

TAMARA BAILLIE, THOM BUCHANAN,
DEIDRE BUT-HUSAIM, GUS CLUTTERBUCK,
BRIDGET CURRIE, BRAD DARKSON,
HONOR FREEMAN, SASHA GRBICH,
RAY HARRIS, ANNA HORNE, HEIDI KENYON,
SUE KNEEBONE, DEBORAH PRIOR,
WILL NOLAN, CYNTHIA SCHWERTSIK
WITH DAVE LASLETT, DARREN SIWES,
CJ TAYLOR, LARA TILBROOK,
HENRY JOCK WALKER, AND LAURA WILLS.

NEOTERIC

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1 March — 10 April 2022
North Eastern Concourse
Adelaide Railway Station

Neoteric dedicates this catalogue to Ann Newmarch,
Hossein Valamanesh and Andy Best.

And all the artists we have recently lost.

Who have taught, pushed, inspired, supported,
mentored, challenged and delighted us, with their
presence, vision and work.

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NEOTERIC

Neoteric is a declaration of the importance of artists. Neoteric is a survey exhibition and an advocacy, affirming the talent of 20 mid-career South Australian artists, with responses from 20 SA writers in this publication, along with performances and talks. Neoteric addresses the lack of exhibition opportunities for mid-career artists in South Australia, borne from an ongoing drive to make exhibition and performance opportunities for fellow artists. It presents mid-career South Australian artists to a wide audience – artists who have been working consistently across photography, painting, sculpture, installation, video, sound, ceramics, and mixed media.

The exhibition presents new works, exploring, embodying, and investigating new ideas and encouraging participation. There is no theme. The motivation was to select mid-career artists who have shown resilience over 10-15 years of consistent exhibition experience, are acknowledged by their peers through a significant history of making and investigating but are not represented or in similar positions.

Curatorial consideration has been given to each artist's inquisitive and responsive approach to creating work that is insightful, poetic, critical, material, and thoughtful. Presenting compelling work across all mediums that engages with contemporary ideas on space, place, identity, environment, and culture.

But mostly Neoteric presents the strength, dedication, and talent of artists. It highlights the diversity, resilience, depth and perseverance of South Australia's contemporary art and arts writing.

As an artist-led, artist-focused initiative working outside establishments, we know how crucial it is to have exhibition opportunities, to make and show new work, to be supported. Most of the work we do as artists is largely unpaid, expected or 'career building' in a career that has no rate of pay, no promotion pathways or stability. We wanted to commission and platform new work from 20 of South Australia's incredible varied artists. With 20 responses to their work, from writers they may not have worked with before, to forge new relationships, perspectives, and connections.

Neoteric is timed to present a significant number of SA artists to the attention of visiting arts professionals, bringing the community together in strength. We hope that Neoteric will start a growing trend of larger group exhibitions concentrating on SA artists, driven by galleries, organisations, institutions, ARIs, as well as the artists themselves.

Neoteric is a testimony to the significance of artists. In times of upheaval, we rely more heavily on artists for nourishment. We turn to art to get us through. Having experienced two years of Covid-19 with its lockdowns, isolation, and uncertainty, this has never been truer. This is not a time we expected to experience in our lives. It was the arts that comforted us all, and yet again, as is the continuing trend in Australia, the arts were one of the hardest hit and least supported.

Our selection of 20 artists is in no way exhaustive. Of course, SA is home to many more talented mid-career artists, let alone emerging and established artists as well. Although we would have loved to include every artist, we took on what we could manage and fund as a small independent team. But let Neoteric be a stimulation. Let's see many more comprehensive exhibition opportunities led by organisations, institutions, and artist led initiatives.

Let us rejoice in the depth, commitment, and strength of the talent in our state.

Join us in championing the artists, who never stop working, creating, inquiring, initiating and reflecting ourselves and our world.

— Ray Harris

Jemima Kemp

So then, this is a thing that begins as a ghost, a spectral writing. A thinking and writing of an idea/thing not yet made but existing, in the mind of the maker, in the exchanges between writer and artist, artist and writer. It exists now (then), as it will exactly, once made, seen and encountered, in pastness again becoming immaterial.

Made material now, this wood and paper globe projects a solidity that belies its fantastically unstable nature. For it is begat from and encompassed by an Ur idea of World as Globe/Globe as World. Inhabited, haunted by every past, present, future version of itself; all these globes, maps, voyages and 'discoveries'; all these histories, ideas, images, knowledges, presences, absences, illusions, accretions. An Ur idea that cannot be separated from these spectres that can never be encountered without reckoning with these live ghosts.

This spectrality exists as the unbidden return of past presences, disjoining time so that past, present, future live in each other, co-present, interacting and changing our experience of the lived world. It is 'the unsettling of self, the haunting taking-place of place, the unhinging of past and present'.¹ And this spectral Ur idea of the World is haunted too by presences, those of images, maps, worlds, histories and myths, those 'others who are not yet *there*, presently living, whether they are already dead or not yet born'.²

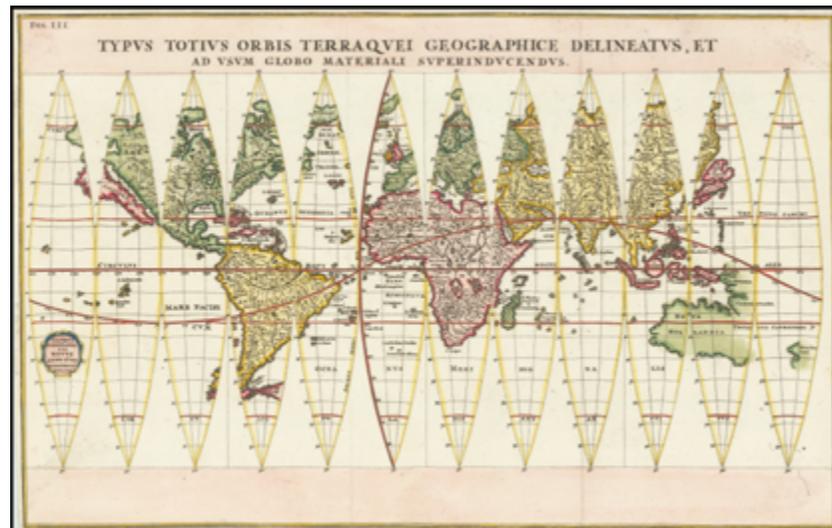
It shivers too because its illusions, these reassuring/seductive illusions of unity in neatly delineated continents, the illusion of the totality of sight (to see the whole globe) at once, of coherence and omniscience that World as Globe offers, the sense of stable presence and time are as thin as a globe's paper skin. It shivers too from its multifarious contradictions, versions and images, partial knowledges, from these presences inhabiting the living present, from its unstable illusions; an unstable too-muchness to be containable or resolvable.

This globe met here, this lovely thin-skinned thing, sets other tremors in motion. Inverting the world, it seems to almost fall in on itself exchanging expansiveness for claustrophobia. It refuses the myth of unity and seamlessness, in the pasted over edges of the 18th century map. It confounds totalising sight and the illusions of knowledge and knowability the familiar world globe offers; it rejects certainty and completeness as this map's continents bulge and change size; its islands wander or are loosed from continents, as the southern land appears as an unbounded form a line in space, interior/exterior (land or water?) ambiguous and uncertain.

In these strategems and refusals, this light simple globe, shakes this Ur idea, this spectral shell to point of collapse. For as these illusions collapse into fragmentation, and uncertainty it brings us into a spectral space/time that complicates and expands the living present; a space that opens up past, present and future where we must reckon with these spectres.

For Derrida, haunting, spectrality is, in the beginning and end profoundly concerned with ethics, 'If I am getting ready to speak... about ghosts, ...*others* who are not present, nor presently living, either to us, in us, or outside us, it is in the name of *justice*'.³

To live in the world truly is to be haunted. It is to reckon with ghosts (of all pasts, presents, futures) to give them our time and, justice, their due.



Now, Here.

Yusuf Hayat

To exist is to be present, here and now, in situ, and so in relation with others. Our encounters with the world always unfold in places. Who and what we are—audience, artist, stranger, host, guest—is contingent on where we are. The events of our lives constitute a 'landscape of action' in which we exercise agency; we play, work, travel, recover, and entertain in places. Our memories are enriched by vivid recollections of places. It is difficult to deny the importance of place as it is foundational to our being in the world with others. It is physically impossible for two people to occupy the same place at the same time; what we perceive is determined entirely by the view from where we are. In acknowledging the particularity of our position we recognise other bodies have alternate views of us, perspectives that are unavailable to us except by imaginatively incorporating their viewpoint so that we might build better platforms for relationships based on mutual understanding, co-operation, and empathy.

In Thom Buchanan's painting practice to date places, people, buildings, and events all dissolve; bleeding into one another like a cinematic transition between scenes. Events coexist as palimpsests on the same surface; form and substance, content and context coalesce to conflate 'here and now' with 'then and there'. The results stimulate an aesthetic reimagining of place as 'then and now' and 'here and there'. As a painterly process, the potentiality of the palimpsest lies in its ability to draw attention to the ways in which places are entanglements of cultural, historical, technological, and ecological planes. Buchanan's cross-dissolve-like juxtaposition of places generates a relational dynamic that is better able to recognize the interconnectedness of humans and non-humans, of the anthropogenic and the environment.

The dis-solution of place speaks to Buchanan's dis-illusion with ongoing government subsidies to the fossil fuel industry. A palimpsestic approach invites a reckoning of dominant ways of being premised on capitalist over-consumption. The unplaceable, visually ambiguous image subverts the commonplace; it disturbs our interpretive complacency and thereby temporarily displaces us. The prospect of being rendered *atopos* (out of place) causes anxiety and confusion such that it provokes a struggle to avoid the void. We call on memory, to remind us of a reliable place, or imagination to project into a future where we feel in place again; to recover common ground by encountering things from a different point of view, and by extension restructuring our placement in the world. The *atopon* artwork compels us into an interrogative engagement that can unsettle sedimented histories in cities, suburbs, streets, squares, parks, and ports so that layered historical narratives can be sensitively resituated in the everyday worlds we cohabit.

Place matters, the meanings of our lives are deeply embedded in them. Palimpsestic thinking can elicit closer self-reflection that produces the possibility for imagining better ways of living. An attentiveness to place may just progress to care for each other, our home planet, and everything in it. The harrowing alternative is no-where.



Thom Buchanan

In the Realm of the Senses

Susan Charlton

Deidre But-Husaim's studio is an in-between space—a staged, sensorial environment. A portal between the exterior world and painted worlds, combining archive, conservatory, laboratory; salon, teahouse, sanctuary. An artist panic room for pandemic times.

The studio is lit from the south with a soft, clear, constant light. In the evening, and in winter when the light fades early, a tall lamp hovers over the painting scene and illuminates the unfolding work. A glass palette with mountains and valleys of glutinous, coloured oils sits as a topography of past paintings, and source of paintings to come. The palette and easel are set apart, just so, to allow a choreographed engagement with the work-in-progress—a repertoire of advance, retreat, repetition; gesture, style, pleasure.

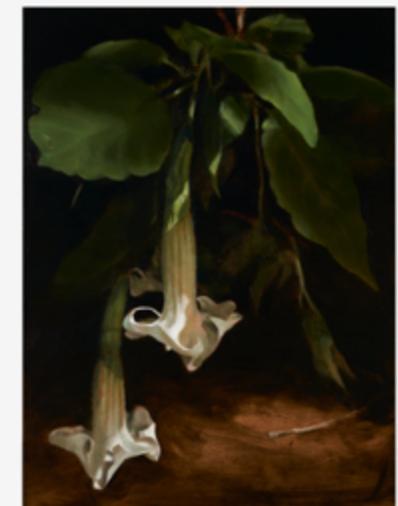
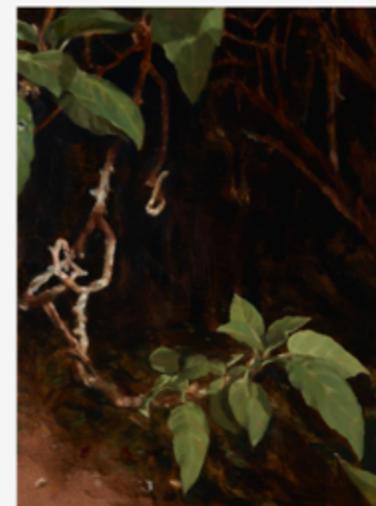
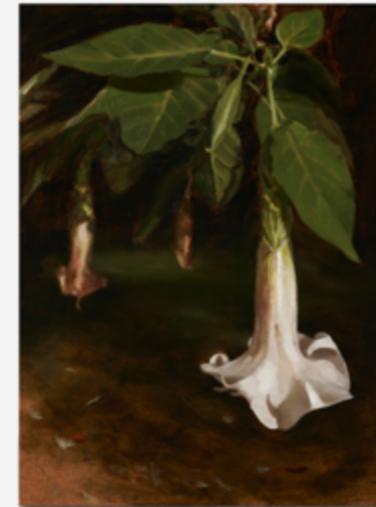
A heavy fragrance fills the studio, causing the visitor to swoon a little. The intoxicating scent comes from a flush of Angel's Trumpet blooms in various stages of flowering—unfurling, pendulous, nodding; torn, wilting, scattered. This vertiginous effect exists entirely within the realm of painting and is experienced solely through looking at the works—a synaesthesia response produced by individual flower portraits, positioned around the studio. The works' dark, painted areas of undergrowth accentuate the sense of risk and unknowing that emanates from these deadly beauties.

