

TOP ARTS 2019

ARTWORK LABELS

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Top Arts 2019

Celebrating its twenty-fifth anniversary at the NGV, *Top Arts* is an annual showcase of Victoria's most exciting emerging young artists who have excelled in the Victorian Certificate of Education subjects Art and Studio Arts. The exhibition is presented as part of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority's Season of Excellence arts festival. *Top Arts 2019* presents the brightest burgeoning thinkers from metropolitan and regional Victoria, with works from forty-six students drawn from more than 2200 submissions. The diverse range of art illuminates a myriad of interests and concerns, from community values to climate change.

Each work highlights strong conceptual development, imagination, individuality and technical excellence. Portraiture, innovation and place are three distinct themes running through many of the works, and students' creative and critical thinking engage a breadth of media such as painting, sculpture, installation, fashion and video art. *Top Arts 2019* provides an opportunity to view development materials that give insight into students' ideas and working practices, and provides inspiration for audiences of all ages. The NGV is proud to continue to foster arts education and offer a forum where young people can creatively express themselves through art.

Visit ngv.melbourne for a full description of associated programs and events.

Adelaide Butler

A study of community

2018

stoneware

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Profile for *A Study of community* aims to question the durability of our cultural values and the impact that their absence may have on individuals and communities. Traditionally, ceramic casting has been a method of creating functional objects at an industrial scale, yet these are all non-functional, riddled with holes and cracks. Into the liquid clay I mixed materials that hold value within our culture, whether that be a symbol of education, nourishment, belonging or purity (paper, rice, cornflour seeds and steel wool). I was interested in historical accounts depicting community breakdown, such as the *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*. Penny Byrne's contemporary works of art investigating ideas of cultural values were also inspirational.

Juliet Fraser

Entropy's arrow

2018

35 mm photographic collage printed on vinyl

Victorian College of The Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Entropy's arrow is a ten-metre, double-sided banner displaying photographs which document everyday activities over the course of a year. The images were taken with a faulty 35 mm point-and-shoot camera permanently stuck on the panoramic setting. This added black cinematic-style bar frames on every negative and subsequent print. The variety of people and landscapes featured in the images creates an indirect portrait of my own personal experiences, and invites the viewer to project their own experiences on to the work of art. *Entropy's arrow* explores the relationship of images and the fallible nature of memories.

Kane Jutson

Rug

2018

wool on rug canvas

Eltham High School, Eltham

My exploration of emotion began through portraiture and morphed into a fascination with colour and shape. At this critical moment, I fortuitously visited the NGV's 2018 exhibition *The Field: Revisited* and resonated with the aesthetics of the 1960s colour field movement. Works by Australian artists Normana Wight, Col Jordan and Verner Panton inspired *Rug*. I used a latch-hook method to weave fifty metres of wool into more than 1.5 square metres of rug canvas. *Rug*'s organic shapes and colours pay homage to arts and crafts of the 1970s and my grandmother's fabrication of similar interior objects. *Rug*'s texture invites interaction and personal viewpoints.

Olivia Mauerhofer

Specious

2018

stoneware

Woodleigh School, Langwarrin South

My studio practice plays with the ritual and intimacy of drinking tea and the tendency of human nature to give preference to objects and consumerism. By employing dysfunctionality, form manipulation and crude distortion, I challenge the ideals of preciousness sold by consumerism and conformity. I incorporate thought-provoking, humorous elements with an absurdist quality. Using porcelain clays was a deliberate choice because of the rich history of porcelain and its connection to materialism. My influences include the technically exceptional work of contemporary ceramicists Brett Freund, Alison Frith and Hilda Carr, ancient Chinese pottery, wabi-sabi aesthetics and my grandad, a former potter. *Specious* is a synthesis of my ideas.

Portraits

Portraiture has played an important role in art from the moment mark making was first used to portray a human being thousands of years ago. Artists since have embraced this fascinating challenge to capture the essence of humanity and the soul of the individual, and to show innate beauty, strength, presence and personality. The contemporary portraitist faces the considerable task of employing aesthetic considerations evermore cleverly and imaginatively.

