



Grace Cossington Smith art award 2021

National art award supporting
contemporary Australian artists



Exhibition of finalists 5 to 26 February 2022

We pay our respects to the Darug people who are the traditional custodians of the land, whose deep connection to culture and customs have cared for this country. We acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging for their spiritual connection to place.

We recognise this land as a meeting place for Darug people and respectfully continue this tradition through the bringing together of our communities through arts and culture.

Cover artwork by Lisa Jones

Gallery photograph copyright Richard Glover

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Selection panel and judges:

Katrina Cashman and Oliver Watts with Mary Faith

45 finalists for the three 2021 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



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

From the Headmistress

I am delighted to welcome you back to Abbotsleigh's Grace Cossington Smith art award.

Like many things in 2020 and 2021, the Covid-19 pandemic delayed this award, but we are thrilled to finally launch the exhibition in February 2022. After such a difficult time for everyone, it is with great pleasure that we celebrate the exhibition of the 2021 finalists in the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery.

This award is a biennial acquisitive prize, launched in 2014, to provide much-needed opportunity for local, national, early-career and established artists to showcase their work. The benefit for Abbotsleigh and community is an inspiring exhibition for visitors and wonderful learning opportunities for education.

Grace Cossington Smith was an Abbotsleigh Old Girl and a local artist with a significant national reputation. Her artworks reveal the vibrant connections she made with her world, and we celebrate her legacy by inviting entrants to make their own connections to their time, people and place.

I would like to thank Katrina Cashman and Dr Oliver Watts who selected the award finalists and judged the 2021 GCS gallery Art Award winners. I am grateful for their expertise and the time and care they have devoted to this process.

Katrina Cashman is the Gallery Manager and Senior Curator at the National Art School Sydney. Formerly Cashman was the Assistant Director/Senior Curator at the Mosman Regional Art Gallery where she was responsible for the curatorial excellence of their Gallery program, public program delivery and audience engagement. She has curated 45 major exhibitions across the gallery and museum sector in Australia and in Indonesia and has extensive networks within the Australian and International art industry.

Dr Oliver Watts is the Senior Curator of Artbank Sydney. He holds an MFA in painting, and a PhD in art history and jurisprudence, from the University of Sydney. Watts was a lecturer at SCA, University of Sydney, between 2011-2017. As a contemporary artist he has been a finalist in many prizes including the Archibald Prize and the Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship. His work is held in the National Museum of Australia, Artbank and the Reserve Bank collections. Watts was a founding member of the Chaser as a cartoonist and illustrator and he is represented by Chalk Horse Gallery and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne.

Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

From the Director

Now in its fifth iteration, the biennial Grace Cossington Smith art award continues its role in supporting the arts and providing a valuable exhibition for artists, the public and Abbotsleigh.

The inspiration for the art award is taken from the works of local artist, and Abbotsleigh ex-student, Grace Cossington Smith (1892-1984). Her colourful, shimmering paintings reflect her response to her modernising world, from her connections to Turramurra, to Sydney, and to the influential modernist ideas she discovered in Europe. Cossington Smith found an energetic, personal approach in which art was the centre of her life.

The 45 finalists in this exhibition show us how they too connect their imagination to the physical world that reflects the time and place that contains them. Over the last two years most artists have spent time in their home or studio in relative solitude and no doubt welcome the opportunity to show their works in a gallery environment rather than virtual space. Visiting the exhibition will provide aesthetic delight and enjoyable sociability, and as art viewers we look forward to experiencing the vitality that artists have imbued their work and to consider these thoughtful words of Charlotte Wood:

Art urges us to imagine and inhabit lives other than our own, to be more thoughtful, to feel more deeply, to challenge what we think we already knew.

Charlotte Wood, *The Luminous Solution*

Entries were received from a highly competitive field of more than 425 Australia-wide artists. Finalists were selected by judges Katrina Cashman and Oliver Watts and we thank them for their time, collegiality and generosity in their contributions to the award.

We are keenly aware of the arts and their contribution to our wellbeing. We are grateful to all the artists who submitted entries for the 2021 award and congratulate them for their strong connections to their art. FujiFilm continues to support the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery through printing the catalogue and publications material, and for this we express our heartfelt appreciation.

Mary Faith

Director, Grace Cossington Smith Gallery

Grace Cossington Smith art award 2021 Finalists

Louise Allerton	NSW	Nadia Hernández	NSW
Kim Anderson	VIC	Nicole Kelly	NSW
Susan Andrews	NSW	Martin King	VIC
Suzanne Archer	NSW	Belem Lett	NSW
Dhinawan Baker	NSW	Steve Lopes	NSW
Ed Bartok	NSW	Tom Loveday	NSW
Deborah Beck	NSW	Paula Mahoney	VIC
Max Berry	NSW	Lisa McKimmie	NSW
Lee Bethel	NSW	Bridgette McNab	VIC
Amber Boardman	NSW	Anh Nguyen	NSW
Kevin Chin	VIC	Amanda Penrose Hart	NSW
David Collins	NSW	Katya Petetskaya	NSW
Yvette Coppersmith	VIC	Julien Playoust	NSW
Jedda-Daisy Culley	NSW	Rhonda Pryor	NSW
Adrienne Doig	NSW	Cate Riley	NSW
Chris Dolman	NSW	Peter Sharp	NSW
Nikki Easterbrook	NSW	Wendy Sharpe	NSW
Sarah Edmondson	NSW	Sally Stokes	NSW
David Fairbairn	NSW	Elefteria Vlavianos	NSW
Emily Galicek	NSW	Barbara Weir	NT
Sophia Lee Georgas	NSW	Agus Wijaya	NSW
Liron Gilmore	NSW	Alice Wormald	VIC
Eliza Gosse	NSW		