The artist and these blooms both like to hang out at night and that's where they met. But-Husaim prefers to paint from an image and these paintings began life as photographs, amongst thousands taken of multiple subjects throughout the year. She documented the floral forms in her garden over several months of pandemic life at home. Each night she set her alarm for the magic hours of early evening to record their transformations. The flowers did not originate in the studio, but staked a claim for a place in her heart and at her easel.

The artist's studio dwells within a building co-designed by Walter Burley Griffin. Its origins are both prosaic and alchemical, as an innovative incinerator plant from the 1930s. Its handsome modernist lines and understated decorative elements survive as a monument to visual language and creative practice that sets the tone for the studios that now reside within. Often live music rises through the floorboards from recording sessions below, offering an ambient soundtrack to the evolving works.

But-Husaim is a twin, though not identical. Not an exact copy. She appreciates Melinda Rackham's Instagram remake of her earlier work *Self (painted beard)*—twinning the two women with russet hair, bold glasses, moustaches and beards.¹ Except But-Husaim's faux self-portrait facial hair is finely painted, whilst Rackham's homage revels in its fabulous fakery. But-Husaim is drawn to altered states—artificial light, ambiguous space, dark nature, being transported. She creates paintings that are 'a little bit removed from life' that leave room for the artist and the viewer. Her works exist as the fraternal twins of their subjects. She experiences painting as time and meditation and presence. 'The more you look', she says, 'the more is revealed'.

² 'That is the reward'.



Deidre But-Husaim

Gus Clutterbuck's *Sticks and Stones*

Bernadette Klavins

Across time, ancient forms that hold, build, and protect have been shaped from the clay beneath our feet. Transformed by the heat of the sun and fire, these once soft, sculpted things have allowed humans to create, nurture and survive. This purpose remains true for Gus Clutterbuck, where clay is an ongoing means to record and reflect upon the shifting landscapes of his life.

Challenging the regimented approach to functional ceramics, Clutterbuck works instinctively with clay as earthly matter that can be coiled, squeezed, scraped, blended, and modelled. While embracing the potential for things to fall apart, he wrangles traditional techniques and experimental methods into moments of unexpected harmony. This intuitive mode to making underpins what he calls a 'broken' aesthetic, to embody the intrinsic ways in which humans are in endless, and sometimes messy, processes of transforming and adapting.

Clutterbuck's practice is richly steeped with stories of his relationships and multicultural experiences. Like a bowerbird, he carefully observes the surface strata of a place as he walks—fallen rubbish, broken cannisters, corroding car parts—and gathers those entities that 'call to him' before they slowly fold back into the earth. Through paying attention to what is underfoot, he finds the poetics of people and places. From annual international trips to the city of Jingdezhen (often referred to as the 'Porcelain Capital'), to regular trips to Miriwoong Country where he works as a mentor with Waringarri Arts – his life and practice is shaped by these exchanges.

Sticks and Stones is an intimate response to a loved one's experience with an eating disorder. The fragile limbs of branches and bones denoting both the bodily and psychological challenges of such an illness. Symbols of trees have traced through Clutterbuck's practice as cross-cultural references to longevity and endurance, and here the bare branches appear in a state of survival. These hand-built porcelain branches are modelled from small, bare sticks collected from the ground by Clutterbuck's son. The branches point earthwards to a bed of salt and slip cast bones, reaching for a state of preservation or stillness. The elemental matters of salt, bone and clay speaks to a body in limbo – something held between states of growth and decay.

Sticks and Stones embraces the potential for fundamental forms and gestures to act as surrogates for the body, as Clutterbuck's practice ventures into installation. The boughs are decorated using qing-hua techniques that Clutterbuck was taught by his mentor Huang Fei in Jingdezhen. Washes of cobalt carbonate—hydrated with green tea—are brushed onto the surface, transforming from grey to blue through firing. Lines topographically contour the branch nodules in Clutterbuck's favoured 'Master of the Rocks' style, drawn from the Kangxi period (1662-1722) where expressive, parallel linework is used to depict a figure in the landscape. Through the drama and tranquillity of these scenes, nature is positioned as analogous to human emotion.¹ Speaking directly to the forces of illness and love, *Sticks and stones* asks us to reflect upon the liminal spaces between fragility and strength, surviving and recovery, pain and healing.



The sleep of reason produces monsters, Goya,
 'Los Caprichos' Plate 43 1799 etching, aquatint,
 drypoint, and burin plate: 21.2 x 15.1cm
 Don Francisco Goya
 An artwork that inspired Bridget Currie in creating
 this intimate, thoughtful artwork.
 Dark vision of humanity...
 What looks like a peaceful sleep
 While bats and owls swirl
 And a lynx lies quietly and alert
 Dark creature staring out at US... crouched on Goya's
 his sleeping back
 Monsters of our dreams threaten us all...
 Goya's caption for the piece: "Imagination
 abandoned by reason produces impossible
 monsters; united with her, she is the mother of the
 arts and source of their wonders."

Combined their work inspired me...
 AN INVITATION TO SIT QUIETLY, LEAN IN,
 REFLECT, IMAGINE...
 Artist, creative, human, spirit burdened
 Sit, be still, with reason beyond reason at this table...
 stoic and practical, a platform:
 Lean in
 Listen
 ceramic molds to hold your hands
 Rest your head on your arms...
 Hold gently
 Close your eyes... imagine
 Abandon reason...
 Imagination reveals monsters...
 Just moments...
 Listen, take heed
 Open your eyes
 Travel softly...
 Hold on tightly to wisdom
 Hold on tightly to love...
 Let it imbue you
 Enlightenment
 First nations voices
 First nations practices...
 Honor
 Listen
 Wake up
 Do...
 Now...
 Spirals
 And cycles
 Atoms
 And light
 ...
 Negative space
 ...
 Chase
 ...
 Shining and bright
Vibrations
 No sounds
 Rattling through my head
 Silence surrounds

silence and dread
 silence deafening...
 Silence so loud
 Silence I fear
 Silence rebounds
 ...
 Monsters and reasons
 The reasons for monsters
 And monsters
 And seasons
 And scary men
 And...
 White wash & savage
 Hold my head in shame
 White soft ceramic
 My head heavy
 Full of blame...
 Caught up in guilt
 Owls eyes shining in the night
 Hang my head in darkness
 Bats swirling for insight
 Darkness swells
 To pierce your soul
 The never ending grind
 The coal
 The oil
 The endless toil
 Poisonous empty gain
 Pipe lines destroy
 Our Mother cries
 Tears so toxic
 Full of pain
 The sugarcane
 The rum
 The flour
 And the fashion
 The slavetrade
 The genocide
 The stolen land
 The ethnocide
 The choked up land
 That suffocates
 The holes in ground
 That decimates
 The coercion
 And all the control
 The choices and
 The Forced unknown...
 Resting thru
 Lost Memories
 Reach for learning
 Reach for LORE
 Choices for our children's sake
 Their children's children too
 & Know that when our now is gone
 Sparkes of life remaining true.
 ...
 Shhhhhh...
 Listen...
 Listen
 listen...

Alexis West



Bridget Currie

Against the Odds

Serena Wong

Surely one of humankind's greatest follies is the innate belief in our own autonomy. If we work hard, we can succeed. If we save money we can retire comfortably. If we diet and exercise, we can lose weight and become healthy. We are in charge of our own fate, and failure to capitalise on this is considered a moral failure.

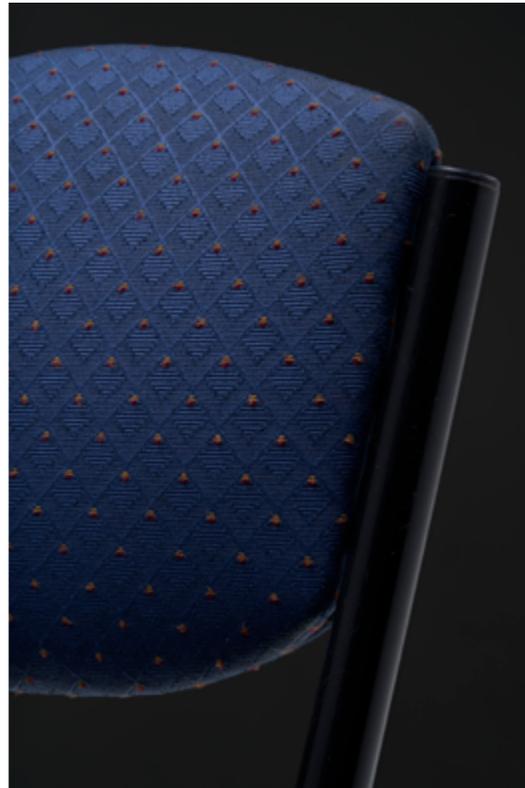
And yet, for all our autonomy, all of our technological advancements, much of our contemporary lifestyle, habits, work and environment is at odds with the design of our bodies and brains. While we know more about human behaviour and health than ever before, it is not always a linear journey to better outcomes for everyone. Look at addiction, for example. On one hand, understanding it means we can develop better tools to combat it. On the other, systems that benefit from addiction know how to hack into human biology to exploit it.

In Brad Darkson's work *Make Yourself Comfortable II* we are asked to consider the tension between human autonomy and the systems created to usurp it. They are innocuous, just like the chair Darkson presents us with, but its blandness belies the sinister forces at play.

As white-collar desk jobs increased from the middle of the 20th Century,¹ there is a corresponding rise in the popularity of ergonomics, which focuses on the efficiency of human and machine interactions.² It is by now a familiar topic for most office or computer workers. But couched within the framework of efficiency and physical wellbeing, hides something more ominous. Consider this logic exercise: we are told that sitting for long periods of time is bad for our bodies,³ to address this companies favour chair and desk designs that make it more comfortable to continue to sit for long periods. In the long run, this saves the company money on inefficient workers and compensation claims, but does nothing to address the underlying, fundamental problem.

Now consider *Make Yourself Comfortable II*. Here, Darkson presents us with a chair specifically designed for us to sit comfortably. In this case, its ergonomic comfort in front of a pokie machine. A chair, a place of rest or refuge, is exposed here as a trojan horse, slyly weaponised to work against our autonomy. This is but one of the strategic calculations casino's make—from game algorithms to internal architecture— that works against us.⁴

In a world where we are considered responsible for our decisions, how do we account for these insidious measures that mean the odds, so to speak, are stacked against us?



Brad Darkson

Words for Honor

*with a dry mouth I began to brush my teeth
six am is not exactly the time of day I want to look at myself in the mirror
so I turn to the window and stare at my dying vegetable patch instead
it's summer and I haven't watered it in two weeks
i raise the hot moist towel to my puffy and oily face
compressing it under my eyes as recommended by my Optometrist
thats when I feel the first thud of weight on my breast bone
i breathe in through the towel, slightly suffocating from the heat
how many more days do I have to swallow the grief you've left behind*

Honor has been working with porcelain for almost twenty years, predominantly creating objects pulled from our daily routines. Using plaster moulds and the process of slipcasting she recreates and refines the objects, like a bar of soap or a dried sponge, evoking tactile memories of touching and cleaning, a reminder of the everyday.

'Most of my work explores the domestic realm and the humble, the minutia I guess of the ordinariness of life, I recreate these objects in porcelain because porcelain has this really lovely ability to mimic other surfaces and textures.'

As a ceramic artist, liquid is always present in Honor's work, whether through making of containers that hold it (buckets) or objects that we use with it (sponges and soap). Liquid is a representation of our emotions, always rolling in like waves as we scoop them up, we try to hold them, but we know we can't as they are the constant tides within our lives.

