

# *Hugh Hayden*

AT NGV TRIENNIAL

# NGV MAGAZINE

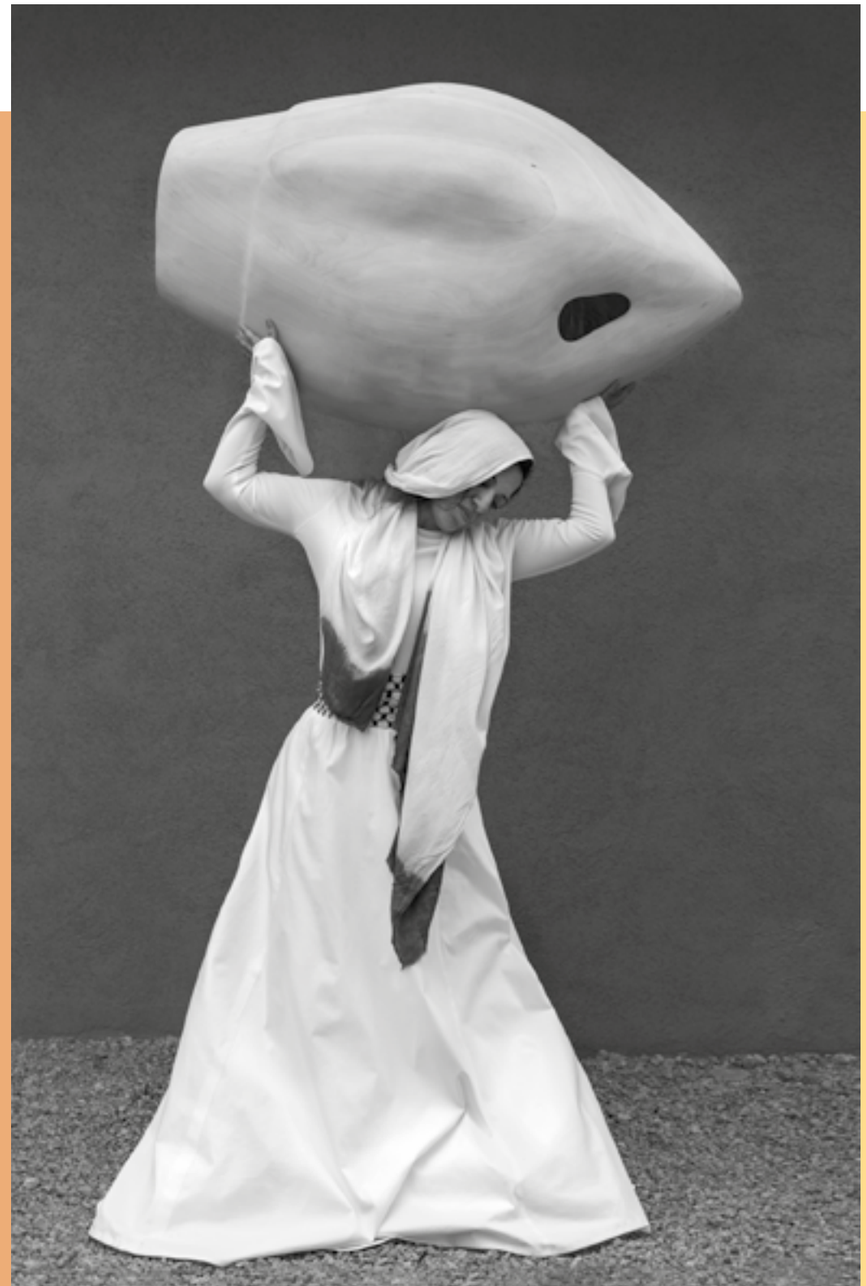
ISSUE 45
MAR–APR 2024
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**19 MAY 2024**

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Courtesy of the artist

**IMAGE BELOW**
**Pushpamala N**
Born Bengaluru, India, 1956
*Karuna (Pathos)* from *The Navarasa suite* from the *Bombay Photo Studio* series
2000-03
Gelatin silver photograph, sepia-toned on paper. 72.3 x 55.9 cm
Purchased 2004. The Queensland Government's Gallery of Modern Art Acquisitions Fund
Collection: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art. © Pushpamala N
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Image: *Feathers, Kalorama* 2023 oil on linen 70 x 52 cm
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**Image details:** *Beyond Tyrrell*, 2023, oil on canvas, 150x120cm **Photographer:** Viki Petherbridge

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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) **Hugh Hayden** with his work *The end*, 2022, on display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International. Photo: Tim Carrafa. This work is supported by the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin.

(p. 6, above) **Hugh Hayden** with his work *The end*, 2022, on display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International. Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin Photo: Tim Carrafa

(p. 6, below) **Hulda Guzmán** *Daily ceremony* 2022 (detail), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by anonymous donors and NGV Foundation, 2022. Courtesy the artist; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London; and Alexander Berggruen, New York. © Hulda Guzmán. Photo: Predrag Cancar/NGV

(above) **Emma Soyer** *The escape: a young girl with a bird cage* 1836. Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024






## From the NGV

Welcome to the NGV and to the final issue of *NGV Magazine* focused on NGV Triennial. The NGV Triennial 2023 has been a remarkable journey and it is heartening to see so many members of our community embrace the diversity of art and design on offer, and take part in exciting events such as the recent Triennial EXTRA festival, which drew more than 39,000 visitors to the exhibition across ten nights in January. We are grateful for your support.

It is also with much gratitude that I acknowledge the many supporters who have contributed philanthropically and as trusted partners to the Triennial and I thank NGV Triennial Champions: Felton Bequest, July Cao, Barry Janes & Paul Cross, Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, NGVWA, and Neville & Diana Bertalli. I also recognise the generous contributions made by NGV Triennial Lead Supporters, Major Supporters, Triennial Supporters, Triennial Circle, and Bequest Support. I also thank Presenting Partner Creative Victoria, Principal Partner Mercedes-Benz, Major Partners CHADSTONE, Telstra, MECCA and Deakin University, Design Partner RMIT and Learning Partner La Trobe University for their support of NGV Triennial 2023.

In this issue, we explore the work of several artists in the exhibition, including Diana Al-Hadid, Lehuauakea, Diedrick Brackens, Petrit Halijaj, Shakuntala Kulkarni and more. We also revisit the sell-out conversation event with Tracey Emin CBE RA and the host of ABC's *Q+A* program Patricia Karvelas in an edited transcript from the event. Dominican artist Hulda Guzman also writes especially for *NGV Magazine* about her work *Daily Ceremony*.

The Triennial celebrates the contributions of our global creative community to our experience of the world in which we live. It serves as a moment to pause and reflect on the role of art and design in creating change. With this in mind I also suggest you stop by The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia at Federation Square, to see *Top Arts 2024*, opening 14 March, and experience the work of our next generation of artists. Now in its thirtieth year, and for the first time, showcasing student work from the new VCE subjects Art-making and Exhibiting and Art Creative Practice, *Top Arts* shows the work of more than 40 VCE students across Victoria. It is inspiring and hopeful to see such dedication, passion and commitment to the future of our creative sector.

**Tony Ellwood AM**
Director

New artists and stories to discover in the NGV Collection are at the centre of this issue of *NGV Magazine*. As NGV Triennial 2023 comes to a close on 7 April, Texas-born artist and architect Hugh Hayden discusses his works, *The end*, 2022, and *The Cosby's*, 2020. Hayden selects his materials not just for aesthetic appeal, but also for the layers of symbolism contained in the origins of materials as diverse as timber and cast iron. On page 18, Hayden shares his hopes to change viewers' thoughts on more complex ideas of class, race, education and cultural assimilation through his work.
The NGV extends warm thanks to Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund and The Fleischner Family Charitable Foundation for their support in enabling these works to join the NGV Collection, as well as the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin for supporting the artist.

Also in this issue, we consider other fascinating and significant works recently joining the NGV Collection. These include First Nations works from emerging and established artists such as Kent Morris. Commissioned for the *Melbourne Now Print Folio*, Morris's work *Unvanished – Yalukit Willam* (*St Kilda*) *– rainbow lorikeet*, 2023, joins a genealogy of his photographs that stress the lack of First Nations cultural representation in urban spaces. The NGV thanks the Supporters of Prints and Drawings for generously acquiring the work for the Collection.

The NGV also welcomed eighteen works of Gucci fashion from c. 2000–17, including *Look 20, dress*, spring–summer 2016, which you can read about on page 43, and two porcelain works by artist Geng Xue, which subvert traditional Chinese art practices, as explained on page 45. We wish to thank the Supporters of Asian Art for generously supporting the acquisition of Xue's work and Olga Kononchuk for generously donating the Gucci fashion into the Collection.

*Botanical Gardens, Melbourne*, 1869, by Emmeline Pritchard is another important recent acquisition made with the generous support of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family. Read on page 38 about Pritchard and her work and find out more about the location of its subject matter in the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, still visible more than 150 years after the painting was made.

As always, we hope you enjoy these stories and more from the NGV and encourage you to see all these works as they are displayed in the coming months at NGV International and The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

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

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# Annemieke Mein

## A LIFE'S WORK

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## Contributors

DR LIISA-RÁVNÁ FINBOG
*Oslo/Vaapste/Skánit*

Dr Liisa-Rávná Finbog is an Indigenous Sámi scholar, curator and duojár from Oslo/Vaapste/Skánit, on the Norwegian side of the border. She has a postdoctoral degree in mediated arctic geographies from Tampere University, is an external curator to KORO and was part of the curatorial team for *aabaakwad* 2022 and the Sámi Pavilion at the 2022 Venice Biennale.

HULDA GUZMÁN
*Santo Domingo*

Hulda Guzmán studied fine arts and illustration at Escuela de Diseño Altos de Chavón, La Romana, Dominican Republic (2002–4). Drawing on Surrealism, Mexican muralism and Caribbean folk traditions, Guzmán's junglescapes and studio scenes conjure portals to a mythical realm.

PATRICIA KARVELAS
*Melbourne*

Patricia Karvelas is an Australian radio presenter, current affairs journalist and political correspondent. Karvelas currently hosts RN Breakfast on Radio National.

DAN THAWLEY
*Paris*

Dan Thawley is an Australian journalist and editor based in Paris. From 2009 until 2023 he was editor-in-chief of the Belgian fashion title *A Magazine Curated By*, editing issues with acclaimed fashion designers. He has contributed reviews, essays and interviews to *Vogue*, *The Business of Fashion*, *Wallpaper**, *Architectural Digest* and *System Magazine*.

IRENE VÁZQUEZ
*New York City*

Irene Vázquez is a queer Black Mexican-American poet, translator, and journalist who writes at the intersection of Black cultural work, placemaking and the environment. Vázquez's debut chapbook *Take Me To the Water* was released by Bloof Books in October 2022. Their poetry also appears in *When Language Broke Open: Queer and Trans Black Writers of Latin American Descent*, University of Arizona Press, 2023.

SARAH WALKER
*Melbourne*

Sarah Walker is a writer, artist and photographer. Her writing is primarily creative non-fiction, considering issues of anxiety, control and intimacy. Her first book, *The First Time I Thought I Was Dying*, a collection of non-fiction essays about the unruly body in late capitalism, won the 2021 Quentin Bryce Award.

DR WENDY ELLA WRIGHT
*Adelaide*

Dr Wendy Ella Wright is a poet and literary translator whose 2007 thesis titled *Intangible Gifts* and its exegesis, 'Japan, the Love Story and Myself', was inspired by the Nobel Prize–winning speeches of Kawabata Yasunari and Ōe Kenzaburō. Her first published poem appeared in the *Tokyo Journal*, while she was living in Kamakura, at age twenty-three.

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Laurie Benson
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Sophie Prince
Beckett Rozentals
Elisa Scarton
Katie Somerville
Danielle Whitfield
Nakita Wilson

## Making News



### NGV ITALIA

Supported by the Italian Australian Foundation, *NGV Italia* is a new three-year series of events, learning and community programs that celebrate the indelible contribution of Italian artists and designers to global and Australian history and culture.

Drawing inspiration from the NGV collection of Italian art and design, which spans from the early Renaissance period through to the twenty-first century, *NGV Italia* offers all audiences the chance to learn about, understand and engage with Italian creativity, language and culture. *NGV Italia* will introduce audiences to works by great eighteenth-century Venetian painters Tiepolo, Canaletto and Bellotto; historical drawings and prints; vibrantly colourful Venetian glass from the island of Murano; early women artists Lavinia Fontana and Elisabetta Sirani; and icons of Italian modernist design from the twentieth century, including Ettore Sottsass and Massimo Vignelli.

Highlights from the 2024 program include *Chat Italiano* – after-hours sessions starting in March that invite participants to practise their language skills and deepen their appreciation of Italian art and design.

In April, the first of a new three-year annual lecture series, *Portraits of Italy*, premieres. Join art historians and scholars throughout this series as they explore Italy's magnificent art cities through works in the NGV Collection.

Further highlights include free monthly tours of the NGV's rich collection of Italian art offered in both English and Italian, and for seniors in the Italian-Australian community, *Coffee and Culture*, which includes tours presented in Italian followed by coffee and social conversation. Also, keep an eye out for regular school programming for all ages dedicated to Italian art, culture and design.

As part of *NGV Italia*, the NGV website hosts a dedicated online hub for Italian art and design, establishing a rich and lasting creative legacy for the program. View the hub at ngv.melbourne/ngv-italia

To find out more, scan the code.

### MELBOURNE WINTER MASTERPIECES® 2024 ANNOUNCED

This winter, the NGV partners with the British Museum to present *Pharaoh*, a landmark exhibition that celebrates three thousand years of ancient Egyptian art and culture. Through more than 500 works, including monumental sculpture, architecture, temple statuary, exquisite jewellery, papyri, coffins and a rich array of funerary objects, the exhibition will unpack the phenomenon of the pharaohs, those all-powerful kings claiming a divine origin.

From imagery on rings, bracelets and personal treasures, to statues and monuments of colossal scale, the pharaohs presented an idealised image of themselves as invincible warriors and fervent worshippers of the gods, who held a unique position as intermediaries between these divine beings and the rest of humanity. Nevertheless, behind these idealised representations the reality of kingship was much more complex. Not all the pharaohs were male, or even Egyptian. Through a carefully curated selection of exceptional works, *Pharaoh* will explore the realities, mythologies and iconographies of kingship in ancient Egypt.

Read more about *Pharaoh*, which opens at NGV International on 14 June in the next issue of *NGV Magazine*.

### 30 YEARS OF TOP ARTS

For three decades, this much-loved annual exhibition has provided a platform for the next generation of artists across Victoria to showcase their talent, passion and ingenuity. *Top Arts 2024* features the most exceptional work from students who have completed the new VCE study designs of Art Making and Exhibiting and Art Creative Practice. The exhibition promises a fascinating survey of the curious, creative and innovative spirit of young artists.

See *Top Arts* at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia from 14 March. For more information about this free exhibition, visit ngv.melbourne/top-arts-2024



### THE ART OF DYLAN MOONEY ON DISPLAY AT THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY, PARIS

More than twenty-five illustrative and hyper-colourful works by First Nations artist Dylan Mooney are on display exclusively in *Blak Rainbow* at the Australian Embassy in Paris, France.

A Yuwi, Torres Strait and South Sea Islander man hailing from Mackay in north Queensland, Mooney is a prominent figure among a group of emerging Blak artists who are using digital imaging technologies to create new forms of artistic expression. As an interdisciplinary artist, his work spans painting, printmaking, sculpture, digital illustration and drawing.

Legally blind, Mooney harnesses the power of digital media to create high-impact illustrations with vibrant and saturated colours that resonate with his keen interest in politics, activism and the fusion of digital technology and social commentary.

Fascinated by history, culture and his personal ancestral connections to place, Mooney's creative spark is ignited by community tales, current events and the ever-changing digital world. Drawing from his rich cultural heritage, Mooney uses his work to translate the stories passed down to him into bold contemporary art.

See *Blak Rainbow* at the Australian Embassy, Paris, until 24 May.

### MAARA COLLECTIVE AND JULIE SHAW IN COLLABORATION WITH BULA'BULA ARTS WIN INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AWARD 2023

The *Maayama-li dress* by Maara Collective and Julie Shaw in collaboration with Bula'Bula Arts has won Fashion Design of the Year at the latest International Design Awards (IDA).

Based out of Los Angeles, the IDA exist to recognise, celebrate and promote legendary design visionaries and to uncover emerging talent in architecture, interior, product, graphic and fashion design.

Evaluating submissions from almost eighty countries, members of the IDA jury commented on the incredibly high standard of design entries across the five award disciplines in 2023.

The *Maayama-li dress* was designed by First Nations designer Julie Shaw and made in collaboration with Aboriginal weavers of Bula'Bula Arts in remote Arnhem Land. A couture-inspired piece, the bodice was made using plant materials harvested from Country, using ancient traditional weaving techniques of the Yolŋu people. The skirt section was made from deadstock fabric, using couture draping techniques by seamstress and draper Alice Cliff. This dress is a celebration of artisans coming together to achieve a creative vision and represent the intersection of high fashion and Indigenous design.



Shaw was the recipient of the NGV's inaugural Indigenous Fashion Commission in 2023, for which she created this bespoke dress inspired by the golden age of couture.

The NGV warmly thanks Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family for their generous support.



### NGV CREATIVE STUDIO BRINGING CONTEMPORARY ART TO THE CLASSROOM

The NGV has teamed up with artists and designers from around Australia – including Kaylene Whiskey, Ashley Eriksmoen, Jessica Murtagh and Joshua Yeldham – to develop NGV Creative Studio workshops for school students. Launching in 2024, the programs combine an interactive tour of the Collection led by NGV educators with art-making in the Gallery's studios. Students will learn about the ideas and techniques that contemporary artists and designers explore in their works through hands-on activities they have specially designed.

Covering topics including cultural icons, personal narratives, mindful artmaking and more, NGV Creative Studio offers a unique opportunity for visiting schools to learn about contemporary Australian art and design and connects creative practitioners with classroom curriculum. Educators can access information on NGV Creative Studio by scanning the code.

(above) Italian Australian Foundation with NGV curator Dr Ted Gott. Photo: al. Photo: Josh Scott

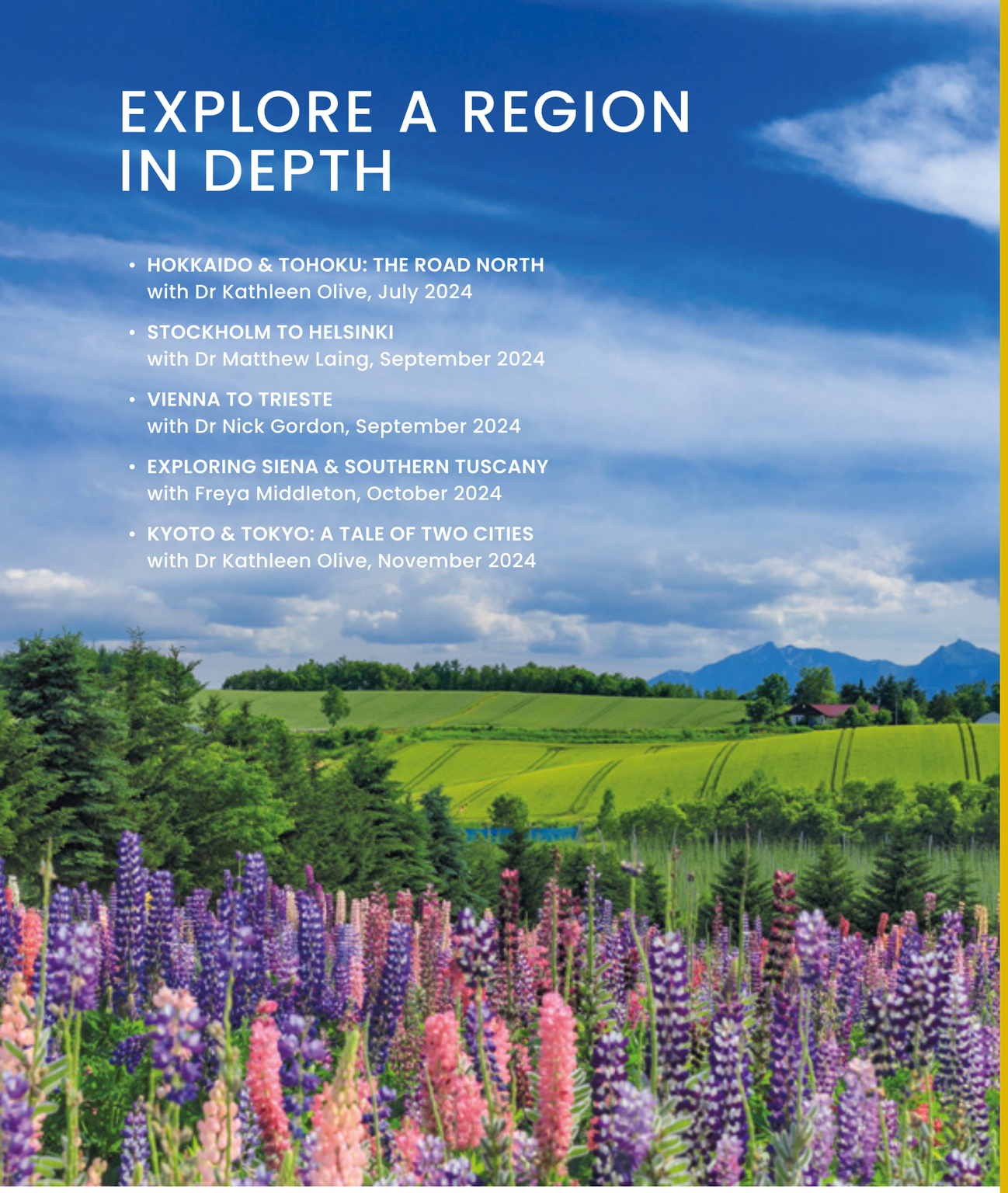
(right) **Dylan Mooney***Stuck on you* 2020; 2021 {printed} from the *Queer, blak & here* series 2020–21. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2021 © Dylan Mooney

(top right) **Julie Shaw (designer) Evonne Munuyngu (weaver) Lisa Lalaywarra Gurrulpa (weaver) Serena Gubuyani (weaver) Mary Dhapalany (weaver) Margaret Djarbalarbal Malibirr (weaver)** *Maayama-li* (*make by hand*) 2022 National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased with funds donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, 2023 © Julie Shaw Designs

(bottom) Students at NGV Education Studios. Image: Martin Wurt/Working Pictures.©Martin Wurt.

# EXPLORE A REGION IN DEPTH

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  with Dr Kathleen Olive, July 2024
- **STOCKHOLM TO HELSINKI**
  with Dr Matthew Laing, September 2024
- **VIENNA TO TRIESTE**
  with Dr Nick Gordon, September 2024
- **EXPLORING SIENA & SOUTHERN TUSCANY**
  with Freya Middleton, October 2024
- **KYOTO & TOKYO: A TALE OF TWO CITIES**
  with Dr Kathleen Olive, November 2024



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ACADEMY TRAVEL

# Hugh Hayden

Raised in Texas and trained as an architect, Hugh Hayden's work arises from a deep connection to nature and its materials. Wood is his primary medium, which he saws, sculpts and sands, often combining disparate species of tree to create composite forms that reflect their complex cultural backgrounds. Here, he shares more in an exclusive interview with *NGV Magazine*.

The NGV warmly thanks the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund and The Fleischner Family Charitable Foundation for support towards acquiring the artist's works.

*Interview by* **Donna McColm** and **Elisa Scarton**

DONNA McCOLM **Hugh, your installation *The end*, 2022, is one of two works on display as part of NGV Triennial 2023. Tell us what inspired you to make this work.**

HUGH HAYDEN I've wanted to make this piece for a while. The work features skeleton creatures perched on school desks and chairs in a classroom-like setting. A school desk means acquiring an education. It can represent personal enlightenment, but also upward mobility in society. The skeletons with tree branches coming out of them don't have any leaves, so they could be any type of deciduous tree or evergreen tree. And skeletons too have no identity. They could be any gender, any religion, any race, any sexuality.

DM **These are dodo skeletons, right? What is the significance of this bird in the context of the work?**

HH The viewer might not realise it, but yes, I chose to use a dodo skeleton as it's one of the first animals you learn about that went extinct because of humankind. This work was made right as COVID was ending and so the classroom can also be conflated with some sort of idea of extinction, because a lot of people thought everything would go online. At the NGV, it's presented on a plinth. The whole thing is an object. In fifty or a hundred years it's like, this is how humans educated themselves, in this sort of classroom. It's funny just to show the whole classroom as this thing of the past.

ELISA SCARTON **Like a specimen in itself?**

HH Yes, so not just the dodo, not just the tree, but the whole means of learning will be a vestige of the past. When *The end* was first shown at Art Basel, you couldn't really walk in the installation and you only saw it from one side. At NGV Triennial, you're seeing it on all four sides. It's slightly raised. It becomes this other specimen. Hence, the name, *The end*. What is this the end of? Is this supposed to be a mascot for Greenpeace or some sort of ecological issue? As an artist I'm open for that meaning to be expanded.

DM **Do you hope that people might draw a sense of optimism from the work as well?**

HH While calling it *The end* might seem dark and pessimistic, I hope a lot of people will also say, 'Oh, it's kind of funny, or comedic, or absurd, or uncanny'. The dodos are animated. There's a dialogue between them, so that hopefully people don't just walk through. Hopefully they want to spend some time looking at it, maybe wondering what it's about.



**Hugh Hayden** *The Cosby's* 2020, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by The Fleischner Family Charitable Foundation, 2022. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin © Hugh Hayden. Photo: Lillie Thompson





ES **You trained and worked as an architect before you started your art practice. How does that background feed into your work?**

HH I am super conscious of the orientation and articulation of space, which can heighten the experience of an artwork. In *The end*, the desks have a front and a back. Whichever way they face in unison, that's facing the teacher. As the viewer, if you enter from the front, you're the teacher, but if you're entering from the back, you're a student. It is architectural and spatial, but meaning is also built into how you use that piece of furniture.



DM **The dodos appear wild and organic, but there's a system behind how they're put together?**

HH Yes, although they were articulated differently, they needed to have some system of how they're put together. And it wasn't just me. It was a team that included a metal fabricator that made the base of the skeletons and provided us with sketches we could follow to make all the bones to clad it. Then it's also a flower arrangement, because while the bones are made a certain way, all the branches go in different directions. They can't interfere with each other, but we also wanted them to have a certain flow. We had to have a plan.

DM **At the other end of the spectrum, the second work in NGV Triennial, *The Cosby's*, 2020, takes a very industrial process. Can you tell us more?**

HH Conceptually I was interested in the idea of America as a melting pot. And I felt that by combining skillets with African masks [by casting the form into the cookware] I could explore the idea of African origins holding together the melting pot that is America. After all, whether you look at the building of America from a construction perspective, an agricultural perspective, or an industry, entertainment, cultural, musical, food and cuisine perspective, Africans were involved in helping create that stew.

So, I started collecting these wooden African masks. They're all hand carved and come from different varying tribes from out in Western Africa. They had different meanings within the tribes for each type of mask, as well as varying levels of authenticity. *The Cosby's* is actually made from the most expensive mask I have.

DM **Oh, really?**

HH Yes, it's a Dan mask from the Ivory Coast. Within that world of African masks, questions of authenticity and how old they are abound. Initially, I worried about this, but then I decided to lean into it because most people in today's world are not 'original'. They're a replication of something else. Like most Australians are a mix of different things. Just like many Black people, many Americans, are made up of a mix of many things. Even in terms of wood, most people are plywood these days. They're not an oak tree or a piece of walnut. Their parents are from different places. They're very far from that original copy or from the birthplace, they're an amalgamation.

The three skillets that make *The Cosby's* are the same mask cast into different skillets. They're different sizes, so that they create a little family, and you can see bits and parts of how they're connected, but they're obviously different too. As this series developed, I started taking more liberties, moving away from what the original mask looked like. I started adding my own body parts into them. I would cast my lips, my nose and my ears in silicone, so that the skillets moved further away from the original mask, leaning into this questionable authenticity.

