



Justene Williams | *Costume relic painting* [detail] | 2014 | plastic tablecloths, various tapes | Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

SPRING EXHIBITION SUITE 2018

INTRODUCTION

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WELCOME TO SPRING AT THE GALLERY

As the flowers start to bloom in the Gallery garden, we present a suite of exhibitions, all full of joyous colour, life and movement.

In the Main Gallery we join with Museums & Galleries of NSW and Artspace to present Justene Williams - *The Curtain Breathed Deeply*. Justene Williams, is a major Australian artist with a deep roots in Western Sydney, having lived, been educated and exhibited in this region. *The Curtain Breathed Deeply* marks a very welcome return of Justene's work to this Gallery. Her installation is a riotous assemblage which speaks to loss and love in the suburbs. It is a personal exploration of life with a very happy ending!

In the Lounge Room Gallery is recent work by Blue Mountains artist Samuel Quinteros. The works draw from Samuels's combined portraiture work and tableaus inspired by both the natural world and myth. It is art which attempts to produce an 'ecstatic feeling of being alive' and, in its fantastical setting and themes, it produces the sense of 'dreaming when awake'.

In Lewers House Gallery is the work of senior Australian artist Leonora Howlett - *the Head and the Heart*. The exhibition surveys over six decades of the artist's diverse practice. Having started as a talented art student, Leonora moved easily in Sydney art circles where she became a member of the 'Imitation Realist' movement. International travel and feminism led Leonora to a life-long investigation and appreciation of women's art and craft, and Islamic and Mexican art. Underappreciated in an art world enamoured of male heroic artist figures, the work on show reveals a depth and love of colour, light and abstraction.

Due to popular demand the Gallery has extended the exhibition of posters from Garage Graphix Community Arts Group, produced in Mount Druitt, during the 1980s.

As always our thanks to the artists involved in this suite of exhibitions, and to the team of dedicated installers who produce such a beautiful result. Our thanks to Penrith Symphony Orchestra who have provided a trio performance for our Exhibition opening in recognition of Samuel Quinteros' portrait of Penrith Symphony Orchestra Composer and Conductor, Paul Terracini.

Please be aware that over the next few months, the Gallery is undergoing major upgrades, with a new café being built, and with improvements to our Gallery lighting, air-conditioning and collection store. Whilst this will pose some immediate challenges, such improvements make for a better visitor experience.

Dr Lee-Anne Hall

Director

Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest

August 2018



Justene Williams | Yves Klein Eyes

[video still] | 2014 | Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

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Justene Williams | *The Curtain Breathed Deeply*
installation view Artspace | Sydney | 2014 | Photo: Zan Wimberley

JUSTENE WILLIAMS

THE CURTAIN BREATHED DEEPLY

Museums & Galleries of NSW was first approached by Artspace, Sydney to consider a national tour of Western-Sydney based Justene Williams' *The Curtain Breathed Deeply* after it was shown successfully there in 2014. We jumped at the chance – not only is Justene's work packed to the brim with joy, extravagance and fantasy with immediate visual appeal but it also challenges galleries – their staff and audiences – with, what could be described as, its theatre of excess and un-conventional methods of display. After years of preparation and funding applications, *The Curtain Breathed Deeply* toured nationally, visiting major metropolitan as well as regional centres in Western Australia, Northern Territory, Queensland and New South Wales and culminates here at Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, fittingly returning to its Western Sydney home.

We've had the pleasure of speaking with Justene on a number of occasions throughout the tour thus far and have found her thoughts poignant and amusing, some of which I'll share with you here. *The Curtain Breathed Deeply* is an immersive suite of video installation, elaborate handmade sets and sculptural elements. Justene is known for her lavish, sensorial work that often combines live performance with multifaceted installation, sculpture and video.

Her work here, as in much of her practice, draws on many references from art history to pop-culture, but universal themes of familial love, sexuality and death feature strongly. Much of her work resonates with her personal life and experiences. The exhibition broadly pays tribute to her father, who passed away from lung cancer as she had begun to make this work, but also to her hope for the future:

'I believe that the unreal and the real can come together, that everything is at once unreal and real, melding together. Art can make magic, it is transformative, meditative, full of ritual and hypnotic. Sometimes things you want in your personal life can be made real. I wanted things to happen in my personal life so I made it in the artwork – a boyfriend and a baby. And they happened.' Justene Williams

The curtain or *Costume Relic Painting*, 2014 forms the central focus point for the exhibition and this suite of work. For Justene, the curtain nods to the hospital curtain that marked the final stages of her father's life but also references 'systems and structures of belief and social rites such as weddings and funerals where certain conventions take place.' Curtains have an array of meanings and purposes, both literal and metaphorical; as a cloth to obscure light, as protective barriers for selective concealment or distortion, as the backdrop to a stage or a divider between rooms. Curtains are as much about movement and life as death.

Like Justene's curtain, many of the sculptural elements in *The Curtain Breathed Deeply* are constructed from recycled or reused materials or readily available hardware and variety shop supplies. As the titles *Performance Relic Painting* or *Assisted Performance Sculpture* suggest, they are often the remains of sets constructed for her performances, as documented in many of the video works on display, or even repurposed costumes given new life:

'My Dad owned a wrecking yard and many of my childhood memories are weekends and holidays spent playing games in the discarded, disused cars – pressing buttons, playing with the gears, the dual role of play and work. Dad would also never throw anything out. If the toaster broke, Dad would fix it. Objects have a history, a life and an energy that resonates from the patina or the way it has worn. I like the overlooked, the redundant and the no longer used and am interested in reanimating that energy and 'assisting' these objects or relics through performance. I somehow bring new life to them – they are assisted ready mades. The titles for my work originate from these concepts.'

