

FACE TO FACE
Self Portraits 2007 - 2014

Paula do Prado
Chasm Gallery, Chippendale
September 27 - October 4

Artist statement

I began working with self portraits in early 2007 whilst still at university. I had been reading Gloria Anzaldua's 'Borderlands', Coco Fusco's 'The Bodies that were not ours' and seen the work of Kara Walker for the first time. I remember sitting in a class learning of Sarah Baartman or the Hottentot Venus as she was called and feeling my cheeks burn red. I was confused by my reaction, was it embarrassment? Shame? Anger? Was this how people viewed me, brown women like me? Would I forever carry the baggage of this history?

Using predominantly my face within my work provided a space in which to think by doing, a way to ask difficult questions about myself, my cultural heritage, my role as an artist and as a woman of colour. The self portraits that have been brought together for *Face to Face* represent a period of 7 years of my practice exploring various culturally and socially constructed roles that are of particular interest to me. These include the mulatta or jezebel, the half caste of ambiguous origin whose outward appearance defies easy ethnic classification. Often these characters morph and are juxtaposed with other complex social characters such as the crazed nationalist supporter or the black face performer. I draw ideas from my own mixed cultural heritage and make reference to terms such as 'Zorra' a Spanish word for a female fox or vixen. The term Zorra as well as referring to the female of the species, is also used colloquially in South American popular culture to denote a sly, cunning woman, at worst a slut or whore.

Its been said that the best way to deal with racism, sexism and xenophobia is to talk about it, to confront the thoughts and try to pin point where they're coming from and to deal with them head on. My practice is a way for me to deal with my own complex and at times problematic ideas and thoughts, specifically in relation to identity and my experience as a brown skinned woman living in Australian society.

I am very much exploring my own gaze, coming face to face with the reflection in the mirror. The face in the work is a prop, at best a mask of an infinite number of possible selves. I am acutely aware of the anxiety that feeds into the work from this intense self scrutiny and introspection. Despite the personal nature of the work, I hope there is a connection to a broader dialogue about identity, belonging and authenticity in Australia today.

Paula do Prado. September 2014

1a



1b



1c



1d



ZORRA

Zorro/Zorra is Spanish for fox or vixen. The term Zorra as well as referring to the female of the species, is also used colloquially in South American popular culture to denote a sly, cunning woman, at worst a slut or whore. Zorra can also be seen as the female counterpart to the fictional Legend of Zorro, a Latinesque character popularized through books and films. Zorro in contrast is typically portrayed as a charming Spanish outlaw wearing a black cape and mask, his cunning and fox-like attributes adding to his appeal.

The use of animal metaphors to describe types of people is something very common both in Spanish and in English, in both cases a double standard often emerges whereby the female animal metaphor positions the female as subordinate or less socially desirable, although not always sexually less appealing. Using the Zorra animal metaphor as a starting point I wanted to explore the intersection between sexual desire, curiosity and repulsion.

