

NGV

NGV TRIENNIAL

FERNANDO LAPOSSE

FEATURING

A rare vase by design and architecture luminary Frank Lloyd Wright

The icons and inspirations of Yankunytjatjara artist Kaylene Whiskey

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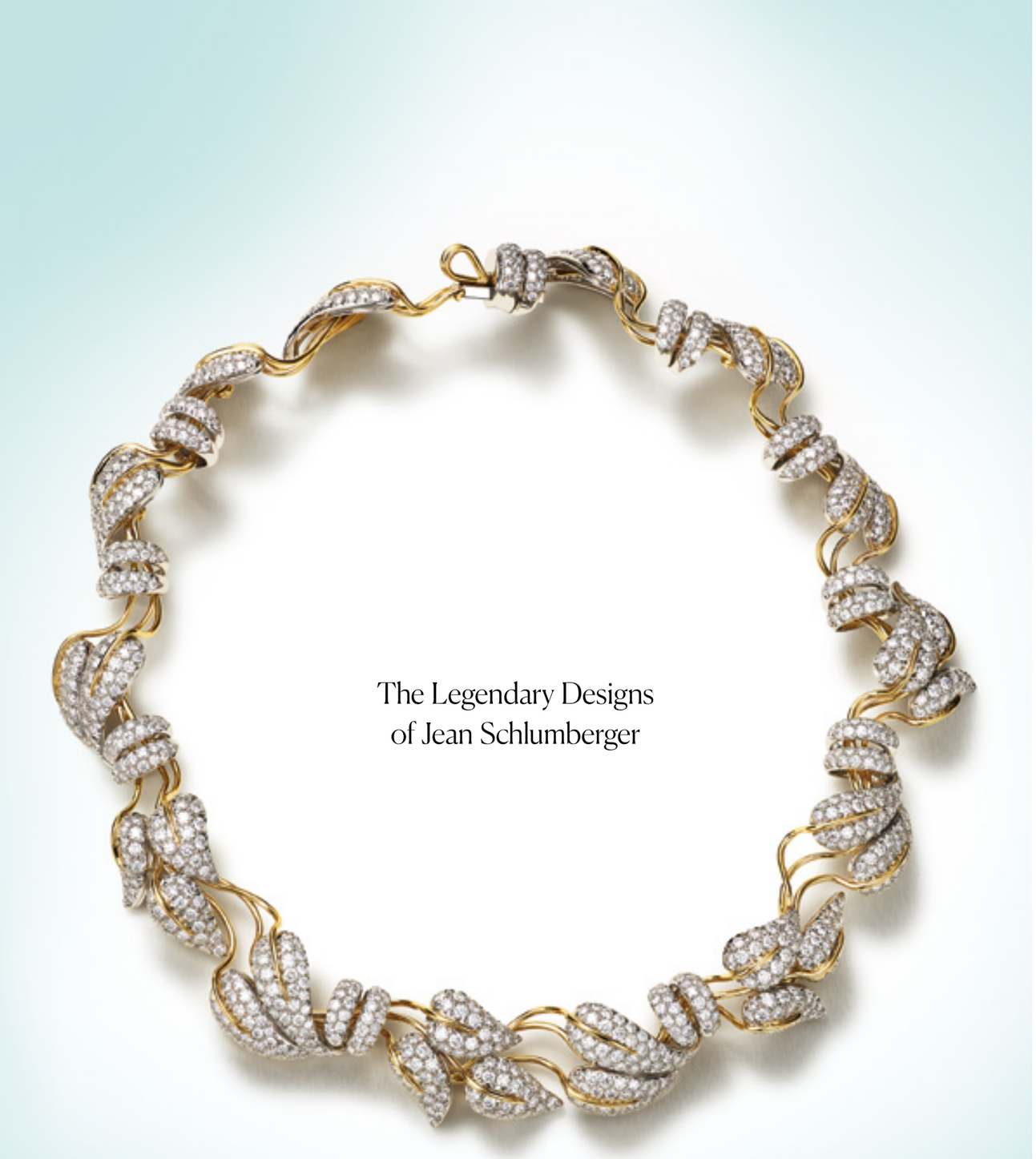

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Ryan Gander *The end* 2020, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Vivien and Graham Knowles. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin. Photo: George Darrell © Ryan Gander

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Kaylene Whiskey Yankunytjatjara, b. 1976, Mparntwe/ Alice Springs, *Cher on Country* 2023. Acrylic on found book page. The NGV warmly thanks MECCA for supporting the acquisition of these works.

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Frank Lloyd Wright (designer) **Gates Pottery (Teco Pottery), Terra Cotta** (manufacturer) *Vase* c. 1902. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

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MANAGING EDITOR
Donna McColm

DEPUTY EDITOR
Elisha Buttler

SENIOR EDITORIAL COORDINATOR
Elisa Scarton

EDITORIAL ASSISTANCE
Cara Becker, Adele D'Souza, Amanda Spann, Nakita Wilson, Imangi Perera

EDITORIAL GROUP
Tony Ellwood AM, Andrew Clark, Donna McColm, Don Heron, Misha Agzarian, Jane Zantuck

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Ramona Lindsay

MAGAZINE EDITOR
Jasmin Chua

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
Kerri Spillane
kerrispillane@hardiegrant.com
0419 897 490

EDITORIAL ENQUIRIES
ngvmagazine.editor@ngv.vic.gov.au
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180 St Kilda Road
Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia
@NGVMelbourne
facebook.com/NGVMelbourne

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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. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this publication may contain names of people who have passed away.

The National Gallery of Victoria acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung peoples of the Kulin nation, the Traditional Owners of the land on which the NGV is built.

(cover) Mexican designer Fernando Laposse. Courtesy: Fernando Laposse
Photo © Pepe Molina



SMACK *Speculum* 2019 (detail). Courtesy of the artists and Colección SOLO, Madrid © SMACK

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FROM THE NGV

Next month we will open the third *NGV Triennial* at NGV International. It has become a cornerstone event for the NGV – and the Australian and international cultural calendar – since its launch in 2017. The Triennial is powerful, resonant, entertaining and, always, reflective of the life and times of the moment. It touches on many of the things that delight and concern us as an international community. This year, expect to see the work of more than one hundred creative minds through seventy-five major projects, twenty-five of which are new works commissioned especially by the NGV for this exhibition. Such is the scale of the Triennial, which will once again occupy all levels of NGV international, that *NGV Magazine* coverage of the exhibition will take place across three issues. To begin, we share some highlight projects and introduce you to the first of the three thematic pillars (Matter, Magic and Memory) that function as a lens through which to consider the concerns and intentions of the artists and designers. NGV Senior Curator Ewan McEoin explores the varied terrain of Matter, from the physical and the particle, to something much more conceptual and amorphous. The Triennial is free and will be punctuated over the summer months by a full program of music and events across the NGV garden and galleries. We share a preview of summer at NGV on page 62 and you can find out more on our website or by asking a member of our team next time you visit.

In scale and scope, *NGV Triennial* truly is an exhibition for everyone – especially if you consider that around 173 of the artworks will become part of the NGV Collection, adding to a wonderful legacy and repository that belongs to the people of Victoria. For this, I am deeply grateful to our philanthropic community, which includes more than eighty donor couples, families and foundations, including Triennial Champions: Felton Bequest, July Cao, Barry Janes & Paul Cross, Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, NGVWA, and Neville & Diana Bertalli. Their generosity sits alongside twenty-one partners including Presenting Partner Creative Victoria, Principal Partner Mercedes-Benz, and Major Partners Chadstone: The Fashion Capital, Telstra, MECCA, Deakin University, Design Partner RMIT University and Learning Partner La Trobe University.

We are also proud to present the next instalments of the MECCA and NGV Holiday Collaboration and MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission, this year engaging Yankunytjatjara artist Kaylene Whiskey through the Holiday Collaboration, and British designer Bethan Laura Wood for the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission. We thank MECCA for its continued vision. Please do also visit our newly-opened photography exhibition *Photography: Real and Imagined*, the new *Wurrdha Marra* Ground Level exhibition galleries, and refreshed Level 2 Collection displays – all at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

It will be a colourful summer at the NGV and I hope you can join us.

Tony Ellwood AM
Director

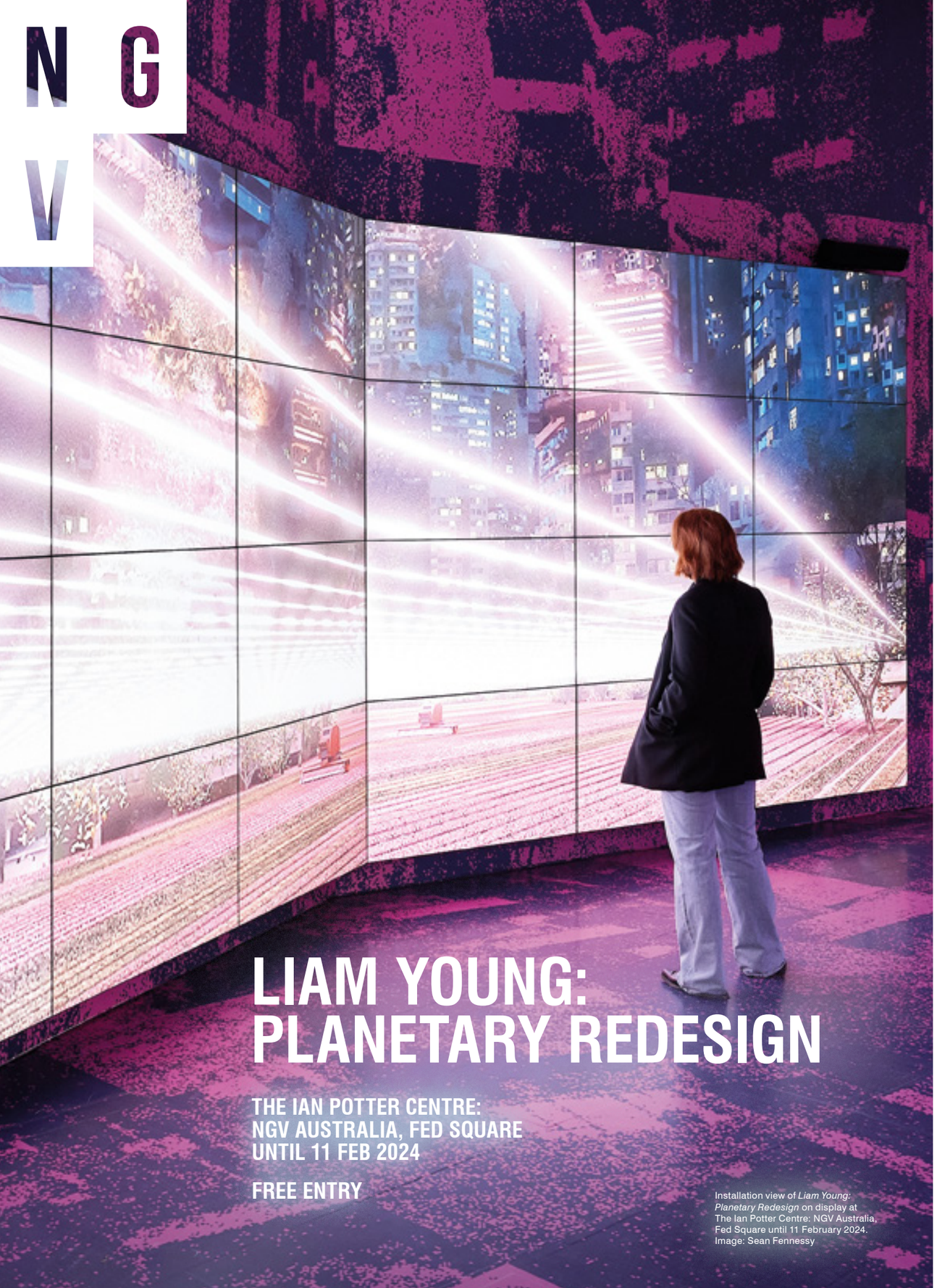
Welcome to the final issue of *NGV Magazine* for 2023. In this issue, we speak to Nic Brundson, the Perth architect who has teamed up with Melbourne art and technology studio ENESS to design the NGV Architecture Commission for 2023. A spherical form that stands fourteen metres tall when fully inflated, *(This is) Air* seeks to make the invisible visible, drawing attention to a finite resource whose quality is becoming increasingly affected. We acknowledge Principal Partner Macquarie Group, and Design Partner RMIT University for their generous support of the 2023 Architecture Commission, and I encourage you to discover this thought-provoking installation in the NGV Garden from 3 December, as part of the free *NGV Triennial* 2023 exhibition.

On page 88, NGV curators Amanda Dunsmore and Imogen Mallia-Valjan share the story of Frank Lloyd Wright's *vase*, c. 1902, made by the highly regarded Gates Pottery for Wright's Dana Thomas-House, Springfield, Illinois. Exceptionally rare, the work is on display on Level 2 at NGV International and highlights the architect's continued impact on art and design. Also new to the Collection and on display on Level 2, is a late nineteenth century bicycle jacket with an exaggerated silhouette. The sculptural linen jacket represents the changes and fashionable contradictions that abounded at the precipice of the new century, as well as the effect the era's cycling craze had on the lives and wardrobes of women. Both works join the NGV Collection with the generosity of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023.

And finally, 2023 marks the 400th anniversary of the book that gave us Shakespeare – the First Folio of 1623. On page 72, Dr David McInnis celebrates the occasion through the NGV's rich holdings of Shakespeare-inspired works, including the recent acquisition of two paintings by German-born painter Philippe Mercier – *Falstaff with Doll Tearsheet,* c. 1738, and *Falstaff at the Boar's Head Tavern*, c. 1738, both gifts of Wendy King through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023. Watch a free recording of Dr McInnis's talk as part of the NGV Scholars Series by scanning the code below.

Happy holidays and thank you to all of our readers, supporters and collaborators for sharing in a passion for art and design throughout 2023 through the NGV Collection, exhibitions and *NGV Magazine*. We wish you a very safe and enjoyable summer season.

Donna McColm
Managing Editor, *NGV Magazine*
Assistant Director, Curatorial and Audience Engagement



Installation view of *Liam Young: Planetary Redesign* on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia, Fed Square until 11 February 2024. Image: Sean Fennessy

CONTRIBUTORS

PRUDENCE FLINT
Melbourne, Australia

Prudence Flint has worked within the Australian artworld for three decades, steadily arriving at significant national attention, winning numerous prizes and awards, including one of the world's most valuable painting prizes, The Doug Moran Prize 2017. Her 2023 series, *Hunting and Fishing*, is on display at NGV International as part of *NGV Triennial* 2023.

DR STEFANIE MARKIDIS,
Melbourne, Australia

Dr Stefanie Markidis is a writer and researcher who has written extensively on design, literature and the arts. She is a lecturer in the College of Design and Social Context at RMIT University and a regular contributor to arts and culture publications.

DR ALEX BROWN
Melbourne, Australia

Dr Alex Brown is an architect and senior lecturer in the Department of Architecture at Monash Art, Design and Architecture. Her research explores twentieth-century and contemporary art-architecture relationships, architecture exhibitions, and architecture and radicality from the 1960s onwards. Dr Brown's writing has been published in journals such as *The Journal of Architecture* and the *Electronic Melbourne Art Journal*.

GENEVIEVE TRAIL
Melbourne, Australia

Genevieve Trail is a doctoral candidate in the School of Culture and Communications at The University of Melbourne. Her current research examines the contemporary art practice of Hong Kong in relation to conditions of precarity.

DR DAVID MCINNIS
Melbourne, Australia

Dr David McInnis is Associate Professor of Shakespeare and Early Modern Drama at the University of Melbourne. His most recent books include *Shakespeare and Lost Plays* and *Shakespeare and Virtual Reality* (both with Cambridge University Press, 2021). He is currently editing *Timon of Athens* for the Arden Shakespeare 4th series.

ALL CONTRIBUTORS

Amanda Dunsmore
Beckett Rozentals
Carl Villis
Elisa Scarton
Ewan McEoin
Gemma Savio
Imogen Mallia-Valjan
Janelle Borig
Katie Somerville
Michele Stockley
Misha Agzarian
Myles Russell-Cook
Raymonda Rajkowski
Sophie Gerhard
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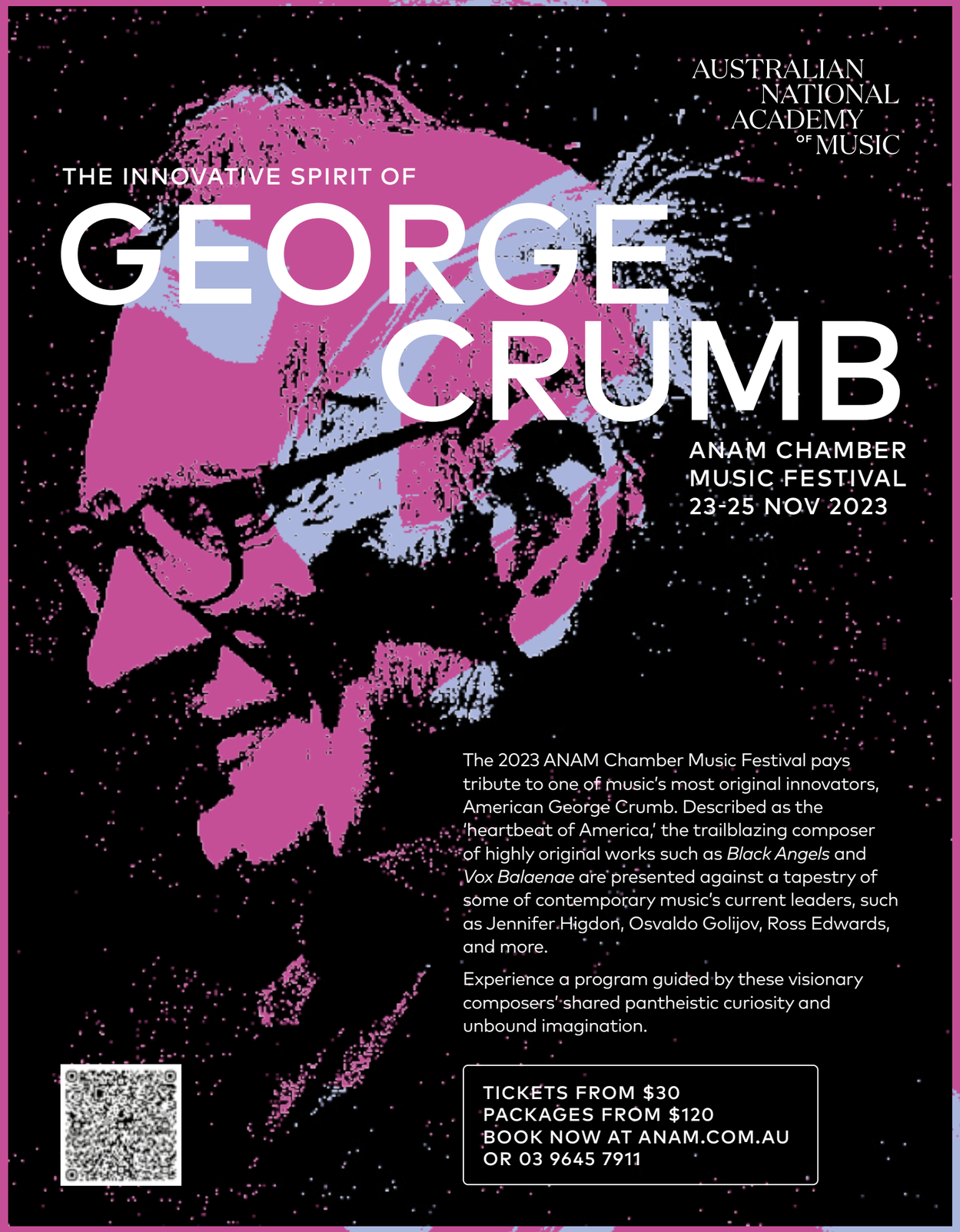
Tacita Dean, *One Hundred and Fifty Years of Painting*, 2021, location photograph, 16mm colour film, optical sound, 50:30 minutes, continuous loop, image courtesy the artist, Frith Street Gallery, London and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York, Paris, and Los Angeles, © the artist, photograph: Mathew Hale



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KATE BERGIN
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The Illusionists & Other Stories (Featuring Diego Velazquez' *Las Meninas*, 1656 on a scarf), oil on canvas, 180 x 215 cm

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TRIENNIAL

The third iteration of the *NGV Triennial* exhibition launches this December. Through art, design, architecture and more, *NGV Triennial* takes a moment to pause and reflect on the social, cultural, political and creative energies of the world at this time. It traverses all levels of NGV International and this year, is anchored by the three themes of Matter, Magic and Memory. Across three issues of *NGV Magazine* we will introduce you to many of the works on display and each of the three themes, beginning here, with Matter.

ESSAY

MATTER MATTERS

BY EWAN McEOIN

‘Matter’, as one of the three a thematic devices for the 2023 *NGV Triennial* performs an introspective function, constantly reminding us of our position within the vast interconnected frameworks of biology, geology and physics. It evokes an awareness of our intimate relationship with and dependence upon the natural systems that have provided the raw materials for our craft and survival throughout history.

This relationship extends beyond the merely physical and grapples with philosophical inquiries, questioning the essence of our existence, our interactions and the consequences that these have on the world around us.

The exploration of matter becomes especially poignant in the era that we now label as the Anthropocene, a geological epoch defined by human activity’s significant impact on Earth’s ecosystems. This is the age when humans have become a geological force, extracting, refining, and proliferating materials at an unprecedented scale.

Yet matter is not merely the physical stuff of our world. It is an embodiment of a more significant conceptual realm. It holds the mirror up to society, reflecting our histories, our advances, and our follies. It serves as a conduit, linking the aesthetic realm to tangible reality, and the microcosmic to the macrocosmic. It is the touchstone against which we measure the cost of our actions and our role as stewards of the planet.

In our exploration of matter, we encounter a profound paradox: that despite its ubiquity and tangibility, matter remains enigmatic, its deeper nature elusive. Its study continually evolves as we seek to unravel its secrets. As we move forward, designers and artists continue to interact with matter, extracting meaning and understanding from its depths, seeking new forms and expressions, and pushing the boundaries of our material world.

The intricacies of matter have not only occupied the canvas of science but have also weaved a complex tapestry in human culture, as seen in the Renaissance, Industrial Revolution, fossil-fuel era and now the digital age. Human history has always been closely tied to the manipulation of matter – the choice of material impacting the design and function of our tools, buildings, technologies and artefacts.

COVID-19 and climate emergency remind us that our relationship with matter is not one-way, but many of us can’t see this yet. It is an ongoing dialogue where our actions reverberate within the natural world, and the echoes return to us as consequences. As such, we are all challenged to reconsider our materialistic tendencies, and to learn the language of matter afresh.

