

TOP ARTS 2020

ARTWORK LABELS

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Top Arts 2020

Top Arts 2020, part of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) Season of Excellence festival, celebrates the distinctive achievements of art education through works of art by forty-three artists from government, Catholic and independent schools throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria. Across painting, photography, participatory and performance art, and many other forms, students in *Top Arts 2020* astutely and sensitively express their ideas of beauty, daring, protest, existential angst, honesty, love and transformation.

From a field of more than 1700 applications, a selection panel comprising VCAA state reviewers, a VCAA country representative and the NGV's *Top Arts* curator assessed students' works based on conceptual development, technical excellence, aesthetic considerations, awareness of past and contemporary art practices, and individuality and innovation.

Top Arts 2020 is presented in three sections: 'perception', 'identity' and 'simpatico', representing participating students' approaches to seeing, knowing and embracing the world.

Online essay available at ngv.melbourne/top-arts-2020

Jebediah Costin

Howl

2019

enamel on canvas

Belmont High School, Belmont

Howl is inspired by the abstract idea of language. The title references Allen Ginsberg's poem 'Howl for Carl Solomon' and the sound of a cacophony of howling words. For Costin, the messy, tangled black lines represent the meaninglessness of language when words are just sounds and text just lines. The artist also suggests that the expressive gestural lines reflect the confusion, noisiness and instability of cities.

Lucinda Campbell

A body

2019

linocut, oil pastel and shellac on washi paper

Sacré Coeur, Glen Iris

A body references the vulnerability of the human form. Campbell rejects sanitised and idealised representations of the body that dominate the mainstream media and depicts disfigured body forms and amputated limbs. Inspired by Surrealism, to create this work Campbell explored the technique of automatism to access subconscious thoughts and to organically generate images.

Ainsley Barwise

Architectonic arrangements

2019

synthetic polymer paint on wood

Woodleigh School, Langwarrin South

By reducing architectural landscapes to their most essential forms, *Architectonic arrangements* presents a new perspective on architectural structures. Each of the three parts of this triptych includes a laser-cut wooden prism. Each panel is painted in a different colour, using different hues and saturations of that colour to create tonal shifts that replicate the shadows created by architectural structures. Barwise took inspiration from twentieth-century art movements, including Cubism, Pop Art, Constructivism and Geometric Abstraction.

Lucy Randall

The shuffler

2019

synthetic polymer clay, fabric, acrylic paint, dog hair, aluminium foil, wire, masking tape, wooden base

St Leonard's College, Brighton

Hyper-realistic and delicately scaled, *The shuffler*, presents the human body as its own work of art, questioning standards of modern beauty and the devaluing of the aged in our communities. The subject, Mr Tak Wong, an eighty-seven-year-old man originally from Hong Kong served in the Royal Hong Kong Police Force before immigrating to Australia. His daily routine, practised for twenty years, is an afternoon run around Randall's neighbourhood in Hampton.

Perception

Throughout history, artists have encouraged us to see the world more deeply by capturing its complexity, beauty and challenges. In this section, Bonni McLaren expresses her fascination of the underwater world and tests powers of perception and imagination. Nicholas Burgos studies the dangers of helicopter parenting, and Ignatz Cady Freer comments on the difficulty of making sense of existence. Dusty Diddle's *An index of childhood memories, anger and intervention* is a personal account of when the artist first become aware of racial discrimination and is a proactive and positive response to combat it. Lucinda Campbell's *A body* involved challenging herself to work outside her artistic comfort zone, and Laura Heron brings traditional and contemporary cultural forms together to question how we define vice. Further into the exhibition, Juliana Neild, a modern-day Heraclitus, philosophically ponders the elusive concept of change through 144 etchings assembled to mirror a pair of searching eyes.

Bonni McLaren

Where did you go?

2019

gouache and watercolour on paper

Trinity College, Colac

A bird's-eye view of a lone rowboat, with idle oars and a lifebuoy, in a patterned sea of deep blue colours lure the viewer. This immersive composition reflects McLaren's love of colour, pattern and sea. Her passion for Vincent van Gogh's vibrant blue tones and a chance fish painting workshop inspired *Where did you go?* The work suggests both simple and metaphoric questions for the viewer: Who is steering the boat? Why is the lifebuoy abandoned? Does the loneliness and isolation point to something bigger?