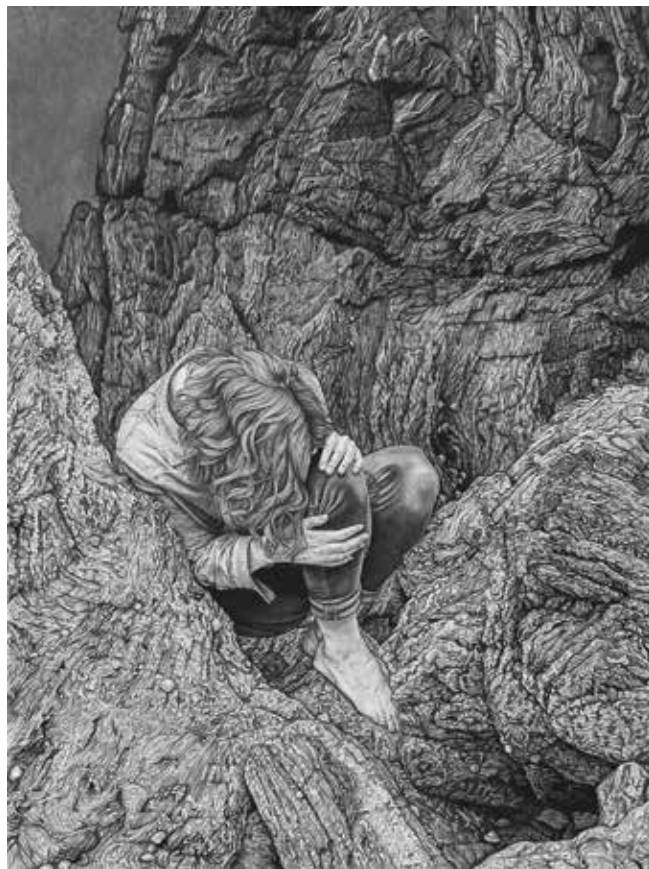
Louise Allerton

This anaglyphic diptych uses modern technologies to produce a stereoscopic or 3D photo media work similar to the 19 century stereographic prints. The subject is my colleague and friend Lise, a dedicated Sydney art teacher and artist whose father emigrated from Norway becoming an Australian citizen in the 1960s. I have placed Lise inside the frame as a way of 'virtually' connecting her to her heritage while playfully using her grandfather's vintage stereoscope to view his original photographs of the Norwegian landscape. The work operates on multiple levels of connectivity including the link between an early populist device and contemporary software technologies which both produce a 3D experience. Lise performs connection as she peers through the stereograph and imagines herself back in the Norwegian fjord country. The dimensionality of this work comes to life with the application of magenta/cyan glasses.

Stepping Out, 2021
anaglyph on Hahnemühle
55 x 105 cm diptych
Courtesy the artist



Kim Anderson



Through intricately detailed drawing I explore our complicated relationship with the natural world. Interwoven with this are themes of ecological grief, interdependence, and accountability. *Down Amongst the Bones* is based on a series of photographs I took of myself immersed in challenging, isolated, yet wildly beautiful locations. Witnessed only by a remote-controlled camera, I undertook a private moving meditation that ranged from awe to anxiety, and melancholy to solace. As I lay my face against rocks, wedged my body into impossible spaces and sought shelter and comfort from hard stone surfaces, I felt a deep connection with the earth and imagined I was within reach of an arcane knowledge that transcends our usual interactions with the landscape. At the mercy of the elements, I felt vulnerable, humbled and insignificant in the face of nature's vastness and resilience, yet also a deep and uneasy love for this extraordinary planet we inhabit.

Down Amongst the Bones, 2020
ink, charcoal and pastel on paper
76 x 56 cm

Courtesy the artist and Flinders Lane Gallery, Melbourne
and May Space Online

Red Zone and Blue Zone explore the painted object, its frame and support as a geometric device via a system of multiple painted frames/ edges and boundary lines. The work offers various viewpoints; inside, outside, and the space in between. The gaze is fixed, or held in, within the edges of the painting, questioning our understanding and perceptual awareness of private and social space; recent geographic zones have denoted areas of restriction and social control while others have referred to spaces of freedom.

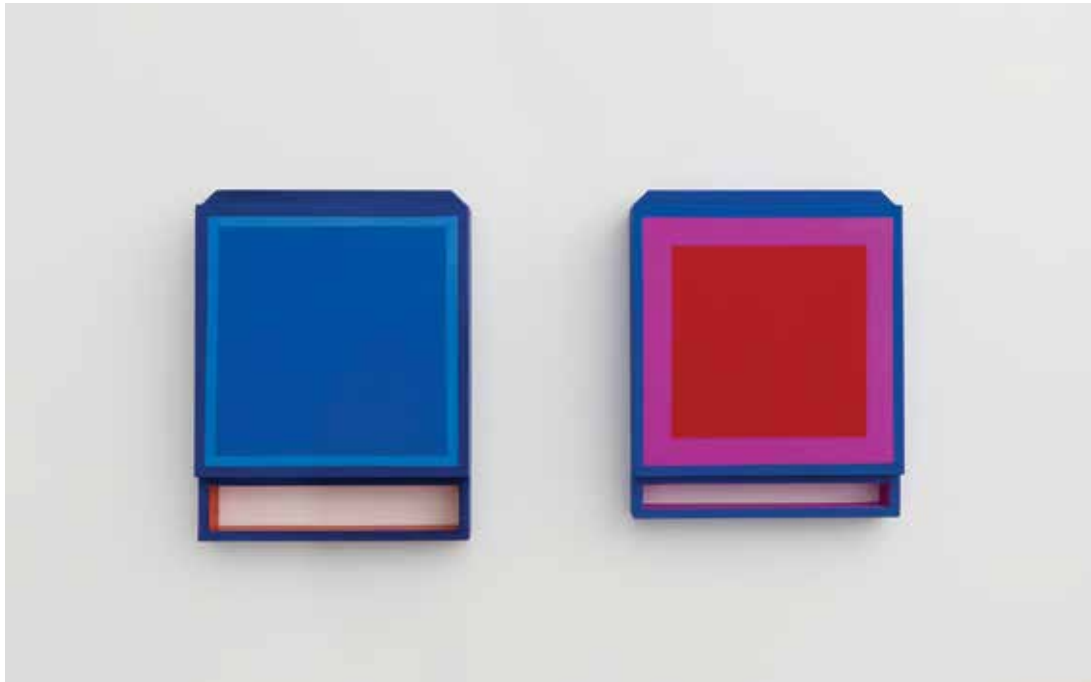
In Western art history, there are multiple references to a painting being a window or door onto the world. Questioning this conventional interpretation, *Red Zone and Blue Zone* offer a visual counterpoint and seek to pose spatial and phenomenological readings that contradict our visual comprehension of the space we inhabit, both private and public.

Blue Zone and Red Zone, 2021

acrylic and oil on wood

40 x 78 cm (diptych)

Courtesy the artist



Suzanne Archer



For 33 years I have lived and had my studio in the rugged landscape of Wedderburn, NSW. Living in such proximity to nature keeps me connected to the patterns of climate and its effect on the plant life that surrounds me. At various times in the year, it suffers from the onslaught of the various weather patterns when sometimes the land is parched, and other times flooded. It has always amazed me how the Australian bush recovers after fire, rain or drought. How beautiful and magical it is after a dry period when the rain comes and it flourishes and stands tall and majestic again. My painting *Embers-Fireland* is one of a series of works where I once again revisit the subject of my beloved landscape. It reflects the dried branchlets criss-crossing, forming the familiar patterning that I see from my studio through the changing seasons. This time with a background of sparks of colour referencing stories of hot summer bushfire.

Embers-Fireland, 2021

oil on canvas

153 x 153 cm

Courtesy the artist and Nicholas Thompson Gallery

Dhinawan Baker

I am a proud descendant of the Gamillaroi Bigambul tribe. A theme close to my heart is water and its importance. I make connections with the world around me through the story of how a molecule of water from rain goes on a journey through the artesian basin, coming together and reappearing as the springs that feed the waterfalls and rivers in my Country in northern NSW. My art is a way to express my connection to the life-giving water and to the environment.

