



Grace Cossington Smith art award 2018

National art award supporting
contemporary Australian artists



Exhibition of finalists 3-24 November 2018

Cover artwork by Lisa Jones

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Selection panel and judges:

Alison Clark, Dominik Mersch with Mary Faith

37 finalists for the three 2018 awards

The Grace Cossington Smith art award \$15,000, acquisitive

The Grace Cossington Smith early career artist award \$2,500, non acquisitive

The Grace Cossington Smith local artist award \$2,500, non acquisitive
sponsored by Susie Stathakis and Di Jones Real Estate Wahroonga

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Grace Cossington Smith (1892-1984)
The Curve of the Bridge, 1929-30
pencil and pastel on paper
collection of Abbotsleigh
courtesy the estate of Grace Cossington Smith



Grace Cossington Smith
Calf in the Landscape
oil on paperboard
collection of Abbotsleigh
courtesy the estate of Grace Cossington Smith

Grace Cossington Smith art award 2018 Finalists

Lyndall Beck, NSW	Waratah Lahy, ACT
Yvonne Boag, NSW	Melinda Le Guay, NSW
Julie Brooke, ACT	Genevieve Loy, NT
Penelope Cain, NSW	Deborah Marks, NSW
Tony Carlon, NSW	Helen Mueller, NSW
Tom Carment, NSW	Ro Murray, NSW
Penny Coss, WA	Adam Norton, NSW
Julia Davis, NSW	Catherine O'Donnell, NSW
John Edwards, NSW	Janet Parker-Smith, NSW
David Fairbairn, NSW	Wendy Sharpe, NSW
Kylie Fogarty, ACT	Sally Stokes, NSW
Louise Fowler-Smith, NSW	Janet Tavener, NSW
Hayley Megan French, NSW	Jane Theau, NSW
Amanda Fuller, NSW	Annabelle Wass, NSW
Jacinta Giles, QLD	Nicole Welch, NSW
Stephen Hall, NSW	JP Willis, NSW
Yvette Hamilton, NSW	Lisa Woolfe, NSW
Amaya Iturri, VIC	Tianli Zu, NSW
Donald Kenner, VIC	

From the Director

Abbotsleigh proudly presents the Grace Cossington Smith art award.

This year marks the introduction of a vibrant new vision for the art award. The award returns as a biennial event with three prize categories: the original Grace Cossington Smith art award, the new Hornsby/Ku-ring-gai local artist award and an early career artist award. The three winners also share a three-week group exhibition at the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery in November 2019. These changes reflect our interest in expanding our connections with our community and a broader range of artists.

Grace Cossington Smith (1892-1984) attended Abbotsleigh from 1908 to 1909. When she left school, Headmistress Marian Clarke, herself an accomplished watercolourist, farewelled Grace with a gift of four books on art – *Burlington Art Miniatures* – on the collections of old master paintings in Italy. Grace later said, 'I think it was the beginning.' Grace attended art classes and made the commitment to be an artist. It is apparent that she expressed great joy in the things around her, from the beauty of her home suburb Turramurra to the progress of the exciting new bridge spanning the harbour. For Grace the simple and the meaningful were a source of interest to be documented through her many paintings and sketches. She built connections with places and spaces, with people and objects and as viewers of her artworks we observe her connections as physical, spiritual, intellectual and cultural investigations.

The finalists in this year's Grace Cossington Smith art award exhibition echo the interest shared by Grace in making connections with their world. These artists offer us a multitude of ideas and experiences and they employ their materials and techniques to trigger associations and layers of interpretation and dialogue.

More than 375 entries were received from a highly competitive field of Australia-wide artists. Thirty-seven finalists were selected by judges Alison Clark and Dominik Mersch and we thank them for their time, commitment and contribution to the award. Thank you, too, to all the artists who submitted entries for the 2018 award and congratulations for your strong connections to your art.

The award is made possible through the continued generous support of Abbotsleigh and this year through the interest and sponsorship of Susie Stathakis and Di Jones Real Estate Wahroonga. Fuji-Xerox continues to support us through printing the catalogue and publications material.

Mary Faith

Director GCS Gallery

From the Headmistress

It is with great pleasure that we celebrate the exhibition of finalists of the Abbotsleigh Grace Cossington Smith art award in its new biennial format. Grace Cossington Smith made connections with her world through artworks, and this vibrant and diverse exhibition serves as a marvellous celebration and reminder of this famous local artist and Abbotsleigh Old Girl.

Each of the chosen finalists has demonstrated the theme of Making Connections in different ways. From making visual, conceptual, material and complex connections, through to making connections with the land, the audience, the world, the world beyond our world and even exploring the simultaneous connections and disconnections associated with our use of technology, the finalists have created original works that are highly imaginative and evocative.

I am delighted that Abbotsleigh is expanding our connections with our community and a broad range of artists through these 'reimagined' awards. On behalf of the whole Abbotsleigh community, I would like to congratulate all the artists who entered and those artists who have been chosen to exhibit in this wonderful space. The variety of medium and the different interpretations of the theme certainly provide a fascinating, thought-provoking and stimulating exhibition.

Over the next month, the exhibition will be viewed by many visitors, as well as our teachers, Old Girls and students, who will be able to enjoy the works at their leisure. Additionally, the works will be integrated into our teaching programs and will, I am sure, inspire our Visual Arts students.

I would like to thank our selectors, Alison Clark and Dominik Mersch, who carefully chose the 37 artists on display from more than 375 entries. We are fortunate to have such highly respected art professionals involved in our Grace Cossington Smith art award exhibition.

Alison Clark has more than 25 years' experience in the local government, regional and commercial gallery sector in curatorial and arts management roles. She has worked extensively as a curator and project manager and is currently the Team Leader Arts & Culture at North Sydney Council. In this role, Alison is responsible for overseeing a range of creative initiatives including the Council's Artist Studio, Residency & Creative Spaces programs, Public Art program and the biennial North Sydney Art Prize.

Dominik Mersch has a PhD in Mechanical Engineering and worked in Biomedical Engineering before turning his passion into his occupation as owner and director of the Dominik Mersch Gallery in Rushcutters Bay. His gallery presents the finest artists at the forefront of contemporary art practice and focuses on exhibiting artists from Australia and Europe. Mersch has a strong commitment to the further development of Australian and International artists and to emerging artists. In 2014 he realised a unique gallery swap, with a Berlin-based gallery, exposing his artists to international audiences and curators. The Dominik Mersch Award was developed in collaboration with the Sydney College of the Arts, to give emerging artists and curators the rare opportunity to show in a commercial gallery space.

I would also like to acknowledge and highlight the superb work of the Director of the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery, **Mrs Mary Faith**. As we celebrate the 5 year anniversary of the opening of the GCSG, we delight in Mrs Faith's innovative approach and the success of her collaboration with Gallery Coordinator **Lisa Jones** and Gallery assistant **Stuart Smith**.

I invite you to enjoy this exhibition and join our community of learners as we share in the artists' representations of Making Connections.

Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

2014 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Margaret Loy Pula**

Margaret Loy Pula belongs to the Anmatyerre people of Utopia in Central Australia.