Alongside her curtain there are screens of varying size and construction; plastic tarpaulins, cardboard, rope and wood. Functionally, they act as pathways through the exhibition, guiding and propelling the viewer from one thought to the next or from one 'room' to another. Justene has remarked that the works in *The Curtain Breathed Deeply* are divided into 'rooms', red being the bedroom, green being the backyard and the garage – where she lives:

JUSTENE WILLIAMS

THE CURTAIN BREATHED DEEPLY

'I literally live in the garage, yet now it is called the flat. It's circumstantial. Seriously I do live in the garage! But pop culture is full of references to 'hanging out' in the garage or the 'man cave'. These are places of transformation and change, where things are made, a place to potter, a space to make and create, to fix and tinker. Garages are important social and spiritual places for kids, men and women alike.'

Garages are one such element of the Australian suburban vernacular that fascinates Justene, a subject that resounds with visitors from Darwin to Ipswich or Bega, and has evolved in the presentation of the exhibition at each gallery it visits. But what happens behind the visible suburban surface is also of intense interest:

'On the surface suburbs are places of manicured lawns, picket fences, kit homes but what goes on behind these veneers is often very different. The weirdest things happen. So this work has holes, peeping and peering holes in the 'cheeses' and the curtains. This alludes to the voyeuristic nature of suburban lives and the temporary structures of concealment that are put up to hide the unusual, atypical or seemingly abnormal.'

For M&G NSW, it's been such a pleasure to share this exhibition with communities across Australia over the last three years and work so closely with the lovely and talented artist herself. Justene's work touches on so many of the experiences we share as human beings today and we hope it brings you joy, wonder and a little magic too.

Rachel Arndt

Gallery Programs & Touring Exhibitions Manager
Museums & Galleries of NSW

The Curtain Breathed Deeply was curated and developed by Artspace and is touring nationally in partnership with Museums & Galleries of NSW.

The generous bequest of the Catalyst: Katherine Hannay Visual Arts Commission has enabled Artspace to support Justene Williams in the development of this major new work at a pivotal moment in her career. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

[#JusteneWilliams](#) [#TheCurtainBreathedDeeply](#) [#SpringExhibitionSuite](#)



Justene Williams | *The Joy of Life After Matisse/Madonna/Marcel*
[video still] | 2014 | Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

JUSTENE WILLIAMS

THE CURTAIN BREATHED DEEPLY



ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Justene Williams [b. 1970] lives and works in Brisbane, formerly a Western Sydney artist, she has exhibited widely throughout Australia and internationally.

Selected solo exhibitions include: *Handbag Hammer Meditation*, La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse, Montréal, 2013; *Static Ballet*, Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, 2013; *She came over signing like a drainpipe shaking spoon infused mixers*, a public work for Christchurch Art Gallery, 2013; *Turnstile Heaped on Pour Down*, St Paul St Gallery, AUT Auckland University, 2012; and *BIGHEAD GARBAGEFACE GUARDS GHOST DERR SONATA*, Contemporary Project Space, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2009.

Selected group exhibitions include: *The National: New Australian Art*, Carriageworks, Sydney, 2017; *The future is already here - it's just not evenly distributed*, 20th Biennale of Sydney, 2016; and *Before and After Science: 2010 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2010.

Her work is held in numerous collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, National Gallery of Australia and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. She is represented by Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney.

Justene Williams | *Assisted performance sculpture*
2014 | paint, wood, tape, plastic, cardboard, various materials
Courtesy the artist and Sarah Cottier Gallery

#JusteneWilliams #TheCurtainBreathedDeeply #SpringExhibitionSuite

JUSTENE WILLIAMS

THE CURTAIN BREATHED DEEPLY

A major monograph accompanies the exhibition, featuring essays by dance theorist and University of New South Wales Senior Lecturer Dr Erin Brannigan, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia Curator Anne Loxley, Sydney-based arts writer Pamela Hansford and renowned playwright Lally Katz, with additional contributions from Charlotte Day, Francis E. Parker, Geraldine Kirrihi Barlow, Caraline Douglas and Mark Feary.

LIST OF WORKS



A ceremonial hat worn for eating finger cheese 2014

7 channel video on loop | various durations

CRT television | garbage bags | foam | various materials



In advance of a broken wing 2014

2 channel HD video

Alien animal | 11min 46s

Hunter | 11min 9s



Performance relic painting 2014

Tarpaulin | tape | rope



Assisted performance sculpture 2014

Paint | wood | tape | plastic
cardboard | various materials



Yves Klein Eyes 2014

2 channel HD video

Blame it on the rain | 9min 37s

Owls | 4min 54s

Plywood

JUSTENE WILLIAMS

THE CURTAIN BREATHED DEEPLY

LIST OF WORKS CTD.



Costume relic painting 2014

Plastic tablecloths | various tapes



Assisted performance relics 2014

Above ground pool | assorted coins
| wood | string | tape |
cardboard | various materials



Santa was a Psychopomp 2014

Single channel HD video
16min 27s



Given That/You put a spell on mine/Uterus 2014

6 channel HD video installation
Hairy Cunt Ball | 12min 52s
You put a spell on mine | 12min 36s
Bangle | 15mins 31s
Given That | 9 mins 52s
Hairy Cunt Ball 2 | 13mins 59s
Helicopter | 8 min
Fluorescent lights | cardboard |
various materials



The Joy of Life after Matisse/ Madonna/Marcel 2014

3 channel HD video
Matisse | 9 min 55s
Madonna | 10 min 5s
Marcel | 10 min 10s
Tape | foam core | paper | paint |
various materials

