

# EXTRA



oh  
oh  
god  
i'm  
ready  
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you



relationship

US 12110

# ISSUE # 12

## EXTRA Zine Issue # 12



Image: Official Launch, banner [e-ephemera] 15 October 2022

### **PETE MALONEY: *Fugitive allure***

Born in Fremantle, Pete Maloney moved with his family to Darwin as a boy, where his father, Brian, a public servant, was employed in Customs and Excise. In his professional capacity, Brian had necessary access to the docks, incoming and outgoing vessels, and their captains and crews. In a private capacity, Brian accessed the same environment for beer, cigarettes, hearty conversation, and time away from the obligations of domesticity.

This maritime environment also provided the background in which Pete came of age – developing a bold sense of adventure – and a prodigious awareness of his attraction to men. He and his band of multicultural mates explored the city's margins – its open spaces, including its marine edges – beaches, mudflats, mangroves, and its docks and wharves.

Brian subsequently transferred to a position in the (then) Department of Tourism, Canberra. It's tempting to note this paternal connection as a deeply felt *leitmotif*, which influenced Pete's life, and the layered journeys of discovery he went on to experience, from hitchhiking as an adolescent in search of excitement outside the boundaries of daily life; to his itinerant existence as a fruit picker, after leaving school; to his later exploration of the world – not so much as a tourist, but very much as a traveller.

Pete studied at Canberra School of Art in the early 1970s, prior to moving to Melbourne, where he enrolled in a Graduate Diploma of Painting, at Victorian College of the Arts, in 1976. Here he enjoyed the influential teaching of two masterful figures of Australian contemporary art – the late Bea Maddock, and Gareth Sansom. From Maddock, he learned to use his camera as a tool in the production of images that could be incorporated into his practice. Although primarily a painter, Pete proceeded to utilise his camera to literally frame the world around him, in all its confounding contradictions – its banality and profundity – incorporating the intimate details of both disinterest and desire. Already identifying as gay, and defiantly 'out', Pete began to distil his photographic images into his early prints, in a way that can be clearly determined today, as visibility through a queer lens.

Once he left formal studies behind, Pete went in search of the world. His experiences and journeys throughout Australia, and across India and Europe, were not only peripatetic, but also decidedly picaresque. He enjoyed colourful interludes with German men in Corsica and

Dusseldorf, prior to becoming involved with highly regarded artist, Michael Buthe who resided in Cologne. During this time, Pete also became part of the circle of German actor, Dieter Schidor, and his New Zealand born partner, Michael McLernon. Both men worked with the influential filmmaker, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, on the production of the movie, 'Querelle', based on Jean Genet's novel, 'Querelle of Brest', and which has endured as an icon of queer male cinema.

By the late 1970s, Berlin was beginning to enjoy a high point in terms of the city's growth of distinctly alternative artistic and cultural sensibilities. Pete enjoyed these sub-cultural qualities, and habitually crossed the Berlin Wall, via 'Checkpoint Charlie', into *Friedrichstadt* – then a grey, grungy part of town, where he indulged his appetite for transgression, in mutually hungry sex with East German soldiers – seedy, illicit, and thoroughly fugitive.

'...Though nothing will keep us together,  
we could steal time just for one day...  
We can be heroes just for one day,  
we can be heroes forever and ever...  
...what d'ya say?'  
'Heroes', David Bowie, 1977

Arriving in London in 1978, Pete bleached his crew-cut hair to a white spike, and launched himself enthusiastically into the sweaty mosh-pit of the nascent punk scene. A seminal turning point for him was attending a gig by the industrial music group, *Throbbing Gristle*, at *Centro Iberico* –

well known as a Spanish anarchist community centre and live music venue. He continued to follow the group through its various incarnations, led by the non-binary artist couple, Genesis P-Orridge, and Cosey Fanni-Tutti.

These experiences animated and informed his growing sense of self, and his emerging awareness that contemporary culture – including music, moving image, graphics, and painting, plus their aesthetic and conceptual foundations – could comprise anything you believed possible.

