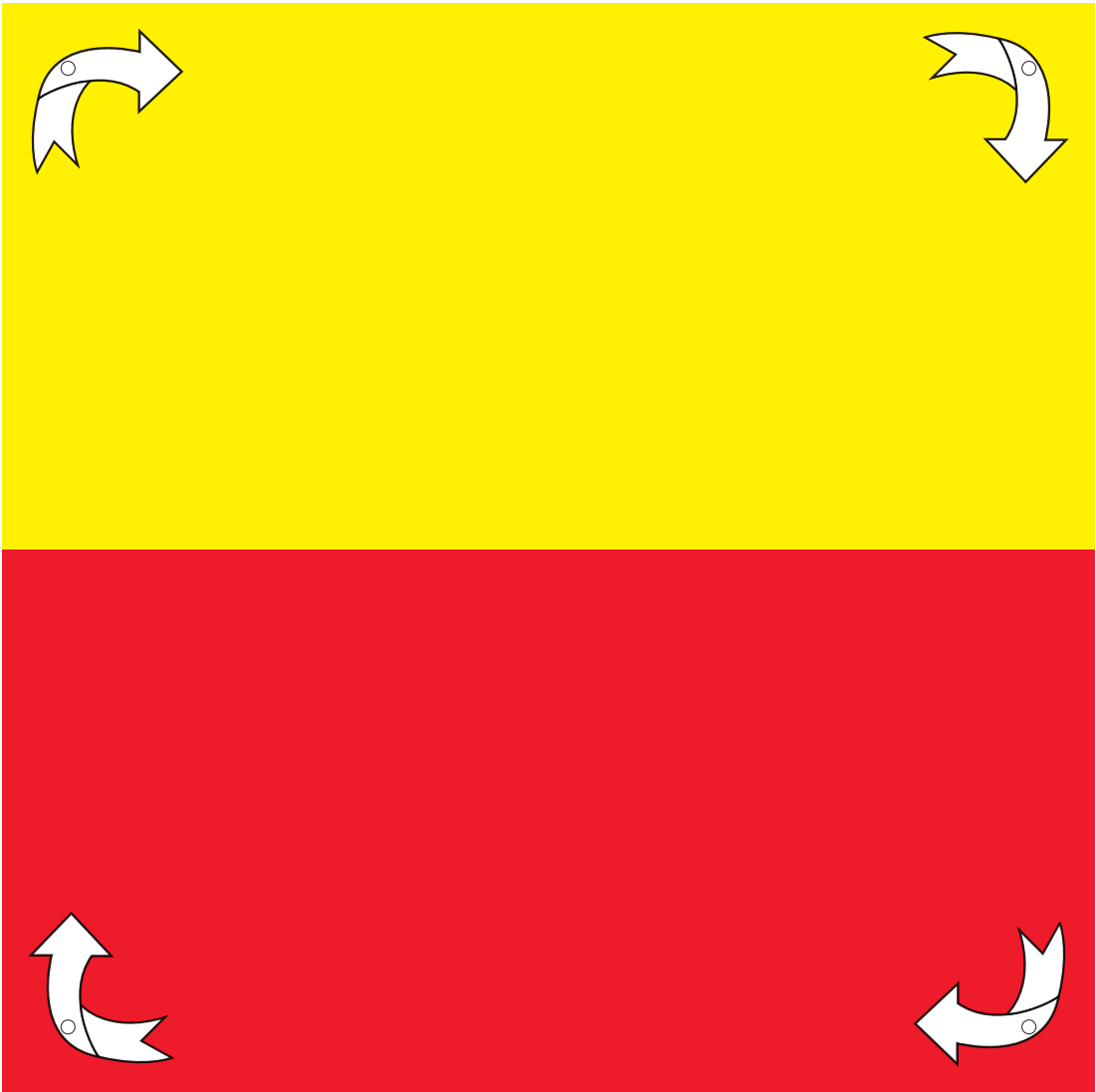


STUART RINGHOLT
*Looking at a painting without clothes on
in the safety of your own home 2020*

BUXTON CONTEMPORARY
LIGHT SOURCE
COMMISSIONS 2020



Looking at a painting without clothes on in the safety of your own home 2020

For the art gallery or museum goer, I have developed a substitute painting to be viewed without clothes on in the safety of your own home. By ‘painting’, I mean a paper print representing a painting. The painting, which is available to order online for delivery via post, is double-sided, with fields of colour represented on both sides. The image below is of a collage I created back in 2013, which encapsulates the idea.

