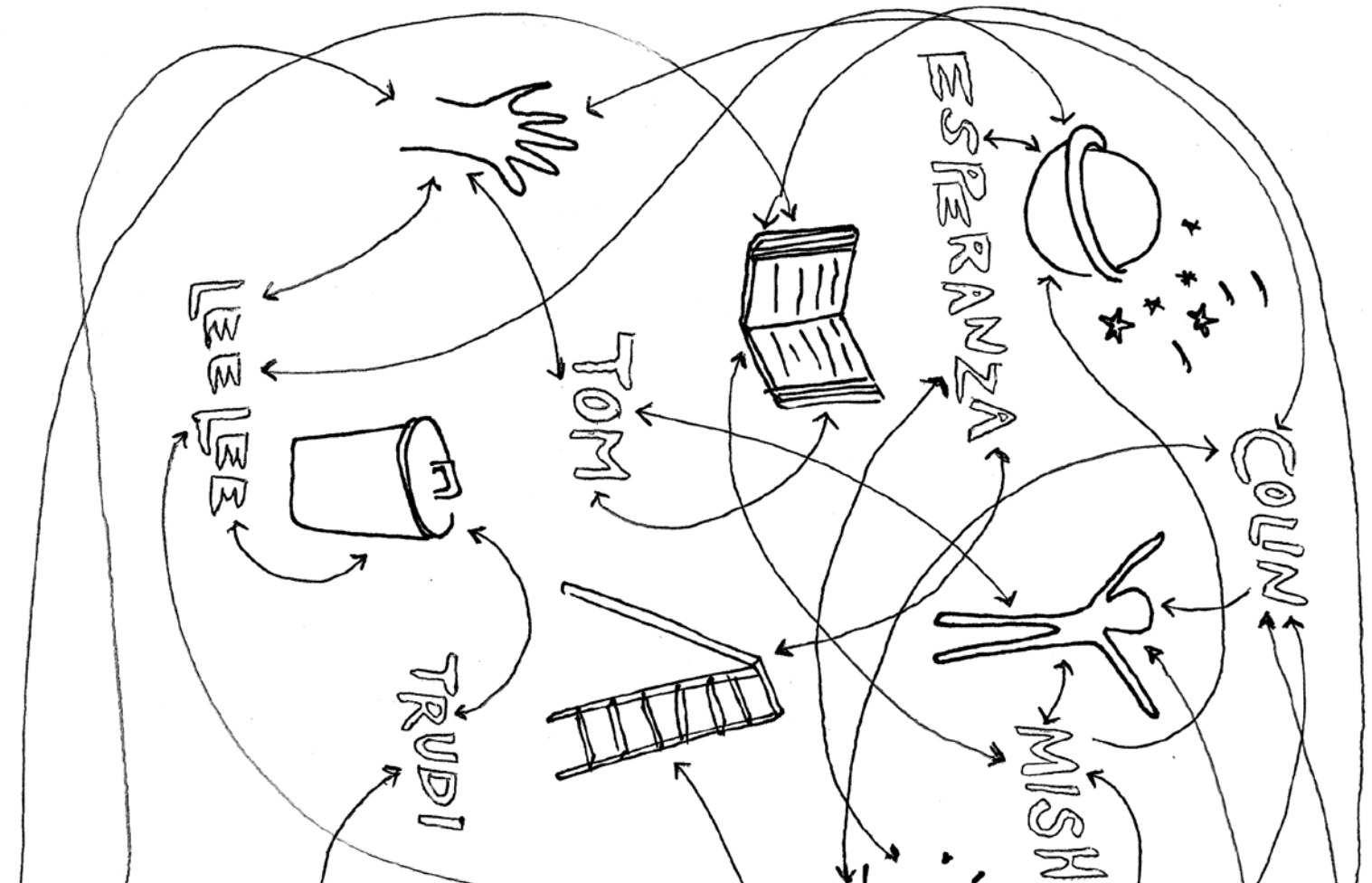
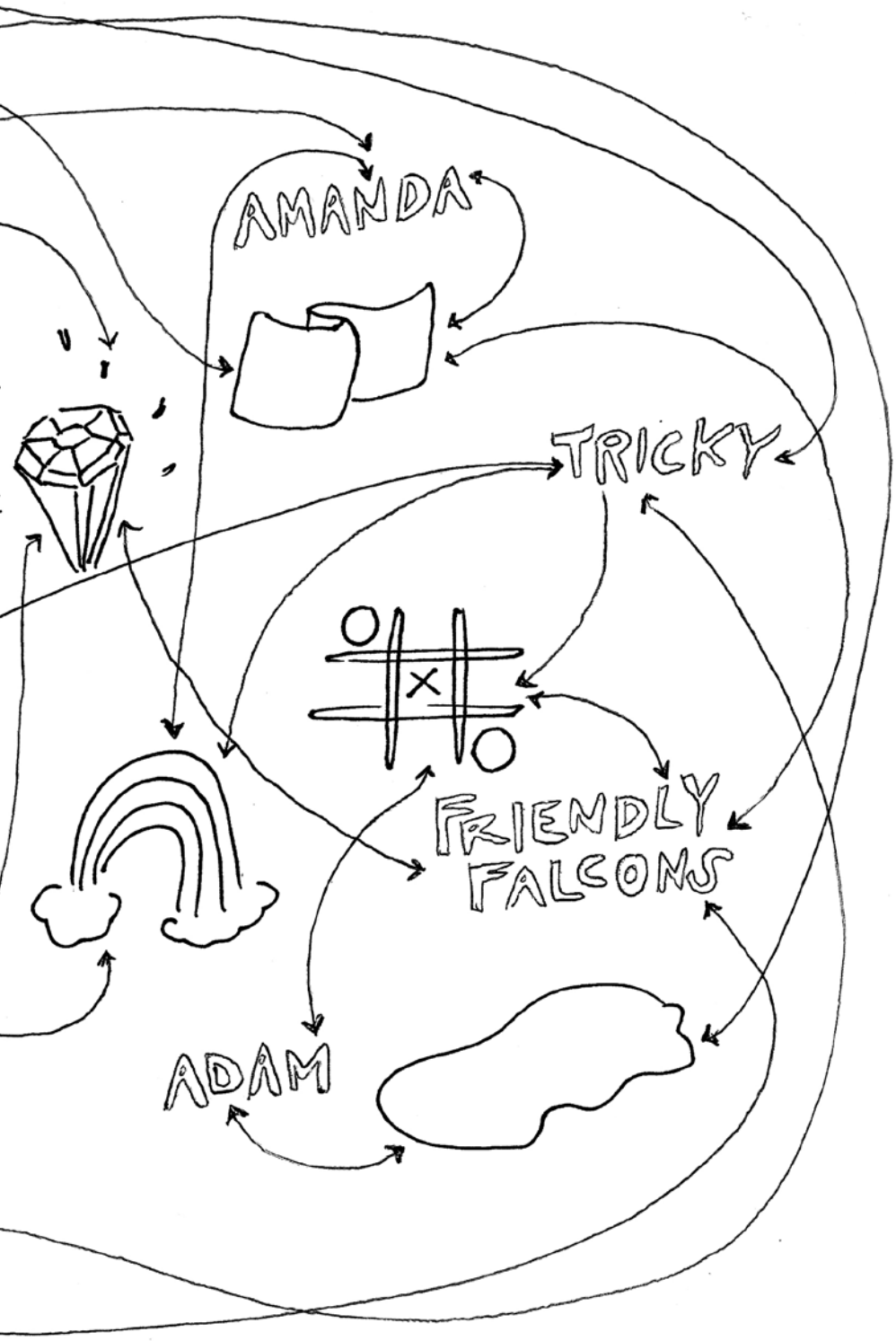
LAS HERMANAS IGLESIAS PRESENTS:
@FLUX FACTORY 25TH AUGUST 2011