Top Arts highlights an exciting range of approaches and investigations in this ever-popular field for applicants. Diversity, beauty and magic contained in the ordinary are some of the themes explored through the selected portraits. Laura McGuane's purposely unfinished woven portrait leads us to think about milestones yet achieved; Kiarna Taylor responds to the challenge of capturing the rawness of the human person by drawing with markers taped to long-handled paintbrushes; Sara Curran explores human friendship and intimacy through K-Pop band SHINee using paint and thread; Markus Begutter's *Wizened* examines the fragility of the mental state through cardboard and charcoal portraits of his grandparents; Joshua Kidd combines darkroom and digital photographic techniques to capture massively scaled and spectacularly classic black-and-white portraits; and Francesca Sulfaro marries a moving image with a still to produce moments of magic.

Kristy Fedoro

Little raccoon

2018

inkjet print on canvas

Fountain Gate Secondary College, Fountain Gate

Little raccoon represents the qualities and quirks I find beautiful in males. It is a complementary latter work to a feminine counterpart titled *Miss Bunny*. With the raccoon's childish fashion, he's my love letter to nostalgia. I twisted my male portrait using a traditional feminine aesthetic to challenge the traditional masculine role. PaintTool SAI and Photoshop were used to digitally draw this fun and mischievous portrait. After the editing was complete, I saved the large file for canvas printing. I am awed by American artist Gil Elvgren's draughtsmanship and his joyous use of colour.

Gayatri Chaturvedi

A brief introspection

2018

oil on canvas

Fintona Girls' School, Balwyn

A brief introspection investigates the depiction of vices like greed, jealousy and vanity, and the literal act of introspection to combat them. Through investigation of these adverse behavioural tendencies, I concluded it is often our inadequacy that provokes vices. Major influences on my art are cinematography and artists such as Anne Wallace, V. R. Morrison and Sarah Bahbah. Their photographs and oil paintings perfectly portray the melodrama and surrealism of vivid emotions and narratives in film stills. I am fascinated by artists' ability to capture quotidian moments and transform them into fantastical dreamscapes. Chiaroscuro and unusual perspectives further accentuate drama and disturbance within my work.

Lily Tarquinio

Release

from the *Water Triptych* series

2018

oil on canvas

Mill Park Secondary College, Epping

Release explores the idea of water being cleansing and purifying. It especially marks a personally cathartic moment of letting go of bad thoughts and habits that fuelled my OCD. I created a visual representation of this act and wish the viewer to engage in a similar transformational release of mind and body. *Brought to life* portrays my brother being 'reborn' through the revitalising properties of water. Contrasting monochrome tones with vibrant colour symbolises the role of water in enhancing my brother's life. I was inspired by Samantha French's large-scale oil paintings of people and water.

Lily Tarquinio

Brought to life

from the *Water Triptych* series

2018

oil on canvas

Mill Park Secondary College, Epping

Isabel Unwin

Felt (Past tense of 'feel')

2018

recycled coat and pants, wool, felt, tulle, beads, press studs, cotton thread

Ballarat Grammar, Wendouree

Felt (Past tense of 'feel') is a wearable work of art intended to create empathy for mental illness. Through the use of upcycled, deconstructed and preloved clothing I emphasise the idea of stepping into someone else's shoes. The bright colour scheme of the coat conveys a positive approach to mental illness, and the embellishments of French-knitted cords, felt, tulle, faux pearls and embroidery thread are symbolic of the abstract nature of our emotions and mental state. This work was inspired by my love of fashion as everyday art, alongside artists Yayoi Kusama, Vincent van Gogh and Edvard Munch, whose works express something of their mental health.

Kiarna Taylor

Absence

2018

watercolour, fibre-tipped pen and cotton stitching on bank-pad paper

Warracknabeal Secondary College, Warracknabeal

The starting point of my work of art stemmed from the desire to create conceptual portraits. Materials and mark making accentuate *Absence's* focus on the concealment of feelings. The absence of colour intentionally provokes a sense of numbness and in turn creates a focus on the absence of emotion. Loose, organic and gesturally produced lines reflect the pulling away of emotional barriers. Neutral and genderless, the subject's experiences can speak to all viewers. I was initially inspired by the work of Frida Kahlo and Pippa Gan (*Top Arts 2018*), and later by Nick Lepard's and Veronica Cay's aesthetics, techniques and processes.

Markus Begutter

Wizened

2018

charcoal on cardboard

Mazenod College, Mulgrave

Wizened aims to create an intimate and intricate examination of the facial structures of people in the final stage of their lives. The subjects are my grandparents. *Wizened* contemplates the way time and various encounters change people physically. The aesthetics of the cardboard surface and ephemeral nature of charcoal accentuate the impact of life's journeys. Time is marked in its skin, too. The weathered texture, tears and the irregular raw edge allude to the impact of time on all things, both living and inanimate. Travel, galleries and great artists such as Robert Ashton are important in my work.

