

## GLIMPSES OF SUNSHINE BEACH, AUSTRALIA AND BERLIN

ULRIKE STURM

Ulrike Sturm currently lectures in the Bachelor of Visual Arts program at the Nambour campus of TAFE Queensland, in partnership with University of Canberra. She completed a BA, BVA and MFA at the University of Sydney, as well as a Diploma of Law (LPAB, NSW) and is now nearing completion of her PhD at CQU.

Born in Berlin, Ulrike's family migrated to Australia when she was a small child. Her first home in Australia was at the migrant hostel at Bonegilla. After living in Sydney for a decade, her family then spent a few years in the highlands of Papua New Guinea where she and her brother were the only non-indigenous students at the local high school. These experiences led to an enduring interest in exploring the perspectives of 'cultural outsiders' in her visual arts practice, working mainly with printmaking, including black and white linocuts, etchings, and artist's books. She also creates large-scale vinyl wall artworks, makes artist books and drawings and her work can frequently be seen in *Meanjin literary journal*.

Ulrike's MFA thesis explored the themes of identity and cultural alienation at the juncture of truth and memory, examining the work of a number of contemporary artists who have worked with visual narratives and/or graphic novels as vehicles to relate their personal experiences which range from finding themselves in a country where they do not speak the language, through to travel and migration stories, as well as feelings of cultural isolation within one's own culture as a result of being a member of a social or ethnic minority. A recurring theme was the sense of a loss for words: a 'silencing' in a certain sense, and a struggle to express one's identity, which eventually found a voice through the narrative of visual language. Her own creative work contemplates the influence that her experience of migration from Germany to Australia as a young child has had on her perception of identity, leading to an exploration of the nexus between memory and truth. She suggests that a key element in the concept of identity is that 'truth' does not matter as much as our perception of it from a particular perspective.

The images in this issue of *Social Alternatives* are based on recent glimpses of Sunshine Beach, Queensland, Australia and Berlin, Germany.



Weyba Street, Sunshine Beach, Queensland, Australia, Lino-cut print. Early one morning a truck came and took this lovely old cottage away. The old houses at Sunshine Beach are all disappearing and being replaced by monstrous new concrete and glass structures. I hope it has found a nice new place to live.



Above: Ja Bar in Neukölln, Berlin, Germany, Lino-cut print. Weser Straße, Neukölln. If you find a parking spot, try to never move your car because it is unlikely that you'll find a parking spot again. Most people walk or ride bikes or take the U Bahn.

Below: Weser Straße Neukölln, Berlin, Germany, Lino-cut print. When I was in Berlin a couple of years ago, I stayed in Neukölln and this bar was just down the street. It seemed to be entirely furnished with sofas, chairs and tables that had been dumped on the street. During the day, the roller shutters were down and these painted creatures, painted peered out.

Following Page 78, top: Aeroplane, 'When I look out of the window of an aeroplane and see another plane flying not all that far away, I feel slightly anxious'. This image was in my self-published book of linocuts titled: *A Cat goes Kayaking: 30 linoprints in 30 days*.

bottom: Red Couch, Lino-cut print. Once, a friend and I opened an eclectic sort of shop that had handmade art and books and stuff. It was the perfect shop because it never had any customers. Every Wednesday evening, when all the other shops were closed, we went in and sat on the red sofa and talked and enjoyed a bottle of wine. We closed it after a year, from the book, titled: *A Cat goes Kayaking*.