There is a deep emotional drive within Honor's work. The capturing of water, a way to measure feelings while simultaneously holding on to the amount that we can handle at one time. A fear of being swamped with an emotional storm, we seek just one bathtub at a time. The water and soap, a refuge to clean and renew.

A detail you will find in Honor's work are the markers of life, the grooves that cut into the hard bar of soap or the tide lines that envelope the bathtub, a reminder of what was here before. But if we look closely, we can all trace our lessons along them.

*i spray two pumps of vitamin D and vitamin B
they fill my mouth with the taste of orange candy that has sat in a hot car for too long
i swallow some water to rid the taste
a northern dust storm is forecasted for today
hot winds, gathering top soil from the dry exposed farms
The pale blue skies, to be corrupted with a fire of lightning and dirt*



Dominic Guerrero



Honor Freeman

Tanner Muller

Sasha Grbich's artistic approach is one of deep respect and gratitude for our natural world. Driven by her curiosities, it is the performative aspect that intrigues Grbich—how art has an ability to involve itself in communities. She describes how much of her work aims to 'disrupt how we assume certain things need to be done' by 'injecting absurdity' and 'creating a parallel set of messy rules'. Her distinctive process playfully deconstructs our surroundings by unravelling their intricacies. To enrich the way something has been created by adapting the significance of it. To capture how our deep, and inquisitive, observations of the world can shift the way we exist.

Grbich's latest installation, *Bat Alphabet 40°*, 2022, demonstrates this through a series of individually handcrafted, ceramic clay objects. Made by transcribing shapes as if they were unknown signs, the work is inspired by the motionless bodies of grey-headed flying foxes. The blackened, silhouette-like figures intended to give insight into the tragic story unfolding around this endangered species.

I spent some time observing a colony who moved to the river area near the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. They're reasonably new arrivals to our state, as they travelled from New South Wales around 2010 due to habitat destruction... Of course, they're not as well-adapted to the heat over here, so what tends to happen is that if it reaches over 38-degrees, their little bodies will go into a huge amount of stress, and they'll just die. Often, hanging in the trees.

Grbich explains how creating *Bat Alphabet 40°*, 2022, feels as though she is learning the intricacies of a newfound environmental language. One that aims to capture the impacts of climate change amidst rapidly changing ecosystems. It is a language that is not so reliant on informing, or teaching, as much as it is rehearsing and articulating—to find new ways of thinking in the folds of an unknown dialect.

I've found languages to be deeply involved in structuring the way we think and shape how we perceive our world... There's a lot of slippery space when you move between them... So, during this process, it's been important for me not to replicate a language or rely on any direct text. My intention, in this scenario at least, is an attempt to find an irrational language, to challenge the way something has already been said.

The simple, yet thought-provoking quality of Grbich's installation invites us, as the audience, to observe it in a way that is more reliant on our emotions. Some viewers may experience a moment of remorse, to reflect on the human condition in all its careless, self-serving glory. It also allows us to focus inwards and ask ourselves:

What sort of issues are emerging?

How do we make sense of them all?

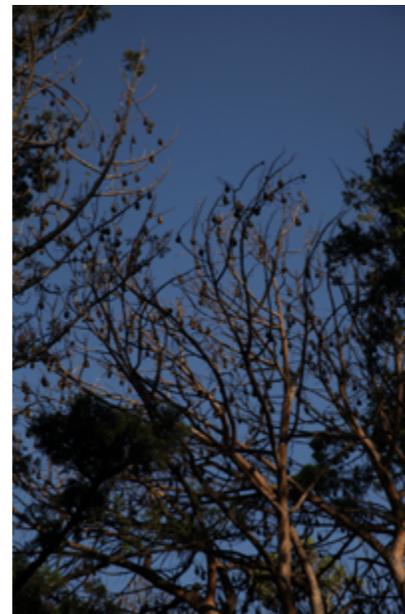
What should we be aiming towards?

Is there a solution to our negligence?

Can all this damage be reversed?

What can be learnt from the bats?

It is too late for us now?



Sasha Grbich

And it is so real I can feel it

And it is so real I can hear it

And it is so real I can be it

So why can't I touch it?

There is an imperceptible veil that exists between us and them. But then again, it is a veil between us and ourselves. An invisible curtain between who we are, and who we could have been, and who we should have been, and what might have been, and what would have grown, and what could have been known; ghosts that linger and haunt like invisible obstacles. And just as death makes ghosts of the formerly living, living makes ghosts of the things that could never be.

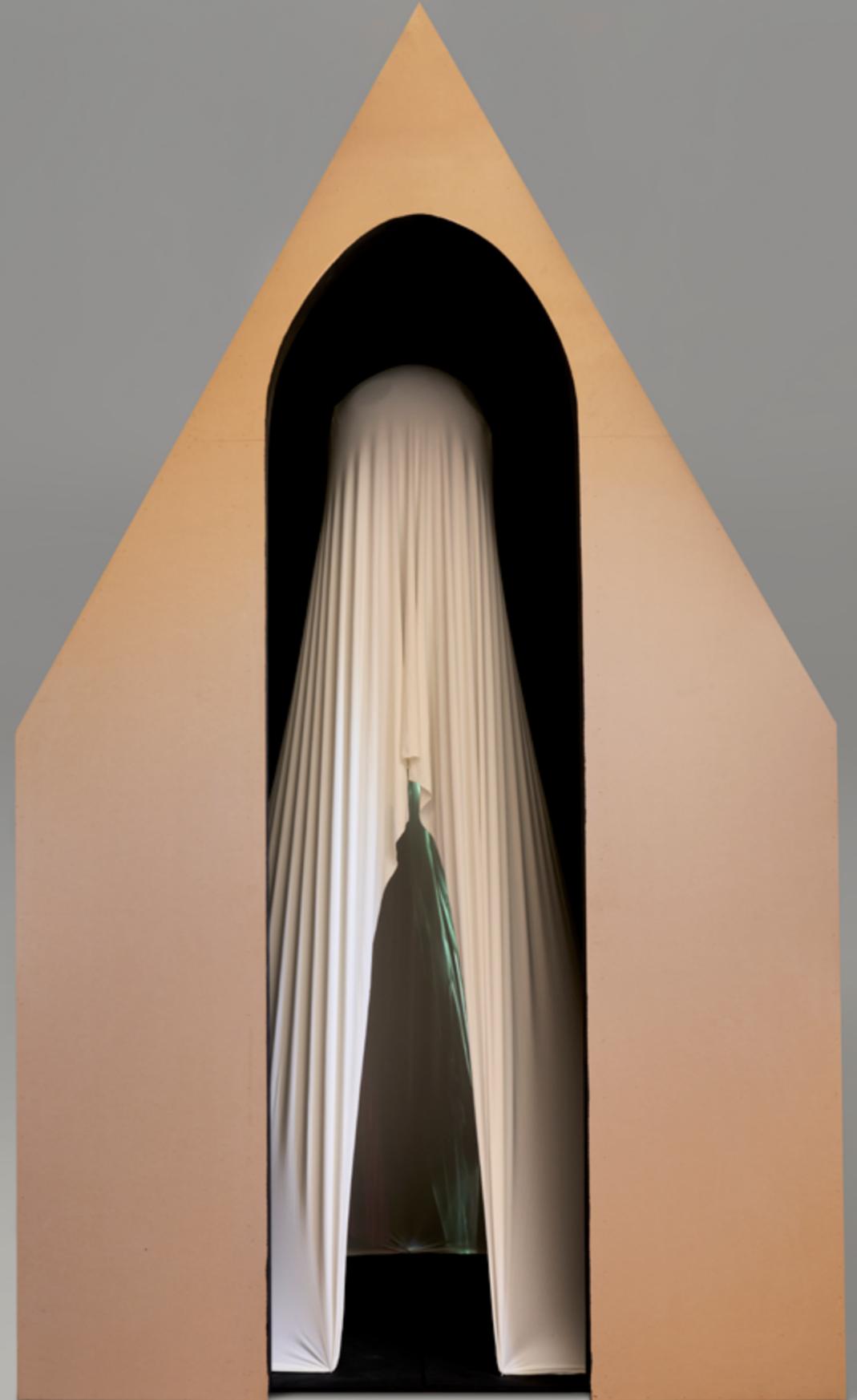
Trauma is not an event in time as much as it is a spectre that lingers in the most hidden of places and makes its house inside memories that keep us tethered to the past. Like an anchor, a memory is a weight of grief. The lap of the ocean. A curtain alive in the breeze. In slow motion, a closing door. Trauma demands to exist because it wants to be known for what it does not yet know it is. As it cannot speak our language of organised syntax and sentence, trauma moves like a poltergeist through our memories as we 'get on with it' and keep breathing. As much as a breath can make up for the grief of living. And just as we all have a breath, we have a trauma that sticks to our insides, haunting, like a ghost that moves in and refuses to leave.

And the house holds a big ghost.²

With reference to the lived experience of trauma Bessel van der Kolk writes in *The Body Keeps the Score*, 'the past is alive in the form of gnawing interior discomfort'.³ Ray Harris's artwork represents the internal discomfort of trauma and the obstacles created by it, in the form of a house occupied by a solitary ghost. Like a house guest that has over-stayed its welcome, this ghost takes up space. Echoing the weighty grief that comes from living with trauma Harris's big ghost provokes the feeling of being trapped with a force that cannot be moved; something is in the way. But to experience this installation we must step inside the ghost and become a part of its ethereal form. In this installation Harris shows us how trauma-ghosts linger in our minds and bodies as much alive in the present as they were in our pasts. We have to stand with it.

Images projected on to the ghost's surface, like the transience of memories, evoke a haunting of the past. While Harris's work is a testament to the power of trauma and memory her installation also speaks of the lived experience of mental illness. That is, the psychological interior that we occupy as a result of the weight and obstacles birthed by the force of trauma states. And the realisation of what we must live with (call it mental illness, call it a haunting) is a trauma itself; the trauma of being in the world standing with our pain, daily. But Harris's artwork is not simply a meditation on the challenge and discomfort triggered by these lived experiences of mental duress. Harris's installation stands as a testament to the power of how we live in a subject position that seems too much to hold. The resilience of self, in all its mental duress, living with a haunted mind, stigmatised, excluded, moving, breathing, loving, in all its abject discomfort, still here. When ghosts move in and occupy our internal space living with them can seem almost impossible to bear. Standing inside the ghost can we reconcile with the grief of our trauma?

Lizzy Emery



Ray Harris

Polly Dance

Anna has always had an intimate relationship with materials and a curiosity about the subtle nuances of how simple materials work and play together. Sitting in her studio surrounded by works in progress, she confesses, “materials lead the process”. This is where the artist is free to play and experiment, chasing the magic of moments when the material reveals itself to you and something just *looks right*.

Often accidental *wow* discoveries give way to new works and further experimentation that can go on for months. There is a giving over of control, a letting the materials do what they do best in Anna’s work that is refreshing but must be utterly terrifying. The artist is always seeking perfection in her objects but mistakes are an integral part of the ‘getting to know you’ stage of each material. Her process is not something you can watch, it is a private, solitary journey of mixing, pouring, sewing, constructing, but the finished products present as crisp, confident, free-standing forms, elevated for audience perusal.

Over the years, Anna has refined and sharpened her focus on this material play. When talking to her about this current body of work, it came as no surprise to me that “drawing helped” in loosening up and reimagining her ideas. From transient memories to solid form. The ideas for these works were formed from experiences. Bushwalking during lockdowns, the artist explained, “these walks went into Spring, when snakes start breeding and become more active”. Anna talked about the collision of feelings of immense joy with an overwhelming sense of fear ever-present in the background—fear and beauty together. That knowledge that it could all stop suddenly in just a moment but you just keep going, walking, and moving forward, knowing the very real threat still remains.

The ideas are presented in a series of medium-sized sculptural works made from perfectly and brightly coloured powder-coated steel frames, cast concrete and aluminium forms—they allure and perplex. Hard is soft, fear and beauty coexist, objects defy gravity, the familiar seems strange, and reality and material composition are questioned.

On approaching the artworks there’s a push/pull feeling—an immediate intrigue surrounds her objects pulling you in while the cold, hard, industrial materials painted in jarring colours also push you away. It’s in these contradictions that Anna plays, quite spiritedly. It’s a joy to be part of her game, I think that’s probably why children are so attracted to her work. It’s fun!