She comes from a distinguished artistic family and she is the daughter of well-known Utopian artist Kathleen Petyarre.

Margaret paints the 'Anatye' or Bush Potato dreaming using a series of fine detailed dots that represent the growth pattern of the plant from an aerial view. The bush potato vine grows after the rains and the vines send out tendrils into the soil and this is where the potato (or bush yam) begins to grow. The women go out to collect the potato and they are cooked in the hot coals of the fire.

She says: *This painting is about my culture, my family. That's my father's dreaming. This is from my father's country, that country is called 'Unjangola'. That is north of Utopia, not too far, but really desert country.*

2014 judge: Rachel Kent, Chief Curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

2014 selectors: artist Janet Laurence and curator Nicholas Tsoutas



Anatye Bush Potato
acrylic on linen
150 x 150
Courtesy Muk Muk Fine Art

2015 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Jake Blaschka**

Jake Blaschka's work explores connections between art and advertising and questions the pervasive role advertising plays within our contemporary society. *rebajas* is a cropped image of large scale collages placed in a steel frame resembling back-lit bus stop advertisements, while *Obelus 3* is a dense black surface with remnant traces of characters suggesting it could have once supported an advertisement.

His work preserves a link to the original source material; the finished size of the works is that of printed billposters, while the depth and material of the steel frames replicates those of the bus stop ad shells. However, he mediates the images of advertising by presenting only fragmented text or traces of characters on the surface of the aluminium.

Jake says: *By emphasizing this dysfunctional character, I intend to intervene with technology used in high-end advertising in the same way I exploit the didactic content within printed advertising imagery.*

2015 judges: Geoffrey Legge and Damien Minton from Watters Gallery in Sydney,

2015 selectors: Anneke Jaspers, Assistant Curator Contemporary Art, Art Gallery NSW and Dr Stephen Little, Head of Painting, National Art School.



rebajas من افس، خصم (Drawing as object 3),
2015
untreated steel, duratrans print, acrylic,
fluorescent lights, timber
156 x 104 cm

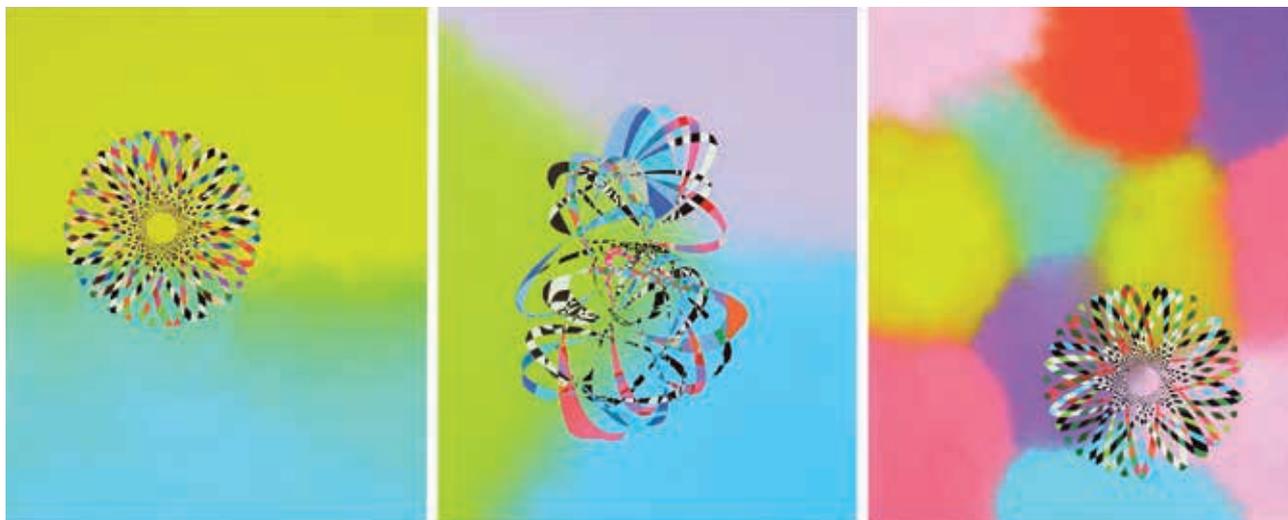
Obelus 3, 2015
aluminium composite panel,
timber, fluorescent light, acrylic paint,
steel angles and paper
150 x 100 cm

2016 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Mark Titmarsh**

Mark Titmarsh investigates the mystery of light and colour and suggests it is found equally in nature as in our fluorescent, post-industrial environment. He says, 'Science tries to explain light and creates a muddle of waves and particles. Believers takes light to be the essence of the god head, a primordial state of grace that has no forbears, unbegotten, where the only thing that can create a god or light is god as light. For unbelievers the essence of light is the wonder of the world, the source of all interest in things, the mood of the moment, the play of appearance and depth across an infinity of possibility. In this painting, colour is the tension and connection between various modes of light, between the geometric and biomorphic, the painterly and industrial, the flatness of the image and the fatness of an object, and so on.' painterly and industrial, the flatness of the image and the fatness of an object, and so on.

2016 judges and selectors: Rhonda Davis, Senior curator of Macquarie University Art Gallery, Dr Andrew Frost, Researcher in science fiction, cinema and contemporary art, art critic for Guardian Australia and a lecturer in the Department of Media, Music, Communications and Cultural Studies at Macquarie University.

Light from Light, Part 1-3
acrylic and automotive polish on aluminium
110 x 90 cm each



The Finalists

Fade to Grey
... the disappearance of the quarter acre
block...cottage and hills hoist...
the burbs
Look at ourselves
What do we value?
What will define community and connection
in and amongst the amassing generic box
towers?
Gardens and trees?
Space to breathe?
Sunlight and sky?
Quiet to hear birds sing?
Knowing your neighbours?
What do we value?
And who cares?

Fade to Grey, 2018
collagraphs (oil inks on Hahnemule paper)
mounted in perspex boxes
142 x 41 cm each
courtesy the artist



Yvonne Boag



This painting, *Sounds of Gangseo-gu*, is making a connection with eminent South Korean artist, Jeong Seon (Korean: 정선) (1676–1759). He was a Korean landscape painter and his works include ink and oriental water paintings as well as numerous ‘true-view’ landscape paintings on the subject of Korea and the history of its culture. He is counted among the most famous of Korean painters.

