

THIS IS A POEM



**BUXTON
CONTEMP
ORARY**

EVELYN ARALUEN
HANY ARMANIOUS
PAT BRASSINGTON
KEVIN BROPHY
JANET BURCHILL
MITCH CAIRNS
JUSTIN CLEMENS
ALEKS DANKO
FAYEN D'EVIE & BENJAMIN HANCOCK
DESTINY DEACON & VIRGINIA FRASER
ROSALIE GASCOIGNE
SAM GEORGE & LISA RADFORD
SIMRYN GILL
MIRA GOJAK
LISA GORTON
NEWELL HARRY
LOU HUBBARD
DAVID JOLLY
JEANINE LEANE
BELLA LI
BRAD AARON MODLIN
TRACEY MOFFATT
MICHELLE NIKOU
JOHN NIXON
ROSE NOLAN
RAQUEL ORMELLA
SANDRA PARKER
MIKE PARR
ALEX SELENITSCH
PETER TYNDALL
LOUISE WEAVER

Main exhibition wall text

Bringing contemporary art and poetry into dialogue, *This is a poem* is a multi-disciplinary project encompassing new commissions in a diverse mix of media and forms, live performances, a publication and an exhibition.

The project draws notable artists and poets into creative discourse. Each participant has been invited to write, perform, read or present in visual form an original work of poetry in response to an artwork held in the University's Buxton Contemporary collection.

Conceived to creatively animate the collection, *This is a poem* brings art, artists and poetry into orbit with audiences through an experimental and experiential exhibition that explores the longstanding tradition of ekphrastic poetry.

An ekphrastic poem can be defined as a vivid description or response to a work of art. Through the imaginative act of narrating or reflecting on an artwork, a poet may amplify and expand its meaning.

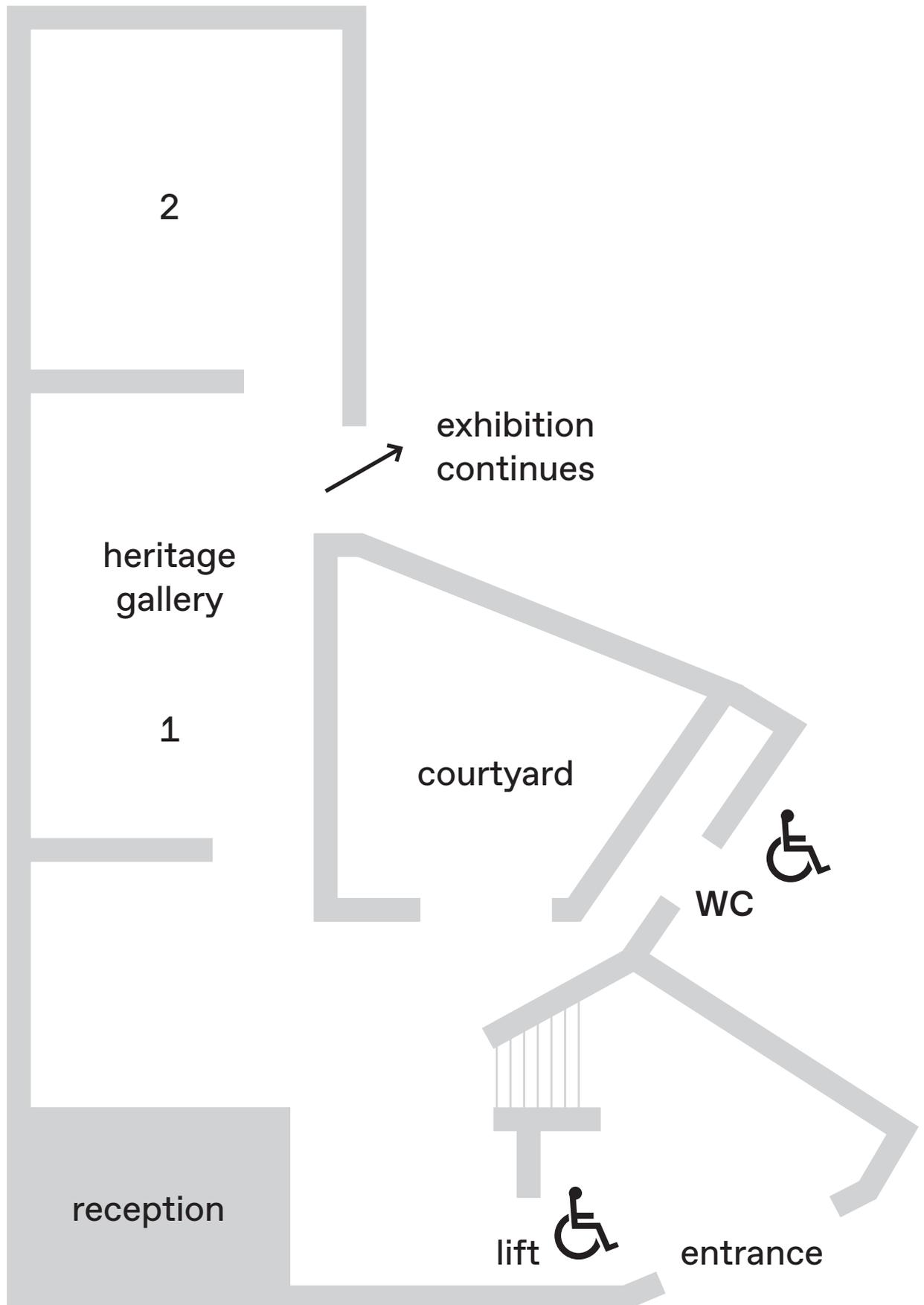
The rich array of poetry created in response to this invitation is variously poignant, heart-rending, playful, humorous, critical and absurd. It spans a broad range of topical themes, from the impact of colonisation, human mortality and the nature of compassion through to the very act of breathing itself.

