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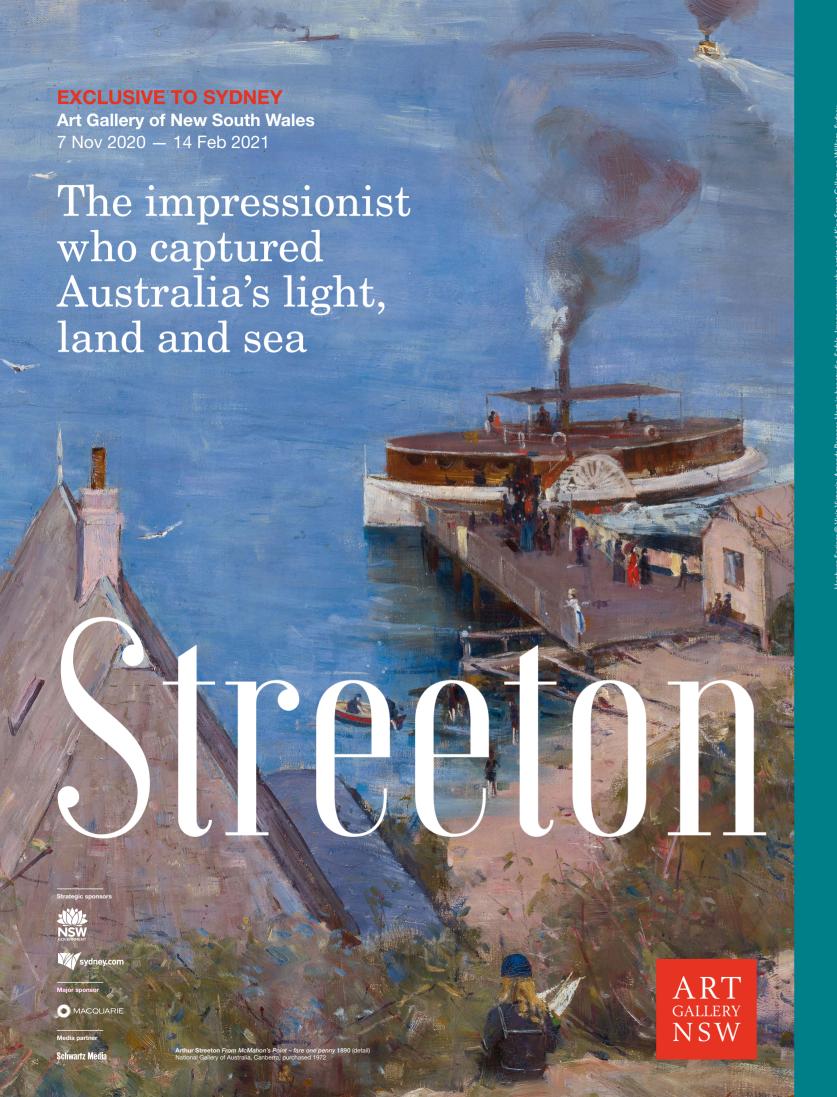
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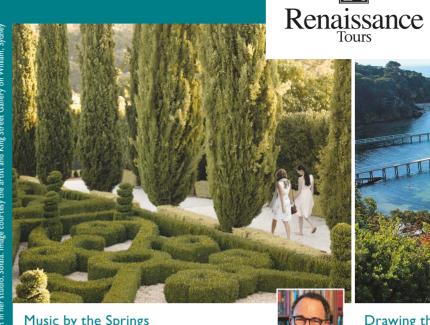
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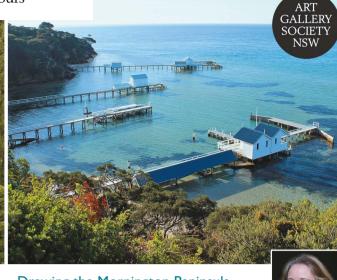




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# **Art & Emotion**From Rome, with love: Donato Barcaglia's Love is blind

**BY** LAURIE BENSON

Donato Barcaglia Love is blind (Amore Accieca) c.1875 (detail) Presented by Carol Sisson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020 FREE EXHIBITION at Old Treasury **ONLINE NOW** 

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Claudia Moodoonuthi with the NGV design store skateboard deck featuring her designs Brisbane, Queensland. 2020. Creative Director: Luke Dean. Photographer: Elisabeth Willis. Hair & Make up: Ginelle Dale. Production: Jessinta Jones

Moodoonuthi

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Every effort has been made to obtain accurate information for this publication. The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the NGV.

Donato Barcaglia Love is blind (Amore Accieca) c. 1875 (detail) Presented by Carol Sisson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020



#### FROM THE NGV

As an unpredictable year draws to a close, I extend my sincere gratitude to you for continuing to engage with art and support our creative community throughout this time. We have been delighted to share more of the NGV Collection than ever before and celebrate the critical role that art and design can play, every day, in our lives. So, too, the continued generosity from NGV corporate partners and individual supporters throughout this turbulent time has been heartening, and highlights both individual and collective commitment to endeavours that provide joy, hope and strength during uncertain times.

In this issue we meet the Australian sculptor, filmmaker, performance artist and writer Ivan Durrant, and through the artist's voice we are introduced to works that trace the evolution of Durrant's career of almost five decades. I am also proud to introduce the work of emerging Sydneybased, Chinese-Australian artist Louise Zhang, the 2020 MECCA Holiday collaborator. Three of Zhang's bold and colourful works will enter the NGV Collection as part of our ongoing collaboration with MECCA Brands. I thank MECCA founder and co-CEO and NGV Foundation Board Member Jo Horgan for supporting this acquisition.

New to the NGV Collection, a rare and remarkable nineteenth-century painting by English artist Harden Sidney Melville depicts an early interaction between Torres Strait Islanders and European maritime explorers. The painting, Torres Strait Canoe and five men at the site of a wreck on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands, off Cape Grenville, North East Australia, 1874, provides an insight into a part of Australian history that is largely undocumented in art and absent from our displays. We are extremely thankful for the support of Warren Clark Bequest and Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Beguest in acquiring this important work.

We also return to some icons of Australian art, looking at the recently restored *The purple noon's transparent might*, 1896, by Arthur Streeton and seeing for the first time the colours of the painting as the artist, more than 120 years ago, had intended them to be seen. We also revisit Tom Roberts's *Shearing the rams*, 1890, ahead of its temporary return to the region that inspired it, as part of a special exhibition at Wangaratta Art Gallery.

The Gallery's commitment to expanding the presentation of global design practices is introduced in 'The influence of nature', which traces the Art Nouveau

movement through the NGV Collection, highlighting key recent acquisitions supported by Merv Keehn and Sue Harlow, Peter and Ivanka Canet, Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, Dr Philip Williams AM and Elizabeth Williams, and NGV Supporters of Decorative Arts.

I look forward to welcoming you back to the Gallery again soon to experience the Collection and from 19 December the free large-scale contemporary art and design exhibition NGV Triennial 2020 at NGV International. In the meantime, please enjoy reading this issue of NGV Magazine and the art and design that inspires the stories within.

#### Tony Ellwood AM

Director

Welcome to the final issue of NGV Magazine for 2020 as we close the year by celebrating the diversity and complexity of Australian art and design, from recent additions to the Collection to favourite works. We hope that the stories in the pages of NGV Magazine over the course of the year have offered a chance to be immersed in the inspiring world of art and design.

We welcome to the Collection a striking work of design by Melbourne craftsperson Damien Wright. In this issue, we discover the process of making the work 5.45pm 18/02/2020, 2020, a shimmering slab of ancient red gum that is supported by three ubiquitous plastic outdoor chairs. The work juxtaposes the natural and synthetic, raising important questions about the time, natural cycles and geological forces required to

produce both materials. We also introduce recent work by Sydney-based artist Jason Wing from his *Battleground* series, 2020, which bridges historical narratives and global social and political movements.

The NGV design store celebrates
Australian art and design with the launch
of its latest streetwear collection, this time
featuring the bold designs of Kaiadilt
artist Claudia Moodoonuthi. Details from
Moodoonuthi's NGV Collection work
Surfboard, 2017, are the inspiration for this
exclusive collection.

We also investigate the museum as a place for innovation, new research and development. Especially for this issue, Carl Villis, NGV Senior Conservator of Painting, writes how, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO),

NGV conservators recently developed a new museum-grade varnish called MS3 that will now be used by conservators in art museums around the world.

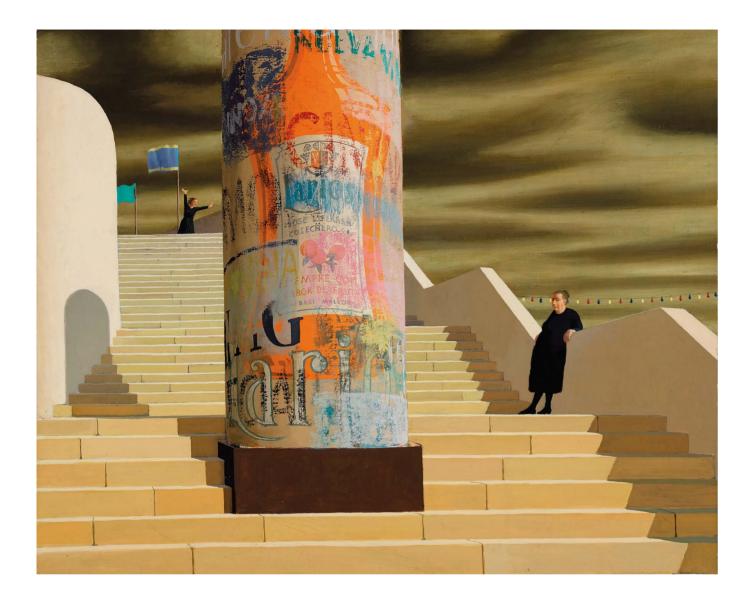
I wish you all the best for a relaxing end of year and thank you for your continued support and connection.

#### Donna McColm

Managing Editor, NGV Magazine
Acting Assistant Director, Curatorial and
Audience Engagement



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JEFFREY SMART *The Steps, Palma* 1965, oil on canvas,  $63.5 \times 79.0 \text{ cm}$  ESTIMATE: \$500,000 - \$600,000  $^{\circ}$  The Estate of Jeffrey Smart

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Assistant Curator, NGV

Myf Doughty is a designer and curator with ten years of cross-disciplinary experience in the design industry. She is Assistant Curator of Contemporary Design and Architecture at the National Gallery of Victoria and has contributed to publications and design exhibitions locally and internationally. She holds a Bachelor of Design from the University of New South Wales and a Master of Teaching from Deakin University.

#### **BRIAN MARTIN**

Guide, NGV

Brian Martin has been a voluntary guide at the NGV since 2011 and is President of the NGV Guides Organising Committee. He was a Senior Lecturer in Graphic Design at Swinburne University before establishing a computer graphics consultancy in the 1980s. Brian has a special interest in landscape painting and drawing.

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lan J. McNiven is Professor of Indigenous Archaeology in the Monash Indigenous Studies Centre, Monash University, and a Chief Investigator in the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage. He has undertaken collaborative, partnership research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities for more than thirty years. His current research centres on understanding the long-term development of Torres Strait Islanders and their specialised maritime culture, especially spiritual and ritual relationships with the sea.

#### KATHARINA PRUGGER

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Katharina Prugger is Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Victoria. Prior to joining the NGV in 2017, she held positions at contemporary art galleries, including Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin and Stuart Shave/ Modern Art, London. Katharina holds a Master of Art Curatorship from the University of Melbourne and a Graduate Diploma in Modern and Contemporary Art History from Christie's Education London/ University of Glasgow.

#### **MYLES RUSSELL-COOK**

Curator, NGV

Myles Russell-Cook is Curator of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria. The Department of Indigenous Art is jointly responsible for the NGV's collections of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and the art of Oceania, pre-Hispanic America and Africa. Much of his influence and inspiration comes from his maternal Aboriginal heritage in Western Victoria with connections into Tasmania and the Bass Strait Islands.

#### **JUDITH RYAN AM**

Senior Curator, NGV

Judith Ryan AM is Senior Curator of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria. Judith received a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Fine Arts and English Literature at the University of Melbourne and a Certificate in Education at Oxford University. In her role at the NGV, where she has worked since 1977, she has curatorial responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art, Oceanic art and pre-Columbian art. Judith's special interest is Indigenous Australian art of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. Judith has curated numerous exhibitions of Indigenous art, has published widely in the field and has been responsible for developing the NGV's collection of Indigenous art.

#### **CARL VILLIS**

Senior Conservator, NGV

Carl Villis is Senior Conservator of Paintings at the National Gallery of Victoria and has more than thirty years of experience in painting conservation in Australia, Italy and the US. He has worked on numerous major NGV conservation projects, including paintings by Titian, Tintoretto, Van Dyck, Correggio, Poussin and Rubens. Along with his work on the MS3 varnish, he was responsible for the research that led to the identification of the NGV's sixteenth-century portrait of Lucrezia Borgia.

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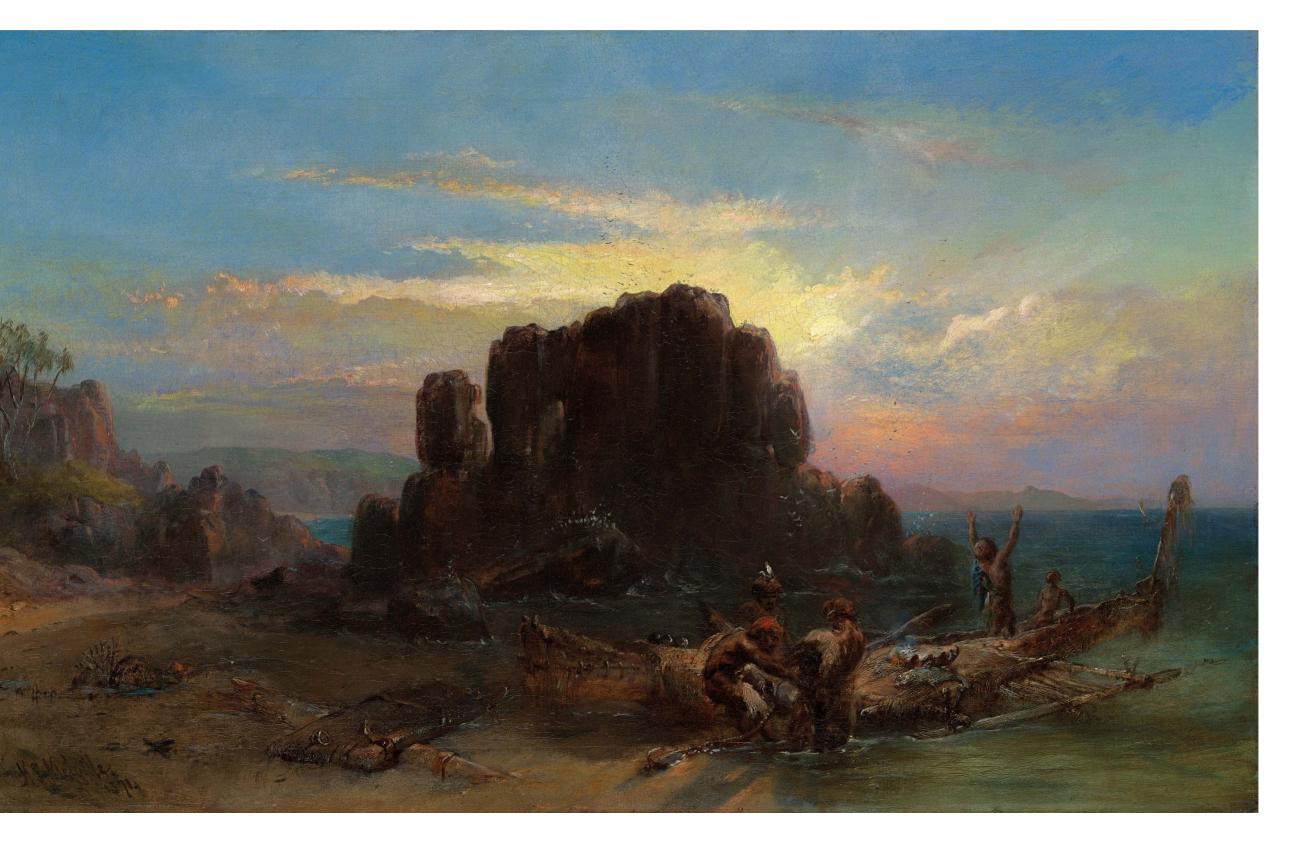
Elisabeth Willis

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#### **DEEP READ**

## Seeing what they saw:

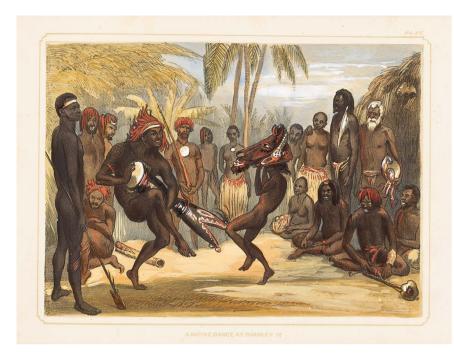
Harden Sidney Melville's Torres Strait Canoe and five men at the site of a wreck on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands, off Cape Grenville, North East Australia, 1874



New to the NGV Collection through the support of the Warren Clark Bequest and Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, is an exceptionally rare example of an early interaction between Torres Strait Islanders and European maritime explorers off the Australian east coast the only known image of this activity involving longrange voyaging by Torres Strait Islanders. Painted by English artist Harden Sidney Melville in 1874, whose most iconic work before now was a lithograph – most illustrations from this period are drawings, watercolours or lithographs (not paintings) – this extraordinary acquisition has truly transformed the NGV's holdings of Australian history paintings.

**BY** IAN J. McNIVEN AND MYLES RUSSELL-COOK

Harden Sidney Melville Torres Strait Canoe and five men at the site of a wreck on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands, off Cape Grenville, North East Australia 1874. Purchased, Warren Clark Bequest and Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2020 16 NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25 17 NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25



'Every figure in this sketch is a portrait of an individual either of Darnley [Erub] or Murray [Mer] Island; but it would be useless to give a list of their names, some of which were not ascertained.'

MELVILLE, SKETCHES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE ADJACENT ISLANDS

When trying to tell the **history** of Australia through public art collections, one faces a dilemma: across our national cultural institutions, there is a glaring absence of Indigenous history paintings. In the historical Australian galleries at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, the presence of Indigenous people can be felt through the small but significant holdings of nineteenth-century artists such as William Barak, Tommy McRae and Captain Harrison, as well as an important collection of painted, woven and carved cultural objects by artists whose names are not recorded. Overwhelmingly, however, the art that one encounters presents to us scenes post 1770, from the perspective of the coloniser, and devoid of Indigenous presence and agency.

The works where Indigenous people do appear, for example, in John Glover's paintings of Tasmania, are for the most part Antipodean Arcadias – landscapes where Indigenous people have been reduced in scale to decorative figures engaged in traditional activities, such as hunting and fishing. In reality, when Glover painted many of his works, the Tasmanian Aboriginal population had been removed from their ancestral lands and exiled to Flinders Island, making their presence in his works an imagined one.

In order to tell the true and full story of Australian history, one is left reliant on contemporary artists to fill the voids. Indigenous artists such as Marlene Gilson, Christopher Pease, Maree Clarke, Gordon Bennett and Brook Andrew, tackle these gaps head on, highlighting

the absences through their own artistic presence. These interventions into the chronology stand in as a substitute for material that doesn't exist. However, these kinds of works can also be seen to reinforce the chronology of European arrival as the dominant narrative, by sitting within it. And so when, in June 2020, an oil painting was discovered that depicted the pre-contact tradition of Torres Strait Islanders voyaging down the east coast of Cape York Peninsula, it would be an understatement to say this was anything short of groundbreaking.

It may initially seem an odd combination to bring together an archaeologist from Monash University, with expertise in the Torres Strait (McNiven), and an NGV Curator, with expertise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art (Russell-Cook), to write about such an oil painting, and yet the chance discovery of this 1874 painting is akin to unearthing a rare and beautiful archaeological object from the past. Archaeology reminds us that objects allow us to transgress distinctions in history. There are no categories of the past, only tools through which we can read and understand it. In the case of this painting, its historical and cultural importance was immediately recognised as something that would transform the NGV's ability to tell the truth about the past, while also shedding new light on understanding these early interactions.

Harden Sidney Melville's Torres Strait Canoe and five men at the site of a wreck on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands, off Cape Grenville, North East Australia, 1874, depicts a scene from a rare dimension of Australia's nineteenth-century maritime colonial frontier, which has previously only been known through historical texts and Indigenous oral histories. A group of Torres Strait Islanders in a huge double outrigger canoe are seen visiting the Sir Charles Hardy Islands in the northern Great Barrier Reef located more than 150 km south of their homeland. There are five people in the vessel - four men and what appears to be a young man, or perhaps a boy. The canoe is of a form that nineteenth-century historical images (paintings, lithographs and photographs) indicate was unique to Torres Strait.<sup>1</sup> The hull features a curved

profile carefully adzed from a large tree at the mouth of the Fly River in southwest Papua New Guinea before it was traded onto Torres Strait Islanders for the addition of telltale accruements. The bow (left) is an elaborate box-like structure that often featured eyes, a mouth and beard. The eyes helped the canoe see its way through the sea for Torres Strait Islander canoes were animate beings in their own right.<sup>2</sup> So from the world view of the men on this vessel, this actually would be a painting of six sentient individuals, as the canoe would be seen as a living person.

The centre of the canoe has a living platform supported by two bamboo outrigger booms. On the platform is a fireplace with a giant clam shell receptacle and a large fish ready to be cooked. The back of the canoe (right) features the characteristic tall stern post with plant fibre tassels. Other fine details of the canoe are obscured partly by 150 years of accumulated grime.

Actually, two vessels are depicted in the painting. To the left of the canoe are pieces of a shipwreck – a large slab of wood (possibly a piece of deck or hull) and what looks like a section of mast. Three of the men appear to be loading onto the canoe something large and heavy with a length of rope attached to a wooden pulley. It is likely they are loading up with wreckage of the ship. Nineteenth-century historical records attest to Torres Strait Islanders cruising across their expansive territorial seas and reefs, ever on the lookout for European shipwrecks and much coveted iron.<sup>3</sup> These records and local oral histories also document Torres Strait Islanders voyaging down along the Great Barrier Reef as far as Lizard Island located more than 500 km south-east of Cape York.<sup>4</sup> Some of these voyages included men and women using their intimate navigational skills and marine knowledge to find food resources. Trips also involved obtaining particular types of stone to manufacture tools such as the renowned stone-headed clubs used in headhunting raids. With the arrival of British colonists and the establishment of shipping lanes across seas and treacherous reefs they knew little about, shipwreck salvaging was added to

reasons to voyage by canoe southwards along the Great Barrier Reef. How does this painting manage to accurately depict such intimate details of Torres Strait Islander voyaging activities hitherto known only through textual and oral histories? This is where the author of the painting, professional artist Harden Sidney Melville, enters the frame.

Melville was born in England in 1824 from a family of artists; his brother Henry was a painter, and both were influenced by their father, also Henry Melville, the famous London engraver, lithographer and painter.<sup>5</sup> At seventeen years old, after making a name for himself as a talented artist, Harden S. Melville 'joyfully accepted' an invitation as official draughtsman onboard HMS Fly for the British Admiralty's official hydrographic survey and mapping expedition of the north-east coast of Australia, focusing on Torres Strait, between 1842 and 1846.6 We meet Melville and some of his detailed engravings of Torres Strait Islanders briefly in Joseph Beete Jukes' official account of the expedition – Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly published in 1847.7 Two years later, Melville published a small volume of twenty-five hand-coloured lithographs, some including Torres Strait Islanders and their canoes, in Sketches in Australia and the Adjacent Islands.8 Jukes mentions visiting the Sir Charles Hardy Islands in 1843 and again in 1844, to obtain drinking water, but makes no mention of Torres Strait Islanders.9 John Sweatman who was on board the HMS Fly's tender, the cutter Bramble, mentions coming across Torres Strait Islanders 'as far south as Sir Charles Hardy's Islands' in 1846.<sup>10</sup> Here we start to glimpse the inspiration for Melville's painting.