ES **And do you have any wishes for those who are seeing your work for the first time in the NGV Triennial?**

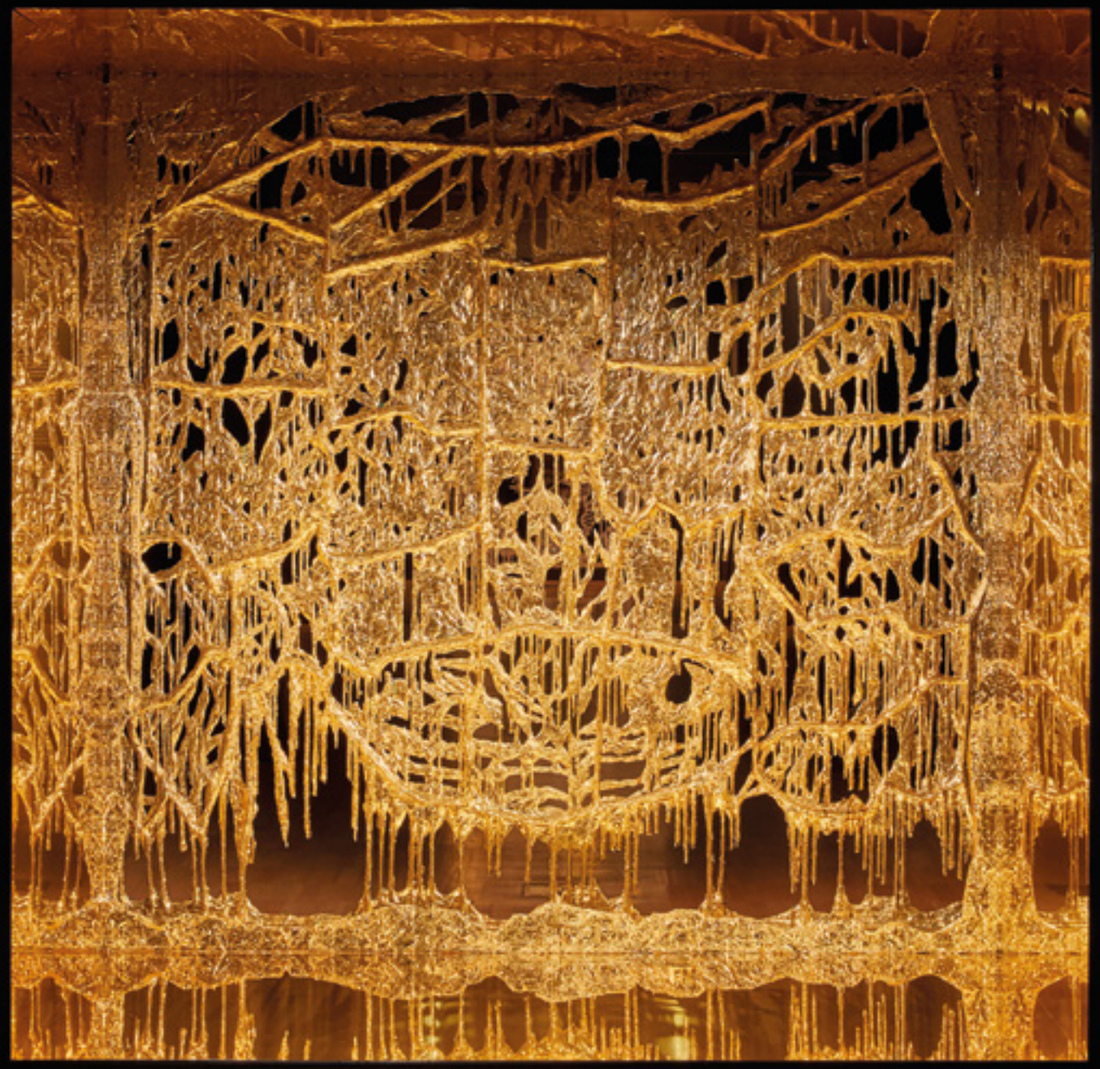
HH My approach is in working with materials and forms that are ubiquitous or familiar, such as wood or trees, things that people might've grown up with their whole life and taken for granted. If I can manipulate how you think about these really ordinary things, I hope maybe I can change what you think about the more conceptual understandings these works are about. It's fine if you don't get to that, but by working first with these familiar things, I can maybe find a way in to transform how you think about the larger issues.

Donna McColm is NGV Assistant Director, Curatorial and Audience Engagement. Elisa Scarton is NGV Senior Editorial Coordinator. Hugh Hayden is an artist who lives and works in New York. His work questions the stasis of social dynamics and asks the viewer to examine their place within an ever-shifting ecosystem.

See Hugh Hayden's works as part of NGV Triennial until 7 April. *The end,* 2022, was purchased with funds generously donated by the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund. *The Cosby's,* 2020, was purchased with funds donated by The Fleischner Family Charitable Foundation, 2022. Hugh Hayden has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin.

(pp. 18–9) Installation view of **Hugh Hayden** *The end* 2022, on display in NGV Triennial to 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin © Hugh Hayden. Photo: Sean Fennessy

(above) **Hugh Hayden** with his work *The end*, 2022, on display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International. Photo: Tim Carrafa



‘I can understand why people are drawn to religion, because it’s easy to answer the complex mysteries of life with simple, idealistic answers. There’s something clean and orderly about it, the allure of perfection.’[1]
Diana Al-Hadid



NGV Triennial 2023 artist Diana Al-Hadid.
Photo Diego Flores

Responding to the NGV Collection, Syrian-born and Brooklyn-based artist Diana al-Hadid creates new narratives among both secular and religious works in *What remains of the floating man hypothesis*, 2023, emphasising what is known and unknown, hidden and revealed between art, collections and their audiences. The NGV warmly thanks Anne Robertson and Mark Robertson OAM, 2023 for supporting the acquisition of this work. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin.

*Words by* **Dr Ted Gott**

Diana Al-Hadid’s life resembles a palimpsest, a manuscript covered with layers of inscriptions and meaning. Born in Aleppo, Syria in 1981, Al-Hadid migrated with her family to the United States at the age of five, where she led a double life throughout her formative years – raised in an Arabic speaking Muslim home but schooled within an English speaking Christian education system in the American Midwest. This daily contrast of cultures, not surprisingly, led to Al-Hadid’s later fascination with the growth and interaction – but also the decay – of civilisations across millennia. As she stated in 2010:

> I was interested in the ways in which histories became layers and complicated, Hellenistic influences in ruins outside of Aleppo, Syria, and the Moorish influences on Spanish Cathedrals … Ancient ruins are culturally nostalgic objects that carry with them a distinct psychological effect – one that seems to attract both descendants of that culture as well as members of distant cultures.[2]

Her place of birth was central to the development of this fascination:

> Conquered by the Greeks, Romans, Umayyads, Ayyubids, Mamluks, and, finally, the Ottomans, who transformed Aleppo into a center of international trade under their empire, Aleppo has historically been home to Jewish, Christian, and Muslim populations … In the center of the city, 12th century mosques stand next to 6th century Christian churches while new buildings shade fragments of ancient temples.[3]

One of the artist’s earliest works, *Spun of the limits of my lonely waltz*, 2006, is an ambitious two-metre-tall sculpture of an upended Gothic cathedral, supported on the ground by the collective accumulation of its slender spires. At once massive but also delicately fragile – it was constructed from wood, polystyrene, plaster, fibreglass and paint – *Spun* spoke to Al-Hadid’s interest in exploring the physical space occupied by three-dimensional architectural installations, as well as the viewer’s bodily interaction with her work as her sculptures are circumnavigated and observed from multiple viewpoints.

Later sculptures by the artist drew upon diverse Eastern and Western influences, from the work of the eighteenth century Italian surveyor and architect Giambattista Nolli to the architecture of San Marco in Venice and the complex inventions of twelfth-century Arab polymath Ismail al-Jazari. The iconography of her works has also been steered by her love of Northern Renaissance paintings by Hans Memling and Pieter Bruegel the Elder, and the Italian Trecento and Quattrocento masters Duccio, Taddeo Gaddi and Uccello. Al-Hadid embraced all these influences, declaring:

> [While] I am in fact, statistically speaking, an Arab woman living in New York who made work about fallen towers … I am also a woman from the suburbs of Ohio who is deeply interested in Flemish painting and illustrations of built structures and myths.[4]

She confesses to being fascinated by religion while also having, paradoxically, a ‘strong dislike of religion in general’.[5] Al-Hadid was invited to create a new installation for the NGV Triennial 2023 that responded to the Gallery’s historical collections and would be placed within the medieval galleries. The project, *What remains of the floating man hypothesis*, 2023, has created new narratives among and between a wide range of works, both secular and religious, selected from the NGV’s holdings. Through experiencing an immersive architectural intervention of sculptural walls in two of these three historical galleries, visitors’ perceptions are reoriented spatially and narratively among the objects as they move between newly built structures. The walls appear to disintegrate, emphasising what is known and unknown, what is hidden and revealed between art collections and their audiences.

In the first of the NGV's medieval galleries, Al-Hadid has constructed a sumptuous semi-decagon-shaped grotto. Skeins of dripped sculptural threads, created from polymer gypsum, fibreglass, paint and gold leaf, evoke, with floating transparency, the forms of the Gallery's *The garden of love*, c. 1465–70, a rare surviving secular panel painting from fifteenth century Venice, currently attributed to the Master of the Stories of Helen, a painter working within the studio of Antonio Vivarini. The leafy arbour that forms the background to this painting has been extended dramatically at both sides by Al-Hadid to create a physically bounded space that evokes the *hortus conclusus* or 'enclosed garden' motif often depicted in medieval paintings. These new walls mask all but the feet of German polychrome limewood religious sculptures from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; Spanish limestone sculptures from the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries depicting the Virgin Mary, St John and St Catherine; and a fifteenth-century French oak statue of St Barbara. Removed from their usual plinths and placed directly upon the floor, these Christian religious works are disassociated from the traditional celestial hagiography and literally grounded on the earth, with only their lower limbs visible through low-cut apertures. Al-Hadid likes to focus on feet in her work, feeling that though 'they are the most distant things when one looks at oneself … our feet help us organise space and understand how we navigate through space'.[6]

Interspersed among these grounded sculptures are four exquisite and fragile Syrian glass objects, made between the first and the twelfth centuries, which speak to Al-Hadid's own Syrian heritage. The survival of these delicate glass flasks, seemingly against all historical odds, invites reflection upon the manner in which cultural survival itself can at times be a matter of chance, and, possibly, in relation to Venetian history specifically, the manner in which that city's delay in sending a rescue fleet to a besieged Constantinople in 1453 contributed to the fall of the capital of the Christian Byzantine Empire to Muslim Ottoman forces. Al-Hadid has also placed among these objects the separated blade and sheath of a nineteenth-century Indian *khanjar* (dagger), which hints at the religious conflicts that have divided Christian West and non-Christian East for millennia, as well as a Sumerian foundation cone dating from 2112 to 2095 BCE, the time of the reign of King Ur-Nammu. Having its roots in the southernmost part of ancient Mesopotamia (corresponding to southern Iraq today), the Sumer civilisation emerged around the sixth millennium BCE and is recognised as one of the world's earliest civilisations. Foundation cones, made of clay or earthenware and inscribed with cuneiform writing, were nail-shaped markers attached to ancient buildings that bore the names of deities or rulers associated with their construction. The NGV's cone is inscribed with the name of Ur-Nammu, who drafted the world's earliest known legal code and constructed the Great Ziggurat of Ur during his eighteen-year reign – a timely reminder that the power of the East vastly predated the later rise of the West.

Normally displayed in another gallery, the transportation of *The garden of love* into the NGV's galleries of medieval and pre-Renaissance Christian art makes it a focal point in an entirely new and transformed setting. The exact iconographic meaning of *The garden of love*, which shows a group of five people, both men and women, standing around an ornate fountain in an enclosed garden setting, still eludes definition, although it exudes an air of erotic play, and certain details within it, such as the syringe that one woman fills from the fountain's waters, have been read as referencing a direct 'sexual double entendre about the ejection of fluid'.[7] Al-Hadid may have been drawn to *The garden of love* due to her recent experience of siting sculptural works in outdoor settings, such as the Oval Lawn of Madison Square Park in New York and the library quad on the campus of Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts.[8] Within *What remains of the floating man hypothesis, The garden of love* provides a commentary on the historic role of Venice as trading gateway between East and West and is juxtaposed with Hans Memling's *The man of sorrows in the arms of the Virgin*, a masterpiece painted in the Burgundian Netherlands around 1475. In Memling's painting, Jesus is shown cradled in the arms of his grieving mother, open-eyed and thus 'alive' but with the wounds of his Passion on display. Fervent prayer in front of harrowing images of this type was considered to hasten the soul's passage through the pains of Purgatory. Al-Hadid has removed this work from its traditional place hanging on the gallery's walls, choosing to display it flat instead, on a waist high plinth placed before the dramatic secular presence of *The garden of love*. Seeing this image of Christ deposed in Melbourne in 2023 may invite soul-searching for devout Christians contemplating the moral quagmire faced by today's Catholic Church in the light of recent sexual scandals in the local community.[9]

In the final room of *What remains of the floating man hypothesis*, Al-Hadid has created a second grotto or cave-like structure. Another diaphanous, striated wall here forms the shape of the Virgin Mary from Memling's masterpiece, reversed. While in Memling's painting the dead Christ is shown in the arms of the Virgin Mary, Al-Hadid has created an aperture through which can be seen, once again placed directly on the floor, *The derision of Christ*, a lifelike polychrome wood figure of Christ, his body mutilated from persecution by Roman soldiers. This figure is thought to have been produced in north-east France during the fifteenth century, probably in relation to the performance of medieval Passion plays. Within Al-Hadid's installation, the Christ figure's abjectly bare legs and feet are visible through another curtain of glistening polymer drips. Next to this, Al-Hadid has positioned an elegant pair of Turkish *takunya* or pattens – clogs made from an intricate combination of wood, mother-of-pearl, silk, linen and leather, designed to protect the feet from water, soap and slippage during the ritual cleansing of a Turkish bath. These luxury items contrast strongly, and tellingly, with the worn and dirty feet of the adjacent Christ sculpture.

Dr Ted Gott is NGV Senior Curator, International Art.

See Diana Al-Hadid's *What remains of the floating man hypothesis*, 2023, as part of NGV Triennial 2023 until 7 April.

This work has been commissioned by the NGV, Melbourne. Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin Gallery. Proposed acquisition. It is supported by Anne Robertson and Mark Robertson OAM, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin.

This essay originally appeared in the *NGV Triennial 2023* publication, available instore and online at the NGV design store via NGV.Melbourne/store. This publication has been generously supported by Wendy and Paul Bonnici and family.

(p. 22) Installation view of **Diana Al-Hadid** *What remains of the floating man hypothesis* 2023, on display in NGV Triennial to 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Supported by Anne Robertson and Mark Robertson OAM, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin. Photo: Lillie Thompson





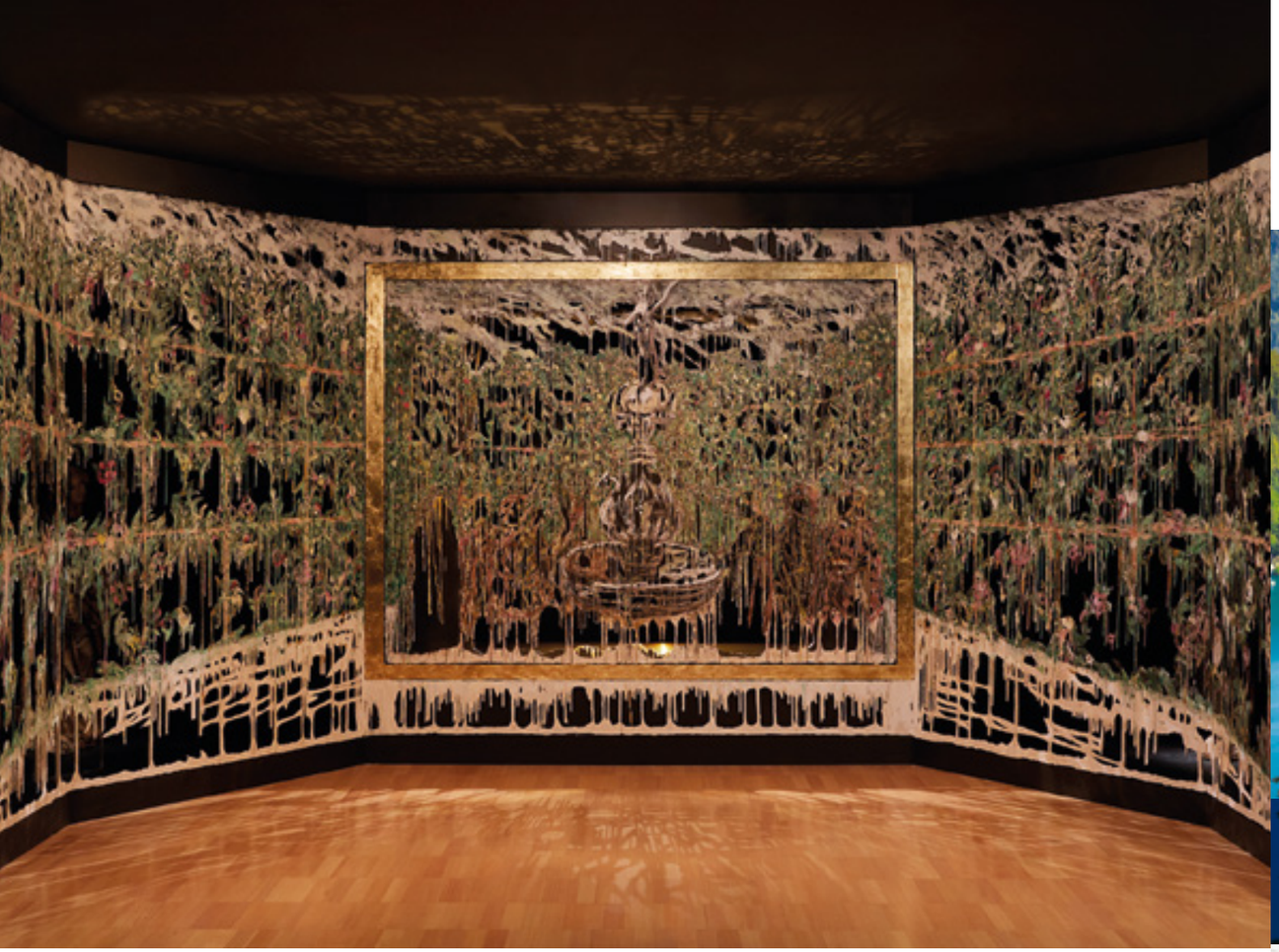
# Anatomy of Art



**Master of the Stories of Helen, studio of Antonio Vivarini** *The garden of love* (c. 1465–1470), National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Felton Bequest, 1948. A digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited

Diana Al-Hadid calls her commission for the NGV Triennial an 'intervention', bringing together her own organically architectural sculptural elements with a number of works from the medieval, early Renaissance and Antiquities collections at the NGV. Here is your guide to two works from the NGV Collection that feature prominently in *What remains of the floating man hypothesis*, 2023.

The major painting *The garden of love* (c. 1465–1470) by the studio of Antonio Vivarini becomes a focal point in Diana Al-Hadid's NGV Triennial work, recreated in fibreglass, steel and dripping gold leaf. In the original painting, a group of five people – both men and women – stand around an ornate fountain surrounded by *Rosa alba*, a luxuriant trellis rose, which was the only white rose available to European gardeners in the Renaissance. The painting is thought to be a depiction of aristocratic love with perhaps a



**Diana Al-Hadid** *What remains of the floating man hypothesis* 2023. Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin Gallery. Proposed acquisition. Supported by Anne Robertson and Mark Robertson OAM, 2023. This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin © Diana Al-Hadid

dash of erotic play. On the left-hand side, a lady strokes a bright-eyed dog, while on the right, another woman touches the curls on the head of her male companion as she prepares to blindfold him – thus making him an easy target for Cupid's arrow. In Renaissance portraiture, dogs often symbolised fidelity as well as female seduction. The work's fountain too is allegorical – its white marble form a representation of eternal love. Radiographic evidence has revealed that there was a sixth figure, a third male, situated on the extreme right-hand side of the painting, creating a gender balance in the composition.[1]

In Al-Hadid's installation *What remains of the floating man hypothesis*, 2023, the painting *The garden of love* provides a commentary on the historic role of Venice as trading gateway between East and West and is juxtaposed with Hans Memling's *The man of sorrows in the arms of the Virgin*, painted in the Burgundian Netherlands around 1475. Memling's painting is considered a devotional work, intended for the private devotion of whoever commissioned it. In the painting, Christ is depicted as an 'image of pity', while Mary adopts the pose of Our Lady of Pity, or Pietà. This type of representation is also known as a Gregorian Image of Pity – named after Pope Gregory the Great (reigned 590–603) who saw a vision of Christ in this pose while saying Mass in the presence of unbelievers. The gold-leaf-covered background represents what awaits the penitent after Purgatory – heaven and the promise of eternal repose. To help the viewer in their prayerful contemplation, small figures and symbols act as prompts, recalling individual episodes from the Passion narrative.[2] For example, the nails are a reminder of Christ being nailed to the Cross. The title of Memling's work comes from Isaiah (53:3): 'He was rejected and despised of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief'. In her NGV Triennial work, Al-Hadid has removed *The man of sorrows in the arms of the Virgin* from its traditional place hanging on the gallery's walls, choosing to display it flat instead, on a waist-high plinth placed near to *The garden of love*.

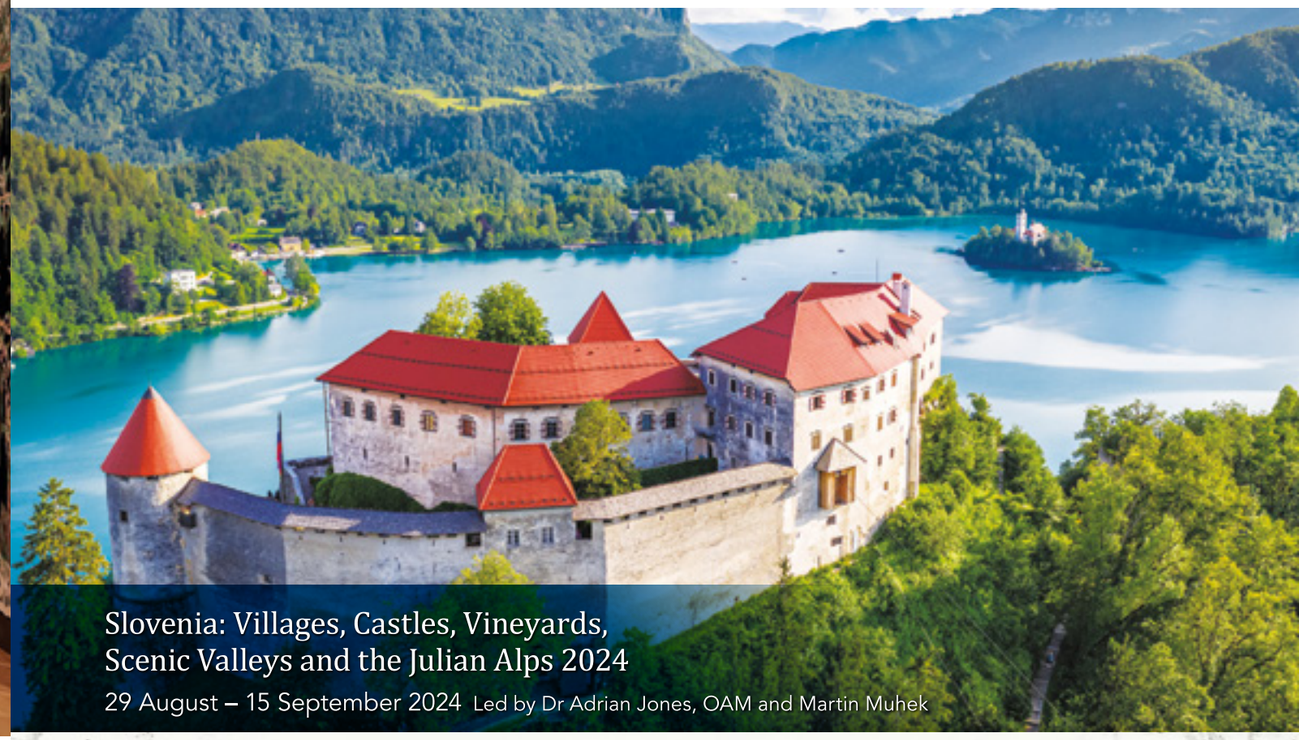
Elisa Scarton is NGV Senior Editorial Coordinator.

*The garden of love*, c. 1465–1470 by Studio of Antonio Vivarini and *The man of sorrows in the arms of the Virgin* 1475 or 1479 by Hans Memling were acquired by the Felton Bequest. Their digital record has been made available on NGV Collection Online through the generous support of Digitisation Champion Ms Carol Grigor through Metal Manufactures Limited.



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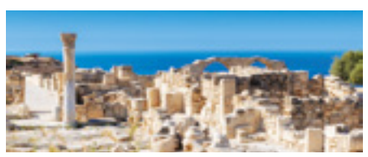
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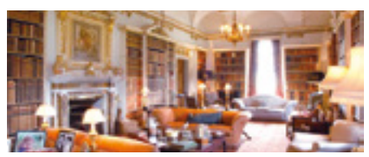
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# A Conversation with Tracey Emin



Born in 1963 in London, Tracey Emin CBE RA's multi-disciplinary practice is powerful and diverse. In this transcript extract from a live conversation, she delves into her career and work with Australian journalist Patricia Karvelas.

The NGV warmly thanks Jo Horgan AM and Peter Wetenhall and Andrew and Judy Rogers for their support towards acquiring the works on display in NGV Triennial.

*Interview by* **Patricia Karvelas**

PATRICIA KARVELAS **Tracey, could you set the scene of your path to becoming one of the world's leading contemporary artists.**

TRACEY EMIN My background, I think, is very different from a lot of other people's and people who go to art school. I first left school when I was thirteen, then went back when I was fifteen for legal reasons. I left school for good literally when I was fifteen and packed a bag with two David Bowie albums and some clothes and went straight to London. I immediately fell in with quite a creative scene and creative people. It was a different energy. I wasn't at school knuckling down, trying to get my exams to get into university. It never crossed my mind even. And it's a long story, the bit in between, so I don't want to bore you all with it, but I eventually got into Maidstone College of Art to do a degree in fine art printmaking.

PK **You're often described as a confessional artist. How do you reflect on that word?**

TE I always used to say to people, 'You don't say that Van Gogh was confessional. You don't say Rembrandt was confessional.' If you go out through history, there were a lot of men that were expressing themselves and their emotions, their feelings, their inner drive, whatever and no one would've called them confessional. Often men say, 'Oh, she's confessing' as if I'm throwing up, as if I'm spilling the beans. I wasn't spilling the beans, I was talking about, say, how it feels to have an abortion, and I was making work about that, which I thought was really important thirty years ago and it's important now. The women who had abortions were made to feel ashamed of it. No one was talking about it. So, thirty years ago, I made a film and talked and made work about abortion, how it feels, not morally whether it's wrong or whether it's right. For that, I was branded confessional. Nobody saw it and said, 'Oh, she's making art about a really important subject'. But they do now because they've finally caught up.

PK **Do you think they've really caught up?**

TE I think now when I say something no one is accusing me of being confessional. They go, 'Oh, it's so good that she's talking about it'. If everybody just keeps putting things under the carpet and hiding these

‘Well, I think people realised that what I was saying thirty years ago or twenty years ago actually was important. I wasn’t moaning, I wasn’t whining, I was talking about my experience and channelling it through to everybody else. I was just using myself as a life model.’