While in London, Pete met Michael Kendall – a handsome young fellow Australian, whose taste in music and apparel tended more towards Bryan Ferry, and Fiorucci – a sleek, retro suavity. Michael was employed at Heal's, the storied department store on Tottenham Court Road. Pete gained employment at the store's vegetarian café, *Cranks at Heal's*, and the two men began a loving relationship before returning to Australia together in 1980, settling initially in Brisbane – Michael's hometown. While Michael continued working in high-end furniture, together they established an alternative business in the form of a retro furniture shop in Newmarket – *Desperate Living* – named after the John Waters movie of the same title.

While in Brisbane, Pete became a regular visitor at the Institute of Modern Art (IMA), then under John Nixon's directorship. John and Pete would see each other at music performances at pubs and clubs in the evenings, and the two began a friendship. Following his exposure to

*Throbbing Gristle*, and other avant-garde bands in London, and encouraged by Nixon, Pete began to experiment with sound, which resulted in the release of a cassette, titled, 'DUST'. Pete readily acknowledges that the packaging concept of his work – a cassette encased inside a 45-disc jacket, was a design idea appropriated from John.

Three years later, Michael was transferred to the Gold Coast to manage his employer's new premises located at Chevron Island. Pete went along for the ride, so to speak, but remained unhappy with his life in supposedly carefree, sunny Queensland. The deeply conservative Bjelke-Petersen state government remained in power, and while Pete was devoted to Michael, Surfers Paradise felt a far cry from his previous existence living on the edge in Berlin and London. Capitalising on his international retail experience, Michael gained a role with a contemporary furniture showroom in Sydney, where he and Pete established a new home for themselves in a vacant former warehouse in inner city Surry Hills. Michael's professional life prospered, and Pete once again enjoyed the freedom to fully express his creative imagination in a shared studio space in Woolloomooloo.

While life continued to feel good, Sydney's gay community was becoming increasingly fractured by the spectre of AIDS. Friends and acquaintances tumbled, falling ill, and were cared for at Ward Seven South, St Vincent's Hospital in Darlinghurst. The hospital nuns were the only health professionals who were willing to provide dignity and respect to those who were dying, which seems extraordinary to us now,

just four decades later. The death toll continued to rise dramatically, and under the leadership of (then) Federal Health Minister, Neal Blewett, the Australian government led the world with the enlightened quality of its grassroots campaign against the epidemic. Integral to this approach was an intense public relations campaign that sought to minimise the social stigma, and high degrees of intolerance, being spread through the community by negative media reports that inflamed fear of homosexuality as the root cause of the disease.

Regardless of what was happening around him, both positive, and negative, Michael also became desperately ill, dying in 1991. Pete lost not only his adored partner, but virtually his entire circle of male friends as well. He recounted that, during this tumultuous period, he attended at least one funeral a week – week in, week out – until the funerals themselves disappeared. As I've written elsewhere, “...these were taxing, illogical times to be living in. They were certainly troubling days and nights in which to be dying...”

The mutable, and occasionally contradictory nature of human behaviour was evident at this time – as Pete tells it – when some of those attending a funeral, and perhaps those who were grieving most intensely – vented pent-up emotions after a ceremony finished, by dashing into the darkness of a gay sauna or back-room, for anonymous, quick-fire sex. Once satiated, they went their solitary ways, returning perhaps, to now empty apartments, to weep as they remembered friends and lovers, or alternately, desperate for companionship – to a bar, to numb their senses with alcohol and amphetamines – against a

background of shared laughter and the hard throb of electronica. The ongoing tragedy seared itself into his emotional self, and the trauma made a lasting impact on the development of his artistic practice.