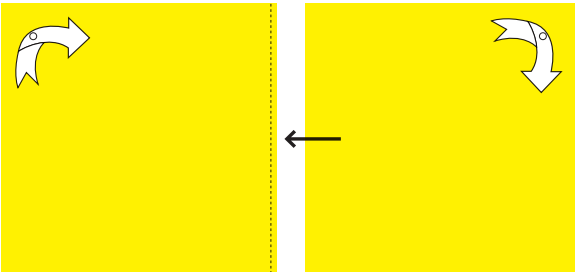
Stuart Ringholt
Nudes 2013 (detail)
collage
29 x 30 cm
Set of 54 collages
Edition of 2
Copyright: Stuart Ringholt
Courtesy of the artist



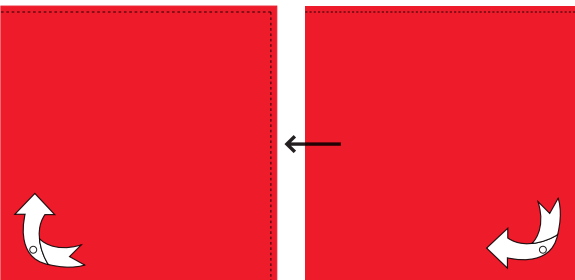
How to view the painting in your own home

To get started, you first request the painting and it will be posted to you in a flat pack. The painting requires assembly from four separate parts; see directions here.

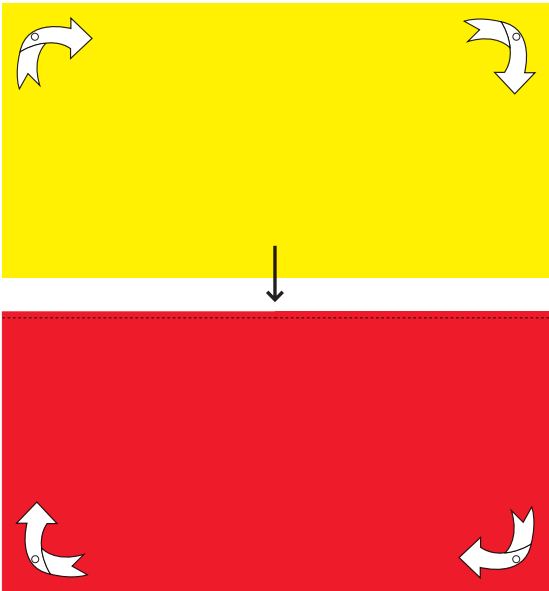
Step 1 – yellow to yellow



Step 2 – red to red



Step 3 – yellow to red



Once assembled, stick the painting to a wall in a living space in your home. The base of the painting should touch the floor. Use Blu Tack or some other removable fixing device because the painting is reversible and can also be rotated to offer different viewing experiences.

The viewing can be experienced solo or shared with other members of your household. Sans clothes, first sit on a chair or on the floor and experience the fields of colour. Directional arrows in each corner of the painting indicate how the artwork can be rotated 90 degrees at various time intervals, which changes the composition of the painting and hence one’s experience of colour.

Put more simply, the viewing of the painting can best be described as playing ‘Twister for the thinking nude’. For inspiration, see the Rodin collage I made with my son below.

Oliver Ringholt and Stuart Ringholt
Rodin Twister 2020
digital collage
12 x 15 cm
Copyright: Stuart Ringholt
Courtesy of the artists



Art museums often display paintings of nudes. Sometimes, for example, a nude is shown lounging on a sofa, or being impaled on a sword. Typically, the museum visitor’s job is to look at the nude in its environs

and marvel at the artistry, but this self-assembled painting functions in reverse. No longer does one look at a nude; instead, you are the nude. But what to do now that you are the subject of the artwork?

Colours mean different things to different people. To one person, red might mean passion and love, but to another, it might mean danger and noise. Similarly, white can suggest peace and light to some, but to others boredom and death. Green can signify either the beauty of nature or sickness.

Because we are entering the cooler months in Melbourne, I have intentionally chosen some warmer colours, as opposed to greens and blues, to be represented. The mail-order painting is scaled in such a way that it will associate your body with two colours simultaneously: red and yellow or black and purple. Depending on which way you hang and rotate the painting, the colours will change their relationships with different sections of your body; for example, they might split your body vertically or split it horizontally.

What does it mean for your whole body to be in proximity to purple and black? What does it mean for your head to be in red and your feet in yellow? What does it mean for your partner or family member to be in black and you in purple?

If you find it confusing or odd of me to ask questions such as 'What does it mean for your head to be in red and your feet in yellow?', I will explain further.

What I am effectively asking is for you to relate colour combinations to your feelings. For example, if red intrinsically symbolises passion, and yellow summer, what does it mean for your head to be thinking passionately while your feet are experiencing summer? If red symbolises wealth and yellow cowardice, what does it mean for your head to be thinking about wealth and your feet to be experiencing cowardice? How can feet experience cowardice, you ask? Think of what feet symbolise and mean for you – walking or immobility, to name just two possibilities. Therefore, the question I am really posing is: What does it mean for your head to be thinking about wealth as you move through the world with cowardice?

