

# Basic Detail Report

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**00030674**

**Title**

The Tourists

**Date**

1989

**Primary Maker**

Anne Zahalka

**Medium**

Type c print on paper

**Dimensions**

Overall: 955 x 1100 mm, 0.17 kg

**Name**

Photograph

**History**

Sun, beach and water have long been identified with leisure and holiday fun. We flock to beaches, rivers and pools to relax and escape the stresses of every day life - revisiting favourite playgrounds and meeting places. The swimmers, lifesavers, sunbathers and surfers who in habit these leisure places have become iconic figures in the Australian cultural landscape. Anne Zahalka, one of Australia's leading contemporary photo media artists, produced a series of images titled 'Bondi: Playground of the Pacific' (1989) and 'Leisureland' (1998-2002). In 'Bondi: Playground of the Pacific', Zahalka toys with our nostalgia for the works of Australian artists Charles Meere and Frieda Robertshaw and photographer Max Dupain by reinventing their statuesque and supine figures of imagined Australians in an artificial beach setting. This selection of works ranges from early works from the Bondi series of 1989, when she specifically turned her eye on the centrality of the beach, Bondi in particular, in Australia's identity, to the more general examination of sport and leisure in Australia's cultural profile. While water has been viewed as central to these pursuits Zahalka pursues the leisure industry in other venues such as gambling houses, the Royal Easter Show at Homebush and the Blue Mountains. The works show this progression both in broadening and critique of the subject and in the construction of the image; the earlier series is very much the construction of individual tableaux and in reworking known images. Zahalka has reworked Max Dupain's famous 'Sunbather' to comment on the notion of the bronzed Aussie and also on the iconic status of the Dupain image itself. She also used actors to highlight aspects of life at Bondi - council workers pose in a carefully constructed tableau, and Japanese pose as surfers and as tourists in a reflexive image of Bondi's changing beach culture.