NGV

MELBOURNE NOW

FREE ENTRY
24 MAR—20 AUG

THE IAN POTTER CENTRE:
NGV AUSTRALIA, FED SQUARE

MELBOURNE NOW EXHIBITION FACT SHEET

THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA
24 MARCH – 20 AUGUST 2023

This fact sheet provides information specific to *Melbourne Now* to support the following Learning Outcomes of VCE Art Making and Exhibiting – Exhibiting Artworks:

Unit 2: Understand, develop and resolve; Area of Study 1, Outcome 1

Unit 3: Collect, extend and connect; Area of Study 3, Outcome 3

Unit 4: Consolidate, present and conserve; Area of Study 3, Outcome 3

For a more detailed overview of exhibition preparation, presentation and conservation at the NGV refer to Exhibiting Artworks at the NGV: VCE Art Making and Exhibiting.

Above
NGV *Melbourne Now* 2023 Artist and Designer Announcement

Below
Outdoor signage at Federation Square

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

The *Melbourne Now* exhibition in 2013 was an unprecedented survey of the work of some of the most exciting local contemporary creative practitioners. Ten years later, *Melbourne Now* 2023 highlights the latest art, architecture, design and cultural practice shaping Melbourne.

NUMBER AND TYPE OF WORKS

The exhibition includes works from over 200 Victorian-based artists designers, studios and firms. With works spanning across every creative field, including 39 commissions and 36 acquisitions, the exhibition's diverse range of disciplines includes:

- Fashion
- Jewellery
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Architecture
- Ceramics
- Film
- Virtual reality
- Performance
- Photography
- Printmaking
- Product design
- Publishing

Entry signage window treatment

KEY TEAM MEMBERS

NGV Curatorial Team:
Tony Ellwood AM, Director
Donna McColm, Assistant Director, Curatorial and Audience Engagement
Don Heron, Assistant Director, Exhibitions Management and Design

Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture
Ewan McEoin, Senior Curator
Amita Kirpalani, Curator (curator: In Memoriam; co-curator Performance Program, Screening Program)
Simone LeAmon, Curator (curator: Design Wall, Jewellery Now, co-curator No House Style, Vessels)
Gemma Savio, Curator, (co-curator: Vessels)
Timothy Moore, Curator, (curator: Civic Architecture, co-curator No House Style)
Anna Honan, Curatorial Project Officer
Katharina Prugger, Curator
Sophie Oxenbridge, Curator

Australian and First Nations Art
Myles Russell-Cook, Senior Curator
Shonae Hobson, Curator
Beckett Rozentals, Curator
Sophie Prince, Curatorial Project Officer

Prints and Drawings
Cathy Leahy, Senior Curator
Petra Kayser, Curator
Jessica Cole, Assistant Curator

Fashion and Textiles
Katie Somerville, Senior Curator
Dani Whitfield, Curator
Charlotte Botica, Curatorial Project Officer (curatorial assistant: Design Wall)

Photography
Susan van Wyk, Senior Curator, Maggie Finch, Curator

Guest Curators
Nicole Durling, Executive Director, Craft Victoria (co-curator: Vessels)
Brad Haylock, Associate Dean, RMIT University (Curator, Babel Bookcase)
Olivia Koh, Co-Founder and Director, recess (co-curator: Screening Program)
Eliza Tiernan, Curatorial and Exhibitions Manager, Craft Victoria (co-curator: Vessels)

NGV Exhibition Project Team and Staff
Megan Patty, Head of Publications, Photographic Services and Library;
Garry Sommerfeld, Manager, Photographic Services, and staff
Melissa Ray, Senior Marketing Manager and staff
Ingrid Rhule, Head of Design
Jessica Brent, Exhibition Designer
Annika Toohey, Exhibition Designer
Dasha Tolotchkov, Exhibition Designer
Allie Mactier, Exhibition Designer
Jenny Kan, Exhibition Designer
James Oates, Graphic Designer
Kathleen Duffy, Exhibition Design Coordinator
Erin Hourigan, Exhibition Design Assistant
Felicity Hayward, Graphic Designer
Ellen Waite, Graphic Designer
Goldy Dzienciol, Senior Project Manager, and staff
Jackie Robinson, Head of Graphic Design, and staff

Guest Exhibition Design
Holly Board, Director, Board Grove Architects
Peter Grove, Director, Board Grove Architects
Rob Backhouse, Principal, Hassell Studio
Catherine Debicki, Interior Designer, Hassell Studio
Chloe Gleeson, Interior Designer, Hassell Studio
Prue Pascoe, Associate, Hassell Studio

Additional Teams
Exhibition Collections and Operations
Registration
Multimedia
Facilities and Operations
Exhibitions Management
Conservation
Audience Engagement and Learning

CURATORIAL RATIONALE

Melbourne Now takes as its premise the idea that a city is significantly shaped by artists, designers, architects, choreographers, intellectuals and community groups that live and work in its midst.