Natalie Cierpisz

Matthew in blue

2018

oil pastel and oil paint on cardboard

Ave Maria College, Aberfeldie

I am fascinated by the complexity of human emotion and its expression in art. I feel compelled to capture ordinary subjects through portraiture by using carefully considered colour palettes and richly applied oil pastel. My goal was to express the true beauty of human vulnerability through rendering genuine emotional expressions. *Matthew in blue*, a large-scale portrait of my brother, is one of several using unconventional lower perspectives and harsh lighting to accentuate his vulnerability. Rough, erratic strokes were applied to convey emotions of uncertainty and confusion. The diversity of people, the complexity of human nature and Picasso's blue period are great sources of artistic inspiration.

Hannah Johansson

Memento mori

2018

oil on canvas

Rosehill Secondary College, Niddrie

Memento mori explores the contrast between the timeless and ephemeral in human life. The oil painting reminds us to not dwell on the inevitable nor disposable but to appreciate life and its transient nature. The title translates as 'remember you must die' and represents a critique of my own obsessions with death and materialism.

Mourning portraiture, vanitas still-life works, Lucian Freud and William-Adolphe Bouguereau are several inspiring sources that led to this resolved work. The materials and techniques used include photography, Photoshop, underdrawing, canvas and paint. This work gives life to my meditation on existence and death.

Joshua Kidd

Untitled

2018

inkjet print

Wesley College, Glen Waverley

My work of art explores identity. It is a tribute to the traditional processes of photography. Fashion photographers Arthur Elgort and Helmut Newton inspired my use of black-and-white film to replicate a classic and timeless style. I worked with analogue film cameras and developed the film and prints in the darkroom, using dodging and burning techniques. I printed on coarse fibre paper, then scanned and enlarged the prints to create a greater impact. In an era where many depictions of identity are manufactured, my methodology and selection of aesthetics highlight the complexity of identity and its perception.

Nina Alston

In our mind

2018

lithographic paper and polyvinyl acetate

Mentone Grammar, Mentone

My aim is to create works that explore often ignored contemporary issues such as mental health. Inspired by the ideas of Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons, and the imaginative use of materials and techniques by Li Hongbo and Louise Paramor, I wish to engage my audience through interesting and challenging aesthetics. *In our mind* accentuates the complexity of human emotions and thoughts, representing both the beauty and brutality by which they can dictate our lives. My work aims to highlight the impact of our thoughts and shed light on the social stigma surrounding mental health.

Cleopatra Kopanidis

Classic Mia

2018

ballpoint pen on canvas

Shelford Girls' Grammar, Caulfield

In *Classic Mia*, I used Hellenistic and late Classical Greek sculpture and their aesthetic elements to explore transition and growth. My younger sister, Mia, is envisioned as a statue subtly intertwined with the path of the golden ratio. Comparable to an artist forging a figure from marble, a child transforms into adulthood. I created a composition that weaves in and out of negative and positive space to represent the search for self that commences at adolescence and continues throughout life. Using illustration, I celebrate the gentle and kind person my sister has become.

Brianna Burns

Transparency

2018

pencil on paper

Beaconhills College, Pakenham

Transparency is inspired by the theme of individuality. Following a conversation with my mother, I explored the topic through Dan, both in and out of his drag costume. Dan and Nancy are represented through large, drawn, red-and-blue opposing portraits. The use of anaglyph 3D glasses in the making and viewing demonstrates the separation of the two personalities and the fundamental complexity and richness of human identity. In creating this work, I was inspired by artists such as Chuck Close, research on the history of drag, and my experiences exploring the terrain of a transgender person by temporarily transforming myself into a male.

Harry Kingston

Handle with care

2018

oil on canvas

Mentone Grammar, Mentone

Bubble wrap, in conjunction with the 'Fragile' sticker, speaks to a contemporary culture of over-protection or risk aversion. Critiquing the restrictiveness of our bubble-wrapped society, I used oil paint to create a portrait of a distorted figure, disconnected from the viewer and isolated from the world. I drew inspiration from the world around me to produce my own unique interpretation and observations. I began by incorporating bubble wrap with other art media, then trialled drawing and painting body parts covered in bubble wrap. I eventually turned to oil paint. Its aesthetic of soft and muted colour further accentuates the message.