This is a poem offers an expansive sample of poetry in multiple and often surprising forms, including concrete and visual poetry, spoken and written word, dance, movement-based expression, sound, colour poetry, found poetry and poetry as physical form and assemblage.

While poetry often appears in other modes of art and is incorporated into exhibitions and within broader museum programming, a presentation of this scale and depth is uncommon. *This is a poem* seeks to make a meaningful contribution to an expanded expression and definition of ekphrasis – the imaginative and magical correspondence between poetry and art.

CURATED BY MELISSA KEYS

Ground Floor Floorplan



Heritage Gallery area

1

Hany Armanious

Effigy of an effigy with mirage 2010

cast polyurethane resin, fiberglass and pewter with pigment

132 × 104.8 × 83.8 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton 2018–19

Flat earth 2017

pigmented polyurethane resin

25.2 × 30 × 2 cm

edition of 2 + 1 AP

The Michael Buxton Collection

Michelle Nikou

The world is flat (fucking me down) 2021

hand-knotted pure new wool

215 × 315 cm

Fever 103° 2021

granite

18 × 47.5 × 38 cm

Space sailor 2021

black cotton jacket, bronze casting

6 × 86 × 79 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Darren Knight Gallery,
Sydney

Responding to Hany Armanious's sculptural forms *Flat earth* and *Effigy of an effigy with mirage*, Michelle Nikou's arrangement of enigmatic elements oscillates between symbolism and materiality, suggestively and elusively alluding to complex layers of possibility.

Woven into a large rug, an aerial view of centre pivot irrigation circles presents as both a landscape and a series of teary eyes – a compression of land, body, sorrow and sight. A headstone inscribed with a memorable line from a Sylvia Plath poem (*Fever 103°*, written in 1962) speaks of a high fever, a late-night delirium and the flickering intermediary states between consciousness and unconsciousness, life and death, knowing and not knowing. Embellished with and weighed down by cast bronze Mars bars, a jacket appears to have fallen to earth, no longer inhabited by the body that it once clothed.

Rich in ambiguity and pathos, Nikou's sculptural assemblage alludes to common human experiences of pain and loss, to a poetry of presences and absences and to the unbearable heaviness of grief.