Tracey Emin

things because they don’t want to admit that they’re happening in the world, nothing changes, and everything will remain the same. And I wanted to make art that changed things, that made a difference.

PK **You’ve recently been through cancer, you’re now in a new phase with this, but it’s been a really difficult time. You talk about the fact that you thought you were going to die and that you accepted it?**

TE Death looks after itself, it’s unavoidable. It happens to us all. There is nothing I could do to prevent it, but I decided I could do something about the living, and my attitude changed overnight. I just suddenly became much happier and decided to really enjoy my days and enjoy my thoughts. It was in the middle of lockdown, so I couldn’t see anybody, but I was much happier. It’s like when someone says, ‘Oh, come on, smile’. You go, ‘Huh?’ And then you do actually smile and laugh and you do feel good. It was like someone saying to me, ‘Come on live, come on live’. And then I thought, ‘All right, just a little bit. Okay’.

Now that I survived all the surgery and everything, it’s brilliant. Not everybody gets a second chance but I did. And I think that whoever they are, they said, ‘She’s not that bad. She’s fucked up quite a bit, she’s been a bit stupid, but actually, she’s not a bad person. Let’s give her one more go and see what she does’.

So, in the last three years, I’ve worked so hard at doing the right thing. Being in the right place at the right time, my life has become so much better and so much more enlightening and fun and eventful and





one. That is what I’m doing now. I’m getting everything in place ready for when I leave. It’s like building my pyramid, but I’m saying this metaphorically, building everything I need around me to make me happy to go to the next world. And that’s why I’m really not afraid [of dying]. I’ve learned something amazing through all this illness and experience, and that’s that life gets better. You just have to live it and not be afraid and definitely not be afraid to change things.

PK **You mentioned that in the last three years you’ve been really prolific, so what’s the next three years for you?**

TE Oh, the next three years are quite brilliant. They include all the shows that I haven’t been doing because I was ill. But it’s not the shows that I’m excited about. That’s having a career in the arts. What I’m excited about is all the work and the journeys I’m going to go on while I’m doing it. Honestly, when I got off the plane in Sydney, I was really chuffed with myself. I thought, fucking hell, I made it back to Australia again. I didn’t think I was going to do that. Three years ago, I thought I was going to die, and here I am in Australia. Art takes you on an adventure. Art takes you to another realm, to another place. I’m amazed by this audience tonight. I was worried that no one was going to come. Anyway, if you think about the art that you make and the journey that it takes you on, that’s what I’m looking forward to.

PK **I heard you say somewhere that your legacy would be text. Do you still feel that way?**

TE Tell you what, I write a column every week for the free London newspaper, the *Evening Standard* and at the beginning it was brilliant. Now it’s like the worst homework in the world. I can write a thousand words without even thinking about it, but now every Thursday morning, I’m like this frightened rabbit. I can’t move.

PK **It’s the deadline.**

TE Yeah, it’s the deadline. Whereas with art, any deadline, bang, bang, bang, I don’t even need it, I just do it. I’m doing it anyway. But since I’ve had the deadline with the writing, I’m writing less. I don’t even do Instagram anymore because I can’t write.

When I first started my career, I felt like there was no room for me in art because I was so expressive, because I was a figurative painter and in the ’90s every-

focused on art. That’s my priority. Art again has come to save me, pick me up, cradle me, and I feel very happy because of it.

PK **On that note, I want to talk to you about legacy. Do you think about your legacy?**

TE I think about it every day. When I thought I was going to die, I decided to update my will with the idea of doing a foundation and [leaving a] legacy. And I’m really proud and happy to say that we finally got the Tracey Emin Foundation ticked off for charity status. Part of it is the Tracey Emin Artist Residency, where we have ten residencies every year and a half for people all over the world.

PK **So did that process of writing that will and preparing for the worst actually mean you are living your legacy in life now?**

TE Once you set it up and put stuff into that foundation, you can never get it back. So, when they found out I was probably going to live, people said, ‘You sure you want to do the foundation and sink everything into it?’ And I said, ‘Yeah, because I’ll enjoy it now’. I don’t want any more clothes. I don’t want any more cars. I don’t want any more of anything. I want to be happy and I want to do what makes me happy. I love art. So if I can make more art in the world or make an environment where more art can be made, that makes me really happy.

The ancient Egyptians spent all their life getting ready for their death because they knew the journey afterwards was much greater and bigger than this



Patricia Karvelas and Tracey Emin CBE RA for the *Live and In Conversation After-Hours* event for NGV Triennial at the The Capitol theatre. Photo: Michael Pham

thing was polished Perspex. I just thought, 'Oh, everyone thinks my work's embarrassing. You know what? I'm just going to close shop'. It seemed like Gerhard Richter had sewn it all up. Sigmar Polke had got there in the end and there was just no more room for another painter. So I just thought, 'I'm not going to compete with that lot. It's impossible'. Now thirty years later, I'm so happy painting because I think when I was younger, I was painting for a different reason. I was painting because I was learning. I was painting because that was art, but now I paint because that is me. It's an inherent part of my stuff. The fluidity, it's like another entity comes out of me. It's like a haunting, it's like a banshee. It's like the full moon, whirling dervish. That's what goes on in my studio, and that releases me and makes me feel good. It makes me feel whole and it frightens me and scares me.

When I was thirty or thirty-five, I was so blinkered by the bright lights and all the other stuff that I didn't hone in on this spiritual ascension to do with my own creativity. It was like an external thing and now it's an internal thing which connects to everything. Especially after my cancer, it's even stronger and even better.

PK **I want to talk about some of the work in the NGV Triennial. A major body of work is on display at NGV International now and will be joining the NGV Collection. This includes a five-metre-high text-based neon *Love poem for CF*, 2007, the remarkable painting, *The execution*, 2018, and a series of gouache paintings and bronze sculptures. How do you think about them?**

TE The thinking, it's not a process. It's not contrived. It's not like, 'Hmm, I've got a show coming up, I'm going to make three small sculptures'. It's more like, 'I really don't want to paint today', and I'll just sit there and Harry [Weller, Creative Director, Tracey Emin Studio] will whack a lump of clay in front of me and suddenly I'll make, say, two figures together and then just go, 'Oh God, that's shit and then smash it down'. And then when I smash it down, I go, 'Oh wow, that looks good. That looks like a big boulder, or this and that'. So it's a real creative process. It's like organic. It's soothing for me, and I hate to say this, it's cathartic, my whole process of art making is cathartic. It's like I'm healing something. In the '90s and '80s this was a really bad thing to say because men didn't like that kind of attitude. Those very successful male artists wanted it to all be about control and not the art taking take control. But I'm really happy for the art to take control. With the small bronzes, I'm not thinking about what I'm making, I'm just making. And of course I'm making myself. So the little figures, the bodies, are me.

PK **How would you describe it now, the attitude to your work now?**

TE Well, I think people realised that what I was saying thirty years ago or twenty years ago actually was important. I wasn't moaning, I wasn't whining, I was talking about my experience and channelling it through to everybody else. I was just using myself as a life model. I didn't have this classic A-level education. My education was about living. So I now think all those experiences, good or bad, that is my background, that is my legacy to use and to work with and to share. And often, this is hard for me, but people will come up to me and I'll get little note and it says, 'You changed my life by talking about your abortion. I had an abortion and I never got over it, but seeing your work helped me.' It's bigger than art, isn't it? It's brilliant.

When I was younger, I thought that artists had no responsibility. In fact, I thought they had to be completely irresponsible. Now that I'm much older, I think that we as artists have a responsibility for our work. It's like giving birth. It's a journey. Where it's going, we can't control that, but we can definitely control how we make it and how it's presented and we can launch it like a ship.

Patricia Karvelas is an Australian radio presenter, current affairs journalist and political correspondent. Tracey Emin CBE RA currently lives and works between London, the south of France and Margate, England.

See Tracey Emin's work as part of NGV Triennial 2023 until 7 April. These works were purchased with funds generously donated by Jo Horgan AM and Peter Wetenhall, Andrew and Judy Rogers, NGV Foundation, Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest, Suzanne Dawbarn Bequest, M.G. Chapman Bequest, and The Nigel Peck AM and Patricia Peck Fund.

This is an extract of a live conversation that was delivered as part of the 2023 NGV Triennial opening week program.

(p. 28) **Tracey Emin** *This is exactly how I feel right now* 2016, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Andrew and Judy Rogers, and NGV Foundation, 2023 © Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2022



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*HRH Crown Princess Mary of Denmark* 2006 (detail) by Ralph Heimans. The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg Castle © Ralph Heimans

# Holly Anderson

## The light in a grid.

March 2024

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N.Smith **Gallery**

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# Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro

## EXORCISM AT WENDY'S.

April 2024



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# New to the Collection

From a nineteenth-century depiction of Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens to Gucci fashion, these works have recently joined the NGV Collection.



## **Emma Soyer** *The escape: a young girl with a bird cage* 1836

*Words by* **Dr Ted Gott**

Four years after his wife's untimely death, the renowned chef Alexis Soyer penned a fulsome tribute to her in his revolutionary new cookbook *The Gastronomic Regenerator* (1846):

> Her career was one, while it lasted, of great success, and must, had it not been so fatally brought to a close, have resulted in the highest fame; as it was, crowned heads of many nations paid homage at the shrine of her talents, and the cultivated sensibility of the aristocracy of this and other civilized nations has at once appreciated her artistic excellences by the spontaneous expression of admiration upon the examination of her works.[1]

Fame being both fickle and fleeting, however, Emma Soyer's name was to be virtually forgotten within a decade of her husband's grieving encomium to her.

Alexis's sorrow at the loss of his young bride was to know no bounds at the time. He erected an impressive marble tomb in her honour in Kensal Green Cemetery in North Kensington, London. Standing more than six metres high, this features a carved profile portrait of Emma, beneath which are embedded the enormous metal letters: 'E.S. TO HER'. In 1848 he staged a retrospective exhibition of 140 of Emma's paintings and drawings, titled *Soyer's Philanthropic Gallery*, all the profits of which were 'devoted to establishing parochial soup kitchens for each destitute district in London'.[2] While the profits were not as high as expected, the show nonetheless raised £259 in subscriptions, which proved sufficient to provide 50,000 rations of food for the poor. We are told by Alexis's biographers that 'notwithstanding the disregard of the Royal Academicians, the public Press (who must be an authority in such matters) was unanimous in praise of her works, which was to Soyer the greatest consolation'.[3]

Number thirty-eight in *Soyer's Philanthropic Gallery* was *The escape*, 1836, and the accompanying catalogue told visitors:

> This picture of a fine little girl is very remarkable for the melancholy and sorrowful expression of a child, losing unexpectedly a favourite pet. The difficulty of drawing a child in that troublesome attitude has been most ably surmounted by the talented artist.[4]

This early Victorian 'loss of innocence' composition recently resurfaced at auction and has been generously donated to the NGV by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family. Painted with broad, confident brushstrokes and a simple yet vivid palette, *The escape* has an energy and pathos that lives up to the artist's reputation in her lifetime as being England's contemporary Murillo. It also accords with the words of tribute to Emma that *The Times* published on her death in 1842:

> Perhaps no female artist has exceeded this lady as a colourist, and very few artists of the rougher sex have produced portraits so full of character, spirit and vigour, and that boldness and breadth of light and shadow which constitutes one of the highest triumphs of art.[5]

Considered a prodigy in her day, Emma was born Emma Jones in London, sometime between 1809 and 1813. Equally talented in the study of languages (Italian and French), music and art, her first teacher was the Belgian portrait painter François Simonau, who had married Emma's wealthy, widowed mother in 1820. Under his instruction, Emma is credited with having 'drawn more than one hundred portraits from life with surprising fidelity' before the age of twelve.[6] Depending upon what date one accepts for her birth, she had her first work accepted for exhibition at the Royal Academy at the age of ten or around fourteen.[7] Over the subsequent two decades she exhibited works regularly at the Royal Academy (including *The escape* in 1837), as well as with the British Institution and the Society of British Artists. She also exhibited paintings at three Paris Salons between 1840 and 1842, where her works were warmly received by French critics. In 1837 she married Alexis, a French chef who had become a celebrity working for British royalty. Alexis keenly promoted his wife's art and in 1842 he travelled to Brussels to show her work to King Leopold of Belgium. In his absence, Emma, who was pregnant with the couple's first child, miscarried and died.

At her death Emma was credited with having created more than 400 paintings. Only a handful of her paintings and drawings are known to survive today, despite her tendency to sign and date her works. Where they have gone remains an art-historical mystery. From the listings in exhibition catalogues, it seems that she frequently painted social interest pictures (such *as The blind man at the Tower of London*), or studies of poor urban children and workers. Hopefully more of Emma's work will re-emerge, given the current interest in reclaiming the stories of unjustly forgotten historical women artists. Meanwhile, *The escape* stands as testament to the high quality of Emma Soyer's work, justifying the praise showered upon her during her all-too-brief life.

Dr Ted Gott is NGV Senior Curator, International Art.

*The escape* by Emma Soyer was generously donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program. See the work on display soon at NGV International.



## **Geng Xue** three new works 2023

*Words by* **Wayne Crothers and Sunita Lewis**

Born in 1983 in Jilin, China, Geng Xue's artistic practice finds a balance between traditional artistic themes, techniques and contemporary sensibilities. She often works with porcelain, a medium that is inextricably linked to Chinese culture and history. Her fantastical narrative works aim to develop a deep conversation between history, literature, music, art and nature, and transport us to worlds both strange and familiar, mixing folk stories and reality as well as cruelty and love.

Using the globally recognised cobalt-blue underglaze porcelain production technique that has been associated with China's porcelain producing districts of Jingdezhen and Dehua since the fourteenth century, Geng's work *Hollowed-out columns woven with clay bars*, 2023, which recently entered the NGV Collection thanks to the NGV Supporters of Asian Art, is a cylindrical vessel, cut and distorted, bringing the inside out and vice versa. Moulded shapes, taking the form of figures, spiritual beings and plants, have been integrated to create an otherworldly scene.

*Open window jar and smart tree*, 2023, which joins the Collection as a gift from the artist and her representative gallery, Vermilion Art, subverts a traditional style of Chinese jar by cutting out a window and incorporating an unearthly 'tree', featuring tentacular appendages and ornate faces. The artist transforms familiar material, which usually takes the form of a practical vessel, to something else – something unfamiliar and unexpected.

*Fragments*, 2023, which also joins the Collection as a gift from the artist and Vermilion Art, is closely linked to Geng's methodology and act as a further deconstruction and reinterpretation of tradition. Part of the artist's practice is to display these pieces or 'fragments' that could have been part of a larger work beside her other porcelain works. Through this, the artist explores broken histories that have been reconstructed through the retelling of handed-down mythologies.

Geng studied fine arts in Beijing and video production in Germany. She was awarded the 'Blanc de Chine' International Ceramic Art Award in 2017. Her works have been widely exhibited internationally, including in the Chinese pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale (2019).

Wayne Crothers is NGV Senior Curator, Asian Art. Sunita Lewis is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, Asian Art.

The NGV warmly thanks NGV Supporters of Asian Art and the generosity of Geng Xue and Vermilion Art for bringing *Open window jar and smart tree*, *Fragments* and *Hollowed-out columns woven with clay bars* into the NGV Collection.

**Geng Xue** *Hollowed-out columns woven with clay bars* 2023
Purchased, NGV Supporters of Asian Art, 2023



## Emmeline Pritchard *Botanical Gardens, Melbourne* 1874

*Words by* **Beckett Rozentals**

Eldest daughter of Emily and Donald Pritchard, a civil and mining engineer, Emmeline Pritchard was born in Hampshire, England, in 1849, and emigrated with her family to Australia in 1852. Pritchard showed artistic ability at an early age, and first exhibited at the Melbourne Public Library Exhibition in 1869 when she was nineteen years old.

Pritchard subsequently enrolled at the National Gallery School, studying under celebrated painter Eugene von Guérard. Von Guérard was a neighbour and family friend of the Pritchards, with both households residing at Gipps Street in East Melbourne. Her work was included in both the Victorian Exhibition and London International in 1872, where she was represented by three copies, including two reproductions of works by Louis Buvelot, and one by Scottish painter Robert Herdman.

Later that year, Pritchard also travelled to and exhibited in the 1872 Metropolitan Intercolonial exhibition held in Sydney. She was the only National Gallery School student who exhibited an original composition, which was of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens, and her work received favourable reviews from art critics of the period.

This same year, Pritchard witnessed a shocking and tragic accident – her father tripped and fell over a banister in their family home, landing on the flight of stairs below. Daniel Pritchard was not to regain proper consciousness and passed away shortly after from his injuries. Following the death of her father, the Pritchard family moved to 'Park Hill Terrace', a home on Hoddle Street, close to Wellington Parade.

Emmeline Pritchard's *Botanical Gardens, Melbourne*, 1874, has been recently donated to the NGV by Krystyna Campbell Pretty AM and Family. *Botanical Gardens, Melbourne* was completed when Pritchard was twenty-four years old and comes from the peak of her career, when she was exhibiting with the Victorian Academy of Arts and giving private tutoring. Annotated on the frame, the work was painted en plein air at the gardens on Monday 18 May 1874.

This work gives a glimpse into the history of Melbourne, from a time when the Yarra River ran through the Botanic Gardens. The Yarra was redirected at the turn of the century to remove a sharp bend, and the former part of the Yarra merged into what is now known as the Ornamental Lake.

In 1875, Pritchard married Joseph Brown, twenty-five years her senior, at Trinity Church in East Melbourne. The newlyweds moved to 'Albert Terrace' on Gipps Street, East Melbourne, the very street where she had lived as a young woman. Brown was to be appointed church warden and vestryman of Trinity Church in 1879. It appears that following their marriage, Pritchard's painting career ended, and the couple were to have several children. Pritchard passed away on 4 December 1887 in Castlemaine and is buried alongside family members at Kew Cemetery.

Beckett Rozentals is NGV Curator, Australian Art.

*Botanical Gardens, Melbourne* is now the earliest oil painting by a female artist held in the NGV Australian Art Collection. See it on Level 2, The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia.

This work was generously gifted by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.

*NGV Magazine* thanks Dr Alastair Robinson from the Royal Botanic Gardens for his insights on the location of Pritchard's painting.



Ornamental Lake, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne. Image supplied by Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne 2024

## Ornamental Lake, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

*Words by* **Elisa Scarton**

In July 1891, Melbourne suffered a major flood when the Yarra River burst its banks, inundating surrounding areas and leaving 1000 people homeless. The same year, the Yarra Floods Board was convened to investigate. Several works were recommended, including diverting the course of the Yarra to remove a sharp bend. This old part of the Yarra was unified with the lakes that were formed from the Tromgin lagoon by William Guilfoyle at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, and so was known as the Botanic Cut. The opening of the new course took place on 8 November 1897, with the occasion attracting more than 3000 spectators.

Completed in 1874, Emmeline Pritchard's painting predates this redirection of the Yarra and depicts the Botanic Gardens with the river running through them. In researching this work, NGV Curator Beckett Rozentals set out to the gardens to see if she could find the exact spot featured in Pritchard's painting.

The location is near Ornamental Lake, where visitors will find a small island that Rozentals thought might be the same island depicted in the painting. Keen for confirmation, *NGV Magazine* reached out to the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's Manager of Biodiversity Services and Editor-in-Chief of the botanical journal *Muelleria* Dr Alastair Robinson. In response, he wrote:

> It seems clear that you've identified the right spot. The clue lies in the *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* in the far right of the painting which is extant in your photograph. It even has the same overall shape, with the additional growth of the already emergent (in the painting) leader up top that one would expect over time. Our arborist, Charles Carrol, confirms that this is without doubt the same tree.

It was incredibly exciting to discover not just that the site of Pritchard's painting is still visible, but also that the eucalyptus she painted continues to stand tall in that spot more than 150 years later. If you do wish to see where Pritchard painted her work, we encourage you to visit the Royal Botanic Gardens's Ornamental Lake.

# Stuart Devlin *Eighteen light candelabra* 1975

*Words by* **Sophie Prince**

*Eighteen light candelabra*, 1975, is an outstanding example of Stuart Devlin's larger-scale silverware centrepieces, which resolvedly reflect his sculptural inclinations and innovative filagree work, intended to surprise and delight the viewer. A gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, the candelabra introduces a cornerstone of Devlin's workshop's expansive range that was not represented in the NGV Collection, sitting alongside his hollowware (vessels such as goblets and wine coolers), ceremonial objects such as his renowned *Surprise eggs*, 1973–74, tableware, and jewellery.

Born in Geelong on 9 October 1931, Devlin commenced art school at fourteen, training for two years in an ecclesiastical metalsmithing workshop before enrolling in a diploma at RMIT in 1977 (gold and silversmithing). Remarkably, he was able to complete the three-year full-time diploma in just one year part time, receiving the highest marks ever awarded and, as a result, was granted a three-year travelling scholarship that enabled him to study at the Royal College of Art, London, for two years. He went on to receive the Harkness Fellowship, which took him to New York for two years, attending Columbia University and lecturing at universities across the United States.



After returning to Melbourne in 1962, the following year Devlin famously won the limited competition to design the first decimal coinage for Australia, which was issued nationally in 1966 and continues to be minted. The opportunity spurred Devlin's rise to prominence and foregrounded his move to London, as the dyes for his first coins were produced at the Royal Mint in London, requiring Devlin to travel to England for three months.

The small business Devlin established in Clerkenwell, London, in 1965, soon developed into a large and profitable enterprise, incorporating showrooms and workshops in the West End. Through the workshop Devlin parted with the principles of minimalist Scandinavian design that informed his early work, developing a signature style characterised by textured and gilded surfaces that emphasise the richness of the metals from which they are produced. This evolution emerged from Devlin's decision to begin making work speculatively rather than relying on commissions. His first uncommissioned piece was a sixteen-light candelabra, featuring revolving sockets into which candles could be arranged in several ways and which was acquired by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

*Eighteen light candelabra* is one the grandest models by Devlin. Hallmarked London 1975 and engraved with Devlin's signature, it is fabricated in sterling silver and silver gilt. The filigree arms branch into eighteen candle sconces, raised on a hand-beaten turned stem. The pieces created in Devlin's workshop are all handmade. Works such as the candelabra were painstakingly hammered until the desired shape was formed, and large pieces may have to be annealed over forty times, taking up to 200 hours before planishing the surface. Polishing to this scale required between 50–100 hours and was handled by expert polishers.

Devlin's workshop operated through to 1989 and its work was collected and celebrated internationally. In 1980, he was made an officer of the Order of Australia on the Birthday Honours List and in 1982 he was granted the Royal Warrant of Appointment as Goldsmith and Jeweller to Her Majesty the Queen. Beyond the workshop and before his passing in 2018, Devlin designed coins and medals for thirty-six countries across the world, notably coins for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Between 1996 to 1997, he was Prime Warden at the Goldsmiths' Company, leading the founding of a training facility for apprentices and designers, which he worked on from 2005 to its opening in 2012 – an initiative that reinforces his lifelong dedication to excellent craftsmanship and design.

Sophie Prince is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, Australian and First Nations Art.

Stuart Devlin's *Eighteen light candelabra* was generously donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program.







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Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM in *Alexander McQueen: Mind, Mythos, Muse* at NGV International.
Photographed by: Carmen Zammit

# **Rod McNicol** Twelve portraits, 1978–2017

*Words by* **Maggie Finch**







Australian artist Rod McNicol studied photography at Prahran College in 1974 and in 1975 was a co-founder of the influential Photographers' Gallery, South Yarra. Renowned for his portraiture, McNicol's work is a social portrait and time capsule of people in Melbourne spanning more than four decades.

From 1978-86 he produced an extensive series of portraits of friends, acquaintances, and the people in his neighborhood originally titled, simply, *A Portrait*. Since that time, McNicol has continued to produce vibrant portraits of people in his immediate, and changing, community – his self-described 'village' – from the same inner-city warehouse studio that he moved into in the 1970s. Using daylight and a neutral backdrop and directing each sitter to look directly into the camera, the portraits have an intensity and stillness that is reminiscent of early studio portraiture. As McNicol has said, 'I was obsessed by the self-conscious stare back to the camera so evident in 19th century photography.'[1]

Twelve photographs by McNicol dating from 1978 through to 2017 recently joined the NGV Collection as a gift of Wilbow Group Pty Ltd on behalf of the Bowness Family Foundation.

Maggie Finch is NGV Curator, Photography.

*Twelve portraits*, 1978-2017, by Rod McNicol were generously donated to the NGV Collection by Wilbow Group Pty Ltd on behalf of the Bowness Family Foundation.





# **Gucci, Florence** (fashion house) Eighteen works, c. 2000–17

*Words by* **Charlotte Botica**

Through the generous donation made by Olga Kononchuk, eighteen works by Italian fashion house Gucci recently joined the NGV Collection. Augmenting the Gallery's existing Gucci collection, these works enrichen representation of Gucci's creative directors: Tom Ford (1995–2004), Frida Giannini (2006–2015) and Alessandro Michele (2015–2022). The donation features iconic works including Giannini's *Bomber jacket*, c. 2006, popularised by Madonna, and Michele's *Look 29, jacket* from the pre-fall 2016 collection, as well as an outfit from Michele's collaboration with New York Street artist and musician Trouble Andrew for autumn–winter 2016–17.

In 1921, Gucci was founded by Guccio Gucci as a travel and equestrian leather goods and luxury retailer. Since then, Gucci has evolved into a fashion empire renowned for artisanal excellence and innovative design.

More recently, Gucci has become synonymous with the work of Alessandro Michele. In the 1990s, Michele was the senior accessories designer at Fendi, then in 2002 he began working for Gucci's London-based design department and in January 2015 he was appointed creative director. Within a year of Michele's appointment, he released the now-coveted Dionysus bag. Unlike other Gucci bags, which are typically identifiable by their double 'G' hardware, the Dionysus bag is marked by its homage to the brand's equine roots and the tiger head insignia, representing Dionysus the Greek god of wine, pleasure and excess.

A total of fifteen works by Michele enter the Collection, all representative of his whimsical vision for the brand. Michele introduced a deeper, more kaleidoscopic exploration of the Gucci aesthetic, embedded in intuitive, emotional interpretation of historic and intellectual references. His vintage-bricolage design sensibility pulls from myriad eras, manifesting as unabashedly retro and geek-chic. Michele's tenure was also typified by camp and hyper-feminine aesthetics, as evident in *Look 20, dress*, spring–summer 2016, featuring bold colour and trompe-l'œil ribbon embellishment.

The Gucci works contained in this donation demonstrate how each creative director reinterpreted the codes of the house in individual ways, each creating their own Gucci legacy.

Charlotte Botica is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, Fashion and Textiles.

The NGV warmly thanks Olga Kononchuk for generously donating these works to the NGV Collection.



**Alessandro Michele** for **Gucci, Florence**
*Look 20, dress* 2016, spring–summer 2016.
Gift of Olga Kononchuk, 2024



## United States, New York, Mount Lebanon *Turning chair* c. 1870

*Words by* **Amanda Dunsmore** *and* **Imogen Mallia-Valjan**

The NGV recently acquired an important example of Shaker seating design, *Turning chair*, c. 1870, generously supported by The Gidleigh Foundation. The chair is one of a small number produced by the Mount Lebanon Community that were entirely experimental and never put into production.

The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, commonly known as the Shakers, was an American Protestant sect of more than 6000 members that reached its height during the mid-nineteenth century. In an attempt to separate themselves from the outside world and to create a heaven on earth, the Shakers grew their own food, constructed their own buildings and manufactured their own tools and furniture. Their guiding principles of honesty, utility and simplicity found expression in the manufacture of their furniture, which was renowned for its minimalist design and unstinting quality. Rejecting excessive ornament, Shaker furniture makers focused on overall form and proportions and used local American woods such as pine, maple, cherry and ash.