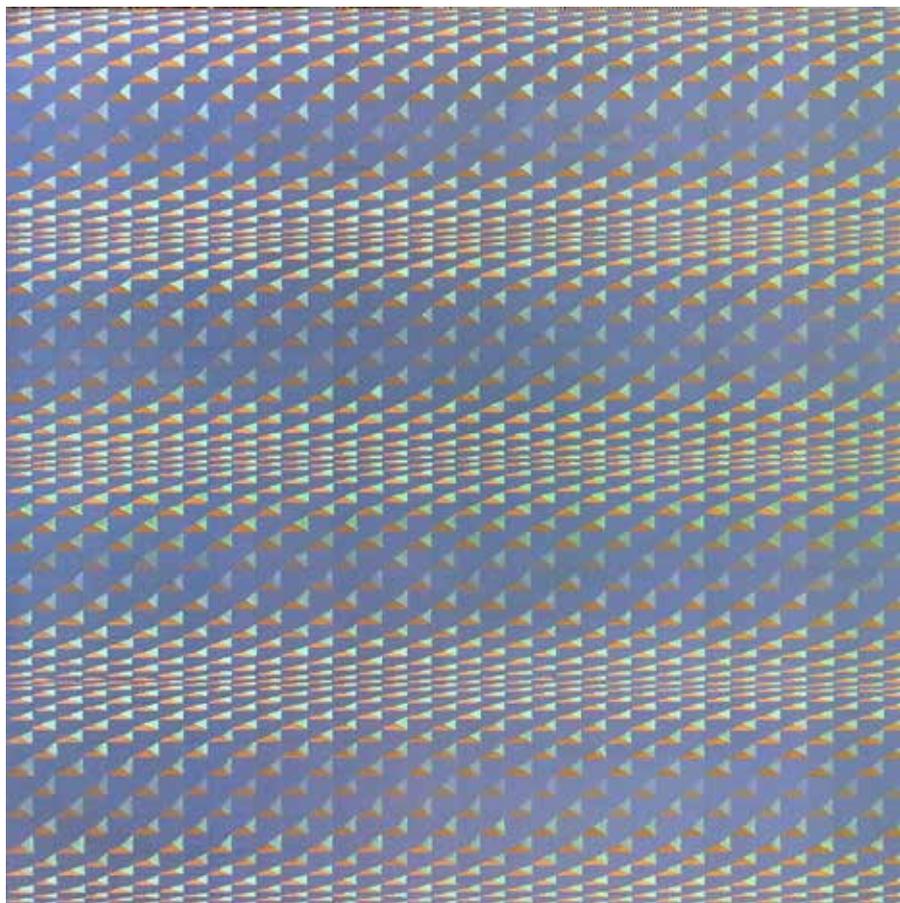
My painting is making a connection with this famous Korean painter by reflecting on a scene of Seoul, which he frequently painted as rice paddies and rural landscape. As you can see in my painting, the scene is now far from rural, filled with vibrant colours and modern shapes and sounds, reflecting the building now underway on what were tranquil rice paddies. I have documented the change that this place is undergoing today in a painting that can be seen as part of the overall timeline Jeong Seon started. I feel a connection with this famous painter, sharing his love for the place despite the obvious differences.

Sounds of Gangseo-gu
acrylic on canvas
130 x 162 cm
courtesy the artist

Julie Brooke

As a former scientist, I have experienced the difficulty of communicating complex abstract ideas to connect with a wider audience. I am fascinated by the conceptual and material connections between the visual arts and science and, as a painter, I now collaborate widely with scientists. *Expanded Labyrinth* is a geometric painting developed from a collaboration with topologists in the ANU Department of Applied Mathematics, who investigate the complex labyrinthine structure involved in the formation of butterfly wing scales. This painting arose from conversations about how elements of the complex mathematics underpinning the design of butterfly wing scales might be communicated to a non-mathematical audience by visual means. Working with gouache and pencil lines on board, I use geometric forms to create spatially ambiguous and optically active imagery. My aim in this work was to evoke the shimmer of the butterfly's wing, while also investigating and communicating how mathematicians visualise abstract concepts.

Expanded Labyrinth
gouache, pencil and acrylic on board
60 x 60 cm
courtesy the artist



Penelope Cain



In 1945 New Zealand economist and tinkerer, Bill Phillips, invented the Financephalograph or 'MONIAC' from a connection of transparent tanks, tubing, valves and water, to visualise the circular flow of money in a national economy. As a model, it visually connected and simplified intangible economic variables, such as taxing, spending, interest rates and consumption to a series of controlled flows of water in an act of reductive modernist magical thinking.

This wall installation propositionally offers an alternative model; connecting materialisations of growth and cost physically in a type of a quasi-manifestation, a form of alchemy for the contemporary truism of growth at all cost.

Planning for Growth at all Cost

dyed rooster feathers, fibreglass mesh, spray paint,
rubber, beads, thread, linen, acrylic, wire

200 x 200 cm

courtesy the artist

Tony Carlon

The more our world accelerates, the more I feel the need to slow down; take time to connect. Through my work I have discovered a place where time almost stands still. The process is pretty simple, I do what a lot of folks would call daydreaming; something catches my attention, an everyday scene or object, familiar at first, then abstracted by motion or a play of light and I am gone – a type of meditation. If you have ever lain on the grass and enjoyed watching the clouds create pictures in the sky, that's a similar experience. It's my way of making connections with the world around me and the essence of what I hope to capture and share in my work.

After the show
acrylic on canvas
75 x 75 cm
courtesy the artist



Tom Carment



This painting was done in January inside my late father-in-law's shed in the northern suburbs of Perth. It's the tenth in my series of typewriters, all belonging to friends and acquaintances. I believe that every typewriter takes on some of the DNA of its user, in this case, Rose, who was visiting her daughter and small grandchildren in a house down the road. These kind neighbours help look after my mother-in-law, who has dementia. When I told them about my typewriter project they asked Rose to bring her Olivetti Lettera up from her home in Albany for me to paint. I worked quickly so she could take it back home again and continue using it, writing weekly letters to her family in Perth.

Rose's Olivetti, from Albany

oil on linen

41 x 51 cm

courtesy the artist and King Street Gallery on William

Penny Coss

Within the hinterland of the urban environment that most of us live there are overlapping spaces that sustain our connection to the familiar, but also challenge us with the unfamiliar. This work illustrates this duality with the fluctuating tides of river systems that blur the boundaries between a body of water and land's end. I track the topography of the place I habitually walk with its phenomena and matter that continue to unfold and enfold. Its changing biology, geography and gravitational forces of water are held suspended. A form of transcendence, the idea of connecting in the landscape offers a way of understanding the world.

Black Water Series
acrylic on paper
141 x 178 cm
courtesy the artist



Julia Davis



Temporality and duration are key themes throughout my practice. My work explores the effects of the passage of time as it passes and appears as a past within the present. The art making process connects me to the physical world, its properties and actions; how I impact and inhabit my environment and how it influences me.

Marking Time: 1768 uses a core sample of a beech tree growing at the time James Cook and an international team of astronomers travelled to Tahiti to observe the transit of Venus and measure the solar system. In this way my work makes connections between past and present, human endeavour and the development of Western science and culture.

Carbon saturation of the paper during the printing process is critical to the work since this element connects all known life on earth. As well, it contributes to the processes by which energy from the sun and stars is converted and used.

Marking Time: 1768 (Fagus sylvatica L.)

inkjet print on canson rag 1/3

112.5 x 180 cm

courtesy the artist

John Edwards

Narratives evolving from bushranger images are integral to a colonised Australian psyche. Characters were famed for stealing, philandering, mateship and murder. Captain Thunderbolt was one such legendary figure; the longest roaming bushranger in Australian history. Less is known about the lives of the hardy, gun-toting women who travelled with these bushrangers.