Sara Curran

Five

2018

synthetic polymer paint and embroidery on canvas

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Five consists of nine pieces of unstretched canvas stitched together. Each piece is a zoomed-in and closely cropped depiction of members of the Korean group SHINee in acrylic paint (some with embroidery). The materials and composition of my work express the intimacy, love and bond of friendships and the wish to communicate this regardless of audience knowledge of the subjects. Korean popular music (K-pop) significantly influences my work. The highly produced music videos have strong visuals and vibrant colours. My recently acquired painting skills and palette reference this aesthetic.

Rebecca Willington

Checklist

2018

jacket: clear polyvinyl chloride, wool roving, cotton thread

Bendigo Senior Secondary College, Bendigo

Inspired by textile design, experimentation, the conceptual contrasted with function, and artists such as Angela Lowe, I focused on the ideas and purpose of clothing. Unconventionally, I used clear PVC material. I twisted multiple coloured threads together, which were then glued in a grid pattern sandwiched between two pieces of PVC. Pink wool roving was used to create alternating checks. The vivid pink commands attention; the reflective plastic conveys a sense of superficiality; the thickness of the double-layered PVC gives the sense that the jacket is a protective 'social armour'; and the jacket's transparency reveals the true vulnerability of the wearer.

Laura McGuane

Woven threads of life

2018

inkjet prints

Sacred Heart College, Geelong

Based on the concept 'journey of life', *Woven threads of life* depicts a metaphoric record of life's explorations, confusions and difficulties, good and bad experiences, and milestones. Each strand represents achievements and growth throughout life; the piece has been left unwoven to represent milestones yet to be achieved. Considerations of composition, perspective, scale, materials and processes, image resolution and a monochromatic palette accentuate my theme. Musicians, photographers and other artists influence the weaving of my work. *Woven threads of life* was inspired by the song 'Waves' by Dean Lewis and works by Vivian Marie, Robert Frank, Steve McCurry, Michelangelo di Battista and Tina Berning.

Blake McCord

Presence (Standing)

2018

rope, glass, spray paint, mannequin

Melbourne Grammar School, South Yarra

My inspiration draws largely from nineteenth- and twentieth-century artists, as well as the philosophers Wittgenstein, Nietzsche and Descartes. *Presence (Standing)* and *Presence (Adam)* investigate their ideas about morality, language and reality. *Presence (Standing)* is a morally ambiguous figure that occupies the space in a room alongside the viewer. Its intentions are veiled despite the upright dominant pose. *Presence (Adam)* is an appropriated representation of Michelangelo's interpretation of the biblical story of creation. It raises important eternal questions about human purpose, obligation and hierarchies. Black-coloured and rope-covered life-size complementary figures are muses for discussions about being.

Blake McCord

Presence (Adam)

2018

rope, plaster, spray paint

Melbourne Grammar School, South Yarra

Molly Stanko

Existential elegance (The three graces)

2018

colour pencil on paper

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Existential elegance (The three graces) strives to subvert traditional notions of beauty imposed on us by history, advertising companies, celebrities and social media. The three torn segments are a direct reference to the three graces in Renaissance and Neoclassical art, which symbolise unattainable cultural beauty standards. This piece explores the experience of resentment through objectification of the three graces by male artists. A sense of reconciliation is generated through the reconstruction of the portrait and the inclusion of native floral elements, a personal take on what I consider beautiful. Coloured pencil drawings on earthy-hued paper conveys a beautiful and raw authentic quality.

Imogen Schwarz

#Adapt

2018

coloured pencils and synthetic polymer paint on plywood

Mentone Grammar, Mentone

We seem completely fixated upon ourselves, with no regard for issues that truly matter. Fuelled by self-obsession with social media, we turn a blind eye to serious climate and environmental problems. We would much rather adapt to a dystopian world than stand up and fight for action. This portrait, produced with translucent layers of acrylic paint and coloured pencil, emphasises selfie culture, our relationship with nature and the increasingly technology-dominated world. *#Adapt* was inspired by my travels to China and the dangerously poor quality of air. It acted as a prompt to think about the need for important and imperative changes.

Polly Reid

A square is in fact a circle

2018

offset lithograph

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

A square is in fact a circle is a satirical exploration of propaganda techniques used to incite strong beliefs and emotional reactions. By depicting arbitrary subject matter in extreme and perverse ways, I intended to show that beliefs presented as the truth are often irrational, or at least debatable. Using twentieth-century-style propaganda posters in this 'post-truth' political era, I hope to prompt viewers to critique contemporary propaganda. Inspired by George Orwell's *1984*, I researched techniques, looked at history and collected a wide range of political media. I identified common methods and used them in my own sardonic works.