FARAWAY NEIGHBOR

TRUDI BRINCKMAN, LEE LEE CHAN, ADAM FREZZA, COLIN LANGRIDGE, ESPERANZA MAYOBRE, MISH MEIJERS, TOM O'HERN, TARA PELLETIER & JEFFREY KUROSAKI (THE FRIENDLY FALCONS AND THEIR FRIEND THE SNAKE) AMANDA VALDEZ, TRICKY WALSH

curatorial diagram by las hermanas iglesias




AMANDA
TRICKY
FRIENDLY FALCONS
ADAM

While it is commonly stated “No Man is an Island,” in these contemporary times, machines have replaced human-to-human contact, education and exploration. Creating a natural distance between the developments of communication and understanding, this phenomenon is becoming ever more present - resulting in the human race understanding an unauthentic simulacrum of distant peoples and the culture that derives from them. With that said, and divulging for a moment, one must defy the old saying and come to the conclusion that we “all live on islands.”

Whether physical, institutional, economical, political or philosophical, architectural structures restrain us by metaphorical borders of internal and/or external forces. In a broader sense and geographically speaking, our personal environments are bound and surrounded by massive walls that begin and end at a certain edge - thus creating an island. And, at that edge, a new border begins with an obstacle that creates a new division. But what divides us is also what defines us, living on our islands. “How do we proceed?” one might ask - build a damn bridge.

Artists have a long-standing history of conquering borders and building bridges to reach distant lands. Searching for new ways of seeing and expanding upon the understanding of this time and place, they have consistently used the great equalizer of “art” as means of communication and exploration. This cultural exchange has brought forth a new sense of globalism that in return, has spread a certain level of modern day western influence. Whether considered good or evil, this cultural influx and gentrification has invented a new found dialogue between distant contemporaries. Through this historical, visual, and popular culture laden conversation, commonalities and differences form a newly found understanding of friendship and universality.

This exhibition, Faraway Neighbor and the participating artists Colin Langridge, Mish Meijers, Tom O’Hern, Tricky Walsh, Trudi Brinckman, Amanda Valdez, Adam Frezza, Friendly Falcons, Esperanza Mayobre and Lee Lee Chan exemplifies how culture, communication, and common understanding is shared by exchange. Ten multi-disciplinary artists, five representing the small island of Tasmania and five representing the megatropolis of New York City, Faraway Neighbor creates a new sense of community and examines how lightening speed translators, video-to-video chats, social media and the infinite matrix of the internet,

become the tools in which bridges are built. The amount and extent of western influence on these artists serves as both a level of exoticism and mediocrity of the commonplace. From kitsch to historical works, art and cultural reference is collected, processed, and reorganized in various forms creating unique perspectives and ways of seeing.

Organized by New York based collaborative artists/sisters, Lisa and Janelle Iglesias/Las Hermanas Iglesias, Faraway Neighbor and its curatorial pursuit brings to the forefront a new sense of freedom. By defying the barriers specifically bound by geography, this exchange allows a platform that explores the various understandings of the contemporary world. The exhibition consists of a carefully curated selection of visual and performance pieces that presents a cultural melding of works of the various artists from different locales where none have never met nor interacted. While a few work collaboratively in their respective country of origin, most are independent of one other and work autocratically through engaging studio practice and conceptual exploration, a new sense of cultural commonalities and globalism arise. Faraway Neighbor culminates into a portrayal of a post-Generation X western material culture and influence, while on varying levels simultaneously presents the artists capacity for simulation and materiality in their artistic process.

It is widely accepted that New York is currently the center of the art world. More artists per capita than anywhere else on the planet, life in New York City includes the barrage of inspiration and multiculturalism. And where the goal is to be as western as possible and live the American dream. North Hobart, Tasmania, on the other hand is as remote as any small town in western Oklahoma. Separated from the Australian mainland, Tasmania is a microcosmic refuge with a wavering population of tourists that flock to the "island of inspiration." Tasmanians and more specifically, the five artists represented in the exhibition are as removed from New York and the "center of the art world" as one can get. Though each artist individually and/or collectively has exhibited work across the globe, they all visually explore the expansion of western culture while relating and/or coming to terms with their exotic home.

Like the islands motto "A World Apart, Not A World Away," the Tasmanian artists bring to the surface an interesting juxtaposition of an allegiance to the fables, myths and pride of their singular culture, while understanding and utilizing access to the outside world.

