Nuclear Normalisation
John Hinkson

The Murray–Darling
Stefano de Pieri

Beyond Brexit
Gerry Simpson
Guy Rundle

Existential Threat
David Spratt

Developing the North
Shannyn Palmer
EDITORIAL
Alison Caddick
1 THE SENSE OF AN ENDING?

LEAD GRAPHIC
4 Around the Bend

COMMENTARY
Stefano de Pieri
5 THE BASIN AND THE KILL
A devastating combination: agribusiness, political bastardry and complacency
Misha Coleman
8 FLAGGING SUPPORT
Alternative days for national contemplation and celebration
Carlos Eduardo Morreo
9 VENEZUELA
A left course?
Cavin Lewis
11 THE UNSPoken ‘WOC’ SLUR
Britain’s neoliberal media and New Imperialism

COMMENTARY: BREXIT
Cerry Simpson
14 BIGGER THAN BREXIT
A first ‘Letter from London’
Cuy Rundle
16 BIG LITTLE BRITAIN
When the political compact loses its ground

REGULARS
ELEN CHERRY
19 ENTREPRENEURS
‘Social influencers’ and the dark fairy tale of autonomy

VISUAL ESSAY
Cali Weiss
28 UNFOLDING PROJECTS
Afghan and Australian artists’ books collaborations

FEATURES
John Roberts
20 ROUND THE BEND CONSERVATION COOPERATIVE
Alternative strategies for conservation and housing
Shannyn Palmer
24 THE PROBLEM CHILD OF EMPIRE
‘Developing the North’ and the settler-colonial capitalist imagination

SPECIAL SECTION: FOR ALAN ROBERTS
Cuy Rundle
33 ALAN
John Hinkson
34 NEW WORLDS AND THE NUCLEAR AGE
Reflections on the social form of the scientific age
David Spratt
39 EXISTENTIAL RISK
How UN science reports and policymaking underestimate the threats of climate change
Hugh Saddler
44 JOINING UP CLIMATE POLICY
Tackling the twin challenges of climate change and electricity supply

ARTS AND CULTURE
Sashi Nair
49 ‘BETTER NEVER MEANS BETTER FOR EVERYONE’
Cultural change, literary adaptation and Margaret Atwood’s The Handmaid’s Tale

REVIEWS
Padraic Gibbon
53 DID ‘PROTECTION’ PROTECT?
Investigating Tim Rouse’s account of the Indigenous protection regime
Dan Tout
55 BELOONGA
Billy Griffiths’ bid for historical truth-telling
in Deep Time Dreaming
Emma Fajgenbaum
56 VANISHED BOHEMIA
George Johnston and Charmian Clift’s Greek idyll in Paul Genoni and Tanya Dalziell’s Half the Perfect World

POETRY
Sarah Hart
48 TEN THOUSAND DEAD BEES
Dockey Farms
Robert DiRapolli
57 THE LOOKOUT MAN (IT’S ALL IN YER ‘EAD)

CARTOONS
Matt Bisset-Johnson

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD
Chris Black

Where to find us
Postal address:
Arena Magazine
PO Box 18 North
Carlton 3054
Web:
www.arena.org.au
Tel: (03) 9416 0232
Fax: (03) 9416 0694

Submissions
Arena Magazine
accepts unsolicited submissions for each of its sections: commentaries & debate up to 1200 words; essays up to 4000 words; features up to 3000 words; reviews of books, film, art, theatre, music and dance up to 1200 words; photo essays; and poetry.

Please provide a brief biographical note.

Send to:
magazine@arena.org.au

Style
We follow the AGPS Style Manual.
The editors reserve the right to change titles and edit for space.

Refereeing
We formally referee any published article as requested by academic authors.

Payment
Arena Magazine does not receive government funding. Published contributors are offered a half-year gift subscription to Arena Magazine.