Innovation

The twenty-first-century artist has at their disposal a considerable range of traditional and non-traditional materials and techniques, and the works in *Top Arts 2019* celebrate this originality and invention. Students' workbooks illustrate their explorations and imaginative problem-solving as they push the development of concepts, experiment with materials and play with display considerations.

In this space viewers engage with prints made from deceased birds; repurposed clothes with embroidery, appliqué and photographic transfers; and a wooden mallet beside a smashed ceramic painting of tableware. Storm Bell uses a drawing machine made from a 44-gallon drum, paper and pens to produce drawings. Bell invites others to engage with the machine which in turn creates the work of art. Maxwell Milne comments about contemporary life and illogical responses to important issues in his multimedia productions, *Caos 15* and *Caos 7*; Alessia Paino's digital animations investigate lifestyle aesthetics; and Ana Livia Maiorino uses a variety of materials to hypnotise the viewer in *Oblivion*. Unexpected materials and techniques continue beyond this space, as seen in the way Brianna Burns highlights the complexity of identity by using anaglyphic 3D glasses in the drawing and viewing of the one image containing both Dan and his drag queen character Nancy.

Qianman (Jessica) Wang

Oops

2018

wooden mallet, oil on porcelain

Luther College, Croydon

Oops explores the idea of how the success of an artwork is measured. A wooden mallet lies defiantly present. Rubble and remains are reassembled. Next to it lies a smashed oil painting of mass-produced and haphazardly stacked ceramic tableware iterated on a porcelain slab. This was a deliberate act of destruction not unlike Ai Weiwei's dropping of Han dynasty urns. *Oops* is a musing on destruction and deconstruction. Emphasis on the personal process of creation in this work of art holds greater significance than the aesthetic value of the work itself. Viewer and artist, sentiment and insight, clash.

Alessia Paino

Fish and nuts

2018

colour digital animation, silent, 1 min 19 sec

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Fish and nuts explores lifestyle aesthetics of everyday life through the environments we encounter or construct. These deeply affect and are consequential to our living. I wanted to make a clear impression on the viewer, create specific atmospheres and moods and bring out the beauty of the everyday. The series of three animated digital illustrations features different characters in their places of occupation. *Fish and nuts* acts as a visual account of mindset of the characters and their respective environments. I was inspired by my own personal workspace and the ways in which it is manipulated.

Adelaide Butler

Preloved

2018

found clothing, cotton thread, reflective tape, photo-transfer print, beads, buttons, metallic frame

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

We rely on our identities, and the perceived identities of others, in order to navigate and understand the world around us. Our identities, however, can be shaped by things that may not have even occurred, or that occurred radically differently from what we recall. My work explores the complexity of memory and identity. *Preloved* consists of nineteen clothing items, each with a unique and unknown history, collected to depict the identity of an imagined person. The memories of this character are communicated through images, text and symbols appropriated from real memories. They are embroidered, appliquéd and transferred onto each article to create a unified piece evoking nostalgia and curiosity.

Adelaide encourages patrons to take clothes with their hangers from the rack, study them and return them to the rack.

Ana Livia Maiorino

Untitled #1

from the *Oblivion* series

2018

oil pastels, watercolour, fibre-tipped pen, synthetic gold leaf on canvas

Haileybury Girls College, Berwick

Untitled #1 from the *Oblivion* series subtly explores the concept of oblivion using abstraction, scale, canvas, gold leaf, watercolour paints, fineliner pens and oil pastels. I am mesmerised by the word oblivion and the meaning of feeling lost. In my work, I employ elements and principles that hypnotise and create a space in which to be lost, evoking a sense of emptiness and confusion. In reading the work, the viewer is encouraged to engage with the patterns, materials and layers. I was inspired by Del Kathryn Barton's work in the 2017–18 exhibition *The Highway is a Disco* at the NGV.

Maddy Barbary

Impact

2018

ink on paper

St Joseph's College, Mildura

Impact is part of my exploration of the emotional, crashing feeling mental illness and self-destruction can inflict. I chose to use the imagery of a bird, specifically a raven, as a symbol of freedom and omen of death. It represents the ways emotional turmoil can have a physical effect. I aimed to capture the harsh and authentic reality by challenging myself to delve into my own mind's darkest corners. This guided my work, allowing me to experiment with a variety of materials and techniques. Researching artists such as Shawn Coss gave me insights into uniquely depicting mental illness.

