

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Electricity: an exploration of drawing enhanced by a simple electric current

5 June - 13 July 2019

Curated by: Dr. Maryanne Coutts, Head of Drawing, National Art School

Artists: Steven Cavanagh, Skelton&Conway, Maryanne Coutts, Ben Denham, Euan Heng, Paul Higgs, Gabriella Hirst, Lisa Jones, Alex Karakonji, Ken Smith

Opening Event: Saturday 15 June 2-4pm with Anne Ryan, Curator Australian Art, Art Gallery NSW

TV screens, electric lighting, telephones, fridges, ovens, dishwashers... *Electricity* drives technology that links, assists and guides, entertains, transports and does our work for us. *Electricity* is a Drawing exhibition that explores the impact of this wonderful resource on the creative processes of drawing. It presents the work of artists whose deep interests in drawing are assisted by electricity and consequently considers the nature of drawing as an interface between human experience and technology.

While we often think of technology as being fundamentally Hi-tech, shiny and new, here we look at ways that artists use technology to extend and explore the physical, material and analogue qualities of drawing in the twenty-first century. This combination of the electric current with artists' curiosity opens up new ways of thinking about drawing and contemporary experience.

Drawing today is alive and active in many ways. Within the technologies and resources that have evolved during the last one hundred and fifty years, persistent qualities of drawing regenerate and emerge in new guises. For instance, line which is often seen as essential to drawing emerges in work of artists like Euan Heng who electrifies his line with neon tubing. While many artists these days will draw their lines with ready-made machines such as jigsaws or in Lisa Jones' case, a laser cutter, Ben Denham demonstrates what a machine designed specifically to draw can do.

Traditionally an intimate and personal process, drawing is increasingly linked with ideas about the artist's body and performance. Gabriella Hirst uses her performance to explore an embattled relationship between nature and culture and Tango Conway and Amelia Shelton humorously engage a sandwich press to perform their drawing practice.

However, the use of 'basic' materials such as graphite and charcoal is still often seen as defining drawing and the potential of these materials is now greatly extended both materially and conceptually. The very physical activity of making marks by hand continues to develop uncompromising observation, where artists like Ken Smith find that a tablet enables more subtle and immediate response to observations than an old fashioned pencil and paper and animation programs allow Alex Karakonji to make his charcoal drawings move.

This show aims to nurture challenging conversations and ignite thinking about long-standing traditions of drawing, offering a chance to consider the underlying qualities of drawing from new perspectives and engage in discussions about contemporary practice. *Electricity* confirms the idea that the age-old practice of drawing can still show us something about the new world we live in.

High School Workshop: Drawing into Animation with Alex Karakonji, Saturday, 22 June 2–4 pm

Teacher Masterclass: Drawing Machines, Gary Warner, Saturday, 22 June 9 am–1 pm

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SHORT STATEMENT

5 June to 13 July 2019

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(68 words)



Steven Cavanagh, *Angry White Man*, Neon tube, 2018

The **Grace Cossington Smith Gallery** is a not-for-profit gallery, run by Abbotsleigh, serving the public through free admission and a changing exhibition program.

The Gallery is open Monday to Friday from 10 am-5 pm and Saturday 9am – 4pm.

Enter via Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway Wahroonga.

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High Resolution images are available.