

THE SPECTRAL SCAPE

Carolyn Craig, Damian Dillon, Clare Humphries,
Roy Subum Lee, David Manley and Justine Roche



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GRACE COSSINGTON SMITH GALLERY

Gallery hours Tuesday to Saturday 10 am-5 pm | FREE ENTRY | Gate 7 1666 Pacific Highway Wahroonga | 02 9473 7878
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The Grace Crossington Smith Gallery acknowledges the Dharug People as the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which the gallery rests. We acknowledge the Elders, past and present.

THE SPECTRAL SCAPE

The Spectral Scape questions how aesthetic practices can represent (or interrogate) Australian identity in an age of image flux and post-colonial review. Using strategies of 'hauntology' and the spectre, the artists consider history as a site of complicit erasure and resurrection, where place is perceived as a complex habitation of ghosted pasts and presents.

These Hauntologies exist from within the present, the past and the future and offer alternative timelines and voices to re-compose dominant historical narratives through methodologies of trace, refraction, distortion and diffusion. These strategies are recomposed or mediated into new spectral entities, of affect and resistance.

The artists conjure the invisible, inaudible and illegible through textures, rhythms, atmospheres, invocations, gestures, vernaculars and affects. These methodologies escape traditional indexical forms of measurement and accounting and instead offer experimental modes of sensing, tracing and mapping. They consider the representational potential of the landscape and subjectivities that defy normative codes. They investigate non-archival practices to construct spaces that give agency to spectral possibilities outside of standardised definitional frameworks.

Manley's speculative and inverted infrastructures invoke the shadows and traces of the 'Real', while Humphries and Lee re-mediate forms of mapping and trace to give us new avenues of understanding place. Both Roche and Dillon use the chemical processes of the darkroom to refract the explicit lens-based practices of the digital, while Craig attempts to re-narrate place through affectual traces of the body and its pain. These material and conceptual strategies give rise to a more complex representation of place, one that hyper-realism erases through its over-arching attempts at 'the Real'.

— Dr Carolyn McKenzie-Craig



DAVID MANLEY

The spectre of architecture looms perniciously in contemporary media culture, its initiatory power a paradox of permanence and codified destruction. Manley's architectural imagery operates at a subconscious level, unearthing through a type of visual archaeology the signifiers of human conflict and technological progress; a diagnosis of the ambivalent nature of modernity.



JUSTINE ROCHE

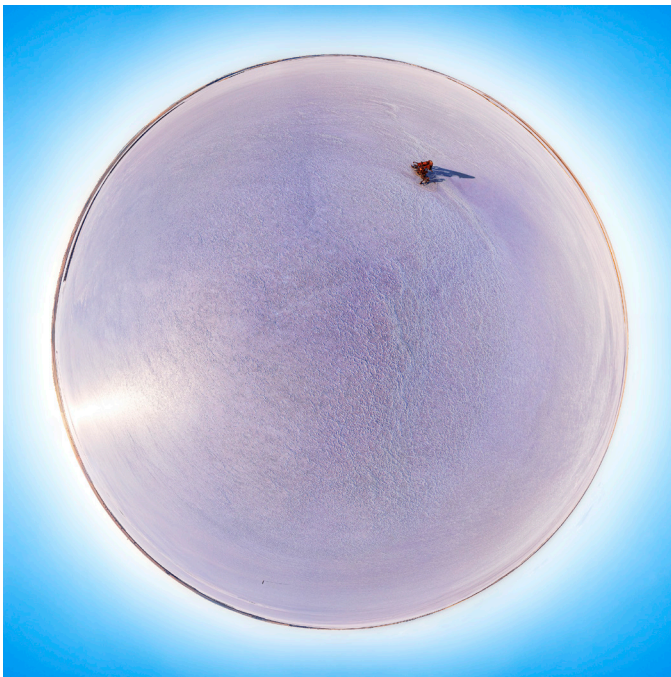
Justine's series of work for *The Spectral Scape* explores the possibilities of capturing the geographical imagination and sensorial experience of place.

The place depicted is an Australian wetland, two hours south of Sydney. Dispelling historical negative material and metaphorical associations, wetlands are recognised today for their integral role in combatting the climate crisis.

Justine's work references the Australian Gothic tradition of foreboding, terror, superstition and the supernatural. Such unsettling features recall the mysticism and fear often associated with wetlands.

In *Untitled, 24 hours*, Justine presents a timelapse over 24 hours, depicting the atmospheric and ephemeral light of the day against the disquiet and unease of darkness.