Ignatz Cady Freer

Tubularis acrobatics

2019

colour digital video, sound, 7 mins 3 secs

Collingwood College, Collingwood

Ideas about order and chaos are at the centre of this work. The costumed performers in this video undertake repetitive and meaningless tasks, interacting only with each other's movements. Trapped in a circular existence they appear driven by the human need to find meaning. In addition to Bruce Nauman's video art, this absurdist, theatre-like performance is influenced by the abstract costume designs of @vanillajellaba and Oskar Schlemmer.

Nicholas Burgos

The cosseter

2019

oil on canvas

Mazenod College, Mulgrave

The subject of *The cosseter* is Burgos's younger sister. The artist is interested in how adults influence children's development, including how their imaginative and creative nature may be stifled by the twenty-first century preoccupation with child safety. Despite constraints, including a muffled mouth, which limit his sister's interaction with the world, playfulness, curiosity and determination prevail, and she breaks free.

Dusty Diddle

An index of childhood memories, anger and intervention

2019

fibre-tipped pen and calligraphy pen on cardboard, found metal drawers

Eltham High School, Eltham

Diddle's observations of racism in contemporary life inspired *An index of childhood memories, anger and intervention*. The work comprises thirty-two drawings housed in a set of discarded office drawers. The drawings include references to childhood memories and innocence, as well as feelings of rage. The artist left copies of each drawing in public places around Melbourne, free for people to take home. The interactivity of the work provokes audiences to actively engage with the themes explored by the artist and to consider art as a form of protest.

If available, reproduced drawings beside the work of art may be taken by visitors.

View the performative element of Diddle's work via the QR code.



Angelo Ooi

Transience

2019

earthenware

Manifestations

2019

earthenware

Xavier College, Kew

Exploring his interest in diverse cultures, Ooi experiments with culturally significant ceramic techniques. His own Australian Malaysian-Chinese family background is an important part of his work: *Transience* represents his Australian heritage and *Manifestations* his Chinese heritage. The forms and colours symbolise his journey to acknowledge and integrate both cultures as part of his identity and life. Empty cylindrical forms imitate the enduring strength of gumtrees and comment on issues such as mental health and racism. Black and white allude to Chinese ink paintings. Subtle cracks are hints of personal resilience.

Identity

Portraiture features significantly and consistently in *Top Arts* applications. The human person is a fascinating and rich subject. The capturing of an individual and their character has evolved over time to include a diverse range of imaginative and innovative forms. Works of art in this area creatively and critically embrace challenging questions about the complexity and realities of human identity across spectrums within culture, age, ethnicity, sexuality and gender. Grace Stevenson's *Fast forward* captures a girl within a television monitor playing out an adult identity. Nearby, *The shuffler* by Lucy Randall delicately models an eighty-seven-year-old ex-policeman's fitness regime. Zara Kimber interrogates propaganda's methods of using popular identity with *Free showbags!* Angelo Ooi reconciles his cultural backgrounds through *Manifestations and Transience*. Lewis Egan's *Hallway portraits* and Ethan Tan's *Androgyny* question cultural ideals and society's simplification of gender. Further into the exhibition, Cat Distel's *Patchwork* is a distillation of materials and introspections about the layers of identity. Corey Lyu's self-portrait *The siren's song* presents the artist dramatically coming face to face with his personal struggles and identity. Like David Bennie's *End of the road*, Lyu emboldens the viewer to face the adventure of life's journey.

Ethan Tan

Androgyny

2019

inkjet print on aluminium and polyethylene

Kew High School, Kew

This photographic work is one from a three-part series, *Androgyny*. Through this work, Tan explores societal ideas of masculinity and femininity, including the allocation of superficial traits, behaviours and expressions according to gender. In this closely cropped photographic self-portrait, the make-up, jewels, underarm hair and artificial pink lighting challenge gender stereotypes and highlight the objectification of the human form. As the subject, Tan represents his honest view of himself along the gender spectrum.

