

In this book, photographer David Marks has captured the cool road trip of our collective imagination. For the journey, he had two ideal travelling companions: the Diana and Polaroid cameras. The Diana, a cheap plastic tourist souvenir of the 1960s, the bad lens providing a nostalgic haze. And the Polaroid, which spits out a one-off every time, its unique effects created by climate, temperature and physical interaction. Take a hypnotic trip along memory's lanes and highways with these stunning images.



David Marks is a prize-winning photographer who has exhibited his personal fine art throughout Australia over the past twenty-five years. He is based in Melbourne.

The Australian Photographic Gallery is a series of books that explores the Australian landscape in all of its dimensions: natural, cultural and social. Celebrating the talent and the passions of Australian photographers, it is highly individual yet accessible, inspiring and thought provoking.



Visit our website
www.echopublishing.com.au



ROAD TRIP

DAVID MARKS

ROAD TRIP

Offbeat Australia by Polaroid and Diana Camera



DAVID MARKS

AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY



echo

Echo Publishing
12 Northumberland Street
South Melbourne 3205
www.echopublishing.com.au

Part of the Bonnier Publishing Group
www.bonnierpublishing.com

Copyright © David Marks, 2015

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or be transmitted by any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

First published 2015

Printed in China

Cover and internal design by Philip Campbell Design

National Library of Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Marks, David Alexander, author.

Road trip : offbeat Australia by polaroid and Diana camera / David Marks.

ISBN: 9781760067281 (hardback)

Australia--Pictorial works.

Australia--Description and travel--Pictorial works.

919.400222

To my partner Sarah and our daughter Florence

ROAD TRIP

Offbeat Australia by Polaroid and Plastic Camera

DAVID MARKS

AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERY



echo



CONTENTS

Introduction 6

Big things 8

Vacation deluxe 36

Point of sale 70

On the road 110

Equipment 156

Acknowledgements 157

David Marks 159

INTRODUCTION

I have been playing around with and collecting naive cameras since the mid-1990s. Plastic 120 film toy cameras from the 1960s in all their variations: Dianas, Holgas, Banners, Snappys, golf swing, baby Halinas and box brownies. Back then you could buy Diana and Polaroid cameras at opportunity shops for a dollar each, still in their boxes. This was before the Lomography resurrection in 2007, when Diana cameras were reproduced and sold online en masse. Back then roll film was still relatively cheap, and so was film processing, especially during my time working in professional labs such as Lab X and CPL, in Melbourne.

In 2000 I had an exhibition called *Diana goes to La La Land* featuring images which I took on a road trip along the west coast of America, mainly architectural icons of Americana culture, cinemas, junk food stores, big things and cars. Nostalgic subjects and roadside vernacular architecture are common themes throughout my work.

The Diana camera, a cheap plastic tourist souvenir of the 1960s, is the ideal camera to shoot on a road trip. It was designed to take snaps with; the kind of pictures many people find unremarkable. The Diana F camera imposes a naive approach to image making. It is a simple low-tech device with one shutter speed, limited focus, and exposure control. Using a simple camera, like a Diana, gets you back to the basics of photography – which is composing elements in a frame. The inherent bad lens quality of the Diana camera, mixed with the subject matter, helps add to the nostalgic quality of the images.

Smart phones and apps like Instagram and Hipstagram have brought the square format and a synthesised plastic lens ‘look’ of the Diana camera to the masses via social media. Achieving a guaranteed fake Diana look – that used to take much time, money, experimentation and skill to achieve – is now as easy as a touch on a screen. The arrival of the digital age has really

changed photography. The guesswork, the happy accident, the element of risk has been removed from image making. Smart phones don’t leak light, double expose if you forgot to wind on or run out of film, and you can frame exactly what you want in your shot in real time, with no parallax error. Pre-visualisation or guesstimation is not needed. You just shoot and decide what post-effect filter you want to add later.

In 2002 I became more interested in working with Polaroids. I bought an old SX-70 camera, one of the coolest pieces of design I have ever come across, with its chrome and brown leather look. The SX-70 is an SLR, in that what you see through the viewfinder is an accurate framing of the subject. The prints that the SX-70 spits out are unique one-offs, objects in their own right.

The Polaroid print’s uniqueness has a connection to the birth of photography back in 1839, where the first method of recording an image was the daguerreotype, a process where the image was exposed onto a polished silver plate. It was then developed by contact with mercury vapours and, like the Polaroid, it was a unique object that was unable to be reproduced with analogue technologies to the same clarity and quality of an original.

The actual climate and temperature at the time of capture affects the quality of the Polaroid image. Colour and image density change, depending on how cold or hot it is. You can be physical with the print when it is still developing, for example, by rubbing and warming the emulsion you can change the look of the image. This kind of physical interaction between image and photographer does not exist in digital photography.

David Marks

Opposite: Detail, *Golden Fleece*, Ross, Tas, 1997

Previous pages: Detail, *Break Dance*, Ascot Vale, Vic, 2001





BIG THINGS



Orange World, Mourquong, NSW, 2005



Big Milkshake, Cheeseworld, Allansford, Vic, 2004

Previous pages: Detail, Big Kewpie Doll, Braidwood, NSW, 2007

Opposite: Detail, Big Pineapple, Nambour, QLD, 2002





Pie in the Sky, Ascot Vale, Vic, 2001



Big Cherries, Young, NSW, 2001



Giant Koala, Dadswells Bridge, Vic, 2006



Big Lobster, Kingston, SA, 2006



Big Shell, Tewantin, QLD, 2002