Cycle Whirlpools, 2021

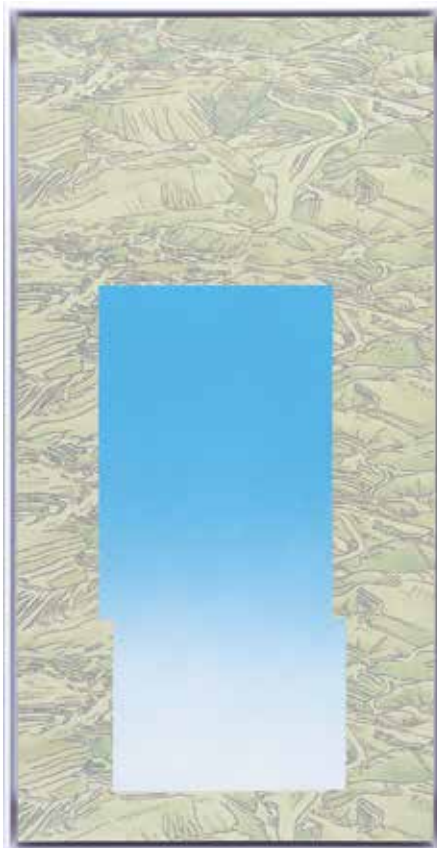
acrylic on canvas

124 x 99 cm

Courtesy the artist and Kate Owen Gallery



Ed Bartok



With this work I went minimal. I wanted the work to be about the space around and above the subject, which is an open mine. It's a loaded subject, one that provokes very distinct reactions in people depending on what side of the room you stand. All those feelings within the viewer pour in and populate the work. As with any artwork, the subject is the viewer.

Sky / Mine, 2021
acrylic on wood panel
80 x 40 cm
Courtesy the artist

Deborah Beck

This painting makes connections with the past and the 18th and 19th century obsession of European artists with 'Chinoiserie', an art form strongly influenced by Chinese and Asian art. Whenever I visit a public gallery, I am drawn to early paintings depicting subjects in elaborate clothes and interiors with wallpaper, drapes and Persian carpets. One work I have visited many times in the Art Gallery of NSW is *Esther* (c1869) by Jean-Francois Portaels, a Belgian artist with an abiding interest in Orientalism. As a way of paying tribute to artists like Portaels, I have recently been painting fragments of curtains and drapes, often found in historic houses in Sydney. Although painted from a more recent fabric, my painting *Chinoiserie* references works painted in the 19th century, when Orientalism was a popular movement, and makes a connection for me with the astoundingly skilled artists of the past.

Chinoiserie, 2021
oil on canvas
45.5 x 45.5 cm
Courtesy the artist



Max Berry



The stone is rough, the sun is warm and the shadow cool.
Even in such tiny events you can sense the wonder of a much
larger universe.

Landscape Effect, 2020

oil on canvas

80 x 122 cm

Courtesy the artist and China Heights, Surry Hills

In this work the grid is deployed to deliver both physical and abstract space. The simple bands draw you into the work, the centripetal behaviour of a grid making you look closely at what is contained in the structure. Light moves through the work creating shifting tones and the bands perform their task of holding and reflecting light, the grid is a lens through which we might track the surface, its centrifugal action creating connections with the world. The grid connects you to the centre and to the extremities.

The grid implies relations where no operational or formal relations may necessarily exist, yet it could connect you to the quiet contemplation experienced when walking in a grid of streets. In *Forever is composed of Nows* I wanted stillness, quiet and light and openness, the perception of infinite connection.

Forever is composed of Nows, 2020

oil and encaustic on tracing paper on board

75 x 77 cm

Courtesy the artist and The Egg and Dart, Thirroul



Amber Boardman



A crowd of spectators in a stadium smooshes together in their attempt to catch greatness – a home run ball hit out of the park by an unseen athlete. As everyday life is increasingly mediated by the internet, reverence for physicality, for touch, for the energy of an exuberant crowd feels important.

Greatness Souvenir, 2020

oil on canvas

183 x 183 cm

Courtesy the artist and Chalk Horse, Darlington

Kevin Chin

My paintings connect distant lands and cross-cultural references, to question how we find our place in the world. Having migrated from one colonised country to another, I aim to reframe landscape conventions, to interrogate how land rights and belonging are constantly contested. *Another Rung* represents the land as something that we build, that we constantly have to renegotiate. I portray people of colour, who are sorely lacking from the Australian art history canon. Migrant workers have suffered much negative press during the pandemic, and here I instead highlight their role in the building of the nation. Just as many Australians have roots elsewhere, the landscape depicted also takes multiple origins, and melds together in a state of flux. In this way, it's a representation of hybrid cultural identities at a time when the rest of the world feels so distant – reasserting the importance of constantly making connections.

Another Rung, 2019

oil on Italian linen

138 x 199 cm

Courtesy the artist and Martin Browne Contemporary,
Sydney and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne



David Collins



Back burn

Hot burn

Charred land

Rain

Regeneration

Inspiration

Colour and form

Hot Burn, 2021

122 X 200 cm (diptych)

oil on Canvas

Courtesy the artist and Defiance Gallery, Paddington

Yvette Coppersmith

Hand-made objects often appear in the composition of my still life paintings as a way of connecting to ideas and relationships beyond the picture plane. This broadens the idea of a static object into one of friendship and exchange. Sanné Mestrom is a New South Wales-based artist whose *Soft Kiss* maquette, 2011, has been on long-term loan from the artist. Mestrom's sculpture practice has a modernist sensibility and a stylised tenderness in the pairing of the kiss between the two heads. One of the pair is pictured here with a vase of red roses, the blooms nestled beside the head, suggesting anthropomorphic aspects of intimacy between objects and a longing for connection that could be as much a meditation on connection to self as to another.

Soft Kiss Maquette with roses (Sanné Mestrom sculpture), 2020
oil on linen
77 x 61.5 cm
Courtesy the artist and Sullivan + Strumpf



Jedda-Daisy Culley



Parallel parallel is a self-portrait that forges a series of internal connections within the artist herself. Drawing on a profound personal experience, Culley revisits an acute moment of fear where she felt her spiritual self separate from her physical body. The painting sees her spirit erupt in neon lime green and materialise into a face with piercing bright pink eyes, a formless limp adrift from her headless physical presence represented in black and white. The removal of the head and eradication of colour symbolise the basic human desire and need to survive. In contrast, the vibrant head seems to be floating away an esoteric current. Exploring integration and separation, the artist proposes a figure constantly in flux, one always shifting between connection and disconnection. Here, Culley asks if it is this inner discord of networks, between two fundamental human aspects – the spiritual and the physical – is what we have come to call human nature.

Parallel parallel, 2021

enamel on board

170 x 120 cm

Courtesy the artist and Jerico Contemporary, Woolloomooloo

Adrienne Doig

In a pose reminiscent of Grace Cossington Smith's *The Sock Knitter*, I surround myself in the domesticity of a vintage needlepoint, alongside a mother imparting skill to her daughter. Seated in a favourite chair, I am shown in the process of making work, creating a double self-portrait. The scene is ornamented with the tools of my art making: scissors, needle and thread, as well as works by other artists, furthering the connections between myself, other artists and the activity of art making. Repurposing the discarded craft projects of other makers, this somewhat quaint tableau draws on the history of women's art making. It is a conversation with the past; an interpretation of the creative process. In changing the scene, I seek to bring new interpretations to it and make connections with often overlooked creative work.