In *Back at the Hideout No. 2* I wanted to capture something of the resilience of Captain Thunderbolt and his Indigenous wife Mary-Ann Bugg in the way that the narratives of Colonial paintings captured a spirit of endurance. The day-to-day duties of connecting with the land, of keeping up appearances in less than salubrious circumstances, suggests something of the grit of an Australian ethos of making do, of being a bricoleur and thriving. As such, my painting hopes to work as homage to all bushrangers and settlers that took pride in colluding, conspiring and connecting in order to survive.

Back at the Hideout No. 2

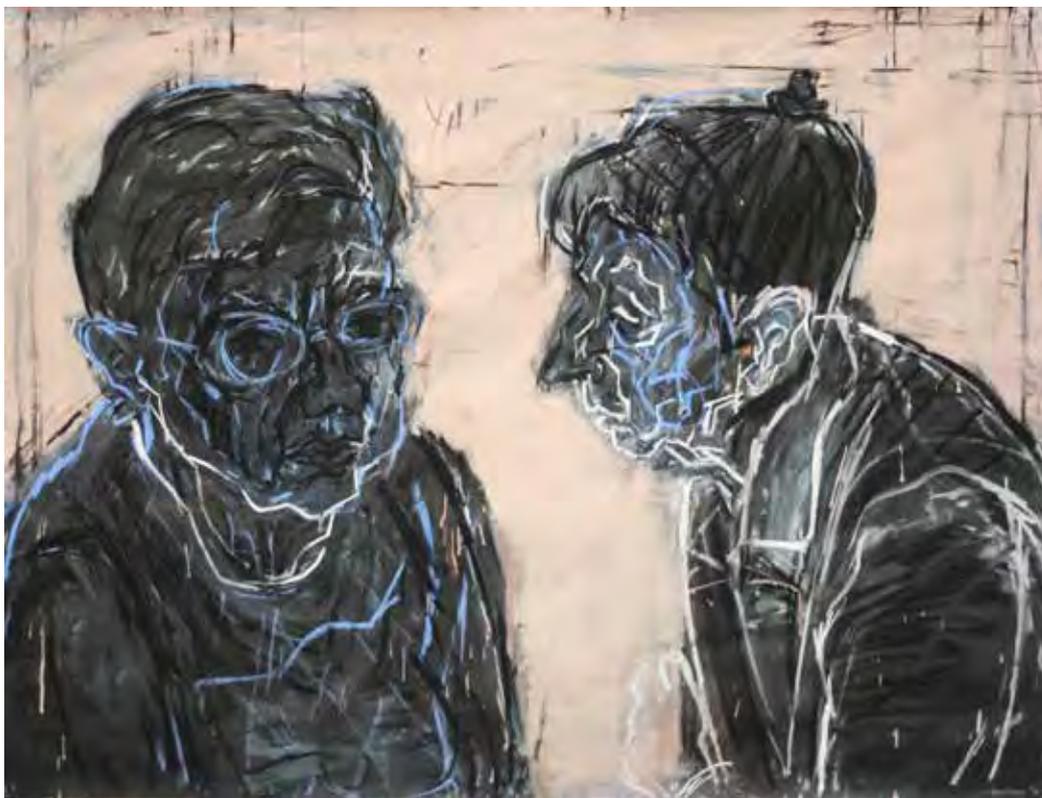
oil on canvas

120 x 120 cm

courtesy the artist and Artiste Gallery Camperdown



David Fairbairn



This work comprises a new body of work under the title *Drawn Together* that seeks to examine the relationship and connections between two old friends and my own interaction with them. The encounter between one sitter and the artist is particularly intense in the single portrait, but is quite different when exploring the relationship between two sitters who are often engaged in conversation with one another leaving the artist to be mostly the observer. Painting and drawing two women in their late seventies I could also see a reflection of my own ageing process

Drawn Together 'Double Portrait V.H. & J.E.L. No. 2'

acrylic, gouache, pastel, charcoal and ink

103 x 134 cm

courtesy the artist and Port Jackson Press Print Gallery

Kylie Fogarty

Inspired by the Nightcap National Park, this drawing
embraces the synergy of the rainforest.

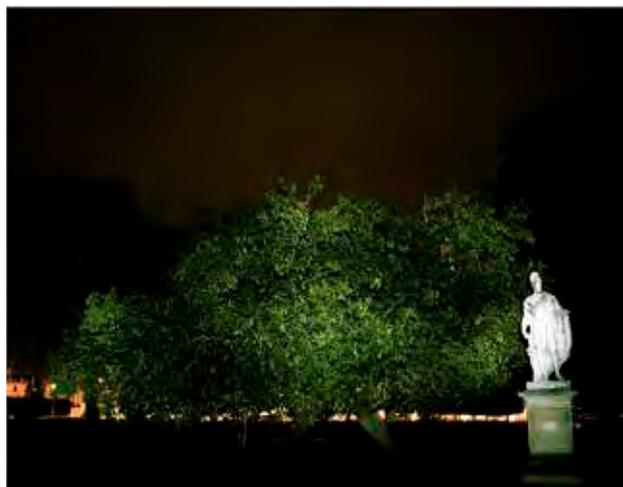
Canopies of trees combine to create a protective layer of each
living component, the energy below which is palpable.

Each element is interconnected and fundamental
to the energy of life.

Canopy Trails
archival pen and pigmented ink on 300 gsm fabriano paper
15 x 87 cm
courtesy the artist



Louise Fowler-Smith



As an eco-artist I believe that how we perceive and contemplate the land affects how we respond to the land. For the past 20 years my practice-led research has focused on the veneration of trees; a subject I was drawn to for the magnitude of their environmental significance and their universal, pan-religious symbolic importance. In my art practice I venerate trees through illumination, at night, using a medium format camera and film. *Arboreal Connections* makes the connection between trees of the world – specifically Australia and Europe. One was taken in the far western region of NSW and the other in the Jardin des Tuileries in Paris, France – part of my 2018 solo exhibition with the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in France. I have also published articles and am completing a book on the veneration of trees in India and how this practice has protected trees from logging.