Hundreds of years of unbridled extraction and consumption of the Earth’s resources, catalysed by theological validation and economic incentivisation under empire and corporation, have led to severe environmental repercussions. The scientific realisation of the planet’s finite resources and the catastrophic effects of climate change have forced humanity to reassess its dominionistic attitude towards nature.

Western philosophy and reductive science have played pivotal roles in this reassessment. Despite being the bedrock of the industrial and technological revolutions, they’ve revealed the limitations of our understanding of the world, matter and the universe. Uncertainty principles, quantum entanglement, and other complex phenomena assert that the more we know, the more we realise how much we do not know.

This predicament has sparked a global introspection about our relationship with matter. There is an emerging paradigm shift towards an ‘entangled world’ perspective. This view acknowledges our deep interconnectedness with the universe, emphasising the reciprocal, interdependent relationship we share with matter and energy.

The escalating environmental crisis and the expanding consciousness of our cosmic interconnectedness have catalysed conversations around sustainability and stewardship. This discourse is challenging the conventional dominionistic narrative, leading towards a worldview that respects the integrity of all life forms and the sanctity of the Earth.

The future of humanity’s relationship with matter might depend on this growing understanding. It is conceivable that as we further unravel the mysteries of the universe and come to terms with the environmental limits of our planet, we might establish a new, more harmonious relationship with matter. This relationship, ideally, will respect the delicate balances of our ecosystems and celebrate our profound interconnectedness with the cosmos.

Such a transition would not necessarily mean a radical departure from the dominant Western worldview. For instance, the Christian, Jewish and Islamic concepts of stewardship – rather than domination – could be emphasised. Here, humans are seen not as owners of the Earth but as caretakers, who are accountable. This approach aligns with many Indigenous spiritualities that uphold the sacredness of nature and the responsibility of humans to maintain balance.

Several thinkers have explored this relationship between humans and nature, particularly through the lens of entanglement, from spiritual, material and design perspectives. David Abram, an ecologist and philosopher, emphasises the importance of sensory perception and embodied engagement with nature,[1] suggesting that humans are intricately entangled with the more-than-human world, and our existence is shaped by our sensory interactions with the environment.

Timothy Morton, an ecological philosopher, introduces the concept of ‘hyperobjects’[2] to describe interconnected entities that transcend our immediate perception, such as climate change or global ecosystems. Morton argues that humans are deeply entangled with these hyperobjects and must embrace a ‘dark ecology’ that acknowledges our interconnectedness with nature beyond human-centric perspectives.

These relatively new Western philosophical propositions align considerably with the enduring belief systems of Indigenous cultures worldwide. First Peoples often have deep spiritual and ecological connections to nature, emphasising the interdependence and entanglement of humans with the natural world, often recognising humans as part of a larger web of life and advocate for a respectful and reciprocal relationship with nature. For these thinkers, entanglement with nature signifies the recognition of our embeddedness within larger ecological systems.

Pushing further into this terrain, German philosopher Jakob von Uexküll term *umwelt*[3] refers to the subjective and unique perceptual world experienced by an organism. It encompasses an organism’s sensory perceptions, cognitive abilities and its interaction with the environment. The *umwelt* of an organism is shaped by its biological make-up, its sensory apparatus.

Understanding the concept of *umwelt* changes the way we think about our relationship to matter by highlighting the subjective nature of perception and the diversity of perceptual worlds. Each organism, including humans, has its own *umwelt*, which is shaped by its sensory capacities and the specific interactions it has with its environment. This perspective challenges the idea of a singular, objective reality and recognises that different organisms perceive and interact with matter and the world in unique ways.

This emergent entangled worldview could provide a common ground across various religious and cultural traditions. A shared understanding of our relationship with matter can foster a global collective ethos that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries. As we confront the realities of a globalised world, this could be a unifying narrative that nurtures sustainability, justice and peace.

Our collective knowledge about matter continues to evolve as we delve deeper into its complexities. As we peel back the layers of reality, new dimensions of understanding unfurl. The enigmatic dance of quantum particles, the unimaginable vastness of interstellar matter, the intricate biogeochemical cycles – these all hint at a universe far more complex and interconnected than we once imagined. Western societies have spent hundreds of years dissecting, cataloguing, classifying and experimenting on matter to reach a consensus position that much of it is still a mystery, and the further in or out we go, the more we find.

> **MATTER IS NOT MERELY THE PHYSICAL STUFF OF OUR WORLD. IT IS AN EMBODIMENT OF A MORE SIGNIFICANT CONCEPTUAL REALM. IT HOLDS THE MIRROR UP TO SOCIETY, REFLECTING OUR HISTORIES, OUR ADVANCES, AND OUR FOLLIES.**
>
> ———EWAN McEOIN

Matter matters. It reminds us of our place within the interconnected frameworks of biology, geology and physics, and of our profound relationship with and reliance upon natural systems. It reminds us of our responsibility as stewards of the planet, prompting us to contemplate the potential legacies of our material culture. As we continue to wrestle with these weighty issues, matter remains a steadfast companion in our collective journey, a silent witness to our triumphs and tribulations in the grand narrative of existence.

NGV TRIENNIAL 2023 OPEN AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/TRIENNIAL. *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023 IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, PRINCIPAL PARTNER MERCEDES-BENZ AND MAJOR PARTNERS CHADSTONE – THE FASHION CAPITAL, TELSTRA, MECCA AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY. THE NGV SINCERELY THANKS TRIENNIAL CHAMPIONS: FELTON BEQUEST, JULY CAO, BARRY JANES & PAUL CROSS, LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND, NGVWA, AND NEVILLE & DIANA BERTALLI, AND WE RECOGNISE ALL GENEROUS SUPPORTERS TO THE *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023.

EWAN MCEOIN IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE.

(pp. 18–9) **Elmgreen & Dragset** *What’s left, fig 2* 2023, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2023
© Elmgreen & Dragset

AGNIESZKA PILAT'S
HETROBOTA, 2023

Polish-born, US-based artist Agnieszka Pilat seeks to explore and reveal the power of technology in contemporary society, opening a conversation about artificial intelligence (AI) enabled robots. As debate roils over AI-generated art, writing, research and pretty much everything else, Pilat stands apart in her exploration of automation and autonomy, asking 'are we creating new species, and if so, how will we care for them?'

For *Heterobota* 2023, Pilat has trained Boston Dynamics robot dogs to paint autonomously. They are the artists working from a spectacular studio on the ground floor of NGV International. Over four months the robot dogs will paint a new work. Each dog will paint individual works, selected by Pilat to be presented in the dog's first exhibition. Visitors are invited to watch what Pilat envisions will one day be revered as the first primitive art making of AI enabled robots.

AGNIESZKA PILAT'S *HETEROBOTA* 2023 IS COMMISSIONED BY THE NGV AND SUPPORTED BY RESEARCH PARTNER HEALTH TRANSFORMATION LAB AND TELSTRA.



Art Critics in Agnieszka Pilat's studio. Courtesy of the artist © Pilat



Yinka Shonibare *Hybrid sculpture (Sphinx)* 2021, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Helen and Michael Gannon, Sophie Gannon and Frazer East, and NGV Foundation, 2021 © Yinka Shonibare. DACS/Copyright Agency, 2023. Photo: Narelle Wilson/NGV

YINKA SHONIBARE CBE RA
HYBRID SCULPTURE (SPHINX) 2021

British-Nigerian sculptor Yinka Shonibare CBE RA investigates political and social histories related to post-colonialism and globalisation, reconfiguring iconic imagery from the Western art-historical canon with a playful and ironic touch for two works on display as part of *NGV Triennial*. Of Yoruba descent and born in London, raised in Lagos, Nigeria, and educated in Britain as an adult, Shonibare remembers one particular experience with a university tutor who questioned the lack of African signifiers in his work. He responded by taking images of African objects from the British Museum collection and placing them in an Argos catalogue alongside domestic appliances. 'Which is me?' read the accompanying text – a poignant questioning by the artist of the notion of identity and the stereotypes that shape our world.

For *Modern magic (Studies of African art from Picasso's collection) IV* 2020–21, and *Hybrid sculpture (Sphinx)* 2021, Shonibare references art history – this time Picasso's collection of African sculpture and European antiquity, reordering and relocating time and place in an intermingling of humans and animals, both real and imagined.

YINKA SHONIBARE'S *HYBRID SCULPTURE (SPHINX)* 2021 WAS PURCHASED WITH FUNDS DONATED BY HELEN AND MICHAEL GANNON, SOPHIE GANNON AND FRAZER EAST, AND NGV FOUNDATION, 2021. YINKA SHONIBARE'S *MODERN MAGIC (STUDIES OF AFRICAN ART FROM PICASSO'S COLLECTION) IV* 2020–21 WAS PURCHASED THROUGH THE PROFESSOR AGL SHAW AO BEQUEST, 2022.



ILANA SAVDIE
CHRONIC IRRITATIONS (COLLECTIVE EDGING) 2022

Colombian-born, Brooklyn-based artist Ilana Savdie is known for her surreal and hot-coloured, electrifying large-scale paintings, often inspired by the ethos of the annual Carnaval in her hometown Barranquilla, Colombia. The Marimonda – a character merging the physical attributes of a monkey and an elephant – makes an appearance in *Chronic irritations (Collective edging)* 2022. Fluorescent fabric masks representing the hybrid figure have long been worn during Carnaval to mock the upper classes and members of the social and political elite. Its large, round eyes and long phallic nose are just discernable amid the flurry of dysmorphic human bodies and elongated forms that Savdie brings to the brink of near abstraction in her canvases. In this, the artist harnesses her artistic practice to explore the multiplicity and interconnectedness of bodies, asking – in the spirit of queer and feminist scholars – questions like where do I end, and where does someone else begin?

ILANA SAVDIE'S *CHRONIC IRRITATIONS (COLLECTIVE EDGING)* 2022 IS A GIFT OF BYOUNG HO SON, 2023.

Ilana Savdie *Chronic irritations (Collective edging)* 2022 (detail), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Byoung Ho Son, 2023 © Ilana Savdie



JOHN GERRARD
FLARE (OCEANIA) 2022

In *Flare (Oceania)* 2022, Irish artist John Gerrard deftly communicates the increasing effects of climate change. A continuously burning gas flare is set against the backdrop of the Tongan coast – the domination of the fossil fuel industry pitted against the life and livelihoods of those who call the Pacific Islands home. To produce the work, which is a real-time simulation, Gerrard worked with photos taken by Tongan artist and eco-activist Uili Louisi. A 3D-game engine generates an always-changing simulation that traces time and moves through day to night according to the time in Tonga. The thick black smoke demands our attention as a persistent reminder of the environmental impact of the fossil fuel industry. Tonga is at the frontline of increased natural disasters due to climate change, which will eventually see the relocation of its population.

JOHN GERRARD *FLARE (OCEANIA)* 2022 IS COURTESY OF THE ARTIST, UILI LOUSI AND PACE GALLERY, NEW YORK.

John Gerrard *Flare (Oceania)* 2022. Courtesy the artist, Uili Lousi and Pace Gallery, New York © 2023 John Gerrard / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

THOMAS J PRICE
ALL IN 2021

Through his monumental sculptures *All in* 2021, and *Reaching out* 2022, British sculptor Thomas J Price draws attention to the lack of people of colour represented in public statuary in the United Kingdom. The two larger than life sculptures installed in Federation Court at NGV International are intentionally ambiguous. They depict no one man or woman, but draw from an amalgamation of found sources, including observed individuals and stereotypical representations of Black and Brown people in the media. Toying with viewers expectations, they seek to subvert assumptions around Black people in art and wider society as well as what it is to claim power in a contemporary world. Combining Western sculptural traditions and contemporary materials, Price is best known for his depiction of Black men and their masculinity through sculpture, but *Reaching out* is the first time the Royal Academy of the Arts–trained artist has created a large-scale public sculpture where the figure is of a woman. Wearing casual pants and sneakers, the woman is depicted looking down at her phone – a fleeting, ubiquitous moment of preoccupation.

THOMAS J PRICE'S *REACHING OUT* 2022, WAS ACQUIRED BY THE FELTON BEQUEST, 2023. *ALL IN* 2021 WAS PURCHASED WITH FUNDS DONATED BY NEVILLE AND DIANA BERTALLI AND LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND, 2023





RICHARD LEWER
OUT OF THE GROUND GOD FORMED ALL THE WILD ANIMALS AND ALL THE BIRDS IN THE SKY. HE BROUGHT THEM TO MAN AND ASKED HIM TO NAME EACH LIVING CREATURE. HE GAVE NAMES TO ALL THE LIVESTOCK, WILD ANIMALS AND BIRDS IN THE SKY 2022, FROM THE *ADAM AND EVE* SERIES 2022

Melbourne-based, New Zealand-born artist Richard Lewer often uses biblical references, drawn to these inherited signs and symbols to communicate personal and universal stories. For *NGV Triennial*, Lewer presents a series of twelve large-format paintings depicting the biblical narrative of Adam and Eve, each one titled like a chapter of the story, recounting the events that led to the couple's expulsion. Ghostly figures float in galaxies and stars and animals bubble up from the earth, depicted in acrylic paints that deliberately bleed and saturate their unprimed canvas. In these centuries-old subjects, Lewer sees modern relevance – a moral tale of desire, shame and original sin set in a time of uncertainty, chaotic global politics and climate disasters. Frame to frame, he interrogates our human instinct to rebel, neglect and ignore consequences at times when faced with decline or demise.

WORKS FROM RICHARD LEWER'S *ADAM AND EVE* SERIES 2022 ARE PROPOSED ACQUISITIONS, VICTORIAN FOUNDATION FOR LIVING AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS.



TYLER MITCHELL
ALBANY, GEORGIA 2021

American-born, Brooklyn-based photographer Tyler Mitchell captures lush, ethereal landscapes of Black figures frolicking in expansive outdoors that are inspired by a childhood spent exploring the forest trees and clean air of his hometown, Atlanta, Georgia. In *Dreaming in real time* 2021, Mitchell visualises scenes of peace, solitude and belonging for Black people in the pastoral American South. Unable to see his family during the COVID-19 pandemic, the photographer often dreamt of home. When he was finally able to return to Atlanta, he created these new images in its metro area. Considering historic and contemporary notions of refuge, repose and rootedness, they imagine 'a Black utopia' where Blackness isn't policed, railroaded or threatened. Intentionally ambiguous in their geography and location, these photographs insist on Black joy, depicting simple acts of play, leisure and reverie in a subversion of what the environment of anti-Blackness expects of Black people in the public space – to remain quiet and unseen.

TYLER MITCHELL'S *VAST, PICNIC AND ALBANY, GEORGIA* 2021, FROM THE *DREAMING IN REAL TIME* SERIES 2021 WERE PURCHASED WITH FUNDS DONATED BY THE BOWNESS FAMILY FUND FOR PHOTOGRAPHY, 2022



MEGACITIES

Megacities are defined as urban areas with more than 10 million inhabitants. In the 1950s there were only two: Tokyo-Yokohama and New York City-Newark. By 2022, there were more than thirty, with Asia home to half of these. Rapid urbanisation in Africa may see the world's biggest cities concentrated on that continent by 2100. In this ambitious photography project, the NGV invited ten leading street photographers from around the world to document their city between 2022 and 2023. These images reflect life in their city, showing the built environment and the population's engagement with that environment. The artists were asked, 'If, in the twenty-first century, the city represents the dominant human ecosystem, what does this mean for life in a megacity?' Their answers will be staged in a dynamic, immersive screen-based critique of the myths surrounding our biggest urban environments. As the cities blur together, viewers will witness just how these enormous urban conglomerations act as engines of cultural and social change from street level.

(p. 26) Installation view of **Thomas J Price** *All in* 2021 at Hauser & Wirth, Somerset, 2021. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Neville and Diana Bertalli and Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, 2023 © Thomas J Price and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Ken Adlard

(p. 27) **Richard Lewer** *Out of the ground God formed all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to man and asked him to name each living creature. He gave names to all the livestock, wild animals and birds in the sky* 2022, from the *Adam and Eve* series 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide. Proposed acquisition, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists © Richard Lewer, Hugo Michell Gallery, Jan Murphy Gallery and Suite Gallery. Photo: Predrag Cancar/NGV

(left) **Tyler Mitchell** *Albany, Georgia* 2021. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2022 © Tyler Mitchell, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

(above) Mas Agung Wilis Yudha Baskoro *Commuters line up waiting for a train at Manggarai station, South Jakarta* 2023, from the *Megacities* project, Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. This project is supported by the Orloff Family Charitable Trust, and Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2022. Courtesy of the artist © Mas Agung Wilis Yudha Baskoro *Megacities* has been commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. This project is supported by the Orloff Family Charitable Trust, and Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2023.

MEGACITIES 2023 IS SUPPORTED BY THE ORLOFF FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST, AND BARRY JANES AND PAUL CROSS, 2023.



Credits: Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Siegfried* © Bernd Uhlig. Scott Curry: Photo Lyndon Mechielsen/Newspix; The Concert Hall of the Palau de la Musica, Barcelona © Matteo Vecchi

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IN THE STUDIO WITH

FERNANDO LAPOSSE

Conflict Avocados 2023, Mexico-born designer Fernando Laposse's most ambitious project to date, supported by The Andrew and Geraldine Buxton Foundation, explores the troubled ethics behind avocado production in Mexico, the world's largest producer and exporter of the fruit. Focusing on town of Cherán in the state of Michoacán, Laposse recounts through furniture, objects, film and a major 40m long narrative textile – the Cherán Tapestry – the struggle by local people to defend their home from criminal cartels and preserve their forest ecosystem, which is being cleared for avocado production.

INTERVIEW BY GEMMA SAVIO

GEMMA SAVIO **Materials help communicate information about the place and time that a designed object was conceived. They can tell us something about who designed the work, who made it and to what conditions those people were responding. Can you tell me about the importance of materials in your practice?**

FERNANDO LAPOSSE Materials are the focus of my practice and I typically start a project by investigating a particular material – not only in its physical form, but also its provenance. I'm interested in what materials signify and often, the problematics around a material – the historical baggage and contemporary complications that surround it. Once you start to look at the complications, you can pose questions that inform the research and of course the design. But the design comes as a final gesture. My work really starts with understanding the politics and problematics of the material I'm working with.

GS **When you talk about the problematics are you referring to methods of extraction and production?**

FL Yes, that's exactly it. I tend to focus on agricultural materials, or plant matter, because it tends to be the most complex and controversial. In Latin America, and Mexico where most of my work is based, crops, agricultural produce and agricultural heritage is extremely important. It's linked to tradition and spirituality, and more recently it's also what causes a lot of social tensions. The influence of



economics and trade have seen agricultural products become global commodities – such is the case with avocados, the plant at the centre of *Conflict Avocados* – my project for the *NGV Triennial*.

GS Why did you choose to explore the avocado now?

FL The avocado is an ubiquitous fruit in Mexico. It has been here for thousands of years but it's now one of the most modified plants we grow. The world trade of avocado for the most part relies on a single variety of the plant and demand for that variety has diminished the biodiversity of the species in Mexico. The avocado is a sacred plant for indigenous communities here, so we see the contemporary perversion of the plant into a commodity that now causes a great deal of conflict. Farming avocado has caused deforestation in one of Mexico's most biodiverse regions, Michoacan. The research we've done for this project focuses on that region and the economics behind the avocado trade. Through each piece of furniture or textile in *Conflict Avocados* we are telling the story of how economics, politics and corruption has turned a well-loved fruit into something for which people are being murdered.

GS Throughout *Conflict Avocados* you have invented ways of working with the avocado as a material. Can you tell us more?

FL We started this project by working on the tapestry and the textiles for the day bed. For this we created a swatch book of all the colours that we could make using the avocado pits. Some of them are produced by boiling the pits, making a tea and soaking the fabric. With other colours we modified the tea by adding other elements – iron shaving from our workshop, lime juice and baking soda. The colour from the avocados comes from tannins in the pits, which are a chemical compound that changes colour depending on exposure to acidity or alkalinity. Developing the artwork for the tapestry was almost like creating a storyboard for a movie. We based some of the drawings on photographs we found on the internet but in many cases, we acted the scenes out here in our studio, and we took photographs of that to work up the design. The textile was made in my studio in Mexico City, which seriously expanded during the production of this piece. Twenty-five people worked on the tapestry for more than a year and all of them were women. The textile has a lot of space dedicated to telling women's stories and their empowerment. And while I was directing the work, the team making it were leading a lot of the graphic and storytelling decisions.

(p.32–3) **Fernando Laposse** *The avocado legacy. Deforestation, revolution, a new beginning* 2023, from the *Conflict Avocados* project 2023, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Andrew and Geraldine Buxton Foundation, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin. This project is proudly supported by Mercedes-Benz © Fernando Laposse

(p. 34) **Fernando Laposse** *Avocado leather cabinet* 2023 (detail), from the *Conflict Avocados* project 2023, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Andrew and Geraldine Buxton Foundation, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin. This project is proudly supported by Mercedes-Benz © Fernando LapsseLaposse

The avocado skin leather that clads the *Avocado leather cabinet* 2023, took us seven months of full-time labour, with three or four people working on it every day. Over this length of time, we developed a really enriching relationship with a guacamole vendor in the market next to the studio. Twice a week, we would go and get all his waste avocado skins, bring them to the studio, and handwash them ready for stretching and drying. The drying was a fine-tuned art that came out of experimentation and working with the material at the right moment and then allowing it the right amount of time to dry without curling or cracking. The result is almost like a Japanese Kumiko technique, where each square composed of several pieces of avocado leather is protected by a frame of wood.

GS Can you tell me about the patchworking in the *Resting place day bed* 2023?

FL *Resting place* is an homage to the murdered Mexican activist Homero Gómez González. The patchwork technique references the Japanese boro, which is a system of repairing worn out clothes. Boro sees patches of material added to clothing that needs repair to the point where the original garment is transformed into something new. Instead of using Japanese indigo, *Resting place* is made of the avocado-dyed cotton. The patchwork represents an act of repair, and our desire to contribute to healing the violence and devastation associated with the avocado. I interviewed Homero's son, Homero Junior, for the *Conflict Avocados* documentary that will also be exhibited at *NGV*



Triennial and during our conversation he told me a story that influenced this piece. There's a belief in Michoacán that the Monarch butterflies are the visiting souls of your relatives because they always arrive on 1 November, which coincides with the Day of the Dead. The year Homero was killed was also the year the Monarch butterfly was added to the endangered species list. In the documentary Homero Junior described this moment in November of the same year when he was standing in the forest completely covered in butterflies and he felt their presence as an embrace from his father. For this story and to connect *Resting place* to Homero and Homero Junior we decided to complement the pink hues from avocados with yellow fabric dyed using marigolds, which are the traditional flowers of the Day of the Dead.