Colin Langridge for instance, explains that his recent residency in Rome, Italy inspired his current series of sculptures. His sculptures, abstract forms comprised of fabric covered in glue and layers of glossy paint, are as illustrative as any Bernini sculpture, but also poetically grotesque as any lump of decomposed matter. Like the decaying mass of urban trash and the natural cycle of life and death in nature, Langridges' abstract sculptures relate to the beauty and decomposition of consumer waste while forming natural cocoon-like pods on the brink of a re-birth and renewal.

For Trudi Brinckman and Tom O'Hern, myth and fable play an important role in the research and practice of their work. Tom O'Hern uses the traditional medium of drawing to create illustrative portraits of colonial Tasmanians infected with cancerous tumors. Utilizing fictional historical figures enhanced by a contagious cancer originating from the Tasmanian devil, the drawings employ a political connotation focusing on a jaded past and brutal present. Like the personified Tasmanian devil characterized in the popular Warner Bros. Bugs Bunny cartoons, the portraits evoke both chaos and intrigue. Brinckman, a multi-disciplinary artist, creates assemblages of found objects and everyday materials in an attempt to establish anti-heroic fables that embrace nothingness and life existing in the ether. Both O'Hern and Brinckman present anarchist and anti-establishment tendencies, while embracing historical and natural aspects of their native land. Their work exudes the over commercialization of land and culture, the western influence of man-made monuments, and the underbelly of natural phenomenon.

The sometimes collaborators and multi-disciplinary artists, Mish Meijers and Tricky Walsh, employ the kitsch of everyday teen pop culture while embracing their synthetic relationship to it. Walsh, who works in installation, video, painting, graphic novels and film, has recently taken to the "arcade" as a form of replaying personal histories. Influenced by handheld video games of the 1980's and more specifically the pinball machine, Walsh creates apparatuses or "circuits" that ping and pong in a game of play, chance, and life. Mish Meijers installations and performative works are based on her fictional alter ego - "Fragile Ghostboy," and his friendly Australian wombat, are obsessed with astral travel, aliens, and empty sports fields. Like Walsh, Meijers relates to a certain form of play that is rooted in teenage fascination, isolation, choice and the grey areas between adolescence and adulthood.

For Langridge, Meijers, O'Hern, Walsh, and Brinckman, pop culture and western influence is a certain form of exoticism in contrast to their deep Tasmanian culture and sense of expanse. For the five New Yorkers in the exhibition, Amanda Valdez, Adam Frezza, Friendly Falcons, Esperanza Mayobre, and Lee Lee Chan, Tasmania is as much the "ideal" of a distant exotic locale as is anywhere outside the cramped quarters of Long Island and Manhattan.

In terms of influence, the five New York artists bring something a little bit different to the cultural exchange. The Tasmanians are outsiders looking in, while the New Yorkers are insiders looking both, out and in and their cultural make-ups areas diverse as the block they live on, often exemplifying the populous mecca and multiculturalism. For example, Lee Lee Chan grew up in Hong Kong, Utah and now lives and works in New York City. Her constructions of painting, photography, sculpture and installation are connected and derived from her extreme living environments. Relating Hong Kong to Utah, her installations use mediums as collaborators and her environments keep people at a distance, yet they are both illustrative and attractive inviting the viewer in. Using everyday objects, Chan captivates the viewer by exploring human attraction to gem-like qualities and reflective surfaces, while creating ethereal moments of visual experience.

Like Chan's exploration of the abstracted visual experience, Amanda Valdez explores this phenomenon on the two dimensional surface. Her "paintings," constructed of fabric and painted shapes are minimal in nature and explore a deep sense of play and sophistication. Drawing upon invention and recycling of shape and line, Valdez's work is similar to that of the city itself, abstract from a distance yet magnetically attractive.