The largest and most influential Shaker community was established in 1787 at New Lebanon, New York, and was commonly referred to as the Mount Lebanon Shaker Society. The craftsmen at Mount Lebanon specialised in the production of chairs, which were sold or traded with other Shaker communities. By the 1860s, chairmaking had become a staple industry of the New Lebanon community. The Shakers were constantly experimenting with labour-saving devices and much of their furniture was made with the aid of circular saws, mortising machines and steam-powered lathes that allowed them to reinterpret traditional forms with an emphasis on utility and simplicity.

The *Turning chair* is one of a small number of chairs that were designed to turn on their base through the use of an iron pin that raised or lowered the seat as it turned. With its pedestal base on four arched feet, the *Turning chair* anticipates the modern office chair. However, the design of these revolving chairs, particularly the cast-iron spinning mechanism that allowed the height to adjust, was never fully tested and as such, all were regarded as prototypes and never marketed for sale. They remained within the Shaker communities where they were used in offices, shops and at desks. The resolved design of the NGV's *Turning chair* with its curved back rail, out-turned spindles, bottle-shaped pedestal stem and tapering, chamfered feet is timeless in its modernity.

Amanda Dunsmore is NGV Senior Curator, International Decorative Arts & Antiquities.
Imogen Mallia-Valjan is NGV Project Officer, Decorative Arts and Design.

*Turning chair* was purchased with funds generously donated by The Gidleigh Foundation.





## Steven Rhall *Recycled or reclaimed* 2021

*Words by* **Michael Gentle**

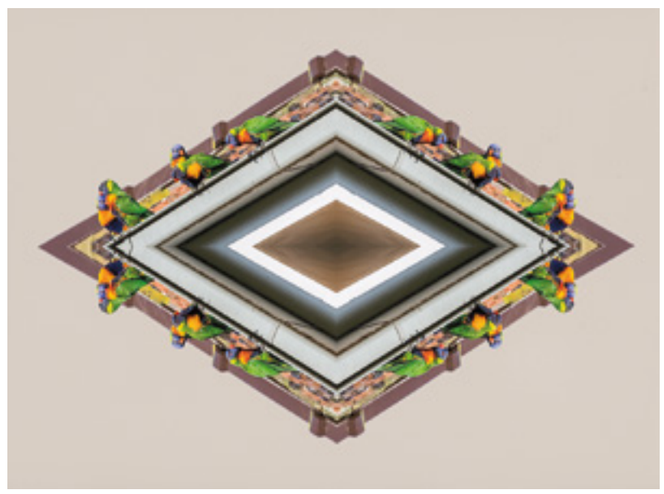


Steven Rhall is a Taungurong artist whose interdisciplinary practice spans photography, installation, performance and sculpture. The multifaceted nature of his work informs, and is informed by, the art historical canons he critiques, navigating the relationship between First Nations creative practice and Western history. Recently entering the NGV Collection is *Recycled or reclaimed*, 2021, a sculptural work that won the Paul Selzer Exhibition Art Prize in 2022. Influenced by a return to a childhood playground, Rhall's work recontextualises found objects – such as irrigation components – to explore how we control narrative and perceive memories. Seated in a quasi-dystopian steel vessel, two youthful figures gaze at one another. The haunting return Rhall makes interrogates temporality, subverting how we discern our personal pasts and highlighting the deceptive figure that is time. The conceptual rigour present in Rhall's work plays an important role in extrapolating new and unexpected meanings from shared experiences – such as childhood – as well as probing the space it inhabits: the gallery.

Steven Rhall's *Recycled or reclaimed* was purchased through the Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists.

## Kent Morris *Unvanished – Yalukit Willam (St Kilda) – rainbow lorikeet* 2022

*Words by* **Michael Gentle**



Working across public art, photography and digital media, Kent Morris traces the resilience of First Nations culture and knowledges in urbanised environments, exploring the tension between industrialisation and Country. Commissioned for the *Melbourne Now Print Folio*, Morris's work *Unvanished – Yalukit Willam (St Kilda) – rainbow lorikeet*, 2022, stresses the lack of First Nations cultural representation in urban spaces. The geometric configuration of the image mirrors traditional designs of the land's custodians; an homage to the durability of knowledges, peoples, waters and skies. Studying the tempo and rhythm of native birds in urban contexts, Morris draws attention to the ways in which Country *remembers*, lingering beneath, within and throughout built-up areas.

Michael Gentle is NGV Curator, First Nations.

Kent Morris's *Unvanished – Yalukit Willam (St Kilda) – rainbow lorikeet* was commissioned by the NGV and purchased with funds generously donated by NGV Supporters of Prints and Drawings.

# Mele O Nā Kaukani Wai

## (Song of a thousand waters)

An ancestor and a descendant at the same time, Native Hawaiian interdisciplinary artist Lehuauakea's delicate, yet commanding *kapa* (traditional Hawaiian barkcloth) is one of the exceptional displays of global First Nations art showing at NGV Triennial. Through the labour-intensive making of *kapa*, made using *'ohe kāpala* (bamboo printing tools) and natural pigments, Lehuauakea breathes new life into intergenerational practices. The NGV warmly thanks Trawalla Foundation for its support towards this work.

*Words by* **Edwina Green**



*Kapa* is made from the bark of a select few trees, with wauke (paper mulberry) being the most used bark. The bark is stripped from the trees in a singular piece, following a time-consuming and physically laborious process of soaking and beating the bark to separate the fibres, with the final beating facilitating a surface to watermark the intricate patterns that are unique to the maker and their familial lines. *Kapa* has been used for generations and continues to be used for clothing, bedding, ceremony and burial wrappings.

The genesis of this homage to *kapa*, one of Lehuauakea's most ambitious works, unfolded during a transformative chapter of the artist's life while studying abroad in England in 2017. Lehuauakea reflects on this reality of living and working away from their homelands while staying connected to ancestral roots, and how these tie into a universal experience of seeking identity and belonging. The dance between physical distance and cultural engagement became a poignant exploration of the artist's personal narrative and the ongoing process of *kapa*-making. The conception of this work bears witness to a profound connection between intergenerational practices and their ability to hold, protect and heal First Nations peoples internationally.

The carving of *'ohe kāpala* tools, which have been etched with ancestral designs, and the meticulous layering of Japanese *Kozo* paper gifted to Lehuauakea by a college mentor, symbolised more than the physical act of receiving a gift; rather, of creating an opportunity. If these cultural items could speak, they would tell the story of how they watched Lehuauakea's artistic journey prosper, and that this work was significantly more than a manifestation of artistic skill – it encapsulated a deeply personal and transformative period of healing and resilience.

*Kapa*, a fabric entwined with life's rites and rituals, transcended its artistic representation as Lehuauakea contemplated its role beyond museum and gallery walls. The use and accessibility of *kapa* within the Native Hawaiian community echoes a universal sentiment: that the true preservation of cultural heritage lies in its integration into everyday life. This functions to destigmatise indigeneity, reframing it as being the original rather than being the 'other'. While the *kapa* is a holder for births, marriages, deaths and to be worn as an everyday item, Lehuauakea also intimately examines the role of institutions in presenting and preserving cultural items, delving into the complexity of historical narratives and the potential for restitution. Lehuauakea's work advocates for ongoing cultural consultation and transparent collaboration to be at the forefront, highlighting the paramount need for equitable engagements in the preservation of cultural heritage. It raises a vital question about First Peoples' autonomous engagement with institutions and how First Peoples and their cultural items can be honoured and their makers appropriately remunerated for their labour, materials and cultural significance, acknowledging these items' place as everyday pieces while simultaneously existing within the realm of fine art. When these artworks enter institutions' collections, they do not become more or less valuable in the Western understanding of worth; an artwork's existence adapts and plays a crucial role in cross-cultural understanding, engagement and education, though its life is different to the *kapa*, for instance, that stays on its homeland with its people. Fundamentally, these items and their cultural knowledge will always belong to the community from which they came.



NGV Triennial 2023 artist Lehuauakea. Photo: Leah Rose

Lehuauakea's *Mele O Nā Kaukani Wai* (*Song of a thousand waters*) intricately binds ancestral heritage, personal metamorphosis and cultural endurance. Crafted during a transformative phase, this marking of *kapa* extends beyond the realm of aesthetics, inviting discourse surrounding the integration of Native Hawaiian cultural items into museums and galleries. In this context, understanding that the responsibility in presenting and preserving cultural items and artworks is shifting is critical to engaging with works such as Lehuauakea's, along with issues of cross-cultural education and intergenerational cultural autonomy.

This ancestral homage to *kapa* embodies a dual identity as a knowledge holder and educator to an ever-evolving audience.

Edwina Green is NGV Curator, First Nations Art.

See Lehuauakea's *Mele O Nā Kaukani Wai (Song of a thousand waters)*, 2018, as part of NGV Triennial 2023 until 7 April. This work was purchased with funds generously donated by Trawalla Foundation.

(p. 46) Installation view of **Lehuauakea** *Mele o Nā Kaukani Wai* (*Song of a thousand waters*) 2018 on display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Sean Fennessy

# STITCHES OF MEMORY: living the past and remembering *the future*



One of three themes in NGV Triennial 2023, memory shines a light on the histories of people, places and objects that make up the complex tapestry of our contemporary world. In this deep read, Indigenous Sámi scholar Dr Liisa-Rávná Finbog reflects on memories, remembering and the stories of her people.

*Words by* **Dr Liisa-Rávná Finbog**

The child, wonder upon her brow, asks: Tell me a story of a time when the land still spoke freely to us, of a time when we dwelt upon her.

Tell me a story of the time when I knew all the creeks and rivers that crossed upon her splendour, of a time when the grass sang, and the wind whispered in my ear.

Áhkku (grandmother) answers: There is a line in the centre back. It is strong because it needs to be.

Carrying the *gákti*, the centre line is where we start. It is where the gákti begins to take form; shaping itself into the cloak of ancestors, carried on our backs, covering us in ancestral wisdom and the safety of knowing, 'I am clothed in and by my ancestors.'[1]

## A GENEALOGY OF BECOMING

Holding the yellow thread between my hands, I pull it taut. The colour illuminates the path that I lay down, yellow on red. Stitch by stitch, as the beautiful blend takes shape, a memory grows. It is not simply one of tangible certainties. Rather, the memory that inevitably reveals itself comes across in a harmony of possibilities, as colours, meanings and story slowly (re)form. From this nexus of imagined creativities and enacted collectivities, the *gákti* beneath my hands comes into its own, taking shape, evolving into a landscape of memory that is both my own and also, distinctively, other.

The *gákti* is a garment (but also a landscape) entangled in and with cultural values, meanings and concepts. It has been collectively developed over a long period of time and throughout many generations. Today it is often, perhaps even primarily, seen as an important symbol of individual identity,[2] an assumption easily explained if considered from a historical perspective. Though its predecessor, a simple tunic of leather and/or skin, is a garment common to the entire circumpolar area,[3] in its later form the *gákti* took up a shape that visually distinguished it from the garments of surrounding cultures.[4] As such, the *gákti* has become unmistakably associated with the Sámi people. To define the *gákti* as an ethnic marker alone would nevertheless diminish its function, because the *gákti* is also a multi-layered and dynamic creation of imaginations and ancestral knowledge.

For one, the *gákti* is a material manifestation of (a) Sámi world of existence – a silent but visible survey of *Eana* (land), *siida* (community) and *sohka* (clan). Through the cut and adornments, for instance, the *gákti* acts to situate its wearer in society, indicating 'place of belonging, family descent, gender, and relationship status'.[5] The *gákti* is also a legal document testifying to the wearer's right to live in and on the clan-based territory of the *siida*.[6] Additionally, the *gákti* is a materialisation of *tiida* (rituals, spells) expressing the complexities of a more spiritual domain.[7] Indeed, the *gákti* provides a material site for the enactment of yellow and red, performing specific attributes that are deeply significant. Red, for instance, is the colour of creation wherein Sáráhkka[8] reigns as queen, while yellow is the colour of Beaiváš,[9] the sun, she who 'warms and nourishes the earth'.[10] Yellow and red are also the colours that in our *muitalusat* (stories) paint the Sámi genesis, a knowledge as old as our emergence.

The *muitalus* of yellow and red is the first story, but perhaps it is also the last. It nevertheless tells of a beginning, even if it is not the only beginning. As I have heard it told, and as I tell it, the story of yellow and red narrates the sacrifice of Vaja, the sacred reindeer doe that gave up her life so that we might live. After all, nothing new can grow into being without the abdication of the old. In the story, then, Vaja's oblation does not erase her presence in the world. On the contrary, she transitions, her flesh and bones becoming the source from which the Creator imagined the living land into being. From the red depths of her blood springs of rejuvenation were drawn forth to create the waterways: the lakes, the seas, the rivers and the streams that still carry Vaja within, because water is always confluent, merging the 'memory of all substances that have dissolved within it'.[11]

From the amalgamation of land (flesh) and water (blood) a metamorphosis happened, and the one who creates, Sivdnideaddji, took the two elements to make the soil. From here, They shaped our Máttaráhkuid, the Foremothers that are the first 'landed' beings, entities that are both of and emerge from the land. In the sky above, Beaiváš looked upon those that were newly formed. Arrayed in the splendour of Her yellow light, a deep and abiding love grew. Like all the stars of the sky, the sun contains every known element – water included, even if it takes on the shape of vapour and/or mist. And it is the sun, after all, 'which drives the water cycle', circulating water between its many stages as liquid and mist, as well as solid state.[12] Travelling, first as mist, the water from the sun eventually transmuted into liquid. Beaiváš cried then. And when Her tears fell on the Foremothers that Vaja bore, the first landed ones birthed the Sámi people. In yellow we thus keep the memory of our conception and the knowledge of our covenant with the sun, who is the giver of life. The red similarly carries a memory, albeit of Vaja, as well as the knowledge that she gave us of the land, which thus gave us the ground we were later consecrated in.

And so we are of the sun and the earth, of yellow and red, seeded by Beaiváš and nurtured by Vaja.

## COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Establishing the progenitors of the Sámi people as female (or female presenting) creates an interesting, but also correct, understanding of the knowledge surrounding conception: of old, the Sámi believes that every child begins as female.[13] Juhksáhkká, who is the goddess of the hunt as well as childbirth, counts among her many responsibilities that of intervening when needed to change the child's sex to that of male – even if she sometimes decides to leave the transition in between (and thus there is no gendered pronoun in our language). In the social structure of Sámi society, prior to colonisation at least, the female focus in our genealogy was evidenced in old naming practices, which suggest that there was a relatively strong matrilinearity and matrilocality.[14] This is not an implication of Sápmi[15] being a matriarchal society. On the contrary, Sápmi was (and in many communities continues to be) bilateral, recognising women, men and other gender identities as equal, their dynamics characterised by symmetrical and complementary domains without adding more or less value on account of which gender performed certain roles and tasks.[16]

As to such roles and tasks, the relevance of females in our story of becoming is reflected in the fact that historically (as well as in the present day) it is the women that hold the responsibility of *gáktegoarrun (gákti*-making),[17] suggesting that women 'had an important role in maintaining and governing the judicial system of Sápmi', including, but not limited to, land tenure and asserting clan rights.[18] After all, even today it is an acknowledged truth that women best manage and know the system of kin and clan, or *háld- dašit bures sohkavuogádaga dieđuid*.[19] My memories as they relate to *gákti* are, as such, primarily related to the women of my clan.

From my childhood, there is a memory of the *gákti*, and of yellow and red, that still resonates strongly. My *tjidtjie* (mother) is dancing, moving between tables. There is colourful fabric gathered on the table to my right, pattern pieces pinned in place. To the left is *tjidtjie*'s work table, a clutter of colours and objects in chaotic segments. To my eyes it seems disorganised, but *tjidtjie* is, in fact, in complete control. From the speakers, the crackle of an old but well-loved vinyl fuses with the husky tones of Leonard Cohen's lyrics, which state: 'First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin'. In her hands, she holds ribbons of yellow and red, and to my childish eyes it is almost as if she's materialising an observance to the knowledge of our becoming. But then, as Sámi scholar Gunvor Guttorm reminds us, to *duddjot* (work with one's hands) also means 'using one's hands to control techniques' ritual functions'.[20] In this place (both in my memory and in this specific and localised moment in time) my *tjidtjie* thus becomes the keeper of a collective memory, and it is through the act of making the *gákti*, her *gáktegoarruma*, that she shares this memory with me, demonstrating 'the ways objects themselves, as material forms, may signify through a specifically material semiotics'.[21]

No doubt anthropologists would extract this specific practice of memory-keeping and translate it into the vernacular of their discipline by primarily focusing on how some objects hold resonances of social relations and personal associations because they have transcended their utilitarian purpose. As anthropologist Annette Weiner, in her seminal book on inalienable objects, states:

> In societies with complex political hierarchies, precious possessions such as gold crowns, jewelry, feathered cloaks or fine silks may accumulate historical significance that make their economic and aesthetic values absolute and transcendent above all similar things.[22]

In their function as 'mnemonic tools' it is expected that certain objects evolve into a material cultural expression that functions within deeply complex social and cultural relations, acting as a focus of collective memory, narratives, and constructions of both community and individual identities.[23] But to understand the *gákti* in this way would, to my understanding at least, be a disservice to it.

One of the more persuasive ideas relating to Indigenous ways of being (ontology), knowing (epistemology) and doing (axiology) is that all dimensions of social life are intertwined. Consequently, there is a permeable quality to the boundaries between worlds, spheres and times (pasts, presents and futures) within Sámi philosophies and ontologies. Though this is an understanding that may, and does, take on many forms, it is also reflected in the common understanding that both human and non-human entities have agency.

In our language(s) non-human entities are distinguished as *luondu*, or beings that do not speak (such as animals), and beings that do not breathe, such as a *jávri* (lake) or *Eana* (land).[24] But regardless of how we are named, we are all capable of subjective will.[25] How this philosophy transfers into materiality changes the perception of objects. As Sámi *dáiddar* (artist) Outi Pieski explains, objects are 'our ancestors' – living elders, what might be termed *eallilan*, with both a place and function within the system of kinship that makes up the world we all live in (or beside).[26] The understanding that objects are *eallilan* also has serious ramifications for how a Sámi pedagogy develops.

Typically, in the traditions of Sami child rearing, the younger ones learn from the elders, seeing and then doing.[27] This is the way of *árbediehtu* (shared/inherited knowledge), which is a term conceptualising knowledge as

> the collective wisdom and skills of the Sámi people used to enhance their livelihood for centuries. It has been passed down from generation to generation both orally and through work and practical experience. Through this continuity, the concept of *árbediehtu* ties the past, present and future together.[28]

Among the many mechanisms that enact the story of yellow and red, *árbediehtu* is perhaps one of the more influential, as it facilitates a sharing of knowledge through bodily practice (which we might also term *duddjot*). Which is why, when years later I stepped into the role of storyteller, my chosen medium of deliverance was to *duddjot*. Just like my *tjidtjie* before me, I took up the needle to stitch the memory of yellow and red.

As I work the *gákti* with my hands, creating a cloak of ancestral wisdom and shelter, I embed but also unearth, because this is where I see and know the lives of my ancestors, and it is where my descendants will come to see and know me. '*Mii lea generašuvnnaid mielde mannán, dego mun muittán hui bures*' – 'What the generations before have lived, I remember well'.[29]

Still, it is important to recognise that '[s]hared narratives cannot be assumed, in and of themselves, to determine ... affiliations, as individual interpretations'. Indeed, when individual interpretations happen, there is a possibility that 'these narratives muddy the specific possibilities for the articulation of collectives'.[30] But the memory of yellow and red is not simply reasserted and narrativised by individuals who integrate their life experiences and/or perspectives into an evolving story of self. Quite the opposite – yellow and red materialise as a collective memory because it is before, beyond and after. There is no beginning or end point, meaning that it is a story that is the first, but also the last. The story of yellow and red, and the memory of the event proceeding such a narrative, is, as such, always in motion, and it continues to be relived whenever we make the *gákti*. The *gákti,* then, is a shared site of meaning that provides the necessary foundation for us to re-remember.[31] In this way, the story of yellow and red becomes 'the virtual presence of ... events ... and memory is the actualization of history in space as embodied movement'.[32] In that sense, to express the ancestral knowledge of our emergence is not as simple as wearing the *gákti.* Rather, such knowledge lies in the making of the *gákti*.

Whenever I make a *gákti*, then, I also practise a collective memory, and in so doing I enact a reality in which the memories of yellow and red are a specific and factual knowledge manifest- ed in actions and creative practices. As has been articulated by Guttorm, '*[m]uittán olles rupmašiin. Dan maid dál oainnán, gávnnan fas rumašlaš muittus*' – 'I remember in my body. What I see is preserved as a physical memory'.[33] This is how, throughout the many generations since our becoming, '*[m]áttuid dieđut oidnojit ja leat vurkejuvvon dálá dujiin*', the knowledge of our ancestors has continued to appear and endure in (and also by) *duodji*.[34]

## MEMORY AS LITERATURE

A small note of explanation on the term *duodji*. Of old, *duodji* is a land-based practice of creation, involving aesthetics, knowledge[s] of materials, place and season, as well as a Sámi holistic worldview that touches upon spirituality, ethics and the interrelational qualities embedded in the multiple world[s] of creation.[35]

Consequently, the practice of *duodji* is part of a sophisticated system of knowledge that bases itself in a historical consciousness of *vuogas* (aesthetics), *árbediehtu, vuoiŋŋalašvuohta* (spirituality) and the interdependence – or balance – of all things, which we term *birgejupmi*. Together, all these elements form both the philosophies and the ethics of a Sámi way of life (which is the combination of our ways of being, knowing and doing). This system is embedded in both the practice and the materialisations – or objects – of said practice.

As a system of knowledge, *duodji* becomes a form of literature. Sadly, due to a specific and strategic process to devalue *duodji* as an epistemology,[36] this is an understanding that often gets under-communicated. This should come as no surprise, because if we look to the Eurocentric confederation of imperial justifications and values (which all too often has been celebrated as the norm by which everything else must be judged), the conceptualisation of literature centres itself in the written word.[37]

The word 'literature' comes from the Latin term *littera*, which means 'letter'; the idea of literature has thus been allied with the act of writing. This has, in turn, created the common misconception that literature is books and other works containing written words. This asserts a very specific hierarchy that casts the written word as superior to the spoken word – or indeed, any other means of record keeping.[38] As Walter Benjamin explains in his seminal essay 'The storyteller', 'The earliest symptom of a process whose end is the decline of storytelling is the rise of the written word'.[39] But how we write – or the perception of how the act of writing is performed – differs in both ontology and practice (or methodology).

In many Indigenous communities literature does exist; however, it does so in sophisticated systems where literacy is a word shaded in the pluralities of many possibilities,[40] of which *duodji* is but one example.[41] In a Sámi context, then, '*njálmmálaš árbevierut leat meroštallon girjjálašvuohtan*', or 'oral traditions should be thought of as literature'.[42] Still, a story is much more than a singular branch born from the tree of remembrance; it is joined by its siblings, who are *muitit* – to remember – and *muitu* – a memory. Derived from a common origin, to tell a story is thus an act of remembrance, rooted in the connections and relations – the collectivity – within the *siida* where the story was first conceived. In this sense, a *muitalus* should be considered a factual record, a 'true -story' that is the opposite of the *máinnas*, the 'made-up-story' of fairytales and other works of fiction.[43] The story of yellow and red, as a *muitalus*, as such becomes the collective and performative *muitu* of our creation.[44] And as a collective *muitu*, the process of its enactment is a collective convergence of knowledge and material motion, whether or not it is individually performed.[45] Through this act, the making of the *gákti* also becomes a literary practice, which both contains and disseminates our history as a people. Every *gákti*-maker consequently transforms into the keeper, but also the scribe, of said history.

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# The door the bone dress opened

Elsa Schiaparelli instilled a creative spirit in twentieth-century fashion with her inventive imagination and revolutionary vision. Her eponymous label is now led by American designer Daniel Roseberry, with a selection of works from Maison Schiaparelli's autumn–winter 2021–22 collection on display.

*Words by* **Dan Thawley**



In Paris, the City of Light, there is a historic square situated between the Palais Garnier and the Tuileries Garden, known as the Place Vendôme. It is pierced by a spiralling column forged from the smelted canons of the armies of Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century. Topped by a statue of Napoleon Bonaparte in a Grecian robe, the column surveys every corner of the Place Vendôme, a veritable cradle of luxury, home to the Ritz hotel, many of the world's most prestigious jewellery workshops and their boutiques, and the haute couture salons of the fabled fashion house Schiaparelli.

At No. 21 Place Vendôme the name Schiaparelli has remained scrawled across the awning of the Hotel de Fontpertuis since the mid 1930s, when the designer Elsa Schiaparelli combined her ateliers, haute couture salons and ground-floor boutique at a single address, conceived in a fresh and eclectic style by the celebrated French architect Jean-Michel Frank with their friend, the Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti. Schiaparelli was a Roman aristocrat who as a young girl studied the stars with her father Celestino, a scholar, and her uncle Giovanni, a prominent astronomer. She left the shelter of the family home, Palazzo Corsini, and the advances of an unwanted suitor [1] for London in 1913 and New York in 1917 before being coaxed back to Europe by her friend Gaby Buffet-Picabia, who introduced her to the aristocratic and avant-garde elite of Paris in the interwar period. There, Schiaparelli met painters and great thinkers, musicians and writers – people who nourished her visual and interior world. They were the Surrealists: people such as Leonora Fini, Salvador Dalí, Marcel Vertes, Jean Cocteau and Christian Berard, whose dreamlike artistic universes pushed at the boundaries of classicism and reality, and who would all collaborate with Schiaparelli on commercially creative endeavours, including perfume bottles, advertising, fabric prints and outlandish embroideries.

Once settled in Paris, Schiaparelli made her first foray into fashion, a quietly radical act that would become one of the most fundamental building blocks of twentieth-century fashion design: the trompe l'oeil – 'trick of the eye' – bow knitted in contrast to the collar of a hand-knitted black-and-white sweater she herself wore to a ladies' luncheon. This symbolic anti-embellishment, almost pixelated in its effect, was the talk of the town, and was followed shortly after by further experiments with similar two-dimensional motifs such as a sailor's bib, a bleeding heart and a man's tie. Later, she produced dresses printed with illustrations of her perfume bottles, buttons in the shape of beetles and, in a sculptural exercise with her friend Salvador Dalí, an elegant black felt hat in the shape of a woman's high-heeled shoe. Schiaparelli's penchant for clothes imbued with symbols and stories would culminate in some of the twentieth century's most dazzling haute couture garments embroidered by the venerated embroidery house of Lesage, including a series of 'zodiac' jackets, dresses embroidered with Baroque drawers, and the gilded *Phoebus* cape from 1938, cut in shocking pink silk velvet and embellished with a lyrical sun. Elsewhere, grapes, coral, sheaves of wheat, roses, butterflies, parrots and lobsters were all common decorative elements in her garments and accessories, treated with a bombastic flair that far surpassed the prettiness of the work of other couturiers of the time.

Though the strange beauty of the natural world was a key conceit in her creations, it was Schiaparelli's treatment of humanistic elements that would truly imbue her oeuvre with a mysticism all its own. In particular, her collaborations with Cocteau and Dalí pushed the Surrealism and figuration in her work to new heights, with human profiles traced out in delicate bugle beadwork on jackets and coats, red python 'fingernails' applied to black suede gloves, and brooches featuring bejewelled 'crying' eyes and ruby-red mouths revealing pearl teeth. Inspired by a sketch by Dalí, Schiaparelli's black silk crepe *Skeleton dress* traced with *trapunto* quilted bones from the 1938 *Le Cirque* collection was a truly modern gesture, cut with the fluidity of her earlier sportswear innovations imbued with an almost sinister anatomical representation, bringing the inside out.