GS The materials in Conflict Avocados can be understood best together, and each piece works in dialogue to tell a clear story of how the avocado industry in Mexico has been corrupted and how the consequences of the avocado trade are being felt.

FL Alongside the furniture and the tapestry, the documentary shares the voices of the people affected by the avocado trade. We have an interview with Safina, the woman who single-handedly started a revolution in Cherán. We speak to Luis who plays a pivotal role in growing the reserve around the Monarch butterfly sanctuary in El Rosario and Homero Junior who carries on the legacy of his father. These people are brave and working hard to combat the degradation caused by the avocado trade. We'd like visitors to understand the issues and consider their part in the problem, but we also want to communicate the optimism in these stories and work towards making change.



SEE FERNANDO LAPOSSE'S *CONFLICT AVOCADOS* 2023, AS PART OF *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023, WHICH OPENS AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/TRIENNIAL. WORKS FROM THE *CONFLICT AVOCADOS* PROJECT, WERE PURCHASED WITH FUNDS DONATED BY THE ANDREW AND GERALDINE BUXTON FOUNDATION, 2023. THIS ARTIST HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY THE ELIZABETH SUMMONS GRANT IN MEMORY OF NICHOLAS DRAFFIN. THIS PROJECT IS PROUDLY SUPPORTED BY MERCEDES-BENZ.

NGV TRIENNIAL 2023 IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, PRINCIPAL PARTNER MERCEDES-BENZ AND MAJOR PARTNERS CHADSTONE – THE FASHION CAPITAL, TELSTRA, MECCA AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY. THE NGV SINCERELY THANKS TRIENNIAL CHAMPIONS: FELTON BEQUEST, JULY CAO, BARRY JANES & PAUL CROSS, LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND, NGVWA, AND NEVILLE & DIANA BERTALLI, AND WE RECOGNISE ALL GENEROUS SUPPORTERS TO *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023.

FERNANDO LAPOSSE IS A MEXICO-BORN DESIGNER WHO SPECIALISES IN TRANSFORMING HUMBLE NATURAL MATERIALS INTO REFINED DESIGN PIECES. GEMMA SAVIO IS NGV CURATOR, CONTEMPORARY DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE.

(p. 35) **Fernando Laposse** *Resting place* 2023, from the *Conflict Avocados* project 2023, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Andrew and Geraldine Buxton Foundation, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin. This project is proudly supported by Mercedes-Benz. This project is proudly supported by Mercedes-Benz © Fernando Laposse

(left) Mexican designer Fernando Laposse. Courtesy: Fernando Laposse Photo © Pepe Molina

(right) Monarch Butterflies on tree branch in Michoacán, Mexico. Photo: iStock



THE MARCH OF THE MONARCH BUTTERFLIES

In pre-Hispanic folklore, migrating butterflies were often thought to have carried the souls of ancestors visiting from the afterlife. For centuries, Mexico's Monarchs have served as a powerful cultural symbol connecting the living to the dead. They're also central to Fernando Laposse's *Conflict Avocados* project as the artist explains.

BY FERNANDO LAPOSSE

The *Conflict Avocados* project started because of the Monarch butterflies. They are an iconic insect in North America. Each year they migrate on mass all the way from Canada to Mexico. They carry out the longest insect migration in the world and no one really knows how they all know where to go, but at the same time each year they arrive from all over North America to El Rosario, a single forest in Michoacan, Mexico. They make this journey only once in their lives – the males die there, and the females die once they return to lay their eggs in the United States and Canada, their offspring then repeat the same journey. So each year, not asingle butterfly has been to that forest before, but they all know where and when to go. Early in 2019, I was travelling in Michoacan, where my grandma lived, to celebrate her 90th birthday. It's such an important place for biodiversity because of the Monarch butterflies. They are one of the main pollinators of ecosystems throughout North America, Mexico, the United States and Canada. During this visit I met Homero Gómez González, an activist who worked to create a sanctuary around the forest to protect the Monarch's habitat. He was an excellent negotiator and a titan of environmental activism in Mexico. Before we could meet for a formal interview for this project Homero was found tortured, beaten and strangled. To see one of the most important activists in this area murdered with total impunity sparked an urgency in me to talk about the fragility of the people standing between the butterflies, the forests and those who devastate these natural resources through unsustainable avocado farming. *Conflict Avocados* tells the story of men against nature and uncovers the complex web of abuse and violence towards vulnerable men and women in the region.

DI BRESCIANI

'A NEW LOOK AT AUSTRALIAN LIGHT' pub. 2022
dibresciani.com

Resilience After the Farm
Oil on Fine Linen 120 x 120cm
Photo Kirsten Bresciani

2023 TRIENNIAL PREVIEW

BETHAN LAURA WOOD



British designer Bethan Laura Wood's installation for the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission considers the gendered history of education and the transmission of knowledge. In this interview for *NGV Magazine*, Wood shares insight into the unlikely combinations of colour and shape that define these new works.

BY DR STEFANIE MARKIDIS

Gaze into the eyepiece of a kaleidoscope and you'll be transported to a visual domain in which colour, pattern and movement offer glimpses of new forms.

A Regency-era invention, the kaleidoscope is a fitting motif for Bethan Laura Wood's NGV installation *Kaleidoscope-o-rama* 2023 with its maximalist approach to colour and book-matched veneer panels tessellating in a patchwork design, directing outward from its centre.

> 'The kaleidoscope was designed as a tool for opening your mind to different ways of creative forming', Wood says. 'By mirroring out from a small detail you could create a whole new, different universe.'

Wood explains her design process as akin to this conceptual movement. 'There is an element of layering throughout most of my work. Layered storytelling that starts with a material or location detail, which anchors the work, and then it spreads out from that point.'

Consisting of two works – *Kaleidoscope-o-rama, carpet* 2023 and *Kaleidoscopeo-rama, bookcase* 2023 – Wood's installation for the MECCA x NGV Women in Design Commission explores sense-making and knowledge transmission within a 'salon' site that references women's emergence into intellectual and artistic life in the eighteenth century.

> 'I decided to make this rotational bookcase that would allow access from all different sides, to have a 360-degree way of learning. It's a nod to the idea of opening up the sharing of knowledge.'

The hexagonal bookcase, open on all sides, and the Rorschach-inspired carpet, derived from book-matched and collaged veneers, combine handmade tactility with mass manufacturing processes.

Wood is the second recipient of the MECCA x NGV Women in Design commission (the first was Mexican architect Tatiana Bilbao's *La ropa sucia se lava en casa (Dirty clothes are washed at home* 2022), which invites international female designers and architects to create significant new work for the NGV Collection. Wood drew inspiration from neighbouring works in the Collection, taking cues from the English Regency period (1811 to 1820), in which interior design was awash with bold colour and elaborate furnishings.

Working across wide-ranging materials such as textile, laminate, ceramic and timber, Wood has established a design methodology that is at once grounded in temporal referencing and open in shape and form.

> 'There's an openness, so that when different people are seeing the works, they will see different things. I like to have that movement in the work, so it can be interpreted in different ways', Wood says.

> 'While there are clear references in my aesthetic choices, showing where I've come from to get there, the end result is open.'

A strong reference in the work is to the Blue Stockings Society, a small group of educated women in 1750s London, who were driven by Enlightenment ideals of progress and intellectual discovery, and, in a notable point of difference, applied these aspirations to women.

'I decided to concentrate on the ways women were starting to gather and group learn and share knowledge', Wood explains. While the Bluestockings were members of elite society, *Kaleidoscope-o-rama* layers this history with textile-driven design – the carpet paying homage to women workers' history within textile manufacturing.

An early feature of Western feminism, the Bluestockings formed an intellectual network that would meet regularly in domestic settings, foregrounding women's entrance into artistic and intellectual 'life of the mind'. *Kaleidoscope-o-rama* spatially constructs such a literary salon: 'It's a tongue-in-cheek nod to the fear of what happens when a ring of women gather together to chat or speak', Wood says.

Wood references a hand-coloured 1815 etching by Thomas Rowlandson, which caricatures the group, faces contorted in rage and cleavage bursting from their gowns as they (inevitably, as was the implication) descend into catfighting. 'I wanted to take that on its head and use some of those colours and that explosion of intensity and decoration', she says.

In the vivid technicolour world of Bethan Laura Wood – who describes her personal style as somewhere between a Buckaroo Russian doll and a car-boot-sale pile – colour becomes a language for creativity. She muses that her affinity toward colour and pattern developed as a teenager, her dyslexia leading her to understand sentences by breaking them into coloured segments.

> 'Even though the conduit, the piece I've made, is a bookcase, I wanted to make sure it wasn't presented as the only way to learn', Wood says.

The bookcase installation is accompanied by replicas of female-authored texts that have informed the design work, from writers such as Jane Wells Webb Loudon and Mary Wollstonecraft. An audio track plays in the space, voicing key passages from these texts.

Designed objects can archive the past while opening toward new futures. Wood's multi-modal practice blends historicity with questions of meaning-making in a postmodern world. 'Sometimes, for imagination to work, we need certain anchor points to start with, then we can relax into being freer with our imagination', Wood says.

> 'I think as creators we often have to find an alternate way into ideas. When you do that, you can find different points of view or alternative ways of thinking.'

SEE MECCA X NGV WOMEN IN DESIGN COMMISSION / BETHAN LAURA WOOD IN *NGV TRIENNIAL*, OPENING AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EXHIBITION AND WOOD'S PROJECT.

THE MECCA X NGV WOMEN IN DESIGN COMMISSION IS A MAJOR SERIES THAT INVITES INTERNATIONAL FEMALE DESIGNERS AND ARCHITECTS TO CREATE SIGNIFICANT NEW WORKS FOR THE NGV COLLECTION. THE SERIES IS SUPPORTED BY MECCA M-POWER, A SOCIAL CHANGE INITIATIVE THAT AIMS TO CHAMPION EQUALITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, INCLUDING ELEVATING WOMEN IN ART AND DESIGN. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS MECCA FOR SUPPORTING THE ACQUISITION OF THESE WORKS.

DR STEFANIE MARKIDIS IS A WRITER AND RESEARCHER AT THE COLLEGE OF DESIGN AND SOCIAL CONTEXT AT RMIT UNIVERSITY, MELBOURNE.

(left) Portrait of designer Bethan Laura Wood Photo: Mark Cocksedge

(pp. 42) Portrait of designer Bethan Laura Wood Photo: Mark Cocksedge



A DAY IN LONDON WITH

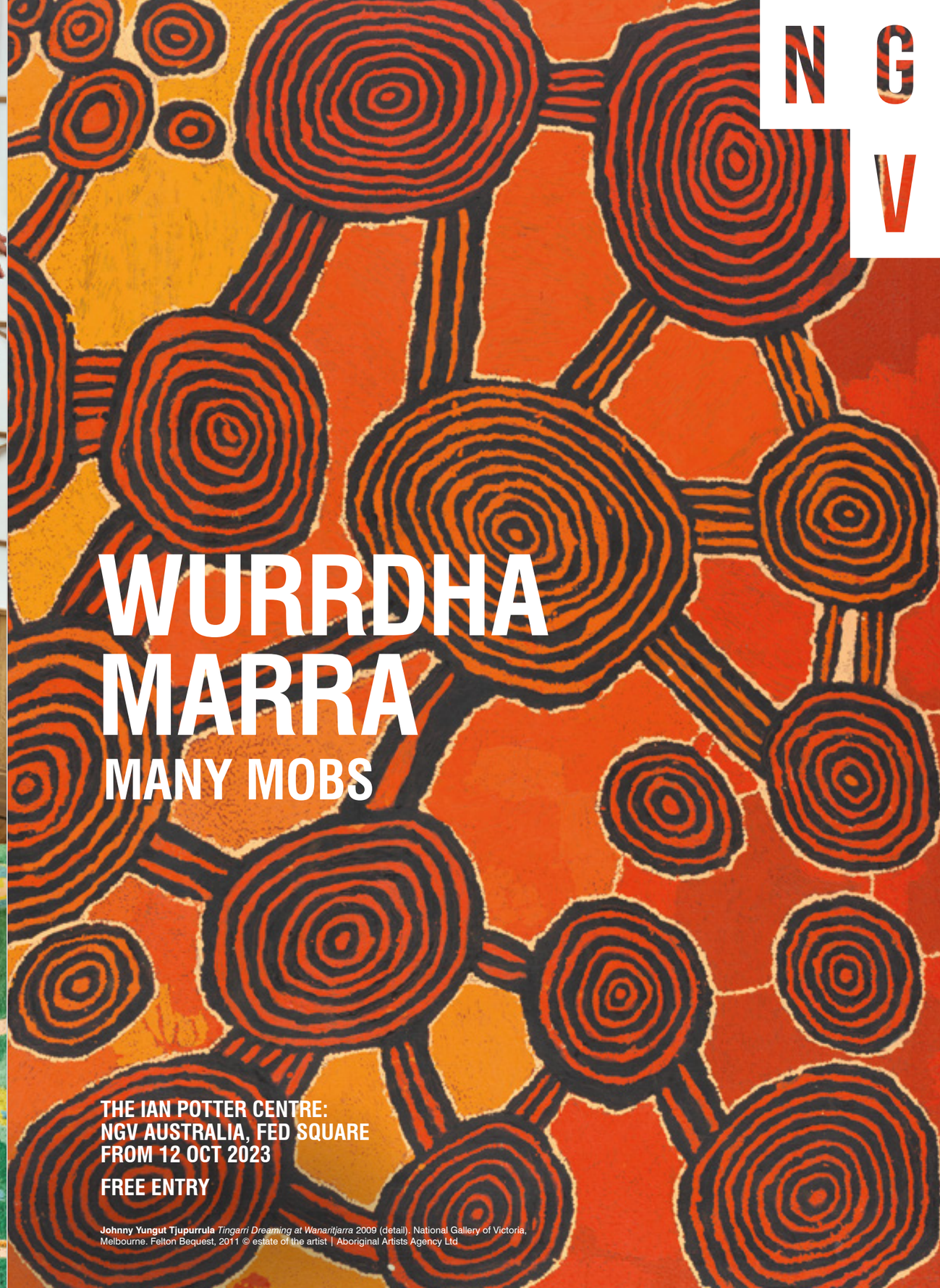
BETHAN LAURA WOOD

If I'm having a day off in London, I like to do it on a Thursday because I like to frequent the **Spitalfields** (65 Brushfield St, spitalfields.co.uk) vintage and antiques flea market in the morning. After that, I like to visit a gallery, and there are a lot of different galleries to choose from in London. There are some fantastic independent galleries around Shoreditch like **Kate MacGarry** (27 Old Nichol St, katemacgarry.com), which is always nice to go look at. There's also the **Whitechapel Gallery** (77–82 Whitechapel High St, whitechapelgallery.org) which lets you bring your dog. Otherwise, I'll go further into London to visit **White Cube** (144–152, Bermondsey St, whitecube.com), **Tate Modern** (Bankside, tate.org.uk) or a museum, depending which exhibitions are on.

For a bite to eat within Spitalfields Market, there are delicious food stalls. I'll often take a coffee at **Climpson's Coffee Bar** (climpsonandsons.com) while I'm perusing the research materials. **Leila's Shop** (Calvert Ave, Bethnal Green, leilasshop.co.uk) is nearby, just by Arnold Circus, and it's always a nice place to eat. My pick in central London is **Toklas** (1 Surrey St, Temple, toklaslondon.com), which has a little bakery next door for an early snack. If I'm heading back east toward my studio, I'll visit **The Quarter Kitchen** (St John at Hackney Churchyard, Lower Clapton Rd), which is an outdoor Mexican place that's really good for breakfast.

Schmid McDonagh (18 Church St, schmidmcdonagh.com) is a great store for German Brutalist design and amazing interior pieces. I often see Schmid in the morning of the Spitalfields flea market before he goes to open his shop. **Lawrence Prentice** (lprenticeartantiques.co.uk) also had a stand at the flea market and I always stop to take a look at his collection. He has a great eye for art pieces.

It's always a pleasure to visit the boutiques on Wilton Way, stopping at **Momosan Shop** (79a Wilton Way, momosanshop.com), which is a small and beautiful store selling Japanese homewares and craft pieces. The store features work by local and international artists such as the London-based glassblower **Jochen Holz** (jochenholz.com).





DEAR PRUDENCE

In meticulously composed paintings, artist Prudence Flint creates interiors featuring mysterious female protagonists who are often lost in thought, surrounded by everyday objects that serve as metaphors for the inner world. Supported by Bruce Parncutt AO and Celebration Donors, and exhibiting in the Dutch galleries on Level 2 for *NGV Triennial* 2023 are seven paintings from Flint's 2023 series, *Hunting and Fishing*. Here, the Melbourne artist shares the story of how these works came to life.

BY PRUDENCE FLINT

Ideas for paintings come from a *working through of conflicts, pleasures and intensities* that are a preoccupation at a certain time. Often there will be a definitive *moment and geographic place* that inspires an idea, and there will be an embodied awareness*; I see myself or another from a distance.* I conceive an idea and produce small pencil drawings, although hundreds of these drawings never become paintings. Occasionally, a drawing will be robust and hold enough ambiguity to become a painting.

I plan a work, in as much as I have a clear idea of the figure's stance and in relation to the imagined space of the room or outdoor scene. The shapes and combinations of the colours will read like a coded narrative that will set up an atmosphere. The painting process will be enacted in broken-up parts, over three or four months, with intense periods of *active waiting*, to make even-handed decisions. Objects will be moved and abandoned, colour and tone adjusted, parts of the bodies enlarged and reduced, and *unconscious* connections made. Like a dream, these connections need to stay unconscious to permit the painting to be made. The painting will have effects, in different light and in different mood states, and there will be an openness to changing course (sometimes getting lost) allowing the painting to evolve. There is an inevitable and vital building up of skin, surface, and texture, that has history and scars (pentimento*)* of former objects, and shifted edges painted over.

The women that I choose to model for the paintings bring their intimacy and their mood. They come with their choice of clothing and a certain body type and posture that holds contradictions and forms the meaning of the painting. It's a kind of delicate projection or mirroring.

I've come to learn that some of the best ideas for paintings will be charged with an element of *fear and dread*, an obvious anxiety. This is a process of *self-knowledge*, and there will be hope and energy that gives the making of the painting its reason for being. The painting must take a risk that needs to be inhabited over time. Overcoming this inhibition reflects on the *feminine subject* in our culture; of being *misconstrued*, *misrepresented*, and not taken seriously. This is all contained within the making of paintings of women in their underwear; seated and standing, in rooms with beds, mirrors, fruit, dogs, and acrobats. The paintings risk being reduced to an advertisement, a cartoon, or an illustration. They are an assertion of an *impossible space of agency that is barred; a necessary transgression*, allowing a free space to open. The calm that comes from this process is the liberation.

(p. 42) **Prudence Flint** *Second Banana*, 2022. The NGV gratefully acknowledges Bruce Parncutt AO and Celebration Donors for supporting the acquisition of Prudence Flint's body of work. Courtesy of the artist and Fine Arts, Sydney and mother's tankstation Dublin | London © Prudence Flint. Photo: Mark Ashkanasy

(p. 44) Prudence Flint
Photo: Karina Dias Pires

PRUDENCE FLINT'S SUMMER READING LIST

Three books the Melbourne artist recommends for sunny days and quiet moments with a cup of tea or coffee in hand.

A GIRL'S STORY

French writer **Annie Ernaux**, 1940– , who was awarded the 2022 Nobel Prize in Literature, is known for her autobiographical writing, in which she addresses pivotal moments in her life including her first sexual experience with a man, her illegal abortion, her marriage and family, an affair, her mother's descent into dementia and her father's death.

A Girl's Story (Seven Stories Press, 2020) is the memory of a 1958 summer in which Ernaux worked as a holiday camp instructor in Normandy. It recounts the first night she spent with a man, exploring the shame, violence and feelings of betrayal.

I HAD A FATHER IN KARRATHA

Annette Trevitt, 1963– , is an Australian writer known for her short stories and animations. She grew up in small country towns in NSW and now lives in Melbourne. *I Had a Father in Karratha* (Upswell Publishing, 2023) is her first non-fiction narrative.

I Had a Father in Karratha is the intimate story of a daughter returning to the Pilbara mining town of Karratha to take on a two-year epic clearing up her father's estate following his death. It is set out in poetic reflective prose and text messages. It is dogged, full of care and unrelenting.

THE HOUR OF THE STAR

Clarice Lispector, 1920–77, is a Brazilian novelist and short story writer.

The Hour of the Star (José Olympio Editora, 1977), written and published at the end of Lispector's life, intercepts the story of Macabéa – a nineteen-year-old woman in the slums of Rio. Eking out a living as a typist, she lives a perversely difficult life. It is deeply dark and compelling, told by outside narrator Rodrigo S. M.

SEE PRUDENCE FLINT'S *HUNTING AND FISHING 2023* AS PART OF *NGV TRIENNIAL 2023*, WHICH OPENS AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/TRIENNIAL

THE NGV GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES BRUCE PARNCUTT AO AND CELEBRATION DONORS FOR SUPPORTING THE ACQUISITION OF TWO PAINTINGS FROM PRUDENCE FLINT'S BODY OF WORK.

NGV TRIENNIAL 2023 IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, PRINCIPAL PARTNER MERCEDES-BENZ AND MAJOR PARTNERS CHADSTONE – THE FASHION CAPITAL, TELSTRA, MECCA AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY. THE NGV SINCERELY THANKS TRIENNIAL CHAMPIONS: FELTON BEQUEST, JULY CAO, BARRY JANES & PAUL CROSS, LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND, NGVWA, AND NEVILLE & DIANA BERTALLI, AND WE RECOGNISE ALL GENEROUS SUPPORTERS TO *NGV TRIENNIAL 2023*.

PRUDENCE FLINT IS AN ARTIST BASED IN MELBOURNE AND EXHIBITING IN *NGV TRIENNIAL 2023*.



ARTEXHIBITION

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TRADITION AND THE NEW IN CHINA

Moving fluidly and fluently between heritage and a contemporary image-drenched context, *NGV Triennial* artists Li Lihong, Song Wei and Lin Fanglu adapt the past to respond to the reality of the present in China, but what does this mean for a generation of artists that have grown up with the influence of both McDonald's and Mao Zedong?

