

# ARTFORUM



Tracey Moffatt, *Something More 3*, 1989, Cibachrome photograph, 40 x 50".

## SIPPY DOWNS

### Tracey Moffatt

#### UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST GALLERY

90 Sippy Downs Drive

January 25 - March 17

In 1984, Audre Lorde issued a declaration to her white, straight feminist associates: "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." In this small but rich survey of key works from the 1980s and 1990s, Australian artist Tracey Moffatt demonstrates her fondness for doing just that—using the tools of Western popular narrative to tell unresolved, unsettling fictions that somewhat resemble the artist's own biography.

The exhibition begins with *Nice Coloured Girls*, 1987, a short film about young indigenous women who use the master's tools for their entertainment. Stepping out in Sydney's notorious King's Cross district and accepting drinks from a middle-aged white man, the women perform a volatile balancing act between being the exploiters and being exploited.

Commissioned by the Murray Art Museum Albury and shot in Link Studios in Wodonga, "Something More," 1989, is a photographic series composed of six vibrant Cibachrome color prints and three black-and-white prints, each of which borrows from film language to construct an enigmatic narrative of a young woman looking for more out of life than the circumstances of her violent rural upbringing. As viewers strain to find a sense of truth, Western cinema proves an annoying cultural interference. The first image has the female protagonist in the foreground, reminiscent of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), wistfully looking to the sky. The last image, in black and white, is perhaps the same character, this time lying beaten and motionless on the road into town.

— Emily Wakeling