One typical Monday morning saw me hitting the gym in Surry Hills, before heading to my favourite café, the Mali Bar, on Crown Street. After ordering at the counter, I noticed an old friend, Garry Stewart, seated at another table with a wiry, good-looking man with an intense expression. I asked if I could join them, and discovered that the stranger was an artist. After some desultory, not to say stilted, conversation, and having finishing our coffee, I asked this guy – now identified as Pete – if I could visit his studio. He agreed without any apparent enthusiasm – or evident reluctance, so after placing his bike in the back of my station wagon, we headed for Woolloomooloo.

Arriving at a former panel-beating workshop, we made our way through the cavernous space he shared with a number of other artists, including Simon Blau, Lindy Lee, Dani Marti, and Sarah Robson. Climbing a short ladder, we moved onto a rough-edged concrete upper level, illuminated by skylights. His studio area was dominated by an enormous mound of paper sheets, piled on the floor in such disarray, it had the appearance of a bonfire. He knelt, and without saying a word, slowly began moving the sheets across, and over each other – leaving sufficient time for me to absorb each work, composed of entangled lines, occasionally interlaced with floating, coagulated forms.

When writing her foreword to Pete's exhibition, 'Missing in Action', Drill Hall Gallery, Australian National University (ANU), 2018, Lindy Lee wrote about this period in his life and the work emanating from it:

"Peter's work was raw and direct with an emotional fragility completely antithetical to the conceptual. He was reaching deeply within himself as a way to deal with pain and grief in his life. While caring for Michael, Peter came into the studio every single day to give voice and solace to his demons. He didn't speak of what he was going through, but it was evident in his drawings and the chaotic, volatile messiness of his workspace. Scrunched up bits of paper, broken pencils, dirty coffee cups. There were times he would get so drunk that he would even piss on his work. It was an act of brutal poetry:

after AIDS, his term of 'sissy abstraction' – was an ironic take on the heroic Abstract Expressionism of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century. 'Heroic' was the last thing he felt, and yet Peter's work was heroic both literally and metaphorically."

Lindy Lee, 'Missing in Action', Drill Hall Gallery, ANU, 2018

Pete was completely immersed in the process of sifting and sorting, which had a sense of intimate ceremony – almost an act of witnessing. At times I vacillated between embarrassment, and feeling privileged to be in the presence of such raw emotion. Consequently, there wasn't a lot to be said during this show and tell, because it seemed to me that the 'telling' – the narrative element in the work – could be clearly understood. While I knew next to nothing about this man, I sensed deep grief in the deceptively simple austerity of his imagery, and his gestures of movement and placement.

Due to multiple surgeries, I had my own personal experience of serious illness, so I felt an immediate connection to Pete's work – intuitively recognizing the sources the imagery appeared to draw on. However, having lost virtually his entire community to AIDS-related illness, these drawings appeared to be both a reaction, and testament to, the pain endured by so many during this catastrophe. The work existed as a virtual archive of anguish, while the deep wound of his personal experience of this period remained open, undiagnosed, and untreated.

Time slipped past me that morning, yet Pete and I had spent hours immersed in the act of viewing. I felt compelled by what I'd shared with him – the gritty, industrial space; the emotionally charged quality of the work; and by Pete himself – this handsome, reserved, and unaffected man. However, I was also unsettled by what I'd seen and felt, and after returning to my car, and rolling down the window, I inhaled deeply, and closed my eyes. After taking some time to gather my thoughts, I pulled away from the kerb, turning away from the concrete, and headed back to my place overlooking the ocean at Coogee.

Pete and I had met a mere four years after Michael's death, at a time when our initial encounter might have felt to him to be too much, too soon. I'd only recently parted ways with my previous partner in acrimonious circumstances, so the last thing on my mind was another relationship. However, as unlikely as it seems, I couldn't shake the feeling that with Pete, I'd inadvertently met the person I might share my life with...

He and I were both feeling quite broken, and in following this unexpected path, we began to see each other in a tentative, uncommitted way. With proceeds from Michael's estate, Pete had purchased a modest studio apartment in an art deco walk-up building on Bourke Street, moments away from the hedonistic gay junction of Taylor Square. When I slept over at his place, he read to me from J.G Ballard's 'Crash' – a disturbing story of dystopian sexual fetishism – yet his voice remained so calm, and his narration so nuanced, that I inevitably drifted off on each occasion.