BY GENEVIEVE TRAIL



SONG WEI

BORN 1980

The history of culture is a history of global exchange. Viewed from a transcultural perspective, place, culture and identity are understood to be non-static entities; each in an endless process of being made and remade. Art, in this view, is constituted by the 'transformatory processes'[1] of cultural encounter, processes that can be traced backwards through history ad infinitum. Included in this year's *NGV Triennial* are three contemporary Chinese artists – Li Lihong 李立宏 (b. 1974), Song Wei 宋玮 (b. 1980) and Lin Fanglu 林芳璐 (b. 1989) – whose work speaks to both current and historic transformations of culture in China. Drawing from a range of classical Chinese crafts and iconographies, each artist speaks to the way in which matter is marked by the endless exchange between heritage and the new, as material, objects and ideas move in and out of local and global contexts.

One only needs to view within the NGV Collection, works of Chinese blue-and-white porcelain and European delftware[2] to locate the motifs, patterns and iconic combination of cobalt blue on white influencing these artists within a genealogy of commercial trade and cultural exchange between China, West Asia and Europe, which dates back to the thirteenth century.[3] Their use of colour, pattern, technique and material also situates their work within the long and deeply entangled relationships between craft and commerce, refinement and utilitarianism, singularity and mass production.

In the more immediate rear-view mirror, the combination of identifiably 'Chinese' materials and iconographies with globally recognised symbols of consumer culture bears a faint family resemblance to political pop (in style if not in substance), one of the key styles by which contemporary Chinese art was made known to the world in the 1990s. In his well-known series, *Great Criticism* (1990–2007), figurehead of the movement Wang Guangyi (b. 1957) pursued a disjunctive combination of Socialist Realism and Western consumer brand logos (Coca-Cola, McDonald's, Walt Disney), bringing these ideologically oppositional iconographies of brainwashing into close proximity but stopping short of assimilation.

With these diverse histories of cultural exchange and juxtaposition in mind, the question then becomes not whether culture (its symbols, materials or meanings) is shared, which has in fact always been true, but rather, to what extent is it shared? How does culture mean differently as it crosses linguistic and geographic borders? And, what does it mean for contemporary Chinese artists to be speaking to these intersections and connections now, in a period of almost unbounded global connectivity and exchange?

Born in 1974, 1980 and 1989 respectively, Song, Li and Lin came of age in the era of opening and reform (改革开放), a period of economic and cultural liberalisation shepherded in by the policies of Deng Xiaoping in 1978, which followed the death of Mao Zedong and the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. They are one or two generations removed from the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) and its total aestheticisation of life into 'red, bright and shining' (红，光，亮), as well as the destruction of traditional art and culture that this period entailed. As teenagers and twenty-something-year-olds in the 1990s and 2000s, artists of this generation are fluent in the iconography of global commerce, a language of images which accompanied them through their formative years, while at the same time being old enough to recall the arrival of specific Western brands to China. (The first McDonald's in China opened in the Special Economic Zone of Shenzhen in 1990 and then in Beijing in 1992; the iPhone was introduced to China in 2007). Song, who is originally from Sichuan, recounts that his lackadaisical teenage years were spent 'revelling in the novel world of popular culture and enjoying hanging around in the cooling air-conditioned interiors of McDonald's fast-food restaurants'.[4] Reflected in the work presented in *NGV Triennial* 2023 and supported by Thomas Bridge, and M. G. Chapman Bequest, they lived through their generation's version of a before and after, or, in some cases, a return – Mickey Mouse first arrived to China in the 1930s and was readily incorporated into Shanghai's booming modern pictorial culture, before being exiled in the 1950s only to return to Chinese television in 1986;[5] a thread that connects an earlier period of international modernity with current globalisation.

This generational positioning offers insight into the way in which these artists look back to China's thousands of years of cultural heritage in order to resource their artworks, a heritage which the highly futurist orientation of art and culture under

Mao sought to revolutionise, dismantle, and in many cases destroy. So, where the first generation of contemporary Chinese artists to receive international acclaim in the 1990s generally dealt with the Communist visual culture of China's immediate past, an increasingly acknowledged thread of the last several decades has been the interest by both Chinese artists and the Chinese state in reconnecting contemporary art to older forms of cultural knowledge. As well as the more brash, monumental and often masculine coded mediums of ink (Yang Jiechang, Xu Bing and Gu Wenda) or gunpowder (Cai Guo-Qiang), many contemporary Chinese artists work with craft-based mediums or handicrafts (手工艺术) with Chinese cultural associations. This includes porcelain, silk, jade, Xuan paper, papercuts and shadow puppets, art forms which are selectively inherited, translated and transformed by contemporary artists seeking to exist in dialogue with history. Of the artists represented in this year's *Triennial*, Li returned to his hometown in the early 2000s to study ceramics in Jingdezhen, China's 'porcelain capital'. Jingdezhen, a small city in Jiangxi province, has been a site of commercial and imperial pottery production since the Song dynasty (960–1279). The high quality of its materials and scale of production has attracted Chinese and international artists in the last few decades (Ah Xian, Li Jianhua, Ai Weiwei). Fibre artist Lin Fanglu, whose work in *NGV Triennial* 2023 has been supported by Vicki Vidor OAM, Ginny Green and Bindy Koadlow, has a degree in product design from Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts, and has spent significant time with women of the Bai ethnic community in Zhou Cheng village, Yunnan in order to study the indigo tie-dye techniques for which the region is known.

At least part of the interest in working with such mediums is a desire to connect with or deliberately display aspects of Chinese cultural identity. As art historian Dr Alex Burchmore describes: 'Identity and materiality are intimately and inextricably intertwined'.[6] For Burchmore, however, 'Chineseness' as it is associated with materiality is 'neither essential nor immutable, but actively produced in acts of making and consuming'.[7] Porcelain, for example, the material used by Li and the qualities of which are intimated by Song, is grounded in associations with China to the extent that the Anglicised name of the material and the nation are shared. It is also, however, a medium of global mobility, 'of movement and metamorphosis'.[8] Embedded in practices of making, trade and the everyday, these mediums of craft and commerce are perhaps particularly well suited to facilitating a kind of cultural identification that is flexible, adaptive and accumulative, making them ideal for artists who seek to speak to both history and forward motion, locality and export.



LI LIHONG

BORN 1974





LIN FANGLU

BORN 1989

Where some materials, notably porcelain but also ink, bring forth associations of China with a capital 'C', others accumulate or represent more localised cultural histories and meanings. Lin Fanglu, who grew up surrounded by the fabrics, needlework and sewing machines of her mother's tailor shop[9], works with the indigo tie-dye techniques of the Bai ethnic community, a people native to the Dali Bai autonomous region of Yunnan. Tie-dye, or *zaran* 扎染 (literally to prick a needle and dye) is a women's craft that has been passed down intergenerationally for thousands of years in the province of Yunnan, understood as part of China's intangible cultural heritage. The conventional process involves tying parts of the cloth with string before dipping the cloth into indigo dye and fixing the colour, and finally removing the threads to reveal the intricate patterns for which the art form is known.

Lin, however stops short of the indigo dying and removal of threads to create densely textured soft cotton sculptures. For the artist, foregrounding the labour involved in the creation of the work is an explicitly feminist statement: 'the final step in the traditional tie-dying process involves cutting open the tied threads, ultimately revealing a flat woven fabric pattern with alternating blue and white floral designs. However, this very process obscures the effort and dedication of the female artisans throughout the entire process'.[10] Unlike the works of Song and Li, the cultural identifications of which are visible and immediate on the surface of the works, Lin's large-scale textile work speaks rather to the subtle range of associations and histories which materials can accumulate and represent.

Growing up in the period of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics[11] also explains the ease with which these artists appropriate globally recognisable iconographies of commerce and, in effect, make them Chinese. Li Lihong's application of a pattern of blue five-clawed dragons, a symbol of imperial power, to a yellow porcelain cast of the McDonald's logo in *McDonald's* 2009, supported by Connie Kimberley and Craig Kimberley OAM, transmutes the yellow of the golden arches from its typical associations with hunger, happiness and crispy golden fries into the yellow that in a Chinese context is traditionally reserved for the emperor. Reinscribed in this way, the work evidences the way that cultural context exerts authority over meaning. In *Apple*, 2011, also supported by Connie Kimberley and Craig Kimberley OAM, the slick and deliberately neutral silver of the Apple logo is glazed in a classical motif known as One Hundred Flowers, an auspicious design symbolising a wish for the Qing Empire (1644–1912) to last as long as flowers grow in the world. Exuberantly



coated, the corporate logo loses all of its deliberately dispassionate distance to become lavishly naturalised into Chinese visual culture. This could be described as a process of Sinification: the acculturation into Chinese of signs and symbols designed to move fluidly across linguistic and geographic borders on the basis of their uniformity and cultural non-specificity.

The process of 'localisation', that is, of making the new or imported sensical within existing local culture and visual norms, is part of the way in which art invents itself everywhere according to local needs and traditions.

In a Chinese McDonald's, you can get the fries and cheeseburger for which the franchise is known, but you can also order pineapple and taro pies, congee and boba tea. This form of localisation is, of course, a straightforwardly cynical corporate strategy to tap different domestic markets around the world. It is also, however a simple example of the way in which culture shapeshifts as it crosses borders, how it accumulates and adapts in meaning. The application of auspicious symbols to a hamburger or corporate logo might be read as a marker of ownership or possession, indicative of the naturalism of China's relationship to capitalism, rather than a tale of confrontation which marked capitalism's sudden arrival now some decades ago.

For of course, at this point, these brands belong as much, if not more, to China and are as native to its people as they are to the 'West'. When China opened its doors to the world in 1978, companies including Nike, Adidas, Dell and Microsoft quickly moved their manufacturing, and later white-collar work, to China. In the case of Apple, the subject of Li's work of the same title, China is one of the main reasons that the company, and its globally dominant products, still exist. In the 1990s, when the company was on the brink of bankruptcy, China offered an opportunity to reconfigure the company's supply chains. After Apple brokered a partnership with China in 2001, the Chinese government 'poured billions of dollars into new infrastructure for Apple – building factories, paving new roads, constructing housing for Apple workers'[12] and even, where necessary, constructing new airports so that Apple could expedite the export of its goods. More than 95 percent of iPhones, AirPods, Macs and iPads are still made in China, and the nation's consumers are responsible for about a fifth of Apple's revenue – USD$74 billion last year.[13] Geopolitics is now reshaping this relationship, as technology becomes a key frontier in the US-China power struggle. In that sense, if there is a political dimension to Li's work, it is in the way that it indexes China's evolving position in global trade and shifting global powers. Li began his *Apple* series in 2007, the year that the first-generation iPhone hit the US market, but two years prior to its release in China (a level of foresight perhaps inspired by the time the artist spent as a designer for Western brands while working in an advertising agency in Beijing in the late 1990s). The 2000s, bookended by China's ascension to the World Trade Organisation in 2001 and it's 2008 'coming out party' (as the Beijing Olympics are fondly known) were arguably the peak of China's 'go-go years'; a period in which the country's eye-watering economic growth seemed boundless and its economic, cultural and, therefore, political integration and liberalisation inevitable.

Today, as companies 'reshore' and 'friendshore',[14] it is a different story. In August 2023, it was reported that employees of the Chinese state are no longer allowed to use iPhones (a ban which mirrors that placed on US federal agency employees on using TikTok, a Chinese-owned company, on their work phones[15]). The outsized influence that China holds over Apple's fortunes was sardonically encapsulated by an article published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in September 2023, titled 'China just took a $300b bite out of Apple',[16] a reference to the company's sharemarket drop of over USD$190 billion (AUD$297 billion) subsequent to the iPhone ban. Blanketed in One Hundred Flowers, Li's porcelain *Apple* expresses the economic optimism of the period in which the work was made (may the relationship last for as long as flowers bloom). It also, however, suggests a level of foresight about the role that China would ultimately play in the fortunes of this global company. The medium of porcelain, with a history of over a thousand years, is one of both durability and fragility.

Moving fluidly and fluently between heritage and our contemporary image drenched context, Li, Song and Lin adapt the past to respond to the reality of the present. Through such adaptations, they challenge the somehow still pernicious perception that the original version of something is the most authentic. Their works rather attest to the living nature of culture; that its most enduring features are continuity and adaptability. It survives on the basis of its capacity to change.

SEE LI LIHONG, SONG WEI AND LIN FANGLU'S WORKS AS PART OF *NGV TRIENNIAL 2023*, WHICH OPENS AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/TRIENNIAL.

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS CONNIE KIMBERLEY AND CRAIG KIMBERLEY OAM, VICKI VIDOR OAM, GINNY GREEN AND BINDY KOADLOW, THOMAS BRIDGE AND M. G. CHAPMAN BEQUEST FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

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GENEVIEVE TRAIL IS A DOCTORAL CANDIDATE IN THE SCHOOL OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE.

(p. 48) **Song Wei** *Hamburger with dragon and phoenix* 2022, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Thomas Bridge, 2023 © Song Wei

(p. 49) Song Wei. Supplied by the artist.

(p. 50) **Li Lihong** *McDonald's* 2009, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Connie Kimberley and Craig Kimberley OAM, 2022 © Li Lihong

Portrait of Li Lihong. Supplied by the artist.

(p. 51) **Lin Fanglu** *She's four seasons* 2023 (detail), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Vicki Vidor OAM, Ginny Green and Bindy Koadlow, 2023 © Lin Fanglu 林芳璐





INTERWEAVING SUSTAINABILITY

A MORAL IMPERATIVE FOR BURRARA WOMEN

In 2021, the NGV commissioned *Mun-dirra* – one of the most impressive examples of fibre art ever undertaken globally. After nearly two years of production, the NGV is delighted to present this monumental work as part of *Triennial 2023,* and we warmly thank Lisa Fox for her generous support of this commission.

BY MYLES RUSSELL-COOK

Freda Ali, Freda Ali Wayartja, Maureen Ali, Cecille Baker, Michelle Baker, Bonnie Burarngarra, Gabriella Garrimara, Doreen Jinggarrabarra, Lorna Jin-gubarrangunyja, Indra Prudence, Jennifer Prudence, Zoe Prudence, Anthea Stewart *Mun-dirra (Maningrida fish fence)* 2023 (detail), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Lisa Fox, 2023. This project has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin © The artists and Maningrida Arts and Culture

(p. 56) *Mun-dirra* artists (from left) Maureen Ali, Freda Ali Wayartja, Jennifer Prudence, Doreen Jinggarrabarra, Lorna Jin-gubarrangunyja and Jessie Stewart. Courtesy of Myles-Russell Cook

First Nations people in Australia have had custodianship of Country for at least 65,000 years, and in that time they have borne witness to extreme environmental changes. They have lived through several ice ages, which saw sea levels drop dramatically, exposing land bridges and creating new habitats for plants and animals. They have experienced rapid warming periods, including the end of the last ice age, which led to significant changes in plant and animal distribution. In more recent times, First Nations people in Australia have also witnessed massive environmental transformations, such as the arrival of other humans, and the introduction of new species, such as the dingo. They have seen the expansion and contraction of rainforests, the spread of grasslands and the impact of bushfires, as well as other natural and human made disasters.

Mun-dirra, 2023, is an immense, 100-metre-long, multi-panel artwork that symbolises the extraordinary possibilities of the human mind and spirit. The beauty and ambition of this major installation reflects the creativity and collaboration that underpins so many aspects of Burarra art and culture. The Community of Maningrida in Central-West Arnhem Land has long been home to a rich and vibrant cultural heritage, with particular strengths in bark painting, sculpture and weaving. In 2021, the NGV, with the generous support of Lisa Fox, commissioned *Mun-dirra* – one of most impressive examples of fibre art undertaken in Australia. After nearly two years of production, the NGV is delighted to present this monumental work in *NGV Triennial* 2023.

The experience of spending time inside *Mun-dirra* is symbolic of the complexity and interconnectedness of the human soul. The patterns created by the intertwining and overlapping of the pandanus walls offer a metaphor that represents the threads of our thoughts, experiences and emotions. Each line is suggestive of a different aspect of our inner selves, and the act of weaving a metaphor for the way in which these elements come together to form a complete and cohesive whole. Humanity.

Burarra women have been creating beautiful, intricate woven objects like *Mun-dirra* for millennia. Women at Maningrida are leaders in the development of sophisticated examples of design and material culture, specialising in objects such as an-guchechiya (fish trap), burlurpurr (bathi or dilly bags), bamagora (conical mat/women's skirt used for ceremony). *Mun-dirra* is simultaneously a contemporary work of art and a form of cultural continuity representing a relationship to land and water that defines Burarra life.

For Burarra women, weaving is not just a means of creating functional objects, but also a way for individuals to express their identity and cultural heritage. Weaving styles are often passed down from generation to generation, or from master to apprentice, with each weaver adding their own personal touch and interpretation to the craft. The result of this type of learning is that the style of each individual's weaving can – and does – reveal much about their personality, cultural background, family history and creativity. When we look at the patterns, colours and techniques used in each artist's weave, we gain insight into their world view, personal values, beliefs and, indeed, their souls. In this way, weaving is a powerful tool for both self-expression and cultural preservation.



Doreen Jinggarrabarra, for instance, is an artist who weaves with great care and precision. Her meticulous and detail-oriented approach to weaving is a direct reflection of her personality, which is similarly focused and meticulous. On the other hand, Freda Ali is an artist who weaves quickly and with less attention to tightness, which is consistent with her more spontaneous personality.

For Burarra people, the connection to land and waterways is profound. Their understanding of the natural world is defined by their relationship to place and sustainability, which is encapsulated in their knowledge of how to work with materials collected from Country. For First Nations people around the globe, sustainability has not been a choice, but a way of life. The survival of culture, family and Community remains intricately tied to the health of the environment. An innate understanding of the importance of sustainability is ingrained in the aforementioned types of fishing traditions. The lands and waterways are not a resource to be exploited, but a living entity that must be cared for and protected. For Burarra people, sustainability is not just important because of climate change, but a moral imperative – one that is central to their world view.

Through processes like weaving, Burarra people maintain an intimate knowledge of the environment and its interconnections, as well as a deep understanding of plants, animals, water and weather patterns. *Mun-dirra* provides an opportunity to reflect on sophisticated techniques for managing natural resources sustainably, including the careful selection of materials and an understanding of how the objects we use affect the world around us.

Design projects such as this serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of listening to First Nations people and their knowledge about sustainable design and climate change. For thousands of years, First Nations people have lived in relative harmony with the land, understanding the interconnections between the environment and the human soul. By incorporating their knowledge and skills into modern design thinking, we can create a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

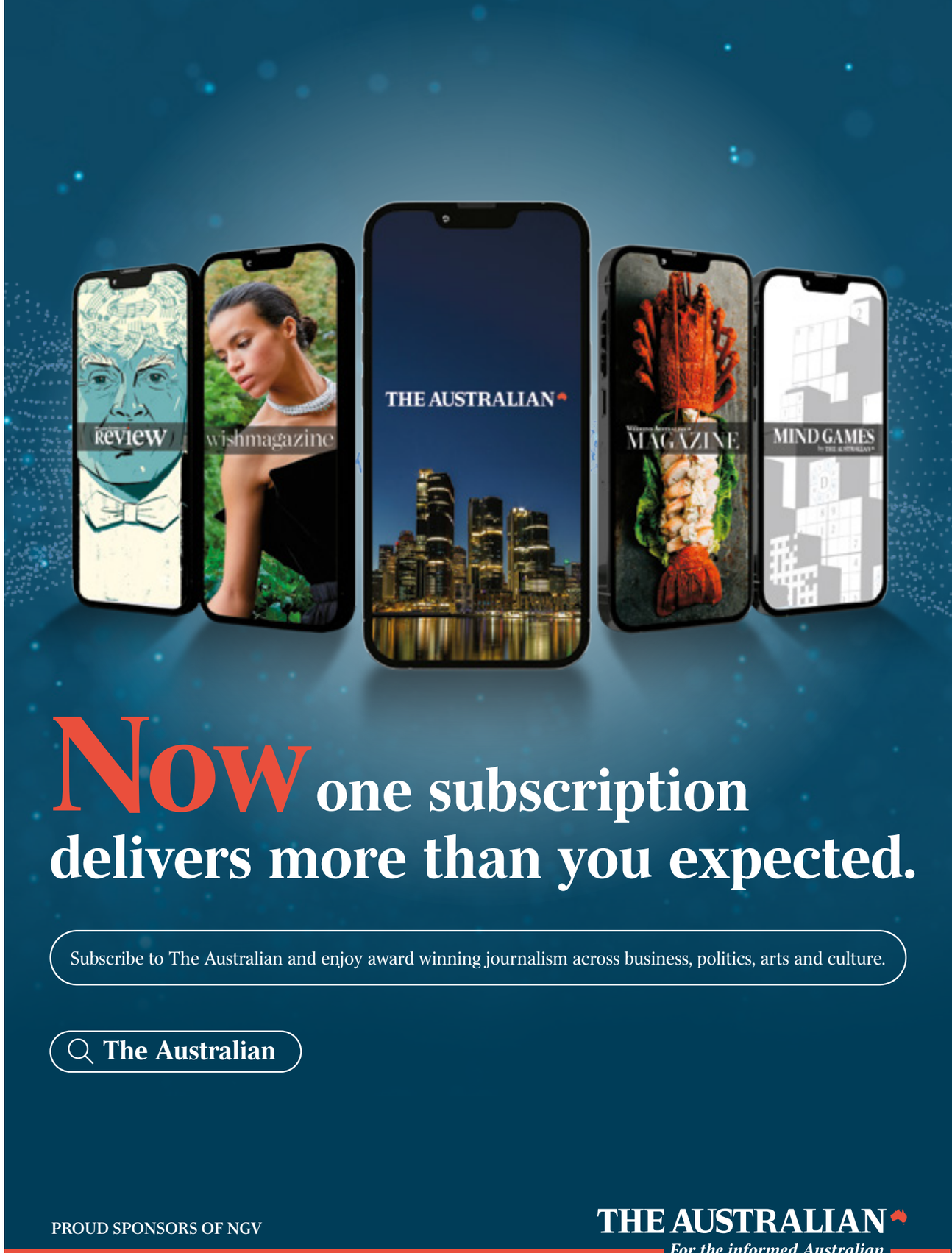
Mun-dirra was created by a group of artists, including Indra Prudence, Gabriella Garrimara, Freda Wayartja Ali #1, Freda Ali #2, Bonnie Burarngarra, Doreen Jinggarrabarra, Maureen Ali, Lorna Jin-gubarrangunyja, Jennifer Prudence, and Zoe Prudence (listed in no particular order). Additionally, the group received valuable assistance from Anthea Stewart, Michelle Baker and Cecile Baker, in creating their pieces, further strengthening their ties as a collective.

Each of the artists working on *Mun-dirra* are connected, be it by history, totem, skin group, language or family ties. Jin-gubarrangunyja taught her younger sister Jennifer Prudence to weave, and Zoe Prudence, the youngest artist to work on *Mun-dirra*, is the younger sister of both Indra Prudence and Gabriella Garrimara. Each of the artists is connected to one another, just as they are connected to an unbroken lineage of Burarra women who have passed down sacred knowledge since time immemorial. Just as the fibres on their creation interlock and connect, so, too, do the artists' lives.