Picture Me, Scene 2, 2020

embroidery, applique and paint

66.5 x 96 cm

Courtesy the artist and Martin Browne Contemporary, Paddington





Dry Times takes an irreverent swipe at the Western canon of art. Like most of my recent work, the painting looks to self-portraiture through the lens of caricature; playing on visual and verbal puns and one liner 'dad' jokes to talk about themes of pathos, loss, and failure, and to set up a parody of masculinity, while interrogating the role of the artist in the 21st century. The title and the theme of the work make connections between the current climate emergencies and a somewhat less important, though no less real catastrophe: an artist, presented here as a lonesome sausage in a desolate landscape, with no new ideas or inspiration, no cool water from the well. Dry times indeed.

Dry Times, 2020

oil and pencil on cotton

172 x 137 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie pompom, Chippendale

Nikki Easterbrook

This work aims to evoke a philosophical enquiry into the concept of place, time and memory to explore nostalgia and diaspora. The photograph exists as a connection between the photographic subject, camera and me. While the passage of time alters memory, the photograph remains unchanged. The memory and the photograph were created in the same place, but they exist differently in time.

There's No Truth in Memory, 2021

archival pigment ink photograph on cotton rag paper, edition 1/3

100 x 150 cm

Courtesy the artist



Sarah Edmondson



My mother created many needlepoint tapestries during my lifetime but I did not start stitching until after she died. I feel like I am connecting with her through my art practice, while at the same time I am connecting with the present, with the use of abstract aesthetics of the computer glitch. The contrasting quality of hand-dyed natural and synthetic fibres and imperfection of hand stitching overrides the manufactured aspect. The chance 'blank' areas allow the eye to rest in the calm amongst the intervening chaos. Our reliance on the internet to make connections is paramount, especially during lockdown, losing these connections through glitches and data loss is prevalent. This corrupted digital imagery is a phenomenon of this time not being seen before the age of the internet and as technology evolves hopefully it will not be present in the future.

Technical Difficulties, 2020

wool, reflective fabric and faux fur on canvas

105 x 102 cm

Courtesy the artist

David Fairbairn

With the advent of COVID-19 I was unable to work with my regular sitters. Fortunately for me my partner, the artist Suzanne Archer, offered to sit for me in regular two-hour sessions.

Initially I worked on individual portraits of Suzanne (Intimacy_S.A. No's 1-12, 2020) which then led to a new series of double portraits in which I included myself. It was an interesting challenge in that I had to construct the drawings and paintings of myself at a separate time mostly with the use of mirrors and photo documentation to locate the relationship between us. One of the advantages of working with someone you are living with is that you can ask them to assume more personal poses, which came about from mutual discussion and often much hilarity! The resulting series *Double Lives* reflects a long and sustained personal and artistic relationship extending back more than three decades.

Double Lives D.F.& S.A. No 3 (Self Portrait with artist Suzanne Archer), 2021
acrylic gouache and marble dust on birchwood panel
172 x 158 cm
Courtesy the artist



Emily Galicek



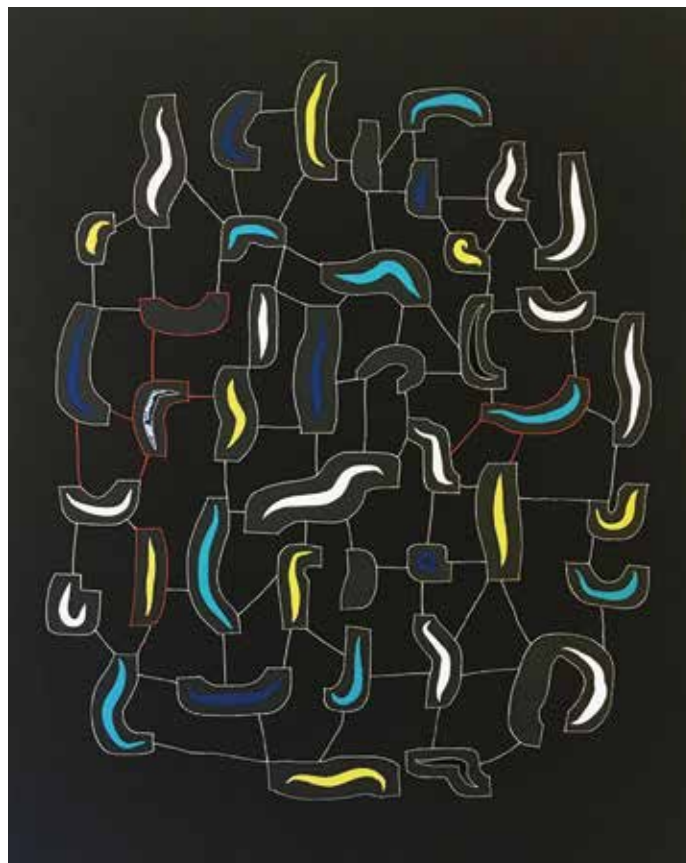
This painting is made from found imagery of antique and vintage textiles and wallpapers, all sourced through extensive internet searching. These images from disparate times and places are connected and pieced together – sometimes easily, sometimes with force – in the composition, first in Adobe Photoshop, then in the physical painting. The result is the building of strong visual connections between the images. The painting charts a movement from handmade object to image on the internet, to digital composition and back to physical painting. I am fascinated by what is lost and gained in this kind of movement; the imperfect act of translation from screen to painting, and the connections that are forged in this process.

Rose Wreath, 2021
acrylic on canvas
76 x 62 cm
Courtesy the artist

Architecture can emulate dreams and aspirations as they act as sublime sculptures or monuments embodying an extraordinary power in their grand scales and structures with mystical and paradisiacal connotations. As a visual artist, I am utilising the structural elements of architecture with aesthetically overwhelming divine power to lead my search for utopia, epitomised in art and architecture. I am concerned with how utopian depictions and spiritual architecture can question the depth of reality, the unworldly relationship in transcendent artworks and religious monuments, the representation and flattening of the third dimension in painting, and the blurring between the imagery of dreams and everyday life. My artworks are inspired by the geometry, forms, fragmentation, collage, transparency and transcendence in the architectural sites and attempt to make a connection between architecture with spiritual and sacred significance and my pursuit of utopia in art.

Isolation, 2019
oil on canvas
101.5 x 76.1 cm
Courtesy the artist





A coven of leaves commune under the glow of moonlight in this textile piece. These fallen leaves with their glyph-like appearance – nature-made marks – are arranged into an alphabet in an attempt to decipher some ancient script. Is there a secret message from nature to be decoded?

The matte texture of the canvas – the night sky – becomes the backdrop for the leaves, interconnected by thread, a network of veins. The materials of soft felt and shiny vinyl speak to the textural variations found in leaves, some wet and shiny, others dry and cracked. *Leaves at Night* investigates the way in which nature invites our observation, speaking to us through symbol and metaphor. By contemplating a leaf, Nature imparts its wisdom, the realisation that we are part of a larger system interconnected by an ongoing exchange, deepening our sense of connection and belonging.

Leaves At Night, 2020

textiles

117.5 x 92 cm

Courtesy the artist

Eliza Gosse

The smell of burnt toast on a Sunday.
Leather seats ready for an adventure.
The hedges pristine.
A time forgotten, the house now gone.

Someone owned this very pink house but now it is gone, 2021
oil on canvas
122 x 152 cm
Courtesy the artist and Edwina Corlette, Brisbane



Nadia Hernández



Green papaya sweet is a traditional Venezuelan dish.

The recipe was gifted to me by my mother.