In a number of ways, perhaps I was somewhat like Michael, so, for this reason, Pete may have felt a strong attraction to me. Yet, equally, these same similarities may have acted as a reminder of his painful, recent past – creating a virtual repulsion of magnetic dipoles – unconsciously pushing me away. I think we were both conscious of taking things slowly – just getting to know each other, and just putting one foot in front of the other at the time. It became evident that we not only shared multiple interests, perspectives, and values, but we also felt extremely at ease in each other's company. We formed a bond – which is a characteristic of friendship that sounds straight forward, but is in fact, a quality of lived experience that is multi-layered, complex, difficult to clarify, and almost impossible to quantify. However, it seems to me that a bond between two people is an essential component in the maintenance of a long-term relationship. It was as central, as elemental, as it was simple – I could just be myself while in Pete's company. I had no expectations of him in any way, except that he continued to be, and remained, true to himself.

The emotional attachment we discovered with each other continued to deepen during winter. By spring, I'd been offered a job at Queensland Art Gallery (QAG) – a significant career opportunity for me – and one I couldn't afford to ignore. Although we'd become devoted to each other, Pete was initially reluctant to return to Brisbane – a place that held few good memories for him. However, against a background chorus of his remaining friends doling out cautionary tales, he eventually took the bold step of selling his apartment to join me. Through a family contact, I enjoyed the good fortune of leasing a spacious old timber house in sprawling, exuberantly out of control gardens, standing high over the riverbank at New Farm. Life felt good.

Pete maintained a studio elsewhere, and we collaborated on a number of exhibitions – a project titled, 'Head', at Doggett Street Studios, Teneriffe, 1996. We also worked closely together on aspects of the exhibition, 'Good Grief', curated by Lynne Sear, at the IMA, established at the time in premises on Ann Street Fortitude Valley. Each of us produced his own project, but also collaborated on a large wall component, made up of small painted and printed elements, hung academy style.

While in Brisbane, Pete began taking photographs, before painting text on the resulting prints. Further into 1996, he was awarded the Dr Denise Hickey Memorial Studio, Cite Internationale des Arts, Paris. There, he assiduously continued taking photographs – occasionally with the assistance of guys he'd meet in bars – using them as models. At the

conclusion of his three-month residency, Pete brought the material back to Brisbane, had his films printed, and began to assemble them in diptych and triptych form. He also began re-photographing images of now deceased friends, and details of gay porn, graphically re-presenting the queer male gaze – teaming them with images of the sky, or gutter details, or virtually nothing the viewer could immediately identify – poetically ill-defined corners of fuck all. Rather than the individual photographs being technically accomplished, it was the act of assemblage – the alchemy of artistic intervention – that infused the final results with mimetic strength.

Pete had returned Brisbane with a new archive. While his earlier drawings had immediately evoked anguish, this material couldn't be as easily read at an emotional level. The painted photographs operated as layered traces of intimacy, reflecting lived experience, while retaining an unquestionably elegiac quality. Often as tough as they were tender, these images had been constructed not only with an acute aesthetic sensibility, but also with Pete's unusually candid emotional quality. After three years at QAG, I was offered a curatorial role in Canberra. Despite holding serious misgivings about returning to the place of his troubled youth, Pete was generous enough to once again join me, after he was offered the role of Visiting Artist in the Painting Workshop, School of Art and Design, Australian National University (ANU), at the invitation of Ruth Waller. After a couple of years of casual teaching, Pete became a full-time lecturer in painting, remaining in this position until leaving the ANU in 2012 to focus on his practice.