MYLES RUSSELL-COOK IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, AUSTRALIAN AND FIRST NATIONS ART.

THE NGV WARMLY THANKS LISA FOX FOR HER SUPPORT IN ACQUIRING THIS WORK.

SEE *MUN-DIRRA*, 2023, AS PART OF *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023, WHICH OPENS AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/TRIENNIAL. *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023 IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, PRINCIPAL PARTNER MERCEDES-BENZ AND MAJOR PARTNERS CHADSTONE – THE FASHION CAPITAL, TELSTRA, MECCA AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY. THE NGV SINCERELY THANKS TRIENNIAL CHAMPIONS: FELTON BEQUEST, JULY CAO, BARRY JANES & PAUL CROSS, LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND, NGVWA, AND NEVILLE & DIANA BERTALLI, AND WE RECOGNISE ALL GENEROUS SUPPORTERS TO *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023.



2023 TRIENNIAL PREVIEW









5 MINUTES WITH ...

SMAC McCREANOR

Sarah McCreanor is an Australian artist based in Los Angeles. Under the moniker Smac McCreanor, she has created the widely popular *Hydraulic Press Girl* series, which combines slapstick physicality, off-beat performance art and Aussie charm. It appears for the first time in an art museum setting as part of *NGV Triennial* 2023.

BY ELISA SCARTON

ELISA SCARTON *The Hydraulic Press Girl* series 2020– is inspired by the popular Hydraulic Press YouTube Channel, which publishes videos of various objects being crushed in a 140-tonne hydraulic press. Were you watching it one day and thought, 'I can make this into performance art?'

SMAC McCREANOR Yes! It really was as simple as watching the video and thinking 'Oh yeah I'll just dance it' then filming and uploading all within an hour or so. The idea of creating a duetted video, side by side, was a concept I had already played with a lot on my social media, particularly with animal videos, so mimicking the unmimicable was on brand. It was the audience who overtly labelled it as 'performance art'. Their response is what pushed the joke for me to further execute a 'fine art' idea in a 'low-fi' manner.

ES You've said that part of the popularity of your videos is due in fact to their 'low-fi quality'. Why is that?

SM Since the start of this series, I've seen a variety of response to the videos and it's fascinating! Most sense the sarcastic approach, some people truly take it seriously, some are impressed with the dance ability, some more so with the music choices, fashion or captions. It goes without saying that there's a lot of strategy with social media, with which I love experimenting. Low-fi is relatable and easy to digest but most importantly allows people to laugh. I don't think this would be as wildly spread if it was executed with more precision and serious intention. It had to stay 'meme-worthy' for it to be accepted. Prior to this new wave of social media, I would put more effort into the professional look of my work as that's industry standard, but social media absolutely changed that for me once I realised how people resonated with the stripped back version.

ES You push your body to the very limit in some of the positions. Did you look at any of them and think, 'Nope, this might be a bridge too far'?

SM I don't think I've ever worried about hurting myself seriously, but I admit I've looked at potential videos and thought 'Nah that's a lot of work'. I love working smarter not harder and knew with this idea that problem-solving in the simplest way would not only take off a level of effort but add an element of humour. Editing apps help me avoid having to do the most difficult body movements, like flying for example. I've luckily escaped *Hydraulic Press Dance* injury, except maybe a few pinched nerves, pulled muscles and bruises, but that's standard with all my practices!

ES You're Brisbane-born, but LA-based, what do you miss the most about Australia?

SM I moved to LA, somewhat on a whim, at twenty years old with just a suitcase and the typical 'no worries' Aussie attitude – which is one of the qualities I miss. We are quite typically easy-going people with a great sense of humour and great slang, but since moving I've naturally altered some mannerisms and softened my dry humour. Honestly, I miss the chocolate, lollies and bakeries the most. The US can absolutely not compare!

ES How does it feel to see your DIY social media project appear as part of *NGV Triennial* 2023?

SM There is no way I will ever look back at this moment and not feel giddy. The journey it has been on has been incredibly fun and surprising. Even though there had been a huge response of online comments jokingly and/or seriously saying, 'This is Art', 'This should be in a museum' and such, I never considered the reality of that. I'm overjoyed to be welcomed into the physical art community in this way. It's a full circle moment. The online audience unintentionally rallied for this and it's like the perfect punchline to an ongoing joke.

ES And finally, do you consider your outfits as part of the performance?

SM Absolutely! The outfits sometimes take more effort than the actual filming, but I'm thrifty and keep true to the DIY approach by using what I have on hand – lots of clothes are worn inside-out or back-to-front or repurposed. Except for one outfit where I had to shop for a hideous silver look so I could imitate a CD.

SMAC McCREANOR IS AN AUSTRALIAN ARTIST, ACTRESS, DANCER, CHOREOGRAPHER, CONTENT CREATOR AND SET DESIGNER BASED IN LOS ANGELES. ELISA SCARTON IS NGV SENIOR EDITORIAL COORDINATOR.

SEE SMAC McCREANOR'S *HYDRAULIC PRESS GIRL* 2020– AS PART OF *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023, WHICH OPENS AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/TRIENNIAL

NGV TRIENNIAL 2023 IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, PRINCIPAL PARTNER MERCEDES-BENZ AND MAJOR PARTNERS CHADSTONE – THE FASHION CAPITAL, TELSTRA, MECCA AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY. THE NGV SINCERELY THANKS TRIENNIAL CHAMPIONS: FELTON BEQUEST, JULY CAO, BARRY JANES & PAUL CROSS, LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND, NGVWA, AND NEVILLE & DIANA BERTALLI, AND WE RECOGNISE ALL GENEROUS SUPPORTERS TO *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023.

Smac McCreanor *Hydraulic press girl* 2020– (detail stills). Courtesy of the artist
© Smac McCreanor

2023 TRIENNIAL PREVIEW

MIGHTY MOUSE

Can you hear that? In a corner of the gallery, a tiny, innocent voice invites visitors to kneel and listen closely. It's Ryan Gander's *The end*, 2020 – the final work in the British artist's trilogy of prophetic, animated mice, which appear to gallerygoers from the debris of a hole in the wall, voiced by Gander's own young daughters. Part of *NGV Triennial* 2023, purchased with funds generously donated by Vivien and Graham Knowles, 2023, with the artist generously supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin, *The end* delivers a profound sermon on some of the biggest questions that face humanity, from our ability to cognitively time travel to our limitations in being able to foresee our own end. *NGV Magazine* shares an excerpt from the work – straight from the mouse's mouth.

NGV What is the difference between man and mouse?
MOUSE There are two great differences between a human and an animal, aside from physical and visual things, although I've never felt physical things or visual things to be of particular importance. I am thinking cognitively, not rationally. The first is a human's ability to tell stories, to pass on information, histories, and to assemble knowledge, to not only know the experiences of one, but to know or at the very least to be able to access the knowledge of the whole of the humankind. This is called language.

… [but] the greatest difference between human and animal however, I would say, is the human's ability to imagine oneself in a different timeframe.

NGV Do mice dream?
MOUSE I daydream regularly. I was told not to at school, but I have learnt in later life that there is no greater free pleasure that is not only a great exercise for the imagination, but also gives a great sense of wellbeing to the psyche. I occasionally imagine myself on stage at night or day, playing guitar, or hunkering down in a log cabin in a snowy Alpine wilderness.

NGV I think you'll find that daydreaming is a luxury many of us humans can no longer afford.
MOUSE I was once asked by a small white mouse, 'If you had ten days to live, would you spend them looking at Instagram?'.

In this era of attention economy, the attention you demand has become more important than your message. Frequently the message is secondary to the traction gained by the framework. And as more and more of you raise your voices, the volume increases, and you begin to shout over the top of each other. It is strange and contradictory, therefore, that as you lean in, attention to my almost audible tiny whisper, towering above me in an otherwise empty room (ahem), a room that is colossal to me, you are listening to my every word. Not really.

NGV How should we spend our time?
MOUSE You should choose how to spend your time navigating your distractions and impulses for yourself. Time is your greatest asset.

… like some animals, humans have genetically developed very well to see danger. Like a wildebeest at a watering hole, their eyes are set far enough apart to provide a partial panoramic field of view to see approaching dangers like a lion or a double decker bus. We all, animals and humans alike, evolve to survive ... The ability of a human to time travel in your imagination seems limited to your own entertainment.

NGV But what, if anything, awaits us at 'the end'?
MOUSE Perhaps the strangest thing about 'the end' is that [despite] all of humans' so-called achievements, like training the planet into obedience, probing outer space, surrounding yourselves with excess, and associating value to things that aren't valuable, humans can't answer the most urgent question: What is 'the end'? Well actually … what is after 'the end'?

THESE EXCERPTS WERE TAKEN FROM RYAN GANDER'S *THE END,* 2020. SEE AND HEAR THE WORK IN FULL AS PART OF *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023, WHICH OPENS AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/TRIENNIAL

RYAN GANDER'S *THE END* 2020 WAS PURCHASED WITH FUNDS DONATED BY VIVIEN AND GRAHAM KNOWLES, 2023. THIS ARTIST HAS BEEN SUPPORTED BY THE ELIZABETH SUMMONS GRANT IN MEMORY OF NICHOLAS DRAFFIN

NGV TRIENNIAL 2023 IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, PRINCIPAL PARTNER MERCEDES-BENZ AND MAJOR PARTNERS CHADSTONE – THE FASHION CAPITAL, TELSTRA, MECCA AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY. THE NGV SINCERELY THANKS TRIENNIAL CHAMPIONS: FELTON BEQUEST, JULY CAO, BARRY JANES & PAUL CROSS, LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND, NGVWA, AND NEVILLE & DIANA BERTALLI, AND WE RECOGNISE ALL GENEROUS SUPPORTERS TO *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023.

RYAN GANDER OBE RA IS A BRITISH ARTIST. SINCE 2003, GANDER HAS PRODUCED A BODY OF ARTWORKS IN DIFFERENT FORMS, RANGING FROM SCULPTURE, APPAREL, WRITING, ARCHITECTURE, PAINTING, TYPEFACES, PUBLICATIONS, AND PERFORMANCE.



Ryan Gander *'The end'* 2020, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Vivien and Graham Knowles. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin. Photo: George Darrell © Ryan Gander

EVENT GUIDE

WHAT'S ON AT NGV

International artist talks, exhibition tours, music in the garden and more. Read on for a preview of what's happening at the NGV as the days warm up this summer.

NGV TRIENNIAL: OPENING WEEK

28 November – 3 December 2024
Venue NGV International

Hear from leading international artists and designers in a series of after-hours events in the lead up to *Triennial*. Then on opening day, Sunday 3 December, take some time to explore the exhibition across all levels of NGV International, and learn more with free talks, conversations and tours with international and Australian artists, and led by NGV curators.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

February 2024
Venue NGV International
FREE

Bring the family and friends to celebrate Lunar New Year at the NGV. 2024 marks the Year of the Dragon, considered one of the most favourable animals in the Chinese Zodiac and the symbol of the emperor in ancient China. Lunar New Year is widely celebrated across the world. Start the Year of the Dragon with a bang with festivities featuring art, food, workshops, demonstrations and dragon performances for all ages.

KIDS ON TOUR

January 2024
Venue across Melbourne and Victoria
FREE

In January during the summer school holidays, NGV Kids on Tour visits local libraries, regional galleries and community halls, delivering free hands-on activities and workshops for children and families.

Inspired by art and design and the *NGV Triennial*, these activities offer children creative experiences and memorable moments for families as they make and play together.

SCAN TO FIND AN NGV KIDS ON TOUR VENUE NEAR YOU.

KIDS SUMMER FESTIVAL

8–14 January 2024
Venue NGV International
FREE

NGV Kids Summer Festival returns for seven days of family fun, celebrating the latest NGV exhibition for families, *RIFIFI: Jean Jullien for Kids*. Step into the enchanting world of French artist Jean Jullien, who has turned the NGV children's gallery into an underwater world inspired by art, the beach and marine conservation. For the Kids Summer Festival, look out for talks about local marine life, artist-led workshops, baby-sharked themed disco parties and yoga workshops.



NGV Kids Summer Festival.
Photo: Eugene Hyland



DROP-BY DRAWING

JANUARY 2024
Venue NGV International
FREE

NGV summer favourite, Drop-by Drawing, returns to NGV International with *NGV Triennial* artists-in-residence guiding free weekly drawing sessions in the galleries throughout January. Visitors of all ages and skill levels are invited to hone their drawing skills and be inspired by historical and contemporary works in the NGV Collection, learning tips and tricks from the artists as they lead participants through a range of fun drawing activities.

THIS IS JUST A TASTE OF THE EVENTS, PROGRAMS AND TOURS PLANNED FOR SUMMER 2023/4. SCAN THE CODE TO FIND OUT MORE.

(pp. 62–3) NGV Garden during NGV Friday Nights. Photo: Tobias Titz

Drop-by Drawing with Nic Plowman
Photo: Tobias Titz

2023 ARCHITECTURE COMMISSION



(THIS IS) AIR

The 2023 NGV Architecture Commission *(This is) Air* by Nic Brunsdon in collaboration with art and technology studio ENESS, is a large, inflatable membrane structure that invites a multi-sensory encounter with atmospheric awareness. The installation in the garden of NGV International is a bold marker of both time and space that nevertheless resists fixed forms and singular readings.

BY DR ALEX BROWN

Throughout its time in the NGV Garden, *(This is) Air* will repeatedly draw breath and exhale, registering its fragility through its shifting, diaphanous presence.

As Studio Principal and Creative Director Nic Brunsdon explains, the work's changing states offer an opportunity to experience our collective immersion in and interactions with air more consciously:

> '[The installation] has three states. The inhalation when it's breathing in and sucking itself back up, which is quite dreamy and cloud-like; its hold state where it stays as the sphere for a certain amount of time; and its exhalation state. The latter is actually quite felt and heard. It's very haptic – you walk around it, and you feel the air coming in and out'.

It's a project that one 'walks around' as opposed to moving through, and in this way *(This is) Air* continues the direction of the commission away from a pavilion-like installation and more conventional modes of occupation. As Brunsdon recalls, 'We just very deliberately didn't think of it as a pavilion. Architecture is about engaging with context, so this is an architectural response in that architecture is about the making and marking of place'.

Brunsdon's practice, founded in 2012, and now with offices in Perth, Canggu and Melbourne, was one of ten invited to submit proposals for the 2023 NGV Architecture Commission Design Competition. The studio's commitment to engaging with each project on its own terms has resulted in a range of sensitive and thoughtful architectural responses which, despite their clear differences, share a recognisable sense of restraint.

In this respect, and perhaps despite initial appearances, *(This is) Air* sits comfortably within the studio's broader work. Framing the project as deeply contextual in its understanding of the particularities of the competition brief, along with its physical and temporal location, Brunsdon notes that the studio sought to calibrate a response that could hold multiple conditions in tension. He says:

> 'The invitation prompted the line of inquiry. So you know, we weren't sitting around saying "we want to make a comment on COVID or we want to talk about X,Y and Z". The competition opens, the brief arrives, you look at the brief and you just try to make sense of it and get down to what they're really asking. We also tried to be quite strategic about it as well. We looked backwards to understand what the NGV had commissioned in the past– what kind of typology and size and colour and those sorts of things – because we wanted to make sure that our ideas didn't land within territory that had already been explored. We just wanted to make sure that it was something that made sense in a lineage of commissions, and that we were presenting something new, without just being new for the sake of it'.

In addition to striking this balance between the new and the existing, Brunsdon and the project team were also 'trying to find a way to be uniquely specific while also generally broad at the same time', which led them towards an exploration of our changed perception of air and its visibility during pandemic conditions.

> 'We were just at the back end of COVID. We'd had these amazingly intense three years – especially for Melbourne, as one of the most locked-down cities in the world. And we have this matter that's universal, a defining feature of life on earth, this invisible, connective tissue of humanity, and it's become this agent that is carrying harmful things. Air is something we spend our lives swimming in and swimming through, and it's only in these quite drastic moments in time that you start to pay attention to it.'

The careful distillation of such a powerful set of ideas within the project also reflects the studio's prioritisation of architectural process, something that has shaped the current structure and direction for Brunsdon and the practice. He says:

> 'We very subtly started thinking of ourselves as a design office that does architecture rather than an architecture office that produces designs. So we're emphasising the design part of it, which is the process part, the thinking part, and then the outcome of that *may* be architecture. We're concerned with thinking first, product second and so we've restructured our office around that model. You know there are a few firms that are working that way as well, deemphasising the capital 'A' in architecture in favour of small 'a' as a process or an agency or a series of soft infrastructures. [The NGV Architecture Commission] is a built thing, but it's actually not about the built thing. It's about the story and the question and the proposition more than the structure'.

As a question and a proposition, *(This is) Air* asks far more questions than it answers, holding space for multiple interpretations and more than one story. 'The idea of it being this quite universal object', Brunsdon explains, 'was that anyone can bring their own readings to it as well'. It's a provocation or an offering or a starting point for whatever makes sense at that moment. You know that the viewer is reading into it and that all meanings and all readings are correct.

In its ambition to call attention to our complex relationship with air as matter and exchange, *(This is) Air* doesn't shy away from its role as a kind of spectacle. Nevertheless, the clarity of the project's elegant and animated cloaking gesture is far from skin-deep. At once beautiful and unsettling, delicate and confronting, it is both the zephyr and the tempest.

SEE *(THIS IS) AIR* IN THE NGV GARDEN FROM 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION, SCAN THE QR CODE.

THE 2023 ARCHITECTURE COMMISSION IS SUPPORTED BY PRINCIPAL PARTNER MACQUARIE GROUP AND DESIGN PARTNER RMIT UNIVERSITY.

DR ALEX BROWN IS AN ARCHITECT AND SENIOR LECTURER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE AT MONASH ART, DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE.

(p. 64) **Nic Brunsdon** *(This is) Air* 2023 (render), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. This project is proudly supported by Macquarie Group and RMIT University
© Nic Brunsdon

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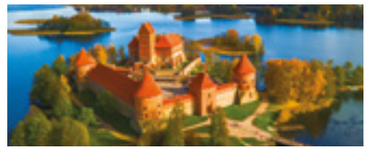
– Marcel Proust



Uzbekistan:
The Silk Road Cities
16 – 29 April 2024
Led by Dr Katie Campbell and Russell Casey



Heritage Cities of the Baltic:
Vilnius, Kaunas, Riga,
Tartu & Tallinn
25 June – 9 July 2024
Led by Dr Uldis Ozolins and Juris Baltputnis



Norway & the Lofoten Archipelago:
Rock Carvings,
Ragnarök and Reindeer
28 July – 15 August 2024
Led by Dr Mindy MacLeod

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MECCA HOLIDAY COLLABORATION

KAYLENE WHISKEY



Rock n' Roll

Each year, MECCA and the NGV collaborate with a contemporary Australian woman artist to create MECCA's annual limited-edition holiday packaging and campaign. As part of this collaboration, work by the commissioned artist is exhibited at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia and joins the NGV Collection of contemporary art and design. Here, NGV Curator Sophie Gerhard interviews the 2023 MECCA Holiday Collaboration artist, Kaylene Whiskey, whose vivid paintings show Hollywood actors, famous divas and pop icons interacting with Whiskey's daily life in Indulkana, north-west of Adelaide.

BY SOPHIE GERHARD



SOPHIE GERHARD Kaylene, when did you first decide to become an artist?
KAYLENE WHISKEY I used to come into the art centre as a young girl and see my family, like my nanna Sadie Singer and tjamu (grandfather) Whiskey Tjukangku working in the art centre. I wanted to be an artist like them, to work there next to my family.

SG Tell us about the inspiration behind your works.
KW I love listening to music while I work. I love Dolly Parton, especially 'Coat of Many Colours' and so I paint Dolly on my canvases and it's like she's coming to visit me in Indulkana. As well as Dolly, I paint lots of other strong women, such as Tina Turner or Wonder Woman – all my favourites from music, TV, movies and comics. I paint these ladies in my community, Indulkana or out in the bush like they're visiting me here at my place and I'm sharing my culture with them.

SG You like to work with lots of different materials – everything from road signs and magazine clippings to sparkling gems – how do you choose your materials and what you do with them?
KW I like trying new things. The signs for Iwantja Arts and Craft were from a long time ago and they weren't being used anymore, so I wanted to decorate them and make them beautiful, like a celebration for our community! I like painting on the pages of books and magazines, it reminds me of when I was a young girl ,always reading comic books!

SG In recent years, your art has been transformed into fashion garments in collaboration with Australian brand WAH-WAH. How does it feel to see your art being worn on the body?
KW: I love my WAH-WAH jumper! I see different people wearing it everywhere I go and they always say, 'Hey Kaylene, I love your jumper!'

SG You paint and work at Iwantja Arts – an Aboriginal-owned art centre at Indulkana on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Lands, north-west of Adelaide. What's it like?
KW All the artists at Iwantja Arts do good work; we work together and support each other. All the women at Iwantja Arts have a good time together – we talk and laugh while we work. Kungka Kunpu (strong women)!

SG In 2018 you won the Sir John Sulman Prize at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. How did it feel to win this award, and how has your career changed since?
KW Winning the Sulman Prize was really special. I travelled to Sydney and the art gallery, and so many people said 'Kaylene, I love your painting' and they were smiling and happy. I was really proud to win the prize and to share it with my family and the community.

SG Are you looking forward to seeing your art incorporated into MECCA's packaging as part of this year's Holiday Collaboration?
KW I love the bags and boxes that MECCA has made using my art – rikina (lovely)! It's been a lot of fun working with MECCA and I'm excited to share this project with everyone.

SG What does it mean for you to have your art acquired and displayed in the NGV?
KW It's great! Us Iwantja artists always go and visit the NGV every



time we're in Melbourne. To see my work there, or to see other family's work there, is really special.

SG What advice would you give to emerging artists seeking to make a career from their art?
KW Be yourself and have fun!

SG What do you think Dolly Parton would say if she saw your work?
KW 'Thank you for painting me on your canvas Kaylene! Can I come visit you in Indulkana?'

SEE THE MECCA AND NGV HOLIDAY COLLABORATION AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA UNTIL FEBRUARY 2024. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS MECCA FOR SUPPORTING THE ACQUISITION OF THESE WORKS.

KAYLENE WHISKEY IS A YANKUNYTJATJARA ARTIST WORKING ON THE ANANGU PITJANTJATJARA YANKUNYTJATJARA LANDS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA. SOPHIE GERHARD IS NGV CURATOR, AUSTRALIAN AND FIRST NATIONS ART.

(p. 68) Kaylene Whiskey. Photograph: Simon Eeles.

