹³

INTERFET and ISF (International Stabilisation Force) went to East Timor to express Solidarity and Friendship (would ISF be there if East Timor did not control some oil and gas resources in the Timor Sea?) Does the art of Sharpe and Amor express the same Solidarity and Friendship? Beyond recording and interpreting the lives and surroundings of Australian soldiers the impression of their artwork remains one of remoteness and even a touch of the old colonial. ☹

Jennifer Phipps is an independent curator and consultant. She visited East Timor in 2007 as independent observer to the Presidential Election as a member of the Victorian Local Governance Association delegation.

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1 United National Transitional Administration in East Timor.

2 International Force for East Timor.

3 Oxfam 2004, 'Two years on...What future for an independent East Timor?' Quoted, p 67; Scholfield, C and Arsana, I, *The delimitation of maritime boundaries: a matter of life and death for East Timor?* in, Kingsbury & Leach, 2007).

4 *Arte Moris* ('Living Art' in Tetum) is based in the capital, Dili. Its primary aim is to use art as a building block in the psychological and social reconstruction of a country devastated by violence, with special emphasis on helping its young citizens." Wikipedia.

5 Interview with Tony at Rozelle, 3 July, 2007. We discussed this painting, and later *Ita hela hamutuk*. Tony had just come from Dili to study art in Sydney.

6 Charles Green and Lyndell Brown, *Both sides of the wire*, CCP lecture, 7 Nov, 2007.

7 I am indebted to Dr Greg Lockhart for some of the ideas discussed here. Dr Lockhart's latest book is *The minefield: an Australian tragedy in Vietnam*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2007.

8 Interview with Iliwatu, Director, Arte Moris, Dili, 11 October, 2007.

9 Brown & Green, op cit.

10 Gary Catalano *The solitary watcher: Rick Amor and his art*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2001, p171.

11 Catalano, p179.

12 Catalano, p171.

13 Interview with Snr Pedro Lebre, Villa Harmonia Guest House, Dili, 13 October, 2007.

tijn meulendijks: the winding way jacqui stock

The North Queensland sugar industry may hold some of the answers to the coming energy crisis through the conversion of its waste matter into ethanol. Thanks to the Labor Government's 20 per cent renewable energy target, the sugar and other industries now have an incentive to produce up to 10 per cent of the nation's electricity from the treatment of municipal and crop waste. Mackay Sugar Mills is currently considering two major investments; a \$100 million co-generational plant producing 35 MW of electricity and a production plant producing 60 million litres of ethanol.

The sheer energy embodied in plant growth in Far North Queensland has long had a powerful effect on artists. Cairns-based artist Tijn Meulendijks considers the plant world as his medium. His sensitivity to the processes involved within plants such as germination, growth, flowering, wilting and decaying, as well as the seasonal aspect, or the 'moment' in which the material is gathered, determine the form his work takes. A work created from material collected in spring would be very different from one where the material was collected in autumn. The evolving state of the plant would change its presence, its gesture and therefore the way in which it informs the artist. Meulendijks, whose practice evolved from his training as a floral designer and his hobby as an amateur botanist, is more attracted to the common than the exotic, finding inspiration in often-overlooked elements like seedlings, thorny vines, root systems and clods of earth and often refers to the symbolic associations of the piece helping to form the final structure, both physically and subjectively.

His exhibition, *Natura est ars*, held at Umbrella Studio in Townsville in 2007, was concentrated around a single plant

community gathered while walking in a coastal Melaleuca swamp after fire had affected the environment. *Woven Forms 2007* uses square cut clods of earth 'stitched' together with broken lines along the floor. The earth was collected from a dry creek bed with tiny seedlings bursting from its surface evidencing new life in the making. A number of branches in various shapes and sizes reach out their arms to each other, their torsos bound with woven vines and grasses common to the swamp community. The shadows cast by their bodies along the gallery wall create the feeling of life moving on, never static. Meulendijks refers to the winding movement of the vines as a cycle with strong connections to the seasons. Meulendijks is a quiet educator, simply rearranging nature so as to confront the viewer, making us pause and notice what was there all the time. ☹

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Tijn Meulendijks *Woven Forms 2007*, floor installation, melaleuca branches and vine material, clay, plant material, string, dimensions variable.

