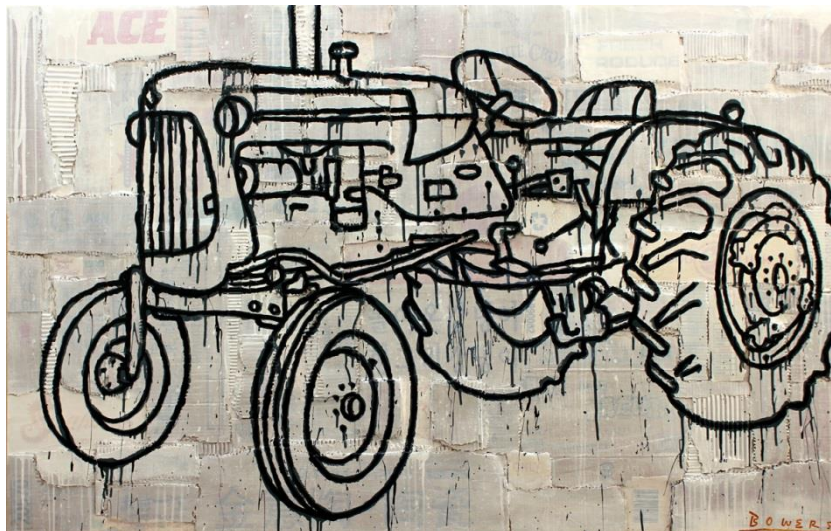


David Bowers

David Bowers was born in Geelong in 1964 and grew up in Melbourne's outer west among rural properties, working class suburbs and industrial wastelands. He studied illustration, life drawing and design at Monash University, and after graduating in 1986 he slowly but steadily steered away from design as a career and experienced the world as a builder's labourer, cray boat deckhand and petrol station assistant, amongst other things: all jobs that have influenced his style and subject matter as a fine artist.

In 1992 he created art/surf label Umgawa with creative partner Nick Morris. His quirky, bold colourful style quickly caught the eye of Mambo head Dare Jennings, and after selling Umgawa, Bowers became a regular Mambo artist thriving in the environment of wild colour and irreverence. David's work appeared alongside other Mambo artists in the 30th anniversary Mambo retrospective exhibition at the NGV in 2015.

Bowers works with acrylics, enamels and oil sticks. He also uses found objects, signage and collage employing cardboard boxes salvaged from Asian supermarkets, with their striking commercial symbols and exotic scripts.



Gentle Giant, David Bowers, Acrylic and resin on canvass

Another source of inspiration and material is street combing, picking through the detritus left by the passing, multicultural human tides of his home suburbs in Melbourne's inner west.

Bowers ranges freely across media and themes, skipping playfully from rural behemoths – majestic bulls, tractors and semi-trailers – to Melbourne streetscapes in close-up, pop icons and the unexpected poetry of spam. Bowers refuses to be defined by a single style: his gleaning of materials, words and colours from his immediate world leads him down many stylistic paths, and when the resulting works meet on his studio walls, they talk to each other in surprising ways.

In 2010 he was a finalist in the Moran portraiture prize with his collaborative portrait of elusive Victorian artist Doug Bartlett. He has designed album covers for The Hoodoo Gurus, The Fireballs, and Melbourne Jazz artist John McCall amongst others.

Bowers exhibits regularly throughout Australia and has also exhibited in France, Hong Kong, Hamburg, Mexico City, Seoul, Shanghai and New York.

Nick Morris

Nick Morris graduated from Monash University in 1986 with a diploma in Graphic Design.

He has worked in the street/surf/art subculture since creating clothing label Umgawa in 1990, after which Morris was director of Quiksilver before launching his Anyhow design company in Torquay.

He went on to produce art for Paul Frank, Stussy, Mambo, Mossimo, etc. and was a guest speaker at both the Semi Permanent and AGIdeas Art and Design conferences.

In 2007 Morris turned his back on commercial work to embrace a career as a full time artist and has been prolific and devoted ever since.

He works with acrylics, collage and screen prints using images from post-war popular culture, Australiana and his own photographs.

He also collaborates with fellow artist David Bowers under the name Doug Bartlett.

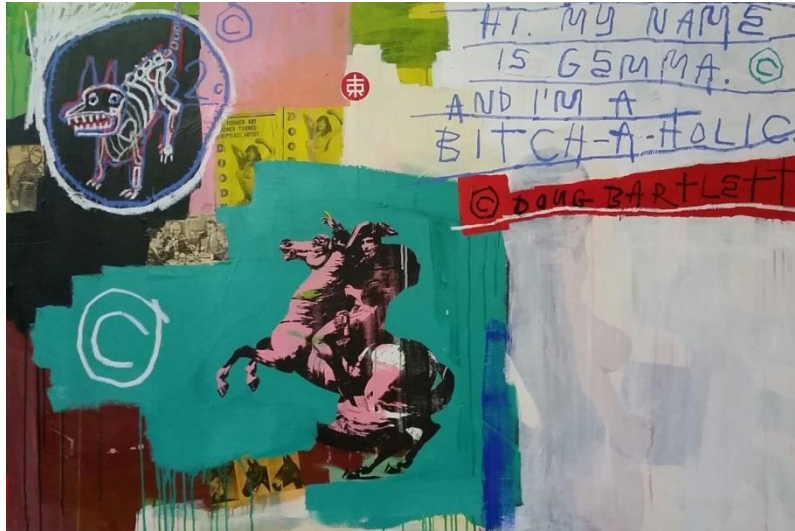
Morris has held sold out shows around the globe with his solo and collaborative works.



Buyer's Rush, Nick Morris, Mixed media on canvass

Doug Bartlett

Doug Bartlett is the alter ego created when Victorian artists Nick Morris and David Bowers work together on the same canvas.



Bitchaholic, Doug Bartlett, acrylic and oil stick on canvass

Working out of a garage/studio in Torquay, we come together for intense two or three day sessions jammed in whenever time can be found. We throw ourselves wholeheartedly into the canvasses. Slabs of raw colour are slapped down haphazardly and images are layered on at random. A lot of this initial work won't survive the painting process because we have a rule that says: 'you can paint over anything, and the other one can't protest'. Whole vistas appear and disappear. Hours of work can be swept away by one brutal sweep of the brush. 'Doug has entered the building' is the only explanation required.

This process, which is confronting as well as cleansing, continues until we both agree the painting is finished. Working this way creates a feverish momentum, and we can be working on up to forty paintings at a time. The canvasses have always been a free-flowing exchange of random images and themes, applied mainly using silkscreen (Morris) and freehand (Bowers). Acrylic paint and oil stick are the main mediums. Recently we tried to channel our ideas into one overarching theme, exploring mass contemporary pop culture and the urban sprawl.

We glean material and images from the world directly around us. The juxtaposition of these images of the countryside being chewed up by new estates and new industries, with quotes from celebrities, cosmetics advertising, reality shows, etc. creates an uneasy balance between suburban reality, and the fantasies of fame, beauty and 'happiness' trumpeted in celebrity gossip magazines. This involves exploring the timeline from wilderness, to farmland, to suburbia, and all the people, animals and cultures involved in that process. The journey from Koori to 24-hour KFC.