Maxwell Milne

Caos 15

2018

black-and-white digital animation, sound,

1 min 10 sec

Donald High School, Donald

Caos 15 and *Caos 7* are inspired by a passion for animation and an interest in contemporary news reports, social media and the issue of online bullying. I am fascinated by contemporary society's inverted, illogical and inconsistent responses to important issues. One person's actions are condemned as anti-social and incite immediate chaos. Simultaneously, another commits a more violent action which goes ignored. I used hardware, such as my iPad, software for animation, and various objects, such as a pillow and a book, for sound. I admire Hayao Miyazaki's traditional animation techniques, his promotion of peace and his many flawed yet fundamentally good characters.

Maxwell Milne

Caos 7

2018

black-and-white digital animation, sound,

1 min 5 sec

Donald High School, Donald

Storm Bell

Interaction drawing IV

2018

fibre-tipped pen on watercolour paper

Wesley College, Glen Waverley

Interaction drawing IV was created with *Drawing machine III*, a device that allows people to participate in art production. Comprised of a free-wheeling, 44-gallon drum and drawing components, the machine responds to the subtle and chaotic dynamics of human movement. Powerful pushes, sweeping turns and abrupt stops translate as ink marks on paper coiled around the belly of my drawing machine. The work is underpinned by themes of fate and coincidence. The artist is disarmed of control by passing it on to another. Movement is expressed as visual language.

Place

The works of art in this room explore themes of place. A place can be as intimate and comforting as a bedroom, as seen in Charlotte Nunn's photography, or as disconcerting and alienating as the experience of immigrating to a new country, as depicted in Lien Zheng's *Liminal*. Danna Wan investigates the memory of places in *Degradation of home*, while Nathan Singe eerily captures the serenity and solitude of a dark and quiet urban landscape. Ariel Reyes, intrigued by questions of identity and stereotypes, undertook a DNA test that indicated a handful of ethnicities and associated nationalities, which were subsequently captured in several striking photographs. Aretha Brown, from Melbourne's western suburbs, explores the impact of intergenerational trauma as she comes to terms with her family's history as part of the Stolen Generation. *Maintaining the wa* by Jared Psaila graphically contrasts traditional and Westernised Japanese culture and landscape; Nicholas Gilbert's *STORM*, sculpted from intertwining tubes mimicking a tornado, highlights humanity's hand in accelerating climate change; and Monet Jones invites us to participate in her work *ghost. M.*, a small book recording the effect of displaced objects on a space and on human consciousness.

Danna Wan

Degradation of home

2018

pencil, ink and watercolour on wood panel

The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School, Melbourne

Degradation of home explores the ways perceived space in one's memory can fade. It is drawn from the warped and waning memories of my home in China. I incorporate my interest in the surreal nature of the human brain and the inherent fear of losing one's memories. Literature by Jorge Luis Borges and Mark Z. Danielewski informed my ideas. Aesthetically, I drew inspiration from the works of the cultures that shape my identity: Japanese traditional woodblock prints and the dimensions of a Chinese handscroll. Wooden boards and the transparency of watercolour allude to gradual disappearance. All is drawn from memory and without reference.

Ariel Reyes

Stereotypical

2018

inkjet print

Princes Hill Secondary College, Carlton North

My photography focuses on identity and stereotypes. We feel the need to define identity with a set of rules. Stereotypes reduce us to simplified and at times inaccurate ideas. I identify as Cuban, Serbian and Australian. Intrigued by the question of identity I took a DNA test, which disclosed a mix of races. I researched each nationality and decided to channel the stereotypes into photographic portrait studies. Artists of colour Atong Atem and Nadine Ijewere inspired me with their incorporation of cultural critique into their works. I also found Christian Thompson's work on culture and identity profoundly thought-provoking. My processes and production focus on experimentation and refinement.

Nathan Singe

Without a wristwatch that counts sheep

2018

digital print

St Michael's Grammar School, St Kilda

Without a wristwatch that counts sheep is a large digital print. Walking home from parties late at night I encounter isolated spaces. I enjoy their solitude. In contrast to a party, they are dreamlike. Film is a significant influence on my work. *Blade Runner's* ambient urban landscape rivets me. The films *Enter the Void*, *Waking Life* and *Clerks* piqued my interest in my manipulation of light and environment. Brassai's series *Paris de Nuit* established my fascination with the beauty of nightscapes. Multiple takes of a figure and subsequent software editing have distilled isolation and serenity onto a silent piece of paper.