Arena Magazine encourages ideas and critical discussion about developments in contemporary social life, culture and politics. Elements of Arena’s editorial approach come from the left tradition, but the usefulness of the left/right distinction is questioned in the context of the rise of techno-scientific capitalism, and its global management in the neoliberal state. How we are constructed as new subjects, and how we are pointed towards more abstract relations generally, comes to the fore for both critique and visioning how life might be lived differently. Arena Magazine is committed to publishing critical thinking from a broad range of perspectives, and to discussing and building our options for the future.
Unfolding Projects

Afghan and Australian Artists' Books Collaborations

Unfolding Projects began as an intuitive gesture in identification with women in a country experiencing a conflict in which our own country, Australia, was involved. The project has been a vehicle for exchanges between Australian women artists and women acquiring literacy skills in the Organisation for Promoting Afghan Women's Capabilities (OPAWC) vocational centre in Kabul. The Afghan women are attempting against all odds to gain an elementary education within an environment of conflict, poverty and patriarchal authority. Currently in its second series, the project invites Afghan women to interact with imagery created by the Australian artists, using their recently acquired literacy skills. Although in the beginning it was not intentionally political art, its very act cannot be otherwise. The sharing of marks on paper is in itself a political act revealing a political intent: Afghan women, be strong; we stand in solidarity with you.

In 2010 a collective of fourteen Australian women artists that I coordinated created fifty-three concertina-style artists' books of imagery from each artist's current practice. In partnership with the Support Association for Women in Afghanistan, the books were delivered to the vocational centre in Kabul, where Afghan women wrote their stories and thoughts in response to the imagery. Of these fifty-three books, thirty-six were returned and these were acquired by the State Library of Queensland, where they are housed in its artists' books collection. Each book, initially a completed artist's book that held its own, was augmented by the direct mark of the Afghan woman's hand in beautiful Arabic script, resulting in another source of visual imagery that implied new meanings. These layered readings were multiplied further when the Afghan stories were translated, and as their meaning was perceived in relation to the imagery.

The general intent of the project was to exhibit the artwork in Australia to raise public awareness. It was possible that the books would be sold to raise funds for ongoing projects. The artistic intent, however, was to take part in a process of support and dialogue with Afghan women who wanted to be literate. It was a manoeuvre that said, You are not alone.

A second Unfolding Projects was recently completed on handkerchiefs and will be included in the exhibition Beyond the Veil, Artlife for the World Gallery at the Venice Biennale 2019.

Gali Weiss
When the transitional government came to power with the help of international friends, it brought happiness in the hearts of Afghan women. But after nine years of support from our international friends, nothing has been provided for us, the women of Afghanistan. Our rights are not given to us, the money received from international countries does not come to us, and it goes to the pockets of the warlords. We hope that we can get our rights one day and that women will be equal in their rights to men.
Christine Willcocks and Anita

School is my mother,
The pen is my sword,
Education is my strength,
The book is my friend.

The devastating story of war: I was a young girl when the destructive war began in my land and we migrated to a neighbouring country. Our homes were left in ruins. There was a massacre and people were escaping to the mountains, carrying women and girls on their back. People were killing each other, one in the name of Afghan, another in the name of Hazara or Tajik. Many lost their lives while trying to bury the already slaughtered. Girls were killed and hanged in wells.

Christine Willcocks and Basira

We, having passed the night, have become homeless.
We, having waited for the morning, are following the dawn.
If we think that Afghanistan is being invaded by other countries, we the young people will never let that happen. We will save our country to the last drop of blood; this country belongs to the Afghans.

Your love is my pride, oh my homeland!
For you, I’ll give my life, oh my homeland! You can’t earn a treasure without hardships. Earning belongs to the one who works hard.

Homeland! Your good name is Afghanistan, your air is cheerful and your scenery lovely. Your terrain invigorates the hearts. The subject of our love is your soil.

Annelise Scott and Amina

Our country, Afghanistan, was green when there was no war. Afghanistan had trees full of fruits and also trees without fruits. When war broke out in Afghanistan, all the greenery of Afghanistan was destroyed, houses were destroyed, people of Afghanistan became refugees and we, the women and girls, could not go to school. For our progress in education we need your help. We hope that for better education you will help us and cooperate with us.