Charlie O'Brien

Prosperity

2019

oil on composition board

Northcote High School, Northcote

A lone young man embraces the dark unknown with outstretched arms. He is wearing all white, his feet are immersed in rippling water and his hand balances a globe reflecting an incongruous landscape. *Prosperity* is a response to unsettling moments of being out of place and playing to the social pressures of fitting in. It draws on O'Brien's experience as a foreign exchange student.

Zoe Joseph

Impression

2019

graphite on paper

Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar, Ivanhoe

Impression explores the world of feelings and concepts of duality found within the self. The face is presented as an external mask that hides multiple and changing feelings. Using long exposure photography as a reference for the drawing, Joseph creates a dynamic representation of emotional states. The motion represents a feeling of internal dissonance for the artist and her self-confessed tendency to distance herself from others. The darkness of the eyes symbolises internal complexities and struggles.

Grace Stevenson

Fast forward

2019

oil on board, television frame, resin

Fintona Girls' School, Balwyn

Stevenson navigates the theme of growth in adults and children. The child wears adult clothing and jewellery, wishing they could 'fast forward' their life, in contrast to adults who often wish theirs would rewind. These ideas are explored through multiple visual and material references to television.

Zoe Joseph

Untitled (façade)

2019

oil on canvas

Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar, Ivanhoe

Joseph's self-portrait explores the idea of duality, and the physical and mental aspects of self. Joseph sees herself as constantly moving, evolving and growing. In this large-scale portrait she gazes directly at the viewer, but the facial expression and body language are ambiguous, and the dark space that surrounds the figure suggests mystery, isolation and emptiness. Contrasts such as darkness and light, stillness and movement are used to capture the complexity of the self.

Lewis Egan

Hallway portraits

2019

inkjet prints

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Egan's monochrome self-portraits convey his childhood experience of growing up as a boy with a narrow understanding of gender identity. The Australian idealisation of hyper-masculinity hampered Egan's ability to express himself authentically and involved him in a long psychological battle as he tried to appease a cultural ideal. *Hallway portraits* was photographed using a 1930s Voigtlander Bessa camera, 120mm black-and-white film and triple exposures.

Zara Kimber

Free showbags!

2019

performance; badges, tote bags, inkjet prints, bottle openers, business cards, stickers

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Free showbags! playfully interrogates the world of contemporary propaganda through performance and giveaways. The work consists of 150 'showbags' containing an assortment of Zara Kimber merchandise ready to be distributed to an adoring public. Visual conventions inspired by contemporary culture and the Chinese revolutionary propaganda of Mao Zedong are used to construct an idyllic impression of the artist. Addressing themes of mass manipulation and advertising, the humorous and engaging presentation of this work utilises a key strategy of advertising: audience amusement.

Kimber will perform her work in the gallery at the following times:

12 March at 6.30pm

18 April at 12pm

13 June at 12pm

11 July at 12pm

Her performance can also be viewed via the QR code:



Cat Distel

Patchwork

2019

inkjet print

The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School, Melbourne

What makes up a person's existence? Self-portraiture presented Distel with an opportunity for introspection. In *Patchwork* the artist exhibits herself as someone pieced together from different parts. To create this work, Distel layered assorted materials and textures on transparent acetate sheets and scanned them. The high-resolution scans were then digitally manipulated and stitched together into one image. Memories, dreams, self-reflection, film, VR, the sub-conscious, Dadaism and Surrealism merge to inspire this work.

Marcus Damon Bedford

Ballarat

2019

fibre-tipped pen on paper

Ballarat Grammar, Wendouree

Bedford investigates the relationship between architecture and identity. The composition includes structures from the gold-rush era that are of personal significance to Bedford. These include the local primary school, fish and chip shop and the artist's home in Ballarat. Inspired by the photography of Andreas Gursky, the perspective has been intentionally altered so each of the twenty-four buildings is given equal significance. To create a reference for this dense and intense patchwork-like ink drawing, Bedford photographed each building individually and digitally edited them together.