The work has been created through a series of photographic and chemical interventions and is intentionally presented on tintype plates to evoke haunting, timeless qualities, and unpredictable traces.



ROY SUBUM LEE

History of the Sky captures the enthralling beauty of Lake Tyrrell in Victoria. Known as 'the sky' by local Indigenous peoples, the salt lake's reflective surface transcends time and space. The aerial photographs, created by combining multiple shots, reveal the dynamic relationship between humankind and the environment.



Immersing viewers in the salt lake region's splendor, the series invites contemplation of the delicate balance between humanity and nature, showcasing the interplay between the natural environment and human resilience.

Part of the *Unforbidden Ruralscapes* series, these works highlight the pristine Australian outback and human resourcefulness. Embracing elements of Indigenous peoples' perception of the sky, the series delves into the mystique of the ancient lake. Through a reminder of our symbiotic relationship in modern history, these images inspire viewers to appreciate our interconnected existence and foster a renewed sense of guardianship for our shared environment.

CAROLYN CRAIG

Carolyn's work for the *The Spectral Scape* emerged during an artist residency in Grafton where she was exploring the site perimeter of the old Grafton prison. Institutions of detention hold a personal interest for the artist due to time spent in custody as a youth.

While there, a gardener approached and told her she had 'better not be taking' his roses, which were planted just outside the prison fence line – possibly where the guards left their cars when they came to work.

They were neglected weeds in stark contrast to the internal landscape of the prison where grilles, concrete, and fences dominated. The gardener spoke of being an ex-prison guard who was maintaining the site of violence against inmates 'who deserved it' – of how 'bad' female prisoners are – and again and again about the roses being 'his'. Craig wondered how many guards see the prison as an extension of their place in the world? How can an image unravel his haunting of her his-story? How can she own that rose?





DAMIAN DILLON

Dillon's series looks at the invisible social, cultural and geographical architectures we inhabit, in particular the urban, suburban and natural environments where colonial erasure and national mythologies have failed to turn space into place as Australia remains both 'unsettling and unsettled'. The colonising representations of the immured family home and its intrusion and consumption of the natural environment is at the core of *Mustard Tiger #5*.

In the work Dillon uses a Derridean process of deconstruction to interrogate the structural discourse of the home – its representations and ideations – to capture the entropic ruinous state of post-colonial Australia. Images are remediated through chemical and digital processes to dissolve the abject boundary between object and subject – in a process of visual 'undoing'. This opens up a fragmented, affectual space that reflects our occupancy (built and un-built) of the propagated landscape.

CLARE HUMPHRIES

In *The Spectral Scope*, Clare Humphries considers the lens as a technology of looking in early telescopes which constructed ideas of 'Australia' in the European imagination. Celestial maps of the 16th and 17th centuries imagined the skies of *Terra Australis Incognita* (Latin for 'Unknown Southern Land') as 'other' – upside down and incomplete. Charts described an upright position for the northern eye, and the Southern Cross was subsumed into the constellation *Centaurus*. Etchings of the Greenwich Observatory also placed the viewer close to what would later become the Prime Meridian, looking outward to a picturesque unknown.

Underpinning these visions was the idea of the *Antipodes* (Latin for 'with feet opposite ours') which conceived the Southern Hemisphere as something opposing, reversed and even inverted, but always defined in reference to the north. For *Spectral Scope*, Clare has taken early European astronomical maps, and views from Greenwich, and re-transcribed them over her own observations of the Australian night sky, rotating and flipping the historical data to more accurately reflect a southern perspective.



IMAGES

FRONT COVER

David Manley

The Embankment, 2023

Pigment inkjet print

125 x 76 cm

David Manley

Post-traumatic urbanist #10, 2019

Pigment ink jet print

100 x 100 cm

Justine Roche

Untitled, 11.35, 2023 (detail from *Untitled, 24 hours*, 2023)

Wetplate collodion on aluminium (tintype)

15.2 x 12.7 cm

Roy Subum Lee

History of the Sky #2, 2023

Digital inkjet print on archival metallic rag paper

101 x 101 cm

Carolyn Craig

who gets the rose: holding the line (act 1), 2023

Photographs on glass, welded steel frame

155 x 75 x 65 cm (frame) 75 x 45 cm (print)

Damian Dillion

Mustard Tiger #5, 2022

Unique C-type print from black and white negative face mounted on acrylic

54x60 cm

Clare Humphries

Study for Seas of Delirium (south side up), 2023

Ink and dry pigment on paper

42 x 48.4 cm