Janet Burchill

Room with my soul left out 2000

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

167 × 182 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018–19

Lou Hubbard

Uneasy body 2010–21

shower screens, door panels, tray table, towel rack,

lino, floor lamp, bottle, water, cotton

40 × 280 × 280 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents,

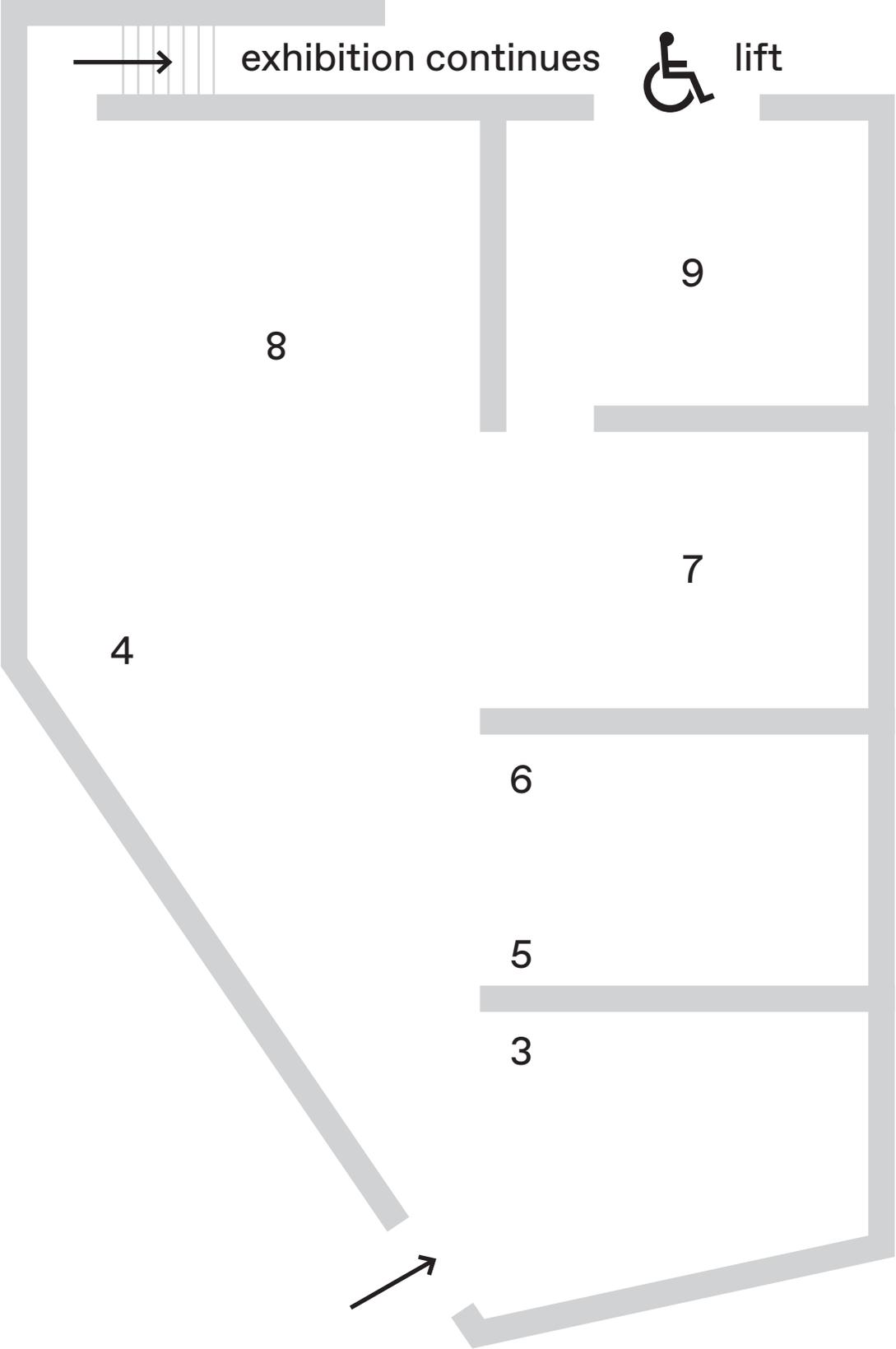
Melbourne

Room with my soul left out is a painting from a series of works titled *Crossbar*, made by artist Janet Burchill from 1998 onwards. These paintings appropriate titles from existing artworks, presenting them as ready-made texts. The title *Room with my soul left out* is borrowed from a work created in 1984 by American conceptual artist Bruce Nauman. Nauman's work exists as both a maquette (a model and form of proposition for a work) and as a large-scale installation.

As a response to, and playful further conceptual extension of, Burchill's 'ready-made' approach, artist Lou Hubbard presents her work *Uneasy body*, a pre-existing, or 'already-made', work from 2011. Initially conceived for an exhibition at Gertrude Contemporary, when presented in its original iteration Hubbard's work was met with a form of trespass; a component of another artist's work, in the form of a bottle filled with water, was positioned on the gallery floor within the spatial field of the installation. Deciding to embrace this impromptu element, Hubbard took the bottle in as an incidental happening or some sort of serendipitous 'offering' and now presents it here formally as part of the sculptural arrangement.

There is a pleasing visual, spatial relationship and interplay between *Room with my soul left out* and *Uneasy body*. In pairing these artworks, Hubbard sets in motion a series of poetic exchanges and puzzling contemplations. For instance, one might ask, where is the location, or boundary, of 'the room', or what are we to make of the absent soul and the uneasy body? For Hubbard, the soul in question is not absent; rather, it's been left out for us to receive. Hubbard's is a perplexing art/poetry work – an absurdist offering and an enigmatic gift.

Ground Floor Floorplan (Continued)



Ground Floor Gallery

3

Mike Parr

Hold your breath for as long as possible / Light a candle. Hold your finger in the flame for as long as possible 1972 (from *Third Body Program* 1973, DVD compilation of 12 works, edition 2/4)

video, black and white, silent

3:28 minutes

100 Breaths from (Alphabet/Haemorrhage) 1995–96

painted wooden box containing 100 etchings

unique

each print 27 × 24 cm; box 27.6 × 31.5 × 7 cm

100 Breaths 2003

video, colour, sound

edition of 1+ 2 APs

7:23 minutes

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018–19

Justin Clemens

Death Breath Chef 2021

poem

Courtesy of the artist

Destiny Deacon

Forced into images 2001

series of 10 light jet prints from Polaroid originals
edition 17/20

4 prints each 77 × 95 cm; 6 prints each 95 × 77 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

Destiny Deacon & Virginia Fraser

Forced into images 2001

super 8 transferred to video, colour, silent
edition 4/20

9 minutes

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

Jeanine Leane

Forced into Images 2021

poem

Courtesy of the artist

Forced into Images

Body is water is body. This is not a metaphor. Body and water are not unlike. They are one – same body. Together.

This knowing comes from before me. The body is a river of movement.

Blak bodies are contested space. Invaded before they are conceived. A battleground of images. Your journey begins long before you hit the road. Skin is everyone's business. Blak bodies are public consumption. Food for white thought. Chewed up. Shat out. Re-consumed.

Blak bodies are for theorists – linguists, anthropologists, historians, ethnographers, white scientists. We make data, statistical reports, policy fodder, textbooks, portraits, postcards, tourist brochures – the stuff of images.

Alice Walker wrote *I see our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, captured and forced into images, doing hard time for all of us*. Forced into images not of our own devising. Prisoners of the mind.

In Australian minds these images become the stuff of myth and folklore or magical realism – Australia prefers a noble savage, or a witch doctor, or a cannibal, over an urban Blakfella. What threatens white people is dismissed as myth. I have never been true in Australia. Or real.

Australia is my myth. A land of grids and gradients. Of maths and science that cannot read a body that it might be made of water and sand and soil. Things that have more names than I could write on this page if I could ever know them.

A river is a body of water. It has an arm, an elbow, a mouth. It bends. Turns. Chortles. Sings. Rages. It runs. Lies in a bed. Gives life. Destroys. Remembers everything.

Toni Morrison says, *All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.* When they cut up and dam and straighten-out and pollute our River bodies we feel it. Damming, mining, dredging, draining, fouling. In this country rivers run inland like veins and arteries to a heart. What happens when these are cut, broken, poisoned, severed, savaged?

When a River floods it is remembering its former self before it was forced into an image of no-longer-self. I am counting all that you took. Can it be put back together again – mended – sewn up with thread leaving only a memory of rough seam backstitching over time?