Melville's voice on the HMS Fly expedition would remain largely silent if not for a curious book titled The Adventures of a Griffin on a Voyage of Discovery published in 1867. This biographical account of the artist onboard the HMS Fly was clearly authored by Melville but in third person under the nom de plume of a 'griffin'. Like Jukes, Melville mentions visiting the Sir Charles Hardy Islands in 1843 but makes no mention of Torres Strait

Islanders. However, in this same region, he notes that 'remains of numerous wrecks strewed the rugged and inhospitable rocks of the Barrier Reef'. In March 1845, the *Fly* expedition visited the Kulkalgal community residing on the sandy island of Dhamudh (Dalrymple Island) in central Torres Strait, where Melville observed 'portions of wrecked ships' scattered around huts. 12

Melville returned to England at the end of the Fly expedition in 1846 where he continued to draw, paint and write for a living. He was in his fifties when he produced Torres Strait Canoe and five men at the site of a wreck on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands, off Cape Grenville, North East Australia, and it is without a doubt one of his most monumental works in terms of scale, at 105 × 155 cm (including frame). His skilful brushwork imbues this composition with an 'uncomposed' appearance while the sensitive palette and tonal harmonies evoke a distinctly Australian sunset. The kind of pictorial structure he used suggests (to us at least) that this scene was one that remained forever burned into his memory.

Most paintings from the nineteenth century represent Indigenous people as passively waiting, as if nothing happened on the Australian continent until 1770. Melville shows Torres Strait Islanders as active explorers with their own agency who have mastered the ability to cross seas, something until now most people would have only associated with the colonising British. It is extraordinary to think that Melville died in north London in late 1894, aged seventy, leaving behind a body of work that more than a century later we are still discovering. One cannot help but wonder what more surprises does Melville have in store for us?

IAN J. MCNIVEN IS PROFESSOR OF INDIGENOUS ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE MONASH INDIGENOUS STUDIES CENTRE, MONASH UNIVERSITY, MELBOURNE. MYLES RUSSELL-COOK IS NGV CURATOR, INDIGENOUS ART.

Harden Sidney Melville At native dance at Darnley Id. 1849, hand-coloured lithograph, plate 20 in Sketches in Australia and the Adjacent Islands, printed and published by Dickinson & Co., London,1849. Image courtesy State Library of New South Wales



# Louise Zhang

Since 2016, MECCA founder and co-CEO and NGV Foundation Board Member Jo Horgan and MECCA Brands have supported the NGV to acquire the work of an emerging Australian female artist. This year, we are collaborating with Chinese-Australian artist Louise Zhang, who explores her cultural and religious background through painting, sculpture and installation. Three of Zhang's works will enter the NGV Collection as part of this partnership, and the artist's signature floral imagery and vibrant colours will also feature on MECCA's Holiday 2020 limited-edition packaging.

**BY** KATHARINA PRUGGER



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'To a certain extent, design and art intermingle in my practice. The art comes first and the design is drawn from that. They are very different processes, but they share the same bouts of creativity, experimentation and exploration. Neither are sacrificed in terms of conceptual explorations and meaning.'

Louise Zhang

Born in Sydney, where she still lives and works today, Louise Zhang grew up in a strict Christian family. In her painting Devil's lion, 2019, she revisits a particular bible story – of the devil, prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour - that haunted her as a child. The work's title is written in Chinese characters in a graphic style, reminiscent of vintage horror film posters. The addition of text elements to her recent paintings is in part caused by adjustments Zhang had to make in her practice for health reasons, as she explains in the lead up to the presentation of her works at The lan Potter Centre: NGV Australia:

Chronic pain is a part of my life as much as eating is part of life. It's ever-present. Some days are better than others, but I am never without pain. [...] My condition worsens as I work so it is necessary to slowly make changes without sacrificing what I love doing and what I'm trying to say.

Previously, she often worked with oil paints and created her own supports of shaped boards to paint on, but she now focuses on using acrylic paint on canvas and more line work, which is less straining for her hand.

During her childhood Zhang was discouraged from engaging with traditional Chinese mythology, however her art practice has become a way for her to gain a better understanding of and relationship with her cultural heritage. As Zhang says:

Visuals are inherent in Chinese story-telling and communication. I find using architecture, landscape, symbols and motifs are a way I can explore deeper narratives that can mean something personal without dictating meaning. There's also a complexity to them, something as simple as a flower or fruit is loaded with folklore, representation, even medicinal properties.

You are forgiven (Lotus), 2020, sees
Zhang explore the symbolism of the lotus
flower. Colloquially referred to as waterlilies, lotus blossoms sprout out of the mud
'unblemished' and are associated with
purity, rebirth and enlightenment in many
Eastern religions. Zhang was inspired by
the goddess Guanyin, who is often
depicted sitting atop a lotus throne and is
revered for her mercy and compassion.
The text in the painting spells out 'I forgive
you/you are forgiven' and references
Zhang working through the notion of being
a 'sinful person' stemming from her



Louise Zhang Scholar mound study #3 2019. Proposed acquisition purchased with funds donated by Jo Horgan and MECCA Brands. 2020 22 NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25

#### Jo Horgan, MECCA Founder and Co-CEO, on Louise Zhang

MECCA has been partnering with the NGV for more than five years now, with our limited-edition Holiday packaging collaboration the key pillar of this activity. Every year I'm so impressed and excited by the incredible calibre of female artistic talent we have the opportunity to work with.

Our aim with this collaboration is to capture the sense of optimism and celebration that is so intrinsic to our Holiday collection at MECCA and to us this is best represented by bright and bold colour. Louise Zhang's work stood out for this very reason, as we found her multidisciplinary use of colour captivating and fantastical – every bit embodying the MECCA magic.

Working with Louise Zhang this year is the first time we've collaborated with a Chinese-Australian artist and we love the way Zhang's practice draws on upon her modern identity and

emotions, as well as traditional Chinese mythology and botany. The exploration of her culture through her work adds a strong and authentic dimension of storytelling, which we instantly connected with.

Our ongoing relationship with the NGV is part of MECCA's philanthropic program, M-Power, which supports efforts to elevate and empower women achieving in the arts and raise awareness around their practice. As a result, MECCA has supported the acquisition of a group of works by Zhang for the NGV Collection. Zhang joins an exceptional line-up of artists that we have collaborated with over the years including, Tammy Kanat, Claudia Moodoonuthi, Atong Atem, Rebecca Baumann and Tanya Schultz.

religious upbringing. The work exemplifies Zhang's methodology of researching cultural symbols and motifs as a way to explore her personal anxieties and experiences of navigating the world as a 'third culture kid'. She uses this term to describe her personal background that is 'not quite Australian, not quite Asian ... being a kid from a migrant family, born in a country where your parents aren't originally ... it births a new culture.' While Zhang conceived the idea for this painting prior to the coronavirus crisis, the themes took on added poignancy during the pandemic:

You are forgiven (Lotus), 2020, was initially a concept I wanted to explore despite the coronavirus – the idea that certain kinds of fears, of fault, of guilt can be dictated by cultural divisions. Let's just say the pandemic hasn't made that any better. Fear is heightened, the way we live, the way we act and move around society has changed. The way society responds to things have changed. Racial and social division has heightened.

Alongside Chinese mythology and botany, horror cinema has been an enduring inspiration for Zhang and her sculptural work often traverses the boundary between the attractive and the repulsive. In her fantastical work *Scholar mound study #3*, 2019, she employs a range of unusual materials that might also be used in movie-making props, including a surprising glass eye peeking out from the back of the sculpture. Experimenting with new materials can be a way out of an 'artist block' for Zhang. She says:

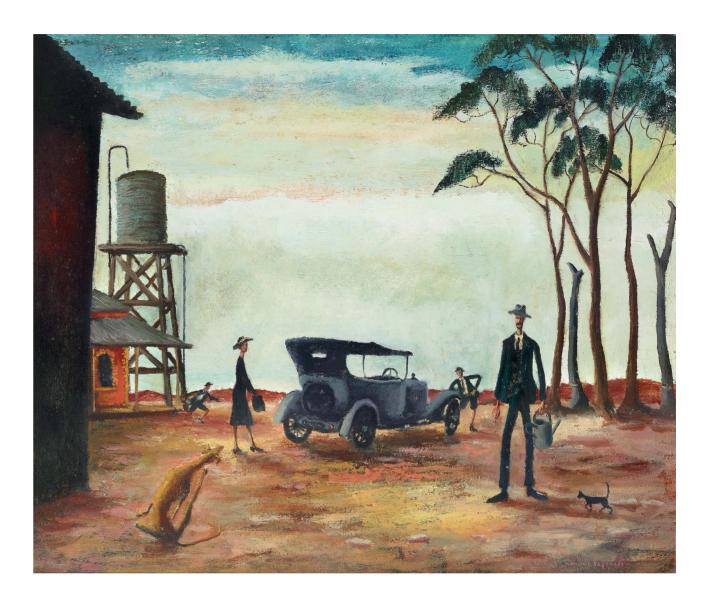
Materials like colour can be very powerful tools in evoking certain feelings and sensations. The mailable, stretchy clay with the visceral nature of free pour polyurethane is highly seductive. I wanted to work with that visceral seduction. The drippy, wet and organic.

Scholar mound study #3 is a playful interrogation of the traditional Chinese scholar's rock, or gongshi. Shaped by wind and water, these expressively shaped rocks were displayed like works of art and appreciated by Chinese scholars for their ability to capture the creative energy force (qi 气) of nature. Zhang humorously subverts the traditionally masculine connotations and sombre aesthetics of Chinese scholarly accoutrements by injecting it with a perceived feminine aesthetic of sugary colours and glittery surfaces.

Whether you encounter Louise Zhang's artwork at NGV this summer or through her collaboration with MECCA for their Holiday 2020 limited-edition packaging, her beautifully rendered imagery and lush colours will no doubt seduce and draw you into her world.

KATHARINE PRUGGER IS NGV ASSISTANT CURATOR, CONTEMPORARY ART. LOUISE ZHANG'S WORK, PURCHASED WITH FUNDS DONATED BY JO HORGAN AND MECCA BRANDS, WILL BE ON DISPLAY SOON ON LEVEL 2 AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA VISIT NGV MFI ROLIRNE FOR DETAILS

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# The influence of nature

Art Nouveau is a decorative style that thrived between 1890 and 1914 throughout Europe, the United States and Australia. A deliberate attempt to create a new style that took inspiration from the organic forms of the natural world, including flowers, foliage and insects; it was also the style that influenced art and architecture of the early twentieth century.

**BY** AMANDA DUNSMORE

n recent years a collecting priority for the Decorative Arts Department has been the period of the latenineteenth century through to the outbreak of the First World War, a rich period of artistic ferment that chronicles the beginnings of modernism. This period is defined by the Art Nouveau style that emerged in France and Belgium during the late 1880s and its central European counterpart, Jugendstil, or Youth Style, which emerged around the turn of the twentieth century in the Germanspeaking world. The Gallery has acquired a number of significant works by leading designers from this period, which illustrate the radical changes that took place in artistic thinking and the profound influence Japanese art had on artists at the time.

The Art Nouveau style is widely recognised as the beginnings of modernism due to its self-conscious break with European design styles of the past. The International Exhibition held in Paris in 1900 marked the style's high point and introduced it to an international audience. Art Nouveau rejected the historicism of much nineteenthcentury design and sought to create a modern style that embraced all aspects of life. Growing out of the European Arts and Crafts movements, it drew upon a range of sources for inspiration; in particular, the art of Japan and its reverence for the natural world. The use of sinuous stylised plant and figurative forms was characteristic of the Art Nouveau style in France and Belgium, whereas these curvilinear elements were interpreted with a more formal rectilinear geometry in the Jugendstil design of Vienna, Hungary and centres across Germany. Much of Art Nouveau's innovation

can be traced to lessons learned from Japanese art. Followers of Art Nouveau believed in the unity of all arts, denying the traditional distinction between the fine arts of painting, sculpture and architecture, and the applied or decorative arts. This reflects a Western understanding of a similar lack of differentiation between fine and applied arts in the Japanese tradition. Art Nouveau, inspired by Japanese art that had been arriving in Europe since the opening up of Japan in the midnineteenth century, drew enormous

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inspiration from nature, emulating shapes, colours and textures from the plant and animal worlds.

The most important dealer of Japanese art to emerge in Paris was Siegfried Bing. Born into a wealthy entrepreneurial Hamburg family, Bing



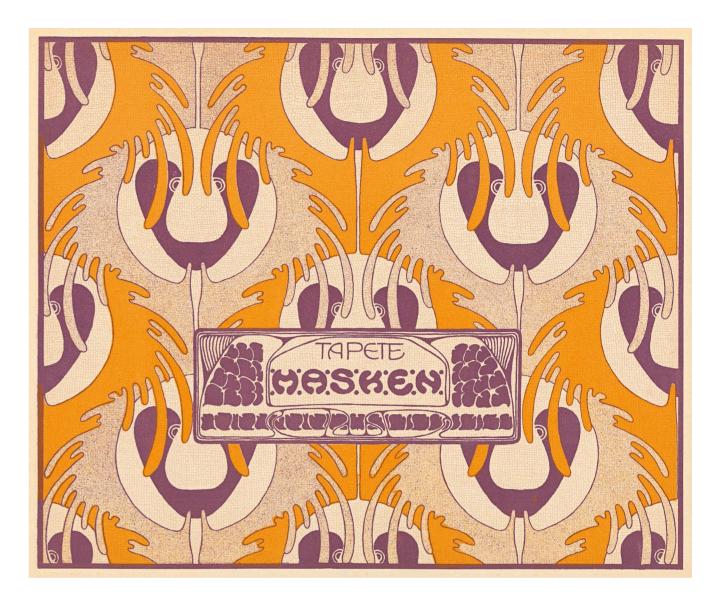
arrived in Paris in 1854 to work in the family's trading business with Japan. At the same time Bing developed his own artistic networks and dealt privately in Japanese works with discerning collectors. Having direct access to artistic networks in Japan, Bing was constantly acquiring works for his own collection which he regularly sold on to private clients and institutions in Europe. In 1878, Bing opened his first shop at age nineteen on rue Chauchat to display his collections and stage exhibitions of Japanese art. He remained a central figure throughout the period and by the mid-1880s was running several shops in Paris, each with their own line of merchandise and catering to both the populist and the more discriminating aspects of the market.

In 1888, Bing established a monthly journal to increase awareness and enthusiasm for Japanese art. Titled *Le* 

Japon Artistique (Artistic Japan), Bing commissioned a wide range of artists, writers and commentators to contribute articles on a broad selection of subjects relating to Japanese art, crafts and culture. The magazine came out monthly and remained in production over a four-year period. In his introduction to the first edition of the journal Bing laid out the parameters for the journal and the inspiration behind it stating, 'The constant guide whose indications he [the Japanese artist] follows is called 'Nature'; she is his sole, his revered teacher, and her precepts form the inexhaustible source of his inspiration'.1

Paul Follot was a leading Parisian designer of objects, furniture and interiors during the first decades of the twentieth century. His silver-plated tea and coffee service, purchased for the NGV with the generous support of Peter and Ivanka Canet in 2017, was designed for the German commercial metalware firm F. W. Quist. Throughout his career, Follot's style was characterised by a sumptuous elegance. The contrast could not have been greater: The German metalworking firm of F. W. Quist was aligned to industrial, serial production and Follot had a predilection for luxurious bespoke design. Nevertheless, the two successfully collaborated in 1902 to produce one of the most celebrated designs of the Art Nouveau period. The service is a formal study in the sinuous lines and organic forms of Art Nouveau. The shapes of the service with radial lines splaying out from the spouts and handles and terminating in scallop-shaped profiles at their rims and bases – evoke aquatic forms such as fish fins or shells. Equally, the forms bear close resemblance to fennel bulbs. The tray features similarly abstracted plant-like motifs with the radial lines of the handles resolving into a formal cluster of blossoms.

Deeply illustrative of the Art
Nouveau style, *Gourd vase*, c.1903, an
earthenware vase by sculptor Ernest
Bussière, generously gifted to the
Gallery in 2020 by Krystyna CampbellPretty AM and Family through the
Australian Government's Cultural Gifts
Program, represents a gourd fruit in the
later stages of decay. Highly organic in
form, the vase reveals Bussière's
profound interest in nature. Such



fascination for nature was one of the key inspirations of the Art Nouveau style of which Bussière was a major exponent in the ceramic medium. The vase is glazed in a range of subtle, naturalistic tones that are highlighted by an iridescent mauve glaze down the throat of the vase. Bussière was renowned for his soft, unctuous glazes, their subtle, velvety sheen giving the gourd an almost furry appearance to its surface.

The overtly organic form of the Gooseneck vase, c.1900, with its tendrillike elongated neck takes its inspiration from Persian rosewater sprinklers of the sixteenth century. A number of leading Art Nouveau designers, including Christopher Dresser and Louis Comfort Tiffany, produced versions of this design and the Loetz Witwe manufactory specialised in producing iridescent, organic glass vases around the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The glassworks was noted for its brilliant design and rich, iridised colour schemes. During the early twentieth century, the firm's designers were particularly influenced by their contact with the progressive Viennese Secession artists, including Josef Hoffmann, Koloman Moser and those associated with the Wiener Werkstätte. The vase was generously supported by Sue Harlow and Mery Keehn in 2019.

Around the turn of the century in Vienna, Austrian artist Koloman Moser was emerging as a pioneer of modern design. A founding member of the Vienna Secession, a radical group of young artists who split off in protest from the academic art scene, Moser trained in painting and later graphic design, keen to pursue his interest in the decorative arts and to develop a more hands-on approach to design. In 1900 Moser collaborated with the publisher

Koloman Moser (designer)
Masks, wallpaper 1901. Purchased with
funds donated by Dr Philip Williams AM
and Elizabeth Williams. 2017



(above) Paul Follot (designer) Koloman Moser (designer) F. W. Quist Metallwarenfabrik, Esslingen am Neckar (manufacturer) Tea and coffee service c. 1902. Purchased with funds donated by Peter and Ivanka Canet, 2017 28 NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25 29 NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25





#### Australian Art Nouveau: Elza Josephson

A rare Australian Art Nouveau vase has recently entered the NGV Collection. Purchased through the generosity of supporters Merv Keehn and Sue Harlow, the vase is a distinctive piece by ceramic decorator and china painter Elza Josephson. Josephson worked as a painter, writer and illustrator; however, it is her relatively short but active career as a ceramic decorator in Sydney, from 1910 to 1916, for which she is best known. Her early training was at the Julian Ashton Art School, Sydney, around 1910, and between 1914 and 1916 she was a regular exhibitor with the Society of Arts and Crafts of NSW. Josephson established a studio in Randwick, Sydney, where she also taught and fired the work of other china painters. Her technique, which typically made use of ceramic blanks (undecorated manufactured ceramics) by commercial porcelain manufacturers, including the German company Rosenthal Porcelain, involved the design being applied using overglaze enamels with the piece then going through a subsequent firing process. This vase is deftly painted with a highly stylised design of black cats playing among bulrushes and taunting a mouse in the process. Using a reduced palette of greens and black, the design reveals influences from Japanese art, as seen in the graphic depiction

of the cats through flat blocks of colour that are boldly intersected by the reeds. Equally, the frontal depiction of one of the cats as it approaches through the reeds is highly unusual, as is the ambiguous perspective of the scene sitting somewhere between ground and eye level with the cats, as if we as the viewer are in the bulrushes and unable to see the horizon line. Japanese art was a key influence on Australian artists of the early twentieth century; including several female printmakers and illustrators, and the distinctive characteristics of the Japanese woodblock tradition can be seen in the decoration on this vase, which is a striking, bold example of Art Nouveau design.

By David Hurlston and Amanda Dunsmore

Martin Gerlach to produce the Flächenschmuck (Surface decoration) series, the third volume in Gerlach's design series *Die Quelle* (The Source), a compendium intended as a design reference for all areas of craft production.

Moser's clothbound portfolio of thirty loose colour lithograph plates entered the Collection in 2017 with funds donated by Dr Philip Williams AM and Elizabeth Williams, and comprises repeat-pattern motifs of plant, animal and human forms. Each plate was designed in a palette of just two or three colours and only five colourways were employed across the whole series, the designs playing with the duality of pattern and colour. The origins of Moser's design work owed much to Japanese woodblock printing and

katagami (textile-dyeing stencils). The reverse of each plate is printed with a further thirty designs in grey and white. Each of the thirty colour designs is given a title and a suggested use, the text forming its own graphic treatment over the design. The Flächenschmuck patterns represented all areas of Moser's practice, including wrapping papers, endpapers of books, wallpapers, wall textiles, tapestries, floor coverings, upholstery fabrics and printed silks. These mesmerising flat-pattern designs from the early years of Moser's career represent some of his most free-thinking, conceptual and exciting artistic expressions.

Koloman Moser went on to become a professor at the Vienna School of Art and Design where he taught decorative drawing, design and painting. Jutta Sika was one of Moser's students and in

1901-02 the pair collaborated on a tea and coffee service for which Sika produced several distinctive decorative schemes that adorned the innovative ceramic forms created by Moser. Sika's bold and original ceramic decorations in *Coffee service*, 1901–02, purchased with funds donated by NGV Supporters of Decorative Arts in 2018, show the clear influence of Japanese graphic design, especially textile stencils (katagami) that were employed by Koloman Moser and Austrian architect and designer Josef Hoffmann to teach their students the principles of flat pattern design. Sika was a founding member of Wiener Kunst im Hause (Viennese Art in the Home), a group established in 1901 whose members, including a number of significant women designers, were drawn from the Vienna School of Art and Design. This group was regarded as a precursor to the Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshops), in part for its emphasis on creating unified interiors that embodied the ideal of the Gesamtkunstwerk or 'total work of art'. a key tenet of the Wiener Werkstätte. Sika was a skilled designer of ceramics and glass, and also designed women's fashion for a number of progressive firms including accessories for Emilie Flöge's Schwestern Flöge salon, Flöge being Gustav Klimt's lifelong companion and one of the most successful fashion stylists and designers in early twentiethcentury Vienna.





(p. 28) Elza Josephson (decorator)
Rosenthal A. G., Selb (manufacturer)
Vase 1914. Purchased with funds donated
by Merv Keehn and Sue Harlow, 2020
(left) Johann Loetz Witwe Glassworks,
Klostermühle Gooseneck vase c. 1900.
Purchased with funds donated by Merv
Keehn and Sue Harlow, 2019

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#### **EXHIBITION**

Dubbed 'Ivan the Terrible' by some in the press for his at times shocking performances and contentious works, the extraordinarily diverse artistic career of Ivan Durrant shows that his motivation was not simply to create a stir but rather to use art and performance to make a social statement. The artist shares his thinking behind works on display soon at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

# Van Durrant: Barrier Draw



'Left alone, I loved milking cows on dairy farms during the Christmas holidays, aged thirteen to fifteen. If I could only ask the cows why it was they looked so content with their monotonous routine of twice a day, every day, in and out of the milking shed, then only a salad of green grass to eat. Here I'm offering them an apple, placed on a doily as if it's a treasure or a trophy. But I'm always frustrated by our language barrier, symbolised by the window glass: me on the inside and my gentle black and white beauty outside.'

