

ENCOUNTER

8 November to 7 December 2024



Sylvia Griffin
Pamela Leung
Juanita McLauchlan
Lisa Pang
Sue Pedley

To encounter is to find, to meet, to discover and to capture. It draws on an attitude of mind and heart that allows the artist to be attentive, engaged and active with the experiences of life, and have an affinity with the way this informs values and belief.

Encounter presents responses to past histories, recent experiences and future conceptions for Sylvia Griffin, Pamela Leung, Juanita McLauchlan, Lisa Pang and Sue Pedley. For these five Australian artists the intersections of personal, cultural and historical narratives are shaped through engagement with themes such as identity, migration, colonisation, trauma, memory and the environment.

The work of **Juanita McLauchlan** reflects on the power of the object and the significance of family and identity as she explores and expands artistic and cultural traditions. Acknowledging that printmaking is key to her art practice, she has a deep consideration for her choice of materials; employing contact printing with local Indigenous plants eco-friendly dyes and ethically sourced skins. She overlays printing and stitching, intertwining her Gamilaraay heritage with contemporary expressions of belonging and connection to Country.

Narratives of identity and community are woven together by **Pamela Leung**. She explores the struggles of living between cultures and her works evoke a sense of melancholia and nostalgia, emphasising the ties that bind individuals to their heritage. Her use of Chinese newspapers and her ongoing project *Shades of Red* reflect on the realities of diaspora and the longing for connection amid political upheaval in Hong Kong.

Lisa Pang combines traditional materials and family memories, blurring the boundaries between art and craft and inviting viewers to confront their own experiences of mixed cultural heritage and the ambiguities that can be encountered.

The inspiration for **Sue Pedley** is a little-known 1830 historical encounter between colonial Tasmanians and Japanese samurai, addressing cultural collision and maritime history. She builds on vivid descriptions provided in Edo period manuscripts from which she generates drawings connected to wind and water, sails and ropes, boats and maritime mapping.

A residency at a former epidemic hospital in Gothenburg, Sweden, enabled **Sylvia Griffin** to capture the intangible qualities of this space. She employs rubbings and endemic materials in her artworks and installations to reveal layers of history marked by cycles of habitation and reclamation.

These five artists have a common interest in the materiality of art, sharing an affinity for the tactility and surface of the fabric with which they work. Creating site-based and studio works, the artists challenge viewers to reflect on their own narratives, prompting conversations about belonging, heritage and the profound connections that shape our lives. **Encounter** invites audiences to engage with the layered stories woven into each artwork, fostering reflection and dialogue on the experiences encountered.

Curated by Mary Faith and Lisa Jones



SYLVIA GRIFFIN

Recent work by Sylvia Griffin has featured installations as a way of interpreting sites, with the aim of reflecting cycles of habitation, destruction, redevelopment and reclamation. She uses processes such as taking rubbings, casting, drawing and dyeing with endemic materials to capture the history and intangible qualities of a site.

The work for *Encounter* was created during an artist residency earlier this year at Konstepidemin, a former epidemic hospital and psychiatric clinic for children, in Gothenburg, Sweden. Her focus was on the Pannrummet, the original boiler room in the basement of Konstepidemin, now one of several exhibition spaces, and probably the only space left in its original condition. The Pannrummet reveals layers of history in what would have been the heart of the hospital providing heating to rooms and for laundry, so vital to patient care. Griffin made a series of rubbings of the walls on both paper and fabric, marvelling at what was revealed as graphite worked over the surfaces. She also took rubbings from the well-trodden metal staircase onto fabric dyed with medicinal plants found throughout the residency grounds. Each rubbing makes present and captures the indexical traces of those who used this space through the wear and tear on each step over 149 years.