This nation forces its image over our Countries. The Right believe that they have conquered an empty land. The Left want to restore the environment to a pristine wilderness of a peopleless space. Either way we are erased in these images.

When you ask is the glass half full or is it half empty? I think either way water is forced into shape. Poured into a container. Half is a word I understand in an invader vocabulary where colonial fractions cut our land, scar our bodies. Half. Quarter. One eighth. One sixteenth.

If you were not here I would not drink from a glass. The River would wash over my hand. I will bend to its shape. If you were not here I would walk to the River of my body. It would be clean and cleanse me. If you were not here I would not have to answer your questions about the colour of my skin.

We can't breathe with your knees on our throats. We can't breathe with your palms on our chests. We can't breathe with fists down our necks. We can't breathe through cell doors. In the back of your vans. Under the weight of your words. Under the force of your images.

—Jeanine Leane

5

John Nixon

Untitled_8 2014

enamel and wooden ruler on canvas

20 × 37 cm

The Michael Buxton Collection

Alex Selenitsch

Monotone 8 2020

typepoems on Canson Rag Photographique 310gsm
8 parts, each 29.7 × 21 cm

narrative + 2020

typepoems on Canson Rag Photographique 310gsm
8 parts, each 29.7 × 21 cm

Courtesy of the artist and grahame galleries +
editions, Brisbane

6

Sandra Selig & Leighton Craig

Special mechanism for universal uncertainty 2010

book pages, acrylic frames, sound

9 parts, each 32 × 22 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018–19

Bella Li

The Tower 2020–21

digital prints

10 parts, each 28.5 × 19 cm

Planet Score 2021

colour poem projection

Courtesy of the artist

Engaging Sandra Selig's *Special mechanism for universal uncertainty*, with musical compositions by Brisbane musician Leighton Craig, poet Bella Li presents *The Tower*, a multi-part poem comprising text, found imagery, a suite of prints and a moving image projection of fields of colour.

Li orchestrates an elaborate and ethereal interplay of elements that include text, colour, shape, sound and imagery guided by principles drawn from systems of mathematics, cosmology and astronomy and found in literature and cinema.

The title, *The Tower*, alludes to a number of historical, mythological and literary towers. These include the Tower of London in Shakespeare's *Richard III*; those found in H.G. Wells' *The time machine*; Cheomseongdae (the earliest known astronomical observatory tower in Asia); and the biblical Tower of Babel.

The series of colour fields, both printed and moving image, comprise visual scores for the 'musical ranges' of the six planets known at the time of 17th-century German astronomer, mathematician and astrologer Johannes Kepler (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Earth, Venus and Mercury). Kepler's notations for these ranges, in *Harmonicus mundi* (1619), were translated into 'colour notes' via John MacDonald's system of correspondences, described in *The analogy of sound and colour* (1869).

In the prints, the colour notes sounded by each planet at three key points of its orbit of the Sun – aphelion, perihelion and the midpoint of orbit – are blended to form a gradient. In the video projection, the musical ranges are represented in full, with each colour note blending into the next to mimic the constant motion of the planets. The black rectangles at the centres of the fields of colour can be read in various ways, including as a reference to the mysterious monoliths in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: a space odyssey* (1968).

7

Aleks Danko

corner > cornered > cornerwise > 2021

mixed-media installation comprising timber, plywood, laser prints, acrylic paint, pencil, synthetic/plastic rug
Courtesy of the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

Hany Armanious

Flat earth 2017

pigmented polyurethane resin

25.2 × 30 × 2 cm

edition of 2 + 1 AP

The Michael Buxton Collection

This work is displayed in the heritage gallery

8

Emily Floyd

Temple of the female eunuch 2008

vinyl, polyurethane and poker work on wood

100 parts, installation dimensions variable

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018–19

Fayen d'Evie & Benjamin Hancock

H(e)R {~~~} ... , ... ; x 2021

performance poem and video

video, colour, sound

6.23 minutes

Courtesy of the artists

Artist Fayen d'Evie and choreographer and dancer Benjamin Hancock's collaborative movement piece titled *H(e)R {~~~} ... , ... ; x*, recorded and presented live, engages with Emily Floyd's 2008 work *Temple of The Female Eunuch*.

Selecting the following line from Germaine Greer's influential feminist book, which is inscribed on one component of Floyd's installation – 'A woman seeking alternative modes of life is no longer morally bound to pay her debt to nature' – Hancock performs this text as an embodied typography: a sequence of fluid gestures that physically articulate each of the letters that comprise the citation.

Performed in drag, the piece embodies the shifts in gender expression that have transpired over time. Hancock's costume echoes and re-imagines the curvaceous form that appeared on the iconic cover of the first paperback edition of *The Female Eunuch*, which also informed Floyd's shapely sculpted timber figures.

d'Evie and Hancock's performance project gestures towards the shifting nature of language and the fluidity and multifaceted nature of identity, gender and self.