Chloe Newberry

Circles and circles and circles and cirices and circles n circlesxm an circlkes

2019

wool yarn, cotton

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Inspired by artistic collaborations with the natural world and patterns in nature, Newberry's work focuses on cycles. Through wrapping binding yarn sourced from balls of spun sheep's wool around scrap fabric, the artist references cycles that connect sheep and humans – the resource and resourceful. Newberry further celebrates her concept through the circular interconnections that form the composition of the work. As part of her process, Newberry employs a method of automatism, in which there is no plan and intuition takes charge. The work functions both as a sculptural wall piece and garment.

Milla Weideman

Harriet, presence

2019

oil and graphite on canvas board

Flinders Christian Community College, Tyabb

Harriet, presence is a series of studies of the artist's younger sister that aim to capture a sense of her character, rather than a likeness. The composition of each work is restrained, with the graphite draught work left deliberately visible in places to highlight the process of creating art and of observing directly from life. Weideman intuitively selected the colour palette, which reflects the subject's personality. Throughout a year of filling sketchbooks with portraits, the artist engaged in a dynamic process of investigating how we perceive another person, observing the wonderfully unique parts that make up a whole.

Laura Heron

Vices

2019

inkjet print, posca pen

Albert Park College, Albert Park

Heron's work references traditional Dutch still-life painting, presenting a contemporary take on the subject matter and moral messages associated with this tradition. The dark, moody photograph features natural objects, such as flowers and fruit. These are juxtaposed with items that reference negative aspects of contemporary culture, including human susceptibility to alcohol, sugar, tobacco and gambling. The word 'vices' appears as a bold white graffiti tag splashed across the framed photograph. While this suggests an act of vandalism, it draws attention to the contradiction that graffiti is a crime, while the vices referenced in the image are legal.

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The range of art in this exhibition has been chosen from a field of more than 1700 applications. Conceptual development, technical excellence, clever aesthetic considerations, awareness of past and contemporary art practices, individuality and innovation are key criteria sought by the selection panel comprising VCAA state reviewers, a VCAA country representative and the NGV's *Top Arts* curator.

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Online essay available at ngv.melbourne/top-arts-2020

Chloe Newberry

Circle wearables

2019

calico, scrap fabric, human hair

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Circle wearables is a collection of interactive soft sculptures that function as a garment when activated by the body. The audience is encouraged to wear them, engage in play, and form new circular relationships with the body and other sculptures. Balls of human hair on the surface of the work emphasise the connection between the body and the work. The circle is a prevalent theme in Newberry's work. She explores the idea of absence by removing sections of the object, allowing the form to become circular or uncircular. The shape of the sculptures and garments were subconsciously selected through the artistic practice of automatism.

The artist invites you to try on one or more of the sculptures from *Circle wearables*.
Photograph yourself and post to social media #NGVTopArts

Katarina Blignaut

Corner of melancholy

2019

oil and pencil on wood panel

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

Nostalgic memories of the artist's childhood in Sydney are central to this work. Blignaut investigates the subjective qualities of memories and human attempts to preserve them. The landscape paintings are loosely composed using stippled oil paint and left incomplete to express how hard it is to accurately reconstruct memories.

Eve Quartermaine

Kisha 1

2019

oil on canvas

Fitzroy High School, Fitzroy

Kisha intensely studies the viewer and we are left wondering about her thoughts. Beginning with a focus on happiness, Quartermaine notes that after looking at all her potential directions the work 'evolved into a broader and more important theme: mental health'. Inspired by the artist Chuck Close, Quartermaine uses portraiture to interrogate mental health. For the artist, the scale and the intensity of detail in this work represents the importance of mental health for Year 12 students.

Corey Lyu

The siren's song

2019

stoneware

Camberwell Grammar School, Canterbury

A confrontational moment with internal struggles and personal identity is given form, texture and vibrancy in *The siren's song*. Lyu's expressive self-portraits feature extravagant 1950s hairstyles and drag queen make-up and have been sculpted from white raku clay and embellished with multiple layers of coloured glazes. The title and theme of the work reference the Sirens in Homer's *Odyssey*, whose beauty and sweet singing had great destructive power. For Lyu, internal struggles are a source of inspiration and unique identity, but are also toxic and dangerous. Lyu interviewed members of the drag community in Melbourne and was inspired by their honest descriptions of their struggles with identity.