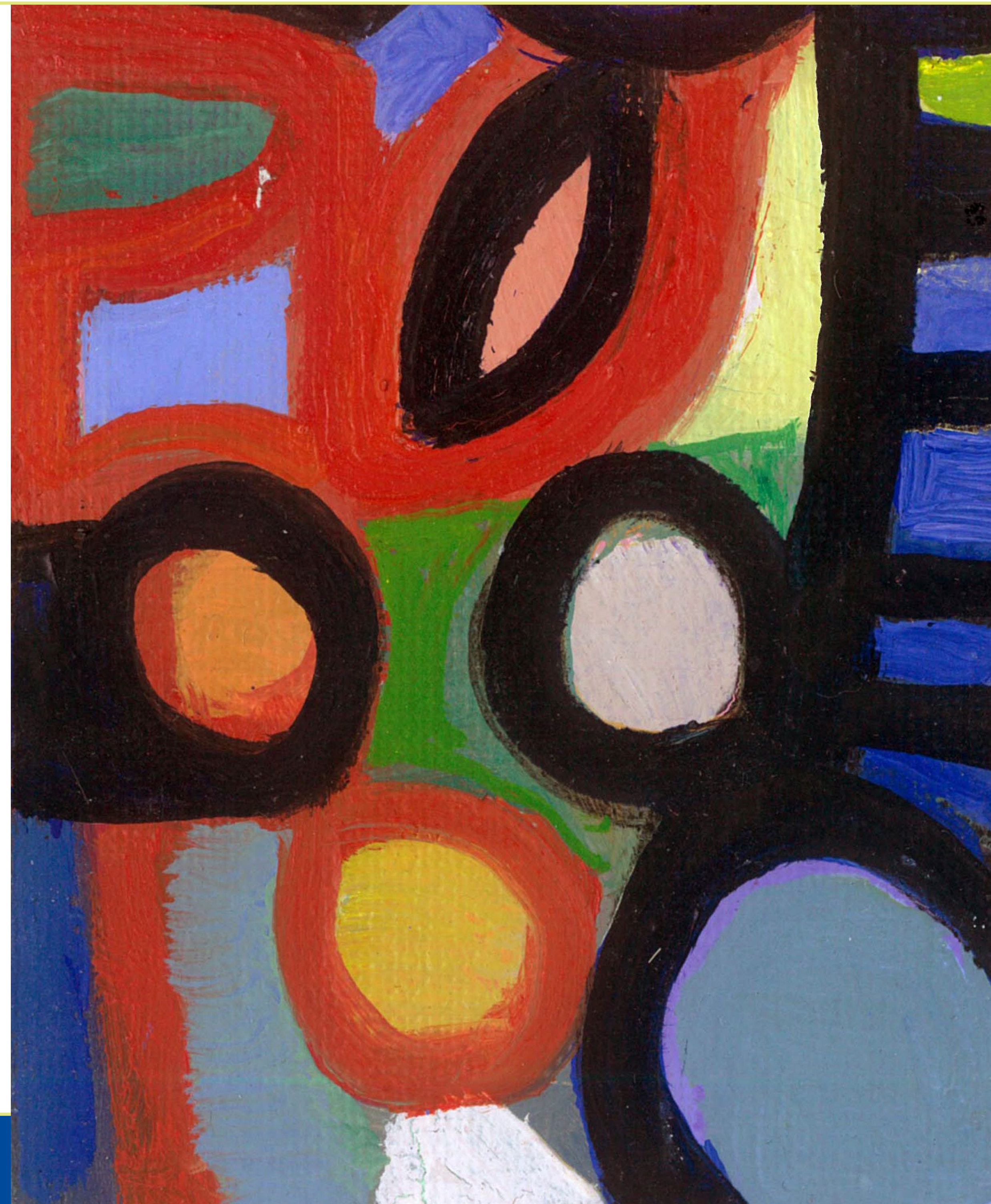
LEONORA HOWLETT

THE HEAD AND THE HEART

Leonora Howlett is a senior Australian artist who has maintained her practice across six decades of social, political and cultural change. During this time, Leonora's work has bridged many false dichotomies established by enforced hierarchies between cultural notions of masculine and feminine, high and low art and Eastern and Western aesthetics. Within her practice Leonora continually explores creative concepts and tackles aesthetic challenges in the quest to reach the heights of authenticity as can be expressed through the visual art form. For Leonora, art is about creating a visual language that can '*communicate on a non-verbal level those things for which there are no words*'.¹ While benefiting from the study of both traditional skills and modern abstraction, it can be argued that it is Leonora's receptiveness to creativity as an open-ended conceptual arena that continues to fuel her career.

Leonora was a young student during a time of great change. Winning a National Art School scholarship in 1956 saw Leonora studied in a period of post WWII optimism under influential teachers such as John Passmore, Peter Laverty, Godfrey Miller and John Olsen. Following the upheaval caused by WWII, there was a general consensus that the new-found sense of national freedom would encourage fresh ways of critiquing and reshaping society into an exciting, forward looking modern world, and the art scene was no different. For the first time, students from a broader range of socio-economic backgrounds were able to enrol in art school. This was, in particular, a critical time for women to undertake formal studies, which in turn revolutionised the student dynamics of both social class and gender.

While still a student at the National Art School, Leonora became a founding member of the Imitation Realists along with fellow classmates, including Mike Brown and Colin Lanceley.² Although short-lived, and somewhat little-known outside of the art world, the Imitation Realists have left a substantial legacy, in the conceptual development and maturity of the Australian art scene. According to the famed Australian critic Robert Hughes the Imitation Realists were the *Urban Guerrillas* of Australian art.³ During the late 1950s, the friends frequently met at Claridge's, corner café in Taylor Square run by Viennese-born migrant Magda Kohn.



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Magda was not only sympathetic to the young creatives, but actively saved and managed an archive of their work. It was at Claridge's that they met the older Ross Crothwell who introduced them to the gritty work of European artists Jean Dubuffet and Giuseppe Capogrossi, as well as the ideas of fellow New Zealand artist Theo Schoon, in particular his appreciation of Maori art.