*Benjamin Hancock will present H(e)R {~~~} ... ,
... ; x, as a live performance poem in the gallery
on Saturday 2 October*

3 performances:
12–12.20pm
2–2.20pm
4–4.20pm

9

Pat Brassington

Neck 1999 (exhibition print 2021)

pigment print

edition of 3

72 × 54 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018–19

Sandra Parker

LOOMING 2021

dancer: Chloe Arnott; videographer: Cobie Orger;

lighting: Jennifer Hector; costume: Emily Collett

two-channel video, colour, sound

14.47 minutes

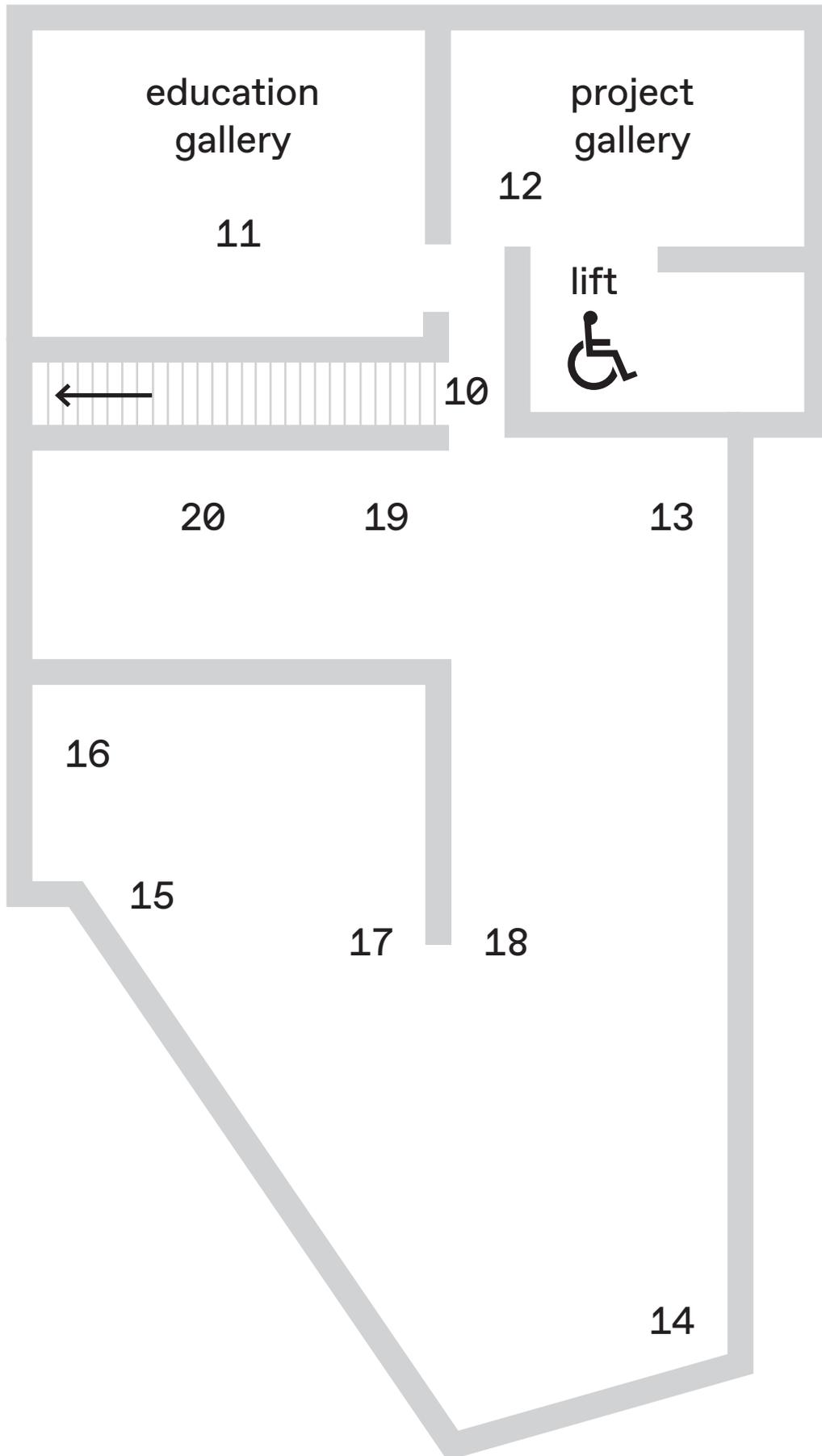
Courtesy of Sandra Parker

Choreographer Sandra Parker's *LOOMING* comprises a series of expressive actions and micro-movements performed by contemporary dancer Chloe Arnott in response to Pat Brassington's surreal and mysterious photographic montage *Neck*.

Engaging with the ambiguous, haunting and strange qualities of Brassington's image, the dancer intuitively and analytically responds to the work through a series of movements and gestures that are performed both within and outside the video frame.

Brassington's *Neck*, says Parker, 'reminds us of the presence of things that lurk in the shadows, out of our line of sight, things that are felt but unseen, always there'.

First Floor Floorplan



First Floor Gallery

10

David Jolly

Hotel part of Liquid Nature 2006

watercolour on paper

50.5 × 69.5 cm

Office part of Liquid Nature 2006

watercolour on paper

50.5 × 69.5 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton 2018–19

Bella Li

When We Were Young 2021

Poem

Beaches 2021

poem

Courtesy of the artist

Beaches

Barb considered herself the Barbara Hershey character in *Beaches*, for obvious reasons. But also because she had bangs and looked a class act in shoulder pads. Sharon would have liked to be the Bette Midler character, but wasn't. Once, in the lunchroom, Sharon said, 'Barb, don't move'. And Barb obediently froze, forkful of tuna salad in mid-air. Sharon reached over and plucked something small and papery from her bangs. It turned out to be a love letter from Marty in accounts, which Barb put in the recycling bin because she was concerned about the environment. At the Christmas party, Sharon got drunk on vodka punch and disappeared partway through Richard's slurred rendition of 'My heart will go on'. Barb went looking for Sharon, who was supposed to be shielding her from Marty, and found her in the stationery cupboard locking faces with the temp. Barb was reminded of the scene in *Beaches* where Barbara Hershey's character barricades herself in an aeroplane toilet after a fight with Bette Midler's character. Prior to this, they had been in a fancy department store, ostensibly shopping but mostly fighting: something about the fundamental incompatibility of careers and reproduction. In the stationery cupboard there was a tearful confrontation, during which the temp curled up and fell asleep. Down the hall Richard, now joined by Paula, was doing surprisingly well with the Kenny Rogers and Dolly Parton duet 'Islands in the stream'. Sharon apologised and Barb readjusted her shoulder pads; they went back to the party. Two months later,

Sharon was transferred to the inventory department on level five. They didn't see much of each other after that.