Ivan Durrant The apple 1970. Collection of the artist

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> 'Living in Soho, New York during 1976-77, and mixing with the great photorealist painters Chuck Close, Janet Fish, Judd Nelson, Jack Beal and Richard Estes, was a life-changing experience, but no match for the greatest show on earth: the Museum of Natural History, where its dioramas stretched for miles. Every blade of grass, twig, leaf: whatever, was made and painted by hand, better than any realist painter could do. Back in Australia, I decided to make my own diorama: Butcher shop, where I could finally get the NGV to accept my slaughtered cow, in a sanitised version.'





(left) Ivan Durrant Butcher shop 1977-78. Gift of Mr and Mrs Burdett A. Lavcock.

(above) Ivan Durrant 3 Jockeys 1975.

Glen Eira City Council Art Collection

licence, giving me access to the mounting yard and jockeys' room. In the rooms there was always tension in the air. These lightly built, smaller-than-average brave souls were about to chance their luck on giant explosive monsters, never knowing if it was their turn to fall, break a bone or worse. Jokes were very few in the rooms, not much chatter either. The only way they appeared to ease their tension was with the fastidious cleaning of gear. I was always glad when they came back safe.'

'Even with no horse to train, I still retained my trainer's

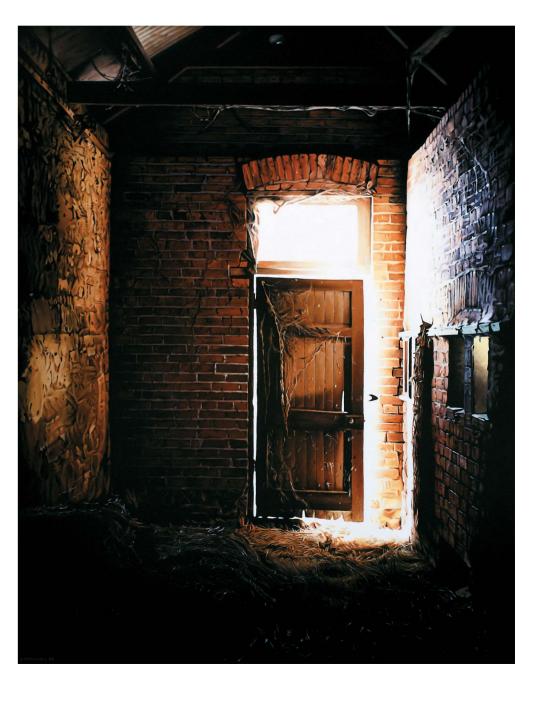
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'I'm not sure if there's any purpose of being on this earth, but I'm convinced art makes living better. Why be a half-glass-full person, when you can opt for two buckets full? My studio table is piled up with random pots of paint, tubes, brushes, jars and paper-plate palettes. At a glance, mundane, but through my eyes it's a joyous blur of brilliant light and colour. I once saw everything in twenty-twenty vision, but now view the world in out-of-focus magic, turning my table into a giant collection of the world's best opals.'

'Mansfield on the Delatite River: what a rush as I opened the cracked-peeling-paint door and glanced inside a 150-year-old shearing shed. It was an edgy moment, a moment between being awake and asleep, where my eyes and brain had to adjust. Peering and straining through the black cave-like interior as the warm red and fire-glowing yellow seeped through the darkness, I stepped forward. Comforted by the padded luxurious quilt of dry hay on the floor, and wrapped by the kindness of brick and stone walls, I'd found the womb I'd been looking for.'

IVAN DURRANT: BARRIER DRAW IS ON DISPLAY SOON ON LEVEL 3 AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA. VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/EXHIBITION/IVAN-DURRANT FOR DETAILS.



Ivan Durrant Studio 9 2017–19. Collection of the artist

Ivan Durrant Delatite feed room 1998 Private collection, Mansfield



Taking care of works that have been impacted by particular climate or environmental influences is a common and complex challenge that conservators face, and one that also shows that environmental change isn't limited to the outside world.

One of the fundamental aims of conservation is enabling access to collections now and into the future. Understanding when and how materials change, and developing practices that mitigate and manage risk and exposure to the unwanted effects of these changes is critical to this aim.

Preserving material and managing change caused by local climate conditions is not a new phenomenon. This body of knowledge and research draws on millennia of human customs in stewardship and basic housekeeping practices. In the last century BC, Vitruvius advised against placing wall paintings in rooms with open fireplaces or using lamps nearby that produce smoke and soot deposits. Both the Old Testament (Jeremiah 32:14; Isaiah 30:8) and Koran (from Surah 85, The Constellations) advise documenting sacred texts on robust materials, such as stone to mitigate loss or storing key documents in earthenware jars to protect against the elements.1

Over the last few decades, conservators, conservation scientists and material engineers have undertaken research to better understand how specific materials change over time due to inherent material instability and in response to different environmental factors. These responses might be physical in nature, such as timber expanding in environments with high humidity, or chemical changes such as the corrosion formed by the reaction of some metals when in contact with air and water. Changes can occur quickly, such as softening of plastics when exposed to high temperatures, or slowly over years and decades, such as the acclimatisation of moisture content in a wooden-panel painting or sculpture.

Ongoing research continues to refine estimated thresholds at which point change is likely to occur and how to avoid tipping points that may lead to other environmental induced changes, such as mould growth or pest infestation. Corrosion of metals



and mould growth tend to occur at a relative humidity (RH) above 70 per cent while desiccation (or the drying out and embrittlement) of organic materials, such as paper, leather and textiles, occurs below 40 maintain collection environments in the range of 45–55 per cent RH and moderate temperatures in the range of 15–25°C. These conditions are also comfortable for most people. A higher relative humidity range of 50-60 per cent RH is recommended for collections in subtropical and tropical climates, such as Darwin and Brisbane in acclimatised to local conditions.2

per cent RH. Museums and galleries typically Australia, where permanent collections have

A universal standard for environmental conditions setting across art museums, ensures artworks being lent to the NGV for exhibition in Melbourne or loaned by the NGV to other galleries nationally and internationally, can be done safely, irrespective of local climates or the current season. The 2019–20 summer exhibition Keith Haring | Jean-Michel Basquiat: Crossing Lines drew upon more than fifty collections from twelve different countries as geographically and climate diverse as Japan, France, Israel, Indonesia and the United States. Having an industry standard, along with soundinsulated crating when transporting an artwork, allows these significant works to move across continents and seasons, without the need for long acclimatisation periods or sustaining climate-induced physical damage. Microclimate methods are used when loans come from collections that might have different environmental conditions, or when the sensitive nature of the collection materials requires a different range to our standard environmental conditions. These

When not on display, most NGV Collection items are housed in boxed storage or covered on shelving units, to provide an additional level of buffering against environmental change. The NGV also holds a number of special collection stores that have been modified to limit deterioration of the works they contain. These include lowhumidity cabinets for glass works, which are subject to weeping-glass syndrome (caused by low calcium oxide content during glass production) and some Asian bronzes, which are subject to bronze disease (caused

may be as simple as adding backing boards and glazing to paintings or works on paper,

(commonly silica gel or zeolites) to maintain

or displaying works in acrylic cases that

contain conditioned buffering material

a set relative humidity.

by contamination with salts). Generally, chemical reaction rates double for every 10°C rise in temperature, so cool and cold storage are used to store chemically unstable materials or materials with high inherent vice. This includes the NGV's holdings of historic nitrocellulose photographs, triacetate slides and some plastics.

There is increasing awareness that the energy use of these preservation environments should not be at the expense of longer term environmental impacts and affordability. The NGV Conservation team has been working closely with NGV building engineers and facility managers, along with gallery and museum colleagues in Australia and abroad, to look at ways of modifying environmental standards or loaning practices for the beneficial outcomes of reduced environmental footprint and energy costs. This research will ensure the NGV is positioned to meet the effects of a changing climate with a sound understanding of the risks and consequences of the different display and storage solutions that are in use.

#### MaryJo Lelyveld

MARY IO LELYVELD IS NGV COORDINATING CONSERVATOR

(p. 36) John Wolseley After fire - spinyeeked honeyeaters at Lake Monibeong (2009-2011); 2011 (dated). Gift of Sir Roderick Carnegie in memory of his wife Carmen through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program (above) A collection display at NGV

International featuring historical and contemporary works, including designer

Adam Goodrun's Bloom, cabinet, 2018

#### **CONSERVATION 101**

## Timber and outdoor display: Bruce Armstrong's *Guardians*

By Di Whittle



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Conservators face many challenges in the preservation of artworks, but perhaps none so critical as those involved in managing and compensating for the display and storage environments that a work is subject to over its lifetime.

In the gallery space, and in transport and storage, institutions work hard to maintain environmental controls, minimise fluctuations to temperature and humidity, and mitigate light

'Long-term outdoor display of wooden sculptures inevitably sees a work becoming host to a unique ecosystem of insects, fungi, plants and birdlife.'

— DI WHITTLE

exposure. Works intended for outdoor display have limited protection and are subject to the vagaries and extremes of weather, visitor interaction, and all types of biological population and activity.

Artworks made from metals and stone are relatively immune to the effects of climate. This is in contrast to a material such as wood, which is soft and porous; its growth is also directional, making it very responsive to temperature and moisture changes. Wood will shrink and crack in hot and dry climates, swell and warp in cold

and damp environments, and light exposure causes a combination of both thermal and chemical reactions affecting surface colouration and results in weathering.

Long-term outdoor display of wooden sculptures inevitably sees a work becoming host to a unique ecosystem of insects, fungi, plants and birdlife. In environments where there is high localised humidity and poor ventilation, insects may feed on the organic material, and bacteria and fungi colonise the surfaces, which can, along with air pollutants such as smoke, dust and bird guano, make an ideal host for plant material growth, such as moss and sprouting grasses.

Guardians was carved by Bruce Armstrong in 1987 from two massive pieces of 400-year-old river red gum, a dense, durable timber with good termite resistance and distinctive red colouring when fresh. Presented by the Bardas Family as the winner of the Bardas Family Sculpture Commission, it is an iconic work, much loved by Melburnians, and for approximately twelve years the pair of guardians greeted visitors as the Gallery's sentinels, flanking the Waterwall entrance at NGV International, while routinely being clambered on and patted by children and passers-by. In 2005, the work was repositioned to the Grollo Equiset Garden.

After thirty years of outdoor exposure, the raw tones of the timber have weathered to a noble silver grey, and the flanks and noses of the figures are burnished from the touch of many hands.

In 2016, the figures were deinstalled and carefully escorted to an external premise, to be assessed and treated in preparation for the Bruce Armstrong survey exhibition at NGV, *An Anthology of Strange Creatures*. This task was logistically equivalent to transporting two elephants, as the sculptures weigh approximately 4 tonnes each.

At the offsite facility, the work was cleaned and treated for pests, then left to dry and acclimatise for several weeks to adjust to indoor temperature and humidity ranges. After a detailed inspection and in discussion with the curator, it was decided that the work would not return to outdoor display in favour of indoor, climate-controlled

display. This decision enabled conservators to use reversible paper-based fill material, to both stabilise the fragile edges and to return surface integrity, rather than the more intrusive and irreversible synthetic resins and putties that would have been necessary for ongoing outdoor display.

At the An Anthology of Strange Creatures exhibition, Armstrong's works were shown in the interior foyer of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia and the care of them during this time involved regular dusting and re-oiling by conservators to ensure the aged timber surfaces looked their best and the works could be appreciated by all.

DI WHITTLE IS NGV CONSERVATOR OF OBJECTS. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS THE BARDAS FAMILY FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE BARDAS FAMILY SCULPTURE COMMISSION.

(left) Bruce Armstrong Guardians 1987 (detail). Presented by the Bardas Family as the winner of the Bardas Family Sculpture Commission. 1987

#### **CONSERVATION 101**

## When storage is an art form: Japanese traditional storage boxes

By Suzi Shaw



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The discovery of lacquered objects at archaeological sites in Japan dating back to 5000 BCE is a testament to the natural tree sap's miraculous durability as a coating. This is in contrast to its susceptibility to damage from sunlight, in particular. Lacquer sap, harvested from the tree Toxicodendron vernicifluum, is known as urushi in Japan. It is a ubiquitous material being used in architecture, sculpture, furniture and decorative arts. Unlike in Western cultures, artworks in Japan are generally displayed for an event such as a tea ceremony, or a season, and then returned to their storage box. In a traditional Japanese home lacquered artworks would be displayed in the tokonoma (display alcove), or perhaps chiqaidana (staggered shelves). It was understood that such lacquered artworks could be enjoyed more intensely if the viewing of them was meted out – each precious time they were displayed was an opportunity to wonder, marvel and discuss, but their brevity also preserved the pristine and highly reflective surfaces. So, what happens to lacquered artworks and many other Japanese decorative works when they aren't on display?

Wooden boxes are generally used to store artworks in Japan, which perform both a protective and authentication function. From around the Momoyama period (1568–1615) wooden storage boxes seem to have been made as a duty of care from the artwork's owners, as well as providing protection and information such as the lineage of ownership and artist's information. More recently, it is common for an artist themselves to commission a storage box to be made at the time of creation. Indeed, the box style and decoration can be a reflection of the maker or the owner's taste. The artworks of Kitamura Tatsuo, known by his art name Unryūan, come carefully packaged in a green lacquered outer box with gold calligraphy script on the lid - the storage box being an extension of the artist's aesthetic. The storage box for Unryūan's Writing box (Suzuribako), 2007, purchased in 2008 with funds donated by Pauline Gandel, contains an additional internal storage box, and the intricately decorated artwork itself is carefully wrapped in a soft rust-coloured cloth, which also assists its removal from the storage box.

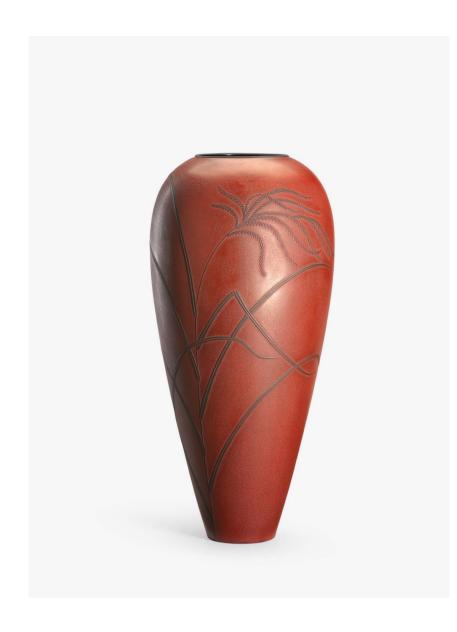


These storage boxes are called tomobako, and if they are constructed of paulownia wood (kiri), then they are called kiribako. Other well-seasoned close-grained timbers have been used for storage boxes, such as cedar (sugi), however paulownia is the most common due to its light weight, ease of manipulation, lack of warpage and naturally protective properties resisting insects and fire damage. Construction involves processing well-seasoned timber into panels that are joined and glued together with rice paste and, sometimes, reinforced with fine wooden pins. The lid is constructed to fit snugly, with the joinery lining up with the bottom part of the box creating an almost airtight fit. The box could remain uncoated, or traditional wax made from insects (ibota) could be rubbed over the surface to increase its

protective properties. The skills required to make *tomobako* have been recognised by the Japanese government as a special technique for the conservation of cultural properties, and one such craftsman has been honoured by the government as a 'National Living Treasure'.

A silk or cotton-tying cord known as sanada himo is threaded through holes in the box frame, then tied in a particular way to hold the lid down, but not necessarily for carrying purposes. The artist or owner may use ink to inscribe the box lid (outer and/or inner sides). Variations include the use of an outer lacquered storage box as well as an interior one, the use of wrapping cloths (furoshiki), and placing paper covers over the lid to preserve the inked inscription from abrasion from the tying cords. The boxed object might then be moved to

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the family storehouse for safekeeping, or, in the NGV's case, the Gallery's storage facilities.

The success of one particular storehouse at preserving its contents is the Shōsō-in imperial treasury, built in the eighth century in an elevated log-cabin style.3 Housing thousands of imperial treasures dating from the eighth century, the storehouse's construction created a natural kind of climate control which limited changes in humidity and temperature in the outside climate from affecting the boxed artworks within. Used up until the 1960s, it was only opened annually to limit these changes affecting its internal climate which could cause damage to artwork such as cracking or flaking of surfaces, and to inspect and care for the works.

Hundreds of years of experience and anecdotal evidence demonstrate that tomobako provide a way to buffer changes to climate fluctuations. However, it wasn't until a research paper was published in 1994 by conservator Nobuyuki Kamba (subsequently forming part of his 1997 doctorate thesis) that non-Japanese speakers had access to studies echoing this evidence. Kamba's research showed that tomobako provided an effective barrier to slow humidity and temperature changes in the outside environment from affecting the artwork within, in a similar way to the Shōsō-in storehouse.4 Predictably, those storage boxes coated with lacquer, such as the green tomobako used by Unryūan, slow the rate of change even more effectively. Considering that sudden changes in temperature and humidity are one of the most significant causes of damage to lacquered objects, the value of traditional paulownia storage boxes in preserving artworks is clear.

With all this in mind, the NGV recognises the importance of such boxes on many levels and retains them as part of the acquisition of the artwork. Traditional storage boxes are tracked in the same way as the artworks are, by giving them identification numbers that enable every movement of the boxes to be documented and tracked. For the vast majority, the traditional boxes are still used to store the NGV Japanese art collection, and notes instructing how to tie the box cords are kept for reference. There are, however, some boxes that have served their object so long and so well that they can no longer provide their intended function – such as when the boxes come with split timber or insect damage. In such cases the boxes are archived, remaining trackable, but not kept in use. Instead, a custom archival box is made with notes put on the artwork's records.

Who knew that the storage of an artwork could be an art form in itself? Certainly, Japanese culture has excelled at this for centuries.

SUZI SHAW IS NGV CONSERVATOR, FRAMES AND





(above) Unryūan Tatsuo Kitamura's *The writing box* or *Suzuribako*, is kept within this second un-lacquered storage box, with a beautifully custom-made cloth to protect the delicate makie decoration while it's stored within.

(below) Unryūan Tatsuo Kitamura Writing box (Suzuribako 硯箱) 2007. Purchased with funds donated by Pauline Gandel,

(p. 42) Two artworks by Unryūan Tatsuo Kitamura in the NGV collection are stored in these unique green-lacquered storage boxes.

(above) **Unryūan Tatsuo** *Kitamura Vase with pampas grass (Susuki zu kabin* 薄図花瓶) 2004. Presented by Lesley Kehoe Galleries through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2009

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#### **CONSERVATION 101**

#### Made in the environment: Caring for John Wolseley's unique art

By Ruth Shervington

John Wolseley is a well-known Australian artist and naturalist whose working practices have a strong association with climate and the natural environment. The uniqueness of the Australian landscape, including plants and wildlife, geology and geography are predominant subject matter for Wolseley. Indeed, these areas of focus go beyond distinct themes and political messages conveyed by the artist, such as regeneration of the landscape after bushfire, migratory paths of birds, movement of sand dunes, the seasonal shift in the wetlands and sustainable farming practices, to the source of materials and methods of creation, where, in many cases, animal and plant material are used and paper roams the forest floors.<sup>5</sup> In 2015 the NGV held a solo exhibition of works by Wolseley, titled Heartlands and Headwaters that were very generously commissioned, then gifted by Sir Roderick Carnegie AC to the NGV Collection. The works shared Wolseley's practice of combining traditional materials, such as watercolour and pencil, with unique markmaking. Water and the wetlands within Australia are the focus of this body of work and illustrate the great diversity of the country's natural environment.

Wolseley visited all the places depicted in his works, including the cool swamps of the Tasmanian central highlands, the hot and humid coastal flood plains of the tropical north (East Arnhem Land) and the dry salt pans of the Mallee country. He produced many of the works in the field, literally

immersing himself in the landscapes. For example, there are photographs of Wolseley standing in the water, wearing waders while painting waterlilies. In other images, the artist is lying on the ground, stretched out over a large sheet of paper, anchored down with rocks and logs, drawing and mark-making on the paper's surface.

Wolseley's body of work is particularly interesting to study from a paper conservator's viewpoint, as his use of diverse and sometimes unconventional materials and techniques means that each work needs to be carefully examined from a fresh perspective, in consideration of display, storage and long-term preservation.

The Heartlands and Headwaters collection is predominantly paper-based and has been created using all manner of materials and techniques. Wolseley makes conscious choices regarding the quality of his materials, choosing chemically stable, archival papers that suit his needs and support the techniques he uses to create certain effects. For example, he utilises robust papers where strength is needed and light, ethereal, gauze-like Japanese papers for some of his printmaking. The artist more commonly creates relief prints, whereby the characteristics of many Japanese papers are especially suitable for this printmaking technique, being strong, flexible and having a smooth surface finish or translucency if desired. When using traditional paints, pastels, oil sticks and other image forming materials, he uses the highest quality



(above) John Wolseley From Siberia to Roebuck Bay – the godwits reach the mangrove swamps, WA 2012. Gift of Sir Roderick Carnegie in memory of his wife Carmen through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016

(p. 48–9) **John Wolseley** Flight of the eumenine wasps – mud domes and papernests 2012–2014. Gift of Sir Roderick Carnegie in memory of his wife Carmen through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016

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'Wolseley sometimes includes animal and insect tracks, as well as serendipitous markings into his work, as well as collage elements.'

- RUTH SHERVINGTON

materials. Yet it is where Wolseley goes off-piste with his creative methods and materials that he particularly fascinates paper conservators and audiences alike.

In producing works for *Heartlands* and Headwaters, Wolseley often worked on a massive scale, creating some of the largest watercolours and drawings now held in the NGV Collection. He also produced some small delicate pieces, such as his rubbings or prints taken from the cross- or length-section of a tree, the cross-section of a termite mound or the surface of an interesting plant form. Wolselev refers to these works as 'nature prints'. There are also three-dimensional artworks in the Collection, most notably the works he calls 'ventifacts', which are made from good quality robust paper that is released into burnt scrubland to become inscribed by branches and tree remains. These sheets of paper are left for weeks to roam the landscape where they are subject to the weather. When they are collected, they have, in all cases, changed shape and appearance. The dampness of dew, or perhaps the rain, softens the paper that then dries and hardens with the sunshine and wind, into a new, contorted shape. As the paper moves randomly around the bush, it becomes marked with earth, charcoal and other substances, becoming pigmented paper sculptures fashioned by nature.

Wolseley sometimes incorporates animal and insect tracks, as well as serendipitous markings and collage elements into his work. In Flight of the Eumenine wasps – mud domes and paper nests, 2012-14, a wasp nest made from fired clay is attached to the work for display. He has an innovative and fortuitous approach to mark-making. For example, in Natural history of a sphagnum bog, Lake Ina, Tasmania, 2013, he has used sphagnum moss as an image-forming material with watercolour leaving behind not only the imprint, but small pieces of the plant matter. In *Dystopia* – the last wetland, Gwydir 2184, 2012–15, a deceased young buzzard is flung at the paper, weighted and watercolour is applied. The watercolour pools around the bird, defining the wings and feathers, whereby an imprint is formed and some of the once soft feathers, remain attached in places. Wolselev readily used charcoal sourced from burnt branches within the landscape and rather than drawing with the charcoal in a conventional fashion, he let nature determine the

markings. Likewise, he included raw earth in some works, such as in Flight of the Eumenine wasps – mud domes and paper nests, where natural reddishbrown earth, mixed with a binder, traverses across the paper in a wet state and is then allowed to dry in a sedimentary fashion. In *Dystopia – the last* wetland, Gwydir 2184, Wolseley used lead fishing weights to impart a lustrous silver-grey line or pattern. It is clear that Wolseley likes to experiment and his choice and use of surrounding materials complement his work. There is immediacy and flow, lyricism and movement in his raw markings, as well as keenly observed detail. Wolseley's depictions of native birds and plants are technically accurate, capturing the moment where a bird sings or a wasp probes a sticky substance.