Help us, friends.
Christine Willcocks and Nazifa

You were awake all nights, my mother
You cradled me till the afternoon, my mother
You sang me a lullaby until I fell asleep, my mother
You sang me a lullaby and rocked me so softly, my mother
You always observed and cared for me, my mother
You fully prepared me while I was going to school, my mother
You did not eat or sleep, my mother
You took care of my health, my mother
While I felt ill or restless.

Education is everything.
Education is a torch, education is the light of life.
Education is the beauty, education is the elegance of life.
Ignorance in life is always pain and sorrow,
Education shows you what is legal and illegal,
Education is the guide and instructor for life.
Let’s learn it from the core of our heart.
Education is a need of life.
Let’s all love education,
If education dies, life will not survive.
Save us from the ignorance of life.

Annelise Scott and Jamila

Long live Afghanistan,
Death to the enemies!
We want the equality of rights for men and women.

When the Taliban came to Afghanistan and took over Ghazni province, we migrated to Pakistan and then there we came to Kabul. As we were refugees, we didn’t have food and clothes and we were without shelter. A lot of people were killed in these wars; lot of them remained in prisons. Their children were without a future and were always waiting for the day they would return to their homeland. When we went to our villages, we had neither tree, nor river, nor water. But still, the foreign friends helped our country; otherwise, we wouldn’t have had anything to eat. After that people started to work. Gradually working began and people could go to school to study. In schools, there were noachers. Gradually refugees returned, and the people from the UNESCO literacy centre came. We couldn’t study there. We came to Kabul and came to the SPAWC literacy centre. We started getting lessons from good teachers. We can read and write things. We want these courses to continue and ask people like us, and our countrymen, literate.
Marian Crawford and Zeyba

One day I saw a mother who had lost her six sons in the war and was begging. I asked her, 'Why do you beg?', and she said, 'Because I live with my two daughters-in-law and four children. If I don't beg, who will feed them?' I became very depressed and said, 'Oh God! What misfortune is this?' I told that woman, 'I will introduce you and your daughters-in-law to a sewing course,' but she said, 'I am not allowed to go to any place.' I asked, 'Who does not allow you that?' and she said, 'My husband's brother; he is an addict.' I became very depressed and left.

I saw another woman another day who had a sick child in her arms and was crying. She had come to see a doctor. I went to her and asked her, 'Why are you crying?' and she said, 'My baby is sick and I have no money for his treatment to buy the expensive medication.' I asked her what the father of the child does and she said that he is mentally ill and doesn't work. I asked her, 'Who pays for your children's expenses?' and she said, 'One of my in-laws used to help me, but six months ago he got married, and now his wife does not let him help with my children's expenses. His wife says to him, "You have an illegitimate relationship with your brother's wife. That's why you give her money." I don't know now what to do with my child and my sick husband. Where should I go? My father's family is also very poor.'

This story made me very sad, but I couldn't help.

Di Ellis and Zahida

It was a day in winter. Russians had attacked our country. War began. My brother with my cousin went to the mountains to save their lives from the Russian bombardments. When they got close to a big block of stone they saw that a big wolf was also hiding behind that stone. My brother and my cousin were scared of the wolf, but because their lives were in danger they also hid themselves behind that stone from the Russian bombs. Surprisingly, the wolf did not attack them. Instead it stayed along with them behind that stone.

At the end I thank all the friends who help us and wish them success.
Joining Up Energy Policy

Hugh Saddler

Venezuela

Carlos Eduardo Morroco

Round the Bend Cooperative

John Roberts

The Handmaid’s Tale

Sashi Nair

VISUAL ESSAY: Unfolding Projects

Gali Weiss and cooperative

Cryptic crossword, entrepreneurs, archaeology and deep-time Australia, Aboriginal Protectors.