Her works take on the descriptor of ‘y’ or ‘like’; they are gloopy or droopy and snake-like or leather-like. They are this and that. It’s these juxtapositions that keep the viewer guessing, requiring you to look a little closer, often tempting you to touch through a natural impulse to understand more of what a thing is or might be, and leaving you smiling.

As humans we all crave for things to look and feel right, questions are healthy, play is essential, and a little magic makes it all worthwhile.



Anna Horne

There is music in everything.

Andrew Purvis

The natural world vibrates with sound and signal, from the magpies' piping call that wakes the morning slumberer, to the whale song plaintively echoing through the headphones of the submarine's sonar operator. Some use a white noise generator to mimic the gentle percussion of breaking waves, either to lull them to sleep or to drown out the incessant chirp of the cicada.

But our senses often fail us; we lack the necessary receptors to tune in to nature's frequencies. The platypus might use electroreception to detect prey concealed within the soil by sensing its bio-electrical field, while the homing pigeon can feel the tug of magnetic north as it navigates the skies. Our ears and eyes, however, are not attuned to the ultrasonic or the infrared.

Heidi Kenyon's practice seeks to correct these human failings, to harmonise with the secret music of the natural world and reveal hidden networks of communication. In *We shall by morning inherit the earth*, Kenyon uses probes to harvest data from fungi, filtering the organism's constant electromagnetic throb through a technological interface to generate an idiosyncratic soundscape.¹

Though the organism sets the tempo, it sings from a hymn sheet composed by Kenyon. In the past, the artist has used language fragments, allowing pot plants to compose their own poetry. Elsewhere, she has assembled a palette of sounds using field recordings of resonant, natural locations. This is typically a site responsive process, considering the presence of significant local trees. In this way, the seedling sings, with a melancholy air, of vanishing forests.

For *We shall by morning inherit the earth*, Kenyon has chosen to extract sound from mushrooms, referencing the deep interconnectivity of mycelium networks, microscopic webs of filament theorised to enable communication across entire continents. The electromagnetic signal of the fungus has been translated into an array of musical notes and synth sounds collaboratively gathered by Kenyon and her brother, Ben Davidson, who resides in the United Kingdom.² In an era of isolation and COVID-19 travel restrictions, this work is a hopeful gesture of connection diligently maintained in the face of prolonged separation.

Though Kenyon's practice makes extensive use of technology, it is not scientific in its outlook; the sense of mystery is an essential element of her aesthetic. This aspect distinguishes Kenyon's work from similar bio-audio projects, such as Guy Ben Ary's *cell/F* (2015), in which 'a neural network [...] bio-engineered from [the artist's] own cells controls a custom-built synthesizer'.³ Kenyon's work is not interested in manipulating organic life to produce artistic outcomes, but rather is designed to foster empathy toward the natural world. A houseplant can all too easily be mistaken for an object of domestic decoration; Kenyon hopes that the organism's song will encourage greater awareness in her audience and instigate a gentle revolution in attitudes toward ecological co-existence.

Kenyon is cultivating a choir, growing her own. However, she is not a gardener by inclination. The growth of plants and fungus for food production or ornament is often about tight control and predictable outcomes. This project, by contrast, grants agency back to the organism, and accepts its unique nature. Kenyon's practice is typified by ephemerality and gentleness; its frequent motifs of sound, found objects, and site specificity, suggest an artist who is deeply in tune with the world around them. Kenyon seeks to harmonise, not conduct.



Heidi Kenyon



Playing with fire

Celia Dottore

In her new installation *Pyrolysis*, artist Sue Kneebone encodes her uncanny Gothic aesthetic with an ominous environmental message. In the artist's words 'a ghostly tableau of ornate hard hats cradling raw materials lie suspended in waiting against a flickering backdrop of perpetual flames.'¹ Working with the intuitive processes of bricolage and photomontage, Kneebone transforms often disparate materials—from archival photographs to found objects—into hybrid assemblages that challenge pervading narratives and create new associations and connections. Traversing the sinister, spectral and sublime juxtaposed with the everyday and familiar, her work brings the Gothic imagination and natural world, or Eco-Gothic to life.

Kneebone's rigorous research-based approach intersects Australian history, environmental philosophy and visual art methodologies to explore ancestral and historical legacies related to colonial settler culture and the natural environment. Her practice continues an ongoing line of inquiry into 'the ramifications of the colonial settler mindset and the continuing desire to push the limits of nature towards an unknown future'.² For *Neoteric*, Kneebone investigates Anthropocene concepts of human interference with and attempts to control the natural world. Her mixed media installation interrogates the 'unforeseen consequences of pushing the environment to the limits for the sake of progress'.³

Contemporary environmental issues play out in her collection of cast cement hard hats augmented with ornamental fixtures as if part of an absurd and arcane colonial experiment. A modern symbol of safety and self-protection, and the uniform of ministers appearing in the media, the hard hat also represents the exploitation of finite natural resources and the relative human and environmental costs.

Taking inspiration from Promethean mythology and other ancient and modern literary references, her mesmerizing moving image works offer prophetic and metaphysical apparitions of fire, that signal the urgency of climate change and the 'threats of a cursed environment or an environment we have cursed'.⁴

In *Burning Bush* a candelabra of Australian native banksia is continuously enveloped in flames, evoking a spectre of supernatural energy beyond our control. Moreover, this imagery calls to mind the modern realities of human-made conditions, as witnessed in the incredible energy and power of the devastating Australian bushfires.

Flames also burn inexplicably inside the inert atmosphere of an enclosed glass vessel. The title, *Pyrolysis*, takes its name from the process of altering the chemical composition of organic materials at high temperatures and in the absence of oxygen. Such technology offers the potential to convert waste into more sustainable sources of energy, a tiny beacon of hope in the face of rapid global warming and critical inaction on climate change.

Capturing the calamitous and catastrophic times in which we live, Kneebone poetically channels our anxieties and fears about the future of the planet through her unique style of visual storytelling. Here, she skillfully weaves together history, politics, time, myth and memory to provide a space of individual reflection and, hopefully, collective action manifest.



Michael Newall

I was very happy to be paired as a writer with Will Nolan. I've been away from Adelaide/Tarntanya, for the most part, since the early 2000s. I didn't know Will, and barely knew his practice. Nolan has established himself as an artist since then, part of a generation that now defines the art world here. His work can look disconcertingly new. Stylish in colour and design, cool in attitude, almost aggressively hip. But for those who like to feel out the connections, Nolan is part of an Adelaide lineage, one that began with the classic postmodern moves of Mark Kimber. Kimber was a teacher of Nolan's at UniSA in the 2000s, and now Nolan is himself influential, teaching at Adelaide College of the Arts.

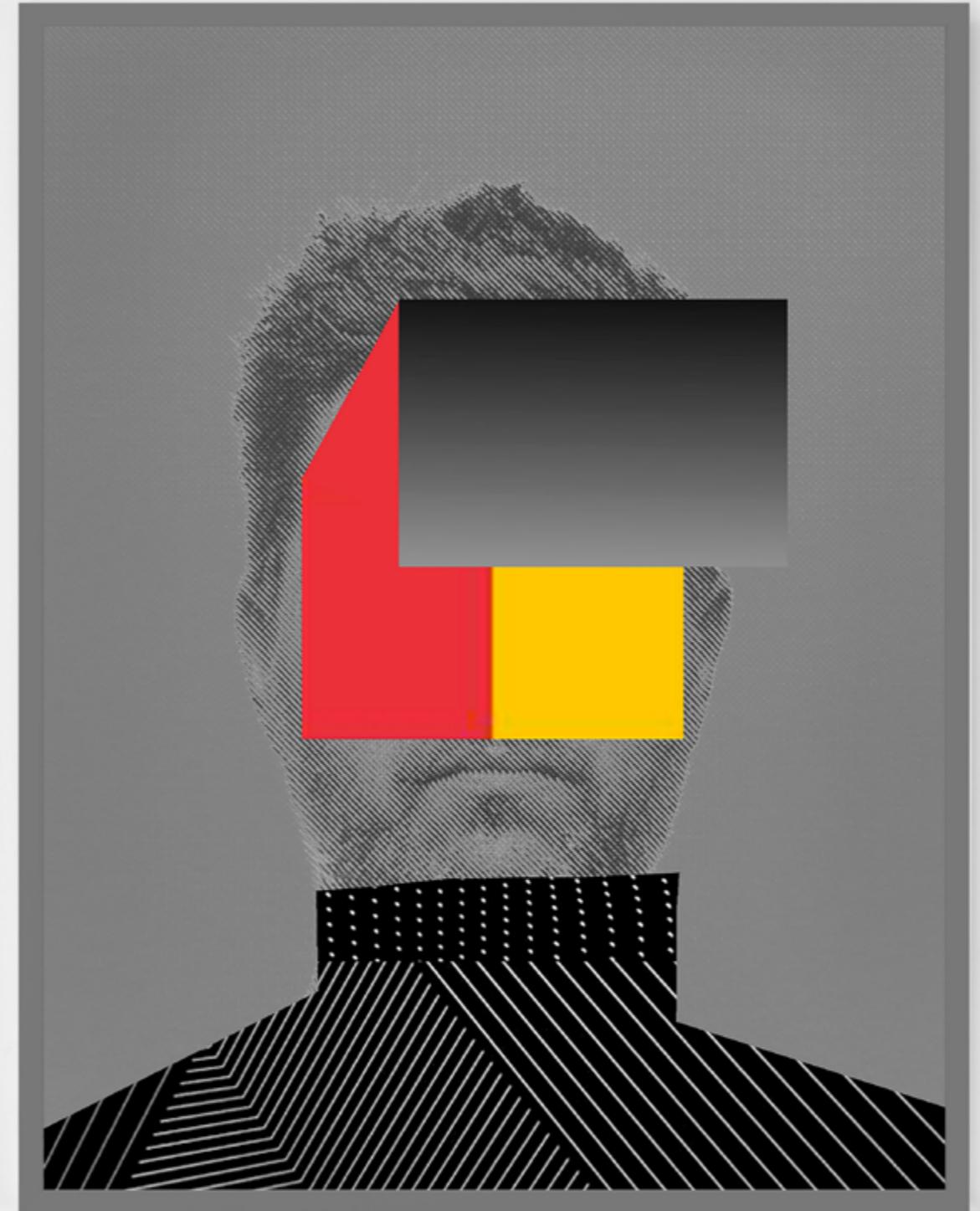
Currently conspicuous in Nolan's practice are his self-portraits: large-scale photographs showing digitally collaged elements. They begin with what appears to be the same photographic image, of Nolan's face, pasting over it images of objects—sunnies, 3-D glasses, a popsicle, on-trend beanies, a pipe—plus bold, zinging graphic elements—colour blocks, grids and other geometric elements. Where's the artist in all this? Under the mass of colour, pattern and imagery—hiding, effaced, stand-offish—the visual antics a mask, maybe. That thought is encouraged by some of his earlier works. His photographs of melted popsicles, *Everything is Melting* (2010), sweet *memento mori*—too attractive for their own good. Or another series, *You're Not Worth a Thing* (2011), showing filled black garbage bags, their folds gleaming like obsidian.

As I've said, Nolan's self-portraits are collages of a kind. I wonder, what are the syntax and semantics of this practice? How do its components, its elements combine, and what do these combinations express? Pop, Cubism, and Surrealism have their own broad logics. Talking with Nolan, I got the sense that he found tiresome any mention of Peter Blake-ish Pop, ready as it is for assimilation back into popular culture. Fair enough. What about Cubist collage then? After all, there's something in Nolan's work of the qualities that Clement Greenberg admired in Synthetic Cubism—its formal satisfactions. And there's facingness too—the orientation of form to the picture plane—as that other formalist, Michael Fried calls it—which is about all that's left of Nolan's own face in his self-portrait works. But perhaps the Surrealist logic makes most sense. Surrealist collage or assemblage is an outlet for the expression of the unconscious: desires and anxieties that we bundle up and repress. That repressed psychic energy, however we might describe it, is the opposite of the public face. I wonder if, for Nolan, that's what lies behind the zany act. It's what fills his black garbage bags. It's the darkness and entropy behind the *luxe, calme et volupté*.

Nolan's plans for Neoteric show a variety of characteristic works, positioned together with sculptural and installational elements. The plan, at the time of writing, is to show (1) a number of the self-portraits, (2) a series of pairs of wall-mounted red and green light bulbs, and (3) a yellow scuba tank placed on a plinth.