On the hunt for poetry, whatever that is as material...

I decided that my mom's recipes were very beautiful

a list of ingredients

that called for X amount of this or that...got me stuck on the "of"

"of" exactly what are we made of?

"of green papaya sweet" – that is what we are made of...

In the methodology of a recipe, there is poetry that speaks to the relationships held by those caught between the exchange. Giving someone a recipe is a sacred act; you are teaching a person how to make something which will nourish them. Nourishment is sustenance that is delicious and loving. In diaspora, recipes allow me and my family to retain an aspect of our *cotidianidad* (everydayness). We may be geographically apart, but our spiritual connection remains intact.

Dulce de lechoza verde (procedimiento)/Green papaya sweet (procedure), 2021

cotton, linen, and corduroy on linen textile

145 x 100 cm

Courtesy the artist and STATION

Silver moon rising is a painting of my friend Sophie Hutchings, Australian composer and pianist. The layered and intersecting imagery incorporates symbols, landscape and figurative elements to create a blurred visual experience and explore the rupture between internal and external realities. The painting attempts to poetically draw together Sophie's struggle with insomnia, her connection to the night sky and how this shapes her music. An image of Sophie at her piano overlaps and intersects with the night landscape. The nondescript and partially transparent figure reflects on the repository of history and memory, etched into and shaping our shared present. Within the seductive use of colour and application of paint, I want to invite viewers to stand in overlapping times and spaces to see beneath a surface image, beneath a surface or single layer.

Silver moon rising, 2021

oil on polyester

167.5 x 198 cm

Courtesy the artist and Arthouse Gallery, Sydney
and This Is No Fantasy, Melbourne



Martin King



Hoodwinks and Lyres, the moment is about the interaction and interrelationship between humans and animals, existing for centuries within the practice of falconry. The works act as metaphors of the desire for a co-operation with nature. Falconry is a way of humanity harnessing wild nature. It is not domestication or taming. It is a way of working with nature that pays respect to both species, human and beast. It might be considered kind or cruel. Arguably it is for the benefit of both species. The work also touches upon the anthropomorphic tendencies that dwell in the human psyche. The raptors are compositionally equivalent to 'the bust' in classical portraiture. It's conceivable to attribute human qualities to these 'raptor portraits'. They could appear disdainful, aloof, stoic, even contemplative. Anthropomorphism assists us in relating to the natural world, aids our comprehension and assimilation of the natural world order to a human order.

Hoodwinks and Lyres, the moment, 2019
graphite and watercolour on drafting film and paper
110 x 130 cm
Courtesy the artist and Australian Galleries, Melbourne
and King Street Gallery on William, Sydney

Belem Lett

Lett's work plays with light and colour as inseparably the same. The act of painting is considered through the history of gestural abstraction. Reduced to a surface and paint applied with a colour loaded brush. There is an implicit physical momentum involved in Lett's work; the push/pull, twists, the drag of the brush, the drip, the stop and start. Individual works explore the surface and traditional constraints of the painting through, at times, bouncing off its edges and returning inwards to explore the interior space of the painting. Others zoom off the edge in a manner which implies a broader, limitless world. These spatial explorations speak to a connected world of which we are only glimpsing cropped sections.

Wave Racer, 2021

oil on aluminium composite panel

110 x 90 cm

Courtesy the artist and Edwina Corlette Gallery



Steve Lopez



The work deals with the connection between the figures and their surrounding environment. The interplay between emotional, physical structures and the healing powers of Nature is at the core of this painting. Are the bare feet figures moving through the land, or are they in a processional ritual celebration?

Atoning Figures, 2021

oil on canvas

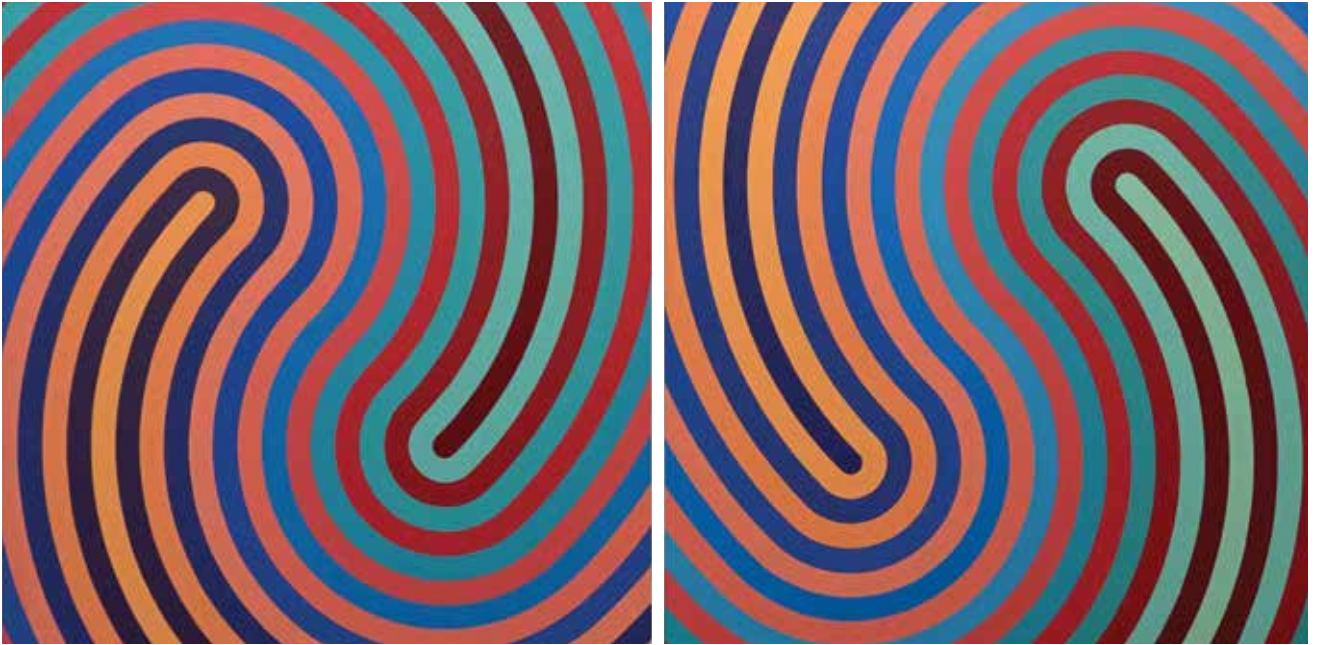
108 x 123 cm

Courtesy the artist and Stella Downer Fine Art

Tom Loveday

Over the Edge is the latest in a series of exhibitions of 'Edge' paintings. The series consists of *The Edge of the World*, *The Erotic Edge*, *The Edge of Reality* and *Over the Edge*. Produced over a period of eight years, each exhibition in the series experiments with ideas about colour, geometry and space using a range of techniques drawn from 1960s Op Art.

Over the Edge 1, 2020
acrylic on canvas (diptych)
107 x 107 cm each
Courtesy the artist and Kronenberg Mais Wright



Paula Mahoney



A place to catalogue my mother No.4 explores the loss of the artist's mother, who died 38 years ago and remains faceless in the artist's memory. From the series *Dis/Appear II* Mahoney uses her niece, dressed in her mothers' clothes, to perform both a lament and a metaphysical search for the artist's mother's face. In this work, the desert acts both as a metaphor for death and as a place of comfort and refuge.