As director Tony Ellwood, AM writes:

> *As an institution, the NGV values its responsibility to showcase the talent and stories of the local artists and designers who have helped to make our city a globally recognised centre for arts and culture...No other exhibition series reflects Victorian life and culture with such depth, nuance and breadth.*[1]

With more than 200 thought-provoking projects on display, the exhibition highlights the vibrant creativity of local emerging, mid-career and senior practitioners and collectives – including many who are presenting at the NGV for the very first time. The exhibition uses a collaborative curatorial approach: twenty NGV curators have worked closely with guest curators and many other members of the NGV team to develop the exhibition. While there are no major themes organising this exhibition, there are projects that incorporate common ideas and practices. This is reflected in the layout and design of the website and exhibition. Some of the projects include:

- *Babel Bookcase*, which brings together a sample of the best work from established and emerging studios and practitioners, showcasing a wide range of modes of practice, spanning posters, typefaces and websites to branding, murals and experimental practice.
- *Civic Architecture* is a survey of five award-winning civic projects by Melbourne architects and landscape architects.
- The *Design Wall* celebrates innovative consumer products designed in Melbourne.
- *Fashion Now* presents the work of eighteen independent Melbourne designers as a marker of both contemporary life and a snapshot of the changing values and new directions underpinning local fashion practice in 2023.
- *Jewellery Now* provides insight into Melbourne's dynamic culture of contemporary jewellery practice through the work of fifteen artists and designers.
- *No House Style* assembles leading and emerging Melbourne-based furniture designers and architects whose contrasting styles are emblematic of the city's creative spirit.
- *Slippery Images* incorporates the work of artists who deal with photography in varied ways. Some play with the surface of images: cutting and collaging, painting over and piercing through, intricate weaving, re-photographing.
- *Vessels* showcases the work of fifteen artists, craftspeople and designers who expand the parameters of that useful, enduring and familiar object – the vessel.

IN THE GALLERY

EXHIBITION DESIGN

Melbourne Now occupies all levels of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. The overall design of the exhibition is pared-back to allow the works to speak for themselves. Wall colours vary according to the works on display; some walls were painted, while other walls are kept white (Dulux Lexicon Quarter). The title wall is located on the ground floor at the entry to the exhibition; the introductory didactic utilises Swis721 font.

CONSERVATION

Melbourne Now includes a range of contemporary materials which involves all six conservation departments: Objects; Paintings; Frames and Furniture; Fashion and Textiles, Paper and Photography; and Loans. The nature of contemporary works challenges the idea of preservation due to the ways they push boundaries and encourage audience members to interact and engage with the works. Conservators consider each artwork individually, evaluating safety issues and reducing any associated risks. Although not all works in *Melbourne Now* will enter the NGV Collection, the conservator's job is to preserve all pieces and ensure they are returned in the same condition as when they arrived.

Throughout the exhibition, conservators and colleagues from the Multimedia and Installation teams will monitor the works, cleaning and maintaining them regularly; this might include altering or adapting how visitors are directed to interact with each piece. They will also closely examine the new acquisitions that will enter the Collection after the exhibition to make inferences about how they will best preserve, conserve and present the work in future.

Installation View of **Mia Salsjo's**
A score for Fed Square, 2022
in *Melbourne Now*

Installation view of **Troy Emery**'s *Mountain climber*, 2022. Purchased with funds donated by Tapestry Foundation of Australia, Dr. Brett Archer, Alan Roberts and family, John Rush KC and Sandra Rush, Janet Whiting AM and Phil Lukies and family, and donors to the NGV Summer Appeal, 2023. Image: Tom Ross