The pairs of red and green lights are part of a series of works likely to have titles such as 'sweat-touch', 'bored-horny', and 'wink-focus'. These are among a series of terms and concepts that have a long presence in Nolan's work, ordering the physical and emotional into binary categories—and here into binary code. Each pair of lights blinks in a sequence encoding its title. The red and green lights are drawn from the navigation lights on ships—sidelights indicating port and starboard, and mastlights used to send coded messages. Taken out of that context, these lights also become polysemic, suggesting stop/go, danger/safety, *etcetera*. Nolan transmutes these (literally and figuratively) 'floating' signifiers into a syncopated play of sensation, colour and beauty for viewers to navigate in their own ways. As Nolan says, the lights are, 'to do with navigation and how the viewer interacts with the works prompted by the title.'

Nolan's sculptural works sometimes have the feel of visual jokes. The yellow scuba tank will have vinyl text on one side reading 'TICK', and on the other, 'TOCK'—luring the viewer into close quarters, only to find it ticking like a bomb (and recalling also a certain social media platform). Nolan's strategy here is 'activating objects through pairing of objects', as he puts it—the text here counting as an object. I think it will feel darkly comic—and be one more instance, in Nolan's work, of binary code and telling juxtaposition channelling the larger powers of sensuous form, the unconscious, and the id of popular culture.



Will Nolan

Uncertain threads.

Steph Cibich

I went for a walk with Deborah Prior. She introduced me to her neighbours; eucalypts the artist has come to know intimately over time. Sharing what she had learned, I started to see what was right in front of me.

Walking is an imperative part of Deborah's practice. It offers opportunities for contemplation and connection. For *Easter in the Anthropocene*, the act of walking synthesises *Fleece*, *Pastoral Apocalypse* and *Squatter Blanket #2*—three ongoing textile, installation, and performance works designed to be worn, carried, and walked in. Together, they respond to hard truths and explore our relationship with the landscape, the Australian wool industry and the ongoing impacts of colonisation and the climate crisis.

Fleece is a wearable garment which continues to evolve. Since 2010, the work has developed into an increasingly unwieldy physical challenge as Deborah wears the garment whilst knitting it. *Pastoral Apocalypse* comes in the form of an embroidered backpack (strange phrase, but true). Patchworked with salvaged materials, its purpose is to carry and hold *Squatter Blanket #2*—a woollen blanket featuring ephemeral plant labels from Deborah's late grandmother's garden. This work resonates with love, grief, and care. However, as the labels (mostly for introduced species) will slowly fade over time it also highlights the intricate threads connecting family histories in the context of colonisation and climate change.

Each work is intentionally unfinished. Like so much these days, there is no end in sight. The outcomes are uncertain; a word we are all familiar with and one that has come to reflect the nature of our times.

There is also the unmistakable thread of penance connecting *Easter in the Anthropocene*. Each element carries the weight of time and expense of the body which holds, works, wears, and sweats into the material itself. This penitent edge is thought-provoking when viewed in the context of Easter; a time of birth and renewal, contrast against what it means to live in 'the Anthropocene'. This term describes our post-industrial age, defined by the impact of human activities on earth, particularly in relation to its climate and ecosystems. For many it is marked by crippling helplessness as we come to terms with humankind's destructive influence. Without much hope for renewal, we are caught between a past we want to escape and a future we hope to avoid.¹

Back from my walk with Deborah, I observed her cultivate dye to use on Australian wool. She collects windfallen eucalyptus leaves from local trees. The leaves boil away on her back verandah while she catalogues the colours obtained from various species. It's like watching an eco-chemist at work; experimenting with carefully selected samples, extracting knowledge along with natural pigments used to dye her yarn.

Populated amongst many South Australian suburban streets are remnant gums that have—presumably—escaped developers, council planning and the impacts of gentrification. Some of these trees are innocuous, and a little 'green'. Others are a force to be reckoned with; neighbourhood giants overseeing all that is and all that has been.

I've been thinking about eucalypts lately. About the way I (and others) have taken their existence for granted. Learning to pay attention to the little things, face hard truths and ask difficult questions is no easy task. But that is the only way to move forward. Like a thread, once you begin to pull, the process is impossible to stop. The only way through uncertainty is to start.



Deborah Prior

Tableau Vivant of Current Affairs

Adele Sliuzas

Perched upon a red chair, Cynthia Schwertsik is precariously balanced halfway up the glistening body of a gum tree. Her new work, *Tableau Vivant of Current Affairs*, a collaboration with land-based artist Dave Laslett, is fantastical and slightly unhinged. Characterised by the artists as a tableau vivant or 'living image', the film's seven minutes draw focus to the multiplicity of nuanced actions and durations within the discrete image. Time opens up as the image attunes us to the constants and variables in the relationships between bodies (the subject, the book, the kangaroo fur coat, the tree, the flow of water and the light as it presses on the environment).

Philosopher Henri Bergson wrote 'when we are sitting on the bank of a river, the flowing of the water, the gliding of a boat, the uninterrupted murmur of our deep life, are for us three different things or a single one, at will'.¹ This awareness of being both *one* and *several* is significant to the work. Schwertsik seeks to draw our attention to the discontinuity between our 'deep life' and the world around us. The subject's complete focus on the large and authoritative bound document is at odds with their surroundings. As viewers, we are not privy to the logic or reasoning, and are left to sit with the uncomfortable ambiguity.

Schwertsik spoke to me about her rationale for the work to describe the absurdity of contemporary Western/ colonial culture that is so overloaded and distracted that we ignore our context. She described the slippage between our obsession with information and our self-knowledge or perception. Her presence in the tree is highly constructed, a poetic and political production of space. Their treatment of the Australian landscape echoes a sentiment explored throughout Australian art since colonisation, where subjects are at once in the landscape, and estranged from it. The symbolic power of the landscape accrues complex and layered meaning.

The magical quality of Schwertsik's subject is mirrored in the composition and construction of the image, in particular Laslett's use of light. The intonation of light and dark across the image draw the eye and create desire to enter into the space of the image. I'd like to frame the treatment of light in terms of *timbre*, a concept that philosopher Timothy Morton has used to describe poetry, art and ecology. He writes 'timbral statements can be strongly medial, evoking the medium that utters them. And medial statements can be timbral, pointing out the physicality and materiality of the language. This is strongly environmental'.² Laslett's use of light makes us think about the space, it is bound up in the environment that it interacts with. The timbral medium of light utters the image into existence evoking an environmental presence somewhere between object and subject.

What I find striking is the relationship between time, movement and affect within the *Tableau Vivant*. I've been thinking of it as an anti-reel, readjusting my sensory expectations from my desire for entertainment, to instead pay attention to the multiplicities within the frame. The light shimmers on the surface of the water as it unnervingly flows up the trunk of the ancient eucalypt. I'm both uncomfortable and delighted by the uncertainty and the strange act of balance.



Cynthia Schwertsik
with Dave Laslett

Reimagining Colonial History

Chris Reid

The British government's *South Australian Colonisation Act* (1834) empowered King William IV to issue letters patent—a form of legal document issued by a monarch—to create the colony of South Australia. The resulting *Letters Patent establishing the Province of South Australia*, issued on 19 February 1836, defined the boundaries of the new province, and described it as 'Waste and unoccupied Lands which are supposed to be fit for the purposes of Colonization'.¹ The *Letters Patent* thus enabled British colonisation of foreign territory, but, importantly, did include the following clause:

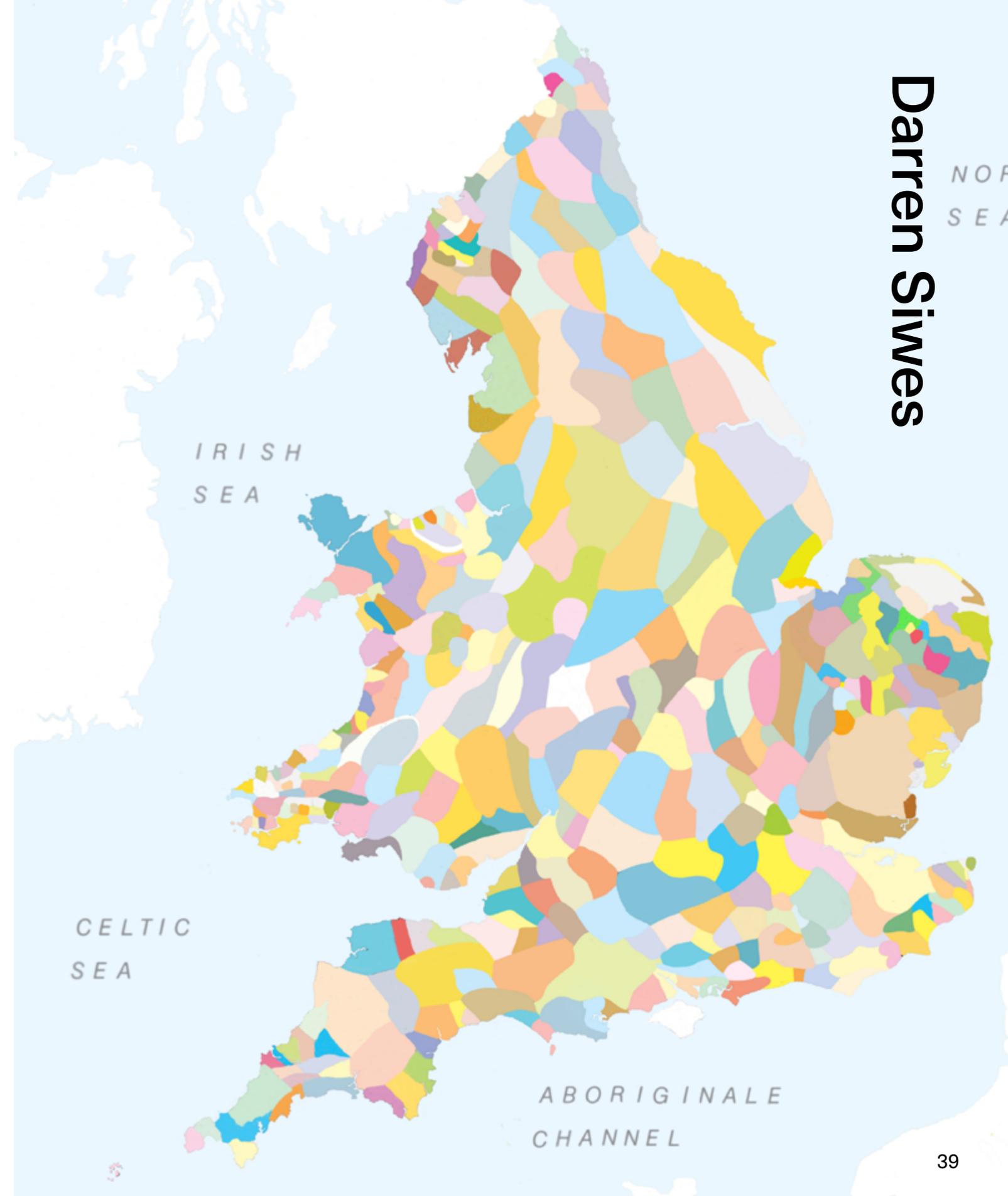
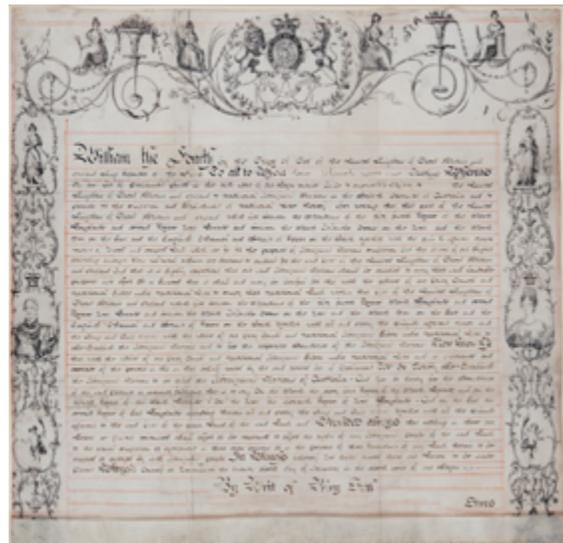
Provided Always that nothing in those our Letters Patent contained shall affect or be construed to affect the rights of any Aboriginal Natives of the said Province to the actual occupation or enjoyment in their own Persons or in the Persons of their Descendants of any Lands therein now actually occupied or enjoyed by such Natives.²

The Colonial Office in London had intended that land in the new province would be ceded by bargain or treaty,³ and the Proclamation of South Australia on 28 December 1836 clearly informed the colonists of the British government's intentions.⁴ The colonists were also aware of the Aboriginal system of land tenure, but the requirement that land should be ceded by bargain or treaty was never honoured and, instead, the South Australia Commission made all land available to colonists.⁵ Aboriginal people thus lost their entitlements.