Jared Psaila

Maintaining the wa

2018

fibre-tipped pen on paper

Hillcrest Christian College, Clyde North

Maintaining the wa directly contrasts traditional and Westernised Japanese culture. The ideal state of harmony (和 – pronounced 'wa') is core. It suggests a peaceful unity within a society. I wanted to express the importance of maintaining harmony through the subtle transitions between subject matter. The monochromatic nature of the drawing references qualities of Japanese manga, a major aspect of contemporary Japanese culture. As an enthusiast of Japanese culture, I wanted to recreate the intricacies of traditional landscapes and urban streets. Yuko Shimizu's and Kiyohiko Azuma's manga-style work and my travels were major sources of inspiration.

Cinaya Vargas

Isolated, looking out

2018

oil on aluminium and polyethylene

Terang College, Terang

My work of art focuses on the disconnection from society and the loneliness that often accompanies it. *Isolated, looking out* subtly features the contrast between a monochromatically rendered face of a lone figure and a colourful cityscape. She looks out towards the viewer without connecting. Even in a highly populated area, an individual can still feel alone. The miniature scale invites the viewer to look closely, to find something in the figure that may otherwise go unnoticed. Inspired by my own experiences, my hope is that the oil painting speaks to others possibly suffering from social anxiety or loneliness.

Antonia Salazar Martinez

On playing God (Centres of creation)

2018

Petri dish, resin, ground pigments, moss, plastic, natural rock, synthetic polymer paint, plasticine, sand, paper, fabric, soil, rock, painted balsa wood

Loyola College, Watsonia

My work explores human intervention in the evolution of the natural world. *On playing God (Centres of creation)* includes religious and scientific perspectives in this ongoing debate. Are humans dangerously intruding in creation's processes by using science to play God? The triptych is an allegorical work using miniature scenes inside Petri dishes to build a diorama. It is inspired by my enthusiasm for small-scale objects and began with research into microbial art and other forms of scientific art. My inspirations also include artists Luke Towan and Myriam Tillson. The mix of materials emphasises the dynamic between art, science and nature.

Lien Zheng

Liminal

2018

oil on composition board

Korowa Anglican Girls' School, Glen Iris

Liminal explores the intersection between space and time. It was inspired by a discussion with my dad about his journey to Australia to begin a new life. We visited the house he moved into on his first evening after immigrating. It is a tangible place that felt like an alternate universe contained in a single building. I imagined the decades of a future yet to be created and his time subsequently. Carefully blended oil paint applied in thin glazes achieves a moody, atmospheric quality à la Rick Amor, Edward Hopper and Clarice Beckett. I am drawn to works that evoke deep melancholy and mystery.

Charlotte Nunn

Untitled (Portraits)

2018

inkjet print on plywood

Avila College, Mount Waverley

I chose photography to explore the private spaces and actions that make up individuals' everyday routines. Playing with locations, a Polaroid camera, manual photography, digital photography and film delivered an articulate path to document subjects. The resolved works of art are digital images, electronically edited to create the aged aesthetic found in analogue and Polaroid images. I studied techniques and styles used by artists Anton Corbijn and Markus Jokela because of their interest in capturing subjects in intimate settings to communicate a narrative. Black-and-white photography created a consistent focus on mannerisms, environment and similarities.

Francesca Sulfaro

False thrills

from the *Moving Surrealism* series

2018

colour digital video, silent, looped

Genazzano FCJ College, Kew

The *Moving Surrealism* series intends to capture a moment in time with a twist. Each work in this series brings to life an element of the photograph. The Surrealist René Magritte, with his engaging and paradoxical works of art, have inspired my exploration. A number of other artists such as Callen Schaub aided the development of my ideas. I am in awe of cinematographers' ability to capture moments within a single frame. Moving imagery evokes emotion as does still photography and together magic happens. My digital photographs were manipulated in Photoshop and imported to Werble to produce nine cohesive works.