This work represents an ongoing examination of death and personal loss. Mahoney investigates lamentation, as a necessary and optimistic viewpoint, suggesting psychological shifts that create an awareness of our limits, and connect us, to each other and to a greater whole.

A place to catalogue my mother No.4, 2019

pigment print

120 x 180 cm

Courtesy the artist

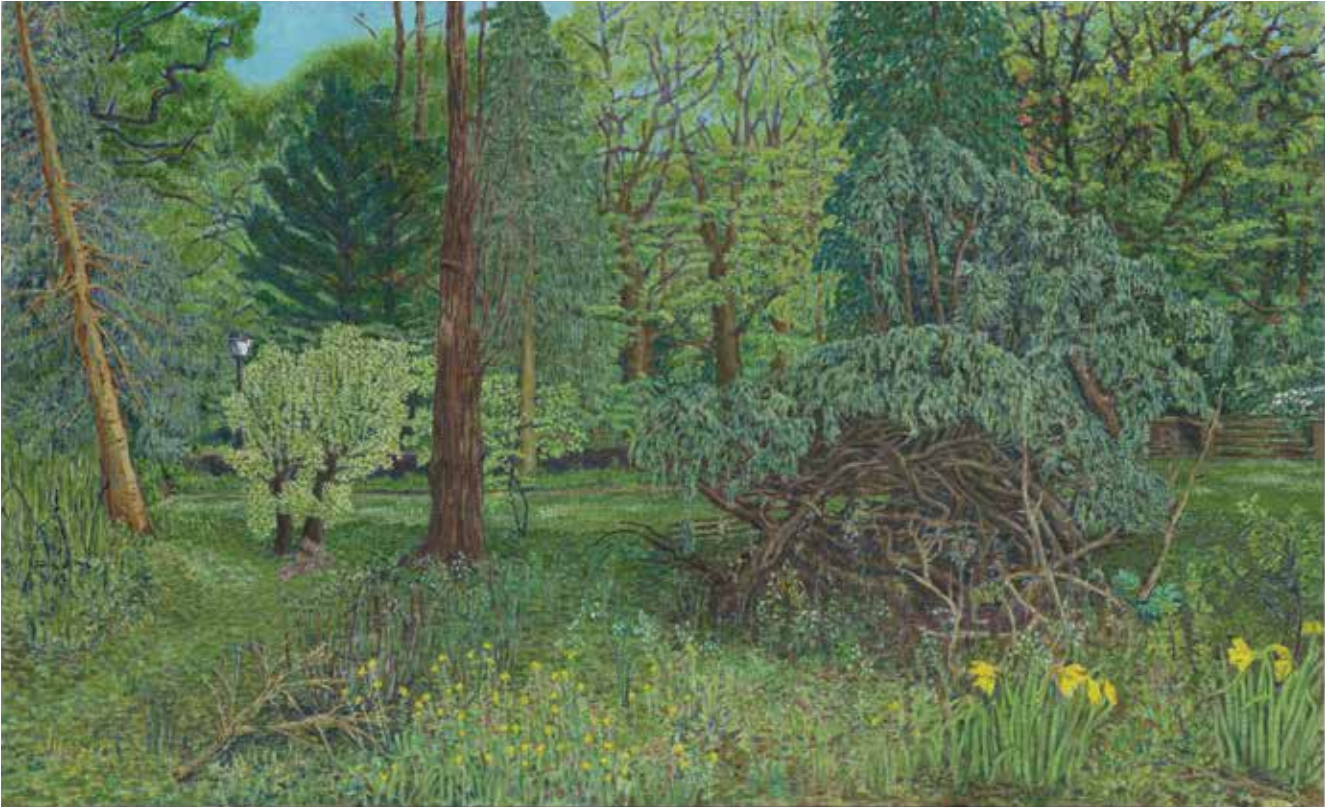
In the Dutch summer of 2019, I began sharing a small studio on the edge of The Hague. The studio became a safe haven where I worked through the 2020 lockdown. Repetition of the same landscape over the seasons was absorbing and inspiring. It became a yearlong meditation. Sometimes I would receive feedback from passers-by. “I see the influence of Dutch painters yet something is not Dutch. Is that Australian?”. This led me to dwell on Dutch-Australian connections and the early European landscape painters in Australia and how they translated their experience of the antipodes. I mused on the persistence of landscape in the mind of a painter. It is often said a culture cannot really be understood unless you become fluent in the language. Perhaps painting is a language through which we understand a landscape and those who dwell there.

*An Early Summer – The Persistence of the Australian Landscape
in the Mind of a Painter, 2020*

oil on linen

84 x 137 cm

Courtesy the artist



Bridgette McNab



Created during a period of lockdown and isolation when our way of life has been upended. Our connection to the world and human interaction has been replaced by digital pixels and voyeuristic interactions, where being seen is being connected. Distanced from reality, the pandemic has amplified the hyperreality world in which we live. We are always watching others or being watched and watching is rarely neutral but involves judgements on behaviour, taste and responsibility. Under these conditions, our homes have been transformed into a place of surveillance and performance, where the virtual world begins to compete with the physical world for time, resources and attention.

Outside In, 2021
oil on polycotton
43 x 58 cm
Courtesy the artist

Anh Nguyen

My paintings are a response to the visual excitement found in life; my motifs revolve around daily rhythms, human activity and small moments. I am interested in finding that space between observational painting and something more abstract away from the motif, memory and invention, and exploring colour relationships and shapes to describe the effects of light. My painting *North Beach et deux enfants* is after Bonnard's *Paysage du Midi* so named with the two children, though it actually has three if you look closely (one is hiding in the shade of the tree). North Beach is our local spot, though I'm uncertain why the children like it so much.

North Beach et deux enfants, 2021
oil on Belgian linen
23 x 31 cm
Courtesy the artist



Amanda Penrose Hart



I am trying to understand my area better. After 15 years of painting in the Central West I'm grappling with some of the atrocities that occurred in my immediate area. I have a 60 acre property which was once home to the Wiradjuri people. My property in Sofala, I have learnt recently, was an Aboriginal birthing area for women. My painting is called whiteness of clouds – to contrast White dream with Black dreamtime.

I paint full time at my studio in the bush and think about the people who were here before me.

Pin the sky to the sea, 2021

oil on canvas

122 x 153 cm

Courtesy the artist and King Street Gallery on William

Katya Petetskaya

I explore connections between alternative forms of existence and visionary new worlds in response to the accelerating change of our organic environment. My paintings feature whimsical, surreal landscapes which flicker between representation and abstracted obscurity. They make connections between the solastalgic present and re-imagined alternate worlds.

Light Age, 2020
oil on synthetic paper
92 x 81 cm
Courtesy the artist



Julien Playoust



The labour of living is ongoing: I'm reading Tara June Winch's book *The Yield* in which the narrator defines 'Yield' according to Gondiwindi language of the Murrumbidgee as follows: "yield, bend the feet, tread, as in walking, also, long, tall – *baayanha* – 'yield' itself is a funny word – yield in English is the reaping, the things that man can take from the land, the thing he's waited for and gets to claim. A wheat yield. In my language it's the thing you give to, the movement, the space between things. It's also the action made by Baiame because sorrow, old age and pain bend and yield. The bodies of the ones that had passed were buried with every joint bent, even if the bones had not broken. I think it was a bend in humiliation just like we bend our knees and bow our heads. Bend, yield – *baayanha*." (Winch, Penguin Books, 2019, p. 25).