After the designer's death in 1973 her fashion house lay dormant for decades, revived only in the 2010s by the Italian fashion mogul Diego Della Valle and helmed first by the Swedish-Italian designer Marco Zanini, who was followed shortly after by the French designer Bertrand Guyon. Both names revitalised curiosity and intrigue around the Schiaparelli name, but it was not until the American designer Daniel Roseberry arrived in 2019 that momentum truly shifted. Moving to Paris after a decade spent in the studio of the American designer Thom Browne in New York, the Texan-born talent took the sense of narrative showmanship he had honed with Browne and projected it into Schiaparelli's universe. For his first show in July 2019, Roseberry himself appeared centrestage, sketching at a drafting table in the middle of the runway, evoking the concept of tabula rasa – a blank page – as his first creations paraded around him. Of those first attempts at capturing Schiaparelli's surreal spirit, it was a pair of nebulous, gravity-defying confections in swathes of silk faille that crystallised his trajectory, upsizing Schiaparelli's codes and marrying them with his own sense of metafictional fashion, American realism and contemporary showmanship.

'When I think about magic, I think about childhood', says Roseberry, reflecting on one of the themes of the NGV Triennial. 'And I think about the suspension of disbelief. Every season you have to claw your way back to a space of creative innocence, where you feel like magical things are possible once again.'[2]

By stepping up to the plate and approaching the founder's ideas with such gusto, Roseberry unlocked a new universality in the work that was previously lacking, moving the conversation away from the subtle romance so often associated with the rarefied world of haute couture towards a bolder vision. In doing so, he successfully provoked the sense of wonderment that comes from, say, a shocking pink velvet gown that hangs not from the wearer's shoulders, but from a pair of gold doorknocker earrings, or a denim jacket bedazzled with filigree embroideries of eyes and ears, replete with a mismatched pair of perky gilded breasts.

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See a selection of works from Maison Schiaparelli's autumn–winter 2021–22 collection as part of NGV Triennial at NGV International until 7 April.

This is an extract of an essay that originally appeared in the *NGV Triennial 2023* publication, available instore and online at the NGV design store via NGV.Melbourne/store. This publication has been generously supported by Wendy and Paul Bonnici and family.

Installation view of designs by **Maison Schiaparelli** on display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Sean Fennessy



## Fashion from NGV Triennial

# Thebe Magugu

Thebe Magugu's autumn-winter 2023–24 fashion collection, *Folklorics*, was conceived as an acknowledgement of the importance of African modes of storytelling – legends, proverbs, mythologies and oral histories passed down from generation to generation.

*Words by* **Danielle Whitfield**

South African fashion designer Thebe Magugu established his label in 2016 with the intention to decolonise fashion and honour his cultural identity and heritage.[1]

In practice, Magugu's collections speak to the realities and complexities of South African life, past and present. Each collection tells a story exploring a different aspect of personal, historical, political or social significance. *Home Economics* (autumn–winter 2018) commented on gender-based violence; *Prosopography* (spring– summer 2020) on apartheid-era female-led resistance and *Genealogy* (spring–summer 2022) notions of family and memory.

In many ways, Magugu is characteristic of a new generation of fashion designer determined to rethink the geography of fashion. Deeply political, Magugu researches and publishes his seasonal show notes on the label's website along with supplementary reading lists. In 2019, concurrently with his *African Studies* collection (autumn–winter 2019) and exhibition, Magugu launched the first edition of *Faculty Press* – an annual zine highlighting the work of emerging African writers and creatives.

Magugu's aesthetic has been described as the 'interweaving of African motifs, craft and silhouettes'.[3] To give one example, for *Genealogy* the designer reworked South African Sotho wax prints (known as *seshweshwe*), replacing conventional iconography with a repeat pattern of regal portraits of his own family. Magugu later expanded this concept into the *Custom Heirloom Shirt*, making the print available to anyone wishing to memorialise their own blood or chosen family.

Featuring in NGV Triennial is *Outfit* from Magugu's autumn–winter 2023–24 collection, *Folklorics*. The collection was conceived as an acknowledgement of the importance of African modes of storytelling: legends, proverbs, mythologies and oral histories passed down from generation to generation. While some of the prints referenced early San rock art, indigenous to South Africa, *Outfit* is specifically inspired by the folktale of Mami Wata. A powerful water spirit, Mami Wata is a mermaid-like creature 'known to have caused devastation in its path through seduction … luring fisherman astray with its melodic voice and compelling beauty'[5]. The textiles' imagery is derived from a nineteenth-century illustration of a ship in the process of sinking off the Cape of Good Hope with the implied devastation also a way of thinking about representations of the femme body within African folklore.

Danielle Whitfield is NGV Curator, Fashion and Textiles.

See these works as part of NGV Triennial 2023 at NGV International until 7 April.

**Thebe Magugu's** *Shipwreck jacket, top and trousers, headscarf and shoes*, 2023, from the *Folklorics* collection, ready-to-wear, autumn–winter 2023–24 were purchased with funds donated by the NGV Supporters of Fashion and Textiles, 2023.

# Iris van Herpen

For her fifteenth anniversary presentation, *Meta Morphism*, autumn–winter 2022–23, Dutch designer Iris van Herpen set out to explore our connection to technology and how it impacts our sense of self.

*Words by* **Katie Somerville**



Dutch designer Iris van Herpen views contemporary haute couture as a laboratory for innovation and experimentation. Never losing sight of its roots in the exquisitely handcrafted, van Herpen has articulated a new path for high fashion, drawing on the disciplines of dance, science, architecture, music and technology.

In 2007 van Herpen established her womenswear label, launching at Amsterdam Fashion Week. Since this time, she has developed an aesthetic language based on the interrogation of new materials and the implementation of innovative techniques. Computer modelling plays a key role in van Herpen's design development, while 3D printing as a tool for creating new fabrics and forms has been integral since the early years of the studio.

The designer's work is characterised by artistic expression as much as function, and collaboration has always been key to her mode of practice. For her fifteenth anniversary presentation, *Meta Morphism*, autumn–winter 2022, van Herpen set out to explore our connection to technology and how it impacts our sense of self. In collaboration with Microsoft, she created a mixed-reality runway experience for her show at Élysée Montmartre, featuring sixteen physical looks worn by models alongside three digital looks designed to be worn by avatars and viewed using mixed-reality headsets. While a COVID-19 outbreak among the technical team meant the show had to proceed without its virtual aspect, van Herpen was nonetheless still able to present the collection's innovative physical designs.

Presented as part of NGV Triennial, *Look 14* of the *Meta Morphism* collection, *Ananda-Maya gown and shoes*, is a highly sculptural gown that floats away from the body as much as it wraps around it. The bodice features dynamic three-dimensional skeleton-like embroidery that spirals outwards and morphs into floating volumes of transparent white plissé tulle. Encircling the face and swirling around the body like ghosts, the tulle creates a series of shadows that blur the lines between body, garment and surrounding space. The gown is paired with winged, 3D-printed platform shoes that likewise demonstrate the potential of technology to transform the way we dress.

'I want to look forward', van Herpen said of *Meta Morphism*. 'I've always done that. The collection is very future-oriented, inspired by post-humanism, by transforming identities, the metaverse, but also hyperreality, where digital reality and physical reality are becoming indistinguishable.'[1]

Van Herpen's technology-centred approach to clothing gets to the heart of her enduring interest in transhumanism. By defying traditional classification, her work questions the limits of the self and the idea of the body as 'an elusive system, rooted in transience', exploring the productive 'tensions between artifice and nature'.[2] As one of fashion's most future-facing creatives, van Herpen is excited by the prospect of this mixed reality, where the physical and digital coexist:

> I don't believe in replacing the physical beauty that we're creating – that's why I want the digital looks to be an extension of the physical looks. They need the same soul, the same intricacy, the same craftsmanship.[3]

Katie Somerville is NGV Senior Curator, Fashion and Textiles.

See these works as part of NGV Triennial 2023 at NGV International until 7 April.

**Iris van Herpen's** *Look 14, Ananda-Maya, gown and shoes*, 2022, from the *Meta Morphism* collection, haute couture, autumn–winter 2022–23 were purchased with funds donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, 2023.

These are extracts of essays that originally appeared in the *NGV Triennial 2023* publication, available instore and online at the NGV design store via NGV.Melbourne/store. This publication has been generously supported by Wendy and Paul Bonnici and family.

# BEYOND CATASTROPHE

Petrit Halilaj transposes relationships, places and people into sculptural forms and softly questions the blurred boundaries between collective and individual memory, as well as the creative labour of remembering. The birds in his NGV Triennial work are on a journey, much like his own journey from Kosovo to Italy and Germany, where he divides his time.

*Words by* **Jessica McEwen**



Refugees queue for food and humanitarian aid at the Kukës II refugee camp in Albania, 1999. Petrit Halilaj centre.

> Remembrance of things past is not necessarily the remembrance of things as they were.
>
> — Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*

The birds of Petrit Halilaj's art arrive in the present, migrating from distant places of imagination with memory caught in their feathers. A contemporary Kosovo artist, Petrit Halilaj transposes relationships, places and people into sculptural forms and softly questions the blurred boundaries between collective and individual memory, as well as the creative labour of remembering. While based between Kosovo, Italy and Germany, Halilaj's more creative travels are between present and past. His work is deeply connected to the recent history of his native country and is rooted in an archive of biography. While a revisiting of past conflict and trauma is undoubtedly challenging, Halilaj 'rejects pathos or nostalgia for something … more optimistic, materially complex, politically resonant and, ultimately, critical'.[1] Indeed, Halilaj's work, which encompasses sculpture, video, drawing, costume and text, is a rich palimpsest of reflection and philosophy.

Historian Dominick LaCapra reminds us that 'with respect to trauma, memory is always secondary … the event must be reconstructed from its effects and traces'.[2] An exhumation of the past with the purpose of reconsidering the traces of personal and political histories has been a longstanding preoccupation for Halilaj. At the Berlin Biennale in 2010 he reconstructed the skeleton of his family home, which was destroyed during the Kosovo War, a conflict that saw the genocide of the Kosovo Albanian community and their forced expulsion from 1998 to 1999. This ghostly scaffolding, a reference to both the presence and absence of home, was accompanied by a flock of live chickens. Birds, tethered to places, yet peripatetic in nature, are never far from Halilaj's mind. In 2020 Halilaj withdrew from the Belgrade Bienniale, organised and hosted by the Cultural Centre of Belgrade in Serbia, after his nationality was redacted from the associated materials.[3] Though Kosovo's full declaration of independence in 2008 was recognised by close to 100 sovereign members of the United Nations, Serbia does not regard it as an independent country.[4] By denying a static framing of individual and collective histories, Halilaj speaks of a desire to see a future in which people 'move freely with no exception beyond geographical boundaries and cultural barriers, as I like to imagine birds do'.[5]

Initially displayed at Tate St Ives as Halilaj's first solo UK exhibition, *Very volcanic over this green feather*, 2021, is an immersive installation of hanging forms that metamorphose from drawing into abstract sculpture. This work is shaped by Halilaj's experiences as a thirteen-year-old living in the Kukës II refugee camp in Albania. The Italian psychologist Giacomo Poli, working within Kukës II, met a young Halilaj and encouraged him to use felt-tip pens and paper to give outline to both the things he had witnessed and those he had imagined.[6] The thirty-eight drawings that Halilaj created in 1999 are enlarged, fragmented, printed on felt and tethered from the ceiling. *Very volcanic over this green feather* begins with a forest of colour, in which a peacock towers over trees and a parrot is perched on air. The action of turning back once within the installation, a gesture synonymous with the past, changes this dreamscape. The forms oriented towards the viewer as they move back to the entrance are representations of human suffering: a soldier wields a bloody knife, a child cries and the facade of a house bleeds black inky smoke. Many of these images are acts of violence that Halilaj witnessed. The encounter between peacock and soldier is a reminder that 'remembrance is neither what happened nor what did not happen but, rather, their potentialization, their becoming possible once again'.[7] Inside this installation imagination and reality coexist.



Installation view of **Petrit Halilaj** *Very volcanic over this green feather* 2021, on display as part of NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Sean Fennessy

It seems no coincidence that the avian creatures populating Halilaj's work are not predators, but rather vibrant parrots, doves and peacocks. Their wings signify the opportunity for freedom, as well as the duality of fragility and resilience. The felt used to create the birds in *Very volcanic over this green feather* maintains a soft, sculptural quality, and the areas of stitching allude to the intimacy and intention of the handmade.[8] In totality, these sculptural birds are fragments of imagination and material traces of an archive. The introduction of feathers, lightly fixed to the felt, conflates representation and the real. Halilaj has spoken of how 'it is not in our hands to take trauma out of our lives. It makes us who we are.'[9] Halilaj uses his hands to retrace and reshape an archive. The feathers delicately adorning the fragmented drawings mark a point where past, present and future have all come home to nest.

Petrit Halilaj's birds, impossibly tall, are a constant reminder of the malleability of memory work. While the original drawings are visible on one side of these monumental forms, the opposing side is spray-painted with a monochrome gradient. Within this installation, perspectives and voids gain new significance. The viewer exists between shapes, and from each change of orientation a new understanding arises. The border of each fragment references the drawing it was extracted from and is a constant reference to the absence of the whole. A presentation of ephemeral material coincides with the primary installation, in which news articles, photographs and media footage situate Halilaj's memory 'traces' within a larger sociopolitical context.[10] It is here that *Very volcanic over this green feather* tethers itself to the archive, even if it is a ruinous one.

Petrit Halilaj's creative pilgrimages to the past are imperatives for understanding our own relationship with memory, both individual and collective. If the voice of the witness inevitably leads us back to the archive, who mediates this site of memory and erasure? Halilaj's work, often as vibrant and playful as the feathers on his parrots, is a reminder of the Jorge Luis Borges adage that '[w]e are our memory … that chimerical museum of shifting shapes'.[11] Within the habitable environment of *Very volcanic over this green feather*, shapes shift, histories speak and memory arrives with soft feathers.

Jessica McEwen is NGV Project Officer, Exhibitions Management and Design.

See Petrit Halilaj's *Very volcanic over this green feather* 2021 as part of NGV Triennial at NGV International until 7 April.

This work was originally conceived and commissioned for Tate St Ives, 2021.

*Very volcanic over this green feather* is generously supported by Barry Janes and Paul Cross, Nick Perkins and Paul Banks, Sarah Cronin, Samuel Cronin and Bradley Cronin, Sophie and Simon Crowe, and Donors to the 2024 NGV Summer Appeal. This project is proudly supported by Deakin University.

This essay originally appeared in the *NGV Triennial 2023* publication, available instore and online at the NGV design store via NGV.Melbourne/store. This publication has been generously supported by Wendy and Paul Bonnici and family.



The subject of the **2024 NGV Summer Appeal** is Petrit Halilaj's installation *Very volcanic over this green feather*, 2021, which draws upon the artist's experiences and illustrations made in an Albanian refugee camp during the height of the Kosovo War.

The NGV recognises Triennial Champions Barry Janes and Paul Cross for their leadership support towards this powerful work, and thanks Nick Perkins and Paul Banks, Sarah, Samuel and Bradley Cronin, and Sophie and Simon Crowe for their support.

*Words by* **Nakita Wilson**

Navigating the ground floor of NGV International reveals an immersive installation by Kosovo-born artist Petrit Halilaj, titled *Very volcanic over this green feather*, 2021. Suspended from the ceiling and depicting scenes of destruction and landscape are large-scale felt replicas of childhood drawings created by Halilaj. Suffering hardship and displacement during the Kosovo War (1998–99), Halilaj and his family lived for more than two years in the Kukës II camp in Albania. A visiting Italian psychologist, Giacomo Poli, provided art materials to the children at the camp, so that drawing could be used as a vehicle for processing their experiences. Thirteen-year-old Halilaj drew the scenes he saw at the refugee camp – motifs of war and trauma with depictions of weapons and fire, as well as images of soaring and colourful birds and lush trees populate the illustrations.

The undeniable talent of Halilaj was quickly identified by Poli who safely stored the child's drawings, and years later, personally helped Halilaj attend art school in Italy. Decades later, Halilaj's felt-tipped pen drawings, of which there are almost forty, became the inspiration for this installation which was originally staged as a solo exhibition at the Tate St Ives in 2021 before a new version of the work was developed for NGV Triennial 2023.

*Very volcanic over this green feather* falls into the Triennial exhibition thematic of Memory, as the work delves into the ideas of collective and personal history and recollection. During his time in the refugee camp, Halilaj was encouraged to express both what he could see and what he could imagine and, in so doing, he blurs the line between reality and illusion. The juxtaposed motifs of harmony and unrest hang alongside each other, layered as the viewer navigates the installation.

During NGV Triennial we are calling upon our community to support the NGV's acquisition of this important work so that audiences in the future can learn from and understand Halilaj's moving work and the powerful storytelling it shares. The NGV recognises Triennial Champions Barry Janes and Paul Cross for their leadership support towards *Very volcanic over this green feather*, along with Nick Perkins and Paul Banks, Sarah, Samuel and Bradley Cronin, and Sophie and Simon Crowe.

We warmly welcome donations of all sizes to make this important acquisition possible. The NGV Collection belongs to you, and we sincerely thank all supporters of the 2024 NGV Summer Appeal to date. Your support enables us to share Halilaj's remarkable story with the community.

Nakita Wilson is NGV Projects and Communications Coordinator, Fundraising.

To donate scan the code or visit ngv.melbourne/2024-ngv-summer-appeal

# NGV Triennial Champions

Every three years, the NGV Triennial has a profound impact on how we experience contemporary art, design and architecture. The NGV philanthropic community is at the core of this success, pioneered by leading philanthropists known as the Triennial Champions. For the third instalment of the NGV Triennial, the NGV has welcomed more than 170 acquisitions into the Collection, made possible through the generosity of more than 80 donor couples, families and foundations, ensuring the works presented can remain in Melbourne for future presentations. We sincerely thank the entire Triennial supporter group and highlight the extraordinary support of the current six Triennial Champions.

*Words by* **Misha Agzarian**









## FELTON BEQUEST

As one of the most visionary supporters in the NGV's history, the Felton Bequest continues to have a transformative impact on the Collection as the leading Triennial Champion. The Felton Bequest, which was bestowed by Alfred Felton upon his passing in 1904, represents the most significant support for our Collection and lives on today through many areas of support, including NGV Triennial acquisitions for the NGV's Contemporary Art collection. Previous Triennial works acquired via the Felton Bequest include Australian-born, UK-based artist Ron Mueck and his colossal installation, *Mass*, 2016–17, for Triennial 2017, and Welsh artist Cerith Wyn Evans's neon installation, *C=O=D=A*, 2019–20, in Triennial 2020.

For the 2023 Triennial, the Felton Bequest championed three extraordinary works: Thomas J Price's *Reaching out*, 2022, Elmgreen & Dragset's *The examiner*, 2023, and David Shrigley's *Really good*, 2016. Each of the three works represents an important moment in the NGV Triennial, giving leading international artists a platform in Melbourne for our audiences to enjoy. The Felton Bequest is led by Chairman Rupert Myer AO, alongside Committee members Janet Whiting AM, President of the NGV Council of Trustees, Carol Schwartz AO, Professor Sally Walker AM and Fred Grimwade. The NGV recognises the incredible support of former chairman, the late Sir Andrew Grimwade CBE, who was instrumental in the Felton Bequest's involvement in the Triennial series.

## JULY CAO

The NGV is delighted to welcome a new champion into the Triennial community: July Cao.

In the 2023 Triennial, the inclusion of significant works by women artists, particularly painters who are rising in their careers, has been made possible with July's visionary support. Works by artists from vast corners of the globe, which explore local and universal ideas, help the NGV to showcase the extraordinary work of female artists globally; through July's support the Gallery is proud to exhibit a number of talented artists. Many of these artists' works are exhibited alongside masterpieces of the NGV Collection, making important links between artists of the past and those of our present and future.

Championed by July, the NGV has acquired three remarkable works for the Collection by leading international women artists: Lucy Bull's *20:59*, 2021, Flora Yukhnovich's *A taste of a poison paradise*, 2023, and Shara Hughes's *Growing pains*, 2023. With July's support, the NGV Triennial also includes major works Vojtěch Kovařík's *The Three Fates: Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos*, 2021, Sayre Gomez's *Everything must go, (1)*, 2022, and Derek Fordjour's *Dual acquisition*, 2022, and *Fly away*, 2020.

## BARRY JANES & PAUL CROSS

NGV Life Member and Foundation Board Member Barry Janes and NGV Life Member Paul Cross have been dedicated champions of the NGV Triennial for two iterations of the series. Motivated by their vision to encourage audiences to engage with artworks on a deeper level, Barry and Paul have supported a range of thought-provoking and multi-layered works. In 2020 Barry and Paul showed remarkable benefaction by enabling the Gallery to welcome works by eight incredible artists into the Collection, including Refik Anadol, Véronique Ellena and Daniel Arsham. Through this outstanding support, the Gallery was able to add many of these artists to the NGV Collection for the first time, ensuring that we continue to grow our encyclopedic collection.

For Triennial 2023 Barry and Paul's commitment to enriching the NGV Collection is evident through the three projects they have generously supported. Danish and Norwegian duo Elmgreen & Dragset have been a hugely popular addition to the Triennial, with their hyperrealistic sculptural work *What's left, fig. 2*, 2023. *Megacities*, a video installation that showcases the works of ten photographers capturing their cities around the world, has also been supported by Barry and Paul. The third work supported is Kosovo-born artist Petrit Halilaj's large-scale installation, *Very volcanic over this green feather*, 2021. The NGV is honoured to exhibit the work of Halilaj, who has been selected as the artist for the 2024 Roof Garden Commission at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Learn more about the work on page 59.

## LOTI & VICTOR SMORGON FUND

A longstanding NGV supporter, the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund has championed the growth and development of the NGV Collection, particularly within our modern and contemporary collection, spanning multiple decades and continuing the legacy of the late Loti Smorgon AO and her husband Victor.

Today, represented by the Bardas, Edwards, Green, Holckner, Koadlow and Vidor families, the Smorgon family remains committed to sharing leading art and design with the community as evidenced through major acquisitions and installation works, many memorably placed in Federation Court, including Carsten Höller's *Golden mirror carousel*, 2014, Céleste Boursier-Mougenot's *clinamen*, 2013, Xu Zhen's large-scale work *Eternity-Buddha in Nirvana…*, 2016–17, and American artist Jeff Koons's iconic commission *Venus*, 2016–2020.

For the 2023 Triennial the Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund championed two works that have proven to be highlights of the exhibition: Thomas J Price's sculpture *All in*, 2021, (alongside the support of the Bertalli family), and Hugh Hayden's *The end*, 2022, which depicts an apocalyptic classroom where skeletal dodo birds are perched. You can read about the work on page 18.





## NGVWA

The NGVWA is one of the founding NGV Triennial Champions, having assisted the exhibition series since its inception in 2017.

The NGVWA is driven by the goal of supporting the interests of the NGV, achieved through art acquisition and growing the NGV Collection. The NGVWA is passionate about encouraging more people to visit the Gallery, and in so doing fostering a broader and accessible interest in the arts. As Triennial Champions throughout the series, the NGVWA has enabled the Gallery to welcome works by leading women artists, including the celebrated Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama and Polish-German artist Alicja Kwade.

For Triennial 2023 the NGVWA has brought distinguished American-born, Paris-based artist Sheila Hicks into the NGV Collection for the first time with her avalanche of colour, *Nowhere to go*, 2022. This gigantic sculpture greets guests as they wind through the ground floor of NGV International and comprises woven boulders in varying shades of blue and grey piled high to the ceiling.

The NGV sincerely thanks the former president of the NGVWA, Tania Brougham, for her leadership throughout the Triennial series. We also warmly welcome and congratulate NGVWA President Georgie Lynch for her commitment to NGV Triennial 2023 and to the year ahead.

## NEVILLE & DIANA BERTALLI

NGV Life Member and Foundation Board Member Neville Bertalli and NGV Life Member Diana Bertalli are devoted champions of the Collection and the Triennial series. Neville and Diana are passionate about making art accessible for all visitors to the Gallery and have facilitated the acquisition of several works that explore universal issues and represent diverse experiences. In addition to major art acquisitions, Neville and Diana have also supported the Triennial EXTRA program, which offered an incredible opportunity for thousands of visitors to enjoy the Gallery after hours through late-night programs during January 2021. The Bertalli family's motivation to encourage people from all walks of life to engage with the Gallery is evident in their thoughtful support.

For Triennial 2023 the Bertalli family championed Thomas J Price's colossal sculpture, *All in*, 2021. Positioned in Federation Court, *All in* stands alongside Price's second work *Reaching out*, 2022, where the works confront the lack of people of colour represented in public statuary. Intentionally ambiguous, Price's figures do not depict a certain individual, but are instead drawn from an amalgamation of found sources, including observed individuals and stereotypes represented in the media. *All in* has captivated audiences since opening weekend. Through scale, meaning and material, the work asks visitors to think deeply about the messages Price presents in his sculpture.

Misha Agzarian is NGV Assistant Director, Fundraising and Events.

See these works as part of NGV Triennial until 7 April.

The 2024 NGV Summer Appeal work is Petrit Halilaj's *Very volcanic over this green feather*, 2021. Through the help of our community, we can add this powerful work to the NGV Collection. The NGV thanks Triennial Champions Barry Janes and Paul Cross for their leadership support towards this work, along with Nick Perkins and Paul Banks, Sarah, Samuel and Bradley Cronin, and Sophie and Simon Crowe. We warmly invite you to make a donation, which will enable the NGV to share Halilaj's story for generations to follow. The NGV is grateful for donations of all sizes.

To donate, scan the code or visit ngv.melbourne/2024-ngv-summer-appeal



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Exhibition organised by the Musée Carnavalet – Histoire de Paris, Paris Musées. Image credit: Jean Béraud, *The Entrance to the 1889 Universal Exhibition* (detail) 1889, oil on wood, Musée Carnavalet.
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# *My Flora,*



# *My Fauna*

Inspired by Hulda Guzmán's immediate surroundings of Samaná in the Dominican Republic, *Daily ceremony*, 2022, centres on a self-portrait dancing wildly on a table, surrounded by frolicking cats. The NGV warmly thanks anonymous donors for their support towards this work.

*Words by* **Hulda Guzmán**

*Daily ceremony*, 2022, is based on autobiographical narrative, depicting a ritualistic summoning of creative energy. It is a symbolic self-portrait, illustrating a way of convoking a spirit of creativity and appreciation, symbolised here by the ghost of native characters known as Taíno spirits. Caribbean peoples understood deities and ancestors to inhabit trees, stones and other aspects of the landscape. This divine environmental force, known as zemí (or cemí) to the Taínos, was a central concept in art and ritual, and visual artists played important roles in maintaining their communities through these creations, reinforcing the political power of their patrons and connecting them to grander mythological narratives.

In *Daily ceremony*, I was inspired by my home in the Dominican Republic. For the past few years, I've been designing my new studio with my father who is an architect. It's a very remote spot on the north coast of the island, located between Santo Domingo and the rainforest-covered mountains of Samaná. Our neighbours are at least a couple of kilometres away. Dancing on a table in the middle of this studio, I am surrounded by mid-century furniture and interiors as well as a chorus of dancing animals, including my rooster and cats. It is a lively and dream-like scene inspired by themes and ideas of Surrealism. However, I'm not trying to be surreal in the same way the Surrealists were working – they were referencing dreams and other states of consciousness. I'm more interested in trying to express the unfathomable parts of life. Instead I am particularly interested in the hidden parts of ourselves - all those energies that come into play, the things that are not perceivable to our senses, such as our fears and demons, that we try to repress.

The spotlights, the symmetry and the dancing pets suggest a theatrical quality in the web of life, where certain forces may be called upon to nurture and express any given sentiment; in this case, a cheerfulness, buoyancy, high vibration, celebration of the creative and the uplifting energies of nature and consciousness.

This piece marks a contrast between the mundane and the mystical realms. The worldly aspects of daily life are symbolised by the setting, depicting an intimate indoor space. The painting is comprised of three horizontal panels of cedar and mahogany plywood, which mirror the natural fibre of a countryside bungalow gable roof; the wooden walls on the central panel and the wooden floor capture the essence of the cabin in a threefold manner. In contrast, the invocation of the guardian Spirit of the land is a plea for guidance, and a deliberate effort to detach from ego-driven separation and surrender to a higher consciousness. The dance session becomes a meditative practice to seek peace and to channel the inspiring Taíno spirit, which appears as an outline in the triangle of light.