For this group of fledgling artists, art was the means through which the pursuit of an authentic expression of modern urban life was possible. The pursuit process was a collaborative exploration of ideas driven by a belief in the power of many as opposed to the individual. Leonora recalls,

It was in Magda's café that the famous game of aesthetic chess started, by moving cigarette butts around in the ash tray to create spatial tensions and compositions. It later became more complicated by scattering assorted objects on the floor, removing one piece to create a better design, then replacing it again somewhere else to improve it once again. It was a serious exercise full of tension and exhilaration, moves by the players were greeted with enthusiasm and various degrees of approval. My most vivid memory is of scattering objects on an old linoleum floor in a room in Ultimo rented by Ross, the pattern used as a background to the moves.⁴

The formation of ideas, for the Imitation Realists, was founded on 'authenticity to time, place and materials'⁵ and was made possible through an openness to experimentation and chance with a degree of playfulness.

While the reinvigorating energy of a new student dynamic generated experiences and opportunities for an alternative mode of creativity, the social mores of the 1950s prevailed into the following decades. Expectations of women's contribution to the arts within a male dominated environment remained tethered to gender prescribed roles and responsibilities. Despite excelling at study, young female students were typically advised that they could not be both an artist and a wife. While Asian art enthusiast Bill Lister openly championed a young Colin Lanceley, he advised Leonora she 'would have to make the choice of being an artist's wife or an artist.' It was, Leonora surmised,

*'hard for people to see the future in a woman painter. In those days it was almost inevitable that she would get sidetracked into having a family and then her inner energies would get diverted into domesticity.'*⁶

After leaving the supportive structure of the art school, changes within the art world also affected the ability for many women artists to achieve and sustain professional visibility. The formation of groups, collectives and prize exhibitions traditionally supported the showing of works by a diverse range of artists. Gallerists, such as Frank Watters and Barry Stern, actively supported and promoted a range of emerging artists, including Leonora's inaugural exhibition held at Barry Stern gallery in 1962. Exhibition openings at this time typically attracted coverage by leading media outlets and reviews published in the press were a daily occurrence. In a review of Leonora's 1962 exhibition, artist and art critic James Gleeson observed that Leonora's firm control over paint was achieved by 'forcing the rebellious colours into still patterns.'⁷ The changing art market, however, saw a shift in the relationship between artists and the gallerists. The modern art market increasingly demanded greater short-term outcomes, and predominately focused on marketing male artists. As evidenced by writer Helen Topliss, cultural funding bodies perpetuated the masculine bias for example the Visual Arts Board of the Australia Council for the Arts granted 99% of the funding to men while 50% of applicants were women⁸ and as late as 1973 there were no works by women artists included in the first Sydney Biennale.⁹

Despite the many challenges of pursuing art as a career, Leonora, like many others incorporated travel as a necessary personal and professional experience. Living in 1960s London for four years enabled visits to Europe and the Middle East where the beauty and balance of Islamic art and design made a lasting impact on Leonora and her practice:

*'I realised, because I'd always been an abstract painter, that this was one of the great abstract traditions... it was the most deeply spiritual art I had seen, and through its symbolism and vibrations of colour, it seemed to have the same effect as Indian music - that power to transport one to another place.'*¹⁰

