

**WE'RE A WEIRD MOB: DESIGNING A CULTURAL IDENTITY– *The projects of All Australian Graffiti (1975-78) and a Vision Unfurled.* 11 June – 9 October 2005, Post Master Gallery, National Philatelic Collection, Melbourne. Curator: Elizabeth Gertsakis.**

Con Aslanis and Domenico (Mimmo) Cozzolino were children of Greek and Italian immigrant parents who had arrived in Australia from Europe in the 1950s. Two decades later, as founders of the *All Australian Graffiti* design studio, it was no accident that questions of identity and culture were pivotal to their artistic and imaginative contribution to the meaning of Australian design. They found affinity with fellow design students from a diversity of backgrounds that were to make up All Australian Graffiti including Izi Marmur, originally from Poland, Neil Curtis whose family emigrated from Britain, Geoff Cook, Tony Ward and Meg Williams.

*All Australian Graffiti* was local, working class and urban. Their illustrational and graphic style was that of the rock 'n' roll poster and LP album cover– streetsmart, irreverent, absurdist with strong affinities to the comic and cartoon traditions combined with the nostalgia of Australian ephemera. They aligned themselves with the anarchic moods of figures such as the American comic artist Robert Crumb and the surreal and often caustic imagination of Monty Python.

It was the time for sardonic humour, secretive and playful visual games, wild colour and comic puns on Australian everyday and sporting life, and the iconography and visual lampoons of Aussie vernacular and popular icons.

The exhibition, set within the context of the National Philatelic Collection which holds stamp designs by these artists, exhibits works prior to, during and after their All Australian Graffiti experience. A selection of their contemporary works is also included. These new paintings and photographs show a continuity of style, content and the eclectic diversity which was so much part of the hybrid nature of the 1970s. It is mature, but no less intense and no less expressive of the local culture. All Australian Graffiti fits well into the greater national discourse and iconography of Australian signs and symbols.

**A Vision Unfurled**

*A Vision Unfurled* is the project of Russell Kennedy, Senior Lecturer, Department of Design, Faculty of Art and Design, Monash University, Caulfield. His concepts for a national flag and ensign of reconciliation demonstrate the process by which a designer creates a unifying symbol that weaves together all facets of Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities in the form of a new Australian flag. *All Australian Graffiti's* critical and hybrid vision observed an Australia of clashing vernacular icons in graphic assertions of strident working class Aussie culture. Their work had a significant impact on Kennedy's thinking around the questions of re-imagining and redefining the symbolic structure of the Australian flag in relation to identity politics.

**Elizabeth Gertsakis, Curator**

**Post Master Gallery, National Philatelic Collection. June 2005**