

**Diego Ramirez
Soda Jerk
Ian Haig
Emile Zile
Martine Corompt
Heath Franco
Philip Brophy**

UNCO UNCO

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**Torrance Art Museum (The Dark Room)
31 August - 12 October 2013
curated by Ian Haig**

Home of the depraved... Land of the dweeb

Darren Tofts

What if Americans didn't sound American? Would they seem more real if they spoke like they were from countries like Texas or Utah? As a kid growing up in Melbourne watching lots of television I remember thinking even then that some people forgot that America was made up. One day in grade three I saw this ace show about some people that land on the moon. Buzz Lightyear or something. I argued with someone who reckoned it was real. I told them that the moon was pretty new in America at the time and not that well known. I also said that in later series the characters travelled to actual places in space, like where Superman lived.

But one show that haunted me for years made America seem really frightening. This kid Greg was always in trouble and for some reason his dad would constantly call him into his den. It was only years later when I started reading film writers like Robin Wood that I understood the horror of what that really meant. But as scary as it was that Greg was forever being penalised, it was nothing compared to the shock of a more recent show where they elected this black guy for President. Someone else told me once about an episode of America where a whole bunch of kids get shot while at school. I didn't really believe them, as they weren't allowed to make up stuff that wasn't like real life.

All those shows about America, wherever they were made, seemed even more far-fetched watching them from the other side of the world. This is what I learned from the newsbreaks by Beavis and Butthead when MTV was on the telly. Not sure where those guys were from but they were grouse, and said things like "this rocks" and "totally cool" about American shit on television. And it was weird and fucked up 'cos all the time they ate and drank things that you heard about in America, like hot dogs, pizza, nachos, soda and stuff.

But you know what's really freaky? I've heard people who actually try to imitate characters from the show, saying "dude" and "butt-munch" all the time as if everyone else has seen it too. I just ignore them and get back to watching shows about real places and ordinary people like Twin Peaks. I also really like that nature documentary about an elephant that turns up in a school one day in a country called Oregon.

Darren Tofts is a Melbourne writer. He still watches America on TV. It's apparently on the Internet now as well.

You're unco! was a familiar phrase I heard growing on sport day. The idea of being UNCOordinated and not in 'touch' with my body as a vehicle for running, catching and scoring points, saw my body as a failure, a reject in the sport obsessed culture of Australia. I have come to realise that 'unco' is in fact a badge of honour, a desirable state of being. Put into the context of an art practice, unco is a not just uncoordinated, but a weird fit, a strange combination, an unusual mix. I always hated sport anyway

The works in unco all manifest this unco state of being, of odd pairings and perverse couplings. From Diego Ramirez's obviously super macho re-voicing; To Soda Jerk's Judy Garland Wizard of Oz time travel portal, as the actress encounters her older self. All of the works here are formally unco, of sounds that don't belong, voices that shouldn't be heard, re-voicing and re-tracking that is entirely aware of its artifice and its unco construction. All of the works too reference and appropriate in different ways a mysterious place called America.

Ian Haig, August, 2013

Heart Shaped Bruises - Diego Ramirez, 2012, 2.07 min

Your Door - Heath Franco, 2012, 8.17 min

After The Rainbow - Soda Jerk, 2009, 6.09 min

Skin Freak - Ian Haig, 2012, 1 min

Spell On You - Martine Corompt, 2003, 3.09 min

Five Production Company Logos in 3D - Emile Zile, 2010, 2.28 min

EvaporatedMusic2 - at the mouth of metal - Philip Brophy, 2008, 18.17 min

Wunder Closet - Heath Franco, 2012, 5.33 min

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