Architecture, politics and space play a large role in the work of Esperanza Mayobre. Living in the tight quarters of the urban landscape and drawing upon the sense of construction and demolition of structures, the Venezuelan-born multi-disciplinary artist, Mayobre tackles the tracing of human inhabitance and conditions. Her renderings of fallen architectural structures explore the impermanence of human monuments. Dealing with a sense of loss of physical space, the drawings have a feeling of fallen shelter that is neither man made or natural, while illustrating the breakdown western societal hierarchies. Her conceptual use of materiality in her extended artistic practice derives from Mayobre's culturally diverse personal history.

For Adam Frezza and the Friendly Falcons (Jeffrey Kurosaki and Tara Pelletier), New York City, its people, and urban remnants is like a fiesta of materials. Collecting, processing and reconstructing, is a collaborative practice for all three artists. Each working in their own way, they use the phatasmagorical carnival of urban life and interaction for the inspiration behind their somewhat different practices. For Adam Frezza, his constructions of paintings, collages, installations and sculptures play upon the magic within everyday objects, forms, and materiality. From toothpaste caps to a wad of hair on the subway floor, Frezza's collecting of mundane materials and constructing them in new fashion relates his interest in religion, monuments, dieties, science and fantasy. Abstracted in form, the works maintain some resemblence to its original form/function while trying to be nothing shy of well, nothing thus exemplifying the debated existence of god, death and a greater power.

The Friendly Falcons have a multi-layered studio practice that expands beyond sculpture, drawing, music and performance. Like Frezza, the Friendly Falcons collect and re-invent the everyday cultural practices while retaining child-like wonderment in their work. Similar to the process of Meijers and Walsh, the Friendly Falcons relate to a specific generational time and cultural group fascinated by the inventiveness of kitsch and pop culture. The visually inventive installations, sculptures, and performances depicting natural phenomenon and personified animals, exploring the multi- layered narratives of their journeys. The Friendly Falcons work utilizes the influence of place, culture, history and play as it explores the dichotomy of the exotic and commonplace.

The ten artists presented in this exhibition, Faraway Neighbor, Langridge, Meijers, O'Hern, Walsh, Brinckman, Valdez, Frezza, Friendly Falcons, Mayobre and Chan, and event organizers, Lisa and Janelle Iglesias, are all building bridges. They have committed to the exchange of ideas and understanding while exploring their own respective artistic practices. Contained by the borders of geography and everyday norms, the artists have all stepped to the edge and looked out. They challenge the constraints of geography, politics and philosophies while respecting the history and traditions of their native locales. Weighing and assessing the influence of western culture, each artist personifies its varying levels of gentrification and understanding. Whether good or bad, they have augmented and created their own personal utopia, viewing it as exotic or commonplace, each collecting, process and reorganize.

Seeing art and diversity as the greatest educator and form of communication with the other cultures in hopes to better understand our time and place, form heightened levels of respect, establish dialogue for new conversations, and well…… just throw this whole "island" theory out the window.

