

FOR THE RECORD – GRAHAM MILLER

Growing up in Australia in the 1970s when TV was still new, there were just four programs on telly. Two of these, *Countdown* and *The Winners* ran back to back, and were shown on Sunday evening, broadcast just as kids were getting called off the streets by their Mums to come inside.

As school kids trying our best to assimilate in the playground it was important to be familiar with these Australian cultural beacons of music and sport. With a little bit of knowledge came the power to avoid a beating. And with the right football cards, or the right album in your hands, your credibility could soar.

Graham Miller's series *Playing the Man* revisited the unique imagery of Australian football collector cards from that era. Taking on the role of 70s iconic footballer Miller assimilated fully into the image culture of that period by recreating the football cards that were traded in the school playgrounds all those years ago, but this time with himself cast in the central role.

In this series *For the Record* with The Patti Smiths, Graham Miller takes on 70s music culture. Recreating some of the iconic album covers of the period Miller casts himself as the rock star, refiguring his 70s soundtrack into an autobiography. Foregoing the haphazard visual language of the football trading card Miller must take on the more purposeful visual language of the album cover.

The music was fundamental back then, but we shouldn't discount the significance of the album cover. Via the album, all music was anchored to a physical 31x31 cm square frame. The imagery inside the frame was static - transportable, but immutable. They were the pictures we held onto as we listened and sang along.

Compared with today, this music was scarce. In my first teenage job I would need to work five hours before I earned enough to buy an album. Today, you can gorge yourself on music and pictures without paying a cent. Everything is available instantaneously, creating a music experience that is much more fleeting, and increasingly indistinguishable as it merges with the general mish-mash of online existence. Nothing sticks anymore.

Perhaps this is the melancholy note that plays in Miller's reworked album covers.

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