

# Everybody Knows this is Nowhere

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**ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT**

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By Joseph Allen Shea,  
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*MCA's exhibition, South of No North: William Eggleston, Laurence Aberhart and Noel McKenna, explores the town between everywhere and nowhere.*

The first thing you notice when viewing the MCA's new exhibition *South of No North* is the scale. No work in the exhibition is over 97 centimetres. Considering the expansion of scale, production and one-upmanship in recent contemporary art, this show brings everything down to a human scale. These intimate, almost exclusively two-dimensional works are the perfect antidote for the dizzying exuberance of the MCA's survey of famed British artist Anish Kapoor.

William Eggleston, Noel McKenna and Laurence Aberhart are three important artists who achieve quiet but lofty goals without overstretching or over-saturating. There's no pomp or hype about these three, who scratch, perhaps not a wide, but a deep mark upon the face of contemporary art.

Each artist deals with matters of the everyday and celebrates an inspiring sense of normality. William Eggleston has argued that even the most inconsequential subject matter is worthy of focus. Similarly, Noel McKenna reveres the commonplace – even the banal – but with a clear wit and tenderness. Where others may be susceptible to sarcasm, McKenna's tone is closer to homage. Aberhart's photographs add to these concerns by suggesting fleetingness of time and, perhaps more weightily, life.

There is a considered narrative that runs through the hanging of this exhibition as it does with the editing of the catalogue plates. Curator Glenn Barkley speaks of a conviction to narrative as he attempts to make the exhibition read as a book, guided by the relationships between the artists' practices and subject matter. As suggested by the exhibition title, taken from a volume of short stories by Charles Bukowski, we witness short narratives within each work that lead to collective stories within rooms.

The exhibition skirts the history of photomedia and the various tensions between painting and photography. Eggleston originally trained as a painter and McKenna's paintings appear like personal photographs, while Aberhart too alludes to the way our memories tend to come to us as if they are snapshots. Each artist shares an interest in regionality and the binding nature of domesticity.

Regardless of current social desires to project fabulous, strategised visions of our personal brand (mostly over social networks), it's the teasing out of the quiet truths that occur within the in-between moments of our lives that makes *South of No North* so timely and relevant.

*South of No North: William Eggleston, Laurence Aberhart and Noel McKenna, shows at Museum of Contemporary Art, from March 8 to May 5, 2013.*

[mca.com.au](http://mca.com.au)

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