The self-portrait being depicted with childlike characteristics is a nod to my inner child. It seeks to proclaim a sense of innocence and release of any accumulated egoic information that may hinder a profound connection to the true essence. Furthermore, my surfing pose atop the coffee table refers to a yearning to overcome my long-standing fear of deep waters, and so it becomes a metaphor for shedding constraints, an intention to plunge into the unknown and propel myself forward into bliss.

I can't perform or paint if I'm not in the right headspace. When I'm painting and experiencing positive vibrations, I believe these vibrations transfer into the painting and the viewer afterwards. Sometimes when people tell me how they feel when they look at my work, I realise it's exactly how I felt when I was painting. It's a beautiful thing, and it makes me relate to people in that way. I would never want to transfer any negative emotions, so I always make sure I'm in the right headspace when I paint.

**Hulda Guzmán** *Daily ceremony* 2022, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by anonymous donors and NGV Foundation, 2022. Courtesy the artist; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London; and Alexander Berggruen, New York. © Hulda Guzmán. Photo: Predrag Cancar/NGV

# Hulda *in* Samaná



The Samaná Peninsula in the far north-east of the Dominican Republic is the country's greenest region. It's where Hulda Guzmán spends a good portion of her year, working from the studio she designed with her father. Here, the artist shares her favourite thing to do in the region.

For anyone who may be planning a trip to the Dominican Republic, I would recommend visiting the peninsula of Samaná, which is my favourite part of the island. It overlooks Samaná Bay on the south side, which hosts thousands of humpback whales during the winter mating season. On the north coast, a long sandy coastline is interrupted only by small mangroves and rocky areas.

One of my New Year's resolutions was to finally start surfing. It's already been a couple of years since my sister, my nephew and a few of my closest friends took up the sport, which seems more like therapy and/or a life-changing activity, from what I gathered from their constant enthusiasm and incessant recruiting. I'm happy and proud to say that I finally took my first surfing class, and it went great! It was tough and I got dunked a few more times than I would have liked, but I started to feel the 'fever', the feeling of getting more and more hooked on catching a wave. Surfing has also helped me process my lifelong fear of deep water because I'm so fixated on doing my best to get that slight chance of riding the next wave that I just don't have time to dwell on my fears.

All this is happening in **Playa Bonita** at the **Mosquito Boutique Hotel** (mosquitoboutiquehotel.com), which has a little surfing school with instructors and boards. They'll even lend you rash guards. There's an open-air **beachfront restaurant**, so it's a great place for anyone seeking a tropical, vibrant and lively ambiance right on the beach.

As for the art scene in the Dominican Republic, I would recommend paying private scheduled visits to my amazing artist friends. They are some of the coolest, most interesting people I've met in my life, and I am proud to be their friend. The ceramicist **Natalia Ortega Gamez** (nataliaortegagamez.com) and the oil painter **Gustavo Peña** (guspenad.com) are at the top of my list. Then there are my sisters, sculptor Julia **Aurora Guzmán** (juliaurora.com), and filmmaker **Laura Amelia Guzmán** (@laurameliaguzman), as well as my father Eddy Guzmán.

Hulda Guzmán is a Dominican figurative painter whose work often depicts tropical settings and naturalistic motifs.

See Hulda Guzmán's *Daily ceremony*, 2022, as part of NGV Triennial 2023 until 7 April. This work was purchased with funds generously donated by anonymous donors and NGV Foundation.

Photo: Eddy Guzmán






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Image: *Abstract bronze* 2023 bronze 60 x 68 x 23 cm
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# IN THE STUDIO WITH SHAKUNTALA KULKARNI

In a poignant exploration of the dynamics shaping the female experience in Indian society, artist Shakuntala Kulkarni collaborated with cane artisans from the north-eastern district of Assam to create her wearable sculpture in the NGV Triennial. In conversation with Simone LeAmon, Kulkarni reveals the motivations behind her work: to challenge audiences, both in India and beyond, to confront societal norms and foster a shift in mindset towards a more equitable and empowering future. The NGV warmly thanks Karen McLeod Adair and Anthony Adair AM for their support towards acquiring the work.

*Words by* **Simone LeAmon**

SIMONE LEAMON **Shakuntala, the concept of the female form as both a site of resistance and an embodiment of societal norms is a recurring theme in your work. How did you arrive at this topic?**

SHAKUNTALA KULKARNI I grew up in an artistic household in Bombay [Mumbai]. My mother was a classical singer and the entire family was involved in the performing arts. As a child our house was always full of musicians and people involved in theatre and film. I experienced a nurturing and enlightened upbringing that fostered openness, education and creativity. Later, when I left my parents' home and married, I would come to have many conversations with my friends, colleagues and people around me, especially women, who faced limitations in expressing themselves freely in society and in their own lives. Sometimes overtly and sometimes subtly, their freedom was restricted in the domestic sphere, work sphere and cultural arena. This realisation prompted me to delve deeper. Initially, it was just an inquiry, but as I listened to women's experiences from different backgrounds, a vivid picture emerged of the challenges many women face in the current system, particularly within the Indian context.

In response, I began drawing and painting [Indian] women in domestic settings. I would go to the homes of women who lived in the slums and in communities representative of different economic backgrounds – and listen to them talk about their experiences – how their bodies were objectified and, in some cases, commodified for dowry pledges or sexual purposes. Subsequently, my wearable sculptures and installations took shape. I wanted to create tangible objects and spaces that conveyed the discomfort I learnt these women endured, not only in domestic settings but also in the social and cultural sphere.

SL **Is it your intention that we read your sculpture in the NGV Triennial as both armour and a cage for the body?**

SK Absolutely because I strongly believe it cannot be just one or the other. I'm not aiming to portray women solely as victims; they possess immense power as well. My intention is to convey this duality – at times we may be victimised, while at other times, we assert our strength. Each of my projects approaches this theme in different ways. In the case of this work for the NGV Triennial, the cane sculpture is constructed so the sari appears as body protection, yet simultaneously it confines the body to emphasise a lack of freedom. You can read the work both ways. I also wanted to make a statement about the beauty of an Indian bride when dressed and adorned. Therefore, I deliberately made the sculpture to be visually alluring and accentuated the details of the sari, hairpiece and adornments. When the sculpture is worn, as I have done myself, it exudes grace.

SL **Your work and practice unfold against the backdrop of a special collaboration with cane artisans; can you tell us about this distinctive partnership and how it influenced the creation of your life-sized sculptures?**

SK The artisans with whom I create my sculptures live in Assam, a three-day train journey from Mumbai. I collaborated with a senior artisan for several years who unfortunately passed away just before the pandemic. It took us a considerable amount of time to master the technical aspects of the sculptures, ensuring they could be worn without breaking. The cane work is held together by fine string weaving, allowing the sculptures to move with my body. This technique was perfected for the body of work, *Of Bodies, Armour, and Cages*, 2012, presented at the 2019 Venice Biennale. So, upon receiving the invitation from the NGV to participate in the Triennial, I had to seek out another collaborator to make the new work. However, considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, I opted not to travel to Assam during that time. After numerous phone calls and negotiations, I invited a versatile artisan from the same village in Assam, Tankeshwar Barik, who I had worked with previously, to join me in Mumbai. He was confident that together we could produce the new work. Despite the safety concerns associated with long-distance travel during the pandemic, he faced unemployment and financial struggles, concerned for his wife and children, so he seized the opportunity. Along with another artisan colleague, Barik traveled to Mumbai with the cane and the three of us worked in my studio for a year. It was a true collaboration and very productive period during what was a very emotional and hard time for everyone.



Simone LeAmon is Curator of Contemporary Design and Architecture at the NGV.

See Shakuntala Kulkarni's *Armour for the Bride* series 2022–23 as part of NGV Triennial 2023 until 7 April.

This work was purchased with funds donated by Karen McLeod Adair and Anthony Adair AM.

(above) **Shakuntala Kulkarni** *No. 1* 2023 from the *Armour for the Bride* series 2023. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by Karen McLeod Adair and Anthony Adair AM
© Shakuntala Kulkarni

(p. 70) Photo: courtesy of the artist

## 5 MINUTES WITH

# Fei Yining

Shanghai-born artist Fei Yining combines the absurd and the real to present speculative tales and fantastical worlds in her digital media artworks and sculpture. By building multi-media narratives – spanning 3D animation, moving image and sculpture – she seeks to explore the possible alternative states of existence in the post-human era. In *Duke of Apple in the Vile Oubliette*, 2020, generously supported by Rob Gould, a furry figure with what look like claws for arms leans back in the shape of an armchair. The work is part of a series that seeks to dissect ideas that cause confusion, consternation and sometimes fear.



*Interview by* **Elisa Scarton**

ELISA SCARTON **In your work, you often speak of literary influences ranging from Edgar Allen Poe to Angela Carter. Who is inspiring you at the moment and how have they inspired *Duke of Apple in the Vile Oubliette*?**

FEI YINING Currently, I am inspired by Olga Tokarczuk, who wrote 'Eccentricity as Feminism' for *The Paris Review* in 2021:

> Things that are eccentric are by definition "outside the centre" … To be eccentric is to view the world from a completely different perspective, one that is both provincial and marginal – pushed aside, to the fringes – and at the same time revelatory and revolutionary.[1]

When I read this, I think 'eccentricity' might be a kind of 'openness', an openness to embrace fluidity, change and new stories. Therefore, in my mind, works like *Duke of Apple in the Vile Oubliette* are not monstrous, but rather undergoing a state of fusion or in the process of mutation, exploring possible alternative states of existence in a post-human era.

ES **Your work is made from so many materials – everything from papier-mâché, foam and steel to water-colour, pearls and beads. How long did it take to make *Duke of Apple in the Vile Oubliette* and how did you choose the colour palette?**

FY It took approximately one month to make. When I create animations, I often use very intense colours as my creative process is always imbued with strong and direct emotions, stemming from very sensual and intuitive choices. For this work, I wanted to present a more 'other-worldly' side, so I avoided a gentle colour palette or colours distilled from nature, deliberately selecting aggressive and warning colours instead.

ES **Fear is front and centre in this work. Why did you choose to explore such a visceral emotion in this way?**

FY If this sculpture is viewed as a chair, the chair is usually viewed as welcoming, inviting viewers to approach and experience its ability and reliability to support their weight. However, when eccentricity and fear are incorporated into it, the posture of rejection creates a contradiction and a tension. Therefore I am asking the viewer whether they would truly want to sit in such a peculiar and unsettling piece.

ES **Can you sit on it?**

FY Yes, theoretically, I can sit on it. I started making functional sculptures because I wanted to do set design for my 3D animation. I already have accumulated many forms in the virtual world, so perhaps one day functional sculpture will be one of my mediums, too.

ES **You live and work in Shanghai. What are some of your favourite things to do when you're not practising your art?**

FY Recently, I have become fascinated with the criss-crossing waterways of Shanghai. I enjoy traversing and capturing footage at various locations in Shanghai where rivers, wharves, sea inlets, or confluences of water systems are present.

Elisa Scarton is NGV Senior Editorial Coordinator.
Fei Yining is an artist based in China, whose work draws from literature, mythology and science, and through the media of video, installation and sculpture.

See Fei Yining's *Duke of Apple in the Vile Oubliette*, 2020, as part of NGV Triennial at NGV International until 7 April.

This work was purchased with funds donated by Rob Gould, 2022.

(p. 74) Installation view of **Yining Fei** *Duke of Apple in the Vile Oubliette*, 2020, on display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Sean Fennessy

(above) Photo: courtesy of the artist

# The Forest



# the Gallery





If you've visited NGV International recently, you may have noticed one of its most loved rooms, the Salon, has a few new residents. On display as part of NGV Triennial, these artworks are inspired by nature and the state of the world around us, bringing a small slice of the forest into the Gallery.

*Words by* **Elisa Scarton**

When the NGV opened (as the Museum of Art) in 1861, the Paris Salon, founded in 1725, and the Royal Academy of Arts in London, founded in 1768, were at their peak. Until the emergence of commercial dealer galleries in the mid-nineteenth century, these exhibitions provided many artists with the only opportunity to show their work and hopefully attract sales and patronage. By the mid nineteenth century thousands of paintings were presented floor to ceiling, as closely together as possible. Visitors sometimes brought spyglasses to see the works that were 'skied' or hung close to the exhibition venue's ceilings – the traditional spot for anything considered controversial or unpopular.

Many of the works in the NGV's Salon were first presented to the public at the Paris Salon or at the Royal Academy of Arts and were acquired by the Gallery during these exhibitions. With more than 140 paintings and a dozen sculptures on display, the space transports visitors back in time to when jostling crowds thronged these exhibitions with wonder, excitement and hunger for information. In the era before the invention of cinema, they were the primary vehicles for disseminating contemporary visual culture.

Fast forward to today and the Triennial works on display in the NGV's lavishly decorated Salon have their own message to share: about the world around us, deforestation and decolonisation, the body and landscape, about stories from Japanese mythology and from the world's oldest continuous civilisation. They have none of the haphazard grouping of the Paris Salon, where works were often hung at random with little continuity or thematic connection. If you pop your head into the NGV's Salon, you'll notice these Triennial works are linked by their connection to nature, each playing their part to bring a distinctly forest-like feel to its lavishly burgundy walls.

Shara Hughes's kaleidoscopic *Growing pains*, 2023, comprising pigment mixed on a canvas surface, is first to greet you as you step inside the Salon. The painting supported by Triennial Champion July Cao is at once vibrant and immersive, created almost entirely from Hughes's imagination, a dreamlike and fantastical landscape of flowers, leaves and branches arranged on top of one another, abstract and representational as they surround a series of snake-like trees. The American artist describes her work as eye-catching. 'My work is like', she explains in a recent interview, '"Come over here, look at me, I'm loud", but if you spend more time with the paintings, they make you feel uneasy'.[1]

That sense of unease grows as you step further into the Salon to get a better look at *Fell*, 2023, by US-born, Australia-based artist Ashley Jameson Eriksmoen supported by Ester Frenkiel OAM and David Frenkiel. From the plinth that supports Hughes's painting, *Fell* appears colossal – a gigantic tree felled in one slice and left to rest on its side in the middle of the gallery. It isn't until you step closer that you notice the colossal trunk is not one smooth piece but a myriad of chair legs and discarded furniture, bits and bobs and offcuts and refuse painstakingly arranged by the artist, so that if you were strong enough to lift the trunk and place it back onto its stump, all the wooden pieces would align perfectly. *Fell* is a manifesto, written in timber salvaged from a diverse array of discarded domestic furniture. Eriksmoen wants you to think about fast furniture and the impact our consumption has on our natural resources. The designer-maker wants you to examine your relationship with the environment to embrace more sustainable practices in the understanding that we are all part of the same ecosystem.



Installation view of **Shara Hughes** *Growing pains*, 2023, generously supported by July Cao. On display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Sean Fennessy

Joshua Petherick and Lewis Fidock consider this ecosystem infinite. The Australian artists have applied a metaphorical magnifying glass to *Make a wish!*, 2023, a body of work acquired through the Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists that delves into the cyclical nature of life and the transient nature of materials. The three large sculptural leaves lie on their burgundy plinth in various states of decay. As the leaves break down, they nourish the trees and plants that in turn nourish insect, animal and human life in a process that has no true end. But Petherick and Fidock's leaves are cold and lifeless – rendered from synthetic polymer paint on burlap with latex and foam, muslin and rope. Frozen somewhere between fantasy and reality, they feel familiar and yet foreign, like the grey mangrove tree depicted behind them.

That tree belongs to Joshua Yeldham, or perhaps it's more apt to say the tree is Joshua Yeldham. Located on the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales, this grey mangrove tree stood as a source of inspiration for the artist for sixteen years, but it did not speak to him as a photograph. 'It was foreign as an image on paper. It was separate to me and I wanted it to be me', Yeldham explains.[2] To 'become' mangrove, Yeldham carved the surface of the image, titled *Resonance*, 2022, with a Dremel tool, working the tool through the bark over and over, as if in meditation. Yeldham says, 'I'm starting to make an offering. I'm starting to find illumination and reverence in something that I didn't fully connect to, which was just a static image. And then I felt it was vulnerable, so I made strings that are holding it together, in case a storm comes. To care and bind'.[3]

To many of us, communing with nature – in the conversational sense rather than the bohemian, free-spirited sense – feels foolish. We hike and picnic, bulldoze and burn, but we rarely stop to have a conversation. This isn't the case for many non-Western Indigenous cultures and for First Nations people, who commune regularly with Country. Such is the case in Vernon Marbendinar and Keith Wikmunea's work, which sits just behind Yeldman's mangrove. Wikmunea is the recipient of the 2023 National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award and a senior artist, together with Marbendinar, at Wik & Kugu Arts Centre in Aurukun, an Indigenous community of approximately 1300 people. For Wik and Kugu people, who live on the west coast of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, the ritual practice of sculpting totemic animals for ceremony is a tradition that has been passed down through generations. Wikmunea's Triennial work, *Tee'wiith yot-a!* (*Plenty of white cockatoos!*), 2022, draws inspiration from the stories of his father's Country of Kencherang. In it, a goanna looks up hungrily at a group of white cockatoos and pink galahs. Sensing danger, two of the cockatoos prepare to take flight in what Wikmunea describes as their role as caretakers, protecting the other birds with their warning calls.[4] The cockatoo is Wikmunea's totem. The brown owl is Marbendinar's totem and in *Nguk-al yotam-an Puulwuya!* (*Lots of owls in the tree!*), 2022, he has carved six of them. They represent the coming of night and, as the artist explains, 'Nguk (owl) like to sit on trees as one family … Minh Nguk is a totem for my people, the Wik-Me'an. They are a significant part of ritual life and belong to a story place near Bull Yard Station'.[5] The NGV warmly thanks Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family for their support towards *Tee'wiith yot-a!* (*Plenty of white cockatoos!*), as well as Barbara Hay and the Hay Family for their support towards *Nguk-al yotam-an Puulwuya!* (*Lots of owls in the tree!*).





Installation view of **Ashley Eriksmoen** *Fell*, 2023, generously supported by Esther Frenkiel OAM and David Frenkiel. On display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Sean Fennessy

The final story in the Salon's NGV Triennial works is also generational as it thrusts us back into a contemplation of Western civilisation and the monuments we have built to it. American photographer Todd Gray has arranged four individually framed archival photographs to create *the hidden order of the whole (venus)*, 2021. The marble neoclassical Temple of Love at Versailles sits at the back, to its right a classical sculpture from the Luxembourg Gardens awash in a red filter. Juxtaposed against these is a photograph of a dancer on the set of the 1994 MC Hammer video 'Straight to My Feet' and a beach house under construction in Akwidaa, Ghana, where Grey has maintained his studio for more than fifteen years. Together, they invite us to reconsider history, or as the artist describes it: 'By juxtaposing signifiers of the West, signifiers of colonisation, and signifiers of the African diaspora I turn photography on its head to show that I am raising questions'.[6] The NGV warmly thanks Bowness Family Fund for Photography for its support towards *the hidden order of the whole (venus)*.

Elisa Scarton is NGV Senior Editorial Coordinator.

See these works as part of NGV Triennial until 7 April. Shara Hughes's *Growing pains*, 2023, was purchased with funds donated by July Cao. Ashley Jameson Eriksmoen's *Fell*, 2023, was purchased with funds donated by Esther Frenkiel OAM and David Frenkiel. Joshua Petherick and Lewis Fidock's series *Make a wish!*, 2023, is a proposed acquisition, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists. Joshua Yeldham's *Resonance*, 2022, was a gift of Scott Livesey Galleries. Keith Wikmunea's *Tee'wiith yot-a!* (*Plenty of white cockatoos!*), 2022, was purchased with funds donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family. Vernon Marbendinar's *Nguk-al yotam-an Puulwuya!* (*Lots of owls in the tree!*), 2022, was purchased with funds donated by Barbara Hay and the Hay Family. Todd Gray's *the hidden order of the whole (venus)*, 2021, was purchased with funds donated by the Bowness Family Fund for Photography.

(p. 78) Installation view of **Osamu Mori** *3MMM – rivalry* 2022, generously supported by Dr Brett Archer, Tania and Sam Brougham and the Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest. On display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Sean Fennessy

# Myths and Mori

Japanese artist Osamu Mori combines traditional woodcarving techniques with imagery of popular icons like Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley to create sculptures that reflect the chaotic world in which we live today. In his NGV Triennial work, Mori carves the human body into the organic form of a 120-year-old camphor tree. This number is significant, mirroring that of the oldest living person and therefore emphasising the ephemerality of human existence. The NGV warmly thanks Dr Brett Archer, Tania and Sam Brougham and the Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest for their support towards acquiring this work.

*Words by* **Dr Wendy Ella Wright**



For Osamu Mori, whose surname is written with the ideogram for 'three trees' 森, meaning 'forest' in Japanese, material and immaterial are entwined. To begin with, his work *3MMM – rivalry*, 2022, is carved from a very old camphor tree. The wood used by Mori is not a mere carving material but is inhabited by spirits. Incense made of camphor drives away the wicked from temples. The revered camphor, when carved, emits a purifying scent. For centuries, in Japan camphor has protected silk from insects and is used medicinally. The colour of carved camphor wood is like a faun's satiny underbelly. Aged camphor carvings attain a prized subliminal patina.

Carved temple deities in Asia like the huge wooden guardian kings called *Nīō* are often made from camphor and other sacred woods. The veins and muscles of their bodies are visibly defined by the sculptor. Mori's visceral carvings bear a resonance with the *Nīō*, with their lifelike hair and bodies that are wood, but seem not wooden. Mori's compositions seem like gods that have transited through spaces far from ancient Japan, and live yet in an intersecting pantheon.

The animumanus (half human, half animal) element in Mori's work evokes the mystical autobiographic *Tale of Genji*, written at Nijo Palace of Kyoto, around the year 1000. The world of its author, Lady Murasaki Shikibu, was inhabited by prophetic dreams that joined the living with the 'dead'. Foxes interchangeably appeared as beauteous women, and then merged back into forest 'animals'. Such *kaidan* stories (stories of the weird and supernatural) are both ancient and contemporary. They live transculturally, across time zones and into the anime genre of pop art. *Kaidan* stories travel and diversify into merging art genres, such as from kabuki into filmic digitalisation. In the *kaidan*, as in Mori's works, the ancient animistic narratives merge humans, moreover neither man nor woman, with other organic matter.

In her esoteric masterpiece, Lady Shikibu questioningly wrote, 'whether devil, god, fox, or kodama (tree spirit)?' In the animism of Japan, kodama 木魅 are tree gods who appear as beautiful and frightening, at will. Kodama is written with the two characters of tree, 木, and spirit and soul, 魅. Sometimes kodama travel in human form, and protect or haunt other living things. Kodama may transform into humans, uniting in the flesh with the objects of their desire. Since ancient times, destructively cutting a tree injures a kodama, and is sinful to the natural cosmos. Kodama conduit us with the unfathomable. In some places in Japan, ceremonies that 'allow ... the tree to bleed' before cutting it down are still observed. Forgiveness is asked of the tree before felling. Kodama interpretations of ancient and contemporary legends are very purposefully reincarnated in Mori's work.

He explains:

> Since ancient times, works depicting the human body have frequently expressed a sense of euphoria and exuberance. Among them, the sense of levitation is a formative beauty that is detached from material heaviness, while simultaneously evoking a sense of euphoria and expansiveness. The expression of levitation in the East is not affected by air or gravity, but the movement of the garments and surroundings is expressed by a kind of "chi" or aura, and such forms give the viewer a sense of exaltation. Such a sense of levitation is felt continuously and strongly when descending stairs with great momentum, and both the descent and the timing of gravity are similar to the classical expression of levitation. In thinking about and expressing human aesthetics, I wanted to incorporate euphoria and exuberance as motifs in the real world today. [1]

Dr Wendy Ella Wright is a poet and literary translator based in Adelaide.

See Osamu Mori's *3MMM – rivalry*, 2022, as part of NGV Triennial at NGV International until 7 April.

This work was purchased with funds donated by Dr. Brett Archer, Tania and Sam Brougham and the Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest, 2023.

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# MARROW BECOMES *breath*



Photo: courtesy the artist and Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

Born in Mexia, Texas, in 1989, Diedrick Brackens is best known for his large-scale woven tapestries exploring the complexities of African-American and queer identity in the United States. In *marrow becomes breath*, 2022, on display as part of NGV Triennial and supported by the Tapestry Foundation of Australia, Brackens uses his own body as a reference; the silhouetted subject kneels beside two skulls (one human, one animal) as it holds a chain-like string. The skulls symbolize the marrow of winter or death, while the string is evocative of transformation/metamorphosis. For *NGV Magazine*, poet and journalist Irene Vázquez reflects on Brackens's work.

*Words by* **Irene Vázquez**

Like many schooled in the lived experience of being Black and queer, I have been asked to give of myself time and time again, to compensate for the parts of myself I couldn't hope to change, to be useful if I couldn't be proper. As I entered my twenty-fifth year, I took inventory of my creative work, revisiting old papers, poems and essays where I spoke of feeling monstrous among my peers at predominantly white institutions, and in that societal rejection, feeling like a shadow. I've written elsewhere about seeing this impossibility, this shadow self, reflected in Black-and-queer textile artist Diedrick Brackens's work – the opacity of the black acrylic yarn, the heft it lends his figures, the choice he makes to render them both black as in chroma and Black as in race.

But today I want to talk to you about defiance. Because when I look at *marrow becomes breath* that's what I see.

Breath figures repeatedly in Brackens's work. As my colleague Danielle A. Jackson writes in the catalogue for *darling divined* [Brackens's first solo show, jointly exhibited by the Blanton Museum in Austin, Texas in 2020, and New York's New Museum in 2019], he undertakes a 'critical exercise in breathing defiantly'.[1]

Breath is central to our understanding of freedom as Black-and-queer people, especially as we continue to live in a pandemic that is transmitted through the air, one that disproportionately affects those at the margins. The land colonially known as Texas is a place that knows all too well how fragile breath is. When I was sixteen years old and Brackens was twenty-six, Sandra Bland, a twenty-eight-year-old Black woman, was found hanged in her cell in the county jail after being pulled over for a traffic stop on the same highway on which my mother drove to work. Each breath we take is in defiance of the police state that seeks to dispose of us – in the time it takes to inhale a breath – if we are not useful, if we are wayward, if we are Black and queer.

There's an easy enough reading of this that focuses on the act of taking up space in and of itself – the reclamation of the Black body, the forceful foregrounding of the black acrylic on the tapestry's backdrop, the ability to simply be as something revolutionary when being, when breathing, has been foreclosed. But instead, my eye is drawn to the chain that breaks forth from the tapestry, held in the hands of the central figure rather than being bound by it. Though they are on their knees, they are free from bondage.

It means something, kneeling there on the rusty red soil, the kind found across the South, from Texas to Georgia, due to the abundance of iron oxide in the dirt. Just as there's 'Blood on

‘My eye is drawn to the chain that breaks forth from the tapestry, held in the hands of the central figure rather than being bound by it. Though they are on their knees, they are free from bondage.’

*Irene Vázquez*

the leaves and blood at the root’ as Billie Holiday sang in ‘Strange Fruit’ in 1959, that blood has soaked into the earth. In ‘Of the passing of the first-born’, W.E.B. DuBois writes of the death of his infant son and laments that he ‘could not lay him in the ground there in Georgia, for the earth there is strangely red … where, O God! beneath thy broad blue sky shall my dark baby rest in peace,—where Reverence dwells, and Goodness, and a Freedom that is free?’[2] Freedom wasn’t free in DuBois’ lifetime, nor is it free in ours. It is hard-fought, and sometimes we pay for it in blood.