(p. 69) **Kaylene Whiskey,** Yankunytjatjara, b. 1976, Mparntwe/ Alice Springs, *Cher on Country* 2023. Acrylic on found book page. The NGV warmly thanks MECCA for supporting the acquisition of these works.

(above) **Kaylene Whiskey,** Yankunytjatjara, b. 1976, Mparntwe/Alice Springs *Kaylene on Country* 2023 acrylic on found book page Purchased with funds donated by Jo Horgan AM and MECCA Brands, 2023 The NGV warmly thanks MECCA for supporting the acquisition of these works.

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IMAGE: Margaret Preston, *Flapper*, 1925, purchased with the assistance of the Cooma-Monaro Snowy River Fund 1988© Margaret Rose Preston Estate/Copyright Agency



NGV SCHOLARS SERIES

'LOOK HERE, UPON THIS PICTURE'

2023 marks the 400th anniversary of the book that gave us Shakespeare: The First Folio of 1623. Eighteen of Shakespeare's plays appeared in print for the first time in that volume, and numerous others appeared in versions that differed significantly from the single-text editions that had come out previously. But these are all documents of performance, not the live, dynamic events we call 'plays'. They are blueprints that need to be brought to life. In this essay to accompany his presentation for the NGV Scholars Series, Dr David McInnis considers how artists imagined and brought to life the plays of Shakespeare through examples in the NGV Collection.

BY DR DAVID McINNIS

Among the NGV's rich holdings are numerous Shakespearean examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that showcase the ways in which artists, not actors, have sought to animate Shakespeare's playtexts and breathe new life into them in paint and ink, imagining scenes and characters that had once enthralled early modern playgoers during Shakespeare's own lifetime.

Perhaps the most celebrated example in the NGV Collection is Edwin Landseer's *Scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream. Titania and Bottom* (oil on canvas, 1848–51), acquired by Felton Bequest. Possibly one of the most famous scenes in all Shakespeare, the transformation of the rude, mechanical Bottom the Weaver into an ass-like creature is often played for laughs to conceal its controversy. In the text, Oberon, King of the Fairies, is fighting with his wife, Titania, over custody of the Indian king's boy. Titania is given a love potion that will make her enamoured of the first man or creature she sees, and so becomes besotted with Bottom as an-ass. Throughout the nineteenth century, when Landseer was active, this scene was still played with little awareness of its darker undertones. It was not until the Polish critic Jan Kott turned his attention to the play that its brutality became truly apparent. In *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (translated into English in 1964), Kott wrote that 'The Dream is the most erotic of Shakespeare's plays', but it is a 'nightmarish' eroticism, in which the drugged Titania binds her lover and drags him to her bower for her pleasure. Landseer's painting was commissioned to adorn the dining room of Isambard Kingdom Brunel in Duke Street, St James, London. It retains a 'Brothers Grimm' quality to the scene that Kott would have found intolerable; it is clearly night, but there is a cosy glow to the light and a certain gentleness to the animals and spirits gathered around the couple. Bottom's ass's head is not repulsive or monstrous, as it increasingly becomes in twentieth-century stage and film productions, and the animals (a common feature in Landseer's work) are rather endearing. Supposedly, when Lewis Carroll saw the white rabbit at the bottom right of the painting, it provided inspiration for his *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

Earlier pieces, such as those derived from items displayed at the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery in London (1789–1805), speak to their historical moment very clearly. A good example is the engraving by Richard Earlom (after Henry Fuseli) of '*King Lear:* Act 1, scene 1' from the *Shakespeare Gallery* series, published by John and Josaih Boydell (London, 1792) (Felton Bequest, 1926). The 'trial of love' scene early in Shakespeare's version of the *King Lear* story is a farce. Whereas the old king in an earlier play on the topic (the Queen's Men's *King Leir,* c. 1589) had strategic purpose in asking his daughters to declare how much they loved him (the king would make his beloved youngest daughter prove her love by accepting his choice of husband for her), Shakespeare's king had already divided the kingdom. His love-contest is all show. He asks his daughters what they can say to prove their love for him, and Cordelia's answer takes the form of a riddle: 'I love your Majesty/According to my bond; no more nor less'. Angered by Cordelia's failure to play the game and stroke his ego, Lear banishes her and divides his kingdom between the elder sisters. Shakespeare's play violates laws of succession: primogeniture (inheritance by oldest male child) was meant to prevent an estate being broken up and weakened, but Lear ignores it by dividing his kingdom. The conspicuously Neoclassical symmetry of the Fuseli/Earlom scene, which seems to recall the famous composition of Jacques-Louis David's 'Oath of the Horatii' (1784), is pleasing in its balance – but contradicts and undermines the events of the scene depicted (disintegration of the kingdom and exile of the beloved daughter).



Other prints in the NGV Collection speak to the Romantic appropriation of Shakespeare. The late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century English poets' interest in the imagination, individual genius, human nature and the revaluation of the natural world led them to recognise a kindred spirit in Shakespeare, but the artists of this period came to understand Shakespeare in these Romantic ways, too, when they brought his scenes to life. The engraving of the storm scene, 'Shakespeare – King Lear, Act III, Scene IV (1793)', by William Sharp (after Benjamin West) (1793) (Gift of Messrs G. & J. Askew, 1929) makes no attempt to frame the scene in terms of stage business, but instead exhibits a Romantic 'Man vs. Nature' appeal with Kent, the Fool, Lear, and Poor Tom all huddled in the rain. This is Lear stripped of civilisation; 'Unaccommodated man' reduced to baseness, the bare essentials, living like a poor, naked animal. There's an inescapable sense of the Romantic sublime at play here. So too in the etching of Edgar as Poor Tom from Act 3, scene 3 ('Away! the foul fiend follows me./Through the sharp Hawthorn blows the cold wind,/Humph – go to thy bed and warm thee') printed and published by John Mortimer (1775), which depicts Gloucester's son as wild, but natural and beautiful – in touch with Nature, not seeking refuge from it. William Wordsworth could have conjured such an image.

Crucially, in the late eighteenth century, Shakespeare was not only being discovered and celebrated by the Romantics, but was elevated to a quasi-divine status by the general public following acclaimed Shakespeare actor David Garrick's famed Jubilee celebrations (see Valentine Green's engraving, after Gainsborough) of David Garrick with a bust of Shakespeare, 1769 (The original portrait hung in Stratford-upon-Avon town hall but was destroyed by fire in 1946). As such, an emerging trend in illustrating Shakespeare consisted of the appropriation of religious motifs and conventions in portraiture. The engraving by James Barry of King Lear carrying his daughter Cordelia's lifeless body in the final scene of the play (1776; presented by the Society for the Encouragement of the Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, 1881), takes the form of *pieta*; a mourning over the body of the dead Christ. As academic Susan Allen Ford observes, 'Cordelia becomes the salvific (though failed) heroine, Lear the father of sorrows. Soldiers in the background look up at Lear's anguished face, tears on the cheek of the forwardmost'.[1] Aligning his characters and scenes with biblical analogues imbued Shakespeare's works with something of the divine. Shakespeare, of course, was not revered in this fashion during his lifetime, when he was first and foremost a commercial playwright – an actor and shareholder in his company, as well as its principal dramatist – but this venerated version of Shakespeare is all Australia has ever known.

Shakespeare was everywhere in colonial Australia. Melbourne, for example, had a lively theatrical scene featuring Shakespearean drama alongside musicals, melodrama and eighteenth-century works blossomed as the Queen's Theatre Royal (1845), the Theatre Royal (1855), the Olympic (1855), Astley's Amphitheatre (1854), the Haymarket Theatre and Apollo Music Hall (1862), and numerous other venues opened across town – many thanks to the industriousness of theatrical impresario George Selth Coppin, who brought out superstar Shakespearean actors from the UK and Ireland, such as G. V. Brooke, or Charles and Ellen Kean. Multiple Shakespeare Hotels (one flanked by a Romeo Lane and a Juliet Terrace in the 1870s), a Garrick Club (1855; named after the actor) and a Yorick Club (1868; named after the skull of the jester in *Hamlet*), and the Melbourne Shakespeare Society (1884) were all operative.

It is in this context of gold rush-era acquisition of cultural capital that two recent NGV acquisitions appear to have first arrived in Australia: Philippe Mercier's *Falstaff at the Boar's Head Tavern*, c. 1738 (a scene from *1 Henry IV)* and Mercier's *Falstaff with Doll Tearsheet*, c. 1738 (a scene from *2 Henry IV*), both generously gifted by Wendy King through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023. These were in the collection of Mrs Edward Salomons, Sydney, by 1870; William E Gill, Melbourne by 1927; L.T. Harris, Carlton before 1968; and purchased by the husband of the donor August 1968.

Mercier, a proponent of the Rococo or late Baroque style, was appointed principal painter to Frederick, Prince of Wales in 1729, having painted portraits of the prince and his three sisters. He and the prince shared a love of theatre, as Mercier's biographer recounts: 'in 1729 they collaborated in a production of Thomas Doggett's *Hob* at Richmond, and in 1733 Mercier was a shareholder in [John] Rich's Theatre at Covent Garden, London'.[2] The Falstaff paintings combine Mercier's interests in theatre and in portraiture, building on his experience popularising the 'conversation piece' genre (notable for its small scale, domestic settings and relative informality as a kind of group portrait – see Mercier's 'The Music Party', 1733, and 'fancies' (a term first used to describe Mercier's own scenes of everyday life notable for their inclusion of an imaginative element).

The first of these, *Falstaff at the Boar's Head Tavern* (a slight misnomer, in that Shakespeare never names the tavern in Eastcheap, though editors have often assumed it to be the historical sixteenth-century Board's Head), depicts a notorious moment from early in *1 Henry IV*. Prince Hal's boyhood friend (and bad influence) Sir John Falstaff has just been set up: he, Hal, and their cronies had planned a highway robbery at Gad's Hill, but after Falstaff completes the theft, the prince and Ned Poins adopt disguises and rob Falstaff of his newly acquired loot. They reconvene back at the tavern, where Falstaff's exaggerated account of how he was beaten by his assailants ('A hundred upon poor four of us') draws the prince's mirth: 'What, fought you with them all?' Mercier's Falstaff points to his hacked sword (he hacked it himself to lend weight to his declaration of bravery) as he recounts his allegedly gallant exploits. The bemused Prince Hal looks on patiently as he prepares to blow his cover and reveal the truth of the matter to the old fat knight: 'Mark now how a plain tale shall put you down'. (Falstaff ultimately insists he knew all along that it was the disguised prince who set upon him!)

The second of Mercier's paintings is a thematic companion piece of sorts: it depicts the last time Falstaff and company gather in the tavern in Eastcheap, in *2 Henry IV*, with Falstaff at his riotous best (and thus demonstrably unfit to be a prince's companion).

Among the NGV's rich holdings are numerous Shakespearean examples from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that showcase the ways in which artists, not actors, have sought to animate Shakespeare's playtexts.

———DR DAVID McINNIS

'Sit on my knee, Doll', Falstaff implores Mistress Doll Tearsheet, as the prince and Poins enter (in the left of the painting), disguised as tap-drawers from the tavern. Poins marvels at Falstaff's lecherous appetite: 'Is it not strange that desire should so many years outlive performance?' Doll quizzes Falstaff about Prince Hal and Poins (who overhear Falstaff's disparaging remarks about them). For a second time in as many plays (and paintings), Falstaff fails to recognise the disguised prince yet swears he knew Hal's true identity all along: 'you knew me, as you did when you ran away by Gad's Hill', the prince gently mocks. In both Mercier paintings, the setting has been updated to reflect conspicuously eighteenth-century aesthetics: these drawing rooms bear little resemblance to the dark taverns of Shakespeare's day, let alone those of the historical personages depicted in the *Henry IV* plays; the clothing worn by the characters clearly belongs to Mercier's own period, not that of the plays; and in the second painting, the disguised Poins wears an Asian conical hat, whilst Hal wears a tricorne ('cocked') hat.

Although Mercier depicted scenes from Restoration and eighteenth-century plays by Colley Cibber, George Farquhar and unknown (or perhaps generic) comedies, these Falstaff paintings appear to be Mercier's only Shakespearean scenes.[3] Perhaps the old knight is vindicated when he says 'I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men': he certainly caused wit, or at least talent, in Mercier. To have both paintings at the NGV is an outstanding addition to the Gallery's holdings.

DR DAVID McINNIS IS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF SHAKESPEARE AND EARLY MODERN DRAMA AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE. HIS MOST RECENT BOOKS INCLUDE *SHAKESPEARE AND LOST PLAYS* AND *SHAKESPEARE AND VIRTUAL REALITY* (BOTH WITH CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2021). HE IS CURRENTLY EDITING *TIMON OF ATHENS* FOR THE ARDEN SHAKESPEARE 4TH SERIES.

DR DAVID McINNIS RECENTLY SPOKE ABOUT SHAKESPEARE AND THESE WORKS FOR THE NGV SCHOLARS SERIES – A STREAM OF IN-DEPTH PRESENTATIONS BY EXPERTS IN ART HISTORY THAT UNCOVER THE STORIES BEHIND WORKS FROM THE NGV COLLECTION. SCAN THE CODE TO WATCH THE RECORDING AND FIND OUT MORE.

(p. 72) **Edwin Landseer** *Scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream. Titania and Bottom* (detail) 1848–51, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Felton Bequest, 1932. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

(p. 74) **Philippe Mercier** *Falstaff with Doll Tearsheet* c. 1738. Gift of Wendy King through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

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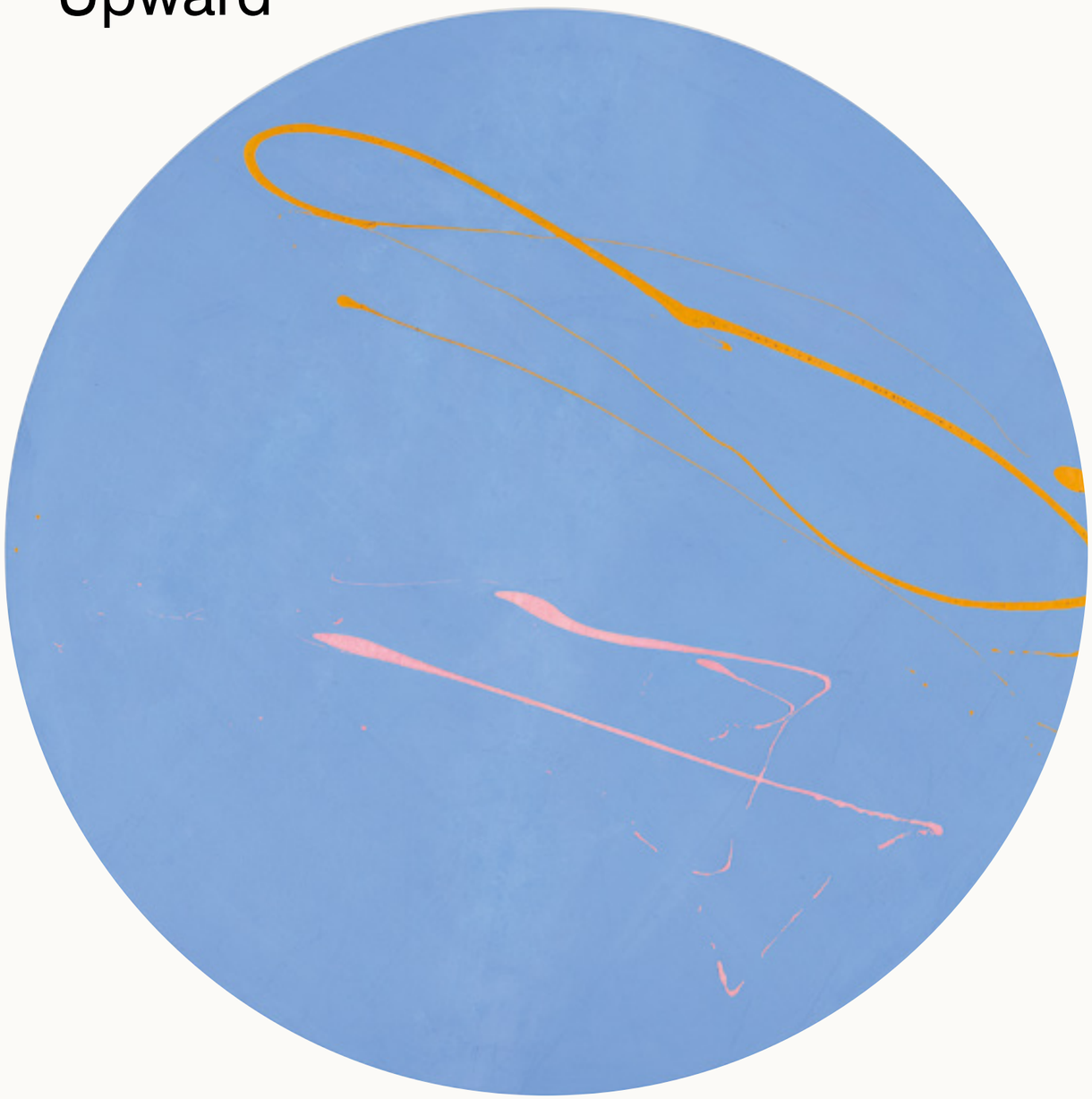
Marikit Santiago, *Filipiniana* (self-portrait in collaboration with Maella Santiago, detail) 2021, acrylic, interior paint, pen and oil on found cardboard. Photo by Mim Stirling. Courtesy of the artist.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Peter Upward



Pacific 1972–73

The NGV welcomes into the Collection an impressive 2.3-metre circular canvas by notable abstract expressionist painter, Peter Upward. Gifted to the NGV by the artist's daughter, Asia Upward, *Pacific* 1972–73, recently underwent conservation treatment and is now on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

BY BECKETT ROZENTALS

Peter Upward commenced his artistic studies at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (now RMIT University) in 1951. After brief studies at the East Sydney Technical College (now the National Art School), he and fellow student William Rose sought mentorship under John Passmore at the Julian Ashton Art School. In 1955, Upward returned to Melbourne, making his artistic debut in a joint exhibition with friend and fellow artist Clement Meadmore at John and Sunday Reed's Museum of Modern Art.

Disheartened by the Melbourne art scene, Upward returned to Sydney in 1960, where he was embraced into a circle he found more receptive to his abstract style. While working closely with Meadmore and John Olsen, Upward further honed his artistic vision. Upward found inspiration in diverse artistic and philosophical subjects, such as improvised jazz and the principles of Zen, including Daiestz Teitato Suzuki's seminal work, *Studies in Zen*. In 1961, Upward held a major solo exhibition at Macquarie Galleries in Sydney, and Upward's gestural black and white paintings from the period show the influence of action painting and calligraphy.

Upward moved to London in 1962, where he was to live and create art for the next decade. He first resided with friends in Oxfordshire, and became part of the city's vibrant underground scene. The year after moving abroad, three of Upward's paintings were included in *Australian Painting Today*, a touring exhibition throughout Europe and the United Kingdom. It was at this time Upward's work was acquired by the Mertz Collection of Australian Art.

London's counterculture and local music scene, as well as the use of psychedelic drugs, were to become Upward's muse. As a consequence, Upward's practice underwent a transformative period during his London years. He embraced minimalist restraint, while maintaining a distinctive gestural style. Upward began experimenting with pouring paint directly onto the canvas surface, and began to make his own oval and circular canvas shapes. Upward's last years in London saw the introduction of colour into his work, a significant development from his traditional restricted palette of black and white.

Upward's return to Australia in 1971 marked the beginning of a teaching career at East Sydney Technical College, where he was recognised as an engaging instructor of painting and drawing. He continued with his own personal artistic practice, blending his signature gestural manner with vivid explorations of colour. Painted shortly after his return to Australia, *Pacific, Ocean rider* and *Io sono* are key examples of his artistic evolution, and are an extension of the circular series of work he commenced in London.

Upward's skill as a colourist is exemplified in *Pacific.* His bold use of blue is accentuated with his confident application of gestural marks in pale pink and orange – with orange the opposite of blue on the colour wheel – and this combination of colour results in a soothing visual harmony. *Pacific* was exhibited alongside *Ocean rider* and *Io Sono* at Upward's 1973 solo exhibition at the University of New South Wales.

In 1976, Upward was the subject of the Art Gallery of New South Wales's (AGNSW) exhibition, *Project 13*. Tragically, Upward's life was cut short by a sudden heart attack in 1983, at just fifty-one years of age. The following year, the AGNSW mounted a survey exhibition of Upward's paintings. Upward's significance in Australian art history is underscored by his unwavering commitment to the abstract expressionist movement, which gained prominence in the United States during the 1950s through the work of artists such as Franz Kline, Robert Motherwell and Sam Francis.

The NGV extends its heartfelt gratitude to Asia Upward for her generous donation of this work to the NGV Collection. Through this gift, the Gallery celebrates the legacy of Peter Upward, offering a window into the transformative journey of an artist whose unique path from Australia to England and back has left an indelible mark on art history.

BECKETT ROZENTALS IS NGV CURATOR OF AUSTRALIAN ART

Peter Upward *Pacific* 1972–73, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Asia Upward through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023 © Estate of the artist

NGV Paintings Conservator Raymonda Rajkowski shares background to preparing *Pacific* for display.

BY RAYMONDA RAJKOWSKI

For years, the canvas of Peter Upward's *Pacific* 1972–73 painting had been rolled and stored in an outdoor shed, exposed to the elements. This resulted in many condition issues: the cotton canvas had extensive creases and several holes; the matte blue painted background was stained throughout; and the painting's most distinctive feature – two gestural swirls of pink and orange poured paint – showed extensive cracking. A creative approach was required to restore this painting, especially given its unconventional shape and large size.

Peter Upward had produced several circular paintings around the time he made *Pacific*. In 1962, at the peak of his career, he moved to London where he began producing what was referred to as his 'circular', 'disc' or 'sun' series of new works. Moving away from his highly gestural and textured calligraphic paintings, for which he was then best known, Upward intensified his colour palette and simplified his gestural mark-making. *Pacific* is particularly unique because it is one of the artist's largest circular paintings, standing at 2.3 metres in diameter. It was made on his return to Sydney in 1971 and exhibited two years later at the Round House at University of New South Wales. Due to its size, the canvas was eventually taken off its original strainer, the wooden frame to which the canvas was attached, for ease of storage.

The conservation treatment involved many complex steps, always beginning with documentation, examination and testing. For instance, the type of paint medium used by Upward was identified through scientific analysis as a polyvinyl-acetate (PVA) paint and the blue pigment used for the background was found to be ultramarine blue. The 1960s and 1970s saw many artists upscaling the sizes of their paintings and, by consequence, they needed to use larger qualities of paint. Commercial house paints, typically based on PVA mediums, came in larger tins and their colours could be altered by mixing dry pigment or tints. The way paint was applied to the canvas by artists also changed. Upward and others used broad brushes, ladles and even brooms, to pour and spread paint onto canvas laid flat on the studio floor.