In the ideal museum environment, where conservators strive to minimise deterioration, humidity and temperature is kept constant and to specific parameters. This is vastly different from the conditions where artworks such as Wolseley's were created. In a museum, any hint of mould, insect or animal presence is seen as an enormous risk. However, in the case of Wolseley's work, where bird and plant material

have been used and paper has been roaming the forest floors, conservators were instead concerned with how these risks could be managed. Prior to entering the NGV Collection, the works were examined to check for potential hazards, such as pests, though fortunately none were found.

Maintaining specific temperature and relative humidity levels are also important in the care of works such as Wolseley's, as this limits potential mould growth if undetected spores are present. Stable conditions also prevent the distortion of paper, which is more likely to occur with the attached components and lighter weight papers. Continued monitoring of the works will be important to ensure that nothing is later detected, and making digital photographic records assists with this process.

The NGV uses different methods when storing Wolseley's works. The extremely large paintings and drawings are stored rolled and boxed, the three-dimensional ventifacts are wrapped and placed carefully in a puzzle-like fashion within a crate, and the small, unframed, two-dimensional works are stored enclosed within archive folders, which are then boxed

for protection. We also consider the properties of the individual materials used to determine how they should be best stored. Where plant matter and potentially acidic substances are used, it is important to place a barrier material between these and adjacent works to prevent acid migration and inadvertent staining. Interleaving by placing a smooth material against the face of the artwork is also essential where charcoal and loose media such as natural pigment or graphite are used to prevent offsetting, smudging and loss.

Wolseley's body of work is evocative of the natural Australian landscape. Given the rising conversation around climate change and recent events such as the Australian bushfires of 2019–20, works like Wolseley's capture and record a most significant moment in time. They also present a unique and interesting responsibility for the NGV's paper conservators who will strive to ensure these unique, complex works will be preserved for future generations.

RUTH SHERVINGTON IS NGV SENIOR CONSERVATOR
OF PAPER. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS SIR RODERICK
CARNEGUE AS EACH US CENERAL IS CURRORE.

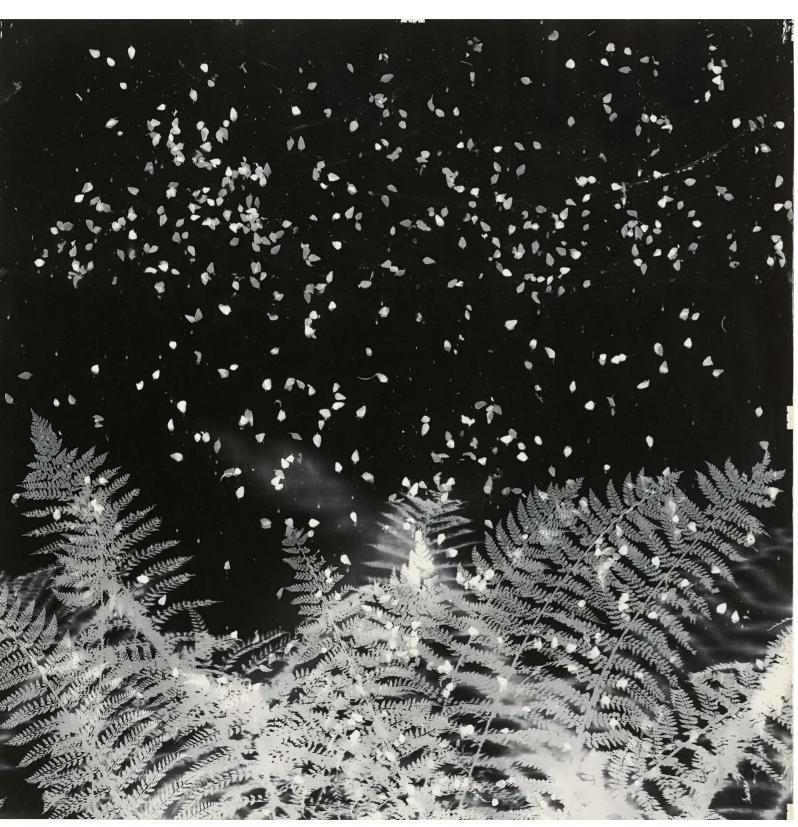


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#### **CONSERVATION 101**

## The importance of materials and process: Working with Harry Nankin's photographs

**By Pip Morrison** 



The Australian artist, Harry Nankin, is known for his images created using natural elements. Nankin and his assistants venture to bodies of water, or into the wilderness, to achieve shadowgrams. Shadowgrams are unique images formed when light shone through a fluid refracts as it goes through different densities and can be recorded on light sensitive photographic paper.

The NGV Collection contains significant works from two of Nankin's series, *The rain*, 2006–07, and *THE WAVE Theoria Sacra Undarum (The sacred theory of the wave)*, 1996–97, where he has captured both these forms of water as they cross the path of the photographic paper.

The process the artist has undertaken in making these series of photographs can be seen in *Of Great Western tears / Duet 2*, 2006. Nankin travelled to the Tasmanian wilderness to expose large sheets of photographic fibre-based paper to the environment at night, using flash pulses to expose the paper. A large covered frame was used

'Nankin and his assistants venture to bodies of water, into the wilderness, to achieve shadow-grams: unique images formed when light shone through a fluid refracts as it goes through different densities.'

—— PIP MORRISON

to house the paper while the location was chosen. The frame with the photographic paper was placed among fern fronds and exposed to the flash. In this method, the paper is subjected to the whims of the weather and records it in more ways than merely the visual image that is produced once the paper is developed. The image shows the clips that would have held the paper into the frame, as well as other aspects of the weather revealed through mechanical damage such as emulsion lifting, scrapes and abrasions, and cockling, giving the paper a slightly wavy appearance. The edges of the paper expose aspects of the process and are an important element of the final artwork. When the work was acquired into the

NGV Collection, staff discussed with Nankin how he wished the photographs to be displayed. His desire was to have both large sheets of paper in the one frame side by side with the edges showing. The sheets of paper are 107  $\times$ 107 cm each, so we needed a large size custom frame. As the photographic paper is fibre based, and the appearance of the paper is important to the artwork we used traditional paper conservation techniques for the float mounting and framing of the work. Float mounting allows for the natural movement already present, and any future movement of the paper to occur without creating unnecessary tensions. We adhered wide Japanese tissue hinges with wheat starch paste at intervals around the edges of the back of each sheet. Slits were cut into the backing board of the mount, matching the width and placement of the hinges. Then we fed the hinges through these slits and adhered and reinforced on the back of the mount board. At all times during this process, the artworks were kept face up as they have a fragile surface. The mounted works were housed in a deep frame with spacers allowing room between the paper and the UV protectant glazing.

Nankin's *THE WAVE* series records the motions of the ocean. He created the photographs by attaching large sheets of photographic paper to rafts and placing them in the ocean at Bushranger's Bay, on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, at night, recording the movement of water and other matter over the sheets of paper using photographic flashes and

moonlight. Nankin also manipulated the images by attaching film negatives and transparencies with handwritten notes or diagrams to some of the paper. These images were subject to extreme conditions, and many of them suffered losses, sometimes emulsion layers only, but sometimes whole sections of paper. There are also many scratches, creases and abrasions present. A conservator's impulse is to 'treat' or fix an image, but in the case of these images, the distinction between changes resulting as part of the process of making the images, and what may have occurred later as mechanical damage or deterioration, is not clear, so the works will be left alone.

These photographs in the NGV Collection are silver gelatin images on fibre-based paper with gold toning. Gold toning replaces some of the silver atoms in the image with gold atoms, and creates a very stable image while keeping a cool blue-black tone. This means that despite all the inherent mechanical damage these images have sustained while being produced, they should have a very long life because of the high-quality materials and processing techniques used.

PIP MORRISON IS NGV CONSERVATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHS.

Harry Nankin Of Great Western tears / Duet 2 2006 (detail) from The rain series 2006-07. Purchased NGV Foundation, 2007

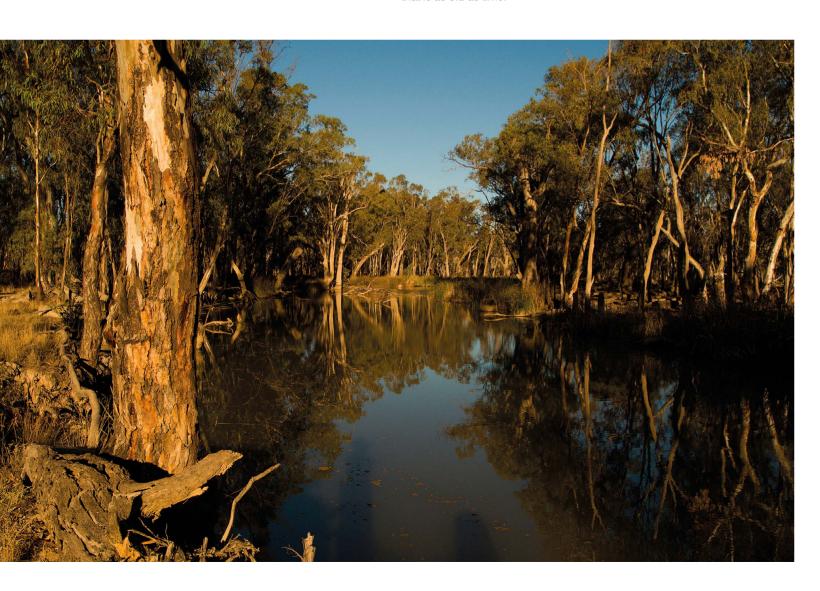


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At 5.45 pm on 18 February 2020, master craftsperson, designer and historian Damien Wright downs his tools. The fresh tang of tung oil and citrus thinner hangs in the air. In his Northcote workshop a large, black, shimmering organic slab – existing halfway between timber and oil – is intersected with and supported by three white plastic chairs. This strange combination of material and object results in a bench seat that asks more questions than it answers. And that is how, as a designer, Wright likes it.

The chairs are the ubiquitous plastic outdoor variety. The kind you expect to see at a sports carnival or awkwardly stacked in the back corner of the shed gathering dust. These chairs are manufactured globally. Compared to their useful lives, the material life span of the plastic is excessive – thousands of years and maybe more. Certainly far longer than we humans can comprehend.

The slab is ancient river red gum (Eucalyptus camaldulensis), or it was. It was dug up at a quarry on Yorta Yorta Country near Wodonga, Victoria, and through radiocarbon dating is estimated to be around 10,000 years old. When timber is unearthed after so long underground, it is in the midst of a material transformation. It can no longer be classified as timber, but neither is it a fossil, and needs at least another 49.9 million years deep underground to become oil. It is a process of metamorphosis that is as old as time.



5.45pm 18/02/2020 is all about time. Named for the time and date it was 'completed', it took two weeks from the spark of an idea to applying the final layer of finish. For a work that embodies vast timescales in its material and philosophy, trying to pinpoint

when the work 'started and finished' proves elusive. It has been a journey.

Depending on which way you look at it, the journey began long before the first pass of the brass brush to remove burrs and prepare the surface. It could have started four years ago when Wright collected the timber slab from miller, woodworker and seventh-generation farmer, Kelvin Barton's Wodonga mill. Barton, who had a local supply



Or it might go back earlier still, to 1990, when geomorphologist Jim Bowler received samples of a curious black material that was fibrous and very hard. Bowler identified and dated the sample as oxidised and ebonised river red gum at approximately 8,000 to 10,000 years old. Recognising the outstanding historical and material qualities of this discovery, Bowler and his wife Joan Bowler encouraged woodworkers and millers, including Barton, to work with this ancient material.

Maybe then, the story begins with the seeding of this river red gum.

Based on Bowler's dating, this particular tree would have grown up on the banks of the Murray River after the last ice age, which peaked about 20,000 years ago. It would have enjoyed a steady rise in temperature and water levels. Eventually it toppled over and perhaps it was submerged in the water, providing food and shelter to a multitude of aquatic life in the river that once nourished its roots. For the Indigenous populations that lived through the last Ice Age the mighty river red gum provided spiritually, culturally and economically. For both the Yorta Yorta and now non-Indigenous people such as Wright, the red gum that have survived logging, mining and other destructive human activities, continue to provide.

Over several thousand years, melting snow and receding glaciers transported vast quantities of gravel and scree from the Victorian Alpine region – carving out valleys, collecting organic matter, and entombing fallen trees, including the river red gum, in sediment. Compacted in an acidic and oxygen-deprived environment, the timber slowly absorbs and becomes saturated with iron and silica – gradually becoming oxidised and ebonised,

hardening and turning black. It is through these ancient and ongoing cycles of material change that this river red gum is transformed. Naturally black through to the heartwood and unbelievably hard, this familiar, yet strange material holds an

enticing, ethereal quality befitting its lived experiences.

The ancient, blackened slab held in dialogue with the contemporary, all-pervasive, and possibly everlasting, polypropylene of the white plastic chairs is visually and metaphorically complex. The clash of materials brings into sharp relief the deep time, natural cycles and geological forces required to produce both this piece of red gum (10,000 years) and

the oil (approximately 50 million years) processed into the plastic for the chairs. By literally intersecting these materials, Wright invites us to travel, not back, but through time. As Wright explains, '5.45 challenges our binary logic of time and place. Of belonging. Of the precious and valuable. The intersection of deep time and the very now. [It asks us to understand] that now and then are not separate'. He points to institutionalised systems of categorisation, including in the design field, where the desire to compartmentalise through an 'Enlightenment logic', underpins much of Western history. Wright sees great potential for Australian craft and design to challenge and ultimately broaden that mindset towards a more holistic understanding of our place in the world and in time. In that regard, there is still much ground to cover, but this seems a good time to start.

Maybe 5.45pm 18/02/2020 does not mark the end, but simply another step along the journey.

MYF DOUGHTY IS NGV ASSISTANT CURATOR, CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE.







**BY** ANNIKA AITKEN

#### **Block prints**

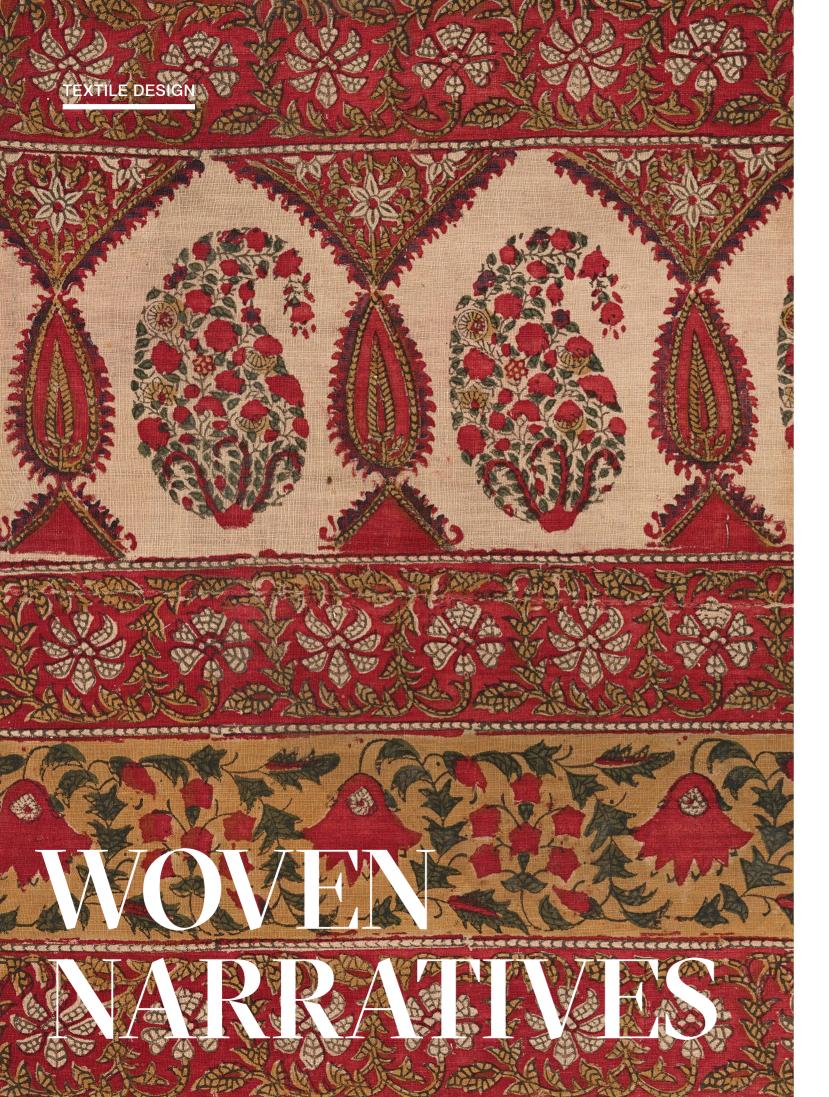
Block printing is one of the oldest textile design techniques known to have been used in India, and has been practised for centuries. Unlike contemporary printing methods, traditional block printing is a time-consuming process, often taking several weeks to complete a single textile. Lengths of cotton are washed, often in local rivers or bodies of water, before being laid flat in the sun to bleach and dry. This process assists in the removal of starch and impurities, which is an essential step in preparing textile fibres for receiving pigment. Wooden blocks incised with intricate designs by master carvers are dipped into dye-resistant glue (resist) or pigment, then stamped with great precision across lengths of material to create flowing patterns.

Variations in climate and natural environment across the Indian subcontinent offer a range of plant and mineral sources for natural pigments and have resulted in the development of myriad colours, techniques and designs. This example from Punjab is part of a group of thirty block print samples from

across India and was among the earliest works from the region to be acquired by the NGV, in 1895. Base patterns have been created by stamping resist onto cotton prior to dyeing, and overlay stamps coated in pigment have later been applied to the surface. Each additional overlay colour has been carefully applied with a separate block, carved to match the first 'outline' block. Stylised plant motifs, including an intricate floral paisley bordered by swirling vines, reference designs found in both Persian and Islamic architecture and illuminated manuscripts.

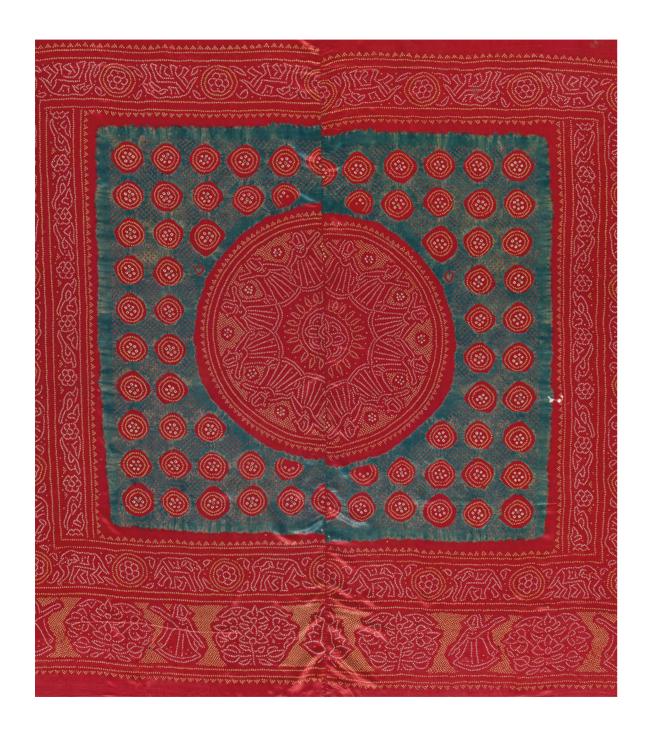
#### Tie-dye

'Tie-dye' is a term used to describe several traditional resist-dyeing textile design techniques prevalent throughout Asia. At its simplest, patterns are created by knotting, twisting or stitching cloth with binding before immersing it in dye. This process – known as *pelangi* and *tritik* in Indonesia and *bandy* in India – can be repeated multiple times, resulting in several different colours and shade gradations on a single textile.



(left) Indian Textile sample 19th century (detail) Purchased, 1895

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This silk example from Gujarat, India, is an *Odhni*, or woman's head covering. Its distinctive red colour is the result of a natural pigment derived from the rose madder plant. A circular central motif of women dancing may reference the *Garba* (womb), a traditional Gujarati dance performed in devotion to the feminine divine, particularly the Goddess Durga. Borders of intricately rendered elephants, birds and blossom motifs are evocative of the *Garba* dance's association with fertility.

#### lkat

The term 'ikat' comes from the Malay/ Indonesian verb 'mengikat', meaning to tie or bind. In the production of ikat textiles, patterns are created on threads prior to weaving. Threads are wrapped around a frame, as they would appear when woven and bound in sections with a dye-resistant binding to create the desired pattern. After being immersed in dye, the thread is rinsed and dried, the bindings removed, and the threads realigned on a loom. As the cloth is woven, the desired pattern is revealed, and results in the soft-edged motifs unique to ikat.

The Indonesian islands of East Nusa Tenggara are particularly renowned for their production of ikat. In this example from the island of Sumba, the warp (lengthwise) threads have been dyed and a plain colour has been used when weaving the weft (transverse) threads. This process distinguishes ikat from other resist-dyeing techniques, such as tie-dye and batik, where fabric is dyed after it has been woven. Illustrating local contact with commodity traders during the centuries of European colonial influence and commercial exploitation of Southeast Asia, the work combines an indigenous design format with motifs adapted from Dutch and French coins, flags and coats of arms, including a lion rampant, roosters and horseriders.

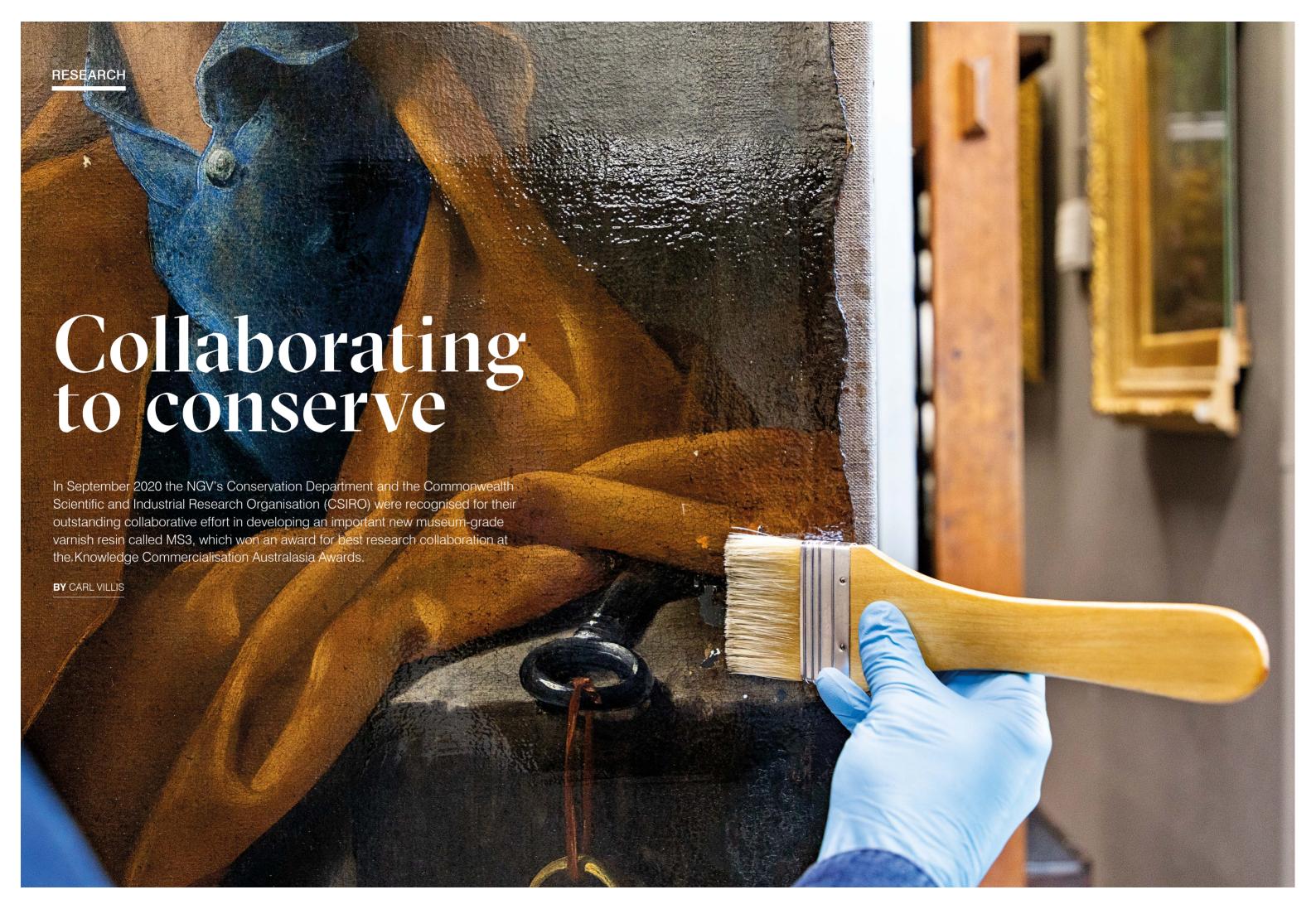
#### Batik

Developed in Java, Indonesian batik is a textile-dyeing process involving the application of dye-resistant wax patterns onto cloth with a tjanting (applicator tool). The combination of resisted areas with successive applications of wax and immersion in different colours of dye, produces distinctive, multicoloured patterns a process that requires incredible skill and craftsmanship. Traditional batik is often categorised into two groups: geometric and non-geometric patterning. Within these classifications, countless patterns exist, with many holding important cultural symbolism and deep spiritual significance. Batik can be used for ceremonial purposes, as costumes for performance and even for everyday clothing. Designs can denote the status or ancestral lineage of the wearer, with some specific design compositions restricted for use by members of the imperial family only.