Sylvia Griffin is a multi-disciplinary artist working across painting, sculpture, installation, textiles, video and photography. Her work addresses trauma, memory and history, seeking alternative ways to address traditional memorial culture and relationships to place. Materiality and embodied processes are important aspects of this work. Griffin has exhibited nationally and internationally in a variety of galleries and cultural institutions, developed site-specific works, and partaken in national and international residencies. She has a PhD from the University of Sydney, has received various grants, prizes and scholarships, and has won and been shortlisted for several national awards. She has also taught, and contributed to peer-reviewed journals, books and conferences.



Pannrummet (The Boiler Room) 1, 2 and 3, 2024,
Whenzou rice paper, graphite, timber frame,
99.5 x 44 cm



The Healing Garden, Konstepidemin, 2024, 8/8
Dandelion, *Taraxacum officinale* and Oregon
grape *Berberis aquifolium* Cyanotype prints on
watercolour paper 25 x 20 cm each



PAMELA LEUNG

Agglomerate, 2022, is a mat woven with 'yarn' made from Chinese newspapers published globally and printed in traditional character. It is about reconnecting community at a time when many people are again leaving Hong Kong due to the harsh government response to recent social movements, especially the anti-sedition laws of 2020. This work reflects the complex entanglement of inheritance, persistence, culture, history, identity and human connections.

Bearing wound, honouring suture, 2023 was a performance and a collaboration between Leung and writer and independent curator Yang Yeung. Exploring themes such as pain, solitude, nostalgia, longing and homecoming, the collaborative performance piece was centred on a chair, which served as a physical reminder of absence and symbolised both loss and the hope for reunion.

Pamela Leung is a Hong Kong-born artist who moved to Sydney in 1976. She works with installation, video, performance, sculpture and painting to explore the routines of everyday life, relationships, connections, displacement and the diaspora. Leung shares her personal migratory experience with the audience, allowing them to reflect on ideas of identity and displacement. The colour red takes on a significant symbolic status in her work, representing the differing perspectives of Western and Eastern cultures; it is also the colour that runs through all people, no matter the colour of their skin and is used as a unifying force.

Since completing her MFA at the National Art School, Sydney, in 2016, Leung has exhibited widely in Australia and internationally and was awarded the Emerging Artist Award at the 65th Blake Prize in 2018.



Agglomerate, 2022, crocheted newspaper, approx. 200 cm in diameter



Bearing wound, honouring suture, 2023, found chair and cotton, size variable



JUANITA McLAUHLAN

Juanita McLaughlan is trained as a printmaker and collagraphy is her preferred medium. Printing is always intensely key to her art practice. An exploration of contact printing with indigenous plants has allowed McLaughlan to work in larger scale, printing directly onto blankets – a staple belonging of Aboriginal families since colonisation. The printed wool serves as a base for many layers of narrative. The blankets are crafted into multi-layered necklaces and wrist cuffs, adorned with possum-fur, and bound with red thread, symbolic of family bloodline. There is a deep consideration in her choice of materials, which are overlaid with printing and stitching. Her Gamilaraay heritage, stories and memories are embedded in the carefully considered materials representing the interconnectedness of McLaughlan's family, with Country, across time.

Juanita McLaughlan was born on her grandmother's Country, Gamilaraay Country, and has lived in many places across Australia before spending the past 20 years with her family on Wiradjuri Country in Wagga Wagga. She enjoys the thrill, complexity, texture, chaos and control of the printmaking medium. While her material and conceptual problem-solving processes of making are experimental, Juanita's work is equally indebted to, and guided by, her Indigenous heritage.

McLaughlan was the recipient of the 2022 Windmill Trust Scholarship, and her work has been exhibited in group and solo shows, including the Wynne Prize 2024.