The first challenge of the conservation treatment was to flatten the canvas. This was achieved with the aid of a custom-built circular aluminium working stretcher, or 'loom'. The canvas was evenly secured around the perimeter of the loom and the fabric gradually stretched. Other structural work was carried out at this stage. The creases, for example, were reduced by introducing moisture and humidity in a controlled manner, while the holes were carefully repaired thread-by-thread under a microscope. Once flat and stabilised, the canvas could be finally measured more accurately for a circular timber stretcher. It was a significant moment to properly stretch the canvas and reinstate it as a painting.

Improving the appearance of the stained and cracked painted surface presented an entirely different set of challenges. Any damages, scratches and even fingerprint marks on flat, matte abstract and monochrome paintings are notoriously difficult to restore. These surfaces are unforgiving since any restoration work can be easily spotted. They truly put the colour and gloss matching skills of the conservator to the test. *Pacific* was no exception and involved considerable retouching to cover the permanent stains appearing through the centre of the work. A reversible inpainting medium was applied thinly and carefully, with a small paint brush and only enough to reintegrate areas in the most sympathetic way possible.

Inpainting or retouching a painting can be a satisfying part of a treatment, if all goes well. The process, however, is often slow and laborious, requiring a conservator to continuously judge and re-evaluate their work. Appropriate lighting is particularly important to the process, especially when attempting to colour match blue pigments. An optical phenomenon, known as metamerism, occurs most commonly with the colour blue, where a colour match may be perceived adequate under one light source yet mismatched under another. The texture and gloss characteristics of the painted surface also influences how colour is perceived. At first glance, the blue colour of *Pacific* appears uniform across the face of the painting. However, at closer inspection, there are subtle broad brushmarks and accumulated paint along the edges, indicating Upward had applied layers of thinned paint that had absorbed into the woven canvas fabric. As the texture of the canvas equally contributes to the surface appearance of a painting, it was another important visual factor to consider when inpainting *Pacific*.

For conservators, it is always a rewarding process to return a painting to a displayable condition. This painting was particularly meaningful as it also offered an opportunity to develop new treatment strategies and better understand these vulnerable paintings. *Pacific*, now restored to its former glory, represents a fascinating moment in Upward's painting practice and showcases his legacy as a daring abstract painter.

SEE PETER UPWARD'S *PACIFIC*, 1972–73 ON LEVEL 2 AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS ASIA UPWARD FOR HER GIFT OF *PACIFIC*, DONATED TO THE NGV COLLECTION THROUGH THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S CULTURAL GIFTS PROGRAM, 2023.

RAYMONDA RAJKOWSKI IS NGV CONSERVATOR OF PAINTINGS.



(right) Raymonda Rajkowski, NGV Conservator of Paintings. Photo: Predrag Cancar/NGV

NEW TO THE COLLECTION



England *Jacket* 1895, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

Jacket c. 1895

Riding a bicycle is something that many take for granted, but access to this commonplace mode of transport was not always universal. Thanks to a recent gift to the NGV Collection of a women's jacket from circa 1895, generously supported by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, the late nineteenth century craze for cycling and the effect it had on the lives and wardrobes of women is revealed.

BY KATIE SOMERVILLE

Although the earliest bicycles were ridden by men as a form of transport, by the late 1880s technological advancements prompted more widespread and enthusiastic embrace.

The perilous experience of riding a penny-farthing with its giant front wheel was superseded by the safety bike with its chain-driven rear wheels and pneumatic tyres, vastly improving the rider's experience. For women, the introduction of step-through frames, accommodated their clothing, was an important innovation.

Initially cycling was adopted by women who had the time and money to indulge in the new craze, but as the decade progressed and prices fell, this broadened out to include working-class women. Dedicated events, sports clubs and publications also came into existence.[1]

As the numbers of women riding increased, so too did public debate and objection. Newspapers printed conservative claims regarding the perceived threat to women's moral and physical safety in sitting astride a bike. With horse-drawn vehicles the dominant form of transport, the bicycle offered women an easy, self-powered independent form of transport, which came to symbolise the promise of freedom and emancipation from the era's restrictive social norms.

In this context, bicycle-riding also required a new approach to dressing. Emerging support for practical dress and dress reform, known as the Rational Dress movement, grew in parallel with the rise of cycling and encouraged women to replace cumbersome, bulky and restrictive garments and undergarments with lighter, looser or shorter options. The most famous and radical of these new styles were the cycling bloomers that closely resembled men's trousers and caused much consternation. Championed in the mid nineteenth century by American suffragist, editor and social activist Amelia Bloomer, this enlightened functionalist approach to women's dress was greatly advanced with the arrival of the bicycle.



Bloomer's writings became an enduring expression of the emerging spirit of reform:

> 'The costume of women should be suited to her wants and necessities. It should conduce at once to her health, comfort, and usefulness; and, while it should not fail also to conduce to her personal adornment, it should make that end of secondary importance'.[2]

For the most part, women cyclists of the Victorian era adopted the less threatening attire of a shirt, jacket and a shorter or bifurcated ankle-length skirt, paired with calf-length boots. In keeping with the fashions of the era, unlined jackets like this one, with its impressive leg-o-mutton sleeves, were produced in easy to care for lightweight linen for outdoor activities.

With a better understanding of the health benefits of physical activity, growing numbers of women in the late nineteenth century took up a range of new pursuits that were previously the domain of men. Sports, such as golf, badminton, croquet, tennis and bathing all required new forms of clothing that were more functional and less restrictive. The influence of menswear on women's clothing of this era also becomes apparent, with the popularity for the shirtwaist, feminine versions of tailored formal and sportwear jackets and straw boaters.

Adapted corsets also started to appear on the market, tailored towards cycling and a range of other athletic pursuits. Incorporating elastic sides and cutaway sections over the hips, these innovative foundation garments balanced the desire for a fashionably small waist with more pliable elements that allowed for flexibility and motion.

Well into the twentieth century, what women wore during this golden age of the bicycle remained a subject of great interest, ridicule and caricature. Romanticised renditions of female emancipation gained respectable popularity in the form of idealised creations, such as the athletic 'Gibson Girl', while others railed against the radical threat to stable society embodied by the so called 'New Woman'.

This sculptural linen jacket represents the changes and fashionable contradictions that abounded at the precipice of the new century. With its impossible tiny waist and exaggerated hourglass silhouette, it reminds us of the strictures of corset-bound women's fashions, while at the same time harkening to a new era of freedoms through its lightweight sportwear materiality and masculine-tailored influences.

KATIE SOMERVILLE IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR OF FASHION AND TEXTILES.

SEE THIS WORK ON LEVEL 2, NGV INTERNATIONAL. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS KRYSTYNA CAMPBELL-PRETTY AM AND FAMILY FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT.

Eugène Grasset *The four-leaf clover brand by Georges Richard, cycles and automobiles* 1899 (*Le Trèfle à 4 feuilles de la marque Georges Richard, cycles and automobiles*). National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased, 1970

This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

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NEW TO THE COLLECTION

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT
VASE
C. 1902

‘The mission of an architect is to help people understand how to make life more beautiful, the world a better one for living in, and to give reason, rhyme, and meaning to life.’

———FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, 1957

Born 1867 in Wisconsin in the United States, Frank Lloyd Wright rose to become one of America’s greatest architects. Celebrated for his progressive modernism, Wright’s houses also encapsulate an organic quality through their connectedness to landscape and his integrated approach to design, which encompassed the house, its interiors and furnishings and the landscape beyond. One such example of Wright’s unified approach is his *Vase* c. 1902, acquired by the NGV through the generosity of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, whose formal sumac plant motifs, native to the Midwest, are mirrored in design details throughout the house for which the vase was commissioned.

BY AMANDA DUNSMORE AND IMOGEN MALLIA-VALJAN

The Gallery has recently acquired an exceptionally rare ceramic vase designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, thanks to the outstanding support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and her family. The vase was designed as part of Wright’s work on the Susan L. Dana House, completed in 1904. It formed part of the furnishings of the house and the original example of the vase remains in the house today. The NGV’s vase one of a small number of vases subsequently produced and retailed by the Gates Pottery.

The Dana House remains one of Frank Lloyd Wright’s most intact expressions of his early Prairie School style. In his search for a uniquely American style of architecture at the beginning of the twentieth century, Wright developed what he called the Prairie style, inspired by the broad sweeping landscapes of the Midwest where he grew up. Wright’s houses reflected his philosophy that architecture should be in harmony with its environment and that it should be a product of its time and place, without reference to outdated historical styles. One of the largest and most complex of Wright’s Prairie designs, Dana House was commissioned in 1902 by Susan Lawrence Dana, one of only a few women to commission Wright at this early stage in his career. A patron of the arts, vocal member of the suffrage movement, internationally travelled and independently wealthy, Dana was

a progressive force within her community and her passions for culture and women's equality were deeply influential upon the design and function of the house. In 1901 Dana inherited the family home and commissioned Wright to undertake a substantial renovation, involving a complete restructuring of the original house, an unusual commission for Wright at the time. The original house provided the basis for what would become a substantial thirty-five room house that included three public gathering spaces, a reception hall, dining room and gallery space, which were used regularly by Dana for benefit parties and music concerts.[1]

Wright worked on the Dana House commission from his Oak Park studio where he employed a number of architects including Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin, whose work is also held in the NGV Collection. It is thought that several architects from Wright's studio worked on the Dana House but there is little documentation as to who worked on what.

Throughout the house Wright employed an abstracted, geometric motif as a decorative scheme across the furnishings, windows and exterior frieze of the house. The chevron motif was based upon the sumac plant, a shrub native to the mid-western prairies and Wright repeated the motif on his design for the ceramic vase, the only applied ornament on the otherwise monumentally austere vase. In discussing his thoughts on the integration of design between a building and its interior, he wrote, '... it is quite impossible for the building to be considered one thing and its furnishings another. ... they are all mere structural details of its character and completeness'.[2]

Wright's vase for the Dana House was produced by the Gates Pottery in Terra Cotta, Illinois, a local pottery run by William Gates. Established in the 1870s to produce terracotta tiles and architectural ornament, Gates' venture was extremely successful with terracotta becoming a highly fashionable cladding material on early cast-iron skyscraper buildings. In 1899 Gates began to develop a range of ornamental vases which he called 'Teco ware', named after the town of Terra Cotta. Gates experimented with a range of ceramic bodies and glazes before eventually settling on a dense white earthenware body with a matt green crystalline glaze that was to become the signature feature of his Teco range. The colour, which quickly became known as 'Teco green', varied from pale green to a deep mossy green and was intended to evoke the velvety green patina of bronze when exposed to the





(p. 88) **Frank Lloyd Wright** (designer) **Gates Pottery (Teco Pottery), Terra Cotta** (manufacturer) *Vase* c. 1902. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

(left) A view towards the fireplace in the great reception hall of the Dana-Thomas House. Photo: Doug Carr. Courtesy of the Dana-Thomas House Foundation

(above) *Vase* c.1902 in situ in the Dana-Thomas House. Photo: Doug Carr. Courtesy of the Dana-Thomas House Foundation

(right) The stained glass windows at the Dana-Thomas House. Photo: Doug Carr. Courtesy of the Dana-Thomas House Foundation





weather. Interestingly, the colour was also chosen as it was considered restful to the eye and soothing to the nerves. As Gates described it, 'Mat (sic) glazes have found most favor at the works, since these have been found to give the best crystalline effect, not glossy or refractive, but pleasing and velvety to the eye and to the touch'.[3]

Gates was keen that his new Teco range reflected an emerging modernist sensibility in which their attraction lay in their cleanly expressed forms and monochromatic glazes, not in any superfluous ornament. Many of his forms were botanically inspired, reflective of the Art Nouveau style which was at its height at the turn of the twentieth century. From his previous work with architectural terracotta, Gates had worked closely with architects and designers from the Chicago Architectural Club. Following the launch of his new Teco range Gates began exhibiting his vases at the Club's annual exhibitions, many of which had been designed by some of the leading Prairie School architects.

Interestingly, Wright was not a member of this prestigious club but he exhibited regularly at their exhibitions. He designed just three vases for Gates's Teco range but all are exceptional in their architectural conception, their geometric complexity and their monumental scale. They stand completely apart from the rest of the Teco range and should really be considered in the context of architectural models or sculpture rather than as ornamental vases. In many ways they are illustrative of Wright's disappointment with American studio ceramics at the time, of which he later wrote, 'We seem to have little or nothing to say in the clay figure or pottery vase as concrete expression of the ideal of beauty that is our own'.[4] By which he was referring to his deep desire to create a uniquely American style of architecture and design, wholly apart from Western design principles with their classical foundations. Wright's monumental vase for the Dana House is certainly this and repays close observation for its sophisticated design, its shift in form from an octagonal rim to a square base with angled, canted corners, its play with three-dimensional ornament and the subtle beauty of its velvety green glaze.

AMANDA DUNSMORE IS NGV SENIOR CURATOR, INTERNATIONAL DECORATIVE ARTS & ANTIQUITIES. IMOGEN MALLIA-VALIJAN IS NGV CURATORIAL PROJECT OFFICER, INTERNATIONAL DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN.

SEE FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S *VASE* C. 1902 ON LEVEL 2 AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ALONG WITH OTHER WORKS BY THE AMERICAN ARCHITECT. THE NGV WARMLY THANKS KRYSTYNA CAMPBELL-PRETTY AM AND FAMILY FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

Window above the *Moonchildren Fountain* in the Dana-Thomas House. Photograph by Doug Carr, Courtesy of the Dana-Thomas House Foundation

N G V

WATERCOLOUR COUNTRY: 100 WORKS FROM HERMANNSBURG

THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA, FED SQUARE
27 OCT 2023 – 14 APR 2024

FREE ENTRY

Peter Taylor Tjutjatja *Ghost gums* c. 1975 (detail).
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Gift of Darvell M. Hutchinson AM through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2022
© estate of the artist | Aboriginal Artists Agency Ltd. Photo: Predrag Cancar/NGV





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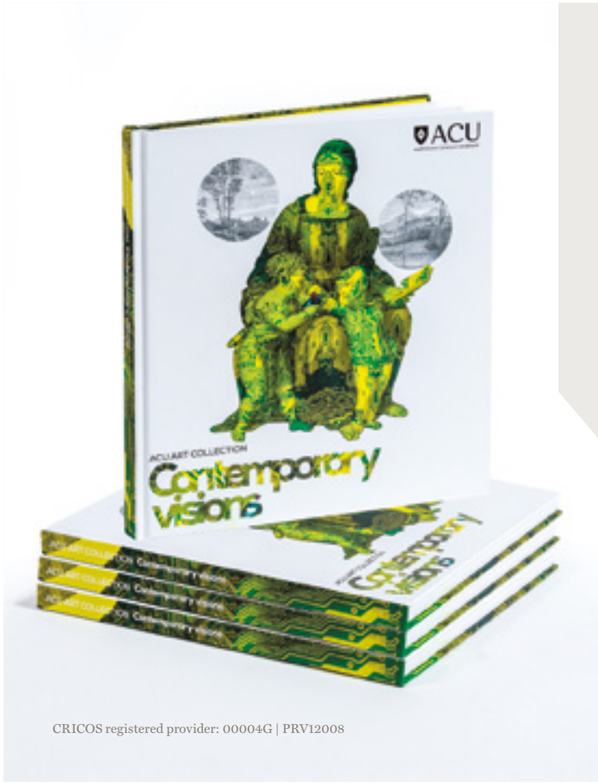
Gilbert & George, ***Union Dance***, (detail) 2008, from the series JACK FREAK PICTURES. Courtesy ARNDT Collection. © Gilbert & George.

sam
Shepparton Art Museum
sheppartonartmuseum.com.au



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Contemporary visions: works from the ACU Art Collection

Contemporary visions is the third volume in a superbly illustrated book series showcasing some of the highlights of the ACU Art Collection.

Published by Australian Catholic University (ACU), 2022, pp. 120, 64 mainly colour illustrations, cover image: Chris Orr, *Motherboard Portal (Verde)*, 2019 (detail) archival pigment ink on rag, bespoke acrylic frame (acid green), H 60 x W 50.5 cm, acquired 2020, Managing editor: Caroline Field, Curator, ACU Art Collection

RRP $45 (P&P $15 within Australia)
ISBN: 978-1-922325-12-9

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

ACU
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A Museum of Australian Photography (MAPh) touring exhibition

28 October - 10 December 2023

Albert TUCKER, Joy and friends (detail) c. 1983
from the series *Early works* 1928–47,
oil on composition board, 81.5 x 122.0 cm,
Courtesy Albert and Barbara Tucker Foundation

wangarattaartgallery.com.au

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TOWN HALL GALLERY
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Image: John Brack, 'The Yarra at Kew', 1946,
oil on board, 46.5 x 57.5 cm, Town Hall Gallery Collection.

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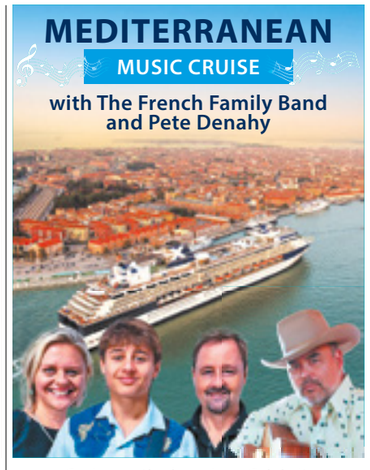

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MAKING NEWS



X-RAY DISCOVERIES IN *THE GARDEN OF PAN* 1886–87 BY EDWARD BURNE-JONES

Carl Villis

In July and August this year the NGV's much-loved Salon Gallery, featuring hundreds of paintings and sculptures from the nineteenth century, characteristically stacked in the European and United Kingdom style of the era, was temporarily closed to enable gallery maintenance. The closure period provided the NGV conservation and photography teams with a rare opportunity to x-ray and photograph many works that had been on display for an extended period. More than forty paintings, were analysed before returning to display. The operation was assisted by a new digital X-ray system, which enables paintings to be X-rayed rapidly.

The X-radiographs are valuable records of both the condition of the works and the materials and techniques that went into the making of each, and in some cases they provide new insight into the artist's working method. In the case of Edward Burne-Jones's *The Garden of Pan* 1886–87, the radiography revealed numerous adjustments made by the artist to the limbs of the figures of Adam and Eve, demonstrating how the poses were gradually worked into shape throughout the painting of the work.

NGV CONSERVATION AND ART SERVICES TEAMS TRIAL GREAT WRAP'S COMPOSTABLE HAND-PALLET WRAP

Janelle Borig

The Melbourne-based company Great Wrap displayed its 100 percent home compostable cling film, and dispensers, on the six-metre high scaffold 'Design Wall' as part of the recent exhibition *Melbourne Now*. At the conclusion of the exhibition, the wrap served another important purpose, with NGV conservation and art services teams purchasing and trialing rolls of Great Wrap's compostable hand-pallet wrap to safely secure selected adjunct items loaned for the display as they were being returned to lenders.

Like the slightly thinner cling film, the pallet wrap is made from food waste and will break down in a composting environment in about 180 days. Recipients of items secured in the wrap were provided with information regarding disposal. The bioplastic pallet wrap proved to be easy to use and comparable in price to the regular petro-plastic wrap many people are accustomed to. The wrap was a great way to meet logistical needs and also continue to help reduce our environmental impact.

NGV TRIENNIAL 2023 KIDS EXHIBITION, *RIFIFI: JEAN JULLIEN FOR KIDS* 2023

Misha Agzarian

NGV Triennial 2023 is set to enthral young visitors with its dedicated NGV Kids exhibition *RIFIFI: Jean Jullien for Kids,* which features the work of the celebrated French graphic artist Jean Jullien. Ensuring that our youngest audiences have the opportunity to engage with and enjoy *NGV Triennial* 2023, *RIFIFI* will enliven the NGV children's gallery with playful and imaginative colours and design. The NGV sincerely thanks the dedicated supporters who have championed this wonderful exhibition, and we recognise the Solomon Family Foundation, Officeworks, City of Melbourne, and Spencer Ko for their collective support.

The presentation of this extraordinary exhibition is only possible through the support of our philanthropic community, who share our vision of making art accessible for people of all ages. Championed by the Solomon Family Foundation, with the steadfast support of Officeworks, City of Melbourne and Spencer Ko, children and families will be invited to reflect upon the world created by Jullien, who is known for his observations on daily life through a creative, imaginative lens.

We look forward to audiences experiencing this fun and inclusive interactive space over summer.

ALWAYS LIVE RETURNS TO THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA

Tori Dinardo

Back by popular demand, ALWAYS LIVE returns to The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia on Sunday 26 November, presenting *Emma Donovan & Friends: Live and Acoustic*, in partnership with NGV. Featuring performances from a line-up curated by Donovan, this event is set to showcase First Nations music, storytelling, and cultural heritage. The performances will be held within *Wurrdha Marra*, the new display of First Nations art at NGV Australia.

Emma Donovan is a highly celebrated, ARIA-nominated, award-winning Indigenous singer and songwriter who has been touring the country for more than twenty years, performing soulful songs, and sharing powerful stories with audiences around the globe. Joining her will be kee'ahn, Kiwat Kennel, Maylene Yinnar, Janaya Roach and Katie Aspel. All are welcome to listen, learn and experience the magic of music and culture at this free, family-friendly event.



(p. 98) **Edward Burne-Jones** *The garden of Pan* 1886–87, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Felton Bequest. This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

(right) Emma Donovan. Photo: Tobias Titz

DESIGN STORE

2023 NGV holiday gift guide

Looking for the perfect holiday present? Find something uniquely special at the NGV design store with a curated range of gifts by the best Australian and international makers.



THE CAKER, CAKE KITS, $39.95

Created by New Zealand–born, Los Angeles-based baker, Jordan Randel, *The Caker* cake kits make baking easy, playful and delicious. Cake kits come complete with decorations, and don't use any artificial food colouring or fondant.



DINOSAUR DESIGNS, HOMEWARES SELECTIONS, FROM $50.00

Australian-made Dinosaur Designs is globally recognised for its continual fusion of contemporary art and design, creating iconic, brightly coloured resin homewares.



CRA-YON, EAU DE PARFUM, $143

Founded in Sweden by Niclas and Christine Lydeen, CRA-YON has perfected the art of perfume making without compromise – offering fun and relevant fragrances with a modern twist.



ISLE OF EDEN, SUNGLASSES, $189

Isle of Eden aims to create bold eyewear featuring stylish and contemporary designs with a focus on quality and sustainability.