Jeremy Mikolajczak
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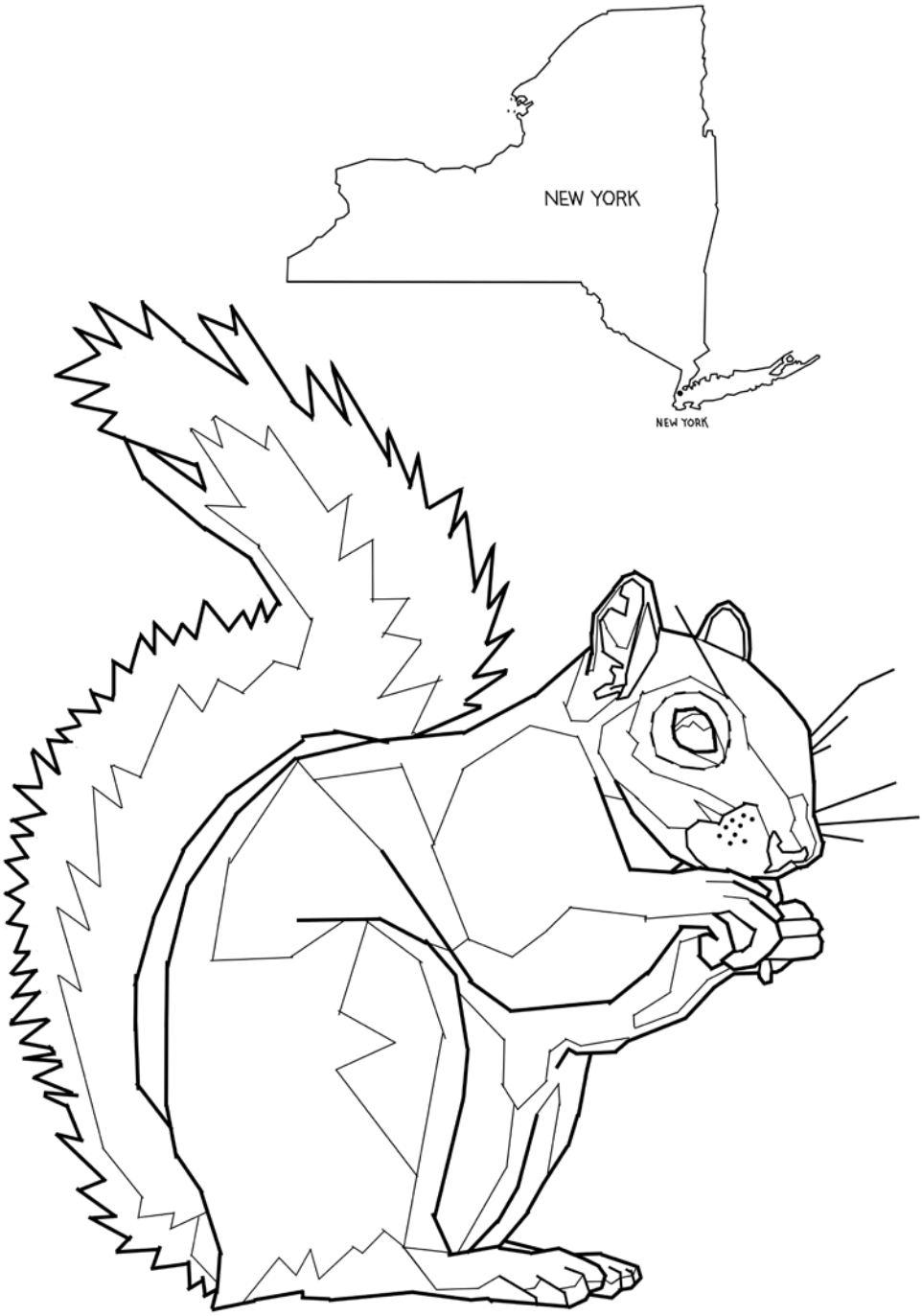
NEW YORK
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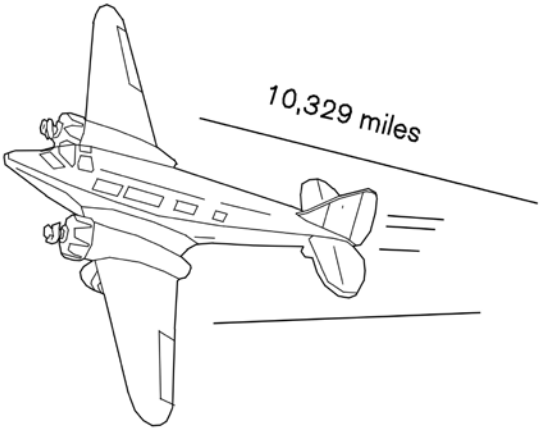
10,329 miles

TASMANIA
HOBART

ADAM FREZZA

COLIN LANGRIDGE

TRUDI BRINCKMAN

AMANDA VALDEZ

nord
electro

THE FRIENDLY FALCONS AND THEIR FRIEND THE SNAKE

MISH MEIJERS

TRICKY WALSH

AMANDA VALDEZ

TRICKY WALSH

LEE LEE CHAN

TOM O'HERN

ESPERANZA MAYOBRE

For more information on the artists and organisers of Faraway Neighbor:

Janelle and Lisa Iglesias: www.LasHermanasIglesias.com

Tasmanian Artists
Tricky Walsh: trickywalsh.com
Mish Meijers: mishmeijers.com
Tom O'Hern: www.bettgallery.com.au/artists/ohern
Trudi Brinckman: trudibrinckman.com
Colin Langridge: http://www.castgallery.org/cast-living-archive/artists/profile/5/Colin-Langridge

New York Artists
Amanda Valdez: amandavaldez.com
Adam Frezza: www.adamfrezza.com
Friendly Falcons: www.friendlyfalcons.com
Esperanza Mayobre: esperanzamayobre.com
Lee Lee Chan: leeleechan.com
Jeremy Mikolajczak: j-mikolajczak.com

Las Hermanas Iglesias and the artists of Faraway Neighbor appreciate the support of our generous kickstarter contributors:
Keith Carroll, Trudi Brinckman, Jin Kim, Juli Toro, Holen Sabrina Kahn
Eloise Murphy, Anne Hennen Barber, Cindy Pratomo, Bodhild Iglesias
Josephine Ortiz, Michael Mclaren, Richard Heipp, Kris Haamer
James Oh, Liz Woods and Kevin Leong, Pip Stafford,
Stefan Kuehner, Trent Johnson, Joy Drury Cox,
Dori Latman, Jordan Duca, Gen Ste. Marie,
Kate Fauvell, Susan Lee, Mary Coble,
Esperanza Mayobre, Chris DePasquale,
Nicole O'Loughlin, Louise Josephs,
Jack Robins, Jessie Henson,
Benjamin Heller, Sarah W.,
Jane, Stuart Campbell, Kat Cohn,
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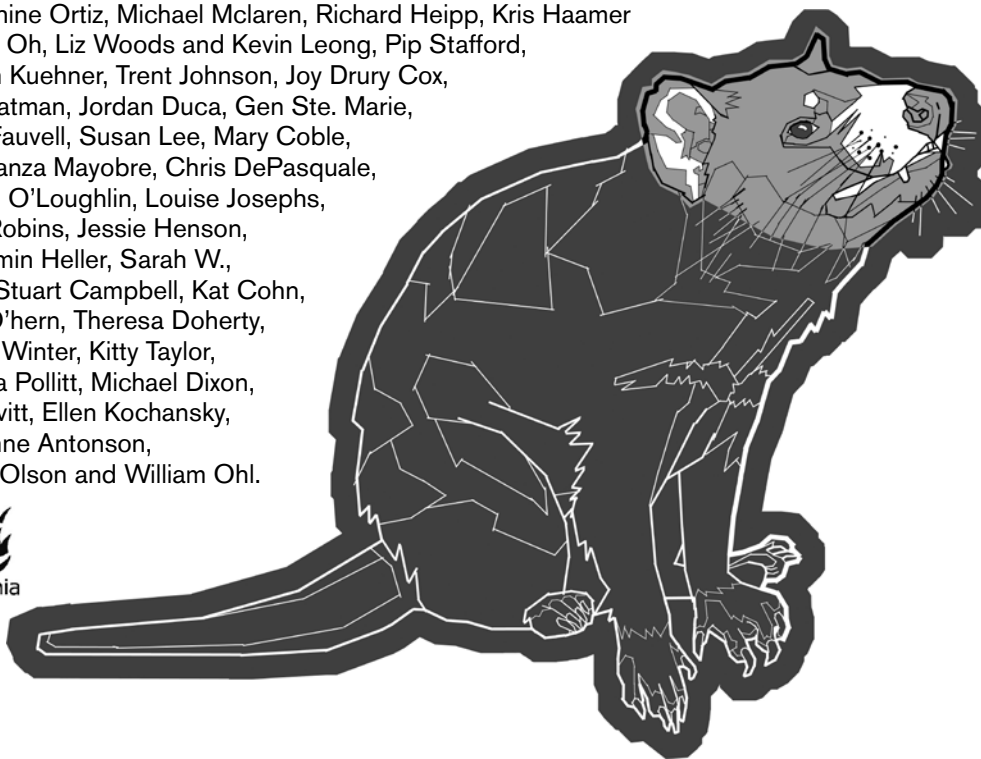
Tasmania