Simpatico

Awe, anger, joy, sadness, love, fear and hope are emotions expressed by *Top Arts* exhibitors in this gallery. Clever choices of subject matter, materials, processes, art elements and principles vividly and palpably communicate feeling. The artist deeply connects with the subject and invites the viewer into the same intimacy. 'Simpatico', a word of Latin origin difficult to fully translate into English, articulates a deep connection and compatibility beyond words and emotion between two or more people. Art offers the same: Bianca Julicher's \$ is a raw cry for environmental justice, Memphis Neagle's *Lost* offers the viewer access to a world of unfiltered desperation, and Lizzie Hall empathetically captures an oppressed person's plea for humanity in her work *If you prick us, do we not bleed?* We are also offered hope and assurance through works from Tasmia Islam, Jack Hewish and Jen Wu. The natural world and abiding family relationships in these works are represented through painting, photography and animation. Claire Price's *Worthy of the Lord's affection* symbolises the artist's own struggles, and Zach Smyrnis graphically protests discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation and race. *Murrundindi* by Shae Jones personifies simpatico. The painting expresses her deep respect for Aboriginal Ngurungaeta (head man) Murrundindi and the world's oldest continuous living culture. Along with other works in this section, *Murrundindi* invites the viewer into a greater story.

Kiara White

Succulent cake

2019

homemade vanilla cake, vanilla buttercream icing/frosting, food dye, chocolate biscuits, lolly snakes, simple syrup

Aquinas College, Ringwood

This edible work reflects the artist's interest in our sensory responses to different stimulation. Interested in how our senses are stimulated by the natural world, White took nature as her subject matter but replicated it in cake and icing. Natural forms, edible materials and sweet smells come together in an unexpected way in this work. Designed to be eaten when presented as a participatory work, *Succulent cake* evokes a multi-sensorial reaction that includes taste.

White's work of art has many elements, including its construction. View it via the QR code.



Monica Jagic

Sure thing

2019

colour digital animation, sound, 55 sec (looped)

Siena College, Camberwell

Windows XP, the computer operating system of the artist's childhood, and the animation technique of rotoscoping were used to create this colourful, eye-catching work. Inspired by the aesthetics of the early 2000s, cinematography, vaporwave art and the prints of Japanese illustrator Eizin Suzuki, *Sure thing* invites viewers to escape into a world of nostalgia inspired by the artist's own experiences and memories.

Lael McCoy

Void

2019

bitumen, oil medium and white ink pen on paper

St Leonard's College, Brighton

In her work *Void*, McCoy explores the nature of hope in relation to mental health. Expressing ideas related to the loss or absence of hope were of particular interest to the artist. McCoy created the work using layers of bitumen, oil and white ink on rag paper, working in an abstract, expressive style. Bitumen, which is most commonly associated with roads, alludes to the idea of a journey.

David John William Bennie

End of the road

2019

synthetic aerosol paint on canvas

Camberwell Grammar School, Canterbury

Bennie explores the transition between significant life stages. Made as the artist was completing his final year of high school, *End of the road* presents a tunnel as a metaphor for the narrow and linear nature of school. Stencilling, vibrant colours and scenic hand-drawn images present a romanticised ideal of the future for young people, who journey into the unknown after completing their secondary education.

Juliana Neild

Eye make change

2019

etchings, pleating pins, painted board

Presentation College Windsor, Windsor

Neild ponders the elusive concept of change, and themes of disintegration and layering, using a process of etching and printing. *Eye make change* is created from 144 unique impressions taken from a single printing plate. The artist made random sandpaper scrapings across the printing plate after each print to create more lines and subsequently darker printed images. Assembled together, the 144 impressions form a pair of searching human eyes.