This Javanese example features a stylised natural composition of vines, blossoms, birds and insects. Its intense colour demonstrates the beauty of the rich natural brown dyes for which Indonesia is renowned, a result of the tannins derived from the roots, seeds, bark, leaves and fruit of a multitude of plants and trees endemic to the Southeast Asian subregion.

In its many forms, textile design is a prolific and vitally important form of cultural expression throughout South and Southeast Asia, and the NGV actively continues to pursue expanding its holdings in this fascinating area.

ANNIKA AITKEN IS NGV ASSISTANT CURATOR, ASIAN ART. VIEW THESE WORKS AND MANY OTHER EXAMPLES IN THE DISPLAY WOVEN NARRATIVES ON DISPLAY SOON ON LEVEL 1 AT NGV INTERNATIONAL. VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE FOR DETAILS.



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(p. 64–5) Applying MS3 varnish to The repentance of Saint Peter, 17th century.
(above) NGV Senior Painting Conservator Carl Villis applying MS3 varnish to Anthony van Dyck's Philip Herbert's 4th Earl of Pembroke. c. 1634.

undreds of paintings in the NGV Collection have a thin, barely perceptible varnish coating, keeping their surface sheen fresh and providing important protection for the brushstrokes that lie beneath. Having the correct varnish is one of the keys to a successful conservation treatment.

In the past, natural resins such as

dammar and mastic, extracted from trees, were commonly used for this purpose. They provided a rich gloss to the painting surface but were prone to yellowing over time, meaning that they needed to be replaced regularly. The development of synthetic resins in the twentieth century opened the door to new classes of resins which could be made more resistant to the oxidation process, potentially adding decades to the useful life of a varnish. Most of these new resins were massproduced for the coatings industry, and while some were undoubtedly superior in terms of aging properties, they did not always provide the ideal surface appearance required for oil paintings. In the early 1960s, a scientist at the National Gallery in London responded to this situation by developing a modified ketone resin specifically tailored to the needs of the painting conservation profession. This resin, called MS2A, proved to be extremely popular with generations of conservators across the world for its unique combination of visual and handling properties, and its improved resistance to colour change, making it an ideal varnish. As a niche product, it was only manufactured in small quantities, and due to its high cost, stocks were jealously guarded by conservators. In 2014, it came as a major shock to the profession when news filtered through that production of MS2A had ceased, due to the closure of the company that had produced it for the previous two decades. In response, conservators began to experiment with other resins and varnishing techniques in the hope that one of them might become a suitable replacement for MS2A, but results were mixed and many still lamented the loss of their favourite varnish.

By 2016, when it became clear that there was no prospect of MS2A returning, the NGV's painting conservation team contacted CSIRO to enquire about the possibility of reviving production of the precious resin. The conversation started

with Dr Deborah Lau, Group Leader in the CSIRO's manufacturing division. Lau, a scientist whose affiliation with the NGV and the conservation profession goes back three decades, invited her colleague John Tsanaktsidis. Research Director of Advanced Fibres and Chemical Industries at CSIRO, to examine how we might proceed. The three of us formed a working group, whose first task was to gather all available scientific literature, historical research and intellectual property rights information to determine MS2A's chemical structure, how it had been made and whether there were any legal impediments to recreating it. Once those hurdles were cleared, Lau, Tsanaktsidis, and their team of scientists at the CSIRO went to their laboratories to see if they could recreate a 'test-tube' quantity of the resin. Within weeks they handed us with a small glass jar filled with a pale crystalline powder, which we tested and compared with a sample of the original resin in the studio. We were thrilled to find that the new prototype closely matched MS2A in appearance and handling properties - proof that the team had successfully established a formula and working method to take the project forward. However, before proceeding to the next stage, the working group came together again to discuss another proposal.

The CSIRO chemists, with their many years of chemical and manufacturing expertise, believed they could produce a higher quality version of MS2A, one that matched the original in its core properties, but improved it in others. They were convinced a clearer, less yellow, resin could be made, with greater consistency in appearance from batch to batch, which had sometimes been an issue with MS2A. This could be achieved by employing a new chemical reaction process known as flow chemistry, which would enable the base reactants to better integrate as they passed through the chemical reactor. We quickly agreed that this was the perfect opportunity to upgrade the new varnish. The CSIRO scientists then created four prototypes, each with slight variabilities in solubility and gloss, which we again trialled in the NGV's painting conservation studio. Once the best varnish candidate was selected, the CSIRO team explored how to transform its lab research into a process that could be scaled up for

'Colleagues in major art museums around the world were sent small samples of MS3...the feedback was unanimously positive, with a combination of excitement and relief that someone had responded to a critical professional need.'

— CARL VILLIS

production. They reached out to Boron Molecular, a specialist chemical manufacturer based in Melbourne, to take responsibility for producing the new resin. which by then had been named MS3 to recognise the third generation of this type of varnish. Meanwhile, the NGV's conservators and CSIRO undertook further tests to assess the performance and ageing properties of MS3 to ensure it met or exceeded the standards set by MS2A. Over eighteen months, we introduced MS3 to a series of painting conservation treatments at the NGV. including Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn's Two old men disputing, 1628, and Anthony van Dyck's Philip Herbert, 4th Earl of Pembroke, c. 1634, with excellent results in terms of the ease of application and the ability to achieve the desired surface appearance.

Colleagues in major art museums around the world were sent small samples of MS3 to try out in advance of the commercial release of the varnish. The feedback was unanimously positive, with a combination of excitement and relief that someone had responded to a critical professional need. Late last year, at a

major conference held at Yale University for the conservation of canvas paintings, a well-known conservator was so elated to hear the news that she danced a jig in celebration! Since its launch, MS3 has already come into use for important conservation treatments in art museums throughout Australia, the US and the UK.

It has been an extremely rewarding experience to play a role in bringing this valuable and much-needed resource to the painting conservation profession and, even more so, for the fact that the entire project was conceived, researched and brought to fruition through the collaborative efforts of the NGV, CSIRO and Boron Molecular right here in Melbourne for the benefit of conservators globally.

CARL VILLIS IS NGV SENIOR PAINTING CONSERVATOR. NGV AND CSIRO WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEADERSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE MS3 CHEMISTRY TEAM: SIMON SAUBERN, YUTONG ZHU, IVAN MARTINEZ-BOTELLA, MARK HICKEY, JOHN TSANAKTSIDIS, CARL BRAYBROOK; AND THE CSIRO PROJECT SUPPORT TEAM: WERNER VAN DER MERWE, HISHANI PRABAHARAN, JOANNE LEE, MARIANN FEE AND ALL GREFN.

#### **ART IN FOCUS**

Arthur Streeton The purple noon's transparent might 1896

Australian impressionist works continue to offer a reminder of the changeability of the Australian landscape, across a day or a season as well as its transformation over many years. Take a closer look at one such landscape, by Arthur Streeton.

**BY** BRIAN MARTIN

Since 2011, I have been a voluntary guide at the National Gallery of Victoria. One of the real pleasures of being a voluntary guide is the opportunity to engage with visitors and communicate something of my enthusiasm, knowledge and experience of the Gallery's wonderful collections, encouraging others to 'see what lean see'.

When I am guiding at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Australian artist Arthur Streeton's *The purple noon's transparent might*, 1896, sits at the top of my list of works for inclusion in a tour. Many viewers, especially international audiences but also people from closer to home, appreciate its evocation of a quintessentially Australian landscape.

The purple noon's transparent might was the first painting by Streeton to be purchased by the National Gallery of Victoria, notably in its year of completion in 1896, and one of the first purchased by the Gallery from artists of his generation.





Arthur Streeton was a leading figure in the group of artists known as the Australian Impressionists, who worked *en plein air* to capture the essence of the Australian landscape and the transformative effects of Australian light. This painting provides an expansive view of the Hawkesbury River near Richmond, New South Wales, stretching from the bend in the river at Richmond Lowlands, looking south-west to the Blue Mountains in the far distance.

The title was drawn from an 1818 poem by English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley titled 'Stanzas written in dejection near Naples'. Streeton often took poetry away with him to serve as inspiration for his work on his many solitary painting trips.



2 The painting was a logistical challenge, with Streeton working under a makeshift shelter to escape the 42-degree Celsius heat and painting the work outdoors in two days.¹ Despite the uncomfortable conditions, he created an evocative impression of a landscape somnolent in the heat and stillness of a summer day.

Streeton soon developed a reputation as a master painter of distance. Fellow artist Lionel Lindsay said of Streeton: 'No one can paint distance like him ... Every touch here is sure and relevant of character'.<sup>2</sup>

Landscape artists use compositional guidelines that are sometimes not apparent to the untrained eye. These guidelines result in works that are aesthetically pleasing. They are not hard and fast rules but can be applied in part or in full depending on the scene being depicted. Streeton's painting offers an opportunity to analyse how he may have used an underlying structure to compose this work and, as Lindsay suggested, 'paint distance' with such success.

As evident when looking at the work in its entirety, Streeton used a square format, which was most unusual for the time. The traditional format for a landscape painting was normally three units high and four units wide, with the height divided into three equal sections. Sometimes artists use the bottom third section for the foreground and mid-ground, and the middle and top third sections for the background and an expansive sky. In this example, Streeton provides a broad landscape view by extending his depiction across the full spread of the foreground and mid-ground, with only the top third of the canvas reserved for the background, mountains and the sky.





We follow the river's path horizontally to the bend that sees its direction change, taking a diagonal course to finish in the bottom left corner of the composition. The river appears lighter at this point flowing over shallow water with the sun reflecting off its surface. A dab of rose madder marks the centre of the painting. Adjacent we see evidence of farm settlement and from there, the landscape rolls out to the river, hinterland and distant mountains.



6 Here, the river opens up, stretching across the full width of the canvas, appearing darker and stronger in hue as the viewer looks down on the surface of deeper water. The shrubbery of eucalyptus trees brings the viewer back to the artist's viewpoint high above the river.

BRIAN MARTIN HAS BEEN AN NGV VOLUNTARY GUIDE SINCE 2011 AND IS CURRENTLY THE PRESIDENT OF THE GUIDES ORGANISING COMMITTEE. THE PURPLE NOON'S TRANSPARENT MIGHT, 1896, IS CURRENTLY ON LOAN TO THE ART GALLERY NSW FOR THE EXHIBITION STREETON. FIND OUT MORE AT ARTGALLERY.NSW.GOV.AU/EXHIBITIONS/STREETON. EXPLORE THE PURPLE NOON'S TRANSPARENT MIGHT, 1896, ONLINE AT NGV.MELBOURNE/EXPLORE/COLLECTION/WORK/3060

Arthur Streeton The purple noon's transparent might 1896 (details)
Purchased, 1896



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# Conserving Streeton's iconic Australian landscape



Paintings are as alive as the subject matter they contain and beneath every surface a story can be revealed. Streeton's *The purple noon's transparent might* has recently been conserved by NGV Head of Conservation Michael Varcoe-Cocks in a process that revealed the painting's brightest blues and sombre shadows, just as the artist intended 124 years ago.

BY MICHAEL VARCOE-COCKS AND JESSICA LEHMANN

Jessica Lehman: Why was it decided to 'clean' and varnish Arthur Streeton's *The purple noon's transparent might* now, 124 years after the work's creation?

Michael Varcoe-Cocks: Arthur

Streeton's The purple noon's transparent might never received a final varnish layer. Leaving a painting unvarnished was not Streeton's normal practice, however the relatively quick exhibition of the canvas after its completion and the successful sale to the NGV prohibited Streeton from doing it himself because a varnish should not be applied until the paint layer has sufficiently dried, otherwise there is the risk of cracking in the paint layer. Since 1896 the painting has remained in an unvarnished state and over time the paint surface has accumulated a layer of grime, including organic matter that bonded to the pigment surface to form organic salts.

In recent years I undertook archival research at the Public Records Office Victoria and uncovered an historic letter from Streeton to his friend, and fellow Impressionist, Frederick McCubbin who was the Drawing Master at the National Gallery School. Writing from London a year after he had sold the painting, Streeton stated that sufficient time had passed for the painting to dry and it would now be ready for varnishing. He requested that McCubbin ask the then NGV Council of Trustees to have this happen and although they gave prompt approval Streeton's wishes were never realised.

# JL: What are the ethical implications that conservators consider when undertaking a conservation treatment of such an iconic artwork in the NGV Collection?

**MVC:** Conservators are highly trained, experienced professionals and adhere to the Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM) code of ethics. The decision to undertake any conservation treatment happens in stages. Initially we would establish the desire or identified need, followed by archival and technical art history research, material technical research and then finally the actual treatment occurs. This process can involve discussion with NGV colleagues, relevant scholars and the artist, if appropriate. At all times conservators are adhering to the strict directive that anything applied to the artwork is reversible. Armed with the

recent understanding of Streeton's wishes, my motivation for this treatment was based on the knowledge that the painting's appearance had changed sufficiently so that it was no longer a true representation of the artist's work.

# JL: What process and steps were involved in this restoration?

**MVC:** Starting in a light area with highest contrast, the cleaning is slow and steady to eventually remove the years of surface build up. Following the cleaning I applied a synthetic varnish that replicates the traditional dammar resin, a resin extracted from trees. The synthetic varnish has the advantage of prolonged stability and ease of removability in years to come. In this case we chose a recently developed resin called MS3 (read more about the development of this resin on page 64).

# JL: What has the cleaning and restoration revealed? Were there any unexpected revelations?

**MVC:** The conservation treatment has revealed, for the first time in living memory, the colours and tonal range that Streeton painted when perched on the riverbank. Below us and extending into the distance the Hawkesbury River is chromatically radical in intense rich blue. Around the bend in the upper left it passes deep blue

trees at the Richmond Bridge crossing whose intense colour is designed to draw the viewer's eye into this sunlight landscape. On close inspection we can now see the subtle colouring of the sky with pink highlights delivered in relentless square brushwork. One of my favourite revelations is the textual variation achieved in the highly affluent farmland on the opposing bank of the Richmond Lowlands. The smooth grazed grass of the foreground is abruptly contrasted by a paddock of flowing maize and further up a summer display of crops and fruiting trees.

# JL: What do you hope others will experience when seeing the painting again after its treatment?

**MVC:** On viewing this painting audiences will now be presented with one of the greatest Impressionist landscapes in Australian art. Its beauty is achieved equally by Streeton's youthful talent and his own love of his Australian homeland. I hope others can now experience the work as intended and as created.

MICHAEL VARCOE-COCKS IS NGV HEAD OF
CONSERVATION. JESSICA LEHMANN IS NGV PROJECT
OFFICER. CONSERVATION.





Pia JOHNSON, Family Portrait Wall from Por Por's House series (2014), archival inkjet print, dimensions variable, image courtesy of the artist.

# **A Family Album**

# 31 October - 13 December 2020

Through painting, photography, textiles and video works, the featured artists in A Family Album illustrate the myriad experiences that bring families together and pull them apart.

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Artwork: Roger Kemp, "Untitled", c.1970, acrylic on canvas, 169 x 227cm. Courtesy of Eastgate Gallery, Melbourne.

# **ACU Art Collection** A new perspective

Comprising highlights from the Australian Catholic University's art collection revealed through essays by renowned art historians, religious commentators, curators, art writers and critical thinkers.

This richly illustrated publication presents a range of artworks in diverse mediums, from early medieval sculpture, stained glass and textiles through to works in oil, acrylic, print, ceramics and, most recently, 21st Century glass. The international and Australian artists represented include Matteo di Giovanni, Taddeo di Bartolo, Justin O'Brien, Arthur Boyd, Angelina Pwerle, Pippin Drysdale and Helen Johnson. Contributors to A new perspective include the Hon John Fahey AC, GCSG, Professor Greg Craven AO, GCSG, Professor Zlatko Skrbis, Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP, Professor Anne Dunlop, Dr Ursula Betka, Anne Marie Brody, Dr Felicity Harley, Associate Professor Alison Inglis, Simone Chetcuti, Fr Anthony Casamento CSMA, Dr Hilary Maddocks, Dr Louise Marshall, Caroline Field, Dr Christine Nicholls, Alasdair Macintyre and Victoria Perin. Each of their essays focuses on one or two works of art and invites the reader to look more closely and gain a new perspective.

Available via: artsandculture.acu.edu.au/ exclusive-gifts



# **JUST IN**

# **Bushfire Brandalism posters**

In January 2020, a group of artists across Australia organised a major intervention of public space by replacing advertising from bus shelters and walls with eye-catching posters in response to last year's catastrophic bushfire season. A set of forty-one of these posters are now part of the NGV Collection, representing the political engagement of Australian artists, and their commitment to addressing climate change.

BY JESSICA COLE

Under the collective name Bushfire Brandalism, forty-one Australian artists took to the streets of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane in January 2020, replacing roadside ads with provocative images and messages calling for immediate action on the climate crisis.

Coming together on social media, the collective of artists (some of whom remain anonymous) released a statement to coincide with what they called 'the nation's largest unsanctioned outdoor art exhibition':

As a collective group of Australian artists, we have been driven to reclaim public advertising space with posters speaking to the Australian government's inaction on climate change and the devastating bushfires.

We do not accept that this situation is 'business as usual'. We are making these issues visible in our public spaces and in our media; areas monopolized by entities maintaining conservative climate denial agendas. If the newspapers won't print the story, we will.<sup>1</sup>

Over the course of what has been named Australia's 'black summer', bushfires emitted more than 300 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, resulting in an air quality index over twelve times the hazardous level in some locations. A scientific study has estimated that nearly 3 billion animals were displaced or killed by the fires, with some endangered species feared to have been driven to extinction.<sup>2</sup>

Established in the UK in 2012, the Brandalism movement is described as 'a revolt against the corporate control of culture and space'. Targeting spaces reserved for commercial advertisements and usually owned by multinational corporations, such as those found in bus shelters, artists use 'subvertising' to call into question dominant government responses to social and environmental justice issues.

For the Bushfire Brandalism campaign, poster designs focused on a range of topics specific to the Australian climate crisis, including the fossil fuel industry, the bravery of local firefighters, the devastating environmental losses due to the bushfires, and the disproportionate effect they had and continue to have on First Nations communities. For example, Thomas Bell's poster depicts Australia in flames, paradoxically asking: 'How's the serenity?' (a quote from the 1997 Australian film classic *The Castle*), while Stanislava Pinchuk's poster simply

states 'LAND IS MEMORY' – a plea for more funding towards Indigenous fire management. A QR code on each poster links to a charity working to combat the issues raised.

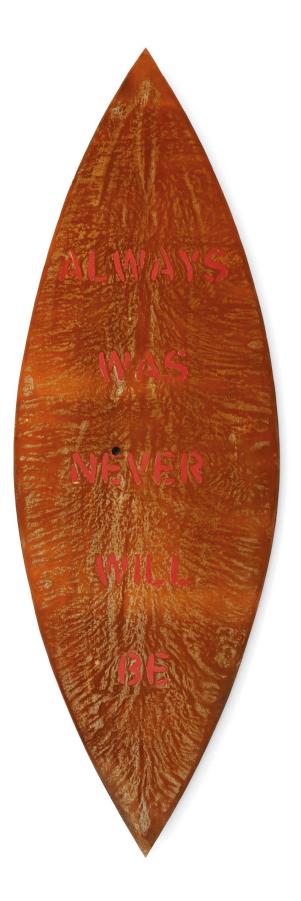
The posters were printed by Collingwood print studio Milkbar, who donated their time and print costs towards the campaign, and who have printed a special 'archival' set for the NGV Collection, and for posterity. The prints join other activist posters and screenprints in the Gallery's Australian print collection, such as those produced by Earthworks Poster Collective and Redback Graphix during the 1970s and 8os. As ever, bringing work that was created for the street into a state collection poses interesting questions about the boundaries (perceived and physical) between these two historically separate public spaces - boundaries that are thankfully now more fluid.

JESSICA COLE IS NGV ASSISTANT CURATOR, PRINTS AND DRAWINGS.

Edwin Down on our luck 2020. Purchased Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists. 2020



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# Jason Wing

Two new works from Sydney-based artist Jason Wing's *Battleground* series, 2020, have recently entered the NGV Collection. *Battleground* is an ongoing series centred on a broad shield known as the Gweagal shield, which is currently held in the British Museum collection. This significant shield conveys the history of the first landing of Captain James Cook to Botany Bay, and the resistance of the Aboriginal people who were present.

**BY** HANNAH PRESLEY

Jason Wing is a multidisciplinary artist based in Sydney; his father is Chinese (Cantonese) and his mother is a Biripi woman from the Upper Hunter region of New South Wales. Wing identifies strongly with his bi-cultural identity, responding to his own experiences as an Aboriginal man by creating work that endeavours to address historical constructs impacting his life and the broader population. Wing's history as a street artist fuels his work, informing his community focus and seeing him embrace public art as a platform for wider awareness of First Nations issues:

I have to switch ego off when I am working on public art, its about representing the community, there are different considerations. I need to be open to wider narratives and other perspectives in the community. It's a challenge to aim for accessibility without compromising layers of interpretation and meaning, but the aim is to reach as many people as possible.<sup>1</sup>

The Gweagal shield is carved from wood, and is one of the two types of shield commonly found in the southeast of Australia. It is an elongated oval shape with pointed ends and a small hole at its centre. This hole is said to have been punctured by a bullet, allegedly fired by Captain Cook himself, and it is this account that has inspired Wing to create the shields in Battleground.