The *Missing in Action*, exhibition at Drill Hall Gallery, (mentioned earlier) incorporated, at the artist's request, a separate gallery space at the rear, for which he was curator, and which he nominated as the 'Backroom', in reference to sex on premises venues, where men (many of whom don't identify as 'gay') have sex with other men. Here he exhibited a number of works that explicitly reflected the queer male gaze – clearly a central aspect of his practice that some had previously chosen not to consider as central to his broader project. This mini exhibition within an exhibition included a selection of his photographic diptychs, and proved to be the beginning of a new chapter for him.

Dr Shaune Lakin, senior curator of photography at the National Gallery of Australia (NGA), visited the exhibition and appreciated the work – seeing it as others had often failed to – as highly personal photographic imagery that had broken new ground at the time of its production in the 1990s. Shaune believed that Australian photographic practice from the period wasn't particularly well represented in the national collection, and he acquired a selection of Pete's works on behalf of the NGA. Subsequently, he successfully sought funding from the Australia Council for the Arts, and artsACT, and managed, in partnership with art publisher, M.33, the production of a book, titled, 'Fugitive Text', devoted to these memorable images.

By turning back time in our collective memory, we're able to recall and consider, the extremely limited nature of the marginal spaces that queer men and women occupied in Brisbane during the 1970s. Pete Maloney had arrived there from London in 1980, by which time two significant

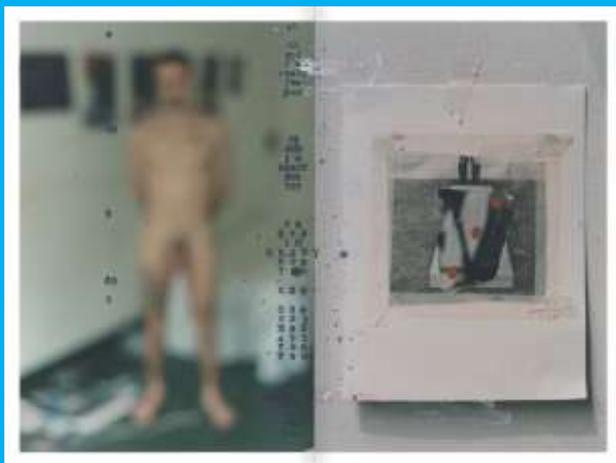
factors had established themselves. A nimble counter culture had begun to emerge – composed of individuals who were ‘out, loud, and proud’ – the very antithesis of the necessarily fearful, codified world, which queer men and women of an earlier generation had inhabited. Secondly, the power of disposable income – the ‘gay dollar’ – deriving from a demographic composed largely of single, men and women, began to hold attraction for commercial players operating venues in the hospitality sector. Things had begun – just – but things had begun to change.

This central aspect of life as a queer man, or woman in the 1970s and ‘80s – the sense of feeling that your core – your very being, exists apart from the mainstream – remains a strong element in Maloney’s life. This sense of marginalisation continued to have an impact upon his creative practice. Born in 1953, he is of the generation for whom the codified practices, and secretive behaviour required of young queer men remained the norm, in order to ‘pass’, as straight, or heterosexual. In performing their identities in this way, they hoped to avoid abuse, discrimination, and potentially violence. As a direct result of strictly observed social mores, let alone the injustice of law enforcement at the time – on each occasion that Pete, or I, or for that matter, any man – gave physical expression to our homosexual libidos, we were breaking the law. Simply by giving ourselves over to our most personal desires – by being true to ourselves, and not denying this – we became fugitive by default.