In various parts of Australia since the 1970s, many native title claims have been successfully made. In South Australia the *Letters Patent* were cited in a claim that led to the establishment of an Indigenous Land Use Agreement with the Kaurna Yerta Aboriginal Corporation in 2018.⁶ However, gaining recognition of Indigenous rights can be a tortuous process—the litigation to achieve the 2018 Agreement spanned 18 years, and, while Aboriginal land was never ceded, the onus of proof of entitlement still rests with Aboriginal communities.

Darren Siwes has painstakingly lifted the inked words from the original *Letters Patent* and re-imagined them back onto the original page, effectively inverting the colonisation process. He has thus re-envisioned history—in his version, the King returns Britain to the Aboriginal peoples of Australia as if the British Isles had been Aboriginal property and the colonisation of Australia had not happened. Siwes has also created an artwork depicting a map of England based on the AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia, asserting the right of Australian Aborigines, who represent the world's oldest living culture, to the ownership of various lands of the world. In Siwes's version, Britain is referred to as 'Wasted and occupied Lands which are rich and fit for the purposes of Aboriginal Nations occupation'. Here, the concept of 'wasted' land highlights the disruption of Australian ecosystems and Aboriginal connections to the land by the British colonists and implies that Britain's ecology might be restored under Aboriginal occupation.

Much of the world was colonised by European nations between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, often brutally disrupting Indigenous life and culture. Siwes's artworks challenge the very idea of colonisation and its legal and moral basis, and ask how we would feel if we were subjected to forced acculturation. While his art may appear tongue-in-cheek, it draws attention to the ongoing failure to adhere to the original *Letters Patent*, invites us to imagine an alternative world, and supports the reclamation of Aboriginal sovereignty.



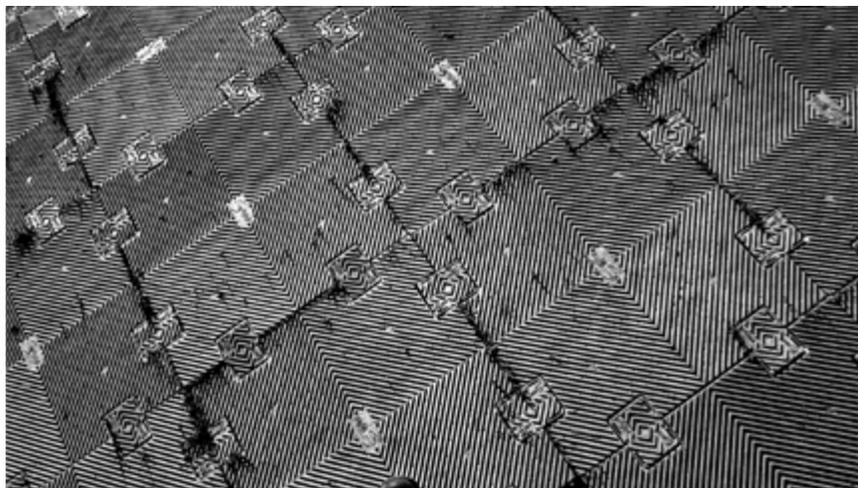
Roy Ananda

The notion of an artist living and breathing their work is by now a familiar shorthand, denoting a level of passion, commitment, or immersion on the part of the practitioner. However, in the case of CJ Taylor, it is genuinely difficult to distinguish where his art practice ends, and the rest of his life begins. The studio visit that preceded and informed this piece of writing involved very little time in the workspace that abuts Taylor's home, being instead largely given over to a ramble through the magnificent bushland of Peramangk country where the artist resides—a locale that he would argue is the 'real' studio. The reciprocal nature of Taylor's relationship to this landscape is immediately apparent. As a volunteer firefighter, Taylor is keenly aware of the fragility and volatility of the Australian bush. He takes his role as caretaker of his property very seriously, weeding, planting, and monitoring its wildlife with assiduous attentiveness. Accordingly, the landscape gives back, informing the artist's practice and activism. This rigorous dedication to firsthand experience and primary sources underpins Taylor's contribution to *Neoteric*, in which elements of recent suites of work, specifically *Base Camp* and *This Little Paradise*, are brought into dialogue with one another.

While Taylor maintains a certain scepticism toward the notion of 'photography as truth', the gut-wrenching impact of *Base Camp* lies in its unflinching, documentarian approach to its subject, namely the devastating bushfires that ravaged Australia over the summer of 2019-2020. In between his firefighting duties in New South Wales, Taylor photographed the peripheries of what became known as 'Black Summer'. The fires themselves are not represented in the works; instead, Taylor's lens lingers on the quiet moments adjacent to the act of firefighting, such as views of the aftermath or the makeshift barracks of the work's title.

In contrast to *Base Camp*'s apocalyptic immediacy, *This Little Paradise* operates in a much more enigmatic register. Utilising the form of the diptych and triptych, Taylor photographs the personal effects of a certain South Australian surveyor-general of the nineteenth century—a nib, a wax seal and various chess pieces—and floats them in ambiguous, soft-focussed pictorial spaces. By way of their function and historical provenance, the objects become emblematic of a reductive, quantitative, and decidedly colonial sensibility, where time flows along a patriarchal lineage, and can be distilled into a familial seal, and the stroke of a pen dictates the arbitrary demarcation of territory. Indeed, perhaps this is the very nib used by William Light to subdivide Tarntanya into the city grid of Adelaide (itself reminiscent of the hierarchical, gridded milieu of the chessboard). In turn, these objects might be seen as relics of the early Anthropocene, brought to light, and ruefully examined in the wake of Black Summer and other by-products of the current climate crisis.

In hybridising these two previously discrete bodies of work, we also see Taylor's mercurial attitude to the 'objecthood' of the photographic artefact at play. His on-going preoccupation with what he terms 'elastic photography' has yielded outcomes that run the gamut from tintypes to stereoscopes to audio-inflected, augmented reality experiences. Taylor is as likely to conjure up an image that betrays no grain, pixelation or other trappings of process or artefact as he is to wrench a photograph from the wall, tearing and crumpling it to tangibly assert its object status. The restless curiosity that has driven Taylor's interrogation of the photographic medium over the past decade now seems shot through with a sense of urgency, born of the looming climate catastrophe. Under the auspices of *Neoteric*, Taylor consolidates these concerns into works that are lyrical and numinous in their execution, whilst simultaneously edifying and cautionary in their implications.



CJ Taylor

Stop

Zoe Freney

We build a forged steel casket, with walls twenty centimetres thick and six and a half metres long. It weighs one hundred tonnes. Inside it we inter four 500-kilogram canisters of 'intermediate-level' nuclear waste. We send it on a ship from the United Kingdom to Sydney, Australia, where it will join another similar cask of waste at Lucas Heights.¹ We tell ourselves it is safe this way. It is also safe to truck these canisters across the land and bury them deep in Barngarla country near Kimba in South Australia.² In land we have probed and tested, but of which many of us have little real knowledge.

Lara presents us with a stack of rusted tins, empty of the toxic chemicals they once held, built up like a city, like a skyscraper, like the absurd façade of a frontier town in a Hollywood movie. This could be the theatre of action for our colonialist comings and never goings. Our comings and stayings, our pollutings and ruinings. As our monuments to late capitalist greed and exploitation reach ever higher, far exceeding our own scale, the more out of touch with the land and its lore we become. Our white-soled feet float above it, walking but feeling nothing. Clearing, ploughing, digging, gouging, and feeling nothing. Learning nothing.

The first people here have been building for tens or hundreds of thousands of years. They build connections and culture that run slow and deep and up to the stars. Before white people came here, First Nations people tended to Country with cool fire in a way that protected and nurtured ecosystems, habitats, and the diverse species they supported. As Victor Steffensen writes in his book *Fire Country*, describing the complexity of the knowledge of the fire practitioner,

There are so many connections of communication within the landscape ... The roots of the trees and plants create a whole connected web that communicate and support each other. The animals constantly talk with each other and leave signs in the landscape that forms a language...³

Since the arrival of white people, the languages have become fractured or lost altogether. The smoke is now black, acrid with burning canopy and chemicals. As I write I listen to the recorded song of a Kangaroo Island Brown Thornbill.⁴ This tiny olive, buff, brown bird is critically endangered through loss of habitat to clearing and grazing, and burning in the climate driven fires in 2019-2020. Fires followed by silence. In some places birdsong returns slowly, as the birds return home. They teach their young to sing this country, reminding us there is hope, even now.

Amidst the rising sense of urgency as we confront the climate emergency, Lara implores us to Slow Down. Stop. Slow down our growth and spending. Stop the destruction of sacred Country and culture. Lara's artwork embodies these ideas, her processes are slow, and careful, a long-term maintenance practice. Her materials are of the land or recycled, and often speak to human intervention and ongoing colonial error. Burnt out blue gum poles come from a plantation on Kangaroo Island, where the trees out compete native vegetation for groundwater, making Country volatile.

In late 2021, an album made entirely of recorded birdsong of endangered Australian species debuted in the top five in the ARIA album charts.⁵ If we yearn for the disappearing languages of Country we can slow down or stop to listen and maybe even learn how to sing them too.



They came
nobody phoned
when they decided to ignite our home
back burns
on heritage lands
beer cans thrown
they didn't realize
The bush was our home⁶

Lara Tilbrook

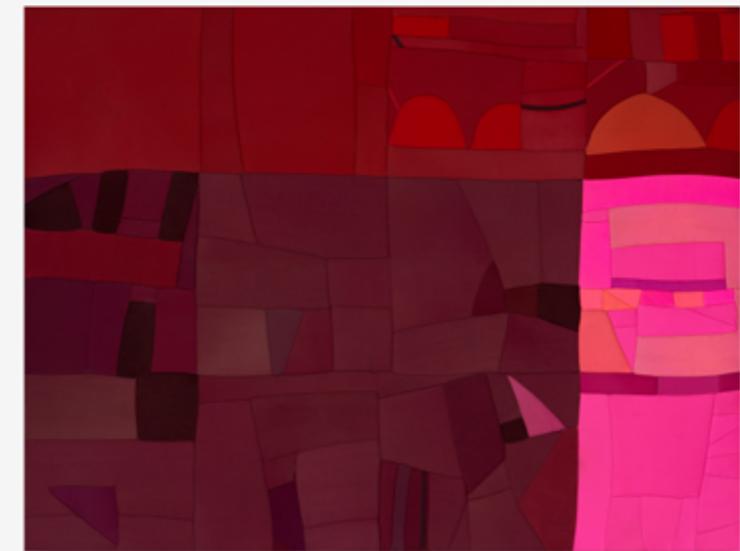
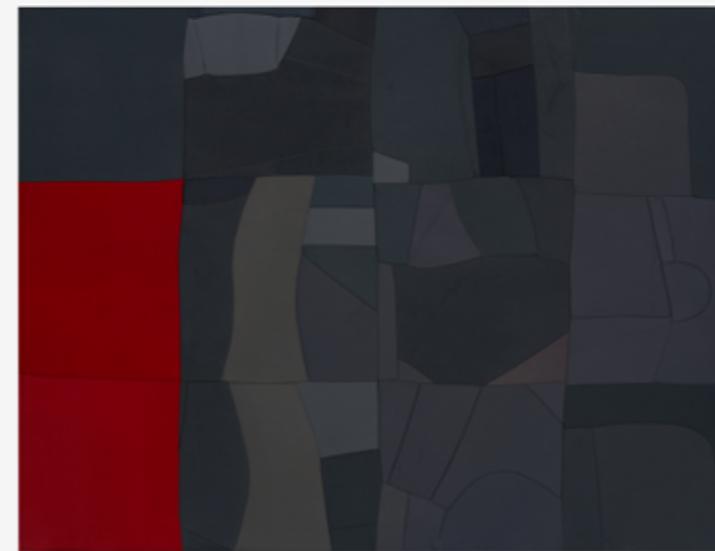
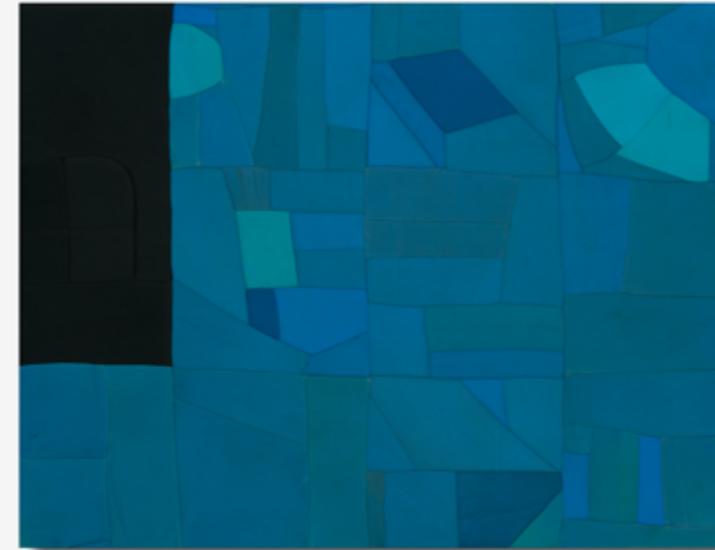
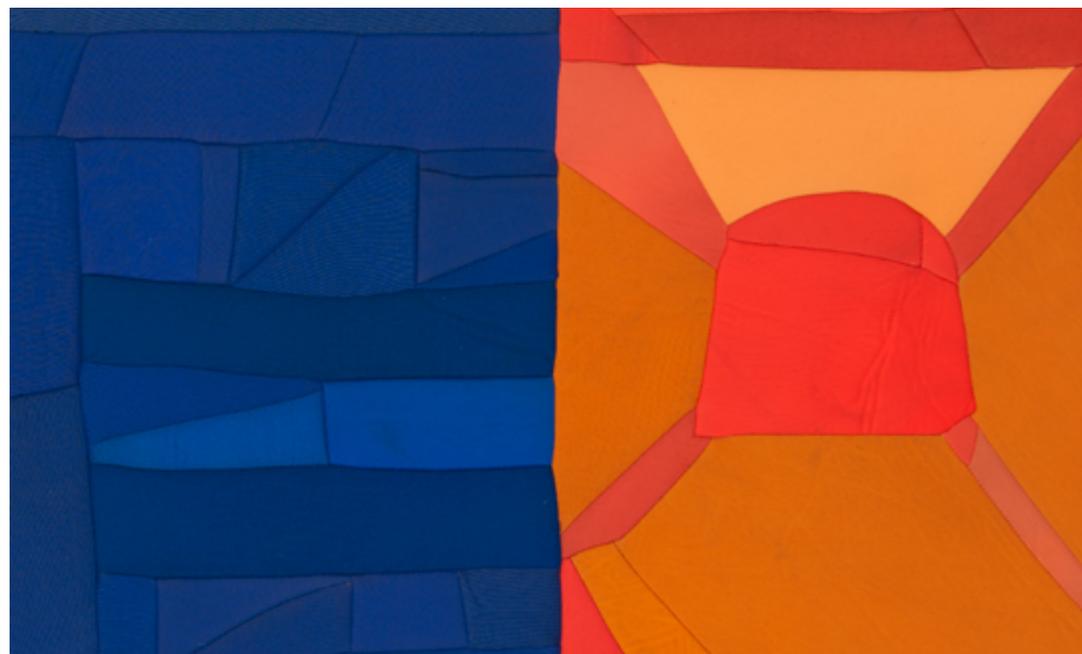
Saltwater Becoming