Memphis Neagle

Lost

2019

inkjet prints

Firbank Grammar School, Brighton

Four of an original series of seven photographic works show a figure defensive, doubled over and collapsing, engulfed by repeating psychedelic patterns. Neagle explores the nature of human addiction: addictions to technology, gambling, drugs, alcohol and others. Following sequential stages, a battle between a weakening subject and their invisible foe unfolds, with the subject appearing to be subsumed by their ordeal and trapped in their own world.

Jen Wu

Roots

2019

black-and-white digital animation, sound, 37 sec

Ruyton Girls' Grammar, Kew

This work explores how culture is transmitted, particularly the role family plays in the propagation of cultural traditions and identity across generations. The animation presents the artist's family and childhood memories of conversations, portraits and storytelling. Wu investigated the work of other artists who are children of Chinese immigrants. The charcoal drawing and smudged transitions reflect the artist's interest in William Kentridge's animations. With an ambient soundtrack, *Roots* evokes a sense of retrospection and intimacy, prompting viewers to reflect on their own childhood experiences and cultural identity.

Jack Hewish

Portraits of nature

2019

inkjet prints

Marcellin College, Bulleen

Taking inspiration from nature and photographer Ansel Adams, Hewish's photographic series seeks to focus attention on the beauty of natural forms that often goes unnoticed in the contemporary world. Employing techniques of studio portraiture, Hewish isolates his subjects against plain backgrounds and uses studio lighting and interesting perspectives to highlight the beauty of natural shapes and figures.

Jezabel Furlong

Untitled

2019

etching, monotype, collaged photographs

Alice Miller School, Macedon

In this panoramic landscape the scene transitions from peaceful mountain views, rendered using etching and monoprinting, to a dense and chaotic cityscape constructed using photocollage. Furlong sees parallels between the fragility of the natural world and the human psyche and through her work seeks to highlight the need to preserve balance in both.

JiaHua (Austin) Zou

Fractured

2019

watercolour and coloured pencil on paper

Brighton Grammar School, Brighton

Fractured explores the devastating consequences of war. Zou's work is set in the Kosovo War of 1998–99 during which many lives were lost. A destroyed home, burn marks, disfigured poles and dilapidated flooring convey the rupture of a once peaceful existence. The floating black-and-white photos of families are reminiscent of mementos at funerals, representing the death of a family. The desolate scene, rendered in delicate watercolour, is an elegy to those killed and a call to not repeat such brutality.

Lizzie Hall

If you prick us, do we not bleed?

2019

ballpoint pen on paper

Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School, Southbank

A love of literature and theatre feeds Hall's artistic imagination. *If you prick us, do we not bleed?* portrays one of Shakespeare's most complex villains, Shylock, from *The Merchant of Venice*. Having been subjected to mistreatment by Venetian Christians and betrayed by his own daughter, Shylock makes a plea to reject discrimination and anti-Semitism in a poignant and intense soliloquy. The raw emotion expressed in Shylock's haggard features in this work is intended to confront the viewer and provoke sympathy for Shylock's plight.

Prue Wilkinson

Cage of confusion (from the series *Confinement*)

2019

watercolour, gouache, charcoal and graphite on paper

Girton Grammar School, Bendigo

One of a series of three watercolour and gouache paintings depicting the anguish of people experiencing confinement, this work was inspired by personal and family experiences. *Cage of confusion* graphically conveys the lost, scared and confused expressions of an elderly family member living with Alzheimer's disease. The complicated nature of Alzheimer's is mirrored by complex vertical and horizontal lines of colour dripping from the subject's flesh.

Christina Rankin

Infection

oil on canvas

2019

Wonthaggi Secondary College, Wonthaggi

Rankin explores the potential consequences of society's actions or inactions. *Infection* depicts the possible impact the anti-vaccination movement may have with the return of diseases such as measles. Despite being visibly ill, the children have carefree expressions and are happily absorbed by the screen in front of them.

Matt McLean

Anamnesis

2019

graphite pencil on paper

Padua College, Mornington

Anamnesis tells a story of sickness, family and emotions. The artist's grandfather, Norman, has Alzheimer's disease and the depiction of him explores the multifaceted and fragile nature of memory, as well as the impact that loss of memory has on a person and their family. In this portrait, three emotions – pride, sorrow and bliss – are captured on one face to communicate the different emotional states that Norman can experience in a single conversation. The portrait is rendered in graphite pencil on tan paper, using a meticulous mark-making to capture the sitter's personality and the family's experience.