As I sit with my ageing parents, where a meal has become the labour of eating, a relinquishing to sustenance, I can think of no better description of our elders and ageing than Winch's 'yield', told by the old people of our ancient land.

Yield another meal, the space between ambivalence and sustenance, 2021
oil on cardboard
60 x 42 cm
Courtesy the artist

Rhonda Pryor

A memory represents place, time and human presence, and the connections between all three. The photograph in this work is a view from a site that, for many reasons, holds an almost mythical sacredness for our family. The old floorboards speak to the absent shack that once stood there. The silk and beads directly reference the traces of human presence that lived, breathed and died within its walls, particularly the robust but exotic feminine power that still lingers at this site and in our memories.

Myths and Legends 1, 2021

pinhole photograph digitally printed onto silk georgette, stretcher, reclaimed floorboards, indigo-dyed silk georgette, Tasmanian oak frame, vintage beads

84 x 142 cm

Courtesy the artist



Cate Riley



In my current art practice, I am investigating the connections audiences make with representations of normal places, when such representations are filtered through digital media. By depicting familiar visual experiences, such as scenes of suburban streets, houses and gardens, audiences can connect with the subject matter. However, through the two-step filtering process they have become real and yet, unreal. Audiences can connect with the subject matter as something strangely familiar yet removed in these representations. Working *en plein air*, scenes are painted from direct observation into a digital media platform (iPad painting). These virtual representations are then worked up in the studio; from the real to digital – unreal – and back to real again, in the form of oil paintings. Subsequently, the familiar is rendered strange by the process, and strange becomes the new normal.

Suburban streets, houses and gardens (triptych), 2021
oil on canvas
21.8 x 27 cm (two works); 22 x 22 cm (1 work)
Courtesy the artist

Peter Sharp

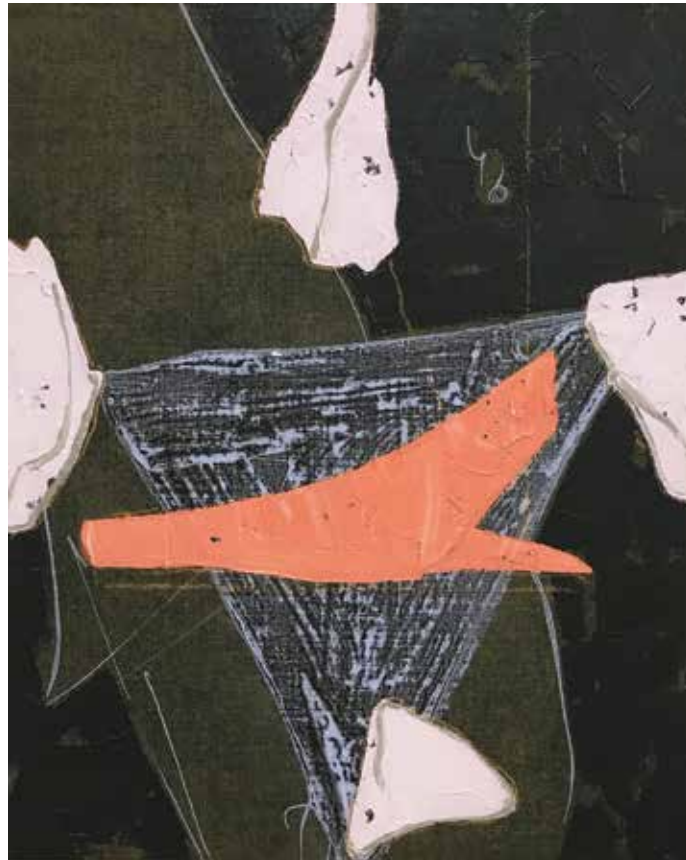
This painting is made from drawings that are constructed in the landscape. The painting may appear abstract, but there is a direct connection to natural forms and systems that we see. The painting is an evocation of the Australian landscape that is endeavouring to make new visual connections about country for the viewer.

Log, 2020

oil and acrylic on linen

75 x 60 cm

Courtesy the artist and Liverpool Street Gallery, Sydney
and Nicholas Thompson Gallery, Melbourne



Wendy Sharpe



This painting, *The Wheel of Fortune*, simultaneously connects past and future, the invisible and tangible, the real and the imagined. In medieval and ancient philosophy, the wheel of fortune, is a symbol of the fickle nature of Fate. The wheel is spun at random, changing the positions of those on the wheel: for some misfortune, for others great luck. As an artist, you must be able to enter your own labyrinth of infinite possibilities and intuition, yet never fully lose hold of the string that connects you back to 'real life'.

Ideas appear to come 'out of thin air' but they are the result and reward from years of work and connecting concepts in different ways, memory, play and experimentation. It is impossible to create something new without daring to explore unfamiliar territory and taking risks. It is a difficult dichotomy

Wheel of Fortune, 2020

oil on linen

125 x 125 cm

Courtesy the artist and King Street Gallery on William

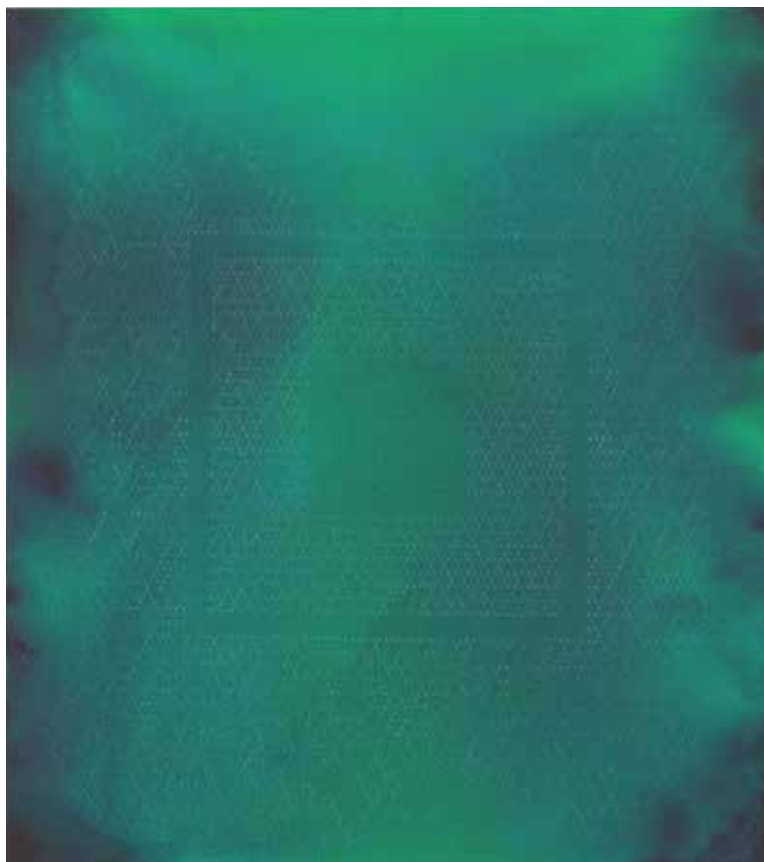
Sally Stokes

Painting for me is about connecting to the place I am in – in this case, the high country – with its amazing rocky granite outcrops – the feeling of space and the freedom it gives to sit silently as I observe more and more of the movements of light and spirit. It's a connection to joy – of being in nature; the feeling of this short journey of life. And it is the connection to an empathetic viewer who sees the joy, colour and life force and sees the world differently after emerging from the work.