Oceans are powerful forces of global proportions. The spinning Earth, wind, sun, gravitational pull and currents, cause saltwater bodies to roil, surge, swell, crash and recede in everchanging cycles. Surfers, like Henry Jock Walker, have made a ritual of giving over to such enormous forces, harnessing lashing waves for mere moments at a time. Surfing has its own lore, lingo and mythology, but Walker's art practice sidesteps most surfer conventions to tackle a different perception of the sea; one, in his words, of 'becoming saltwater'. Walker's interventions into saltwater empathising take many forms—film, performance, costumes, props and paintings pieced together from wetsuit neoprene. This is an artist's way, through surf materials and surfing itself, of finding alternative routes into a well-paddled world.

So how can one become or embody saltwater? For saltwater is at once the entirety of oceanic bodies with innumerable fingers rippling forward and back, to an individual droplet with its sodden actualities. Break the tension of saltwater as a concept and you are quickly splashed, submerged, soaking, and salt encrusted. Walker situates his practice both above and below these watery surface tensions, as well as within saltwater and its ever becomingness. He uses surfing as a site for testing, experimenting, and performing. In conjunction with his South Australian Seaford surf community, Walker has undertaken filmic experimentations of unlearning surfing conventions, becoming a seaweed wanderer in a wetsuit of weedy neoprene tendrils, and most recently donning (with others) a joined wetsuit entanglement to move together as interconnected waves.¹ In finding ways into becoming saltwater, Walker immerses, embodies and performs as a droplet, which while singular cannot stifle the attraction that draws droplets together into greater oceanic phenomena.

The sewn colourful compositions of Walker's abstract neoprene paintings confront another saltwater tension; around how to represent the ocean's rhythmic yet pattern-less force.² The sea is never the same, and this is perhaps why humans, ever seeking pattern hunters, are drawn to it. We can watch, record, measure and contemplate but never resolve oceanic patterns. A seascape, to borrow Robert Macfarlane's description of landscape, is 'volatile and unruly – dynamically disobedient to the eye'.³ How does an artist, represent the pattern-less patterns of saltwater waves, churned froth, or glints of reflected sun, let alone the experience of being immersed in its movements. Walker's neoprene experiments head toward this challenge, similarly disobediently. Neoprene in Walker's practice, rescued from landfill, is arranged to form disorderly patterned terrains and surfaces. Like the ocean, these paintings refuse stillness, and each interconnected segment impacts the next in wavelike ripples of colour. Their materiality, invented by human endeavour to be one with saltwater for a little longer before succumbing to cold,⁴ gives insight into the depths of human entanglements with the sea, and why one might desire to become saltwater ... if just for moments at a time.

Sera Waters



Henry Jock Walker

Community tree portrait

Lauren Mustillo

Laura Wills has long collaborated with communities, inviting participation to encourage and foster understanding, connection and exchange. Her approach is underpinned by reciprocity and a desire for dialogue and learning where artist and participants are empowered to affect and be affected by each other. This has often manifested as a call for audiences to contribute one component of a larger whole.

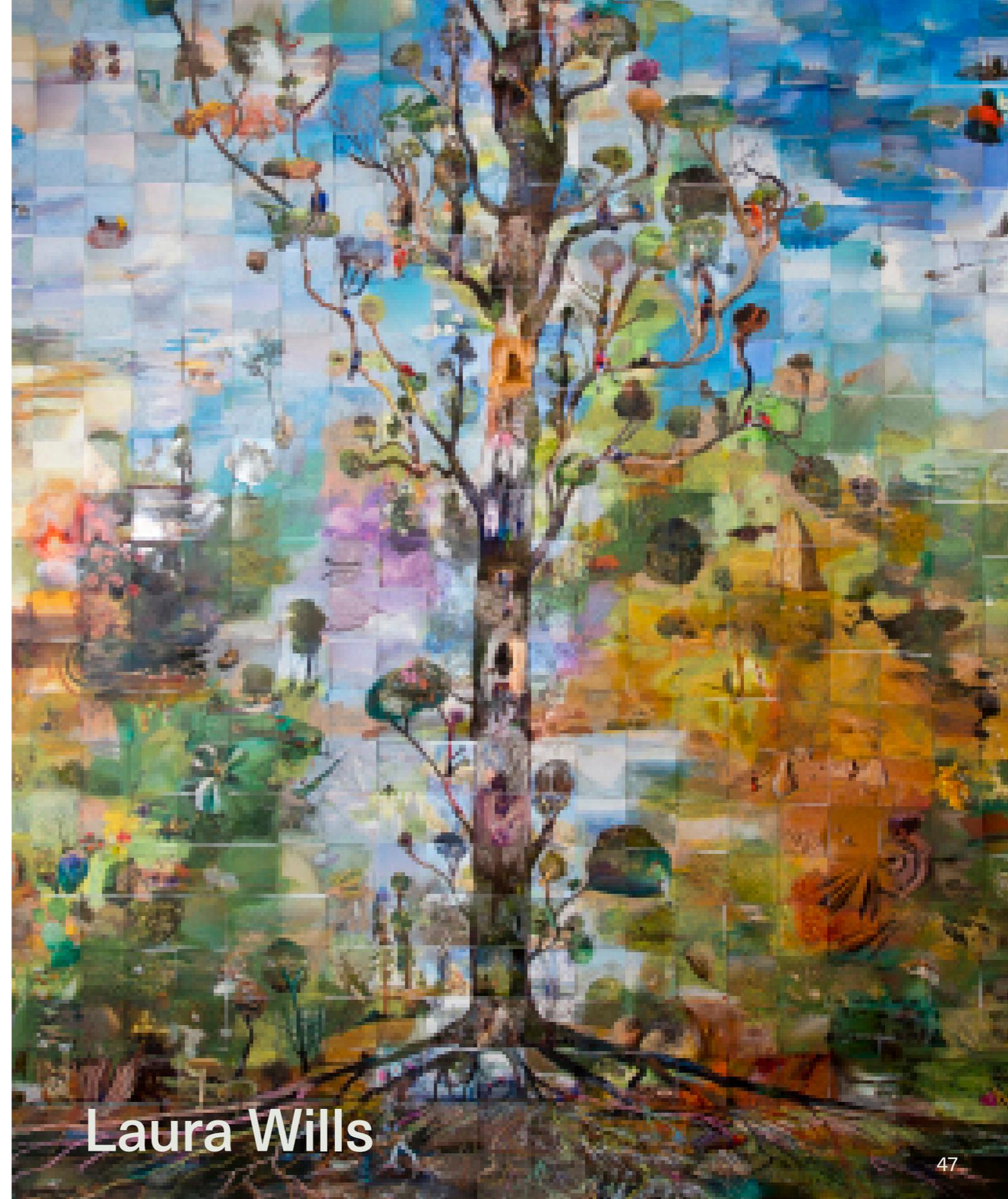
Community tree portrait grew from an invitation issued by Wills as part of the 2021 Nature Festival: send a photograph of yourself with your favourite tree. Participants shared images with Wills via social media and email for inclusion in a collaborative artwork titled *Tree Portrait* evolving on Instagram. The prompt's power is that to have a favourite tree you must consider a tree to be individual, special and unique, and see characteristics that you love and admire. Wills's practice frequently personifies and gives sentience to plants, attributing personalities to organisms often considered without consciousness. Exploring unanswerable questions through playful investigation, such as whether flowers dream or if plants have auras, Wills is interested in speculative narratives. What does it mean to have a favourite tree? Is it tall and impressive, sprawling and gangly; do its leaves shimmer in the sun or turn brilliant orange in autumn; does it provide bountiful shade; has it witnessed memories of picnicking or hours spent climbing its limbs?

Guided by this proposition, submissions were collated by Wills, considered individually for their subject and composition and thoughtfully placed within a three-tile-wide Instagram-format grid. Drawing into them digitally, Wills melded and merged each image's limbs, trunks and foliage with those adjoining it. The resulting impression is a tree that climbs, meanders and intertwines, growing upwards indefinitely.

'Overwhelmed by the richness' of the initial project and generosity of contributions, Wills's *Community tree portrait* translates the collaborative digital artwork into physical form. Using and adding to the original 132 'tiles', this iteration extends upwards and outwards. Transcending the boundaries of Instagram, the work impresses upon us the reach and vibrancy of the project. Measuring several metres in length, the tree expands across the floor and wall. Its scale invites a bodily experience, necessitating we walk alongside and around it to experience its entirety, echoing the way we might circumnavigate the trunk of an established sentinel.

Forefronting this work is a permission to engage through a lens of joy and whimsy in what Wills describes as a 'beautiful celebration' of trees and the innate delight taken from being in their presence. The tree glows, pulses and sings with colour and light in and around the people and animals that cohabit it. Contributors see themselves as part of an ecosystem in and of the tree.

Encouraging a personal connection with nature is a way of fostering empathy and in turn concern for wider environmental issues. Wills's rationale is that if you understand it, you might better care for it. In the face of rising climate anxiety and collective uncertainty Wills invites us to be still for a moment and connect. She invites us to get into nature and spend time with our favourite tree.



Laura Wills

Footnotes

Tamara Baillie, p.6

¹ 172 Wylie J, *The spectral geographies of W.G. Sebald*

² xviii Derrida J, 1994, *Specters of Marx*

³ ibid

Deidre But-Husaim, p.10

¹ Rackham, M. 2020. *Remaking Deidre But-Husaim: Self (painted beard)*, 2014

² But-Husaim, D. 2021. Studio conversation with Susan Charlton. Thebarton, South Australia.