So I want us to think instead about the violence that this breath demands, the violence that living in a world under white supremacy imposes on Black-and-queer people, the violence that we are called to in order to break free from our chains so that we might, like the figure in *marrow becomes breath*, hold them out in front of us defiantly. Marrow, after all, becomes consumable when bones are not only accessible, but broken open, slurped dry. I want you to imagine the point of Brackens’s needle as it goes in and out of the tapestry, the violence that inscribing Blackness upon the world requires. For marrow to become breath we must slaughter, we must imbibe the lifeblood of another and use it to free ourselves and one another.

I think, as Black-and-queer people, we often shy away from overt violence in our work because the world is always ready to cast us as violent people and, as such, people who can be criminalised, whose breath can and should be extinguished.

In his poem ‘Fixin’ Things’ Black-and-queer poet Essex Hemphill writes, ‘in the turbulence we call love was bred / the possibility of my dysfunction and yours’.[3] Turbulence, the violent or unsteady movement of fluid, of water, of air, of breath, is that which allows breath to become breadth: a cloth of standard width, like Brackens’s tapestry, or the distance from side to side of something, one’s full wingspan, taking up not just the space one needs, but the space needed to break free. Hemphill is often a touchstone for Brackens’s work. As Black-and-queer people, we are made possible by the breaking open of all existing forms: racial, gendered, familial and otherwise. We are called to the task of rupture. We know that violence is an option. If we are to seek, as queer Australian artist David McDiarmid declared in many of his print works, a future that lives up to our past, we will have to fight for it.

Where I once saw shadow, impossibility, I now choose solidity, breath, breadth. From Palestine to the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung, as a new world cries out to be born, I see *marrow becomes breath* as an omen, a reading of the tea leaves, a portend. Who will we become when we are free of our chains?

Born in New Orleans, raised in Houston and now living in Manhattan, Irene Vázquez is a queer Black Mexican-American poet, translator and journalist.

See Diedrick Brackens’s *marrow becomes breath*, 2022, as part of NGV Triennial 2023 until 7 April. This work was purchased with funds generously donated by Tapestry Foundation of Australia, 2023.



**Diedrick Brackens** *marrow becomes breath* 2022. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Purchased with funds donated by the Tapestry Foundation of Australia, 2023 © Diedrick Brackens. Courtesy of the artist, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, and Various Small Fires, Los Angeles. Photo: Sean Fennessy

# MEGACITIES



The photographers in NGV Triennial project *Megacities* were invited to consider the question, 'If, in the twenty-first century, the city represents the dominant human ecosystem, what does this mean for life in a megacity?' Their work identifies ten of the world's most populous cities – Tokyo, Delhi, Shanghai, Lagos, São Paulo, Cairo, Dhaka, Mexico City, Seoul and Jakarta – offering a dynamic account of how and where we live today in these spaces and beyond. The NGV warmly thanks the Orloff Family Charitable Trust, and Barry Janes and Paul Cross for their support of this work.

*Words by* **Sarah Walker**

You can always spot a tourist. They're the ones looking up, jamming the sidewalk with their stumbling, gawking bodies, all their attention captured in their eyes. *Look, look.* Posing, smiling, freezing themselves before the camera shutter can immortalise their expression. Proof of existence, of presence. *Here I am, far from home. Look!*

For me there's a sense, in this Triennial, of excess. Not just of scale, but of content: canvases exploding from the ceiling, overlapping frames, felt and yarn and text, clamouring for attention. That's what it feels like to be a human, now: too much. Partly, it's politics. The avalanche of pain in the world. Partly, it's our still-shocked emergence from the pandemic, overstimulated, blinking in the sun. And, naturally, it's the internet. The coursing, heaving data flooding past us, passing through us, infecting us with half-determined ideas and fast-degrading snapshots.

Entering the *Megacities* exhibit in the NGV Triennial, it is excess that first arrests us. Screens are everywhere, like some deranged, futuristic Times Square. We're surrounded by billboards, each demanding attention, impossible to attend to. Even when the screens are showing the same content, it's still moving. To enter this space feels like being a sighthound in a field full of rabbits. *Look!* The exhibition itself as unfamiliar locale: novel, strange, overfull. We look the way children look. Hungrily, naively. Everything is present and nothing is erased. It takes time to learn how to see the paths, the relationships. It takes time to develop habits.

You can tell who's been here for a while. The newcomers huddle in the entryway, take a few hesitant photographs. Their heads swivel, mouths half open. Those who've settled in just choose a screen and stay with it, loose and easy. They've become citizens of this space. They're learning to focus their attention. The bodies in the room start to mimic the images on the screens. Portraits of love, or care, or boredom. Some never quite acclimatise. I watch a white-haired man sitting with his hands clasped hard together in his lap, knuckles pale. He only moves his eyes, but they dart from screen to screen over the top of his glasses. He looks hunted.

To photograph is to capture, to fragment, to set parameters. The image is static, like a pin through a butterfly. It's a way of freezing time and space, of saying: *you stay there so I can understand you.* These photographers live in these cities. What they show us is their homes; they see through acclimatised eyes. But the exhibition design reacquaints us with the overwhelm, the vastness and multiplicity of these places in all their churning life.

We've seen these places before we see them, in films and travel books and the stories of wide-eyed friends. We have certain expectations: chaos, primarily. Human gristle. Litter. Crush. There's a guilt in viewing some of these photos, the guilt of seeing the images we expect to see. A man surrounded by plastic cages, sleeping, feet bare. The shock of the private made public. The megacity is the future, but this is not the future we like to envisage. The Western futuristic city is all cleaners and humming pale lights. Tidy, ordered, efficient, sterile. Dead. Maybe we need better imaginations. Futures that are messy, sweating, heaving, lively. Unruly. Excessive.

These cities are not like this city. Melbourne: a wide, flat crepe of a town, edges licking the grasslands around it. Spreading. Eschewing the efficiency of the stack. The apartment was never the Australian dream. We like space, but not too much, not the fearsome plains of our country's centre. But we do like a little room to move – around 600 square metres, preferably. The megacity overwhelms us. *It's not like home*, we think. But then, suddenly, it is. A woman waiting for a Tokyo train, her hand tucked into the t-shirt sleeve of the man to her right or kissing the cheek of her neighbour through the fabric of her niqab.

We don't like it when things won't fit into a category. We like binaries, even when we try to escape them. We like summing things up in a word or phrase. But a city won't be summarised. A city is never either/or. It is always *and*. This quality of multiplicity is inherently expansive. It allows a city both to be a powerful and a weak thing. Supportive and crushing. Dangerous and glorious.

It's the *and* that fragments Western expectations. Yes, there is poverty in *Megacities*. Yes, there are power lines knotted like errant wool. Yes, there are stray cats and street sleepers. But yes, also, the things we cannot expect, the things that startle us with their strangeness and their familiarity, all bound up together. In Cairo, it's a Luna Park mouth, a wobbly painting that smells of St Kilda seashore. A woman, jaw hinged open, yawning or screaming, glimpsed through a crowd. In Mexico City, it's hundreds of VW Beetles, dip-dyed bright green. In São Paulo, it's a statue bending ecstatically away from the man wielding a hose to clean it. In Delhi, a waiter striding across a mirrored floor. In Lagos, guards on a soccer field, one lightly holding a sword. In Tokyo, a woman, out of focus, lifting a foot to adjust her shoe.

It's a ridiculous idea, to sum up a place. You can't hold a home in a word or phrase, let alone a town, let alone a city where ten million lungs breathe, where ten million hearts thud along until they don't. *What is it like?* It's everything. It's community making it work because the government won't get around to it. It's waiting patiently for bureaucracy. It's fine dining and street food. It's slums and penthouse apartments. It's life. Throbbing and jostling and obeying nothing but itself, its desires to sleep and eat and be temperate, to laugh and give birth and die.

What is the megacity? It's exhausting. It's invigorating. It's human: nothing could be more human. Stacking ourselves like poker chips, just trying, trying, to live, to do better than our parents, to be with each other.

Twice per cycle in the work, the cities all blur together, one great ecumenopolis, a city with no limits or edges. To the sound of crashing drums and soaring violins, people do what they do. They wash, they bathe, they love, commute, pray. They stand in patches of sun and close their eyes. They dance and wave and scroll their phones and wait, bored, for the train to come. It's the things you expect. But it's also the things you don't. In these images, the city is full of wonder, yes, and atomisation too. The city ceases to be a body, a structure, a single thing. It ceases to be consolidated and becomes particular. In *Megacities*, the city is not infrastructure, is not place: a city is people.

*Look, here they are.*

Sarah Walker is a Melbourne-based writer, artist and photographer.

See *Megacities*, 2023, as part of Triennial at NGV International until 7 April. This installation is supported by the Orloff Family Charitable Trust, and Barry Janes and Paul Cross.

Installation view of *Megacities* 2023 on display as part of NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Sean Fennessy

# My Country

*Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions* is a new biennial mentorship and exhibition program that pairs emerging Australian First Nations artists and designers with an esteemed industry mentor across each state and territory.

Participants in its inaugural program were invited to consider the theme of 'My Country', and the rich outcomes of the First Peoples–led selection and invitation process has revealed examples of the power of First Nations mentorship and art making. In this feature we meet the eight artists and their mentors and learn about the work they have created for this very special exhibition, which opens at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia on 22 March.

*Words by* **Edwina Green** and **Sophie Prince**



(left to right) Sophie Honess, Cheryl Rose with her work in *taypani milaythina-tu: Return to Country* at Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, 2022

## New South Wales
**SOPHIE HONESS, ARTIST**
Jonathan Jones, mentor

Sophie Honess, a Gamilaroi woman living and working on Gomeroi Country in Tamworth, New South Wales, embraced the challenges of translating her Country through her textile and weaving practice, working within the medium of wool to realise her largest tapestries to date. Her mentor is Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi contemporary artist Jonathan Jones. Working across a range of mediums, from printmaking and drawing to sculpture and film, Jones has exhibited nationally and internationally since the late 1990s, utilising everyday materials in minimal repeated forms to explore and interrogate cultural and historical relationships and ideas from Indigenous perspectives and traditions. Jones identified Honess's work as offering critical insight into 'pastoral expansion being the primary motivation for the forcible removal and dispossession of Koorie peoples from our country and the destruction of our culture'[1].

Honess's three tapestries for *My Country* represent Daruka in Gomeroi Country, each panel reflecting a different environmental feature – the grasses, the creek beds and the sands. Through research that involved going out on Country with knowledge-holder Marc Sutherland and cultural mentor Amy Hammond, Honess has developed a visual language of textures, tones and colours that connect to the layers of Country. Through tufting and latch hooking over 86,000 wool knots into a grid mat, Honess charts the beauty of her Country, which deserves to be appreciated and looked after.



## Tasmania
**CHERYL ROSE, ARTIST**
Denise Robinson, mentor

With the commitment to depicting fragments of cultural landscapes and translating their forms, Cheryl Rose is mentored by Denise Robinson. Both descendants of the Trawlwoolway people of lutruwita/Tasmania, they have been working together on projects for more than fifteen years. As an artist, administrator, adviser, broker, and mentor, Robinson has held a diverse range of roles across government, business, community and industry sectors as well as managing her own arts practice.

Robinson saw this commission as a quintessential opportunity to bring Rose's practice to the forefront of national discourse and, rather than direct it, she supported Rose's capacity as a 'deep listener … to hear the pause when Cheryl spoke about Country and what it meant to her'.

Through this process, Rose has realised *Fragments*, an installation centred on a large-scale work on Japanese Kozo paper. Gently collaged onto its surface are hand-rendered images and archival references to digging materials that were collected from the caves at pinmatik (Rocky Cape) and stored at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in the 1970s. Accompanied by an audiovisual component that provides the atmospheric sounds of this sacred site, the installation emanates the connectedness and emotion Rose gets from her Country that heals her.



## Queensland
**WARRABA WEATHERALL, ARTIST**
Tony Albert, mentor

Also building upon a longstanding relationship but working for the first time towards a specific outcome, Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku Yalanji man, Tony Albert has selected Warraba Weatherall from the Kamilaroi Nation as his mentee. Drawing on both personal and collective histories, Albert's multidisciplinary practice considers the ways in which optimism might be utilised to overcome adversity. Albert is the first Indigenous artist on the board of trustees for the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

In his PhD research, Weatherall considers the relationship between oral and visual languages and responds to the complexities of colonialism and its naturalisation in contemporary society through systems of colonial bureaucracy and linguicide. For *My Country* Weatherall's commission builds upon this research and permits time and resources to deeply consider archival materials and undertake new modes of fabrication. His work *Dirge* is a large-scale polyphon that translates oppressive archival documents into braille to form a musical composition. Working with steel and monumental forms, *Dirge* explores notions of longevity, creation and destruction.



## Australian Capital Territory
**AIDAN HARTSHORN, ARTIST**
James Tylor, mentor

Already friends and professional supports, Nunga (Kaurna Miyurna) and Māori (Te Arawa) man James Tylor identified that the mentorship and exhibition program would be a meaningful space for Aidan Hartshorn, a Walgalu man of the Ngurmal Nation, to develop his modes of making. Tylor is a multi-disciplinary visual artist whose practice explores the Australian environment, culture and social history. These mediums include photography, video, painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, sound, scents and food.

For *My Country*, Hartshorn builds on research he has undertaken for his master's degree, which considers the implications of the Snowy Mountains Scheme – Australia's largest hydro-electricity and irrigation complex, which has and continues to be one of the major causes of decimation on his Country. Hartshorn worked with Canberra Glassworks to fabricate sixteen diamond-shaped glass shields that form an installation. Each shield is suspended in space and weighed down by electrical cords that illuminate them. This tension characterises what Hartshorn terms 'ghost objects' – the powerful yet burdened presence of these translucent shields speaking to the ways culture has been removed, obscured and misrepresented through colonial forces.



## Western Australia
**JAN GRIFFITHS, ARTIST**
Peggy Griffiths, mentor

Peggy Griffiths identified the potential of *My Country* to share cultural and artistic practice and thus chose to mentor her daughter, Jan Griffiths. Both are Miriwoong women from Kununurra in the East Kimberley. Peggy is the first Indigenous artist to win the prestigious Fremantle Print Award and is a highly respected senior artist at Waringarri Aboriginal Arts, teaching other artists as well as contributing to leadership in a director role.

The native gerdewoon (boab tree) underpins the premise of Jan's work. A source of nourishment – from the boab nuts to the water in its hollow trunk – as well as being central to birthing and to stories relating to Miriwoong being and knowing, the multiplicities of gerdewoon as personally and culturally sacred elements are reflected in Griffiths's work for this commission. Her installation encompasses ceramics, painting and poetry. The experiential quality of the work presents a sacred story, holding knowledge passed down from her old people.







## Northern Territory
**JOHNATHON WORLD PEACE BUSH, ARTIST**
Pedro Wonaeamirri, mentor

Bringing the lessons and ways of Tiwi culture to a global audience is central to the work of Johnathon World Peace Bush (Jon Jon). He is mentored by Pedro Wonaeamirri and the pair are cousins – their shared ancestry and Country existing at the heart of this mentorship. Wonaeamirri has been exhibiting since 1989 and is a senior cultural leader on the Tiwi Islands with a significant and strong knowledge of the old Tiwi language and Tiwi culture.

Jon Jon has painted a triptych that brings together stories of when his grandparents lived on Andranangoo Country (Goose Creek) with Western systems of laws. The subject and choice of materials and colours are vital expressions of Tiwi culture. He explains: 'I make the work with ochres, from the ground, from the land'. Jon Jon and Wonaeamirri came together to produce a tunga (folded bark ceremonial basket) and a two-channel video work that offers insight into the strong culture of their practices. The video shows Jon Jon dancing his totem tartuwali (shark) with Wonaeamirri singing for Jon Jon on their shared Country.



## South Australia
**ALEC BAKER AND ERIC BARNEY, ARTISTS**
Vincent Namatjira OAM, mentor

The strength of story and the practice of cultural protocol is central to Alec Baker and Eric Barney's two collaborative paintings titled *Ngura* (*Country*). Barney is a younger artist who paints in the proper way under the cultural mentorship of Baker, a senior lawman, and both are mentored by Vincent Namatjira for this commission. This important way of working collaboratively is vital to the continuation of painting of Tjukurrpa (ancestral dreaming). Namatjira comments that through the exhibition the artists are 'bringing their Country to the big smoke'. Namatjira started painting at Iwantja Arts in 2011, where he has established himself as a subversive and witty portraitist. In 2020 he was the first Indigenous artist to win the Archibald Prize.



## Victoria
**MITCH MAHONEY, ARTIST**
Maree Clarke, mentor

Boon Wurrung and Barkindji man Mitch Mahoney has been working alongside his aunt and mentor, Mutti Mutti, Yorta Yorta and Boon Wurrung/Wemba Wemba woman Maree Clarke for the past five years. Clarke has been a practising artist living and working in Melbourne for the last three decades. Her continuing desire to affirm and reconnect with her cultural heritage has seen her revival of the traditional possum skin cloaks, together with the production of contemporary jewellery designs adorned with kangaroo teeth and echidna quills.

Clarke considered *My Country* the right time for Mahoney to apply his strong skills to a major commission. Mahoney directed this opportunity towards Country, cultural revitalisation and working with materials to create two canoes that represent his father's Country, as well as a possum skin cloak, which honours his mother's Boon Wurrung culture, telling saltwater stories. Making a canoe is an extensive process and has many protocols. With further mentorship with Barkindji artist David Doyle, Mahoney has undertaken full and proper practice, from learning where to take a canoe to healing the tree with mud.

Edwina Green is NGV Curator, First Nations Art and Sophie Prince is NGV Curatorial Project Officer, Australian and First Nations Art

*Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions: My Country* opens at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia on 22 March. For more information about this free exhibition, visit ngv.melbourne/country-road-ngv-first-nations-commissions

*Country Road + NGV First Nations Commissions: My Country* is supported by Principal Partner Country Road.

(clockwise from far left) Tony Albert and Warraba Weatherall, James Tylor and Aidan Hartshorn, Jan Griffiths, Johnathon World Peace Bush (Image courtesy of the artist and Jilamara Arts and Crafts Photo: Will Heathcote), Alec Baker and Eric Barney (Image courtesy of Iwantja Arts Photo: Iwantja Arts) and Mitch Mahoney



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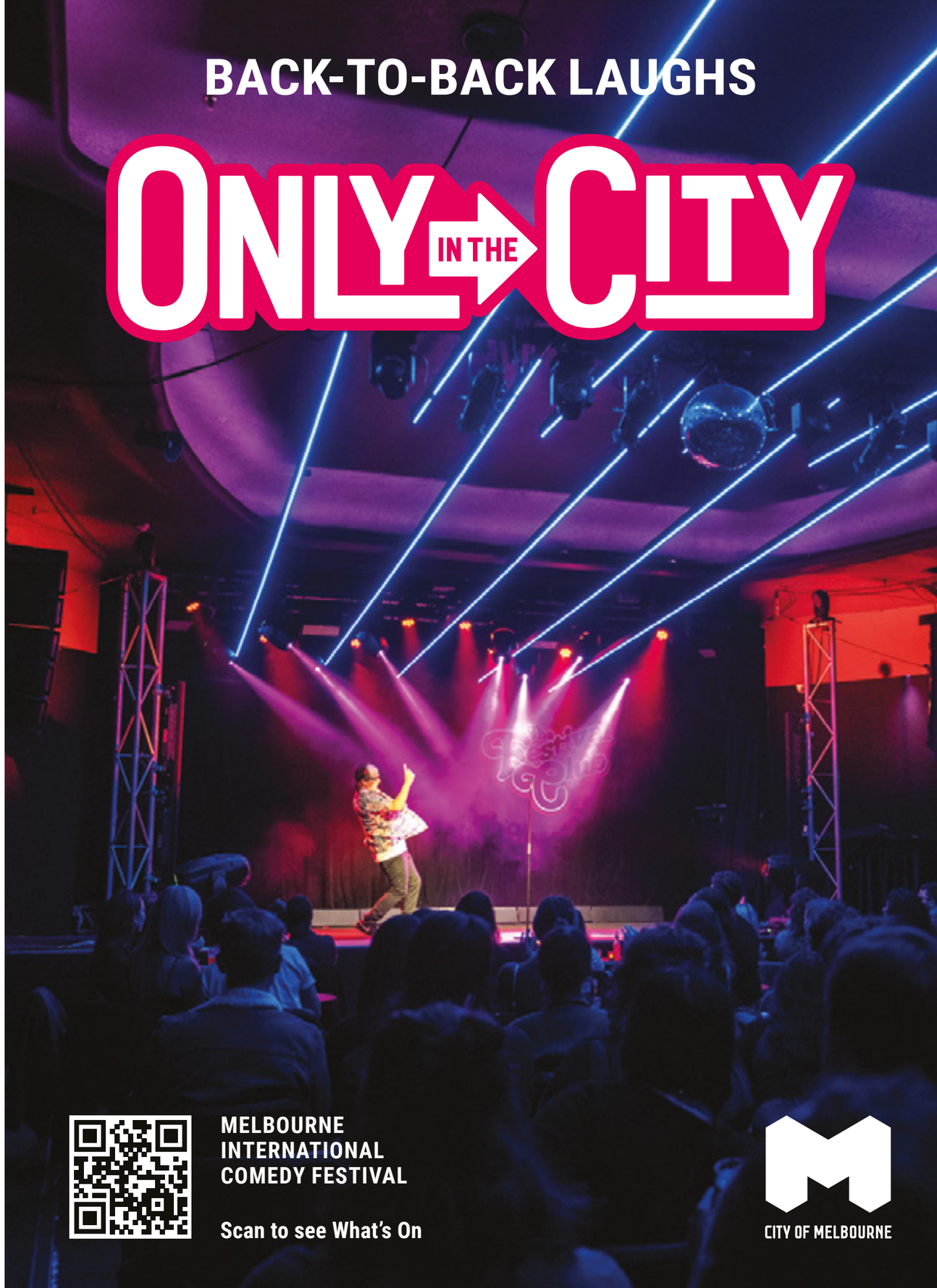
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*The Tucker Portraits*, installation view
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Image: Mechelle Bounpraseuth, 'Bánh mì', 2022, glazed earthenware, 12 x 19 x 14cm, image courtesy of the artist and Chalk Horse.

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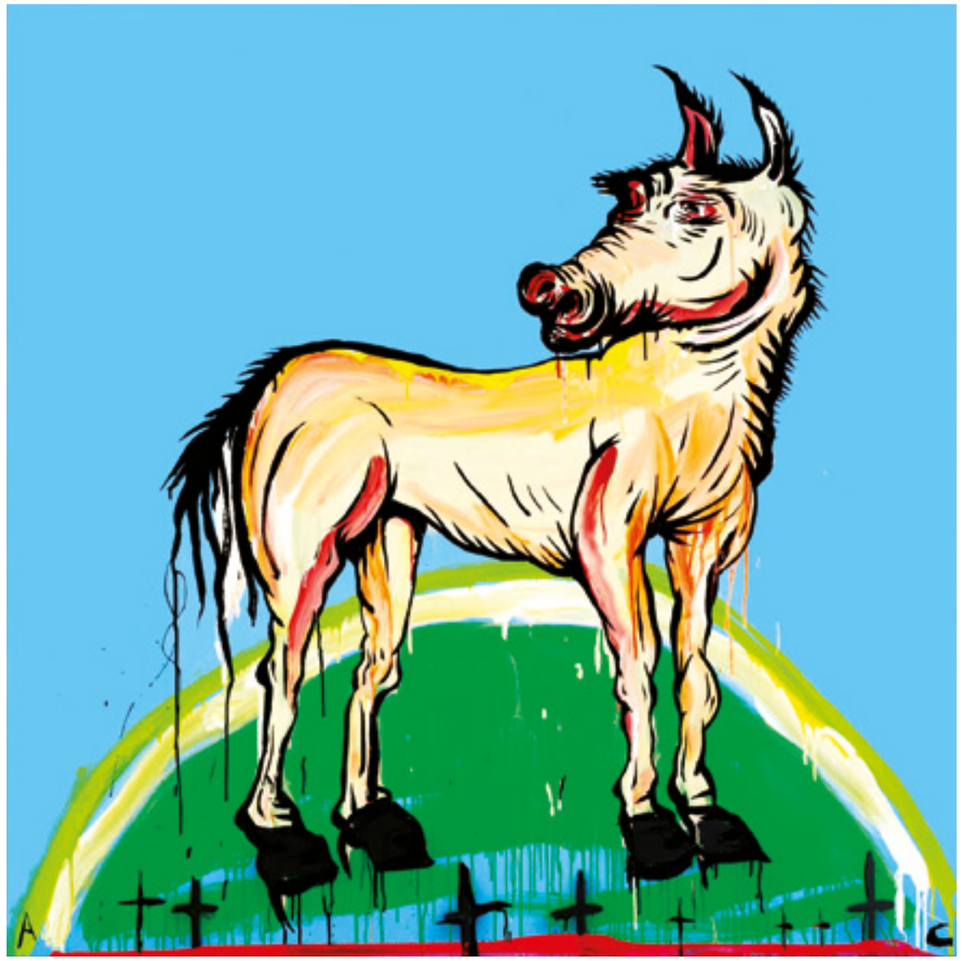
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# Adam Cullen
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Horse on a Hill / 2010, acrylic on canvas, 183 x 183 cm

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Image: Reggie Uluru, *Wati Ngintaka (Perentie Lizard Man)* 2023, acrylic on linen, 199 × 198 cm. Courtesy Walkatjara Art Uluru. Photo by Andrew Curtis.