Arboreal Connections

medium format photography

82 x 102 cm

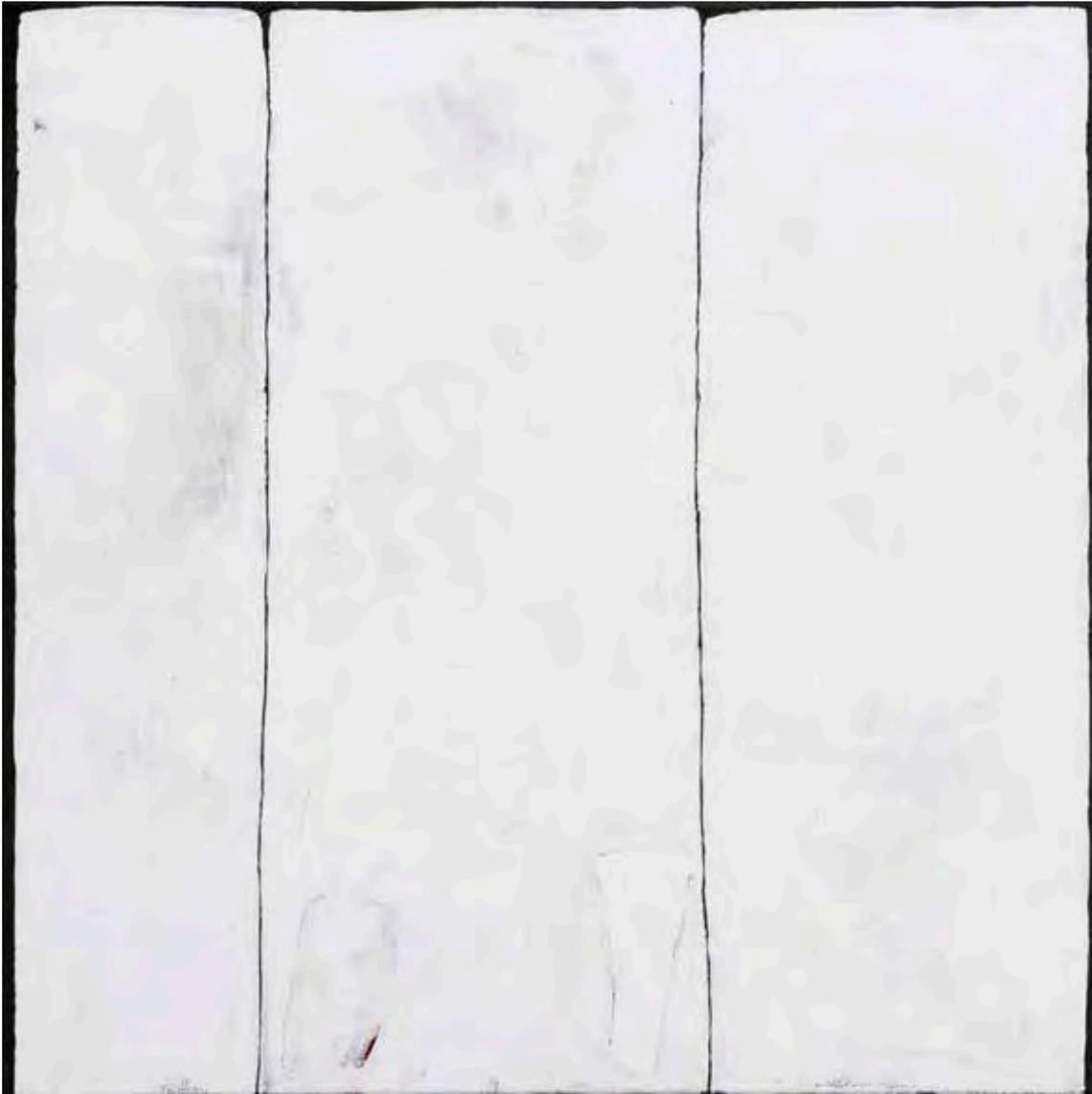
courtesy the artist

Hayley Megan French

In previous paintings I have recreated feelings of landscapes – through shapes, forms and layers – performing my own connection to place. Now I am reworking these ideas, obscuring previous ideas of landscape to capture a physical and emotional vertigo of landscape in Australia. The vertical line emerged as a gesture to alternate perspectives: looking up and down when no discernible horizon is present.

Somewhat detached from the landscape itself, the build-up of layers and perspectives holds in it ways of thinking about place and its relation to the self – a making and re-making of connections between the self and the land. This movement between individual and collective identity is a continued and mutable interrogation of myself and my place through the act of painting.

Over remainders
acrylic on canvas
80 x 80 cm
courtesy the artist and Galerie pompom



Amanda Fuller



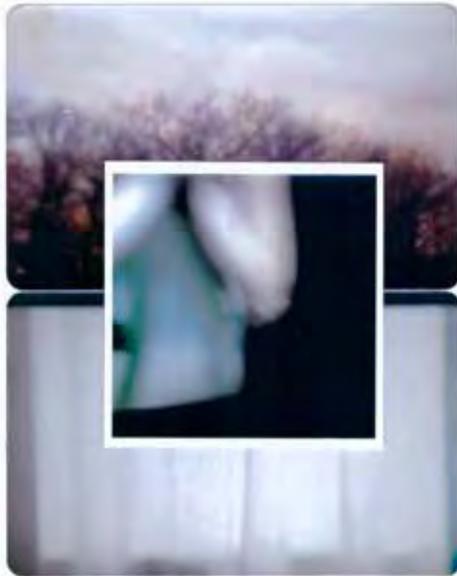
The Australian landscape is a recurring theme in my painting and is influenced by the connection I feel to my surrounding environment. Absorbing the peace and stillness of nature is a reminder that you are such a small part of the big picture. With wandering thoughts to match my steps, I find parallels between my journey as an artist and reflect on the connection I feel to the landscape and the various challenges faced along the way. In an attempt to record the visual and sensory experience, I have explored the Post-Impressionist use of the figure in the landscape and the path of my ongoing journey.

Reflections in Pink
oil on timber panel
64 x 64 cm
courtesy the artist

Jacinta Giles

The materiality of the photograph and memory. The small and the fragile. Fragmented bodies and melancholia. These are all connections that my practice explores through the process of photomontage; the interplay between images, materiality and scale, raising questions about the uncertainty of our human condition at a time when we are both hyper-connected and spiritually alienated.

Matter
Photomontage
50 x 50 cm
courtesy the artist



Stephen Hall



This work contemplates the human race attempting to make connections beyond the Earth. The skeleton represents humanity's fragility and that it is most likely finite; however, it is depicted as alive and moving within an astronaut suit, which symbolises a possible future for humanity beyond Earth. The horse skeleton represents the things humanity implicates and uses to reach its goals - its 'progress'.

Connections are also made between the future and the past, depicting images that reflect aspects of humanity's journey and legacy on Earth, such as mythology, religion, economic society and monarchy, but they are now projected into a future context, perhaps not left behind. Other images show the astronaut tinkering and planning for life in an uncharted phase, attempting to make new connections.

Asking Answers Revealing Questions Punctuating with Sighs

(suite of 10 etchings)

etching, aquatint

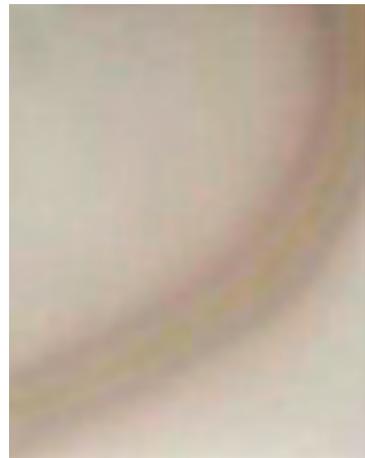
37 x 30 cm each

courtesy the artist

Yvette Hamilton

Laying Light (Burn) is a meditation on photography's essential connected elements – light and dark. Process and concept are intertwined in this series. In the dark, I arranged and laid a length of LED strip light directly onto photographic paper and then turned it on – not knowing exactly where or how the light would mark the paper until it was too late to change it – the process an act of blind drawing. Exposed for hours in a lumen printing process where the paper is deliberately 'fogged' with light, and fixed as is, the images are a direct rendering of the connection between light, dark, time and chance and represent a reductive attempt at drawing illumination on a two-dimensional surface.