Bibabiiba/book, 2020, woodcut, on linen, copper leaf and cotton, 21 x 27 cm



Home is My Place, 2023, woollen blanket, possum skin, cotton thread, screen print, copper coins, 200 x 165 cm



LISA PANG

"Tell all the truth but tell it slant ..." –*Emily Dickinson*

The works for the exhibition *Encounter* embody a conceptual collision of histories; personal, cultural and art historical. *Sharp China* consists of three-dimensional forms made from gesso on canvas, traditional materials from the European easel painting tradition. With swaddling cloth as a blank canvas and the moulded forms as visual fragments, they offer glimpses of family memories. Family rituals vary from casual cups of tea to more formal gatherings. While some are closed forms, enclosing and suggesting secrets held inside, other open forms are formed from inherited teacups used by her family, her support. White gesso suggests beginnings, but also universalities. The teacup settings can be read with reference to still-life genre painting, Vanessa Bell, Judy Chicago and Meret Oppenheimer. Completing the installation and suspended on the walls are two-dimensional textiles; doorway curtains worked with gesso and stitching. Titled for the geometric *Halves* they depict, they reference her own identity and journey as half-between

cultures, countries and families. These are works that sit between or resist definitions; between painting and sculpture, surface and object but also between art and craft. Ultimately, they are things that sit in between familiarity and strangeness, an ambiguous encounter.

Lisa Pang is a Borneo-born artist, writer and curator living and working on Darug land in the north of Sydney. She has exhibited in Australia, Japan and Europe and has a particular interest in non-objective art, handmade textiles, and alternative art platforms. Following a previous career as a lawyer, Lisa holds a BFA (Hons) from the National Art School.



Sharp China (detail from series), 2024, gesso, beeswax and textile (swaddling cloth), 8 x 8 x 8 cm (approx.)



SUE PEDLEY

Tracing Wind approaches the theme of colliding cultural worlds from the perspective of an extraordinary historical event that took place in 1830. The colonial brig *Cyprus* voyaged from Recherche Bay, Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) under pirate control and with 10 escaped convicts. It reached Japanese waters and was repulsed by samurai from Teba Jima Island, Awa Domain (Tokushima). At the time Japan had been closed to outside contact for more than two centuries. Makita Hamaguchi, a local samurai, wrote the first account of the episode, illustrated with watercolour and indigo dye.

Pedley's research is based on Edo period manuscripts, one of which she viewed at the Tokushima Archive during a recent residency on Teba Jima. She is indebted to Nick Russell, a historian living in Japan. The manuscripts are a unique record of how the Japanese samurai encountered and perceived the barbarians on board the ship as they encroached on Japan's closed borders.

Exhibited works include paintings created in Japan and Australia. The indigo paintings are tracings of washed up detritus collected from the shoreline of Teba Jime where the samurai fired canons at the barbarians. The

paintings map the journey of the escapees across the Pacific Ocean steered by the wind and currents, tracing discarded ropes. *Tracing Wind* builds on previous works addressing the settler and maritime history of her family in Tasmania and historical links between Tasmania and Japan. This work is the preliminary research for a larger project titled *Prevailing Gales* which will be exhibited in Japan and Tasmania in 2025.

Sue Pedley is an artist who researches place, community, culture and history in relationship to materiality through site-specific installation and interdisciplinary practice. She is recognised for her multimedia installations, large scale drawings and collaborations that explore colonisation, the environmental degradation of water and its impact; and the intergenerational hurts of war. Pedley has a history of making artwork in Japan, participating in the Echigo Tsumari Art Triennial (2006, 2018), and Setouchi Triennial (2010) working closely with rural communities. Residencies and exhibitions relating to Japan include Orange- Net Work, T5 Camouflage Fuel Tanks, Mosman Gallery (2017), Tokyo Wonder Site (2012); Copper Ships, Tin Shed Gallery (2011); LARQ – Land Art Research Queenstown, Tasmania (2011).



Tracing Wind #15, 2024, indigo dye, Kozo paper, 96 x 64 cm each approx



Tracing Wind #16, 2024, indigo dye, watercolour, Kozo paper, 96 x 64 cm each approx





All works are courtesy of the artists.

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