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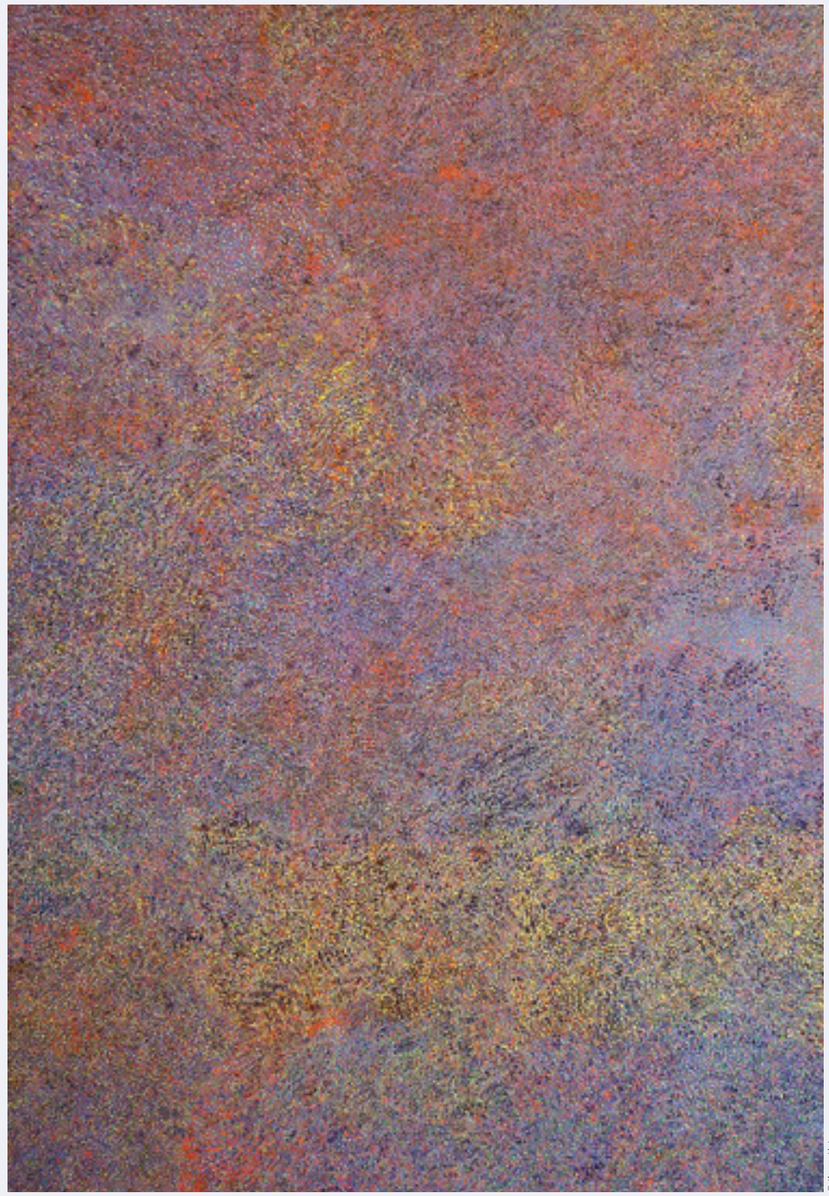
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Tennis players Zheng Qinwen and Juncheng Shang with NGV Triennial 2023 artist David Shrigley during *Melbourne Tennis Ball Exchange* during Triennial EXTRA. Photo: Fiona Hamilton



Donna McColm, Assistant Director, Curatorial and Audience Engagement, Harry Laughland, Director at Stephen Friedman Gallery, with Triennial Champions the Felton Bequest Committee members Professor Sally Walker AM, Fred Grimwade, NGV Triennial 2023 artist David Shrigley, Felton Bequest Chairman Rupert Myer AO, and Janet Whiting AM, President of the Council of Trustees of the NGV, with David Shrigley's work *Really good* on display in NGV Triennial at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Predrag Cancar



Representatives of the Joe White Bequest Committee, Triennial Lead Supporters, and family, with Agnieszka Pilat's work *Heterobota* on display in NGV Triennial at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Carmen Zammit



NGV Triennial 2023 supporters Marco Gjergja, Melissa Gjergja, Ben Woods, Tania Capovilla, Clare Cross, Anthony Cross and Cameron Oxley, with NGV Triennial 2023 artist Azuma Makoto. Photo: Selina Ou



Artist Olana Janfa leads a Drop-By Drawing session in the NGV's nineteenth century gallery at NGV International. Photo: Martin Wurt



NGV Triennial 2023 artist Yee I-Lann speaks with NGV curator Sunita Lewis as part of Triennial EXTRA at NGV International. Photo Michael Pham



Gallery visitors with Thomas J Price's *Reaching Out*, 2020, and *All In*, 2021, at NGV International. Photo: Michael Pham



NGV Triennial 2023 artist Prudence Flint in conversation with NGV curator Katharina Prugger during Triennial EXTRA at NGV International. Photo: Michael Pham



NGV Triennial Major Supporters Andrew Fleischner, Dawn Fleischner and Chris Fleischner visiting from Pittsburgh, USA, with Hugh Hayden's work, *The Cosby's*, 2020, on display in NGV Triennial at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Selina Ou



NGV Triennial Supporters James McGrath and Susan Jones with Heather B. Swann's work *Ouroboros*, 2023, on display in NGV Triennial at NGV International, Melbourne. Photo: Selina Ou







Award-winning composer and performer Mindy Meng Wang peforms for Triennial EXTRA. Photo: Michael Pham



Jazz singer Mama Alto performs during Triennial EXTRA at NGV International. Photo: Michael Pham



Performer Candy Bowers as part of *Afrocentric – Curated by Candy Bowers* for Triennial EXTRA at NGV International. Photo: Michael Pham



Congolese multidisciplinary artist wani toaishar showcases a segment from his work *This Spirit is no Citizen* for Triennial EXTRA at NGV International. Photo: Michael Pham

## What's On



**Mechelle Bounpraseuth** *Bánh mì* 2022. Image courtesy of the artist and Chalk Horse



**Kate Bergin** *The Alpacas' Teaparty* 2011, collection Bendigo Art Gallery. The Gift of Grace and Alec Craig of Bendigo, Victoria, 2011. Image courtesy Kate Bergin and Scott Livesey Galleries

### *JOSH MUIR: FOREVER I LIVE*
9 March – 14 July 2024
VENUE Koorie Heritage Trust
Birrarung Building,
Fed Square

*Josh Muir: Forever I Live* is the first major solo retrospective exhibition of the late Josh Muir (born 1991), following his passing in 2022.

Josh Muir was born and raised on Wadawurrung Country in Ballarat, Victoria. The exhibition title is taken from an artwork of the same name – *Forever I Live* (2015) – and is a reference to the ongoing legacy that continues to live in Josh's artwork beyond life itself. *Josh Muir: Forever I Live* is co-curated by Josh's partner Shanaya Sheridan, his mother Justine Berg and the curatorial team at KHT.

His works simultaneously maintain the continuous tradition of storytelling that is inseparable from his cultural identity as a Gunditjmara, Yorta Yorta and Barkindji man.

kooricheritagetrust.com.au

### *KASIA TONS – PANOPLY*
2 March – 16 June 2024
VENUE Ararat Gallery TAMA, Ararat

*Panoply* is an emergency shelter that aims to provide a place of retreat and safety in the first stage of displacement. Motivated by the uncertainty of life and a fascination for textiles and architecture, Kasia Tons is a textile artist whose work sits at the intersection of art, fashion, and craft. This iteration of *Panoply* has been laboriously hand stitched over many months and utilises reclaimed fabrics and stuffing. The design elements of colour, shape, base, doors and 'windows' are personal to the artist with the idea that this modular approach can be adapted to the needs of different inhabitants.

araratgallerytama.com.au

### *LOVE*
Until 14 April 2024
VENUE Central Goldfields Art Gallery
1 Neill Street, Maryborough

Love is a source of inspiration for visual artists throughout history. This exhibition explores love expressed through the themes of country, nature, self-love and love between people. The exhibition is drawn from the Central Goldfields Art Gallery collection and other public collections including Ararat Gallery TAMA, Bendigo Art Gallery and the Golden Dragon Museum. It features Kate Bergin, Dean Bowen, Denis Chapman, Jeff Gardner, Aunty Marilyne Nicholls, Norman Lindsay, Wal Richards, Vipoo Srivilasa.

centralgoldfieldsartgallery.com.au

### *DISH*
Until 27 April 2024
VENUE Town Hall Gallery, Hawthorn

*DISH* is a major exhibition indulging in the beauty and complexity of food, featuring contemporary crafts, sculpture, painting and stories. Beyond mere sustenance, food binds us to family, friends, and culture, shaping our identities, preserving traditions, and igniting memory. An examination of human connection to the world, this exhibition explores how we harness natural resources and how we engage with each other. It features Mechelle Bounpraseuth, ChiliPhilly, Zena Cumpston, Laetitia Olivier-Gargano, Callum Preston, Rasha Tayeh and Elizabeth Willing.

boroondara.vic.gov.au/arts

### *UNRAVEL: THE POWER AND POLITICS OF TEXTILES IN ART*
13 February – 26 May 2024
VENUE Barbican Centre, London

In this major group exhibition, fifty international, intergenerational artists use textiles to communicate vital ideas about power, resistance and survival. From intimate hand-crafted pieces to monumental sculptural installations, these works offer narratives of violence, imperialism and exclusion alongside stories of resilience, love and hope.

barbican.org.uk

### *SARGENT AND FASHION*
22 February – 7 July 2024
VENUE Tate Britain, London

Celebrated for his striking portrait paintings, this exhibition sheds new light on John Singer Sargent's acclaimed works and explores how he worked like a stylist to craft the image of the sitters he painted. Almost 60 of Sargent's paintings will be on display, including major portraits that rarely travel. Organised by Tate Britain and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

tate.org.uk

### *GIORGIO DE CHIRICO: METAPHYSICAL JOURNEY*
27 April – 29 August 2024
VENUE Metropolitan Art
Museum, Tokyo

Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978) is one of the leading masters of the twentieth century. This exhibition introduces de Chirico's works from his early years to his later years, divided into themes such as 'Piazza Italia', 'Metaphysical Interiors', and 'Manukan', covering approximately seventy years of his painting career. This is the first large-scale solo exhibition of Giorgio de Chirico's work in Japan in ten years.

tobikan.jp

### *WHITNEY BIENNIAL 2024: EVEN BETTER THAN THE REAL THING*
Opens 20 March 2024
VENUE Whitney Museum of
American Art, New York

The Whitney Biennial – a showcase of what's new in American art – returns to the Whitney for its eighty-first instalment in March 2024 and is the longest-running exhibition of its kind.

Whitney.org

### *24TH BIENNALE OF SYDNEY: TEN THOUSAND SUNS*
9 March – 10 June 2024
VENUE Art Gallery of New South
Wales, Sydney

The 24th Biennale of Sydney works across time periods and all continents, beyond the borders separating cultural practices rooted in different genealogies. The exhibition owes a profound debt to the rich heritage of what is known today as Australia, especially to the struggles and practices that First Nations communities and migrants have faced and in which they have played key roles.

artgallery.nsw.gov.au

### *YHONNIE SCARCE: THE LIGHT OF DAY*
2 February – 19 May 2024
VENUE The Art Gallery of Western
Australia, Perth

Internationally recognised Kokatha and Nukunu artist Yhonnie Scarce brings her luminous and powerful works to the Art Gallery of Western Australia in the largest-ever ensemble of her collected glass and mixed-media works seen in Australia.

artgallery.wa.gov.au

# List of reproduced works and endnotes

(cover)
Hugh Hayden with his work *The end* 2022 on display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International. Photo: Tim Carrafa

p. 6
Hugh Hayden with his work *The end* 2022 on display in NGV Triennial until 7 April 2024 at NGV International. Photo: Tim Carrafa

p. 6
**Hulda Guzmán**
*Daily ceremony* 2022
synthetic polymer paint and gouache on Cedar (*Cedrus* sp.) and Mahogany plywood (*Swietenia* sp.)
140.6 × 122.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by anonymous donors and NGV Foundation, 2022
Courtesy the artist; Stephen Friedman Gallery, London; and Alexander Berggruen, New York © Hulda Guzmán

p. 7
**Emma Soyer**
*The escape: a young girl with a bird cage* 1836
oil on canvas
76.0 × 63.2 cm
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024

p. 12
**Dylan Mooney**
*Stuck on you* 2020, printed 2021
from the *Queer, blak & here* series 2020–21
inkjet print
118.9 × 84.1 cm
ed. 1/5
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Ruth Margaret Frances Houghton Bequest, 2021 © Dylan Mooney

p. 13
**Julie Shaw (designer)**
**Evonne Munuyngu (weaver)**
**Lisa Lalaywarra Gurrulpa (weaver)**
**Serena Gubuyani (weaver)**
**Mary Dhapalany (weaver)**
**Margaret Djarbalarbal Malibirr (weaver)**
*Maayama-li (make by hand)* 2022
pandanus (*Pandanus* sp.), cotton (sateen), polyester, steel, aluminium
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, 2023
© Julie Shaw Designs

pp. 18–9
**Hugh Hayden**
*The end* 2022
Fir (*Abies* sp.), steel, mirror
525.0 × 680.0 cm (variable)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Loti & Victor Smorgon Fund
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin © Hugh Hayden

p. 20
**Hugh Hayden**
*The Cosby's* 2020
cast iron
(a–c) 61.0 × 139.6 × 19.3 cm (variable) (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2022
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin © Hugh Hayden

pp. 22, 26
**Diana Al-Hadid**
Syria born 1981, lives in the United States
1986–
*What remains of the floating man hypothesis* 2023
polymer gypsum, fibreglass, steel, metallic leaf, pigment
270.0 × 2767.6 × 1473.5 cm (variable) (installation)
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Courtesy of the artist and Kasmin Gallery
Proposed acquisition
Supported by Anne Robertson and Mark Robertson OAM, 2023
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin © Diana Al-Hadid

p. 25
**Master of the Stories of Helen**
**Antonio Vivarini (studio of)**
*The garden of love* (c.1465–1470)
oil, tempera and gold on spruce panel
152.5 × 239.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Felton Bequest, 1948
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. 28
**Tracey Emin**
*This is exactly how I feel right now* 2016
bronze
26.9 × 123.3 × 13.5 cm
ed. 3/6
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by AGL Shaw Bequest, Collection Strategy Fund, Nigel and Patricia Peck, MG Chapman Bequest, and Suzanne Dawbarn Bequest
© Tracey Emin. All rights reserved, DACS 2022

p. 36
**Emma Soyer**
British 1813–1842
*The escape: a young girl with a bird cage* 1836
oil on canvas
76.0 × 63.2 cm
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024

p. 37
**Geng Xue**
*Hollowed-out columns woven with clay bars* 2023
porcelain
26.3 × 18.1 × 18.3 cm
Purchased, NGV Supporters of Asian Art, 2023

p. 38
**Emmeline Pritchard**
*Botanical Gardens, Melbourne* 1874
oil on canvas
37.0 × 44.7 cm
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024

p. 40
**Stuart Devlin**
*Eighteen light candelabra* 1975
sterling silver, silver gilt
56.0cm (height), 45.0 cm (diameter)
Gift of Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024

p. 42
Top left to right
**Rod McNicol**
*Meg* 1998, printed 2006
from the *Portraits of the Last Century* series 1998–2006
Melbourne
type C photograph
52.1 × 39.0 cm (image); 67.7 × 54.5 cm (sheet)
Gift of Wilbow Group Pty Ltd on behalf of the Bowness Family Foundation through the Austrlian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024 © Rod McNicol

**Rod McNicol**
*Nanette* 1978
from the *Permanent Mirrors* series 1978
Melbourne
gelatin silver photograph
33.0 × 22.4 cm (image); 39.6 × 28.3 cm (sheet)
inscribed in pencil on sheet l.r.: R. D. McNicol.
Gift of Wilbow Group Pty Ltd on behalf of the Bowness Family Foundation through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024 © Rod McNicol

bottom
**Rod McNicol**
*Seiya* 2010
from the *Newcomers to My Village* series 2010
Melbourne
type C photograph
60.0 × 45.1 cm (image); 67.9 × 52.9 cm (sheet)
Gift of Wilbow Group Pty Ltd on behalf of the Bowness Family Foundation through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2024 © Rod McNicol

p. 43
**Gucci, Florence (fashion house)**
**Alessandro Michele (designer)**
*Look 20, dress* 2016
spring–summer 2016
silk, plastic (sequins), metal (fastenings)
(a) 124.0 cm (centre back), 34.0 cm (waist, flat) (dress), (b) 58.5 cm (centre back), 39.0 cm (waist, flat) (slip)
Gift of Olga Kononchuk, 2024

p. 44
**United States, New York, Mount Lebanon**
*Turning chair* c. 1870
pine, maple, ash, iron
66.7 × 43.2 cm diameter
Purchased with funds donated by The Gidleigh Foundation, 2024

p. 45
**Steven Rhall**
*Recycled or reclaimed* 2022
stainless steel, concrete, basalt, enamelled brass, water, irrigation components
(a–f) 124.5 × 144.0 × 91.9 cm (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, Victorian Foundation for Living Australian Artists, 2023 © Steven Rhall

p. 45
**Kent Morris**
*Unvanished – Yalukit Willam (St Kilda) – rainbow lorikeet* 2023
from the *Melbourne Now Print Portfolio*
colour inkjet print
54.0 × 39.9 cm (image) 56.1 × 42.0 cm (sheet)
ed. 1/15
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria. Purchased, Supporters of Prints and Drawings, 2023 © Kent Morris

p. 46
**Lehuauakea**
*Mele o Nā Kaukani Wai (Song of a thousand waters)* 2018
mulberry papers, plant dyes, mineral pigments, gouache, clay (beads), cotton thread, metallic thread
212.5 × 346.0 × 28.0 cm (variable) (installed)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased NGV Foundation, 2022
© Lehuauakea

pp. 52–3
**Schiaparelli, Paris** (couture house)
selected works
(variable) (installation)
Courtesy of Maison Schiaparelli, Paris

p. 54
**Thebe Magugu, South Africa**
**(fashion house)**
**Thebe Magugu (designer)**
*Silver shipwreck jacket, shirt, trousers and headscarf* 2023
*Folklorics* collection, autumn–winter 2023–24
triacetate, polyester
(a) 123.0 cm (centre back) 46.5 cm (waist, flat) (jacket) (b) 74.0 cm (centre back) 72.0 cm (sleeve length) (shirt) (c) 109.0 cm (outer leg) 34.0cm (waist, flat) (trousers) (d) 97.0 × 146.0 cm (headscarf)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, NGV Supporters of Fashion and Textiles, 2023 © THEBEMAGUGU

p. 55
**Iris van Herpen, Amsterdam**
**(couture house)**
**Iris van Herpen (designer)**
*Look 14, Ananda-Maya, gown and shoes* 2022
*Meta Morphism* collection, autumn–winter 2022–23
nylon (mesh, tulle), polyester film, rayon (embroidery), metal (boning, wire, fastenings)
(a) 188.0 (centre back) 29.0 cm (waist, flat)
(b–c) 27.5 × 8.0 × 17.0 cm (each) (shoes)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Krystyna Campbell-Pretty AM and Family, 2023
© Iris van Herpen

p. 58–9
**Petrit Halilaj**
*Very volcanic over this green feather* 2021
felt
1000.0 × 1000.0 cm (variable) (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Originally conceived and commissioned for Tate St Ives, 2021
Purchased with funds donated by Barry Janes and Paul Cross, Nick Perkins and Paul Banks, Sarah Cronin, Samuel Cronin and Bradley Cronin, Sophie and Simon Crowe, and NGV Foundation, 2023
This artist has been supported by the Elizabeth Summons Grant in Memory of Nicholas Draffin. This project is proudly supported by Deakin University.
© Petrit Halilaj. ChertLüdde, Berlin; Mennour, Paris

p. 66
**Hulda Guzmán**
Dominican Republic born 1984
*Daily ceremony* 2022
synthetic polymer paint and gouache on Cedar (*Cedrus* sp.) and Mahogany plywood (*Swietenia* sp.)
140.6 × 122.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by an anonymous donor and NGV Foundation, 2023
2023.249 © Hulda Guzmán

p. 71
**Shakuntala Kulkarni**
*No. 1* 2023
from the *Armour for the Bride* series 2023
cane, cane threads, Teak (*Tectona grandis*)
182.8 × 60.9 cm diameter (overall)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Karen McLeod Adair and Anthony Adair AM
© Shakuntala Kulkarni

p. 72
**Yining Fei**
*Duke of Apple in the Vile Oubliette* 2020
watercolour on papier-mâché, wool, pearls, plastic beads, metal, foam, stainless steel
129.7 × 91.8 × 60.6 cm (variable)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Rob Gould, 2022 © Fei Yining

p. 76
**Shara Hughes**
*Growing pains* 2022
oil, synthetic polymer paint and dye on canvas
220.8 × 208.0 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by July Cao
© Shara Hughes, David Kordansky Gallery

p. 77
**Ashley Jameson Eriksmoen**
*Fell* 2023
from the *Afrikando* collection
timber salvaged from furniture
(a–b) (75.0 × 495.0 × 170.0 cm) (variable) (installation)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Esther Frenkiel OAM and David Frenkiel, 2023
© Ashley Jameson Eriksmoen

p. 78
**Osamu Mori**
*3MMM – rivalry* 2022
Camphor Laurel (*Cinnamomum camphora*)
285 × 100 × 190 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by Dr. Brett Archer and the Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest, 2023 © Osamu Mori

p. 85
**Diedrick Brackens**
*Marrow becomes breath* 2022
woven cotton and acrylic yarn, fabric (trim)
246.3 × 271.7 cm
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased with funds donated by the Tapestry Foundation of Australia, 2023
© Diedrick Brackens. Courtesy of the artist, Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, and Various Small Fires, Los Angeles

pp. 86–7
Megacities
selected works by Chen Ronghui, Farhana Satu, Francisco Mata Rosas, Gustavo Minas, Hana Gamal, Mas Agung Wilis Yudha Baskoro, Mikiko Hara, Saumya Khandelwal, Yagazie Emezi, JT White

Megacities 2023
multichannel digital video
(variable) (installation)
Commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Supported by the Orloff Family Charitable Trust, and Barry Janes and Paul Cross, 2022 © the artists

p. 106
**Mechelle Bounpraseuth**
*Bánh mì* 2022
glazed earthenware
12.0 × 19.0 × 14.0 cm
Image courtesy of the artist and Chalk Horse
© Mechelle Bounpraseuth

p. 107
**Kate Bergin**
*The Alpacas' Teaparty*
2011
oil on canvas
171.0 × 232.0 cm
Collection Bendigo Art Gallery. The Gift of Grace and Alec Craig of Bendigo, Victoria 2011
Image courtesy Kate Bergin and Scott Livesey Galleries © Kate Bergin

ENDNOTES

pp. 22–4
**'The allure of perfection.'**
1. Matthew Bedard, 'Diana Al-Hadid', *Flaunt*, Spring 2015, pp. 84–7.
2. Sasha Mann, 'Q&A with artist Diana Al-Hadid', 1 Sep. 2010, Hammer Museum, <https://hammer.ucla.edu/blog/2010/09/ qa-with-artist-diana-al-hadid>, accessed 3 May 2023.
3. Natalie Edwards, 'Nolli's Orders: form unlimited', 8 Jul. 2018, *Journal of Art Criticism*, <https:// journalofartcriticism.cargo.site/Nolli- s-Orders-Form-Unlimited>, accessed 3 May 2023.
4. Brent Randall, 'Interview with Diana Al-Hadid', *Husk*, Winter 2014, p. 43.
5. ibid.
6. Michael Amy, 'Ghosts of things: a conversation with Diana Al-Hadid', *Sculpture Magazine*, April 2013, p. 27.
7. Patricia Simons, 'Spaces of love', in Angela Hesson, Matthew Martin & Charles Zika (eds), *Love: Art of Emotion 1400–1800*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2017, p. 81.
8. 'Delirious Matter arrives in Madison Square Park', 13 May 2018, *Gotham-ToGo*, <https://gothamtogo.com/delirious- matter-arrives-in-madison-square- park/>, accessed 3 May 2023; Benjamin Cassidy, '"Delirious Matter": sculpture and surroundings meet – Al-Hadid's sculptures go from New York City to Williams College campus', 11 Jan. 2019, The Berkshire Eagle, <https://www. berkshireeagle.com/archives/delirious- matter-sculpture-and-surroundings- meet/article_165f2b6e-2ce1-53cf-8dd3-b07ee6e27fd9.html>, accessed 3 May 2023.
9. Specifically, the official conclusion of the 2013–17 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was that Cardinal George Pell, former Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, both knew about child abuse, particularly within the Victorian diocese of Ballarat, and failed to take proper steps to act on complaints about dangerous priests; see Christopher Knaus, 'George Pell: what the five-year royal commission into child sexual abuse found', 12 Jan. 2023, *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/ australia-news/2023/jan/12/george-pell- what-the-five-year-royal-commission- into-child-sexual-abuse-found>, accessed 3 May 2023. This was followed by decades during which he 'fought relentlessly to limit the church's liability in relation to abuse claims'; see Editorial, 'Church must acknowledge Pell's tainted legacy', 1 Feb. 2023, *The Age*, <https://www.theage.com.au/ national/church-must-acknowledge-pell- s-tainted-legacy-20230201-p5ch6u.html>, accessed 3 May 2023

pp. 25–6
**Anatomy of Art**
1. Angela Hesson, Matthew Martin & Charles Zika (eds), *Love: Art of Emotion 1400–1800*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2017, p. 72.
2. Gordon Morrison, *Painting and Sculpture before 1800 in the International Collections of the National Gallery of Victoria*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2003, p. 15.

pp. 36–7
***The escape* by Emma Soyer in New to the Collection**
1. Alexis Soyer, *The Gastronomic Regenerator: A Simplified and Entirely New System of Cookery*, London, 1847, p. 826.
2. F. Volant & J. R. Warren (eds), *Memoirs of Alexis Soyer: With Unpublished Receipts and Odds and Ends of Gastronomy*, London, 1859, p. 128.
3. ibid. p. 135.
4. *Soyer's Philanthropic Gallery (*Prince of Wales's Bazaar,1848), Exhibition catalogue.
5. 'The Late Madame Soyer', *The Times*, 16 Nov. 1842, p. 4.
6. 'Obituary. Madame Soyer', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1842, p. 667.
7. The birthdate of 1813, given to Emma in Alexis Soyer's memoirs, has recently been questioned. 1809 has been proposed instead by Gabriella Maria Madallena Randsen, 'Emma Soyer. The Artist Wife of a Celebrity Chef', MA Thesis, University of Buckingham, 2020, pp. 78-83.

p. 42
**Rod McNicol *A Portrait Revisited* series 1986–2006**
1. 'A Portrait Revisited: 1986, 2006', in New to the Collection *LensCulture*, <www.lensculture.com/articles/roderick-mcnicol-a-portrait-revisited-1986-2006>, accessed 25 Jan. 2024.

pp. 48–51
**Stitches of memory: living the past and remembering the future**
1. This was first published as a poem in Dr Brook Garru Andrew et al., *galang*, vol. 2, Garru Editions and Powerhouse Publishing, Sydney, 2002.
2. Astri Dankertsen, '"Men du kan jo snakke frognersamisk": tradisjon og kulturell innovasjon blant samer i Oslo', A. Dankertsen, Oslo, 2006; Elin Anita Sivertsen, '"Jeg er same, og jeg bærer det med stolthet": identitet, ambivalens og tradisjon blant unge samer', in Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Hans Erik Næss (eds), *Kulturell kompleksitet i det nye Norge*, Unipub, Oslo, 2011.
3. Gudmund Hatt, *Arktiske Skinddragter i Eurasien Og Amerika: En Etnografisk Studie*, J. H. Schultz, Copenhagen, 1914, p. 60.
4. Gjertrud Gjessing, *Lappedrakten: en skisse av dens opphav*, Instituttet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning (Trykt Utg.), vol. 4, no. 2, 1940, 47.
5. Liisa-Rávná Finbog, *It Speaks to You: Making Kin of People – Duodji and Stories in Sámi Museums*, DIO Press, New York, 2023, p. 102.
6. ibid. p. 164.
7. For example, Gunvor Guttorm, *Duoji Bálgát – En Studie i Duodji: Kunsthåndverk Som Visuell Erfaring Hos et Urfolk, Det humanistiske fakultet*, Institutt for kunsthistorie, Universitetet i Tromsø, Tromsø, 2001, 59.
8. One of the primary female deities of the Sámi religion, Sáráhkka is the keeper of the fireplace (árran) and the mother of creation.
9. Beaiváš is considered one of the primary deities of the Sámi religion, and the entity appears in sources by various names and genders. This is on account of regional differences in how the Sámi practise their religion.

10. Anna Westman, 'The sun in Sámi mythology', *Acta Borealia*, vol. 14, no. 2, Jan. 1997, pp. 31–58, p. 36.
11. Joanne Barker, 'Confluence: water as an analytic of indigenous feminisms', American Indian Culture and Research Journal, vol. 43, no. 3, 1 Jan. 2019, pp. 1–40, p. 4.
12. ibid. p. 22.
13. Today it is well established that every fetus starts developing from the same starting point, which is that all fetal genitalia are the same and that they are phenotypically female.
14. Rauna Kuokkanen, 'Myths and realities of Sami women: a post-colonial feminist analysis for the decolonization and transformation of Sami society', in Joyce Green (ed.), *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, Fernwood Publishing, London, 2007, pp. 72–92, p. 74; Erik Toralf Solem, *Lappiske rettsstudier*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, 1970.
15. Sápmi is the name of our homeland and we, her people, are the Sámi, the children of the Sun. Research into Finno-Ugric languages, in which all the Sámi languages (eleven in total) belong, seems to confirm that Sámi and Sápmi have their etymological roots in the old word Šämä. The word exists in the earliest variations of Sámi languages, and even then is associated with 'land'.
16. Kuokkanen in Green, pp. 72–92.
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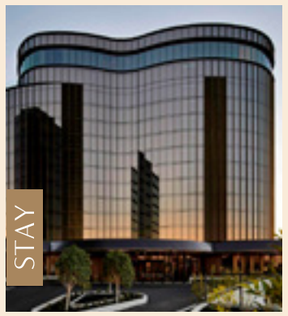
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