LEONORA HOWLETT

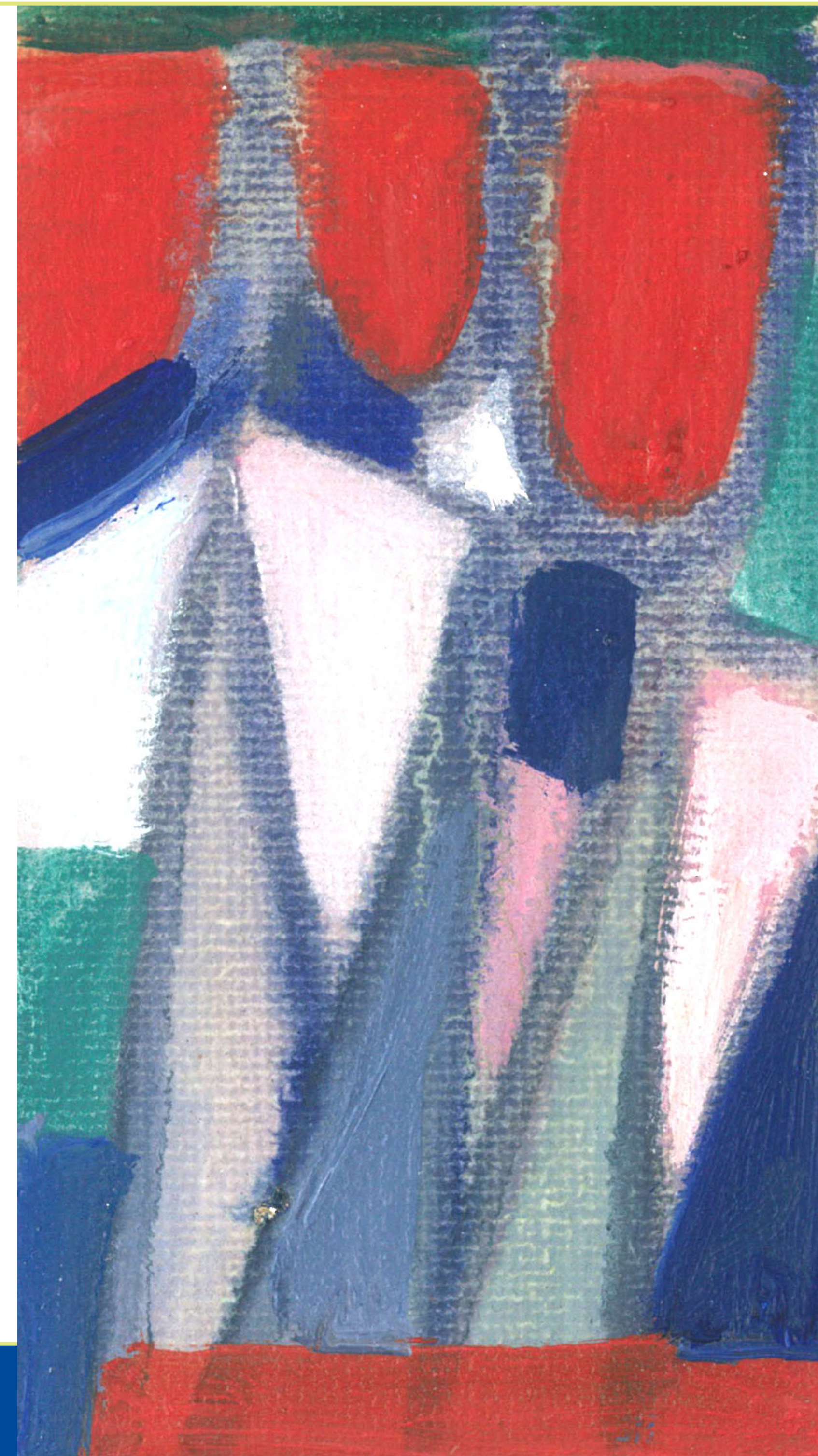
THE HEAD AND THE HEART

For Leonora, 'colour is the language of the soul'¹¹ so the opportunity to both view and study first hand a wealth of work previously only seen in black and white reproductions provided an unquantifiable experience.

With the experiences of her travels and her fascination with Islamic patterning fermenting, Leonora attended the 1975 International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City.¹² Finding a new sense of strength from this pivotal experience Leonora redirected her creative path towards one guided by her own internal perceptions and dialogue. The following year, influenced by Indian miniatures seen while in London, Leonora began to work in opposition to the general 1970s trend, that favoured large-scale, 'masculine' paintings with broad brush swathes of colour, by creating a series of 'miniature' works. While not miniatures in the truest sense, works such as *Interior View* and *Formal Garden*, were small scale works that suggest a captured moment of a larger epoch through the harmonious use of colour and pattern that, although somewhat irregular in shape and form, presents a tight, coherent sense of balance.

By the late 1970s, Leonora's engagement with traditional geometric patterning and modern colour aesthetics led to her painstakingly creative works that morphed geometric abstraction with optical allusion. Although not made as a direct comment within the growing second wave feminism, her body of work including, *Series A - No 1*; *Series B - No 4*; *Series B - No 5* and *Series B - No 6* projects a strong visual alignment with contemporary discourse unpacking the influencing perceptions of gender on traditionally accepted aesthetics.

Following Leonora's exacting engagement with geometric patterning, she began to fragment the formal grid into constellations of shapes all the while retaining symmetry. In works such as *Faded Fragments* [1986] and *Fragments of the Past* [1987] the repetitive geometric patterning of an overall artwork has been reconfigured to present varied individual shapes of diverse patterning. The combination of colour and pattern speaks to the increasing awareness of women's marginalised forms of creativity by constructing an aesthetic alignment with traditional forms of women's art and craft.



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Forming a visual reference to patchwork and quilting, these works composed of fragmented, disparate shapes actually suggest a sense of unity formed from disorder.

The inclusion of doilies as integral elements of Leonora's artwork evident in *Mosaic* [2001] and *Remembering Africa* [2001] draws attention to the artificial cultural division between the high arts and the low crafts. Undeniably perceived as feminine craft, the doily has a long history tied to social customs and moments of personal expression. The art of doily making acts as a thread joining the social history of women's lives across centuries of western culture. Beginning as a practical aid to the presentation of food or the protection of furniture, the design of doilies provided a creative outlet for many. Leonora's awareness of the doily as an intriguing object arose from their continual appearance at the local markets; an indicator of both under-valued skill and changing times.¹³ Interestingly, an aesthetic assessment of the doily reveals a balanced, repetition of geometric shapes, not unlike that valued within formal elements of abstraction, as Leonora explains,