Wing's shields are crafted from rusted corten steel, each shield in the series emblazoned with designs and text in enamel paints that reference a

mix of surveyor's marks and cultural symbols applied in ochres. Many of the shields are perforated to reflect the musket or bullet hole found in the Gweagal shield – recognising the violence and confrontation of this first historical interaction, but also making a connection with the current issues facing the Indigenous community. In this work, Wing connects national protests against Aboriginal deaths in custody in Australia with the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement originating in the USA as a response to police brutality and racially motivated violence. Wing sees BLM as an opportunity to find global solidarity and give voice to the injustices and disparities seen in our country. Text is an important tool in Wing's artistic artillery. His use of words and word play allow for communication in a direct and resolute way, in many ways recalling protest banners. Wing elaborates:

Placards seen at protests are ephemeral, the shields in *Battleground* are made of steel, mined from Aboriginal Land, they are a marker in time and they will be around for hundreds of years.<sup>2</sup>

Wing created the work Battleground (Always was never will be), 2020, after attending Aboriginal Deaths in Custody protests in Sydney that ran in solidarity with the BLM movement. Always was always will be is a political assertion referring to First Nations sovereign rights that is often heard chanted at demonstrations, it is also this year's NAIDOC theme. Wing felt his reworked slogan more accurately reflected

reality, highlighting the fact that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders now make up only 3 per cent of Australia's population. He has said:

Typically this phrase is intended, by those who use it, to be a hope filled acknowledgment of Indigenous sovereignty. But in moments of frustration and despair, it has occurred to me that this hopeful phrase fails to match our everyday reality. The words themselves are not being matched by the action required. These words are a wish yet to be fulfilled, a plea yet to be heard and actioned.<sup>3</sup>

Battleground (Civil lies), 2020, speaks directly to the outdated legal concept of terra nullius. With a simple play on words, Wing challenges the idea that the British Empire was the most sophisticated or 'civilised' on earth, a viewpoint that he contests blatantly disregards the Empire's impact on the many ancient cultures invaded and violently disrupted.

Wing's *Battleground* series, by drawing on historical narratives and making connections with global political movements, is an important reflection of our current times and the daily battles fought by Aboriginal people for justice and respect.

HANNAH PRESLEY IS NGV CURATOR, INDIGENOUS

Jason Wing Battleground (Civil lies), 2020 Battleground (Always was never will be) 2020. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2020



# **Dean Cross**

Recently the NGV acquired *The Yowie*, 2017, an exciting new video work by Worimi artist Dean Cross who was born and raised on Ngunnawal/Ngambri Country.

BY MYLES RUSSELL-COOK

The Yowie, originally shown as part of an installation titled *The Mausoleum*, 2017, refers directly to the black-silhouetted figure that populates Sidney Nolan's *Ned Kelly* series, 1946–47. Cross has filmed his own version of the Kelly character in an Australian Army 'ghillie suit', colloquially called a yowie. The bark helmet is made from the wood of an Australian eucalypt, with a white ochre stripe standing in for the rectangular void where the eyes would be.

Despite his infamous past, Ned Kelly has been mythologised as the lone bush ranger, the battler, the rebel without a cause. Cross's work addresses the complexities that come with that character, and that version of a national identity. Cross's Kelly entangles black and white, blurring the lines between settler legends and Aboriginal myths.

His figure is motionless, with the only reference to the passage of time being the gentle ripples in the water and the rustling of the reeds. At one point a single fish jumps in the background; if you are not patient, you will miss it.

Cross's career began in contemporary dance, both performing and choreographing, nationally and internationally for more than a decade. It is surprising, considering his trained history as a dancer, how it is the stillness of this figure that gives the work such great depth.

A yowie is a magical being known by some Aboriginal people to exist on the margins. Cross's yowie appears in the golden hour. He stands at the intersection of time; the moment when day and night run into one another. He

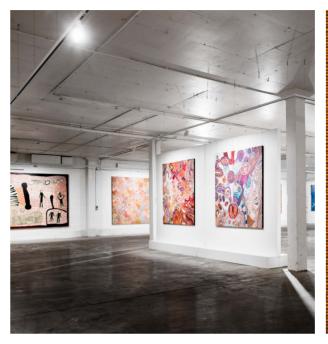
also appears in a liminal position in space, on the border of a lake, surrounded by reeds, with his body semi submerged. Symbolically the work is about the meeting of two worlds: night and the day, the water and the land, black and white. *The Yowie* is a powerful contemporary work that provides an Indigenous perspective on Australia's settler history.

MYLES RUSSELL-COOK IS NGV CURATOR, INDIGENOUS ART. EXPLORE *THE YOWIE*, 2017, ONLINE AT NGV. MELBOURNE/EXPLORE/COLLECTION/WORK/141824

**Dean Cross** *The Yowie* 2017. Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists. 2019



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TOP RIGHT Turkey Tolson Tjupurrula, Straightening Spears 1998, 150 x 183 cm, Acrylic on Linen. © estate of the artist licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd. BOTTON LEFT Anatjari Tjakamarra No.III, Men's Corroboree Dreaming in a Cave 1974, 50.5 x 45 cm. © estate of the artist licensed by Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd. G Bardon.



NGV MAGAZII

# JUST IN

# Michelle Woody Minnapinni

Through the support of Judith and Leon Gorr, the NGV acquired *Ngiya Murrakupupuni* (*My Country*), 2020, by Tiwi rising star, Michelle Woody Minnapinni. The painting will be on display in the upcoming exhibition *TIWI*.

BY JUDITH RYAN AM

Michelle Woody Minnapinni's paintings are connected to her Ancestors across time and place through her use of the pwoja (customary Tiwi ironwood comb) and natural ochres gathered on Country. As fellow artist, Pedro Wonaeamirri explains, 'The ochres are being left by our Ancestors ... We have never forgotten our colour'.'

Minnapinni's Ngiya Murrakupupuni (My Country), 2020 reads from top to bottom like an exemplar of the Tiwi palette: ngaki turtiyanginari, arrikirninga, yaringa (this is white; this is yellow; this is red). Tiwi artists obtain the turtiyanginari (white ochre) from near the beach cliff's edge at Milikapiti, a community on the northern coast of Melville Island, and collect the yellow ochre at a cutting past Three Ways on the road to Pirlangimpi, another community on the southern coast of the island. They make red ochre by baking the arrikirninga (a rich cadmium-yellow ochre) in a fire until it is transformed into yaringa (a brilliant burnt sienna or Indian red).

'Minnapinni applies broken horizontal lines of red dots on white and on yellow, then white broken lines of dots on red to conceptualise terrain and express her connection to Country.'

——— JUDITH RYAN AM

Minnapinni, like leading artists at Jilamara Arts, including Pedro Wonaeamirri, Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu and Kaye Browne, paints primarily with the pwoja. During the 1960s, this design tool – traditionally used to apply ochre ritual markings of bands of dots to the face and body - was extended to painting on stringybark or ironwood by artists such as Tommy Pukualami Mungatopi. Using the pwoja, like painting with the Yolnu marwat (brush made of human hair), requires an assured and disciplined hand. Similar to a tutini (pole) for the pukumani (mourning) ceremony, a pwoja is carved from an ironwood tree by specialist makers and, just as the tutini is symbolic of bones of the deceased, pwoja means 'bone', or colloquially 'the bone of a tree'. Moreover, the refined impression of multiple lines of tiny dots made by dipping the meticulously

carved teeth into ochre and rolling the pwoja lightly onto the surface of a work is an example of Tiwi design ingenuity dating from times unknown.

Rather than working on a black-primed canvas, often preferred by Tiwi artists because of its link with the charred surfaces of pukumani tutini or the bodies of dancers for the pukumani ceremony, Minnapinni divides the ground of her *Ngiya Murrakupupuni* into curved horizontal vistas of white, yellow and red ochre, which is metaphorical of her Tiwi homeland. Instead of encountering a predominantly dark painting with shafts and points of lighter ochres, Minnapinni's painting is luminous and fluid.

Minnapinni applies broken horizontal lines of red dots on white and on yellow, then white broken lines of dots on red to conceptualise terrain and express her connection to Country. These different combinations of pwanga (dots), marlipinyini (lines) and turtiyanginari (colours) together invoke elements of ritual body painting and assert the essence of Minnapinni's cultural identity, as well as her own creativity.

Through the pwoja, Minnapinni creates a field of unpredictable dots and dashes, of lines and points, of regular and irregular patterns and passages. There is something about the horizontal yellow ochre form that pushes into the pictorial space despite the weight of the white tract overhead, as if this current is both moving and being leaned into at the same time. The picture plane hovers and vibrates on a tricoloured field, creating a sense of illusionistic space.

Michelle Woody Minnapinni is also an active member in local arts development and advocacy bodies. She is an executive committee member of Jilamara Arts & Crafts Association at Milikapiti and a board member of ANKA (Arnhem, Northern and Kimberley Artists Aboriginal Corporation), the peak body for Art Centres across the Top End.

JUDITH RYAN AM IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, INDIGENOUS ART. MICHELLE WOODY MINNAPINNI'S WORK WILL BE SOON ON DISPLAY IN TIW AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA. TIW IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY MAJOR PARTNER DEAKIN UNIVERSITY. VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/EXHIBITION/TIWI FOR DETAILS

# Meet the artist

For the publication *Tiwi: Art & Artists*, Hannah Raisin and Will Heathcote, Art Centre Manager and Studio and Workshops Coordinator respectively at Jilamara Arts & Craft Association on the Tiwi Islands, got together with Jilamara Arts artists Pedro Wonaeamirri, Johnathon World Peace Bush, Kaye Brown and Michelle Woody Minnapinni to discuss the relationship between old and new art. Here is what Michelle Woody Minnapinni had to say when she sat down in the Muluwurri Museum to discuss her role at Jilamara Arts as both an artist and arts worker with a commitment to the historical collection at Muluwurri Museum, and the making of ceremonial adornments.

BY MICHELLE WOODY MINNAPINNI

When I think about parlingarri, I consider how it is important to keep culture strong and keep it going for the next generation. This is important to Tiwi people from both islands – Bathurst and Melville. To all be connected together in culture and life. The young ones coming up today are going to be the future leaders – and we want them to be learning with their Elders, through art and culture.

Working at Muluwurri Museum is all about looking after the artefacts and the stories of our Ancestors. It is a keeping place and a special place to work. I get to work with visiting conservators, other artists and different managers, and we share knowledge. The managers and visitors also learn from us – it is two-way learning and travelling through a pathway into the future, like a journey.

In 2018, I had the chance to go to Melbourne, to the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne. There were participants from all over – different cultures. We were all Indigenous. We met with the conservators that work there. We shared knowledge, learning from each other and getting connected. We met with a Traditional Owner from the Wurundjeri tribe in Melbourne and he made us welcome on his Country and told us about his knowledge. I am glad to have this arts worker position at

Iilamara Arts and have these opportunities to travel and learn. In the future I would like to be a mentor to the younger members of the art centre – look after the artwork, performance and stories that our Ancestors left for us. The Muluwurri Museum here at Jilamara Arts holds the name of an Ancestor of the Traditional Owners of this area - it makes me proud to work in the museum with the collection. Hopefully the young ones will step in and help me with the role and then I can teach them as an artist. I started at Jilamara Arts in 2011, but I was only doing some painting. I was lucky to have strong family to support me on the journey I have had here at the art centre, introducing me to the arts industry. Also going out on Country to collect materials for art- making is important to Tiwi people, art and culture.

In 2019, I was part of the Wesfarmers Indigenous Leadership program in Canberra. This was also really special for me. I got chosen because of my role as an arts worker at Jilamara Arts and as a director on the Arnhem, Northern and Kimberley Artists (ANKA) board. As I went on this journey, I wasn't alone. I did it all with artists and leaders from many different cultures and backgrounds – conservators and curators that work in the big galleries and museums. They were much bigger than our Muluwurri

Museum. I got to see all the artefacts and art from different places. I also saw artefacts from our wulimawi (old people) from the Tiwi Islands, from Bathurst and Melville, really old painting and carving – some spears. They had really big ironwood carvings. I saw prints and paintings from some other Jilamara artists - Timothy Cook, and prints and paintings from that cousin brother (Pedro Wonaeamirri) and Janice Murray Pungautiji. They had a big digital archive, old photos and songlines too. They had all those photos from parlingarri - photos and recordings of songlines. Even though it is smaller, the Muluwurri Museum is really special to me and all the Tiwi people, all the community and the artists. It is important because it holds so much of our history and art in one place. It is a place where you can see things from parlingarri, from when our ancestors were alive to ningani.

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I have recently been focusing on making marruwi (grass skirts). Before I didn't really know how to make the marruwi, so I went to Colleen's house and my eldest sister was there, making grass skirts. She was that senior wulimaka (old lady) artist working at Jilamara Arts – the carving shed is named after her husband. She was like a teacher to me. She said 'Mantanga mumana mumana (slowly slowly) you go mumana mumana, you and Colleen, so you can learn properly and show the kakirijuwi (children)'. She told me you have to make ten plaits for the belt and ten plaits for the skirt, then weave on the feathers. She told me we should be doing it with yingwati (bush honey) wax, but instead we used beeswax from Jilamara Arts - the old way and the new. I learnt a lot from that wulimaka, and now as an artist I work both in painting and making ceremonial adornments, and going out on Country to collect materials.

THIS TEXT WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE ESSAY 'PARLINGARRI AMITA NINGANI AWNGARA: OLD AND NEW AT JILAMARA ARTS' BY HANNAH RAISIN AND WILL HEATHCOTE WITH PEDRO WONAEAMIRRI, JOHNATHON WORLD PEACE BUSH, KAYE BROWN AND MICHELLE PULUTUWAYU WOODY MINNAPINNI IN TIWI: ART & ARTISTS, PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA IN 2020 AND AVAILABLE TO PURCHASE ONLINE AT NGV.MELBOURNE/STORE. READ MORE ABOUT THE BOOK ON PAGE 102.



**By its very nature,** taste shifts dramatically through the years and like any major museum, the collecting patterns of the NGV have reflected many changes since the Gallery's foundation in 1861. In those early years, ancient Classical art was popular and Neoclassicism was the prevailing style, its methods and techniques being taught in Academies throughout Europe. Along with most public galleries across the world, the NGV then acquired plaster copies of famous ancient Classical sculptures, including the famous Discus thrower, Greek c. 460-450 BC, and various incarnations of popular deities such as Apollo and the goddess Venus. These copies served two of the early aims, to elevate public taste and to serve as teaching tools in the NGV Art School that was established in 1867. Galleries and collectors also purchased works by contemporary artists who were heavily influenced by Classicism, who conformed to prevailing ideals of beauty. For many decades of the nineteenth century, exhibitions at the Royal Academy in London, the Paris Salon and indeed expositions held all over the world, including Australia, had galleries jam-packed with life-size figurative sculptures carved in pristine Carrara marble. Room after room featured writhing white idealised bodies. In the decades before the turn of the century, a number of such sculptures were acquired into the NGV Collection, representing mythological or biblical themes, which were considered the pinnacle of the art form.

However, deep into the twentieth century, with the advent of modernism and abstraction, international galleries either exiled their old-fashioned copies and Neoclassical works to the basement, or sold them. So dramatic was the shift in taste, that often only a tiny percentage of what was paid for the works was recouped, or in some cases the redundant plasters were just discarded. At the time, all but one notable sculpture from the Gallery's collection was either sold at auction, or donated to regional Victorian galleries. Indeed, in 1943, the NGV Council of Trustees presented four nineteenth-century figurative sculptures to the Bendigo Art Gallery, which are proudly on display there today.

The wheel of fortune has swung yet again, and interest in Neoclassicism has resurged in recent years. Now many galleries have resuscitated their previously maligned sculptures and have either dusted them off and brought them out of storage, or are once again active in the art market. The recent major refurbishment of the eponymous Cast Courts at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, being a case in point, those galleries have been restored to their original purpose to show casts of monuments and sculpture. Until four years ago, the NGV only represented this very important period of European art with one white marble sculpture, Musidora, 1878, by English artist Marshall Wood. The acquisition of Venus, 1792, by French Neoclassical sculptor François Marie Poncet in 2016 somewhat redressed this gap in the Collection. Happily, the NGV has now added a further work of this nature with the recent gift from Carol Sisson, a longtime supporter of the NGV, of the imposing Love is blind (Amore Accieca), c. 1875, by Italian sculptor Donato Barcaglia. Before entering the NGV Collection, this work was acquired by the donor from the late Australian collector John Schaeffer AO, who was a great supporter of many Australian public galleries, including the NGV.

Barcaglia was a highly skilled artist and at a young age was under the tutelage of Neoclassical sculptor Abbondio Sangiorgio at the Brera Academy, Milan. There, he received an education typical of the time, grounded in the Classical tradition. Like many artists of his day, he began his career as a painter before shifting his attention to sculpting. He certainly found his place working in three dimensions and created many dazzling works noted for their delicate and interesting details, which made his work stand-out in a crowded art scene.

Barcaglia achieved distinction at international exhibitions held in Vienna in 1873, Florence in 1875 and Philadelphia in 1876, forging a truly international career. He was a wellestablished and experienced sculptor by the time he produced Love is blind, which he entered in the Florentine Exhibition in 1875 where it won a Gold medal. Love is blind featured in many expositions around the world during the late 1870s, where it acted as a virtual calling card for Barcaglia. Typical of the time, Barcaglia and his studio produced multiple carved versions of their successful works in a variety of sizes. Certain details and some elements were included, or not, depending on the value of the commission. The NGV work is extremely refined, lacking no details and is as large as any that were produced. It is possible that this very piece was exhibited at the Florentine Exhibition in 1875.

This life-size sculpture comprises a standing semi-nude female figure that is heavily indebted to Classical and Neoclassical forms. She stands before a superbly carved floral arrangement and is attached to a round marble pedestal that is original to the work. Cupid (or a putto) flies just above the young woman, attempting to cover her eyes. The theme and symbolism in the sculpture is quite straightforward and unambiguous. Cupid's role in matchmaking is well known from ancient mythology, and instead of shooting an arrow to blind the woman to the faults and imperfections of her intended beau, he just shields her eyes. What the subject lacks in subtlety, however, is more than made up for by the sheer quality of the carving and its form. The work has a remarkable dynamism and liveliness that is a feature of Barcaglia's best work and its delicacy and light touch in the carving indicates the influence of the most renowned Neoclassical sculptor, Antonio Canova.

LAURIE BENSON IS NGV CURATOR, INTERNATIONAL ART. LOVE IS BLIND IS A CENTREPIECE OF THE INSTALLATION NATURAL HISTORY BY THE LOS ANGELES BASED ART COLLECTIVE FALLEN FRUIT, FOR THE NGV TRIENNIAL 2020. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS CAROL SISSON FOR THIS GENEROUS GIFT.

(p. 84–5) **Donato Barcaglia** Love is blind (Amore Accieca) c.1875 (detail) Presented by Carol Sisson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020 (right) **Donato Barcaglia** Love is blind (Amore Accieca) c.1875 (detail) Presented by Carol Sisson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020





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'By making art the perfect expression of one time and one place, it becomes art for all times and all places.'

\_\_\_\_\_ TOM ROBERTS, 1890

Shearing the rams, 1890, is one of Australia's most recognisable and celebrated paintings. It is also an important part of this country's recent social and cultural history. Completed in 1890 by artist Tom Roberts, the painting captures a moment in time. A moment just more than 100 years after first European contact – when non-Indigenous Australians were still developing a sense of national identity. This was a time when the country was 'riding on the sheep's back'1, prosperity was measured by the size of the wool clip, and hard labour was intrinsically bound up in the notion of an honest day's work.

In January 2021, Shearing the rams will travel to the Victorian regional city of Wangaratta, where it will be on display at the Wangaratta Art Gallery for a month. It is fitting that, in the 130th year since Roberts laid down his last brushstrokes, the painting is to return to the area where it was originally conceived.

It was while Roberts was attending a wedding held at a property near Corowa in the Riverina region of NSW that he was struck by a need to express 'feeling the delight and fascination of the great pastoral life and work'. Roberts returned to the property during the shearing season of the following year and began a series of about seventy preparatory sketches. A year later, in the spring of 1889, he set up his easel in the shed and painted the work, adding the final touches in his Collins Street studio in May 1890.

Located on the traditional lands of the Bpangerang, Gunaikurnai, Taungurung and Yorta Yorta peoples, the rural city of Wangaratta is approximately 250 kilometres north-east of Melbourne, and 45 kilometres from the Victoria and New South Wales border. The local government area covers 3645 square kilometres and has a population of almost 30,000, with around 20,000 people living in the city. The surrounding area is rich agricultural land, with uses ranging from high-quality wine production to cattle and sheep grazing.

Shearing the rams has a strong connection with the Wangaratta community and the surrounding region. As Simone Nolan, Director of Wangaratta Art Gallery, recently explained, 'When mentioning the work, people will proudly tell stories of long-lost relatives who posed for Roberts. There are family relatives who still live locally, particularly in

the neighbouring towns of Corowa and Howlong'.<sup>3</sup> For many in the region, the painting has become an 'iconic representation of farming life ... something they feel proud of'.<sup>4</sup>

The Wangaratta Art Gallery was established in 1987 and is housed in a heritage building (a former church) in the creative arts precinct. The Gallery has an active program – in 2019 they presented twenty exhibitions – and every two years it hosts the Wangaratta Contemporary Textile Award, a major national event next scheduled for 2021. The collection, which began in 2004, has a focus on textile art.

For more than a year, staff from both the NGV and Wangaratta Art Gallery have been working together in managing the logistics involved in the painting's relocation to Wangaratta and in developing associated programming. Nolan is enthusiastically looking forward to the work being unveiled in January 2021:

For Wangaratta Art Gallery to host such an iconic Australian Impressionist work that connects so closely to our region and our agricultural beginnings is bound to be a huge attraction for our local audience. Regional galleries play an important role in engaging their local audiences with contemporary and new ideas, but it's also just as important to reflect on our local identity and familiarity. We hope that by hosting this work we will remind our local audience of the beauty of our rural landscapes and how Roberts captured the farming practices of this time.

Tom Roberts painted and researched *Shearing the rams* locally at Brocklesby, a farming area north of Howlong, just over the border [near Corowa]. It is a key work that particularly resonates with the farming communities in North-East Victoria and our border towns. We want to celebrate our local farmers and our agricultural history and I firmly believe this work will do that.<sup>5</sup>

Tom Roberts
Shearing the rams 1890 (detail)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest. 1932



# 'THE TARPOT BOY'

By Sophie Gerhard

Shearing the rams, 1890, is filled with identifiable figures who lived in and around Corowa, New South Wales, at the time the work was painted. For most of the models portrayed in the work, their representations are emblematic of their professional roles. Frank Barnes, for example, is the overseer seen smoking a pipe in the painting's lower right, and Roberts's depiction of him makes clear his position within the woolshed. Similarly, the man in the centre of the work, Jim Coffey, has been painted in a way that recognises him as a local shearer. The identification of one character within the painting, however, often leaves viewers guessing: the 'tarpot boy', towards the centre of the work.

'The tarpot boy' was, in fact, modelled by Susan Bourne, or Susie, an eight-yearold girl who was paid sixpence by Roberts to kick up the dust in the shed to create a hazy atmosphere within the work. Bourne lived close by to the station with her parents, James and Isabella Bourne, and her siblings, Sophie, James and William. Her father, James, worked on the station as a stockman. Bourne's cheeky smile and playful stare provides youth to the painting, representing the younger generation that would continue the agricultural work of the region. Her presence is particularly felt within the painting due to her being the only person giving the viewer eye contact.

It wasn't until Bourne was in her seventies that she would travel to the National Gallery of Victoria on St Kilda Road in Melbourne to see herself within the painting for the first time. Looking at the work alongside her daughter-in-law and her sister-in-law, Bourne remarked, 'and there I am'. Bourne went on to live in the Corowa region until her death in 1979.

DAVID HURLSTON IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR,
AUSTRALIAN PAINTING, SCULPTURE AND DECORATIVE
ARTS TO 1980. SOPHIE GERHARD IS NGV ASSISTANT
CURATOR, AUSTRALIAN PAINTING, SCULPTURE AND
DECORATIVE ARTS TO 1980. A COLLABORATION
BETWEEN THE NGV AND WANGARATTA ART GALLERY,
SHEARING THE RAMS, 1890, WILL BE ON DISPLAY FROM
30 JANUARY – 28 FEBRUARY 2021 AT WANGARATTA ART
GALLERY



# A closer look at Shearing the rams

**By David Hurlston** 

# SHEEP AND MEN

Shearing the rams, 1890, recognises the importance of the wool industry to Australia's development as a nation and is one of the most loved and identifiable paintings in the NGV Collection. A celebration of nineteenth-century pastoral life and a tribute to hard work, it has become one of this country's cultural icons. As a symbol of Australian identity, the painting has been used in many ways since its creation, from calendars to postage stamps. In 1985 Australian cartoonist Michael Leunig drew a humorous reinterpretation of the painting and titled it *Ramming the shears*.