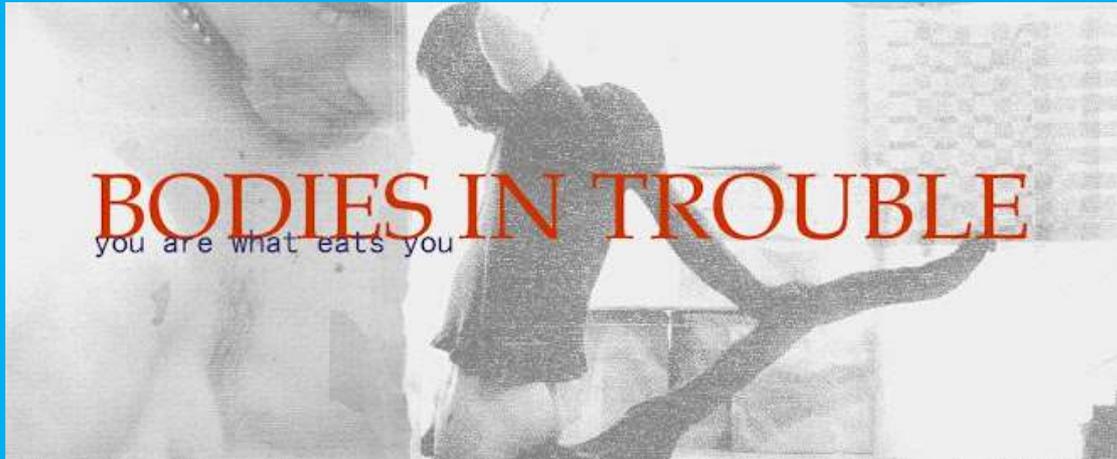
By producing works in a broad range of visual and conceptual vernaculars, Pete has perennially confounded critical reception in Australia. His multiple artistic variations – or ‘styles’ – tend to make him marginalised from the critical mainstream, which appears unable, or unwilling, to comprehend the puzzle of his artistic output, by neglecting to attempt to put the various pieces together. By not possessing an identifiable ‘brand’ associated with his work, he insists on being visible – wishing to be seen and understood, as different – hybrid – non-binary – queer. Indeed, it is the very promiscuity of the multiple photographic images, and their sources, that Pete began producing and assembling in Brisbane, and subsequently in Paris, Sydney and Canberra – and now reproduced in the book, ‘Fugitive Text’ – that seems to embody this proposition.

**Mark Bayly**

**October 2022**



‘Fugitive Text’, images by Peter Maloney,  
essays by Shaune Lakin and Lynne Tillman,  
published by M.33, Melbourne, 2022



Pete's blog can be accessed here: <http://petermaloney.blogspot.com>

*Peter Maloney is represented by Utopia Art Sydney*

*'Fugitive Text', images by Peter Maloney,*

*essays by Shaune Lakin and Lynne Tillman,*

*published by M.33, Melbourne, 2022*

*Fugitive Text* draws together photographic diptychs and triptychs made since the mid-1990s in response to the artist's experience of love, desire and loss through the HIV/AIDS pandemic.



## EXTRA

EXTRA IS AN AUSTRALIAN NETWORKED ZINE COLLABORATION BUILDING FROM PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE 'LIVING' ARCHIVAL ART INITIATIVES. IN PARTICULAR, EXTRA ZINE BUILDS OUT FROM EXTENSIVE ARI REMIX MEMORY WORK COLLABORATIONS 2011-2021.

We are thrilled and delighted to launch this *'anarchive as anthology'* online on 8 August 2022. EXTRA zine collaborations aim to place added emphasis on the hidden histories, marginalised narratives and digitised artists' ephemera – 'at risk' artists' ephemera – safeguarded in the personal archives of artists and artworkers. Activists, co-creatives among many others who were directly involved in the expanded and expanding Queensland/Australian artist-run ecology in the 1940 to Now temporality.

ACCESS > <https://remix.org.au/extrazine>

PROJECT TWO | STAGE ONE JUNE 2022 – JUNE 2024

ARI REMIX PRESENTS "SELF-MADE, ARTIST-RUN" A NEW ZINE-BASED ARCHIVAL ART INITIATIVE "THE EXTRA ZINE PROJECT" | feat. 25 ARTISTS, 25 ZINES [2022-2024] | An ARI Zine Anthology