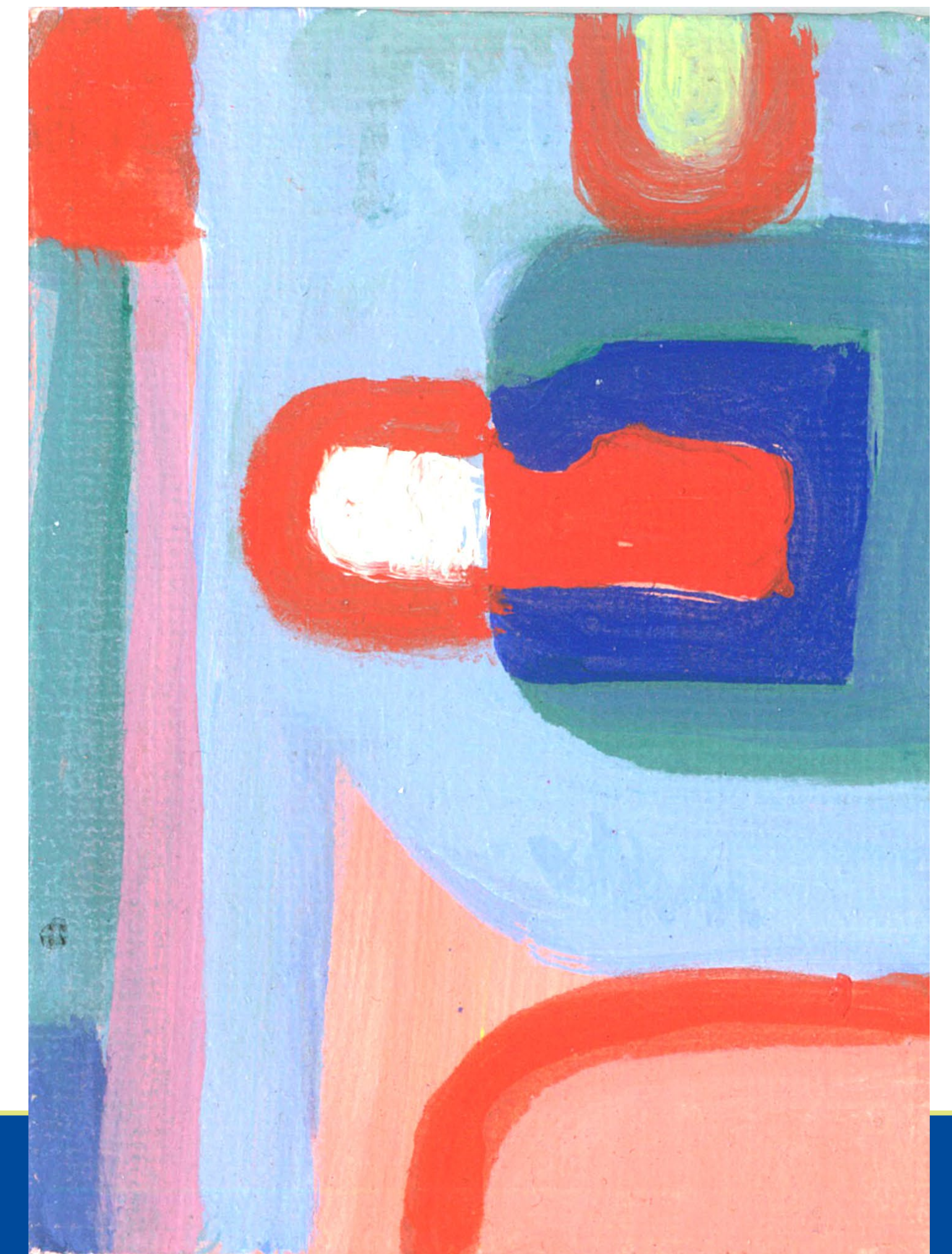
*'My use of doilies was a sort of revelation as I realized how similar in some ways they were to the traditional patterns I saw from other cultures. They were exquisite and often warmly personal dedications to causes. I only ever used the ones I had multiples of.'*¹⁴

The words of 17th century French philosopher Blaise Pascal, *'The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing'* is much-loved wisdom for Leonora. It is therefore unsurprising that watercolour has become a favoured medium. *'Watercolour is'*, Leonora explains, *'so luminous and flexible.'*¹⁵ The masterful handling of this 'free-spirited' medium requires a degree of acceptance that the paint is, to a point, uncontrollable and requires what Leonora calls both the 'intuitive and irrational components of the brain'.¹⁶ Furthermore, her more recent focus on the painterly qualities of watercolour on paper speaks to her ongoing engagement with the principles of chance and play she had enthusiastically embraced at the beginning of her career.

The longevity of Leonora Howlett's artistic career has been sustained by an overarching commitment to the pursuit of authenticity. The journey has meant that Leonora's creative repertoire includes many paths, some of which have been travelled down for only a short period of time. In the creative world, these divergent paths can often be perceived as false starts or 'mistakes' within the overall trajectory of an artistic career. However, for Leonora it is the opposite. The many paths of enquiry have all, in turn, added to the overall wealth of experiences and learning that has underpinned, sustained and driven her creative focus.

Shirley Daborn

July 2018



LEONORA HOWLETT

THE HEAD AND THE HEART

ESSAY BY SHIRLEY DABORN – FOOTNOTES

- 1 Leonora Howlett, artist's statement, Leonora Howlett – from the Head and the Heart, 2018.
- 2 Leonora and Colin Lanceley had a personal relationship during this time and married in 1961. Although the marriage was short-lived their partnership over the preceding years helped to establish the strong idealistic parameters that shaped the Imitation Realists.
- 3 Robert Hughes quoted in Bronwyn Watson, 'The Urban Guerilla the Art History Books Forgot', The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 September 1993, p. 21.
- 4 Leonora Howlett, Artist's own notes on the Imitation Realists.
- 5 Leonora Howlett, Artist's own notes on the Imitation Realists.
- 6 Leonora Howlett quoted in Bronwyn Watson, 'The Urban Guerilla the Art History Books Forgot', The Sydney Morning Herald, 7 September 1993, p. 21.
- 7 James Gleeson, 'Colour Gets Out of Hand', Art, 1962.
- 8 Helen Topliss, Modernism and Feminism: Australian Women Artists 1900-1940" Modernism and Feminism: Australian Women Artists 1900-1940, Craftsman House, Australia, 1996, p. 21
- 9 Helen Topliss, pp. 29-30.
- 10 Leonora Howlett in Linda van Nunen, 'Art', artist's archives.
- 11 In conversation with Leonora Howlett 23.05.18.
- 12 On her return from London, Leonora was commissioned to design a postage stamp for International Women's Year and later that year she presented a paper at the International Women's Year conference as part of an Australian delegation.
- 13 In conversation with Leonora Howlett 23.05.18. Leonora spoke of finding a large selection of doilies depicting Australiana flora and fauna.
- 14 Answers to questions asked of Leonora and received 9 July 2018.
- 15 Answers to questions asked of Leonora and received 9 July 2018.
- 16 In conversation with Leonora Howlett 23.05.18.



LEONORA HOWLETT

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ARTIST STATEMENT

Art like life is a response to the random and uncontrollable universe that mystifies and confronts us with its order and disorder and possible meaning fleetingly comprehended.