(after *Office, part of liquid nature* by David Jolly)

When We Were Young

Before the days of the long grass. Lounging in the lobby, finding love in all the wrong places.

In the afternoons there was a slow bleed of traffic —
Along the street — On the facades of the tall buildings. In the dining room the waiter fumbling the plates, forgetting his lines. And the tables slightly askew, mutton in the sugar bowl. She had turned her gaze toward the fire escape, thin gaps in the walls, through which the hyacinths could be seen.

Outside, the mild summer air, faint sky, fading out.
Washes of colour
At this hour
On this day.

In the room, with its view; that stubborn agility of youth — fair head turning on its stalk. Damp walls, the open door
Overcome by salt dunes.

And time looming in from the highway, sinking in great waves.

Out on the street — only the wind and the grass,
bending in the shadow of the closed hotel — and only
these things were young.

(after *Hotel, part of liquid nature* by David Jolly)

Education Gallery

11

Mutlu Çerkez

Untitled: 17 April 2023 2004

oil on canvas

40.5 × 30 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

Stuart Ringholt

Everything I own 2002

artist book

edition 5/10

22 × 14.5 × 1 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

Sam George and Lisa Radford's *The dugong sublime* is an epic absurdist poem with multiple interconnecting and intertwined cultural and historical references, narratives and ideas. George and Radford's episodic project began with the selection of two self-portraits: a painted self-

portrait by Mutlu Çerkez, *Untitled: 17 April 2023* and Stuart Ringholt's *Everything I own*, a bound book containing an inventory of everything that the artist owned in the year 2002.

While discussing the approach that they would take in creating their ekphrastic poem as part of this exhibition, George posed the question to Radford, 'What is the purpose of poetry?'; however, a slip of the tongue turned this question into 'What is the porpoise of poetry?', at which point their investigation took an oceanic turn. Responding to their selected artworks through processes of association, intuition, emotion and sensation, the artists soon replaced the porpoise with the dugong, a gentle, highly social sea creature that is of significance in numerous cultures and vulnerable to over-exploitation – vulnerability and social care being qualities that George and Radford identify in Çerkez's and Ringholt's approaches to art practice.

Felicity Mangan's score for *The dugong sublime* is, in part, based on the echo sounding language of chirps, whistles and barks that dugongs use underwater in order to communicate. The artists made numerous attempts to swim with a dugong, an experience they had anticipated would be an encounter with the sublime. However, each attempt was thwarted by rolling travel restrictions and they turned their attention locally to Port Phillip Bay – to look for a dugong in a place that they knew the animals cannot be found.

While undertaking an artist's residency at the Quarantine Station, Police Point, in the Point Nepean National Park, George recorded video footage of the sea floor that now forms part of this presentation. This recording conveys an absence as much as it documents the marine environment. During one of their stays in Point Nepean, the artists came upon a number of old film reels held in the Queenscliff Maritime Museum, each of which was shot in the area. Among the reels are a copy of the post-apocalyptic science fiction film *On the beach* (1959) and the film version of the well-known play *Hotel Sorrento* (1995) by Hannie Rayson, which engages with Australia's place in the world and the enduring impact of cultural cringe.

Paired with the footage of the sea floor are scenes of Gregory Peck's character in *On the beach*, Commander Dwight Lionel Towers, seen peering through a submarine periscope looking for signs of humanity. It is a sequence that ironically underscores the artists' and their collaborators' open-ended exploration and search, with its multiple diversions and ellipses and no particular destination in mind but, instead, a series of natural phenomena, fragments of histories, and ideas alive with possibility.

Sam George & Lisa Radford

The Dugong Sublime 2021

two-channel video installation and accompanying performance with Veronica Franco v Instagram

bronze nipples; sound by Felicity Mangan;

performance development with Evelyn Pohl and

Yundi Wang; video adaptation of *On the beach*, 1959;

script adaptation from *Hotel Sorrento*, 1990

3.58 minutes

Courtesy of the artists

Project Gallery

12

Tracey Moffatt

Birth certificate, 1962 from the series *Scarred for life I* 1994

photolithograph

edition 19/50

80 × 60 cm

Charm alone, 1965 from the series *Scarred for life I* 1994

photolithograph

edition 23/50

80 × 60 cm

Doll birth, 1972 from the series *Scarred for life I* 1994

photolithograph

edition 23/50

80 × 60 cm

Heart attack, 1970 from the series *Scarred for life I* 1994

photolithograph

edition 23/50

80 × 60 cm

Job hunt, 1976 from the series *Scarred for life I* 1994

photolithograph

edition 23/50

80 × 60 cm

Mother's Day, 1975 from the series *Scarred for life I*
1994
photolithograph
edition 23/50
80 × 60 cm

Telecam guys, 1977 from the series *Scarred for life I*
1994
photolithograph
edition 23/50
80 × 60 cm

The Wizard of Oz, 1956 from the series *Scarred for life I*
1994
photolithograph
edition 23/50
80 × 60 cm