Laying Light (Burn)
diptych of unique silver gelatin lumen prints
40 x 50 cm, 20 x 25 cm
courtesy the artist



Amaya Iturri



We sometimes forget that the little pleasures in life come from understated situations, like a good chat.

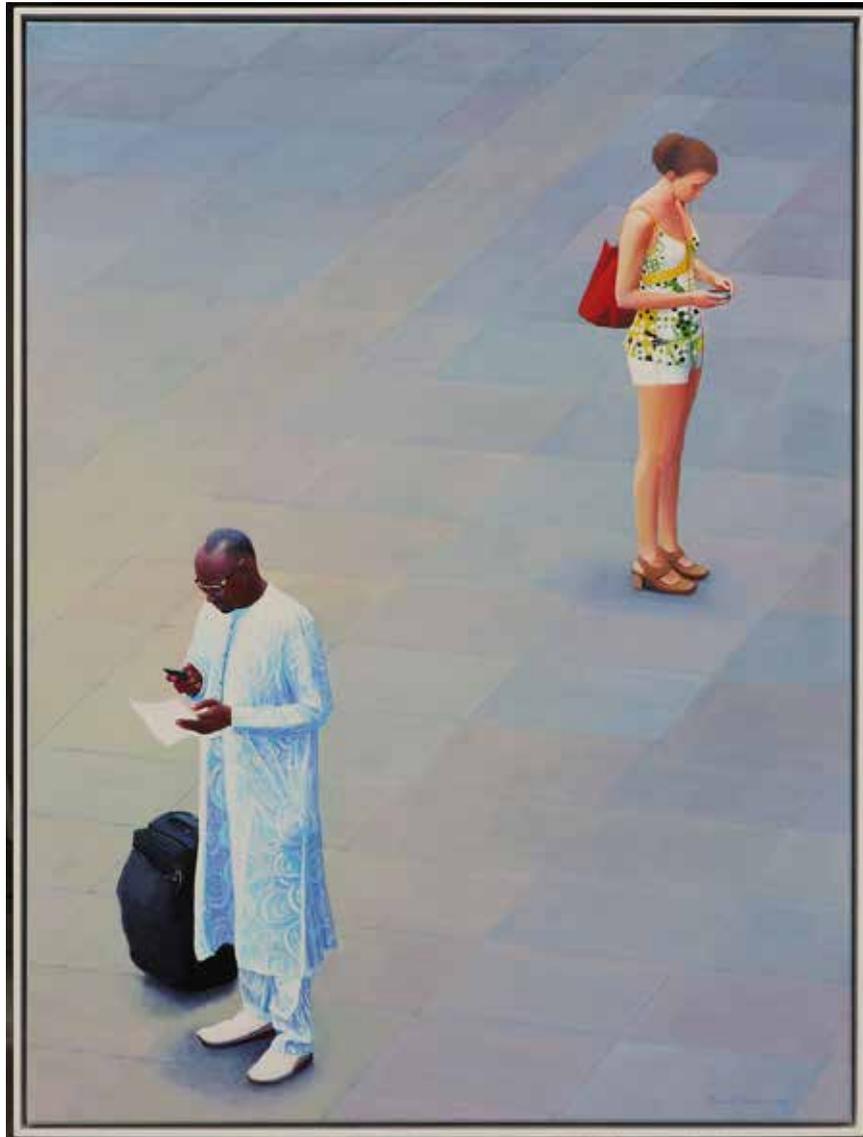
In a time and age where relationships have turned the virtual corner, we seem to be losing the capacity to make this kind of connection, to get involved in a casual conversation with neighbours, in the school grounds, the tram, a bus etc.

Good Chat
acrylic on linen
40 x 60 cm
courtesy the artist

Donald Kenner

I find it difficult to put words to the visual language of painting and believe that a painting should speak for itself. I first noticed these two people at Antwerp Station while my wife and I were awaiting our connecting train into Germany and the image on the spacious concourse below had to be captured, knowing it had potential for a painting down the track. These two attractively attired, ethnically and culturally different people seemed unaware of the other while immersed in making their own connections. Although a spacious composition, the goal was to connect the two persons pictorially while maintaining a visual dialogue. As for the storyline, that's best left to others.

Station Concourse
acrylic on linen
122 x 92 cm
courtesy the artist



Waratah Lahy



I've lived in the same inner-city suburb for the past 20 years and in that time the streets around me have changed dramatically. Houses get knocked down, apartments go up and the skyline is continually changing. At times it's challenging to live in a place with so much development: big fences, 'keep out' signs, piles of rubbish and rubble, mud, dust and steel. During summer, construction seems to slow down and I can take the time to notice moments of unexpected beauty – repetitions of shapes and patterns and richness of colour. I paint these moments in miniature as a reprieve from the big and grandiose. My neighbourhood becomes palm-sized and these quiet moments offer a way of making new connections with my changing suburb.

small scale suburbia (1-6)
watercolour on paper
38.5 x 31 cm each
courtesy the artist and MAY SPACE

Melinda Le Guay

Briar references the figure and palette of Grace Cossington Smith. Using luminous colours to create paintings of what she saw around her, collectively her works express a sustained artistic vision. I knitted this dress using discarded copper wire and thread, a methodical and repetitive act that is seen as gendered labour. I attempt to capture Cossington Smith's independent outlook in its delicate yet briary nature, embellished with items that connect the work to her aesthetic and approach. The golden tone of the thread used in the bottom half of the dress is accentuated by objects bound in gold, reminiscent of her use of this hue. Other embellishments include coloured feathers, referencing Cossington Smith's rhythmic colourations. These feathers, along with other items, such as echidna spines, thorns and bones were collected from the Ku-ring-gai bushland, connecting this work to a shared location between Cossington Smith and me.

Briar
wire, thread, mixed media
98 x 36 cm
courtesy the artist and MAY SPACE



Genevieve Loy



Genevieve is from the Utopia region in Central Australia. She learnt to paint from her grandmother, Nancy Petyarr, and her father, Cowboy Loy Pwerl, a senior elder. Genevieve paints her father's country and the story of Arwengerrp, the Bush Turkey, depicting the tracks it makes as it searches for seeds. Her work combines meticulous dots and elegant wisps creating vibrant, pulsating and richly textured surfaces using a harmonious colour palette. On a more complex level Genevieve's painting is about women's ceremonies of the Anmatyerr people and represent her own reimagining of the Dreaming stories, acknowledging the integral connection between Genevieve and her country.

Bush Turkey Tracks

synthetic polymer on linen

200 x 120 cm

courtesy the artist and Lauraine Diggins Fine Art

Deborah Marks

The subject of my painting *State of Grace* is concerned with the psychological state of disorientation. This is occurring while in a transitional phase prior to a new connection in life. In this phase there is a sense of fragility and vulnerability; however, the female figure in this painting is also strong as this new connection unfolds in her life. Here she is located in an improbable space yet forges forward unfazed as she makes this transition. In this transient condition, one's unknown destiny lies poised at the threshold between past and future. There is a sense of dislocation of being on edge, unbalanced, yet powerful. The location is physically awkward and mentally confusing. The surroundings are unstable where the figure searches within a precarious territory which could be a dead end, false internal proposition or unlikely destination. The male figure represents the concept of a witness or relationship.