SELECTED WORKS

MOUNTAIN CLIMBER, 2023
TROY EMERY

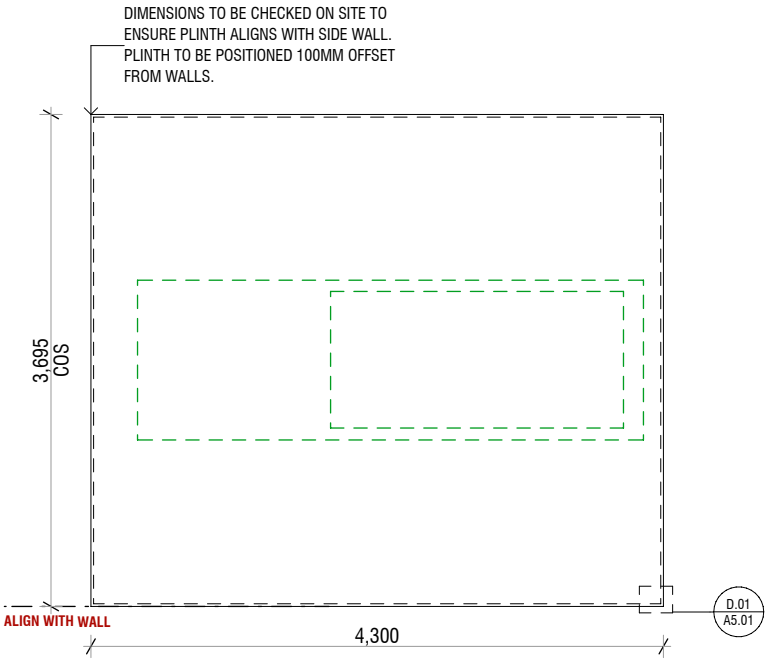
Troy Emery is a sculptor whose work blends consumer craft materials with taxidermy and natural history. At over three metres high, *Mountain climber,* 2022, is Emery's largest work to date. The sculpture of the feline creature, perched atop a gallery plinth, is a continuation of his work exploring humankind's relationship with animals and their historical representations in museums. In *Mountain climber* bright-coloured pompoms are assembled and pinned over an underlying form to create a large-scale and abstracted animal-shaped mass.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

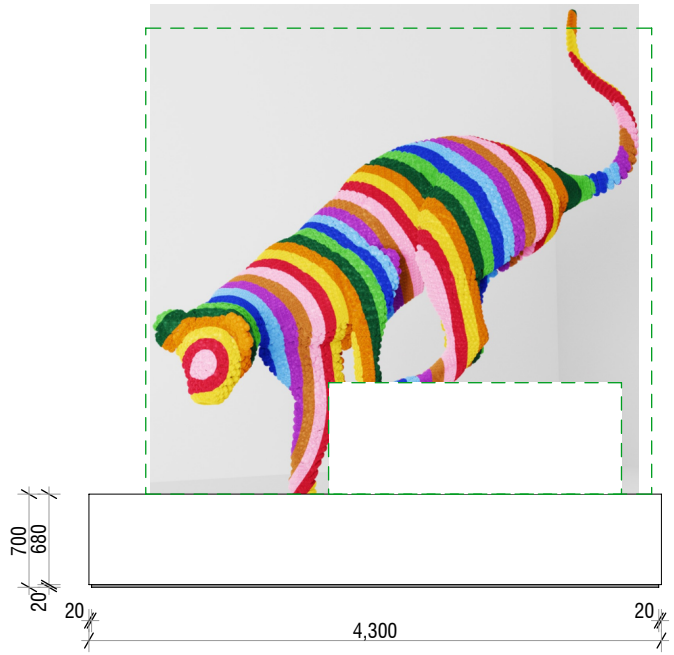
Emery's work is a large-scale sculpture located on the ground floor of The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia. It sits at the centre of the main exhibition space, greeting viewers as they enter. A new configuration was applied to the ground floor gallery which included removing the back wall to reveal a large window (covered with UV protected film) which overlooks the Yarra River, creating a relationship between the indoor and outdoor spaces.

One of the biggest considerations was ensuring that visitors couldn't touch its delicate, furry pelt. Consequently, *Mountain climber* is displayed on a square plinth that keeps the sculpture stable and creates a touch-distance, to prevent visitors from coming into contact with it by providing protection at the lowest point: the creature's head. It is accompanied by colourful and textural surrounding works by artists Virginia Fraser and Kait James. The plinth was made as small as possible and designed to fit with the gallery's existing architecture.

Created with thousands of colourful pompoms, *Mountain climber* is both delicate and light sensitive. Constructed with a metal armature underneath resembling a skeleton, it is clad with polyurethane to form the 'skin', which is sealed to produce a barrier layer; and then pompoms form the fur. Due to the fragile nature of textile sculptures, Emery worked closely with curators and conservators to choose materials and develop best practices for longevity and durability. Whilst Emery has previously used glue as an attachment method, for *Mountain Climber* he used screws to secure the pompoms so that there is no risk of glue become brittle or failing, and allows for pompoms to be removed for treatment if required. Considering that the sculpture will need to be stored for lengths of time, he constructed it in three parts that bolt together when assembled. Due to the delicate nature of this sculpture, conservation will manage its light exposure cautiously in future; it will only be on display for four months every two to three years with light levels being kept at 70 lux or below.