I start the day, 2021
oil on linen
183 x 183 cm
Courtesy the artist



Elefteria Vlavianos



I am an abstract painter whose visual practice has developed through an ongoing investigation into the processes of abstraction, its vocabulary and conventions as a visual connector of a displaced cultural aesthetic. My paintings draw on my multi-cultural Armenian and Greek heritage. Imagery in my paintings such as *Renewal #3* are derived from my research into 13th century Armenian manuscript paintings and the tradition of Armenian textile crafts. Continued themes within my paintings are time, presence and absence as they tie into a dialogue between representation and cultural memory. In this framework, issues such as colour, structure and mark-making are key concerns as they connect and make connections across cultures, histories and idioms in painting in a contemporary cultural context such as Australia.

Renewal #3, 2021

acrylic on canvas

157 x 134 cm

Courtesy the artist and M Contemporary

Barbara Weir

This painting refers to the native grass that is part of the bush tucker found in the Utopia region, which is located approximately 230 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs.

Grass seed is collected, crushed to a fine powder and then used to make bread. Introduced grasses, such as buffel grass and rhodes grass have crowded out native species and removed that food source from some areas. It's a changing world. Through my art, people can learn about my Anmatyerre culture and my homeland of Atnwengerrp.

Grass Seed, 2021

acrylic on linen

122 x 91 cm

Courtesy the artist and Kate Owen Gallery





Benang Merah (literal translation: Red thread), is an Indonesian phrase similar to 'connecting the dots' in English. It explores my attempt to have an understanding of things; whether recent things from my everyday life or those that stay with me over time, by piecing together and making a connection between them. It interrogates our need to seek order, which is by its nature a construct – knowing, not knowing – as we stand by the edge of chaos. I reference elements from my home country, such as Kayon/Gunungan and the title itself, as I try to reconnect with my cultural heritage that I stayed away from due to a political othering, but came to realise that despite everything, is part of me and helps explain my perception and understanding of things.

Benang Merah, 2021

mixed media, red thread, archival pigment printing on canvas

29 x 14.5 cm

Courtesy the artist

Alice Wormald

The abstracted imagery within *Turning in Circles* is derived from collaged source material with fragmented areas of brushwork, texture and transparency framed by repeating circular forms. Disjointed lines flow from one another across the surface of the canvas. The work dismantles any sense of space, subject or focal point. Instead, the eye attempts to join up lines, or the mind makes free associations with straws, lamp posts or Mickey Mouse ears. The idea of 'making connections' that this work operates within, is the arbitrary path that a neuron takes in the brain, a train of thought, an illusion or a spark of recognition. These are the connections and associations that occur when context, logic and meaning are obscured, and they speak to the fundamental exchange that exists between image and viewer.

Turning in Circles, 2020

oil on linen

140 x 110 cm

Courtesy the artist and Gallery 9



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

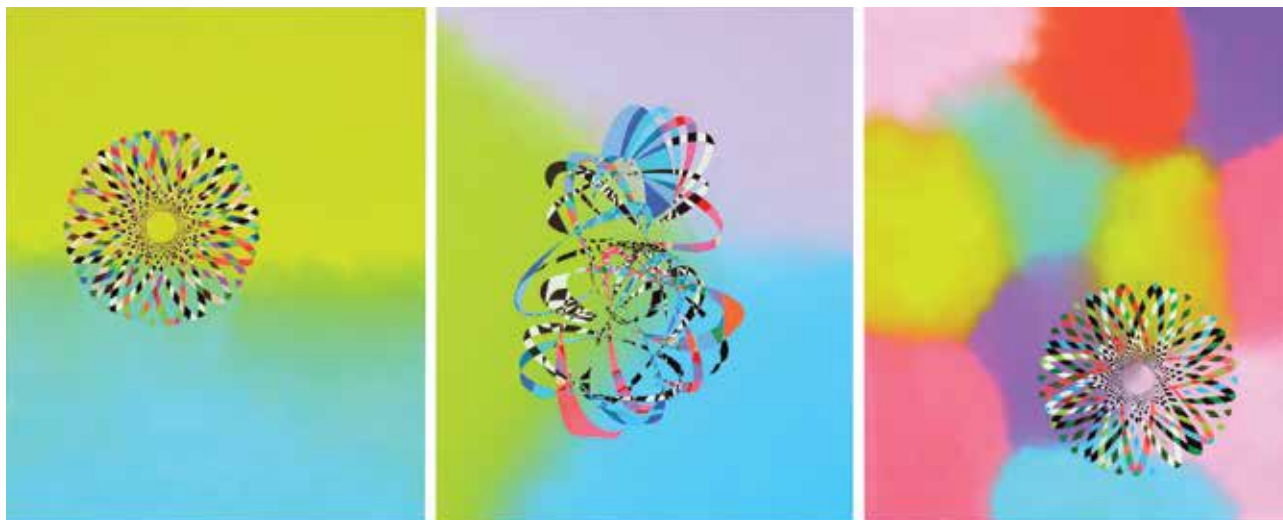
Obelus 3, 2015
aluminium composite panel, timber, fluorescent light, acrylic paint, steel angles and paper
150 x 100 cm

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



2018 Grace Cossington Smith art award winner **Catherine O'Donnell**

Catherine O'Donnell is known for her detailed renderings of streetscapes and urban dwellings. She says of her work My drawings an exploration of the architecture, culture and history in the everyday-ness of the urban environment. I see the suburbs as full of connection and disconnection, sameness and difference; in short, my drawings examine suburban living as a site of complexity. O'Donnell graduated with a Master of Fine Arts from the National Art School in Sydney in 2014 and in the same year she was awarded a residency at the British School of Rome. She exhibits widely and is represented in both public and private collections in Australia and Internationally. She has won many awards and numerous commendations.

Local art award WINNER

Stephen Hall's awards include The North Sydney Art Prize Drawing Award 2013, The Kedumba Drawing Award 2011, The UNSW Alumni Art Prize 2007 and UNSW Paris Residency 2003. In 2004 he was awarded an MFA from the UNSW. His work is in many public and private collections.

Early Career artist award WINNER

Jane Théau works in a variety of media, particularly textiles, with a focus on performance, music and art. She has a Master of Art from UNSW Art & Design, a Master of International Affairs from Columbia University and a Bachelor of Applied Science from UTS.

2018 judges and selectors:

Alison Clark Team Leader Arts & Culture at North Sydney Council, 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 owner and director of the Dominik Mersch Gallery in Rushcutters Bay representing artists at the forefront of contemporary art practice and focuses on exhibiting artists from Australia and Europe. 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.

Yates Court
pencil on paper, 46 x 65 cm
courtesy the artist



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