Members receive a 10 per cent discount when shopping at NGV design store. Premium Members receive a 15 per cent discount. Scan to join NGV Members to enjoy discounts.



MUD AUSTRALIA CERAMICS, FROM $25.00

Celebrating elegant and timeless design, Mud Australia offers a range of handmade porcelain homewares. Shop a selection of pieces in varying colourways at NGV International and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.



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***NGV Triennial* 2023**

NGV

RRP: $89.95

At a time when rapid and seismic global change is no longer unprecedented, the third *NGV Triennial* exhibition is a moment to reflect on the complex tapestry of our world through the work of more than 100 artists and designers.

The *NGV Triennial* 2023 is based on three thematic pillars: Matter, Magic and Memory. Matter looks at nature, materials and making, Magic reveals how spirituality has shaped the world around us, and Memory shines a light on the people, places and objects – and their histories – that have made and remade our world.

This publication includes dialogues, reflections and commentary from more than fifty writers and presents readers with an opportunity to explore diverse cultures and belief systems, reflect on histories and envision shared futures.

This publication has been generously supported by Wendy and Paul Bonnici and family.

Available and instore and online at the NGV design store via NGV.Melbourne/store

Also on display

Photography: Real and Imagined



Photography: Real and Imagined examines two perspectives on photography; photography grounded in the real world, as a record, a document, a reflection of the world around us; and photography as the product of imagination, storytelling and illusion. On occasion, photography operates in both realms of the real and the imagined.

Highlighting major photographic works from the NGV Collection, including recent acquisitions on display for the very first time, *Photography: Real and Imagined* examines the complex, engaging and sometimes contradictory nature, of all things photographic.

This landmark exhibition is the largest survey of the NGV's photography collection in the institution's history and features more than 270 photographs by Australian and international photographers and artists working with photo media, including works by Max Dupain, Nan Goldin, Zanele Muholi and Man Ray.

SEE *PHOTOGRAPHY REAL AND IMAGINED* ON LEVEL 3 AT THE IAN POTTER CENTRE: NGV AUSTRALIA UNTIL 4 FEBRUARY 2024. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION SCAN THE CODE.

In The Next Issue

Continued coverage of *NGV Triennial*

In the next issue we dive deeper into *NGV Triennial* 2023 with more features, interviews and curator selections including French graphic designer and illustrator Jean Jullien, who has created a fantastical world of underwater creatures for the *Triennial* 2023 kids exhibition, and Polish-American artist and writer Agnieszka Pilat, who has joined forces with multiple Boston Dynamics robots for the newly commissioned landmark work, *Hetrobota*, 2023.

We'll also be sharing other events and exhibitions to catch at NGV International and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia this summer, along with the stories of some exciting new works to join the Collection.

NGV TRIENNIAL 2023 OPENS AT NGV INTERNATIONAL ON 3 DECEMBER. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS FREE EXHIBITION VISIT NGV.MELBOURNE/TRIENNIAL. *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023 IS SUPPORTED BY PRESENTING PARTNER CREATIVE VICTORIA, PRINCIPAL PARTNER MERCEDES-BENZ AND MAJOR PARTNERS CHADSTONE – THE FASHION CAPITAL, TELSTRA, MECCA AND DEAKIN UNIVERSITY.

THE NGV SINCERELY THANKS TRIENNIAL CHAMPIONS: FELTON BEQUEST, JULY CAO, BARRY JANES & PAUL CROSS, LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND, NGVWA, AND NEVILLE & DIANA BERTALLI, AND WE RECOGNISE ALL GENEROUS SUPPORTERS TO *NGV TRIENNIAL* 2023.

Nan Goldin *Misty in Sheridan Square, NYC* 1991, printed 2015, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased NGV Foundation, 2015
© Nan Goldin, courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery

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People

















1. Brendan McClements, Chief Executive Officer, Visit Victoria, Janet Whiting AM, Chair of the Council of Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, Steve Dimopoulos MP, Victorian Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events; Minister for Outdoor Recreation and Minister for the Environment, Consul General of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Melbourne, Mr Yasser Hashem, and Tony Ellwood AM, Director NGV at the *Pharaoh* announcement. Photo: Eugene Hyland **2.** Katrina Knowles and Vivien Knowles at the Supporters *NGV Triennial* 2023 Lecture. Photo: Carmen Zammit **3.** Kevin Fong and Zoe Zhu at the NGV Foundation event, *Drawing in the Salon*. Photo: Martin Wurt **4.** Claire Piltz, Lynda McLary-Smith and Marty Smith at an NGV Business Council event **5.** Annie Smithers, chef, and Sophie McHugh, NGV, present an in-conversation and exclusive dining experience for NGV Members at Garden Restaurant. Photo: Tobias Titz **6.** Natasha Gaudiano and Kuba Lecki at the NGV Foundation event, *Drawing in the Salon*. Photo: Martin Wurtt **7.** Vice-Chancellor, Duncan Maskell, speaking at University of Melbourne Alumni event **8.** Chloe White and Sasha McGregor at the NGVWA Spring Lunch 2023. Photo: Guy Lavoipierre courtesy of Kay & Burton, Principal Event Partner, NGVWA **9.** Brigitte Hafner, Peter Kudelka, Tania Brougham, President of the NGVWA, Annie Smithers, Gemima Cody, and Kate Reid, at the NGVWA Spring Lunch 2023. Photo: Guy Lavoipierre courtesy of Kay & Burton, Principal Event Partner, NGVWA

AROUND VICTORIA



TONES OF HOME

Until 25 November
Venue Arts Project Australia
Level 1, Perry Street Building, Collingwood Yards, Collingwood

artsproject.org.au

Drawing together artists from Arts Project Australia (APA), Melbourne, regional Victoria, and north Queensland, this exhibition presents works inspired by domestic and urban spaces and extends beyond these settings to consider 'what makes a place, a home?', touching on notions of family, community, belonging, connection, love, comfort, safety and personal histories.

Featuring APA artists Amani Tia, Anthony Romagnano, Chris Mason, Chris O'Brien, Georgia Szmerling, Lisa Reid, Miles Howard-Wilks and Steven Ajzenberg alongside Atong Atem, Kenton Davey, Ron McBurnie, Erub Arts, Cooper + Spowart and Susie Buykx, *Tones of Home* is curated by Eric Nash, Director Benalla Art Gallery.

WEATHER/Whether

9 November – 7 January 2024
Venue Wyndham Art Gallery
177 Watton Street, Werribee

wyndham.vic.gov.au

Curated by Dr Megan Evans and Olivia Poloni *WEATHER/Whether* looks at the effects of climate change and the weather on our lived experience. How are we coming to terms with the weather we are experiencing and what might be coming in our future? Do we adapt, resist, control or ignore these major weather incidents that are happening more and more often? *WEATHER/Whether* provides a glimpse into a creative way to address current concerns and how creative power can incite change.

Featuring artists Alison Bennett, Peta Clancy, Megan Cope, Jessie French, Cara Johnson, Gomathi Suresh, Keg de Souza and Mandy Quadrio.

THE SUN SHINING ULTRAVIOLETLY ONE DAY UPON THE PROTEAN SEA

11 November – 11 February 2024
Venue Latrobe Regional Gallery
138 Commercial Road, Morwell

latroberegionalgallery.com

The creative practice of printmaker Heather Shimmen is a world occupied by a vivid assemblage of characters from both Western mythology and Australian history, dancing a precarious line between truth and fantasy. Her detailed and imaginative figurations of humans (often women), flora and fauna often reconfigure and metamorphise into combinations of the three. A prolific maker who pushes the boundaries of the print, Shimmen presents a suite of new works in this large solo presentation at Latrobe Regional Gallery.

WORLDS OF INFINITE POSSIBILITY

17 November – 18 February 2024
Venue Horsham Regional Art Gallery
80 Wilson Street, Horsham

horshamtownhall.com.au

Worlds of Infinite Possibility sees six leading contemporary sculptors from across Australia inhabit the halls of Horsham Regional Art Gallery with their own unique sculptural worlds. Adventure through a series of wonderful and magical lands created by Jenny Orchard, Vipoo Srivilasa, Mark Eliott, Eliza-Jane Gilchrist, Stephen Bird and Tom Moore, where you will meet a variety of creatures in ceramic, porcelain, glass and cardboard.

WITH THANKS TO THE PUBLIC GALLERIES ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA. VISIT PGAV.ORG.AU FOR MORE EXHIBITIONS.

Chris O'Brien *My Nan's Holiday House*
2018 © Chris O'Brien



Image: Roger Byrt, *Glacial Cave* 2023, oil on linen
Photography by Andrew Curtis

Roger Byrt
Melting

cbOne Gallery
11 Nov - 02 Dec

Featuring Roger Byrt's new subterranean paintings of melting glacial caves, accompanied with a sound composition by Barb Byrt.

cbOne Gallery
1c Marine Parade
Abbotsford VIC 3067

cbOne
chapmanbailey.com.au

LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

(cover)
Mexican designer Fernando Laposse
Courtesy: Fernando Laposse. Photo © Pepe Molina

p.5
Ryan Gander
England born 1976
The end 2020
silicone rubber, nylon (flock), silicone paint, plastic, fibreglass, brass, aluminium, steel, composition board, electronic components, electrical components, existing wall, sound
ed. 3/3
16 min 24 sec (animation and audio)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Vivien and Graham Knowles, 2023
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin
© Ryan Gander. Photo: George Darrell

p. 5
Kaylene Whiskey, Kaylene Whiskey
Yankunytjatjara, b. 1976, Mparntwe/ Alice Springs
Cher on Country 2023
Acrylic on found book page.
The NGV warmly thanks MECCA for supporting the acquisition of these works.

p. 7
Frank Lloyd Wright (designer)
United States 1867–1959
Gates Pottery (Teco Pottery)
Terra Cotta (manufacturer)
United States 1886–1930
Vase c. 1902
earthenware
61.5 × 29.0 × 29.3 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

pp. 18–19
Elmgreen & Dragset, Copenhagen and Berlin
Denmark est. 1995, Germany since 1997
Michael Elmgreen
Denmark born 1961, lived in Germany 1997–
Ingar Dragset
Norway born 1969, lived in Germany 1997–
What's left, fig. 2 2023
silicone, fabric, metal
(variable) (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2023
© Elmgreen & Dragset

p. 23
Yinka Shonibare
England born 1962
Hybrid sculpture (Sphinx) 2021
synthetic polymer paint on fibreglass, wood, shells
(a-b) 224.0 × 60.0 × 116.0 cm (overall)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Helen and Michael Gannon, Sophie Gannon and Frazer East, and NGV Foundation, 2021
(2021.782.a-b)
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin
© Yinka Shonibare

p. 24
Ilana Savdie
Columbia born 1986
Chronic irritations (Collective edging) 2022
oil, synthetic polymer paint and beeswax on canvas on wood panel
218.4 × 304.8 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Byoung Ho Son, 2023
© Ilana Savdie

p. 25
John Gerrard
Ireland born 1974
Flare (Oceania) 2022
colour digital simulation, silent (looped)
Courtesy the artist, Uili Lousi and Pace Gallery, New York
© 2023 John Gerrard / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

p. 26
Thomas J Price
England born 1981
All in 2021
bronze, silicon
ed. 2/3
369.0 × 128.0 × 85.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Neville and Diana Bertalli and Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, 2023
© Thomas J Price. Photo: Ken Adlard

p. 27
Richard Lewer
New Zealand born 1970, lived in Australia 1997–
Out of the ground God formed all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to man and asked him to name each living creature. He gave names to all the livestock, wild animals and birds in the sky. 2022 from the *Adam and Eve* series 2022
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
152.6 × 152.7 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide
Proposed acquisition, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists
© Richard Lewer, Hugo Michell Gallery

p. 28
Tyler Mitchell
Albany, Georgia 2021
Bowness Family Fund for Photography, 2022
Courtesy of the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York
© Tyler Mitchell, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

p. 29
Mas Agung Wilis Yudha Baskoro
Commuters line up waiting for a train at Manggarai station, South Jakarta 2023, from the *Megacities* project
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
This project is supported by the Orloff Family Charitable Trust, and Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2023. Courtesy of the artist © Mas Agung Wilis Yudha Baskoro

pp. 32–3
Fernando Laposse
Mexico born 1988
The avocado legacy. Deforestation, revolution, a new beginning 2023
from the *Conflict Avocados* project 2023
avocado-dyed cotton, marigold-dyed cotton
265.0 × 3740.0 × 1.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Andrew and Geraldine Buxton Foundation, 2023
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin
This project is proudly supported by Mercedes-Benz
© Fernando Laposse

p. 34
Fernando Laposse
Mexico born 1988
Avocado leather cabinet 2023 (detail), from the *Conflict Avocados* project 2023
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Andrew and Geraldine Buxton Foundation, 2023
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin.
This project is proudly supported by Mercedes-Benz
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p. 35
Fernando Laposse
Mexico born 1988
Resting place 2023, from the *Conflict Avocados* project 2023
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Andrew and Geraldine Buxton Foundation, 2023
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pp. 44
Prudence Flint
Second Banana 2022
oil on linen
135 × 107 cm
Photo: Mark Ashkanasy
The NGV gratefully acknowledges Bruce Parncutt AO and Celebration Donors in supporting works by Prudence Flint presented in *NGV Triennial*
© Prudence Flint. Courtesy of the artist

p. 48
Song Wei
China born 1980
Hamburger with dragon and phoenix 2022
synthetic polymer paint on brass
23.0 × 23.0 × 23.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Thomas Bridge, 2023 (2023.238)
© Song Wei

p. 50
Li Lihong
China born 1974
McDonald's 2009
porcelain
38.0 × 14.0 × 42.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Connie Kimberley and Craig Kimberley OAM, 2022
© Li Lihong

p. 51
Lin Fanglu
China born 1989
She's four seasons 2023
cotton, wood
65.0 × 600.0 × 350.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Vicki Vidor OAM, Ginny Green and Bindy Koadlow, 2023
© Lin Fanglu 林芳璐

p. 54
Freda Ali
Burarra-Martay born 1972
Freda Wayartja Ali
Burarra-Martay born 1959
Maureen Ali
Burarra-Martay born 1978
Cecille Baker
Burarra-Martay born 1980
Michelle Baker
Burarra born 1971
Bonnie Burarngarra
Burarra/Yan-nhaŋu born 1985
Gabriella Garrimara
Burarra-Martay born 1984
Doreen Jinggarrabarra
Burarra Anbarra born 1961
Lorna Jin-gubarrangunyja
Burarra-Martay born 1952
Indra Prudence
Burarra-Martay born 1980
Jennifer Prudence
Burarra-Martay born 1973
Zoe Prudence
Burarra-Martay born 1990
Anthea Stewart
Burarra-Martay born 1981
Mun-dirra (*Maningrida fish fence*) 2023
Pandanus (*Pandanus Spiralis*), natural dyes
(1–10) 450.0 × 1911.0 × 1911.0 cm (variable) (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Lisa Fox, 2023
This project has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin
© The artists and Maningrida Arts and Culture

pp. 58–9
Smac McCreanor
Australia born 1992, lived in the United States 2013–
Hydraulic press girl 2020
multi-channel colour digital video, sound (variable) (looped)
Courtesy of the artist
© Smac McCreanor

p. 61
Ryan Gander
England born 1976
The end 2020
silicone rubber, nylon (flock), silicone paint, plastic, fibreglass, brass, aluminium, steel, composition board, electronic components, electrical components, existing wall, sound
ed. 3/3
16 min 24 sec (animation and audio)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Vivien and Graham Knowles, 2023
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin
© Ryan Gander

p. 64
Nic Brunsdon (architecture studio)
Australia est. 2019
ENESS (fabricator)
Australia est. 1997
(This is) Air 2023
synthetic fabric, steel, plywood, electric motors, electronic components, water ballast
1450.0 cm diameter
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
This project is proudly supported by Macquarie Group and RMIT University
© Nic Brunsdon

p. 69
Kaylene Whiskey
Yankunytjatjara, b. 1976, Mparntwe/ Alice Springs
Cher on Country 2023
acrylic on found book page.
The NGV warmly thanks MECCA for supporting the acquisition of these works

p. 75
Kaylene Whiskey
Yankunytjatjara, b. 1976
Mparntwe/Alice Springs
Kaylene on Country 2023
acrylic on found book page
Purchased with funds donated by Jo Horgan AM and MECCA Brands, 2023
The NGV warmly thanks MECCA for supporting the acquisition of these works.

p. 72
Edwin Landseer
Scene from A Midsummer Night's Dream. Titania and Bottom 1848–51
oil on canvas
82.0 × 133.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1932 (4658-3)
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

p. 74
Philippe Mercier
Falstaff at the Boar's Head Tavern c. 1738
oil on canvas
130.7 × 162.5 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Wendy King through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

p. 80
Peter Upward
Pacific 1972–73
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Asia Upward through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023
© Estate of the artist

p. 84
England
Jacket 1895
linen
86.0 cm (bust), 61.0 cm (waist)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

p. 86
Eugène Grasset
The four-leaf clover brand by Georges Richard, cycles and automobiles 1899
(*Le Trèfle à 4 feuilles de la marque Georges Richard, cycles and automobiles*)
poster: colour lithograph
36.8 × 51.2 cm (image) 44.0 × 60.4 cm (support)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1970
P65-1970
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of the Joe White Bequest

p. 88
Frank Lloyd Wright (designer)
American 1867–1959
Gates Pottery (Teco Pottery), Terra Cotta (manufacturer)
American 1886–1930
Vase c. 1902
stoneware
61.5 × 29.0 × 29.3 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2023

p. 98
Edward Burne-Jones
The garden of Pan 1886–87
oil on canvas
152.5 × 186.9 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1919 (961-3)
This digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

p. 102
Nan Goldin
Misty in Sheridan Square, NYC 1991, printed 2015
cibachrome photograph
76.0 × 102.0 cm (sheet)
ed. 20/25
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2015 (2015.395)
© Nan Goldin, courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery

p. 106
Chris O'Brien
My Nan's Holiday House 2018
foam material and wool
12.0 × 35.0 × 29.0 cm
© Chris O'Brien

LIST OF REPRODUCED WORKS AND END NOTES

END NOTES

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Matter Matters
1. D. Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World* [Vintage, New York] 1996, pp. 11-3
2. Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World* [University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota], 2013, p. 23.
3. Jakob von Uexküll, *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: with A Theory of Meaning* [University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota], 2010. p. 40

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Tradition and the new in China
1. Monica Juneja, "Global Art History and the 'Burden of Representation,'" *Global Studies: Mapping Contemporary Art and Culture*, 2011, p.281.
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4. Wayne Crothers, "Consumption of Tradition," in *NGV Triennial 2023* (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 2023), p.66.
5. Crothers, p.66.
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7. Burchmore, p.59.
8. Alex Burchmore, *New Export China: Translations across Time and Place in Contemporary Chinese Porcelain Art* (California: University of California Press, 2023), p.9, <https://doi.org/10.1525/9780520392571>, date accessed 12 September 2023.
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Jacket c.1895
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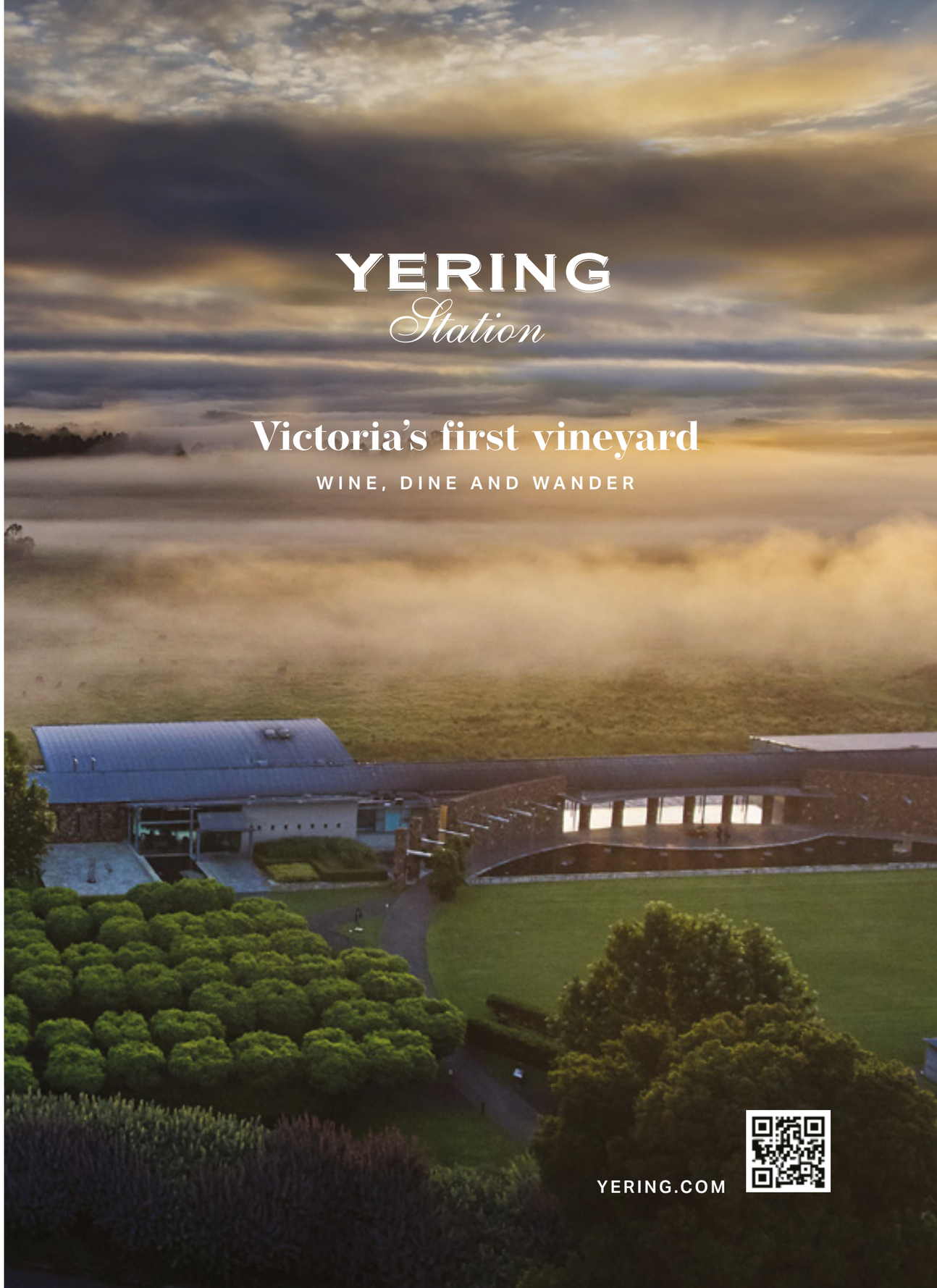

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