PLAN

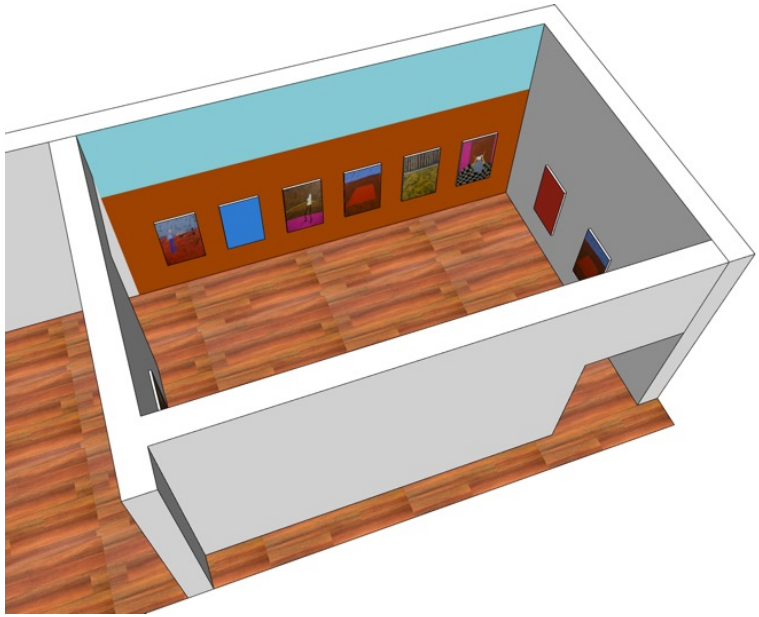


ELEVATION

NOTE: PLINTH TO BE REINFORCED TO ALLOW FOR ARTWORK WEIGHT 200KG APPROX. AS REQUIRED.

Above
Mountain Climber in Emery's Studio

Opposite
Joinery drawings prepared by NGV exhibition design.



FOR THE ANGELS IN PARADISE, 2023
MIA BOE

For the angels in paradise, 2023, continues Mia Boe's practice of recording and recovering Indigenous histories in a contemporary context. Her paintings of elongated bodies floating in the landscape serve as representations of ancestral spirits, family members and key historical figures.

For *Melbourne Now*, Boe responds to a series of linocuts and paintings by Australian artists Noel Counihan and Russell Drysdale, including Counihan's portrait of Arrernte artist Albert Namatjira, a person who has featured prominently throughout her work. Using the NGV Collection as a reference point, Boe challenges notions of representation and imperial power. *For the angels in paradise* consists of nine individual paintings hung on a mural which she painted onsite; she describes this as a 'stage' for her paintings.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

For the angels in paradise is located on Level 2 amongst the 20th Century Australian Collection. Exhibition design prepared the walls using a base coat of Dulux white paint and painted a backdrop using Terracota brown (Dulux Temptress) and sky blue (Dulux Swift). Boe completed the mural onsite over the course of a few weeks; all works had to be removed from the gallery spaces during this process and time was allowed for drying. Boe collaborated with curator Shonae Hobson to select works in the NGV Collection to hang next to her own paintings to create a dialogue between the works. She chose one painting and five prints by Noel Counihan and one painting by Russell Drysdale. As there are both paintings and works on paper in this space, direct light is angled onto the artworks and adjusted to prevent damaging the prints, which are more delicate. Boe's paintings are displayed at 250 lux; however, the prints on the walls opposite are displayed at a lower level of 50 lux. Conservation will monitor the mural throughout the course of the exhibition and repaint any areas that might be subjected to wear and tear. However, while the mural will be maintained, photographed and documented, it is an ephemeral artwork. Once the exhibition concludes, the wall will be repainted for the next exhibition.