So many art movements in the last century have come and gone with bewildering rapidity expressing aspects of the constantly changing world as we try to assimilate so much newness to our daily lives. Art which moves us transforms our lives, giving us a fixed position in time expressed in forms from basic mark making to transcendental experience.

For me the most compelling subject of art is the eternal quest for the answers - if there are any - to the mysteries of existence, and this I think has been the subject of all great art from ancient to modern times whether representational or non-figurative.

My work has been mainly involved with abstract painting. It is painting which is not directly derived from a visual experience but is constructed as a personal language of form with usually no obvious reference to the actual world.

By its very nature abstract painting is difficult to speak about as its subject is often those things which are nameless and vague and which communicate in a non logical way. It is not a search of 'find the hidden image' but is a visual language communicating on a non verbal level those things for which there are no words.

LEONORA HOWLETT

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BIOGRAPHY

After being awarded a scholarship to the National Art School, Leonora graduated with a Diploma of Painting in 1960. At that time art students studied the traditional forms of pictorial expression including portraiture, life, still life, tempera painting, composition, design, and sculpture – all with an emphasis on drawing. Towards the end of the course students were introduced to abstract painting with John Olsen.

After graduating she was employed as a secondary school art teacher for five years before leaving for a prolonged period of travel overseas. Upon her return to Australia, she worked as the Information Officer at the Art Gallery of New South Wales and in 1980, she and her partner launched a very successful stained glass business whose commissions have included windows for St Francis in Paddington and Sydney Grammar.

Leonora has exhibited her work regularly in Australian private and Regional galleries [12 solo exhibitions]; overseas in India, U.S.A, Hungary, Korea, and her work is held in numerous public and private collections including the National Archives Canberra. Her commissioned designs include the Reserve Bank of Australia, the Australian postage stamp for International Women's Year [1975]. Her life and work have been reviewed in the Sydney Morning Herald, Art Monthly and Kalimat Literary Magazine.



LEONORA HOWLETT

THE HEAD AND THE HEART

INTERVIEW

with Curator, Dr Shirley Daborn, via correspondence, July 2018.

Did you come from an artistic family?

No, I did not come from an artistic family although like many children there were the obligatory visits to the Museum and the Art Gallery every year. Higher education was something to aspire to and, as art was something I loved, I gained a scholarship to the National Art School and set the course for my life.

Were there any artists that particularly inspired you or influenced you early on in your career?

If early in my career means really early... I remember May Gibbs and the Gumnut Babies and Blinky Bill. Children's books had marvellous illustrations... Dorothy Wall for one... and of course 'The Magic Pudding' by Norman Lindsay... As a child I once came upon a Bible with the most detailed etchings... which I came to realize later in life were by Gustave Dore... gruesome images.

As a student, artists such as Passmore... Godfrey Miller... who I still love... Ian Fairweather... were inspirational not only for their work but their determination to live outside social norms. John Olsen returned to Sydney with all the art he had absorbed in his travels and so much to talk about. It was not until the early 60s that I went to Melbourne and saw a real Rembrandt - my first sighting of a really great painting. Towards the end of my student years my main and new interest was the School of Paris group - Alfred Manessier, Maurice Estève, Jean René Bazaine - great colourists and perhaps this was the beginning of my use and love of colour. Much of the abstract painting of the time in Sydney was using muted colours. Then Ross [Day] Crothall became our colleague and brought with him his knowledge of Giuseppe Capogrossi and Jean Dubuffet.

So, then a whole new world opened up just waiting to be explored. It is hard for people now who have so much access to information to realize that there once was a world without much colour, that illustration of art works, which were few, were mainly in black and white, so the institution of the artist Margo Lewers Notanda Gallery opened a whole new world of the paintings of the post impressionists and moderns to us students hungry for images.

So, then there were Klee... the Bauhaus... Kandinsky... Mondrian... the burgeoning Abstract Impressionists in America and the installation of the Aboriginal Burial Posts in the AGNSW in 1988 caused intense interest and the beginning of awareness of other cultures.

As a young woman artist operating in the masculine world of art, was there a particular group or individual women that supported each other?

At that time there were only two women teachers at National Art School. I guess the fate of the women students was problematic... would they survive the challenges of marriage? etc... or would the impetus to paint just dissipate when the practicalities of life took over?... which had been proved so many times in the past.

What were your student days like? Was it an exciting time to be studying art and taking advantage of new life opportunities? What were the main challenges you faced?

My student days were marvellous. To be totally immersed in discovery every day with other people who shared the same obsession was I realize now a transformative experience. Challenges were really to absorb all the new things that were discovered each day. It was a hothouse environment of a small group only 13 of us with hotly contested ideas, arguments, rivalries, developing traditional skills with the prospect of new directions we were impatiently waiting to explore. At that time there was some connection between Sydney University and the Art School. As final Year students we held an exhibition there and I remember student and soon to be critic Robert Hughes being there and his witty cutting remarks, along with several others who became notable poets.

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THE HEAD AND THE HEART

SD: Did your travels influence you immediately or take some time to 'emerge' in your work?

I lived in England for four years and did very little painting. I was just trying to make a living and travel absorbed all my time, but it was all there in the background once I came back.

Did you first learn about Islamic art before or after you travelled? What is it about Islamic art that you find so inspiring/fascinating?

Before I left Australia, I had very little acquaintance with art of any other cultures that were not European. I had seen a few Indian paintings and of course was familiar with Greek, Egyptian and Mesopotamian art as influences on European culture. Before leaving Australia I had already had two exhibitions of non-representational abstract painting with vivid use of colour. I was transfixed by the use of coloured tiles and patterns which I saw in the architecture from a culture which does not use depictions of living things and the use of patterns derived from mathematics has produced such a transcendental experience, as described by Keith Critchlow as 'Abrahamic Pythagoreanism'.