Shae Jones

Portrait of Murrundindi

2019

oil on canvas

St Margaret's School, Berwick

Murrundindi, the subject of this portrait, is Ngurungaeta (head man) of the Wurundjeri, traditional custodians of lands and waterways in parts of the greater Melbourne area. The artist met Murrundindi when he visited her school, where he is a respected part of the school community. The life-size portrait celebrates Murrundindi's role as a cultural leader, and conveys his energy, strength and presence. Jones depicts him wearing a possum skin cloak, which has great cultural significance for Aboriginal people in the south-east of Australia. For the artist, the possum skin cloak worn over a formal white shirt suggests the unity of traditional and contemporary culture.

Elli Gale

Place

2019

linocuts

Balwyn High School, Balwyn

Where do you feel most comfortable, safe and assured? How does it connect to your personal identity? Place can be a physical space to call your own. In this series of prints, this view of place is reflected in an image of a classic suburban Australian home. Place can also be intangible, a feeling or emotion gained from a specific place, a relationship, or a task that creates a feeling of validation or comfort.

Claire Price

Worthy of the Lord's affection

2019

charcoal and pastel on paper on wood

St Francis Xavier College, Beaconsfield

Price expresses her conflicting thoughts and experiences of her religious tradition, Catholicism. It has been a place of comfort and, more recently, the cause of dissonance. The diptych, drawn with charcoal and pastel is a complex amalgam of appropriated historic images depicting heartbroken individuals. Fighting their own battles, Price's struggle with her religion and identity is personified by Mary, the Mother of God, and Laocoon, the Trojan priest. The monochromatic colour scheme elicits a sense of melancholy and sombreness, while the broken composition echoes the pain of discord.

Tasmia Islam

Holding life

2019

oil on canvas

Suzanne Cory High School, Werribee

Holding life illustrates the innate connection that humans feel to water. Also recognising humanity's dependency on water, Islam seeks to represent water as the giver of life. Islam uses her own hand as a key element in the composition of the painting. Water intimately fills the spaces between her fingers while simultaneously keeping her hand afloat. The hyper-realistic oil painting was created by a process of wet-on-wet layering, using glazes and tints.

Bianca Julicher

\$

2019

copper, resin, found metal sign

Woodleigh School, Langwarrin South

At what price is the planet valued? Julicher considers the health of the earth and causes of environmental destruction in \$. Using text as a key element in the work, Julicher engages the viewer in a dialogue about the human impact on the planet. Subverting expectations that art should be aesthetically pleasing, the work aims instead to shock and unsettle the viewer. Non-conventional materials including upcycled rusting metal, polished copper and long-lasting resin are used to highlight themes of degradation and waste, oil spills and permanency.

Zach Smyrnis

Progress comics

2019

copic marker, fibre tipped pen, pencil on paper

Oakleigh Grammar, Oakleigh

This series of politically and socially charged comic book covers highlights contemporary issues. The triptych crosses themes of gender equality, LGBTQI rights and racial discrimination. Each cover presents well-known figures alongside satirical antagonists: real-life personalities are transformed into imaginary creatures. The series creates a complete narrative. *The Patriarchy Punishers* depicts a tense scene just before a fight, *The Uni-Diverse Command* shows a fight in action and *The LGB Team* illustrates the success of winning a fight, leaving the audience uplifted.

Corey Lyu

Pillow talk

2019

tent, pillows, cotton fabric, light, speakers

Camberwell Grammar School, Canterbury

In this work the artist has created an intimate space to explore the complexity of human emotions. For Lyu the bed is both a place of vulnerability where people ruminate deeply on suppressed emotions and thoughts, and a place of comfort and sweet dreams. In *Pillow talk*, snippets of interviews recorded with the artist's friends invite the audience to encounter honest and sometimes confronting expressions of emotion. The pillow fortress offers a place of healing from hurt.