# INSPIRED BY KILLENEEN

Tom Roberts conceived the work in 1887 while at a relative's wedding at a property near Corowa, in the New South Wales Riverina region. The property, *Killeneen*, was an outstation of Brocklesby, a 24,000-hectare sheep station. Roberts returned to *Killeneen* during the shearing season of the following year and began a series of more than seventy preparatory sketches in order to capture 'the light, the atmosphere, the sheep and the men at work'. A year later, in the spring of 1889, he set up his easel in the shed and painted *Shearing the rams*, adding the final touches in his Collins Street Melbourne studio in May 1890.





# CHARACTERISTICS OF A SHEARER

Roberts chose models he considered to be the most appropriate for his painting, selecting 'the most characteristic and picturesque of the shearers'. He then posed them in the way he required. In 2007 the NGV took an X-ray of the painting while it was being cleaned. This revealed Roberts's original sketch of the central shearer, which shows him without a beard and positioned in a more upright stance. Depicting the shearer in a bent position creates a sense of focus and gives the painting greater energy.

# THE OVERSEER

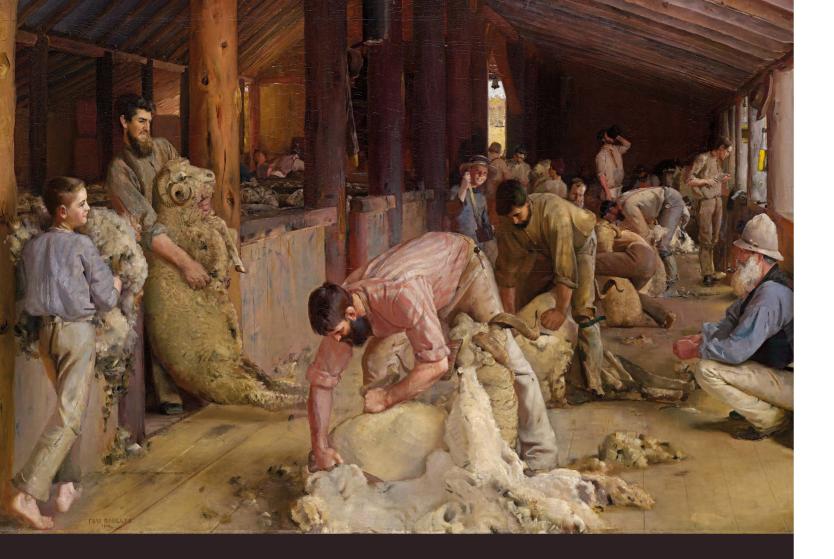
Surveying the activities in the shed is the overseer, possibly the farmer. The overseer's role was to manage the team of shearers and ensure they stayed to schedule, shearing a set amount of sheep within a designated timeframe. In the 1800s, many shearers in New South Wales were rovers who travelled long distances cross-country, following the shearing season from farm to farm on foot, horse or bike. It was often a hand-to-mouth existence. Smoking a pipe, this overseer seems to be enjoying sitting back and keeping an eye on goings-on.



# THE SHEARING INDUSTRY

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the shearing industry was one of Australia's largest employers. It was also one of the first to become unionised and by 1890 had tens of thousands of members. In 1891 shearers went on strike in one of Australia's earliest examples of organised industrial action. The dispute was based on the use of non-unionised labour in shearing sheds across the country.

DAVID HURLSTON IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, AUSTRALIAN PAINTING, DECORATIVE ARTS AND SCULPTURE TO 1980. THIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE JUL-AUG 2019 ISSUE OF NGV



In partnership with the National Gallery of Victoria, Wangaratta Art Gallery presents

# Tom Roberts Shearing the rams

The artist, the painting, a moment in time

30 January - 28 February 2021



16 OCT - 7 NOV

LYNNE BICKHOFF STATE OF SERENITY



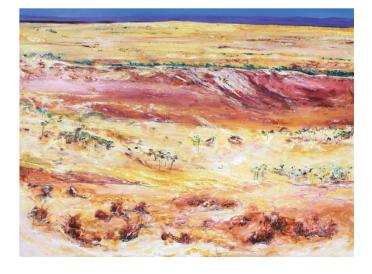


16 OCT - 7 NOV

# **GRAEME FOOTE SELF PORTRAIT JUGS** Commemorating 50 years of sculpting. Limited Edition Porcelain and Glaze

14 - 28 NOV

LAURENCE CUMMIN **RED DUST LANDSCAPES** 











oil on canvas on composition board



The first NGV Magazine of 2021 will be a very special issue, dedicated to the highly anticipated second edition of NGV Triennial.



NGV Triennial 2020, a large-scale and ambitious exploration of current art, design and architecture, will feature eighty-six projects by some of the world's most celebrated artists, designers and architects from more than thirty countries.

Creative practitioners are vital to our society – perhaps no more so than now when our world is faced with unprecedented societal, economic and environmental challenges. Every three years, the NGV Triennial provides a platform to explore the pressing issues of our time and celebrates the work of some of the world's most accomplished artists and designers, while also giving voice to emerging practitioners. Through this ambitiously scaled and conceptually rich exhibition, our audiences will have an opportunity to look at our world and its future through the eyes of some of the world's most creative minds, including media artist Refik Anadol and contemporary photographer and artist Aïda Muluneh.

The exhibition reveals the fascinating intersections of painting, sculpture, design, architecture, fashion and photography, as well as works created using new technologies at the edge of contemporary creative practice.

Drawn from across Africa, Europe, the Americas, Australia, the Pacific and Asia, the works cover subject matter as diverse as geography, isolation, environmental conservation and identity, while also offering bold new ideas in the context our ever-changing world.

THE NGV IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT, OUR VALUED CORPORATE PARTNERS, AS WELL AS THE EXTRAORDINARILY GENEROUS SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM OUR PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY FOR NGV TRIENNIAL 2020.



(left) Refik Anadol Quantum memories 2020 (render) Purchased with funds donated by Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund and Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2020 (above) Aïda Muluneh Compromise 2017 from the Memory of Hope series 2017. Bowness Family Fund for Photography, NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25 NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25

# **VALE**

We acknowledge the recent passing of two significant Australian contemporary artists.





# KATE DAW (1965-2020)

Dr Simon Maidment

Much-loved Melbourne artist Dr Kate Daw passed away on 7 September 2020, succumbing to an aggressive cancer, and we join in mourning her and extend our deepest sympathies to her family, and to the multitudes who knew Kate and held her dear. Born in 1965 in Esperance, rural Western Australia, Kate moved to Melbourne in 1987 to study painting at the Victorian College of the Arts, becoming a vital member of the city's arts community. Renowned for her generosity of spirit and genuine, near-endless encouragement of others, Kate was a highly influential educator, teaching scores of young and established artists during her career. Committed to education. Kate was Associate Professor of Programs and Partnerships and Head of the School of Art at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne when she passed away, a position she had held since 2018, having previously been Head of Painting since 2013. Completing her PhD there in 2006. Kate's research focused on narrative in contemporary art, a central

tenet within her feminist art practice, which was cross-disciplinary and conceptually grounded, celebrating literature, the feminine and the everyday.

The NGV holds a number of key works by Kate in our collection, including a suite of her signature text canvases, produced with a typewriter, and A simple act, 2007, a work made with long-time collaborator Stewart Russell, which centres on an iconic photograph for the Black Power and human rights movements and depicts Australian sportsman Peter Norman standing alongside John Carlos and Tommie Smith. In its celebration of a hidden or forgotten story, it is emblematic of Kate's concerns as a woman and feminist who throughout her career foregrounded with equal importance a nexus of art-work-life and who, through her advocacy, teaching and mentoring, curating and loving, raised up all who came into contact with her or her art.

DR SIMON MAIDMENT IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, CONTEMPORARY ART, EXPLORE KATE DAW'S WORKS ONLINE AT NGV MELBOURNE/EXPLORE/COLLECTION.

# **JOHN NIXON (1949-2020)**

Jane Devery

In August, we sadly learnt of the passing of John Nixon, one of Australia's most influential conceptual artists. Nixon was born in Sydney in 1949, studied at Preston Institute of Technology in 1968, and between 1969 and 1970 attended the National Gallery School in Melbourne, then part of the National Gallery of Victoria. Over a career of more than five decades, Nixon developed an extensive body of work characterised by experimentation and a sustained engagement with various approaches to making art, including abstraction, constructivism, minimalism, the monochrome and the ready-made. Nixon's prolific output encompassed a range of media, including painting, printmaking, drawing, collage, photography, film, graphic design, music, dance, performance, jewellery and theatre design. Nixon was an influential teacher and mentor to many generations of artists. He was also a dedicated curator. In 1979, he established the artist run initiative Art Projects in Melbourne, and from 1980 to 1981 he was Director of the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane. In honour of the artist's memory, a selection of his works from the NGV Collection will be presented on level 2 at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, including works dating from the early 1980s to 2017. The display represents a small sample of the extensive output of one of Australia's most remarkable artists. John Nixon was greatly admired in the arts community in Australia and beyond. On behalf of all at the NGV we extend our deepest condolences to his family and friends.

JANE DEVERY IS NGV CURATOR, CONTEMPORARY ART. VIEW A SELECTION OF JOHN NIXON'S WORKS SOON ON LEVEL 2 AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA AND ONLINE AT NGV.MELBOURNE/ EXPLORE/COLLECTION/ARTIST/1706

## (above) Kate Daw, Spacecraft, Melbourne (manufacturer) Friendship love

truth 2013 from the On top of the world: Flags for Melbourne series 2013. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria in collaboration with the City of Melbourne, 2014 (below) John Nixon Project for a wall painting, colour group E (Random) 2008 Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2009

# MAKING NEWS

# **NGV TEENS**

# INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS

Misha Agzarian

Online NGV Teens program Industry Connections was developed by the NGV in the wake of COVID-19. Through the generosity of dedicated supporter Beatrice Moignard, this program has enabled the Gallery to continue to connect with young people throughout its temporary closure. Presented live through an online platform, participants gain direct access to artists, designers and industry professionals. In this format, teens pose questions to presenters in an inviting environment which has facilitated discussions on a range of topics, encouraging teenagers to discover diverse careers and opportunities within the creative industries.

Fostering hope for the future, *Industry* Connections has engaged more than 300 teens since May 2020. Highlights of the program have included sessions with Tyrone Wright, known as Rone, a wellknown figure in the international street art scene; contemporary florist Hattie Molloy, whose distinctive and unique arrangements blend floristry, sculpture and installation art; Atong Atem, who combines photography with hand painting, video and projection, to explore migrant stories and identity; and Nick Connellan, journalist and publications director at Broadsheet.

The NGV warmly thanks Beatrice Moignard for her generosity and enthusiasm for this NGV Teens program. The Gallery also acknowledges The Ullmer Family Foundation for their support of the broader NGV Teens program including important initiatives such as NGV Teen Council which continued to meet virtually throughout 2020. It is through this significant support that programs such as Industry Connections can reach young people and positively contribute towards their personal and professional development within the creative industries.

MISHA AGZARIAN IS NGV ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR. FUNDRAISING. SEE NGV.MELBOURNE/TEENS FOR UPCOMING INDUSTRY CONNECTIONS EVENTS.

# COMMUNITY

# ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES

Andrea Stahel

The temporary closure of the NGV amplified the opportunity for the Gallery to support people with disability via digital resources. Digital content can be especially valuable for many people facing barriers that affect physically travelling to the Gallery. To support such audiences, the NGV launched a new 'Access Resource and Events' section on the NGV website bringing together digital resources for people with disability or autism.

One highlight is a suite of recorded audio descriptions of artworks from the NGV Collection, produced in collaboration with Description Victoria. Audio descriptions provide people who are blind or have low vision with information of the key visual elements of an artwork. While the descriptions are created primarily for people with vision impairment, they would | course inspired by the exhibition

benefit anyone listening to them as a new way of experiencing art. To provide a richer experience and help convey the feeling of the work, NGV curators and special guests, including Professor Deborah Cheetham AO, selected music to accompany the descriptions.

ANDREA STAHEL IS NGV COMMUNITY AND ACCESS PROGRAMS MANAGER DISCOVER THESE DIGITAL RESOLIBOES AT NOV MEL BOLIBNE/ACCESS

# **NGV ONLINE COURSES**

Zoe Kirkby

Earlier in 2020, the NGV launched Online Courses, a new stream of adult learning delivered virtually through self-guided readings, videos, discussions and weekly guizzes, and taking inspiration from the NGV Collection. Two new upcoming courses include Women in Art & Design, an exploration of the unique contributions of women to the art world through a study of historical and contemporary works, and Colour - a



Artist Hattie Molloy

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Spectrum: An Exploration of Colour. The course will explore colour theory, the history of pigments, and the science behind colour and our relationship with it. These two courses follow on from the NGV's flagship online courses, run earlier in the year: Surrealism – 1920s to Now, a five-part study of the birth of the movement and its ongoing influence, and The Art of Writing, a four-part creative writing course that uses art and design as inspiration.

ZOE KIRKBY IS NGV PUBLIC PROGRAMMER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE FULL RANGE OF NGV ONLINE COURSES AND TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST VISIT NGV MFI ROURNF/COURSES

# NAIDOC WEEK

Stephanie Pohlman and Zoe Kirkby

Each year NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia to acknowledge the rich history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. To coincide with NAIDOC Week 2020, running from 8 to 15 November, the NGV hosts a range of free online events for all ages honouring this year's theme Always Was, Always Will Be.

Primary-aged children and their families can take part in drawing workshops with Indigenous textile artist Taylah Cole at NGV Kids at Home Art Club, while the youngest members of the family can discover the story of William Barak in a special Under 5s program. Teens can meet Cassie Leatham and learn about her practice as an Indigenous artist, designer, master weaver, traditional dancer and bushtukka woman in her Industry Connections program.

Adult audiences can learn about two new exhibitions scheduled to open soon at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia – *TIWI*, an exhibition celebrating the unique art and culture of the Tiwi people of Melville and Bathurst Islands, and *DESTINY*, a solo exhibition of the work of contemporary artist Destiny Deacon. Especially for NAIDOC Week, NGV senior curator Judith Ryan AM presents an illustrated lecture exploring the dynamic trajectory of Tiwi art across time and across media, from 1911 to now. Then, the NGV's Art of Emotion series

continues with NGV curator Myles Russell-Cook discussing melancholy in the work of Destiny Deacon.

STEPHANIE POHLMAN IS NGV YOUTH AND FAMILIES COORDINATOR. ZOE KIRKBY IS NGV PUBLIC PROGRAMMER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS FOR FAMILIES VISIT NGV. MELBOURNE/KIDS AND FOR ADULTS VISIT NGV. MELBOURNE. THE NGV KIDS AND TEENS PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED BY THE TRUBY & FLORENCE WILLIAMS CHARITABLE TRUST, MANAGED BY EQUITY TRUSTEES. THE NGV KIDS ONLINE PROGRAMS UNDER 5S AND NGV KIDS AT HOME ART CLUB ARE SUPPORTED BY THE SPOTLIGHT FOUNDATION. THE NGV TEENS PROGRAM IS SUPPORTED BY THE ULLMER FAMILY FOUNDATION, BEATRICE MOIGNARD AND THE JTM FOUNDATION FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF NGV TEENS.

# COLLECTION ONLINE REDESIGN AND NEW CONTENT HUBS

Maria Quirk

The online home for information on the NGV Collection has recently been redesigned to make it easier to explore, research and discover something new in the NGV Collection. This important area of the Gallery's website re-launches with four Collection 'hubs', which brings together a curated selection of media relating to works in the Collection, including artwork highlights, video content, interviews and essays. Across four themes of Gender, Environment, Participation and Performance Art, and Conservation, the collection hubs reflect the growing interest in new ways of learning about museum collections around the world.

The NGV Collection page also includes a new 'Research and Archive' category, bringing the Gallery's research program to the fore for the first time. This section highlights new scholarship being produced by the Gallery and links to research-led material, including focuses on British art, the Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM Family Suffrage Research Collection and writing for the NGV publication *She Persists:* Perspectives on Women in Art & Design.

The more than 75,000 works in the NGV Collection form the heart of the Gallery, and, through research activities, programs, print and online publications, play a leading role in connecting people with art and design. As it grows and evolves, the Collection embraces and reflects diversity in cultural identities, artistic practices and geographies more than ever before. As the NGV Collection continues to grow and

diversify, more hubs and microsites will be launched, adding new ways to explore and engage with art and design.

MARIA QUIRK IS NGV ASSISTANT CURATOR, COLLECTIONS AND RESEARCH. EXPLORE THE COLLECTION ONLINE AT NGV.MELBOURNE/EXPLORE/ COLLECTION

# **BRITISH ART VIRTUAL HUB**

Jasmin Chua

The first in a series of forthcoming virtual Collection hubs, *British Art* was launched recently to the NGV website. This dedicated resource focuses on the Gallery's British painting and sculpture holdings, featuring key works created between the mid sixteenth century and 1980, such as Mary Beale's *Portrait of a lady*, c. 1680; William Quiller Orchardson's *The first cloud*, 1887; Annie Swynnerton's *New risen hope*, 1904; and William Rothenstein's *Aliens at prayer*, 1905.

Curated through the lens of four themes, including world history and cultural change, family and domestic life, nature and the environment, and conservation, this free-access, searchable virtual hub aims to allow broad access to insightful texts about works in the NGV's British collection, both on and off display. It currently presents more than fifty new essays, images and videos on specific works researched and written by NGV curators and conservation specialists, and provides an exciting opportunity to explore, discover and be informed about this significant aspect of the Collection in detail and and at any time.

JASMIN CHUA IS NGV PUBLICATIONS MANAGER. EXPLORE THE *BRITISH ART* VIRTUAL HUB ONLINE AT NGV.MELBOURNE/BRITISH-ART

# **CONSERVATION**

# **COLLECTION CARE IN COVID TIMES**

Michael Varcoe-Cocks

Walking around vacant galleries in half-light has become a defining memory of my professional life in 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the care and oversight of the NGV Collection and all loaned works have been diligently maintained, albeit in an unusual and changed manner.

In preparation for the Gallery's temporary closure, the Conservation team commenced preventive arrangements ensuring that works on display could safely pass through an unknown period. The highest priority was the elimination of unnecessary light, particularly to items most vulnerable to extended exposure. Soft covers draped the dressed manneguins, while special cloths blacked out works on paper and photographic works. The NGV's technical coordinator of lighting created a digital profile using lighting software, which selectively removed direct light away from artworks, yet still enabled safe navigation throughout the galleries. Exhibition conservators worked to return temporary loan items, adopting new initiatives such as digital technologies for condition assessments with lenders in lieu of physical travel.

As Head of Conservation, I was the collection professional approved to attend work during Stage 4 restrictions.

Collaborating with a small, dedicated team of facilities, engineering and security staff, we continued to manage safekeeping collection care strategies and preventive programs, such as environmental controls and equipment maintenance.

Every week my inspections ranged from storage areas and members lounges, to conservation and photography studios, and of course the gallery spaces. It was a sad privilege to wander through these spaces with the only sound being the echo of your footsteps. Passing familiar faces such as Rembrandt's *Portrait of a white-haired man*, 1667, or the crowd in John Brack's *Collins St, 5p.m.*, 1955, provided me with a great sense of optimism, and the beauty of material culture produced by diverse societies over many centuries was a constant reminder of the adaptability of the human spirit.

MICHAEL VARCOE-COCKS IS NGV HEAD OF CONSERVATION.

# REHOUSING THE ANDRÉE HARKNESS GIFT

Enrique Tochez Anderson

The recent bequest of more than seventy works as part of the Andrée Harkness Gift comprise an important addition of paintings and works on paper by Australian female artists to the NGV Collection. These works were made between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century representing a vital but under-represented period for women artists in Australia.

As part of the Gallery's commitment to conserving these works for safe storage and display, the large quantity of paintings in the Andrée Harkness Gift were recently rehoused by having their frames modified. This delicate process included the fitting of backings to the reverse of the painting's frames, and the addition of glazing to protect the paint surface to form a microclimate free from the risks of damage. These tasks, undertaken by Gervais Battour, NGV Senior Conservation Art Technician, and myself, incorporated specialised processes and materials that have been innovated and standardised by the NGV's Conservation team. Precision hand tools and machinery were used to finish woodwork, while aluminium composite was used as the backing material due to its ease of use, weight, aesthetic and archival grade; it will last a long time and is slow to react to its environment and degrade.

Each painting was carefully unframed and assessed, which often uncovered hidden information, such as preliminary sketches on the back of works, annotations by an artist and information relating to a painting's provenance and framing histories. These factors informed the best tailored approach to take for rehousing individual works. Frame additions, such as build-ups on the back of frames, and spacers between the glaze and the artwork surface, were customised and finished to fit each painting. Combining new technologies and materials, alongside handcrafted woodworking techniques, the paintings and their frames were reassembled with updated protection for safekeeping.

The Andrée Harkness Gift is now safely rehoused and will continue to provide a valuable resource for understanding the significant contributions of women to Australian art.

ENRIQUE TOCHEZ ANDERSON IS NGV CONSERVATION MOUNT CUTTER. THE NGV IS DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO THE ANDRÉE HARKNESS GIFT FOR THIS SIGNIFICANT DONATION OF WORKS.

# **NGV PUBLISHING**

# NGV PUBLICATION AWARDS

Julia Rodwell

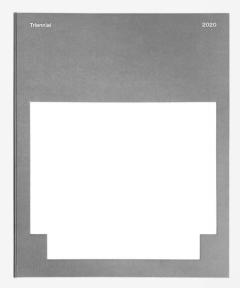
We are thrilled to report that NGV publications have recently received several awards. At the 2020 Australian Book Design Awards (ABDA) in August, Darren Sylvester: Carve a Future, Devour Everything, Become Something won 'Best Designed Fully-Illustrated Book Under \$50'. This is the third consecutive year that an NGV publication has won this category, with NGV Triennial 2017 and Escher X nendo | Between Two Worlds receiving the prize in 2018 and 2019 respectively.

In September Petrina Hicks: Bleached Gothic was awarded 'Best in Show' and won the 'Major Exhibition Catalogue Level B' category at the Museums Australia Multimedia and Publication Design Awards (MAPDA). The judges praised the publication for its 'Bold and elegant design with classic white end pages', 'Excellent treatment of the photography and lovely centred presentation' and described it as an 'uplifting experience'. Discover the Terracotta Warriors was also highly commended in the 'Children's Book Level B' category.

Internationally, She Persists:
Perspectives on Women in Art & Design and The Centre: On Art and Urbanism in China were announced as finalists for the Designers Institute of New Zealand Best Design Awards. Winners are announced on 13 November. She Persists was also shortlisted for the Design & Art Direction (D&AD) Awards held on 10 September. Winners of the NGV's 2020 Cornish Family Prize for Art and Design Publishing Karen and Donnachie and Andy Simionato were also recognised internationally, winning the RGB Prize at the Tokyo Type Directors Club awards in Japan.

