

James Powditch



**ray hughes gallery**

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**Boo!**

5-31 August 2005

*Love & Hate - Night of the Hunter*  
454 x 140cm mixed media 2005  
Photos by Michael Buick

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

# Boo! by James Powditch at Ray Hughes Gallery 5-31 August 2005

In the film adaptation of Harper Lee's novel *To Kill A Mockingbird*, Gregory Peck's character Atticus Finch tells his precocious young daughter Scout, "You never really know a man until you've stood in his shoes and walked around in them". So too a stroll in James Powditch's boots will reveal the layered meaning and implied narrative in his latest body of work *Boo!*

Powditch's homage to the icons of cinematic history, which began with his 2000 exhibition *Widescreen*, continues in a series of frequently monumental, billboard-scaled works which thematically take their cue from films which focus upon a child's perspective of the harsh and at times sinister, world in which they live. In many of the films from which Powditch lifts the titles for his works, vulnerable children are caught up in a disturbing, corrupt and often violent adult world. Yet despite the sometimes-unsettling imagery that plays a part in these new works, the artist's subtle humour – and optimism – prevails.

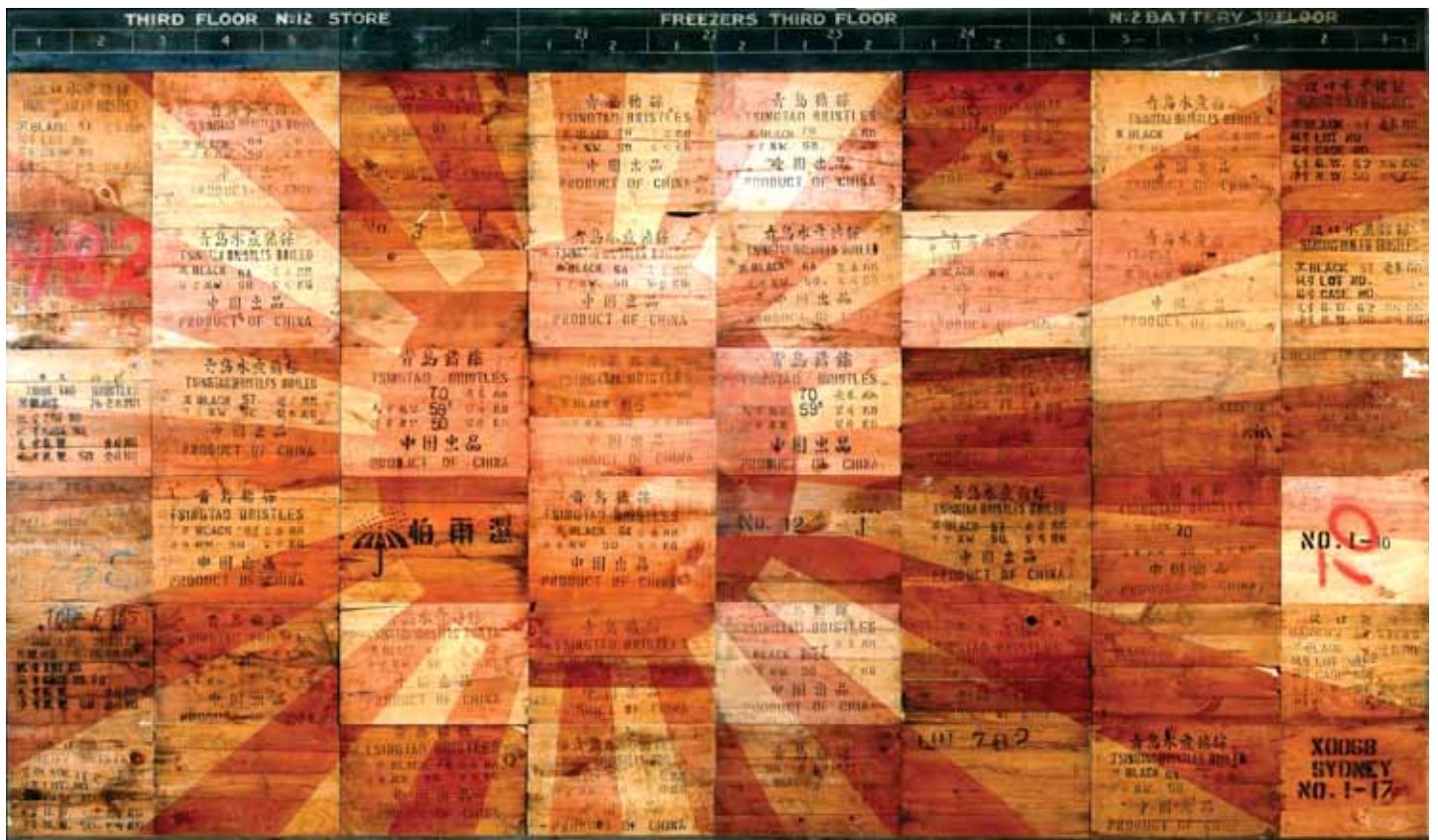
*Boo! To Kill A Mockingbird* (above, 303x93cm) references the sublimely shot opening credits of the film where a cigar box filled with artefacts offered up to the Finch children by the wrongfully demonised Boo Radley is reverently unpacked. Powditch's nine "frames" incorporating marbles, cotton reels, buttons, bus tickets etc forms a film-like strip on the enormous black letters (boo) – the objects in exactly the same arrangement, only shifted a few millimetres across in each frame.

This implied motion is repeated in the ominously titled *Night of the Hunter* (previous page, 454x140cm). We follow the journey of two children down the Ohio River as they escape the LOVE-HATE-knuckled clutches of Robert Mitchum's menacingly played serial-killer/preacher. A hopping rabbit traverses the top edge above an unfolding scene of Little Golden Book characters – played out upon a pianola scroll in the background.

In *Lord of the Flies* (below, 300x100cm) the smiling, benevolent face of Looney Tunes' Porky Pig is painted on an old film screen and transformed through association into the severed head of a pig, skewered on a stick and discovered by the plane-wrecked boys in Peter Brooks' 1963 masterpiece of the same name. The words chanted by the choirboys-turned-killers – KILL THE PIG - CUT HIS THROAT – are ritualistically repeated in chalk on a blackboard.

In these original and poignant works, Powditch transforms disparate material skilfully and imaginatively into forms of extraordinary and mysterious beauty. Other titles in the show include: *A.I. Artificial Intelligence*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Lawn Dogs*, *Days of Heaven*, *Paper Moon*, *The Shining*, *Storm Boy*, *Empire of the Sun*, *Walkabout*, *My Life As A Dog*.

For bio and images go to [www.jamespowditch.com.au](http://www.jamespowditch.com.au) or for high res images email [james@jamespowditch.com.au](mailto:james@jamespowditch.com.au)



*Empire of the Sun* 2005 timber & paint 400x231cm