

# “Pleasantries”

## ARTISTS:

Ross Coulter  
Kellie Wells  
Mathew Shannon  
Benjamin Sheppard

**CURATED BY:** Benjamin Sheppard.

**04 May - 03 June 2006**



Conte on Newsprint, 2005, Kellie Wells.

Artist and curator, Benjamin Sheppard, has brought four very different artists together for this exhibition.

Through the task of assembling a show here at the Alliance Française, Benjamin has been inspired by the significance of the venue as a meeting place and cultural centre, contributing to the potency of his proposed investigation. With the notion of ‘pleasantry’ at the forefront of his mind, an exploration will be constructed that will both highlight and test the value and meaning of the- often overlooked- civilities of human interaction.

Existing on the front line of social interaction, every day pleasantries serve to buffer the human subject from the ever-present societal hazards of misunderstandings, confusion and offence. Feelings are hurt, affront is taken, even egos can be threatened, when proud people don’t get the respect they feel they deserve.

It can be as simple as a “Please” or “Thankyou,” a tone of voice, the posturing of stance or the firmness of a handshake as peoples’ lives collide and relationships are made and broken. Inter-linguistic relationships can be easily affected, in the early stages, by efforts to be pleasant. Parents can be impressed, or otherwise, by the well-dressed nature of their child or their child’s friend on a weekend outing. A similar thing could be said of employers or potential employers of their employee or potential employees respectively.

From the intuitive video works of Ross Coulter and Benjamin Sheppard, to the delicate sensibilities of Kellie Wells’ pastel drawings on newsprint and Mathew Shannon’s imposing monolith, the upcoming show *Pleasantries* at the Alliance Française Gallery in St Kilda is sure to stimulate your thoughts about exactly what it means to be pleasant in a tolerant society.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

**Ross Coulter** is 34 and a practicing artist and photographer. Having been a reporter and segment producer on the ABC’s Recovery program for two years, he has a long list of award winning credits both in Television production and the Visual Arts.

**Kellie Wells** has a previous degree in Political Science and Women’s Studies from the University of Tasmania. At 34 Kellie has a wealth of experience in various industries, travel, indeed life and, along side her artistic career, tutors in Koori education at Deakin University.

**Matthew Shannon** was born in Australia, but grew up in the home of pleasantries, Oxford England. Since returning to Australia, the 23 year-old Victorian College of the Arts graduate has already exhibited in Melbourne’s leading Artist Run Initiatives.

**Benjamin Sheppard**, also a recent VCA graduate, has travelled extensively around Europe and the Asian Sub-Continent. At 29, his artistic practice is as varied as his experience. With a concurrent show at *24seven Art Space* in May, this will be his first exhibition as both a participating artist and a curator.

**Exhibition dates:** 04 May - 03 June 2006  
**Opening on:** Thursday 4 May 2006 at 6.30pm

**Alliance Française Gallery**  
17 Robe Street ST KILDA VIC 3182  
t: 03-9525 3463  
www.afmelbourne.asn.au

**Opening hours:**  
Mon-Thu 9.30am to 8.30pm  
Fri 9.30am to 6.00pm  
Sat 9.00am to 4.30pm