JULIA RODWELL IS NGV PUBLICATIONS COORDINATOR.
THESE BOOKS WERE PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL
GALLERY OF VICTORIA IN 2019. NGV BOOKS ARE
AVAILABLE ONLINE AT NGV MELROLIBNE/STORE

# **BOOKS & DESIGN STORE**

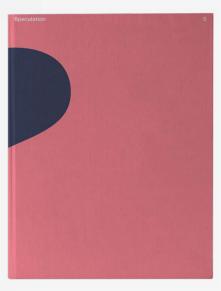














(above) NGV Triennial 2020 published by National Gallery of Victoria (right) TIWI: Art & Artists published by National Gallery of Victoria 105 NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25



# **NGV TRIENNIAL 2020**

NGV Triennial 2020 is an exciting, large-scale publication featuring ninety authors from around the world, and including NGV writers, with newly commissioned scholarship. With a broader reach than a traditional exhibition catalogue, this volume presents discourses from a variety of perspectives, including those of academics, journalists, literary figures, social commentators, artists, designers and curators.

The publication comprises five linen-bound large-format paperbacks housed in a slip case. Each of the main four volumes links to a different theme explored in the NGV Triennial exhibition, and each is designed to be transportable. The fifth volume acts as a dossier on NGV Triennial, with the exhibition information, biographies of artists, designers and authors, and project descriptions.

The publication is richly illustrated with images of works, and also includes photo essays and source and research material from featured artists and designers.

VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/STORE FOR MORE DETAILS. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS TRIENNIAL MAJOR SUPPORTERS WENDY & PAUL BONNICI & FAMILY FOR THEIR SUPPORT, TRIENNIAL SUPPORTER BEATRICE MOIGNARD AND RESEARCH PARTNER THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO NGV TRIENNIAL 2020.

# TIWI: ART & ARTISTS

Edited by Judith Ryan AM

Tiwi visual and performative cultural practices have existed for many millennia, but it was only during the twentieth century that a wider public became aware of the magnificence of Tiwi painting and sculpture. This compelling publication celebrates this unique art of the Tiwi people of Melville and Bathurst Islands – the Tiwi Islands of the Northern Territory – and explores the dynamic trajectory of it across time and across media.

Edited by Judith Ryan AM, Senior Curator, Indigenous Art at the NGV, this publication is a scholarly, in-depth study of Tiwi art and culture and of many of its major artists. With contributions from leading curators, scholars and artists, and commissioned field photography by award-winning photographer Tobias Titz, TIWI: Art & Artists provides an incisive view of a rich and complex art.

VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/STORE FOR MORE DETAILS. TIWI IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY MAJOR PARTNER DEAKIN UNIVERSITY.



The NGV design store presents its second footwear collection, this time featuring the bold designs of Kaiadilt artist Claudia Moodoonuthi.

**BY** TOBY NEWELL

When planning to produce a second collection of NGV sneakers featuring the works of Australian First Nations artists,

the bold and colourful works of Kaiadilt artist Claudia Moodoonuthi seemed a natural choice. In 2019, the NGV design store launched the first sneaker range in a classic low-fi canvas style with two designs inspired by works from the NGV Collection: Katsushika Hokusai's famous *The great wave off Kanagawa*, c.1830, and Australian abstract artist Allan Mitelman's *Carinosa*, 1975.

Moodoonuthi draws from a rich lineage of Kaiadilt women, including her grandmother May Moodoonuthi, Sally Gabori and Netta Loogatha. Like these important senior artists, Moodoonuthi's work reflects her deep connection to Country. Her works are in dialogue with the language, history and culture of the Kaiadilt people of Bentinck Island.

Moodoonuthi's painting style is bright, relaxed and intimate. Her works share stories of times spent with family, hunting and gathering in the bush. Her use of images, patterns and text combines the aesthetic of Brisbane street art and the paintings of her Kaiadilt mentors, whose love of colour is instilled in Moodoonuthi.

Moodoonuthi says of her Island upbringing, 'the skies of Bentinck have no pollution day and night, both provide an intensity of colour. The reds, oranges, and ochres of the cliffs at Nyinyilki magnificently contrast with the blues and greens of the Gulf of Carpentaria ocean. Colour is therefore important because it provides my spirit with energy and clarity'.1

Moodoonuthi's *Surfboard*, 2017, from the NGV Collection, is the perfect work for

a shoe design given its bold style, influenced by street art. Sneakers are such an iconic statement with origins from



the world of street culture. Designed in collaboration with Moodoonuthi the sneakers aim to connect NGV patrons with Indigenous artists and their works through exciting wearable accessories. Claudia Moodoonuthi's sneakers are destined to become part of this global footwear phenomenon.

Details from Moodoonuthi's work were carefully selected to create the required panels for production of both left and right shoes. After review of the first sneaker samples, artwork details were changed to ensure a more engaging narrative from the complete work would translate in each panel design across both feet. Moreover,

colours were reprinted several times to ensure that the reproduced design on canvas sneakers closely matched the

original work in synthetic polymer paint on surfboard.

Produced in a classic canvas style, the exclusive sneakers are offered with crisp white laces and two extra sets of laces in azure blue and hot pink to complement the colourful design. The sneakers are presented in an NGV shoebox with an accompanying NGV cloth dust bag to store and keep these stylish fashion accessories fresh.

Since Moodoonuthi's work evokes street art stylings, Surfboard has also been produced as a flat brim cap and skateboard deck, creating a range of products for skaters, surfers, art lovers, street culture vultures, sneaker freakers and fashionistas alike. What better time than now to celebrate the incredible work of this talented young Indigenous artist, and what better time than the changing of seasons from spring into summer to launch this exciting retail collaboration: a bright,

vibrant and bold statement at the end of a long year in lockdown.

TOBY NEWELL IS NGV MANAGER, COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS. VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/STORE FOR MORE DETAILS.

(left) Claudio Moodoonuthi with the NGV design store skateboard deck featuring her designs. Brisbane, Queensland. 2020. Creative Director: Luke Dean. Photographer: Elisabeth Willis. Hair & Make up: Ginelle Dale. Production: Jessinta Jones

(above) Claudia Moodoonuthi x NGV design store exclusive sneakers. Brisbane, Queensland. 2020. Creative Director: Luke Dean. Photographer: Elisabeth Willis. Production: Jessinta Jones

# AROUND VICTORIA



# **GRAND: COSTUMES FROM THE DAME JOAN SUTHERLAND** COLLECTION

Venue Online exhibition Arts Centre Melbourne

artscentremelbourne.com.au/grand

In 2019, the Australian Performing Arts Collection welcomed an exciting donation of costumes worn by Dame Joan Sutherland from Opera Australia. Comprising thirty complete costumes, the collection spans the breadth of Sutherland's expansive repertoire and includes gowns, headpieces, jewellery, wigs and shoes from more than three decades on the world stage. Grand: Costumes from the Dame Joan Sutherland Collection is a dynamic and interactive online exhibition – using 3D models and macro photography to create rich digital content. Explore a selection of Dame Joan Sutherland's iconic costumes close-up, unearth historical facts and view rare footage from past performances.

Richard Lewer Crucifixes from the series There is light and dark in us all 2018 (detail). Courtesy of the artist, Sullivan + Strumpf and Hugo Michell Gallery. Photo by Andrew

# ONE FOOT ON THE GROUND, ONE **FOOT IN THE WATER**

3 November 2020 - 17 January 2021 Venue La Trobe Art Institute 121 View Street, Bendigo

latrobe.edu.au/art-institute

One Foot on the Ground. One Foot in the Water explores death and dying as states of transition, presenting art-making processes as a means of facing mortality. At a time when the universal fact of our mortality has never been more potent, the exhibition presents artwork by leading contemporary artists, including Catherine Bell, Timothy Cook, French & Mottershead, Mabel Juli, Richard Lewer, Michael Needham, Nell, Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri and Mr Wunungmurra, who challenge us to reckon with death as an inherent part of life. It is accompanied by a fully illustrated e-catalogue featuring six newly commissioned texts. This exhibition has received assistance from NETS Victoria's Exhibition Development Fund 2020 supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria. Visit La Trobe Art Institute online for artist and curator talks, lectures, panel discussions and a fully illustrated e-catalogue.

# LINDEN POSTCARD SHOW 2020-21

7 November 2020 - 31 January 2021 Venue Linden New Art 26 Acland Street. St Kilda VIC 3182

lindenarts.org

The Linden Postcard Show 2020-21 is celebrating its thirtieth birthday! Including more than 1000 artworks from across Australia, this iconic open-entry exhibition has been running since 1990. This year's exhibition will include a special selection of artworks by an illustrious group of Linden Postcard Show alumni. You can buy a mini-masterpiece and support a living artist. Visit Linden New Art online to explore a range of content including a live-streamed virtual opening, online sales and artist talks.

# JACKY REDGATE—HOLD ON

Until 14 February 2021 Venue Geelong Gallery 55 Little Malop Street, Geelong geelonggallery.org.au

Jacky Redgate—HOLD ON presents the most recent iteration of the artist's mirror work, in which Redgate has been recalling and introducing into her work and oeuvre the autobiographical images and subjects of her juvenilia. What we understood previously as formal compositions and seemingly neutral subjects are now 'contaminated' by dolls and teddy bears from Redgate's childhood. Embodying a cathexis on emotionally laden subjects, these photographs tease with a combination of abstraction and autobiographical mirroring that seemingly contradicts the Cartesian sobriety of her well-known 'impersonal' works. Visit Geelong Gallery online to discover curator's insights, learn more about the works on display and explore the 360°-virtual tour.

WITH THANKS TO THE PUBLIC GALLERIES ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA (PGAV). VISIT PGAV.ORG.AU FOR MORE EXHIBITIONS AND THE LATEST COVID-19 INFORMATION FOR VISITORS ATTENDING PUBLIC GALLERIES.



Enjoy responsibly

NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25 NGV MAGAZINE ISSUE 25

# LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

# Donato Barcaglia

Love is blind (Amore Accieca) c. 1875 (detail)

marble

168.6 × 70.0 × 58.0 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Presented by Carol Sisson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

# nn 14-15

# Harden Sidney Melville

Torres Strait Canoe and five men at the site. of a wreck on the Sir Charles Hardy Islands off Cane Grenville, North Fast Australia 187/

oil on canvas

105.0 × 155.0 cm (framed)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased using funds from the Warren Clark Bequest and Ruth Houghton Beauest, 2020

# p. 21

# Louise Zhang

Scholar mound study #3 2019 foam clay, polyurethane, synthetic polymer paint, pigment, transparent synthetic polymer resin, wood, glass, flat back pearls

43.0 × 36.0 × 35.0 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Proposed acquisition purchased with funds donated by Jo Horgan and MECCA Brands, 2020

© Courtesy the artist and Artereal Gallery,

Photo: Silversalt Photography

# p. 24

# Ernest Bussière (modeller)

Keller & Guérin Lunéville (manufacturer) Gourd vase c. 1903

earthenware

18 8 × 13 3 × 12 5 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020

## Paul Follot (designer) Koloman Moser (designer)

# F. W. Quist Metallwarenfabrik, Esslingen

am Neckar (manufacturer)

Tea and coffee service c. 1902 silver-plated brass

(a) 16.5 × 27.9 × 12.1 cm (teapot)

(b) 18.9 × 30.5 × 12.7 cm (coffee pot)

(c) 10.2 × 15.2 × 8.9 cm (creamer)

(d-e) 12.6 × 14.9 × 8.9 cm (overall)

(sugar box)

(f) 4.0 × 61.6 × 42.6 cm (tray) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased with funds donated by Peter and Ivanka Canet, 2017

# Koloman Moser (designer)

Masks, wallpaper 1901 plate 16 from the Flächenschmuck (Surface decoration) series, published in Die Quelle (The source), Verlag M. Gerlach, Vienna and Leipzig 1901-02 colour lithograph 22.5 × 27.4 cm (image)

25.0 × 29.5 cm (sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased with funds donated by Dr Philip Williams AM and Elizabeth Williams, 2017

# Elza Josephson (decorator)

Rosenthal A. G., Selb (manufacturer) Vase 1914

porcelain

24.5 × 12.0 cm diameter National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased with funds donated by Merv

Keehn and Sue Harlow, 2020 Photography: Richard Weinstein

# n 29

## Johann Loetz Witwe Glassworks, Klostermühle

Gooseneck vase c 1900

25.4 × 10.6 cm diameter

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased with funds donated by Merv Keehn and Sue Harlow, 2019

Image courtesy of Macklowe Gallery, New

# Ivan Durrant

# The apple 1970

composition board 90.0 × 75.0 cm

Collection of the artist © Ivan Durrant

# p. 32

Ivan Durrant

Butcher shop 1977-78 synthetic polymer and enamel paint on composition board and wood, ceramic tiles, transparent synthetic polymer resin, mirror, steel, fluorescent light, plastic, polyvinyl chloride, metal, string 241.0 × 303.0 × 128.7 cm (overall)

# National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Mr and Mrs Burdett A. Laycock,1978

# © Ivan Durrant n 33

Ivan Durrant 3 Jockevs 1975

synthetic polymer paint on composition

81.0 × 122.0 cm

Glen Eira City Council Art Collection © Ivan Durrant

# p. 34

# Ivan Durrant

Studio 9 2017-19 synthetic polymer paint on composition

100.0 × 145.0 cm Collection of the artist © Ivan Durrant

# p. 35

### Ivan Durrant Delatite feed room 1998

synthetic polymer paint on composition

122.0 × 90.0 cm

Private collection, Mansfield © Ivan Durrant

### John Wolselev

After fire - spiny-cheeked honeyeaters at Lake Monibeona (2009-11): 2011 (dated) (detail)

watercolour, charcoal, pencil, gouache and brown chalk

 $151.7 \times 128.9 \, \text{cm}$  (image and sheet) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Sir Roderick Carnegie in memory of his wife Carmen through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016 © John Wolseley/Licensed by Copyright Agency Australia

### n 40

# Bruce Armstrona

Guardians 1987 (detail) red gum (Eucalyptus blakelyi) (a-e) 204.4 × 307.3 × 118.4 cm (overall) (f-i) 171.0 × 307.5 × 137.4 cm (overall) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Presented by the Bardas Family as the winner of the Bardas Family Sculpture Commission, 1987

© Bruce Armstrong

# Unryūan Tatsuo Kitamura

Vase with pampas grass (Susuki zu kabin 蒲図花瓶) 2004 lacquer, metallic powder 35.3 × 17.4 cm diameter National Gallery of Victoria Melbourne Presented by Lesley Kehoe Galleries through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program, 2009

© Unryuan Kitamura Tatsuo

## (below) Unryūan Tatsuo Kitamura

Writing box (Suzuribako 硯箱) 2007 lacquer on wood (maki-e), gold, pigment, ailt eilver inketone

(a-e) 4.0 × 17.1 × 15.0 cm (overall) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased with funds donated by Pauline

Gandel, 2008 © Unrvuan Kitamura Tatsuo

# n 46-7

# John Wolselev

From Siberia to Roebuck Bay - the godwits reach the mangrove swamps. WA 2012 watercolour over pencil, charcoal, coloured chalk and masking out 151.9 × 199.0 cm irreg. (image and sheet) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Sir Roderick Carnegie in memory of his wife Carmen through the Australian

Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016 © John Wolseley/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

# pp. 48-9

John Wolseley Flight of the eumenine wasps - mud domes and paper nests 2012-14 charcoal, watercolour, pencil, black pencil, chalk, masking out, fired clay nest, velcro and red fibre-tipped pen 114.3 × 476.5 cm (image and sheet) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Sir Roderick Carnegie in memory of his wife Carmen through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2016 © John Wolseley/Licensed by Copyright Agency, Australia

# Harry Nankin

Of Great Western tears / Duet 2 2006 (detail)

from The rain series 2006-07

gelatin silver photogram (a-b) 107.1 × 214.3 cm (image and sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased NGV Foundation, 2007

# nn 52-3

# Damien Wright

5 45 18/02/2020 2020 River red gum (F.camaldulensis) 80 0 × 90 0 × 356 0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2020 © Damien Wright

## p. 58 Indian

Textile sample 19th century (detail) block-printed cotton

47.0 × 66.2 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, 1895

# Indian

# Woman's head covering (Odhni) late 19th century (detail) silk gold thread

200.0 × 168.0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Gift of Michael Abbott. 2008

# Indonesian

Man's cloth (Hinggi kombu) 20th century cotton dves (warn ikat) 273.5 × 124.0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, 1973

# Indonesian

Skirt cloth (Sarong) c. 1930 batik on cotton 72.5 × 254.5 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, 1974

# nn 68-9

# Arthur Streeton

The purple noon's transparent might 1896 123.0 × 123.0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

# Purchased 1896 nn 70-1

# Arthur Streeton

123.0 × 123.0 cm

The purple noon's transparent might 1896 (details)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, 1896

## Edwin (Keir Ralph) Down on our luck 2020

digital print

180 0 × 120 0 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2020

# © Fdwin

# Jason Wing

Battleground (Civil lies) 2020 Rattleground (Always was never will be)

2020 rusted Corten steel, deen etch primer enamel paint, sealant, aluminium bracket 120.0 × 45.0 × 6.0 cm

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2020

Image courtesy of Artereal, Sydney. Photograph by Zan Wimberley. @ Jason Wing

## p. 80 Dean Cross

The Yowie 2017 (still) Apple Prores 4444 format, silent 30 min 35 sec (looped) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2019 © Dean Cross

p. 82

Michelle Pulutuwayu Woody Minnapinni Ngiya Murrakupupuni (My Country) 2020 earth pigments on canvas 150.0 × 120.0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased with funds donated by Judith

# © Michelle Pulutuwayu Woody Minnapinni

## pp. 86-7 Donato Barcaglia

and Leon Gorr 2020

Love is blind (Amore Accieca) c. 1875 168.6 × 70.0 × 58.0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Presented by Carol Sisson through the

Australian Government's Cultural Gifts

# Program, 2020

# Donato Barcaglia

Love is blind (Amore Accieca) c. 1875 168 6 × 70 0 × 58 0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Presented by Carol Sisson through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts

# Program, 2020 pp. 90-1

# Tom Roberts

Shearing the rams 1890 oil on canvas on composition board 122.4 × 183.3 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Felton Beguest 1932

## p. 93-5 Tom Roberts

# Shearing the rams 1890 (detail), (details) oil on canvas on composition board 122 4 × 183 3 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Felton Beguest, 1932

Quantum memories 2020 (render)

# Refik Anadol

custom software, quantum computing, generative algorithm with artificial intelligence (AI) real-time digital animation on LFD screen. 4 channel sound 1015 0 × 1020 0 × 250 0 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased with funds donated by Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund and Barry Janes and

# Aïda Muluneh

Paul Cross, 2020

Compromise 2017 from the Memory of Hope series 2017 inkjet print, ed. 3/7 801 × 801 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2018

# n 100

# (above)

© Aïda Muluneh

Kate Daw Spacecraft, Melbourne (manufacturer) Friendship love truth 2013 from the On top of the world: Flags for Melbourne series 2013 digital print on polyester, nylon 122 0 × 250 0 cm National Gallery of Victoria Melbourne

Commissioned by the National Gallery of

Victoria in collaboration with the City of

## Melbourne 2014 © Kate Daw

# (below)

John Nixon Project for a wall painting, colour group E (Random) 2008

enamel paint on composition board

601 × 902 cm National Gallery of Victoria Melbourne Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists 2009

# n 108

# Richard Lewer

Photo: Andrew Curtis

© Courtesy of the artist

Crucifixes from the series There is light and dark in us all 2018 (detail) fired stoneware dimensions variable Courtesy of the artist, Sullivan + Strumpf and Hugo Michell Gallery © Richard Lewer

# **END NOTES**

## pp. 14-7 Deep Read

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Landesamt für Denkmalpflege.

5. Cathy Leahy et al., John Wolseley: Heartlands and Headwaters, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2015.

# pp 68-73

# Art in Focus

- Terence I ane. Nineteenth-Century Australian Art in the National Gallery of Victoria, National Gallery of Victoria, 2002. p. 122.

# nn 76-7

# Just In: Bushfire Brandalism posters

- 1 Brandalism 'Rushfire Brandalism' <hrandalism ch/nrojects/hushfire> accessed 8 Sep. 2020.
- 2. Aljazeera, 'Nearly 3 billion animals killed or displaced by Australia fires', <www.aliazeera.com/ news/2020/07/3-billion-animalskilled-displaced-australiafires-200728095756845.html>, accessed 8 Sep. 2020.
- 3. Brandalism. <brandalism.ch>. accessed 8 Sep. 2020.

# Just In: Jason Wing Jason Wing, in conversation with

Hannah Presley, Oct 1 2020. 3. Jason Wing, Battleground, Artereal

# Gallery, Sydney, 2020, p. 20

pp. 82-5 Just In: Michelle Woody Minnapinni 1. Pedro Wonaeamirri, in Marielle Schwerin, Living Tiwi: Contemporary Tiwi Paintings from Milikapiti, Melville Island, Jilamara Arts & Crafts

Association, Winnellie, Northern

# Territory 2004 n 9

# pp. 90-5

- Australian Art 1. The colloquial term 'riding on the sheep's back' refers to the significant role wool production played in Australia's developing economy from
- the early nineteenth century. 2. Tom Roberts, 'Letter to the editor', The Argus, 4 Jul. 1890, p. 10.
- 3. Simone Nolan, email to David
- Hurlston, 1 Oct. 2020. 4 ibid
- ibid. Susan Bourne, cited by Dorothy Ambrose (granddaughter), in 'Susan Bourne's starring role in Tom Roberts' Shearing the Rams', Namoi Valley Independent, 25 Jul. 2015.

# pp 106-7 Design Store

1. Claudia Moodoonuthi, interview with NGV, Brisbane, Queensland, 1 October 2020.

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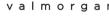


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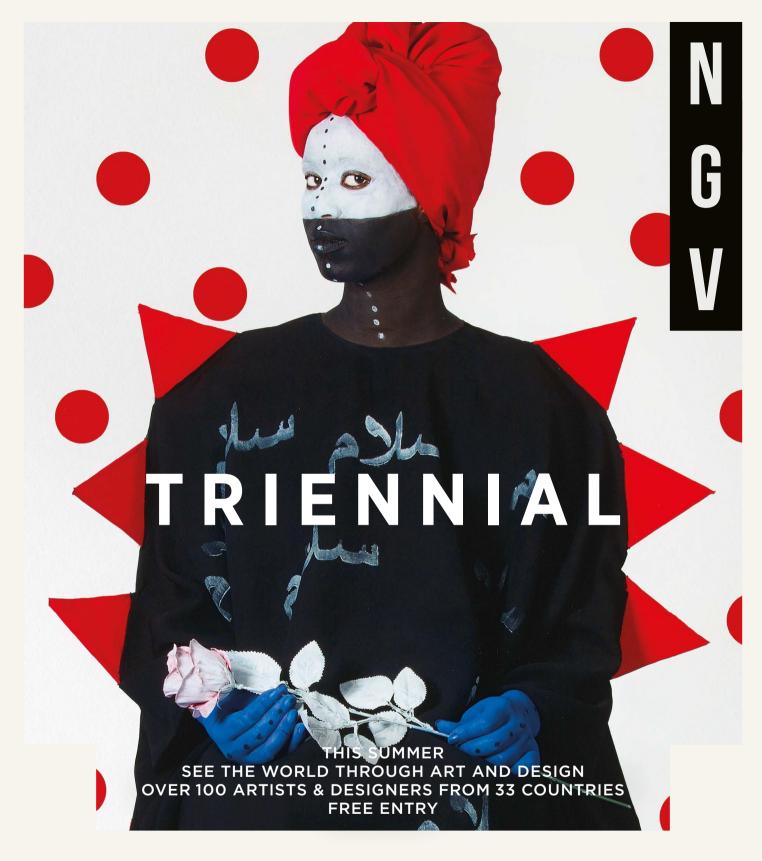












Aïda Muluneh Seed of the soul 2017 (detail) from the A Memory of Hope series 2017 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2018 © Aïda Muluneh The NGV warmly thanks Triennial Major Supporter Bowness Family Foundation for their support.

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