

HEIMLICH UNHEIMLICH

Hazel Smith (poet)
Sieglinde Karl-Spence (artist)



Part poem, part story, a mixture of image and text with a dash of autofiction, *Heimlich Unheimlich* probes the concepts of home and belonging. The context is the aftermath of the Second World War and the intertwining childhood stories of two women both named after different types of cloth. Hessian is a German girl born towards the end of the Second World War, whose father fought in the German army. She migrates with her family to Australia when she is still a child, where she suffers some discrimination because she is German. She eventually becomes an artist. Muslin is born into a Jewish family in England after the war. She is a violinist who subsequently becomes a poet and migrates to Australia as an adult.

Her family, who live in the shadow of the holocaust and are unforgiving of Nazi Germany, are pre-occupied with preserving a Jewish ethnicity. Both Hessian and Muslin are shaped by, but also rebel against, the cultural environments in which they grow up.

Heimlich Unheimlich suggests strong links between Muslin and Hessian, despite their contrasting, even conflicting, childhoods. It explores, through photographic collages, the inter-generational aftereffects of the Second World War and the shadow it cast of personal and collective trauma. The work has considerable relevance to contemporary Australia and global issues concerning war, migration, displacement and ethnic identity.



Heimlich Unheimlich is the most recent in a series of collaborations by Sieglinde Karl-Spence and Hazel Smith. It originated as a gallery installation by Karl-Spence and Smith. The installation has been exhibited in the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, Sydney, 2020, the Edith Cowan University Gallery 25, Perth, 2021, and the John Mullins Memorial Art Gallery, Dogwood Crossing, Miles, Queensland, 2023.

Hazel Smith is a poet, performer, electronic writer and academic. She has published six volumes of poetry including *The Erotics of Geography*, Tinfish Press, 2008, *Word Migrants*, Giramondo, 2016 and *Ecliptical*, ES-Press, Spineless Wonders, 2022. She has published numerous performance and multimedia works, and has performed and presented her work extensively internationally, has been commissioned by the ABC to write several works for radio, and has been co-recipient of numerous Australia Council for the Arts grants. She is a founding member of the multimedia ensemble australYSIS. In 2018, with Will Luers and Roger Dean, she was awarded first place in the Electronic Literature Organisation's Robert Coover prize. In 2023 her collaboration with Luers and Dean, *Dolphins in the Reservoir*, was shortlisted for the UK New Media Writing Prize.

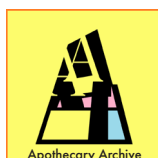
Hazel is an Emeritus Professor in the Writing and Society Research Centre, Western Sydney University. She has authored several academic books including *Hyperscapes in the Poetry of Frank O'Hara*, Liverpool University Press, 2000, *The Writing Experiment*, Allen and Unwin, 2005 and *The Contemporary Literature-Music Relationship*, Routledge, 2016. With Roger Dean she wrote *Improvisation, Hypermedia and the Arts since 1945*, Harwood Academic, 1997, and co-edited *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

Her website is at <http://www.australysis.com>

Sieglinde Karl-Spence spent her childhood years in her native Germany before emigrating to Australia with her family in 1953. Sieglinde trained as a jeweller, graduating in Jewellery and Silversmithing from Middlesex Polytechnic, London in 1978. Since the late 1980s her practice has focused on installation and performance, including works of a site-specific, transitory nature such as 'Healing Mandala – 365 offerings', Mildura Arts Festival, 1996 and 'Red Bead Seed Offering', Botanic Gardens, Darwin, 1997. Sieglinde has exhibited extensively in Australia and internationally, including at the Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia in 1992 and 2002, and in *Crossing Borders: History, Culture and Identity* in Australian Contemporary Textile Art, 1995, a major survey of Australian textiles that toured throughout the United States of America.

Recently, Sieglinde has focused on making small transient mandala installations. Her work is represented in most of the major galleries in Australia including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory, Darwin, NT; Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston, Tasmania and Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences, Sydney, N.S.W.

Her website is at <http://sieglindekarl-spence.com.au>



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