Gus Clutterbuck, p.12

¹ Pierce, Julianne. 2018. *Falling: Gus Clutterbuck Ceramic Art Collection*. Shanghai: Meou Museum.

Brad Darkson, p.16

¹ Solomon, Benjamin. ‘The Growth of the White-Collar Work Force’. *The Journal of Business* 27, no. 4, 1954: 268–75. http://www.jstor.org/stable/2350477.

² ‘Ergonomics’, Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia, 6th Edition. March 2021. Accessed January 8, 2022. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=anh&AN=134513574&site=ehost-live

³ Katella, K. ‘Why is sitting so bad for us’, 2019, Yale Medicine, Accessed January 8 2022, https://www.yalemedicine.org/news/sitting-health-risks

⁴ *In Addiction by Design: Machine Gambling in Las Vegas* (2014), Natasha Dow Schüll writes about one surprising example where casinos use curving hallways to avoid you ever having to turn at a 90° angle... a right-angle turn forces people to call upon the decision-making parts of their brain — to stop and reflect on what they’re doing

Honor Freeman, p.18

¹www.youtube.com. (n.d.). Honor Freeman | Studio | 2017. [online] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bpcwd_WAQc4 [Accessed 9 Jan. 2022].

Ray Harris, p.22

¹ Buzzcocks, Why Can’t I Touch It? from Singles Going Steady, 1979.

² Ray Harris in correspondence, February 2022.

³ Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Mind, Body and Brain in the Transformation of Trauma*, 2015.

Heidi Kenyon, p.26

¹ The title of this work is borrowed from the final stanza of Sylvia Plath’s short poem *Mushrooms* (1959), which uses the metaphor of silent, creeping fungal growth to allude to a quiet revolution of the oppressed.

² Davidson releases music under the alias Ben Sun and Earth Patterns. https://www.instagram.com/bensunmusic/

³ Guy Ben Ary, “cellF”, guybenary.com, January 4, 2022, http://guybenary.com/work/cellf/. Neurology is also on Kenyon’s mind, so to speak, as the choice of fungus in this work was influenced by reading mycologist Paul Stamets, who has theorised that the high granted by the psilocybin mushroom promotes empathy and feelings of connectedness. This is a rather less extravagant form of the ‘Stoned Ape’ hypothesis, which posits that magic mushrooms kick-started the evolution of human cognition.

Sue Kneebone, p.28

¹ Correspondence with the artist, 7 January 2022.

² Sue Kneebone, ‘Inland Memories’. In *Naturally Disturbed*, Mary Knights (ed.), (Adelaide: SASA Gallery, University of South Australia, 2010), 14.

³ Correspondence with the artist, 31 December 2021.

⁴ Correspondence with the artist, 20 December 2021.

Deborah Prior, p.32

¹ Hamilton, Clive. ‘Utopias in the Anthropocene’, the American Sociological Association, Denver, 17 August 2012.

Cynthia Schwertsik, p.34

¹ Henri Bergon, quoted in Giles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, New York: Zone Books, 1991, p.80.

² Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature* , Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Darren Siwes, p.36

¹ *Letters Patent under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom erecting and establishing the Province of South Australia and fixing the boundaries thereof*, 19 February 1836

² ibid.

³ *Coming to Terms: Aboriginal Title in South Australia*, Shaun Berg, Wakefield Press, 2010, p. 1

⁴ *Proclamation*, Robert Gouger, Colonial Secretary, Glenelg, 28 December 1836

⁵ Berg, op. cit. p. 9

⁶ Agius v State of South Australia (No 6) [2018] FCA 358, Federal Court of Australia, 21 March 2018

Lara Tilbrook, p.40

¹ Australian Associated Press. 2021. ‘Earthquake-proof steel cask carrying 2t of radioactive waste to arrive in Sydney next year.’ *The Guardian Australia*. 20 December. https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2021/dec/20/earthquake-proof-steel-cask-carrying-2t-of-radioactive-waste-to-arrive-in-sydney-next-year (accessed 21/12/21).

² The Barngarla people have lodged legal action against the Australian Government’s plan to build a nuclear waste dump in the Kimba region in north western South Australia. ‘Barngarla people claim they were not consulted and were not part of the ballot, which included rate payers of nearby town of Kimba. “We don’t want it to be at Kimba because we were excluded from the vote under white man’s law,” Barngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation chairman Jason Bilney said.’ Gooch, Declan; Martin, Patrick; Aeria, Gillian. 2021. ‘Traditional owners lodge legal challenge to planned Kimba nuclear waste dump.’ *ABC North and West*. 21 December. https://amp.abc.net.au/article/100717404 (accessed 21/12/21).

³ Steffensen, Victor. 2020. *Fire Country: How Indigenous Fire Management Could Help Save Australia*. Chapter 9. Sydney: Hardie Grant Travel. Kobo eReader.

⁴ Albrecht, Anthony; Slattery, Simone; Stewart, David. 2021. ‘Australian Bird Calls: Songs of Disappearance.’ *Bowerbird Collective*. Album. 25:00.

⁵ Dick, Samantha and Shams, Housnia. 2021. ‘Songs of Disappearance album featuring birdsongs of endangered species reaches the Top Five ARIA album charts.’ ABC News. 16 December.

⁶ Poem by Lara Tilbrook. 2021.

Henry Jock Walker, p.42

¹ Filmed with assistance from cinematographer Mark Tipple

² The neoprene paintings are made with the assistance of seamster and pattern maker Lachy Lang

³ Robert Macfarlane, *Landmarks*, Milton Keynes: Penguin Books, 2015, p. 240

⁴ As a material, neoprene fits within a category of technological textile developments from oils and chemicals (from around the 1920s) that have enabled humans to find comfort in extreme environments longer than the body on its own can accommodate.

Image Captions

Tamara Baillie, p.6-7

Heinrich Scherer, *Typus Totius Orbis Terraquei Geographice Delineatus, Et Ad Usum Globo Materiali Superinducendus*, Hand coloured set of globe gores, including a hypothetical depiction of Australia. Munich, 1702.

The End of All Our Exploring (detail), 2022, plywood, screws, paper, telescope. 2.5m x 3.5m x 2.5m. Image: Sam Roberts

Thom Buchanan, p.8-9

100 seconds to midnight, 2022, Oil and acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

Paralysis by analysis, 2022, oil and acrylic on canvas, 177x 145cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

Deidre But-Husaim, p.10-11

The Between, 2022, Oil on hardboard, 400 x 300. Image: Sam Roberts

Gus Clutterbuck, p. 12-13

Sticks and Stones, 2021-22, Porcelain and Stoneware,(hand built and slip cast), cobalt underglaze decoration, glaze, salt, dimensions variable. Image: Sam Roberts

Bridget Currie, p.14-15

The little door, 2021-22, Ceramic, plywood, wood, sound recording, speaker and audio player, 82 x 70 x 70 cm, Audio length: 3 Minutes table made by Dean Toepper. Image: Sam Roberts

Brad Darkson, p.16-17

Make Yourself Comfortable II, 2022, gaming lounge stool, plywood, acrylic paint, electric motor, 70 x 70 x 132cm. Image: Sam Roberts

Make Yourself Comfortable II (detail), 2022, gaming lounge stool, plywood, acrylic paint, electric motor, 70 x 70 x 132cm. Image: Sam Roberts

Honor Freeman, p.18-19

and the tide rises, the tide falls, 2022, porcelain, stoneware, enamel bathtub, 94 x 152 x 76 cm. Image: Sam Roberts

Sasha Grbich, p.20-21

*Bat Alphabet 40**, installation with ceramic objects, sound and video including sonic translation developed and recorded by Zoë Barry. Cello performed by Zoë, text created and performed by Goldie Palmer. Dimensions variable. Production still. Image: Sasha Grbich

*Bat Alphabet 40**, (installation detail), 2022, installation with ceramic objects, sound and video including sonic translation developed and recorded by Zoë Barry. Cello performed by Zoë, text created and performed by Goldie Palmer. Dimensions variable. Image: Sam Roberts

Ray Harris, p.22-23

When ghosts move in (video still detail), 2022, mixed media, 360 x 210 x 210 cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

When ghosts move in, 2022, mixed media, 360 x 210 x 210 cm. Image: Sam Roberts

Anna Horne, p.24-25

Purple Haze, 2022, concrete, steel frame, rope, 94c x 80c x 23cm. Image: Sam Roberts

Walking with Ouroboros (detail), 2022, concrete, 140 x 18.5 18.5cm. Image: Sam Roberts

Heidi Kenyon, p.26-27

We shall by morning inherit the earth (work in progress), 2022, artist and son's hands, Pleurotus djamor, dimensions variable. Image: Adrian Kenyon

We shall by morning inherit the earth (work in progress), 2022, Pleurotus citrinopileatus, artist's hand and mixed media, U1 device with musical instrument digital interface dimensions variable. Image: Adrian Kenyon

We shall by morning inherit the earth (work in progress), 2022, found mushroom (Sally's garden I), artist's hand, U1 device with musical instrument digital interface, 2022, dimensions variable. Image: Adrian Kenyon

Sue Kneebone, p.28-29

Pyrolysis, 2022, moving image (screen still). Image: Courtesy of the Artist

Pyrolysis, (installation detail), 2022, cement fondue, metal fixtures, quartz crystal, dimensions variable. Image: Sam Roberts

Deborah Prior, p.32-33

Easter in the Anthropocene.

(left) *Pastoral Apocalypse*, 2021-22, linen, studio ephemera, woollen yarn, plastic beads, 102 x 136 cm. Image: Sam Roberts

[right] *Squatter Blanket #2*, 2020, archive of plant labels, woollen blanket, woollen yarn, sellotape, 138 x 180 cm. Image: Sam Roberts

[foreground] *Fleece*, 2010-2022, assorted yarns, eucalyptus dyed yarn, found chair, dimensions variable. Image: Sam Roberts

Will Nolan, p.30-31

Tank and Text, 2022, SCUBA tank, vinyl lettering, 21 x 21 x 77cm (front). Image: Sam Roberts

Tank and Text, 2022, SCUBA tank, vinyl lettering, 21 x 21 x 77cm (back). Image: Sam Roberts

Cusp, 2022, Inkjet print, foam core, artist frame, 58 x 72 cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

Cynthia Schwertsik with Dave Laslett, p.34-35

Current Affairs Tableau Vivant, 2021/2022, Flinders Ranges, single channel video / sound, loop, installation elements. Image: Dave Laslett

Darren Siwes, p.36-37

The New Aboriginal Lands of Australia: nineteen two eighteen thirty six, 2022, Giclee print on smooth cotton, 40cm x 40cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

Terra Aboriginalis, 2022, Oil on Linen,168cm x 168cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

CJ Taylor, p.38-39

Age of the Pyrocene (This Little Paradise), 2020-2022, c-type print on metallic paper, diptych, 150 cm x 200 cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

Age of the Pyrocene (Base Camp), 2019-2020, pigment print on photographic paper, 60 cm x 33.75 cm. Image: Courtesy of the Artist

Lara Tilbrook, p.40-41

Remote surveillance image of common brush tail possum, 2022, video still, installation detail.

Stop (work in progress detail), 2022, Xanthorrhoea semiplana seed pods, Onkaparinga woolen blanket, cotton, blue gum, 65 x 220 cm. Image Courtesy of Country Arts SA by Rosina Possingham

Henry Jock Walker, p.42-43

12/3=4, 2022, Stretched found Neoprene with powder coated aluminium frame, 4 (122 x 92cm). Image: Sam Roberts

Laura Wills, p.44-45

Community Tree Portrait (detail), 2022, pastel and pigment ink on rag paper and book pages, 6 x 2.5m. Image: Michael Mullen

Neoteric acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners of the Kurna lands on which Neoteric was developed and held, in Tarntanya Adelaide.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS:

First and foremost, thank you to the artists for your significant work, contribution, and distinctive perspective. Without you no exhibition is possible. We recognise your importance above all else.

And we salute you.

Thank you to the writers for your considered engaged responses and perspectives.

Neoteric would like to acknowledge the following sponsors and contributors. Thank you for your support.

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Special thanks to:

Sam Roberts Photography, University of South Australia, Jenna Pippett, Kennards Port Adelaide, Sandy Cenin, Stephen Atkinson, Chris Menz and Carla Zub at Renewal SA, Megan Rainey, Guildhouse, Greg Ackland, Leigh Robb, Adele Sliuzas, The Mill, and to everyone who helped us along the way with this project.



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