These questions are mere examples of questions you could invent for yourself while in front of the painting.

You might, as another option, like to consider the inside of your body and its related organs and then consider these parts of the body in relation to colour. **What does it mean for your left lung and heart to be in black and your right lung in purple?** You might choose to not think at all and merely sit in front of the colour fields, as though in a solarium, soaking up the colour. Do the colours make you happier? Can you feel the vibration of colour more so without clothes on than with clothes on? Is red a more energetic colour than purple? Is purple beautiful? Do the colours warm you like a heat source? Invent your own

questions and experiment with colour in relation to your body. I hope you enjoy the experience of looking at this painting in the safety of your own home!

Some background information on geometric abstraction and naturist tours

One of my first memories of experiencing geometric abstraction was as an eight-year-old while sailing. My father was crewing a yacht named Robin, and the side of the hull was emblazoned with a bright decal comprising three layers of block colour in a rectangular shape that looked like a flag. The decal fascinated me.

Forty years on, I look at the photo of the yacht and imagine it keeling over in heavy winds, dunking the decal underwater. What a sight this box of colour would be for the many jellyfish, fish and gulls of the Swan River below!

Robin 1975
Photographer: unknown
Courtesy of Doug Ringholt



Thirty years after my yachting experience, I found myself contemplating geometric abstraction during a series of naturist tours of art exhibitions.

Stuart Ringholt
Preceded by a tour of the show by artist Stuart Ringholt, 6–8pm. (The artist will be naked. Those who wish to join the tour must also be naked. Adults only.) 2011–ongoing Gallery tour and drinks, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, March 2011
Edition of 2
Pictured: Peter Tyndall
detail
A Person Looks At A Work Of Art/ someone looks at something...

LOGOS/HA HA

Date -1979-

Photographer: unknown
Copyright: Stuart Ringholt
Courtesy of the artist



The tours are fun but also informative and intellectually engaging. Highlights have included witnessing the huge piles of clothes, belongings and baggage quickly piling up on the gallery floor.

During one event, I was astounded by the way in which the colour red in a Peter Tyndall painting dominated the show. The red of the painting seemed more red than usual, possibly because it was no longer competing with the reds of clothing, bags and shoes (apart from the red lipstick of the sound recordist, as seen in the image).

Consider the picture of a gallery visitor below, in this case at Art Cologne in 2016. You can further see how art competes with noise. The visitor – with his red phone ‘necklace’ riffing against a mass of yellow – sucks up all the oxygen in the room, and the exhibited art can only gasp for air after he goes home.

Art Cologne 2016
Photograph: Stuart Ringholt
Copyright: Stuart Ringholt
Courtesy of the artist



An aim of the naturist tours is to give participants varied experiences of colour in paintings. Large wall-based monochromes are experienced very differently than if one was clothed, because the barriers of fabric, phones, wallets and watches have been removed. Colour, like sound, is a wavelength and therefore can be designated as a vibration. Sans clothes, a vibration of colour from a painting can be experienced more acutely.

Naturists can use their whole body to experience colour, particularly if the colour meets the floor like it did in a Robert Owen painting, *Sunrise #3* (2005), at the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia in Sydney. On this tour, I encouraged participants to walk alongside the large wall painting and let the colour wash over them. I asked them to consider: ‘What does it mean for your foot to move from red to blue?’ Further questions included: ‘What does it mean for your groin

Stuart Ringholt
Preceded by a tour of the show by artist Stuart Ringholt, 6–8pm. (The artist will be naked. Those who wish to join the tour must also be naked. Adults only.) 2011–ongoing Gallery tour and drinks, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney, April 2012
Edition of 2
Pictured: Robert Owen, *Sunrise #3* 2005
Photograph: Christo Crocker
Copyright: Stuart Ringholt
Courtesy of the artist



Stuart Ringholt
Preceded by a tour of the show by artist Stuart Ringholt, 6–8pm. (The artist will be naked. Those who wish to join the tour must also be naked. Adults only.) 2011–ongoing Gallery tour and drinks, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, April 2015
Edition of 2
Collection: Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney
Pictured: James Turrell, *Raemar pink white* 1969
shallow space construction: fluorescent light
Collection: Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles
Photograph: Christo Crocker
Copyright: Stuart Ringholt; James Turrell



Considerable conversation and storytelling has been shared between tour guides and participants during the many naturist tours to date, including at the after-drinks, which are an important element of the work. This has enabled me as an artist (and potentially participants) to shake themselves loose for a short while from art histories that disallow unconventional, alternative and experimental readings of art.

Stuart Ringholt May 2020

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Stuart Ringholt
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137 x 137 cm
Edition of 500
Courtesy of the artist, Buxton Contemporary, the University of Melbourne, and MADA, Monash University

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