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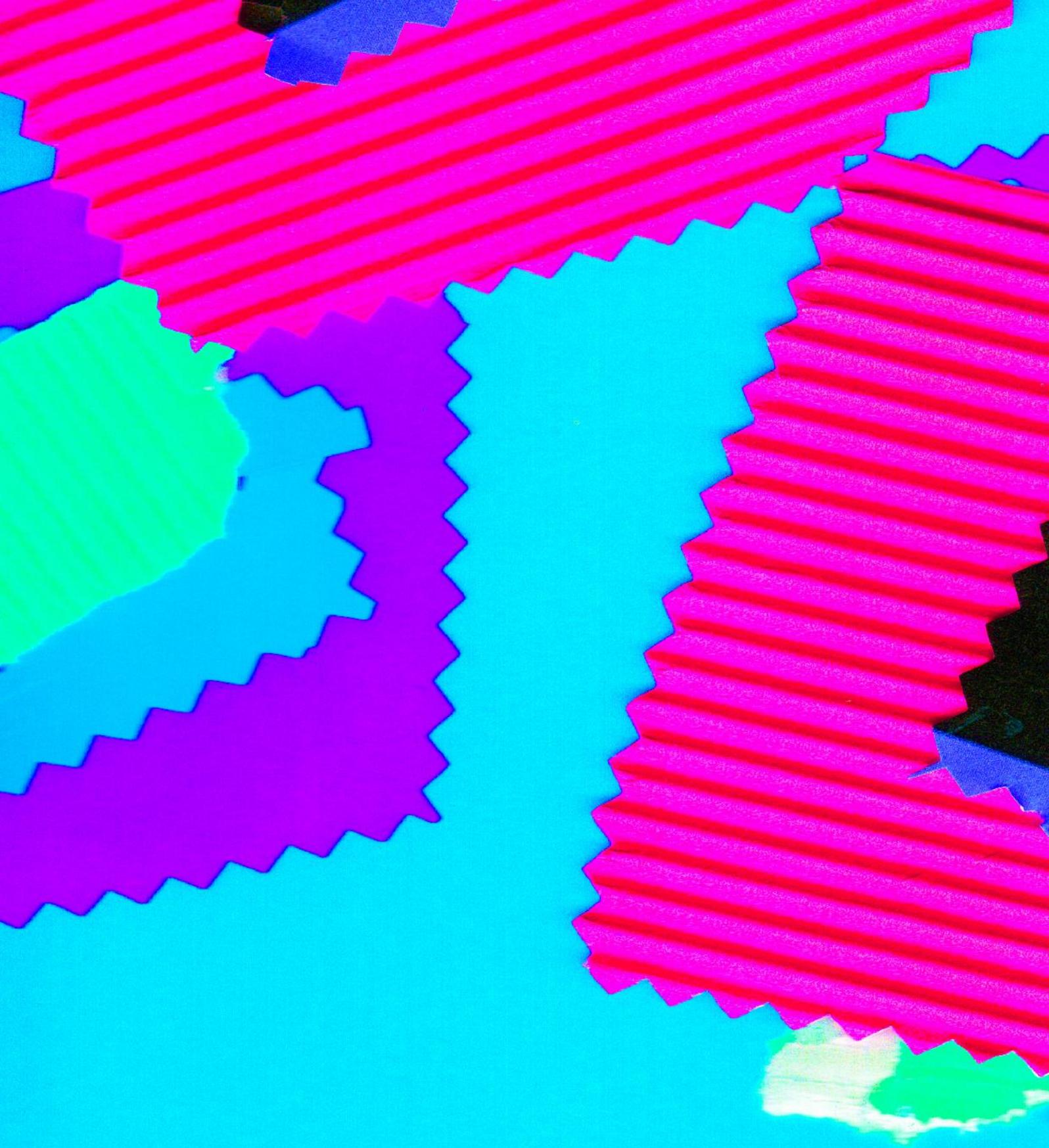
### ARI REMIX + EXTRA ZINE

PROJECT TWO – Stage One 2022 - 2024

of this project is supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland and has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



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**PETE MALONEY | Fugitive Allure**

*An Australian networked zine collaboration building from past,  
present and future 'living' archival initiatives.*

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