Above
Installation view of **Mia Boe**'s *For the angels in paradise,* 2023 on display as part of the *Melbourne Now* exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne. Image: Sean Fennessy

Below
Installation render prepared by NGV exhibition design

PORTRAIT OF SISTER IN LAWS; WEMBA WEMBA GREAT AUNTY FRIEDA STEWART AND WERGAIA GREAT GRANDMOTHER ELEANOR STEWART, 2019 KELLY KOUMALATSOS

Portrait of sister in laws; Wemba Wemba Great Aunty Frieda Stewart and Wergaia Great Grandmother Eleanor Stewart, 2019, is a multi-layered portrait of Kelly Koumalatsos' First Nations ancestors, inspired by a photograph taken in the early 1900s of her great-grandmother and great aunt. The work includes a traditional Victorian blouse and skirt, re-imagined in tissue paper that has been printed with possum fur. The fur print connects with traditional possum skin–cloak-making; and symbolizes her ancestor's cultural identity and its persistence in the face of colonisation.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

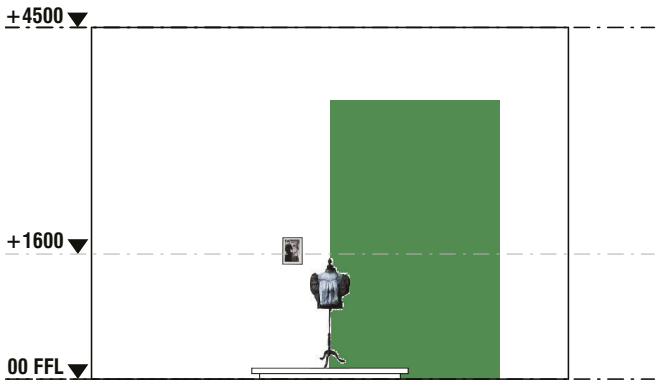
Portrait of sister in laws; Wemba Wemba Great Aunty Frieda Stewart and Wergaia Great Grandmother Eleanor Stewart, 2019 was acquired in 2021; *Melbourne Now* is the first time it has been on display. The work is displayed alongside other depictions of Victorian women such as E. Phillips Fox's Portrait of my cousin, 1893-1894 and John Longstaff's Lady in grey, 1890; to tie into the artist's intentions of revising and complicating how we imagine First Nations Australians at that point in history. Displayed on an armless torso-mannequin with a wooden base, Koumalatsos has constructed a polyester and tulle petticoat that creates the traditional shape of a Victorian skirt underneath the dress. At first glance the material resembles silk, however, upon closer inspection we can see it is a delicate black tissue paper with a relief print made from possum fur and white ink.

Behind the sculpture is a green rectangle (Dulux Tarmac Green) that references an earlier installation and draws attention to the framed photograph of Koumalatsos' great grandmother and great aunt. A stand-off floor plinth protects the garment from visitors' touching, reinforced by the 'Please do not touch' text on the plinth. Due to the fragile and light sensitive nature of the work, *Portrait* is displayed with low lighting at levels of 50 lux. After *Melbourne Now*, display of the work will be limited to preserve the intense black of the tissue paper. When not on display, the garment is stored in two boxes to protect it from dust and light. Tissue padding is used between the sleeves, and the skirt is padded with the petticoat and more tissue.

Kelly Koumalatasos
Portrait of Sister in Laws; Wemba Wemba Great Aunty Frieda Stewart and Wergaia Great Grandmother Eleanor Stewart 2019 (detail)
tissue paper, cotton (thread), mannequin, inkjet print, metal
(a-b) 177.3 x 150.0 x 108.5 cm (variable) (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, NGV Supporters of Indigenous Art, 2022

KELLY KOUMOULATSOS

ELEVATION



Above
Installation view of **Kelly Koumalatsos**' *Portrait of sister in laws; Wemba Wemba Great Aunty Frieda Stewart and Wergaia Great Grandmother Eleanor Stewart* 2019 on display as part of the *Melbourne Now* exhibition at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Melbourne. Image: Ben Moyniha

Below
Artwork elevation prepared by NGV exhibition design

IN THE GALLERY

NOTES

1 Tony Elwood, 'Foreword' *Melbourne Now* National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 2023, p. xi

FURTHER RESOURCES

- This resource is designed to support VCE Art Making and Exhibiting Exhibiting Artworks at the NGV: VCE Art Making and Exhibiting.
- VCE Art Exhibiting and Making Study Design and VCAA support materials for implementation 2023
- National Gallery of Victoria, Explore Conservation
- Melbourne Now Exhibition Page
- Melbourne Now: Kelly Koumalatsos
- Melbourne Now: Mia Boe
- Melbourne Now: Troy Emery
- Creative Practice: Troy Emery
- Creative Practice: Mia Boe
- Creative Practice: Gracia and Louise

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The NGV warmly thanks Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family for their support of the NGV School Support Program.

CREATIVE VICTORIA