Useless, 1974 from the series *Scarred for life I* 1994
photolithograph
edition 23/50
80 × 60 cm

Always the sheep, 1987 from the series *Scarred for life II* 1999
photolithograph
edition 35/60
80 × 60 cm

Brother was mother, 1983 from the series *Scarred for life II* 1999

photolithograph

edition 35/60

80 × 60 cm

Door dash, 1979 from the series *Scarred for life II* 1999

photolithograph

edition 35/60

80 × 60 cm

Homemade hand-knit, 1958 from the series *Scarred for life II* 1999

photolithograph

edition 35/60

80 × 60 cm

Mother's reply, 1976 from the series *Scarred for life II* 1999

photolithograph

edition 35/60

80 × 60 cm

Pantyhose arrest, 1973 from the series *Scarred for life II* 1999

photolithograph

edition 35/60

80 × 60 cm

Piss bags, 1978 from the series *Scarred for life II* 1999

photolithograph

edition 35/60

80 × 60 cm

Responsible but dreaming, 1984 from the series
Scarred for life II 1999
photolithograph
edition 35/60
80 × 60 cm

Scissor cut, 1980 from the series *Scarred for life II*
1999
photolithograph
edition 35/60
80 × 60 cm

Suicide threat, 1982 from the series *Scarred for life II*
1999
photolithograph
edition 35/60
80 × 60 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection
Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

Brad Aaron Modlin

Compassion 2020
poem
Courtesy of the artist

First Floor Gallery

13

Raquel Ormella

130 Davey Sreet, Hobart (1/3) 2004–05

whiteboard, permanent and whiteboard markers,
telephone book, cibachrome

188 × 131 × 57 cm

130 Davey Sreet, Hobart (2/3) 2004–05

whiteboard, permanent and whiteboard markers,
masking tape

120.5 × 180.5 cm

130 Davey Sreet, Hobart (3/3) 2004–05

whiteboard, permanent and whiteboard markers,
masking tape

61 × 91 × 6 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018–19

Simryn Gill

6 Ivanhoe Street, Marrickville (Maria's Garden) 2021

ink on paper, pins, glue

93 sheets, each 240 × 45 cm, installation dimensions
variable

Courtesy of the artist and Utopia Art Sydney

Simryn Gill's new work *6 Ivanhoe Street, Marrickville (Maria's garden)* is made in response to Raquel Ormella's *130 Davey Street, Hobart (1/3)*, and consists of impressions taken from inked plants, and parts of plants, by an action of frottage – in this instance, by rubbing with a hard tool onto sheets of paper pressed over the inked material. The work, taken together, is a record of a garden planted by Gill's neighbour, Maria, who lived most of her adult life at the address in the title. Maria's garden held numerous fruit trees and vines, with some productive shrubs, a few flowering plants and succulents, reminiscent of gardens in Italy, her familial homeland. At the time when this work was made, in the period after Maria died and before the property was demolished for development, it also included a crop of exotic weeds.

Drawn in permanent marker pen on a selection of office whiteboards, Ormella depicts the Wilderness Society's Hobart Campaign Centre as it appeared one day in the early 2000s. These skilfully executed images, created using office equipment and stationery (rather than art supplies), reveal a cluttered NGO workplace focused on utility, campaign administration and planning. The unremarkable appearance of the office space contrasts with the magnificence of the natural environments that the society has campaigned to preserve throughout its almost 50-year history.

As a response to Ormella's series of whiteboard drawings, Gill's Maria's garden is a drawing of a place made using its own substance: direct prints from plants, a process also known as 'nature printing'. As a result of the pressure of the frottage, many of the plants left smears and traces of their sap and juices on the paper.

Pinned through the print-drawings are typewritten magic incantations spoken by Trobriand Islanders over their yam gardens at various stages of planting, growth and harvest, collected and transliterated into English by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski in his two-volume study, *Coral gardens and their magic*, first published in 1935.

14

Mira Gojak

Prop for instabilities 2 2012

wire, steel rod, copper tubing, aluminium strapping,
wood, masking tape

250 × 130 × 100 cm

Floating eclipse 2013–14

gouache, acrylic, fibre-tipped pen on paper

3 parts, each 150 × 100 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018–19

Lisa Gorton

PROP 2021

poem

Courtesy of the artist

15

John Nixon

Colour – rhythm, film composition 1 2006

enamel on board

45 × 60 cm

Colour – rhythm, film composition 2 2006

enamel on board

45 × 60 cm

Colour – rhythm, film composition 3 2006

enamel on board

45 × 60 cm

Colour – rhythm, film composition 4 2006

enamel on canvas

45 × 60 cm

Colour – rhythm, film composition 5 2006

enamel on board

45 × 60 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018–19

Rose Nolan

Flat flower work 2021

synthetic polymer paint on cardboard and found boxes

109 parts, installation dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery,
Melbourne

Presenting her multi-part installation piece *Flat flower work* alongside John Nixon's *Colour – rhythm, film composition 1–5*, Rose Nolan observes the deep creative kinship that she shared with the late John Nixon for more than 30 years.

Bound by similar interests in experimental painting and the legacies of constructivism and minimalism, the artists met while Nolan was a student at the Victorian College of the Arts. Nolan visited Nixon regularly at Art Projects, the first of several exhibition spaces that Nixon established throughout the course of his life. He became a mentor to Nolan, including her work in numerous artistic, curatorial and publishing ventures, as well as exhibiting alongside her as a peer. Nolan and Nixon regularly discussed ideas and exchanged artworks, and on these occasions Nixon always requested one of Nolan's flat flower works. For this exhibition, Nolan presents a *Flat flower work*, created especially for Nixon, as a love poem (from one artist to another), a commemoration of their enduring connection and in memory of Nixon's singular and irreplaceable contribution to artistic practice and community in Melbourne.

