

22 November 2013 – 23 March 2014 | The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia and NGV International

How does your garden grow? Sustainability and the natural environment

A unique aspect *Melbourne Now* is the introduction of horticultural practice, appreciation, innovation and design into the gallery spaces with multiple projects that explore the natural environment and sustainability.

These projects consist of:

Lauren Berkowitz

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia

Nature is a constant element of Berkowitz's artistic practice. Inspired by the landscape but troubled by its degradation, Berkowitz recycles materials to produce striking assemblages that explore environmental narratives.

Berkowitz's installation for *Melbourne Now* is a sensory indoor garden that incorporates edible and medicinal plants that have healing qualities in traditional and western

medicine, as well as the traditional Indigenous bushfoods. The garden embodies notions of renewal and sustainability, with plants, foraged from around Victoria (including the Federation Square rail yards) which have been cultivated in recycled plastic pots, bottles and takeaway containers. The artwork creates an immersive experience for the viewer, inviting reflection upon the Australian landscape and its transformation from past to present.



Urban Commons foodscape

NGV International

Urban Commons foodscape is a colourful, interactive, and educational installation that explores our contemporary relationship to food systems and urban spaces. Consisting of two parts – the Kitchen Garden and Wayward Forest – the Urban Commons foodscape creates a dynamic and iconic productive landscape in the Grollo Equiset Sculpture Garden at NGV International.

The **Kitchen Garden** explores different and novel ways to grow, eat, and recycle food waste. More than just a veggie patch, the Kitchen Garden is a productive hub for growing and sharing food. With its cellular-like structure the design entwines social and relaxing spaces with growing and productive ones. The Kitchen Garden is activated throughout *Melbourne Now* with a regular schedule of engaging public programs, allowing visitors to propagate seedlings in the onsite greenhouse, before transplanting their seedlings to the Kitchen Garden and then harvesting at the end of the season. Using contemporary materials and design, the Kitchen Garden represents a vision for urban space that is connected to people and the need to make our cities more sustainable and resilient places to live.

The **Wayward Forest** is a playful concoction of a native food forest (native berries, nuts, and flowers) and contemporary advertising. Contrasting the natural world of native trees and plants with planter bags made from recycled vinyl billboards, the Wayward Forest is a poignant commentary on the loss of local knowledge and its replacement with the alluring and transient world of advertising. This installation is about discovering new relationships between different cultures and times as well as exploring links between our natural and built environment.

The Urban Commons foodscape offers a space to discuss change and explore ways to create cities based on a foundation of respect and inclusion. This is a space for young and old to discover the value and joys of food, and leave feeling inspired to start transforming their own urban environments into creative and edible landscapes.

Slow Art Collective **NGV International**

Founded in 2009, Slow Art Collective is a group of artists whose members – Tony Adams, Chaco Kato and Dylan Martorell – explore ethics relating to production and consumption, sustainability, the environment and DIY culture, positioned within the broader ‘slow movement’ philosophy. Their *Melbourne Now* commission for kids, *MARLARKY*, 2013, is a site-specific installation made from recycled materials. In the spirit of bricolage, this environmental work resembles a makeshift domestic dwelling of interconnected cave-like spaces, inhabited by a fictitious (yet absent) character. Salvaged materials are utilised to create a multipurpose space that explores domestic living – eating, sleeping, washing, entertaining and relaxing. As each viewer enters the dwelling, he or she becomes the inhabitant.

Cameron Robbins **NGV International**

Cameron Robbins has been described as a collaborator with nature. In the tradition of land art, he creates site specific installations that make tangible the underlying structures and rhythms of natural phenomena, such as ocean currents and wind. For *Melbourne Now*, Robbins has created *Climate control*, 2013, a kinetic drawing machine in NGV International’s Grollo Equiset Garden that is powered by the wind and the sun. *Climate control* is inspired by the thermo-hygrograph, a clock-like device used for the preservation of works of art in art galleries and museums. This instrument continuously records both the temperature and relative humidity of the atmosphere by drawing coloured traces onto a chart. Exposed to the elements for the duration of *Melbourne Now*, Robbins’s massively scaled-up version is controlled by the climate – translating weather energy into abstract ink drawings on paper.

Melbourne Now is on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia and NGV International from 22 November 2013 – 23 March 2014. 10am – 5pm. Free entry.



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Image caption:

Lauren Berkowitz, *Manna* 2009 © Lauren Berkowitz courtesy Utopian Slumps, Melbourne, photo Kalli Karvelas

The commission for *Melbourne Now* is supported by Peter and Monica Edwards