State of Grace
oil on canvas
100 x 110 cm
courtesy the artist



Helen Mueller

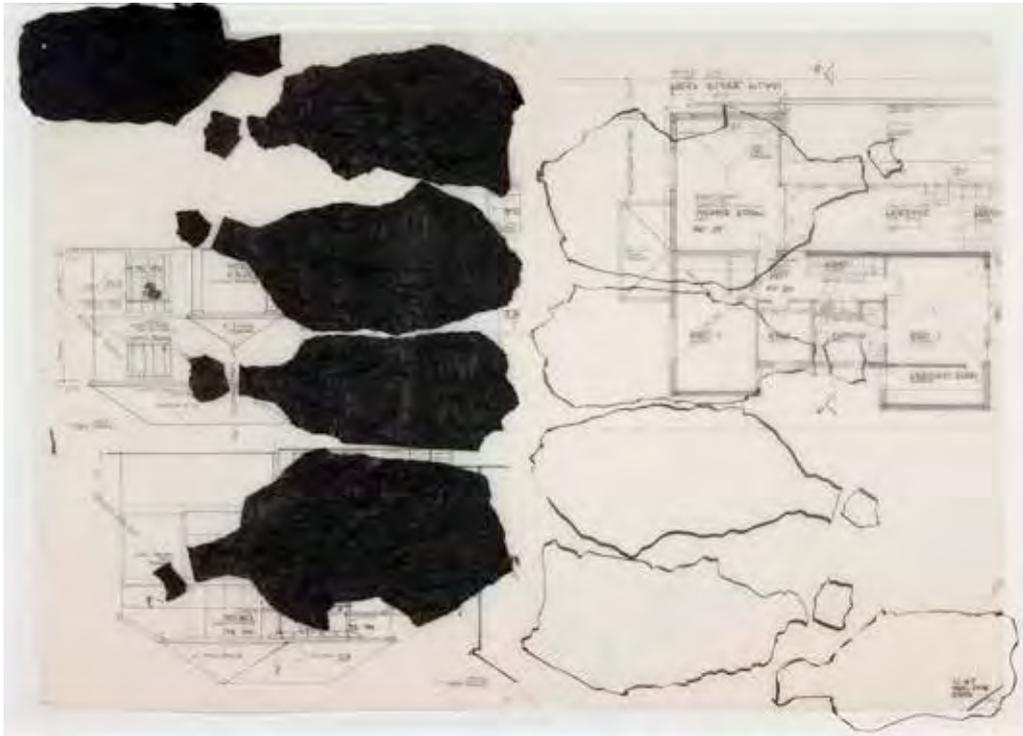


Roots make the literal connection between tree and the soil that sustains it. Roots also make the metaphorical connection between us and place and community – there where we have always been and there where we have ‘put down’ our roots. Without this connection we wither, trees and humans alike. In this work I examine the complexity of this connection.

Roots Studies 1, 2018
15 woodblock prints
32.5 x 33.5cm each
courtesy the artist and MAY SPACE

We dutifully drop into the recycle bin thousands of disposable plastic water bottles and believe that they are going to a new life, never dreaming that they might be dumped into the ocean or landfill to become toxic waste polluting the environment. How far away are new solutions to recycling, or bio-degradable products, or outright banning of plastic? *Section CC* is on recycled tracing paper, my dead filed architectural negatives. These hand-drawn house plans now have a new life.

Section CC, 2017
collage and ink on tracing paper
72 x 100 cm
courtesy the artis





This painting is wilfully declaring that flying saucers are real, and if they are then they must contain beings from other planets. I think the desire for people to want to believe in UFOs and aliens fulfils a deep need for us to not feel so lonely when we look up into the great expanse of the night sky. This might be just a deep seated need for humans to connect with each other. However, I think many of us share the belief that one day we may connect up with friendly beings from beyond planet Earth.

Flying Saucers Are Real
synthetic polymer on board
90 cm diameter
courtesy the artist

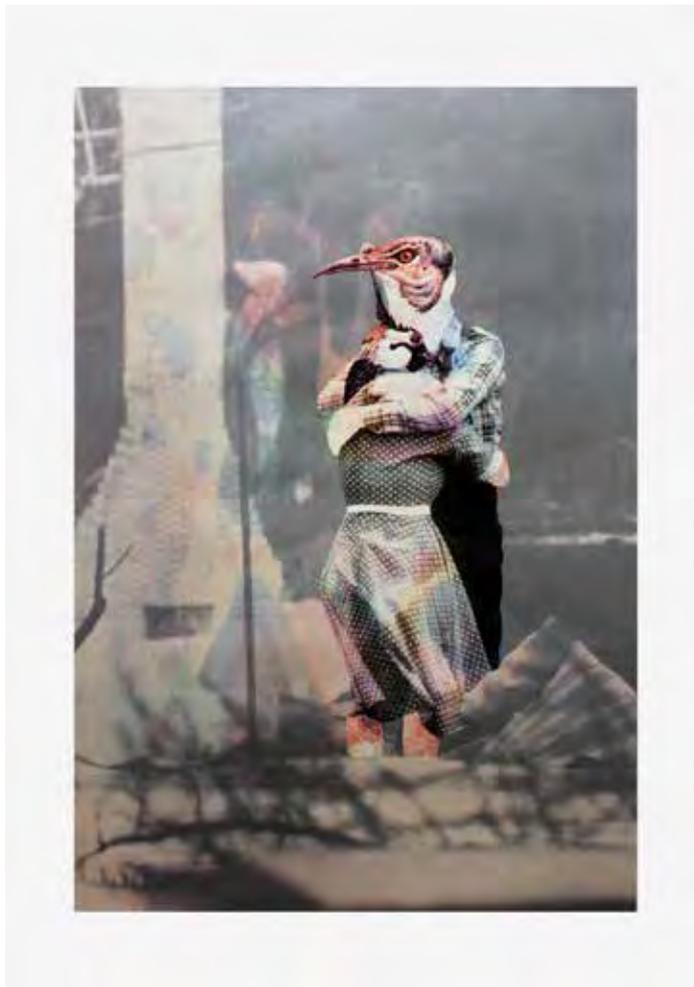
Catherine O'Donnell

My art practice focuses on the urban landscape, representing the commonly overlooked dwellings of suburbia in an abstracted form. Recently, during a residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris, I extended my research into Parisian and London mid-century housing estates. In the mid 1900s, when buildings such as 'Yates Court' were developed, they embraced contemporary aesthetics and were full of promise for a better tomorrow. These structures now stand quietly making connections to the past and the people who called them home, exhibiting the signs and marks of past lives etched into the walls. In this straightforward pencil drawing, I aim to portray both the formal aesthetics of this structure as well as capture a sense of the humanity present in these homes.

