

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

An Empire of Things 19 April to 26 May 2018

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is delighted to announce *An Empire of Things*, an exhibition presenting works by some of Australia's finest artists - **Tony Albert, Tom Carment, Vivian Cooper Smith, Phil Drummond, Sarah Goffman, Harley Ives, Nigel Milsom, Margaret Preston, Margaret Olley, Jude Rae, Anthony Springford, Robyn Stacey and Ken + Julia Yonetani.**

In *An Empire of Things* the still-life genre is used to explore a diverse range of themes, from environmental degradation (Julia and Ken Yonetani) to the legacies of colonisation (Tony Albert, Robin Stacey). *Memento-mori* is reframed in a contemporary context by Sarah Goffman: what are the moral and ethical responsibilities of the consumer in a culture of excess and waste, and with a dependence on cheap, outsourced labour from developing countries? There are still-life paintings that explore formal concerns of reconciling depth, weight, and tactility, with the flatness of the picture plane (Anthony Springford, Jude Rae, Tom Carment, Nigel Milsom). Decorative still-lives by Margaret Preston, Margaret Olley, and Phil Drummond reveal Australian shifts in ideology, technology, and economics. Finally, there are works that respond directly to the pervasive influence of technology on everyday life and challenge the established values of a given medium, whether it be 'truth' in photography (Vivian Cooper Smith), or the impossibility of traditional 'craftsmanship' in the moving image (Harley Ives). The incredible variety of still life practices on display demonstrates the continuing relevance and power of a genre that was once considered frivolous. Through still-life, the banal rituals and trappings of everyday life are put on show within the 'higher' discourses of culture, and we are asked to slow down the way we look, and re-evaluate the familiar in a new, critical light.

From the catalogue essay by Dr Jaime Tsai, 2018

Curated by Lisa Jones and Mary Faith.

Meet the Artist afternoon tea, 2-4pm Saturday 5 May, with Dr Christopher Allen, art critic, historian and educator.

Short Statement 50 Words

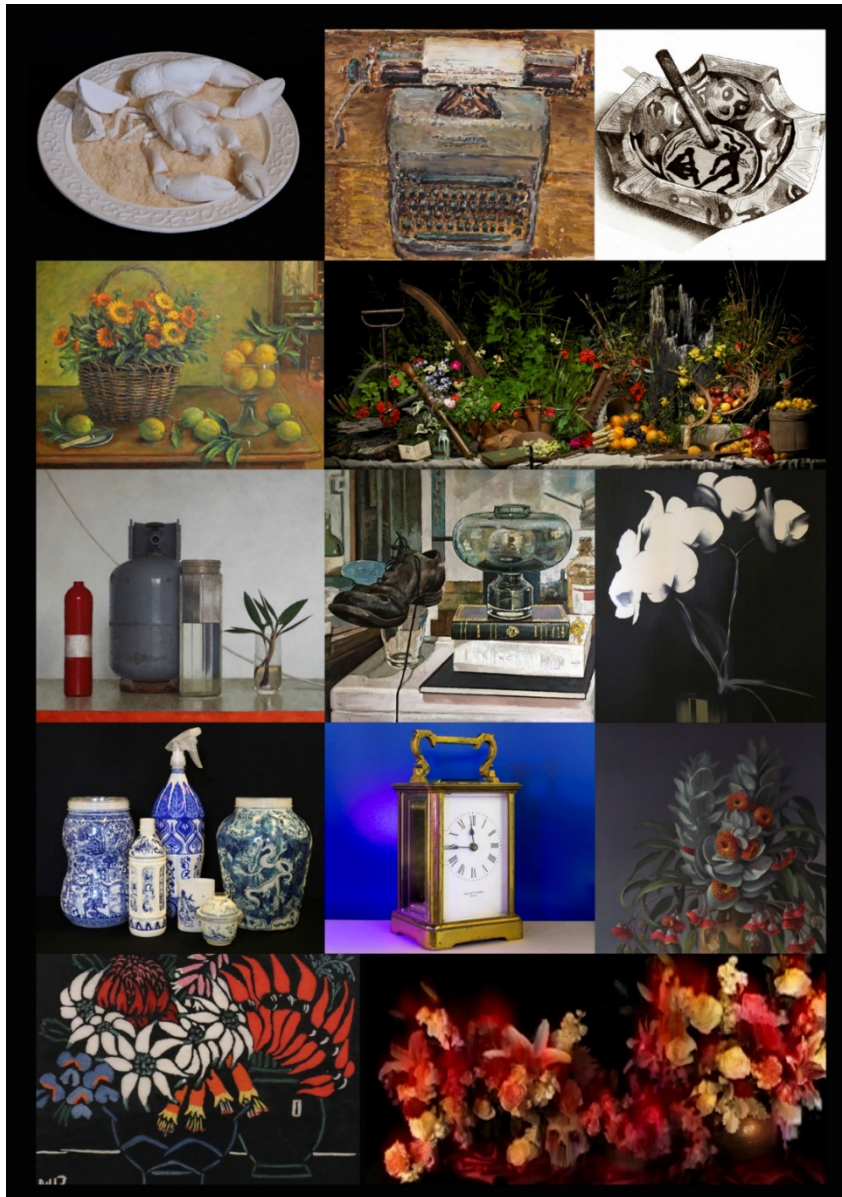
An Empire of Things

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Artists **Tony Albert, Tom Carment, Vivian Cooper Smith, Phil Drummond, Sarah Goffman, Harley Ives, Nigel Milsom, Margaret Preston, Margaret Olley, Jude Rae, Anthony Springford, Robyn Stacey and Ken + Julia Yonetani** respond to ideas about still life from environmental degradation to the pervasive influence of technology on everyday life.

Artworks: High resolution images available

Rows left to right, from top



Row 1
Ken+Julia Yonetani, Tom Carment,
Tony albert

Row 2
Margaret Olley, Robyn Stacey

Row 3
Jude Rae,
Anthony Springford, Nigel Milsom

Row 4
Sarah Goffman
Vivian cooper Smith
Phil Drummond

Row 5
Margaret Olley
Harley Ives

All artworks © the artist.

The **Grace Cossington Smith Gallery** is a not-for-profit gallery, run by Abbotsleigh, serving the public through free admission and connections to education. The Gallery is open Monday to Friday from 10 am-5 pm and Saturday from 9 am-4 pm. Enter via Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway Wahroonga. Phone: 02 9483 7878

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