Newell Harry*The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady: Part I* 1975–2012

two parts: banner ink screenprint on Tongan Ngatu, unique, sheet 232 × 80 cm, framed 245 × 92 cm; framed Lambda print on Kodak lustre, unique, image 55 × 79 cm, framed 63 × 86.5 cm

Untitled: White / Conundrum 2021

two-part mixed media installation

part one: archival inkjet prints on Kodak lustre paper of 8 restored photographs from found archive of 35 mm Kodachrome slides, found text, artist's stamp images each 20 × 45 cm; framed each 43 × 63 cm;

part two: 80 selected Kodachrome slides, slide projector, wood projection block, steel and acrylic table table 76 × 78 × 9.2 cm; projection block 18 × 25 × 9.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

James 'Jimmy' Green*Untitled (Sydney Harbour)* 1972

watercolour on paper

sheet 23 × 29.2 cm (irreg.); framed 43 × 63 cm

Elizabeth 'Lily' Green

Table Mountain, Cape Town (from memory) c.1980s
gouache on paper
sheet 18 × 27 cm; framed 63 × 43 cm

Collection of Newell Harry

17

Rosalie Gascoigne

Conundrum 1990
sawn retro-reflective road signs on wood
183 × 152.5 cm
The University of Melbourne Art Collection
Michael Buxton Collection
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

John Nixon

Untitled white 2011
enamel on canvas and wood
62 × 76 × 4 cm
The University of Melbourne Art Collection
Michael Buxton Collection
Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

Newell Harry's project takes Rosalie Gascoigne's *Conundrum* and John Nixon's *Untitled white* as his reference points, titling his project as a confluence of theirs: *Untitled: white / conundrum*.

Drawing Gascoigne's and Nixon's works into dialogue, Harry then presents them alongside an array of found, modified and recontextualised elements.

Eight new photographs with colour bars have been paired with dictation tests (found online) from the era of the White Australia policy, which have been grammatically altered by the artist but otherwise remain unchanged. A slide show of 80 found Kodachromes (possibly by a dentist named John Sheedy), taken between the 1950s and the 1970s of travels throughout Europe and across Australia, capture scenes of what Harry refers to as the photographer's 'grand tours'. Two watercolours, one painted by Harry's late grandfather James 'Jimmy' Green, an amateur artist who enjoyed painting seascapes and scenes of Sydney Harbour, and the other by his grandmother Elizabeth 'Lily' Green, are presented alongside a work by Harry titled *The black saint and the sinner lady: part I*, which comprises a text banner paired with a photograph of the artist's mother and aunt at the wedding of an interracial couple in Fremantle, Western Australia, in 1975.

Through this combination and complex interplay of imagery and elements, Harry creates a nuanced

dialogue that engages with notions of distance – between places and people, value and meaning – and with ideas of exclusion and omission.

Describing his project, Harry said in selecting Gascoigne's and Nixon's works,

I am interested in the formal similarities between the pieces, but also very distinct differences and it's that tension I feel I'm responding to. Gascoigne to me is 'local' and Nixon the 'international' avant-gardist rooted in the European modernist tradition. In some sense, the schism between the 'local' and 'international' runs through much Australian art, reflecting a conundrum of where and how we place ourselves. I guess it's also a generational thing, having never felt the desire to spend extended amounts of time in Europe or the US as past generations of Australian artists did, or indeed the 'unknown' photographer. As a first generation African-Australian I've always felt more at 'home' with the art and culture of the region we inhabit over the northern hemisphere. Anyway, these are some thoughts I've grappled with responding to these works, both of which I admire greatly for different reasons. (Newell Harry, 19 April 2021 email to Melissa Keys)

Mitch Cairns & Peter Tyndall

Mitch Cairns

Figure/Ground for Buxton Contemporary 2021

archival digital prints, paper serviette, magnets

3 parts, installation dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Label	Title	detail
		A Person Looks At A Work Of Art/ someone looks at something...

LOGOS/HA HA

Medium	A Person Looks At A Work Of Art/ someone looks at something... CULTURAL CONSUMPTION PRODUCTION
--------	---

Date	-1984-2008-
------	-------------

Artist	Peter Tyndall
--------	---------------

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's

Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton

2018-19

Simryn Gill

Throwback 2007

interior parts of a 1980s Tata truck cast in termite mound soils, river clay, laterite, seashells, fruit skins (banana, mango, mangosteen), leaves (bodhi, sea almond, durian), coconut bark and fibre, areca nut casings, kapok, lalang grass, banana trunk, bougainvillea flowers, gelatin glue, damar resin, milk
82 parts, installation dimensions variable

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

Evelyn Araluen

Throwback Inventory 2021

poem

Courtesy of the artist

Louise Weaver

Hiding in plain sight (Witch grass nest) 2011–12

polystyrene, epoxy resin, linen, calico, felt, raffia,
linen thread, deconstructed and repurposed cane
lasts from Akari light sculpture designed by Isamu
Noguchi, shells, plastic, room fragrance

200 × 125 × 125 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton
2018–19

Kevin Brophy

The Soldier's Dream: Hiding in Plain Sight 2021

poem

video by Oskar Weimar, colour, sound

8:39 minutes

Courtesy of the artist