Nicholas Gilbert

STORM

2018

tulle, polystyrene balls, clear tubing, chicken wire, wood and smoke machine

Ballarat Grammar, Wendouree

STORM was developed to represent the serious threat climate change poses to the existence of our planet. The ways in which the tubes intertwine evoke the twisted force and motion of tornadoes. The wearer is fully immersed, trapped and constricted in its centre and is powerless over the surrounding forces. The form behind the wearer represents a natural force that is slowly but surely destroying life for humankind. My wearable works of art are inspired by my strong interest in fashion as well as the practices of people who highlight environmental concerns, such as textile artist Vanessa Barragao and fashion designer Iris van Herpen.

Aretha Brown

Time is on our side, you mob

2018

gouache, pencil, synthetic polymer paint, fibre-tipped pens, spray paint and gloss spray adhesive on composition board

Williamstown High School, Williamstown

Time is on our side, you mob, my first self-portrait, is personal and political. It depicts me as an observer of my emotions. I explore themes of detachment and isolation, especially within the cityscape around me. The use of text is a political statement, forcing the viewer to critically question the nature of Australian society. Symbols such as a Metro train, an Indigenous flag and council blocks are significant to my identity and highlight my experience as an Indigenous teenager from Melbourne's west. Social advocacy, modelled heroically by people like Gary Foley and Eddie Mabo, inspires me and bleeds into my painting, shaping its political style and commentary.

Monet Jones

ghost. M.

2018

artist's book: laser prints, 120 pages, glued binding, cardboard book

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

I wanted to explore how collections of objects represent and affect space. Andrea Löffke's and On Kawara's work and methodology intrigue me and inform my practice. *ghost. M.* was a performative piece in which I brought some of my bedroom belongings (books, toys, bedding, a lamp, etc.) to other people's houses and slept there for a night. I repeated this ten times over the year. Written reflections and interviews were recorded with people from each house. I altered and obstructed the final responses with additions of visual material using the letters and form of the words. In turn this was printed into an object to continue the performance.

As part of the work of art, Monet invites patrons to read the book.

Hugh Williamson

Protective services

2018

poster: inkjet print on offset lithograph

Camberwell Grammar School, Canterbury

My work explores the Japanese concept of wabi-sabi and how society collaborates and shares knowledge to create greatness. Using layering, I aim to create harmonious connections between ideas, thoughts and patterns and ultimately provide insights into the mind and popular culture. *Protective services* and *Industry* are studies of contemporary society and the ways in which businesses and corporate greed contribute and control the individual. Each work was developed on Photoshop and Illustrator and then mounted onto old advertising posters stripped from buildings. My own media posters were then pasted on top. The ordinary is profoundly beautiful.

Hugh Williamson

Industry

2018

poster: inkjet print on offset lithograph

Camberwell Grammar School, Canterbury

Talulah Chauvin-Cunningham

Still life

2018

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Princes Hill Secondary College, Carlton North

Still life is a personal investigation into tradition and devotion in painting and the domestic realm. All of my interests – religion, traditional still-life painting and the domestic realm – share the common requirements of time and devotion. The acts of praying, painting and living call for perseverance and practice. Domestic subject matter – vases of flowers and bowls of fruit on a wooden table – emphasises the importance of the pure, palpable natural world. The plastic water bottle contextualises the work in the contemporary world. In creating a traditional still-life painting using acrylic paint, I explored the ideas of art-making itself.

Maia Braden

Secrecy

2018

inkjet print

Methodist Ladies' College, Kew

Two animal-masked humans in a beautiful, dream-like location provoke curiosity and a sense of the surreal. My work explores the hidden beauty and quietness of landscapes through four conceptual ideas: serenity, secrecy, soft and still, and silence. I used digital and analogue photographic processes to capture different degrees and narratives of my overall theme, quiet. I have drawn inspiration from artists Polixeni Papapetrou and Prue Stent, who capture a magical aura in their photographs. My images of a fanciful and mystical story of hidden love between a rabbit and a pigeon explore the dynamics of conflicting identities, quiet spaces and human understanding.

Grace Robinson

The Women

2018

inkjet print

Princes Hill Secondary College, Carlton North

The Women is a series of portraits inspired by the 2018 National Aboriginal and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) theme 'Because of her, we can!' NAIDOC Week celebrated the incredible achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who, filled with unbridled power and pride, fight for justice. My five portraits explore a diverse and shared history of Country and First Peoples. 35 mm film photography taken in my homemade studio, and subsequent digital image conversion, captured the indomitable strength and rich diversity of Australia's Indigenous peoples. Rosemary Laing's large-scale images that eloquently investigate the complex nature of place, landscape and culture inspired the development of my own work.