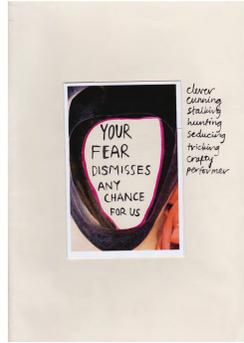
2a



2b



2c



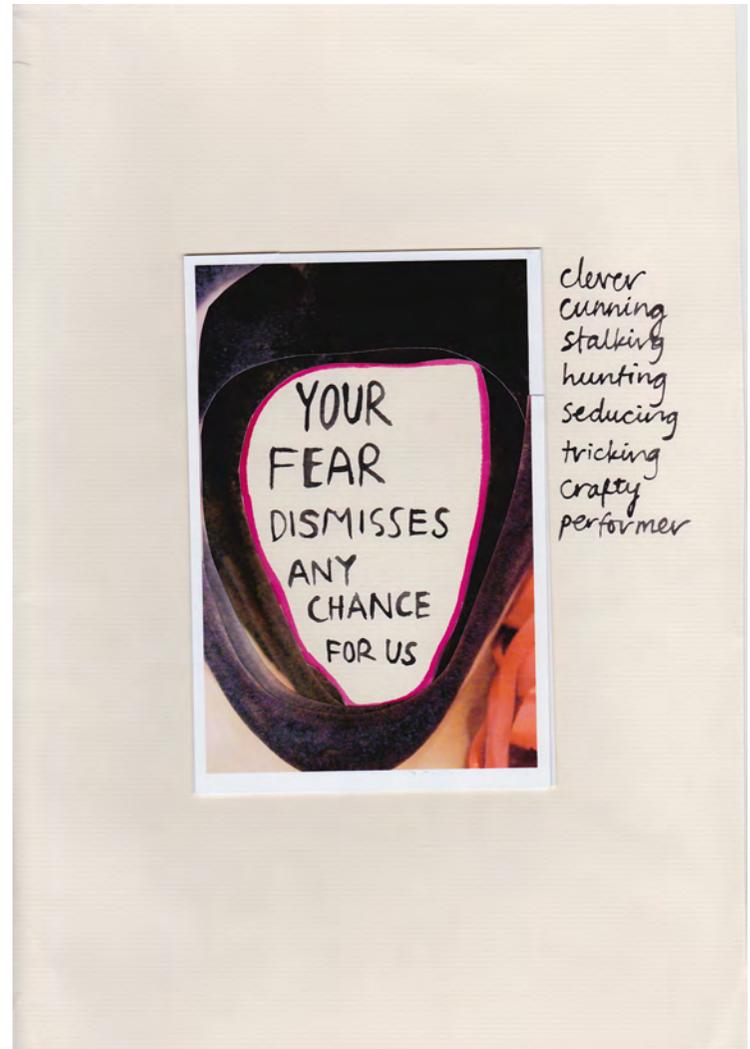
2d



2e



2f



2c

2a Black Eye Blue
2b So Obvious
2c Your Fear

2d Invisible
2e Invasive Species
2f Cherry Ripe

IN EQUAL MEASURE 2014

3a Union Jack Halo

3b Bloody Loudmouth

3c Feral Mongrel

3d Tall Black Poppy

3e Blonde Ambition

3f Been Caught Stealing

3a



3b



3c



3d

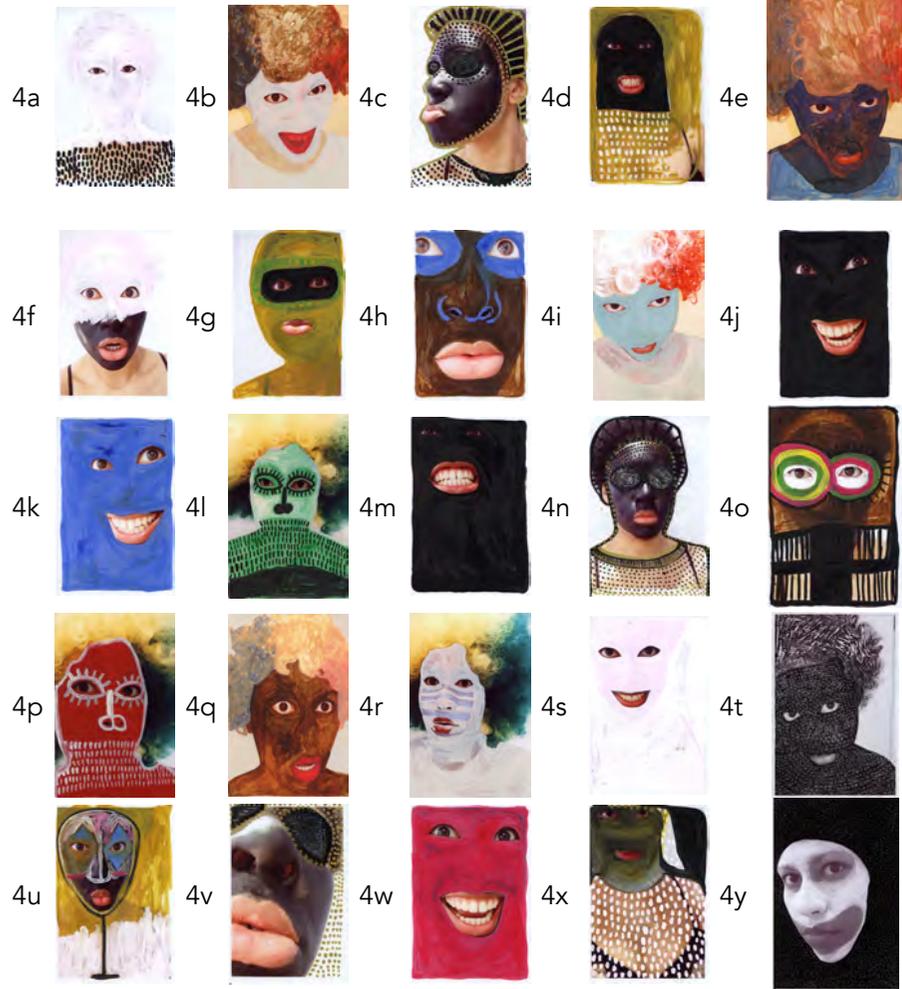


3e



3f





SELF PORTRAIT SERIES 2009



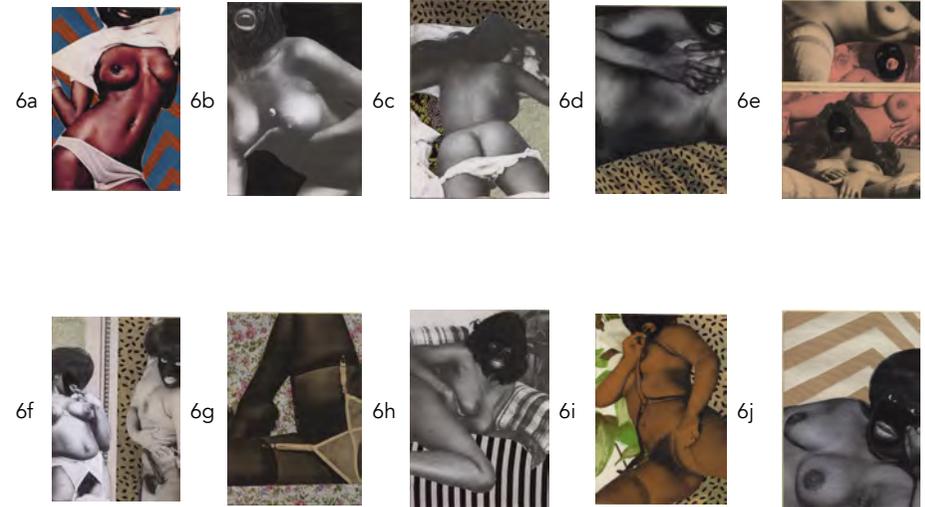
SEPIASIREN

Sepiasirens takes its title from a vintage adult magazine of the same name. I came across a single copy of the magazine some years ago for twelve dollars ninety-five at a second hand bookshop in Newtown. Sepia Sirens Volume 5, Number 2, Summer 1974 the contents page lists a range of 'foto-features' with various suggestive titles such as 'Dark Dazzler', 'Pleasure Pet', 'Hanging it out', 'Mellow Maid' and 'Chocolate Pie'. An Eros Goldstripe Publication, Sepia Sirens is for the man with exotic tastes, as the editorial statement explains

" Visual stimulation is probably the most basic of areas where a man can pursue sexual variety, and Sepia Sirens is a good starting place for the man who seeks exotic thrills, who looks for variety in women, for the mysterious aspects of human contact. Sepia Sirens, women drawn from the far corners of the world and brought together in one photo collection for the man with a taste for the unusual, a man who has already sampled the delights of dark girls and who has cultivated his tastes to the high point of sophisticated appreciation"

Interspersed with the photo layouts of black models in various sexually suggestive poses wearing only garter belts, boots or knee high sport socks is the fiction feature 'Cheating Black Whore'. A short story about a black pimp 'Dirty Dick' and his anger at one of his girls Glenda, who he finds out has not been handing over half of her earnings to him. The premise of the story sets up various sexually violent encounters, ending with Dirty Dick's rape of Glenda at knife point.

"Dirty Dick grinned lewdly as his hands gripped the dark whore's shoulders. She was moaning now, groaning and deeply satisfied"