Yates Court
pencil on paper
46 x 65 cm
courtesy the artist and MAY SPACE



Janet Parker-Smith



Through the process of collage different worlds become unified. This work explores the mingling of human and non-human, serving as a reminder of how vulnerable we are to the destructive impact of our own actions. This work is an extension of my fascination with humans, their connection with nature, and their boundless capacity for re-invention and rejuvenation. Using the transmutation of humans and animals, morphology and the desolation of our environment, the work explores the human collective, chaotic and sometimes purposeless existence on the universe

The work references nature, history and culture. The strange juxtapositions used hint at the natural world and the concerns with changes we unconsciously make to it that then form future identities. There is multiple layering of fragmented and reconstructed images. Using parts of the natural world there is a duality in the relationships that are constructed.

Damage

six colour screen prints

120 x 80 cm

courtesy the artist

Wendy Sharpe

This painting is from my experience of the Western Front of North France and Belgium WWI. In mid-1915, the village church of Ablain-Saint-Nazaire was reduced to rubble. At the end of the war it was decided to preserve the ruins as a monument.

These ruins are surrounded by little suburban houses, and the fact that it has been left in ruins reminds us of the reality of the war, unlike a rebuilt church or memorial. I found it particularly poignant and moving. It creates a link between the atrocities of WWI and the sufferings of the people. It brings the past into the present.

Ablain-Saint-Nazaire

oil on canvas

100 x 125 cm

courtesy the artist and King Street Gallery on William



Sally Stokes

Connections move us through this human life. My mother used to walk past Grace Cossington Smith's house as a youth – 'The Artist's House' – so the stories of GCS met me before her paintings of jewelled colour and imaginative structures met me in life. She painted the life she led – as I do with my enthrallment of our Australian land; its jewels of colour in its arid centre – the ghost gums, the salt lakes, its diversity of vegetation and fauna. Strange hills, unexpected colours, emotional bonds of joy and awe. As diversity is challenged by our human consumption of this earth, I feel the privilege of these invisible connections – to the land, to contemporary painters and painters from the past; the privilege of time spent – looking, drawing, reflecting, travelling and then returning to the studio to make anew.

I thought the earth remembered me

oil on canvas

153 x 185 cm

courtesy the artist



Janet Tavener



The series titled 'The Last Seed' draws its content from Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, that houses 5,000 species of essential food crops deep within the Arctic permafrost. The vault was supposed to be an impenetrable, modern-day Noah's ark for plants, a life raft against climate change and catastrophe. But a recent flood threatened its security – heavy rain occurred at a time of year when the temperature was usually well below freezing.

The work connects global warming, food production systems and humanity's race to preserve the natural order – with scientists currently building repositories of everything from seeds to mammal milk throughout the world – creating cabinets of curiosity serving to remind us of our own mortality; of our mistakes and failures.

Violette
chromaLuxe on aluminium
91 x 91 cm
courtesy the artist and MAY SPACE

Jane Theau

In transit at Hong Kong airport I passed the time taking photos of people waiting for their connecting flights. Upon returning home, I uploaded the images and realised that of the 20-odd people I had photographed, only one was not looking at a screen. They could have been emailing or catching up on Facebook, working or listening to music, reading the news or watching YouTube. They were making connections.

In Touch represents one of these people using his smart phone, that amazing device that, while revolutionising the way we stay in touch, has minimised our tactile and aural connection with people. We are now more likely to text than visit or talk. This work is made with textiles, that most tactile of media which is always against our skin. The holes in the lace, the absences, are the skin – symbols of the loss of touch in our digital world.

In Touch (Screens 1)
thread and tarlatan
100 x 80 cm
courtesy the artist



Annabelle Wass



33 'GOD' is a painting in a series that looks at the connection between black in fashion, religion, ritual and the unknown. This painting is the first in a series that I am working on for my Master of Fine Art at the National Art School in Darlinghurst. 33 'GOD' was inspired by a recent visit to Hill End, where BFA students and I inhabited the Presbyterian Church to work for three days. I was interested in making a connection between the contemporary artists living in Hill End and the kinds of people that would have inhabited the church when it was erected in the late 1800s.

33 'GOD'
oil on canvas
38 x 31 cm
courtesy the artist

Wildēornes (Old English): a land inhabited only by wild animals.

The 'Wildēornes Land' set of works was made on location in the World Heritage Blue Mountains National Parks. An 1880s mourning shawl, that was once worn by a woman in Europe for mourning the loss of a loved one is placed as a memorial in the iconic Australian landscape and recorded photographically.

These works are a quiet reflection on the inherent loss and uncertainty we face for the natural environment, drawing connections across history and time to speak to the universal human connection to the environment, ecology and landscape.

In *Wildēornes Land #3*, my body and the landscape mirror one another. Wrapped in the shawl, I stand vulnerable and exposed on the edge of a plateau overlooking the Grose Valley, facing down an approaching storm.

“In *Wildēornes Land #3*, something has shifted. Nature is no longer secure. With climate change, the big scary wilderness has lost its power. Welch occupies the same position as Casper David Friedrich's confident wanderer, immaculate in 18th century gentleman suit, surveying the mighty realm. Welch by contrast, in mourning garb, offers herself, naked and sacrificial, to a world on the brink of being lost.” Dr Ann Finegan, *Wildēornes Land* Catalogue essay

Wildēornes Land (triptych) #1 – Capertee Valley, #3 – Grose Valley, #7 – Wollemi
pigment print, face-mounted
80 X 142 cm each
courtesy the artist and MAY SPACE





Looking For Love displays F16 fighter jets caught in flight, reconditioned in illuminated acrobatics casting shadows that rearrange, fold over and push the flight trails to spill on every surface.

Beauty and deadliness are shown in counterpoint, playing off masculine iconography. Connections exist as tension in this tête-à-tête, what is really going on here? The vibrant display and ambiguity reinforces themes that are central to the conceptual elements, involving and engaging the senses drawing the viewer to contemplate their own situation. Participant or spectator? Friend or foe?

Looking for Love

acrylic and metallic paint, screen print on glass

56 x 162 cm

courtesy the artist

This drawing is part of a wider series of work based on ideas contained in the environmental philosophy of 'deep ecology'. In a nutshell, this philosophy regards human life as just one of many equal components of a global ecosystem. Of particular interest to me is ecologist and deep ecology proponent David Abrams' book *Becoming Animal*. This is a treatise on stopping to look, take in and really become connected to the natural world. Abrams challenges us to look up from our devices that keep the living world at a distance and reconnect with the natural world around us. By experiencing ourselves as part of the living earth we may find our role in protecting the planet.

Plateau 6
charcoal on fabriano paper
95 x 150 cm
courtesy the artist



Tian Li Zu



Drawing with knives and scissors lies at the centre of my practice. I have practised this technically primitive method for many years as a means to reconnect with old cultural traditions.

Red drawings connects us and our outer world with our inner world. It penetrates the surface to reveal recurring forms and motifs, including segments and cross-sections of human organs, such as the heart and eyes, the nervous system and blood cells. The cut-outs connect two polarities – presence and absence, life and death, positive and negative. Drawing is phenomenological. It is physical, an act. But it is also conceptual and profoundly psychological.

Red drawings
watercolour hand cut paper
64 x 46 cm each
courtesy the artist



art award



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