FISA PAINT - CORRECTED - 11





9a



9b



9c



10a



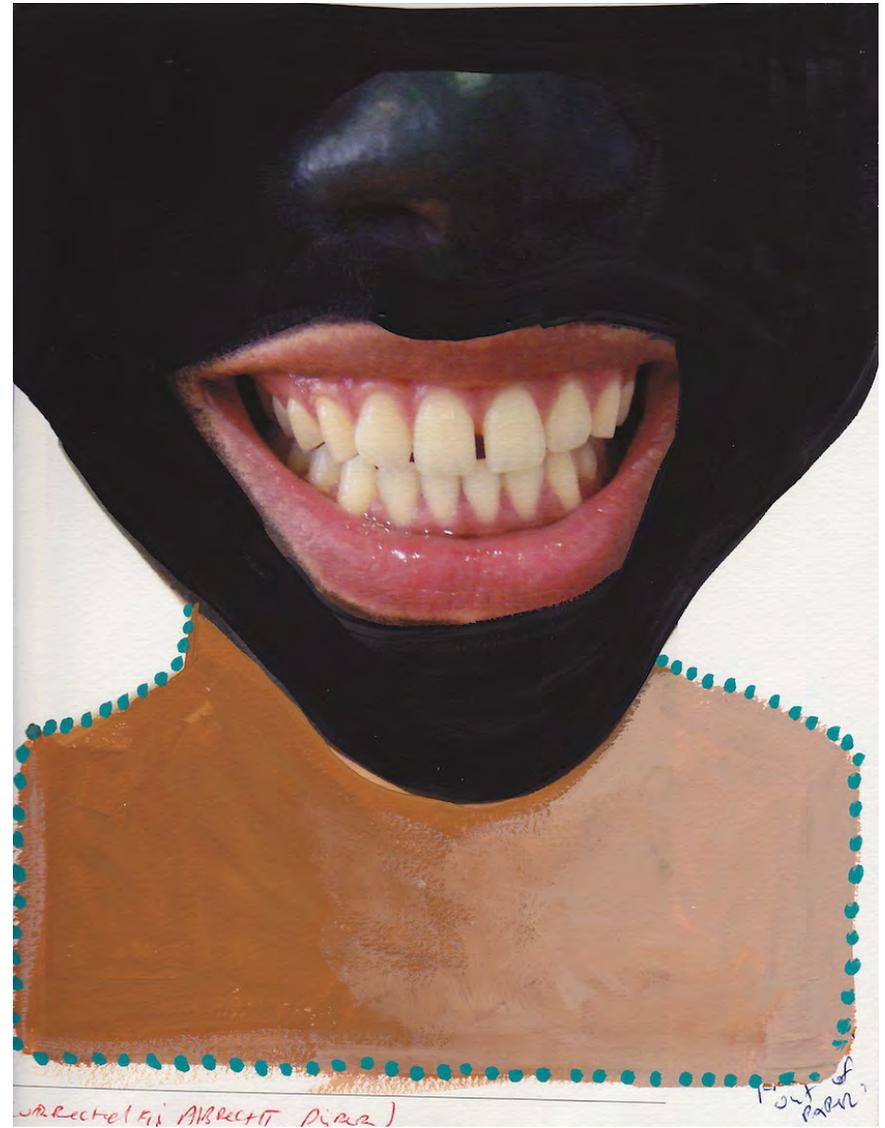
10b



10c



- 9a Self Portrait as Oceanic Tribal Inspired Mask
- 9b Self Portrait in Blue Face
- 9c Self Portrait as African-European Happy Brownie
- 10a Self Portrait in Traditional Headdress
- 10b Self Portrait in Blue Damask
- 10c Self Portrait in Decorative Accents



1a-d

Zorra series 2013

Collage on digital print on matte paper, unique state, 29.7 x 21cm
Unframed \$250 each

2a-f

Zorra Blue series 2013

Photo collage, gouache, 29.7 x 21cm
Framed \$320 each or entire series of 6 for \$1800

3a-d

In equal Measure series, 2013-14

Gouache, acrylic, charcoal and collage on transparency, 29.7 x 21cm
Framed \$320 each or entire series of 6 for \$1800

4a-y

Self Portrait series, 2009-2010

Gouache and acrylic on digital print on archival photo paper, unique state, 15 x 10cm
Previously exhibited "Where Yah From?" solo exhibition at Gallerysmith Melbourne 2010.
Framed \$120 each or entire series of 25 for \$2800

5

Untitled, 2008

Digital print on archival photo paper, unique state, 84 x 100cm
Previously exhibited at "Play" Textiles Art Centre, Brooklyn NY
Unframed \$1200

6a-l

Sepiasiren, 2012

Collaged vintage magazine colour copies, beading, fabric appliqué, artist's hair, 17 x 12cm
Previously exhibited "Feminage: The logic of Feminist Collage" Cross Art Projects, Kings Cross, 2012
Framed \$320 each or entire series of 10 for \$3000

7

Just Like Them, 2013

Paper and fabric collage, 28 x 24cm
Unframed \$250

8

Memory Totems, 2012-2014

Acrylic and collected objects from Uruguay on wood, 8 totems
Dimensions: variable \$120 each or 8 for \$900

9a-c

Self portrait as mask series, 2014

Appliqué and acrylic on found silk/linen blend fabric, 42 x 33cm
Framed \$750 each

10a-c

Self portrait as mask series II, 2014

Appliqué and acrylic on found silk/linen blend fabric, 42 x 33cm
Framed \$750 each

11

Fancy Dress, 2014

Acrylic on digital print on archival paper, unique state, 28 x 24cm
Unframed \$250

12

She'd be lying through her teeth, 2014

Acrylic on digital print on archival paper, unique state, 27 x 22cm
Unframed \$250

13

Process wall

Various elements/installation

Select process wall elements for sale, priced individually

Opening Saturday 27 September 2014, 4-6pm

Chasm Gallery, 10 Bartley Street, Chippendale

View by appointment, exhibition until 4 October

Preview Wednesday 24 September

by appointment, contact jess@chasmgallery.com

Sales enquiries

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Artist acknowledgements

Thank you to my wonderfully supportive family and friends.

Jessica Holburn @chasmgallery

Marita Smith @gallerysmith