The art world was very dominated by men. How hard was it as a woman artist to secure opportunities to be taken seriously and be given opportunities to exhibit?

The advent of serious women artists into the art world was a new phenomenon and graduating women artists were in the past considered to make good wives for male artists. After leaving the sheltered world of Art School and entering the 'real world' the old experience of equality vanished and the cut throat world of competition emerged. However, things were starting to change. Galleries like Watters and Barry Stern emerged, who gave me my first exhibition in 1962.

Statistics show that the number of women included in exhibitions, represented by galleries and offered opportunities such as traveling scholarships and solo shows, have been consistently low compared to men. It seems like the challenges women artists faced competing within a masculine culture may have become even harder when the art world shifted towards the art market. Would this be true as you experienced it?

It has always seemed to me that the problem for women is that they have little credibility in the public consciousness, so that if a woman is good at something it is only a freak occurrence. Masculine sensibility and capitalist imperatives dominate what is called the 'arts industry'... and overall our whole culture has a masculine sensibility. The problem for women is not to be accepted by being more masculine than the men, but to be accepted as different with different and important realizations to offer. How to gain this acceptance is a problem. This has certainly been my experience.

Regarding feminism and art, what did this mean for a young woman interested in abstraction? A lot of visual art responded to feminism with a very particular aesthetic - such as choice of material or using representational imagery that tapped into the social and political lives of women, such as motherhood and domesticity. How did you, and other women interested in abstraction, respond to this emphasis? Did any issues arise? For example, did 'women's abstraction' become tied to ideas of pattern and decoration?

Feminism was an emerging concept at the time although as we know it always been an undercurrent in society. When I had my first show I was aware of my use of strong colour being offensive to the critics who could not see past the already established abstract style of muddy colours. My vivid colours seemed somehow offensive 'bad taste'. Hadn't they ever seen Matisse, I wondered or the Fauves?

Most of my contemporary women painter friends were mainly painting traditional 'female' subjects with a slightly modern approach.

LEONORA HOWLETT

THE HEAD AND THE HEART

The general pattern of life at the end of student days was mainly a dispersal of all but the closest friendships. Making a living, travel, moving to cheap areas and the encroachments of just trying to live and find time to paint dispersed a lot of the camaraderie. And a reminder that communication was sometimes a problem - who had a telephone? Or a car? Not many.

Visual comments about women's lives came later. Although I call myself a feminist I have not used my painting to make social statements and always hope that it will stand alone as a positive assertion. Not belonging to any stated category, which could be interpreted universally. As far as I remember there was not a general interest in pattern in fact my use of pattern was generally considered to not be real painting but belonging to an inferior category called 'design'.

SD: Has the use of doilies in your work been influenced by the craft and skill of the women who made them?

My use of doilies was a sort of revelation as I realized how similar in some ways they were to the traditional patterns I saw from other cultures. They were exquisite and often warmly personal dedications to causes.

What inspired your miniature works?

I have always painted small pictures in contrast to the prevailing fashion for gigantic board room paintings ... which beat you into submission ... small works draw your consciousness in to them... Contemplation ... intimacy.

You often use watercolour on paper. Can you say what it is that attracts you to the watercolour medium?

Watercolour is so luminous and flexible.

Why has colour remained so important to your practice?

Colour is the language of the soul.



LEONORA HOWLETT

THE HEAD AND THE HEART

LIST OF WORKS

Ancient 2009

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Balancing Act 2013

watercolour on paper | 25 x 25

Balancing on the Edge 2001

watercolour on paper | 37 x 45

Balancing on the Edge – No 1 2005

watercolour on paper | 20 x 20

Composition – No 1 1986

oil on canvas | 60 x 50

Composition – No 2 1986

oil on canvas | 80 x 80

Connections 2008

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Dancing on the Edge – No 2 2002

watercolour on paper | 33 x 40

Drought 1956

gouache on paper | 90 x 60

Exterior 4 1976

gouache on paper | 50 x 50

Faded Fragments 1986

oil on canvas | 125 x 85

Floating 2014

watercolour on paper | 25 x 25

Floating 2015

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Floating Islands 1985

oil on canvas | 80 x 120

Flowering 1988

watercolour on paper | 70 x 50

Formal Garden 1976

gouache on paper | 60 x 60

Fragments – No 2 1988

gouache on paper | 60 x 40

Fragments of the Past 1987

oil on canvas | 80 x 55

Fusion 1969

watercolour on paper | 70 x 50

Garden 1986

gouache on paper | 50 x 50

Happening 2010

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Interior View 1976

gouache on paper | 50 x 50

Jack-in-the-box 2015

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Luminous 2002

gouache on paper | 77 x 65

More Random Thoughts 1995

watercolour on paper | 70 x 115

Mosaic 2001

oil paint, crocheted doily on canvas
| 120 x 80

Landscape 2013

watercolour on paper | 25 x 25

Overwhelmed Town 2014

watercolour on paper | 25 x 25

Place in Time 2013

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Postcards [selected works] 2000 –
ongoing

oil on canvas board | dimensions various

Random Thoughts 1995

watercolour on paper | 70 x 115

LEONORA HOWLETT

THE HEAD AND THE HEART

LIST OF WORKS CTD.

Remembering Africa 2001

oil paint, crocheted doily on canvas
| 70 x 50

Sacred Dance 1988

watercolour on paper | 70 x 50

Self Portrait with Ravens 2006

oil on canvas | 35 x 35 x 10

Series A – No 1 1978

oil on canvas | 110 x 85

Series B – No 4 1979

oil on canvas | 110 x 85

Series B – No 5 1980

oil on canvas | 110 x 85

Series B – No 6 1980

oil on canvas | 110 x 85

Series D – No 1 1983

gouache on paper | 110 x 80

Silence 2015

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Stage 2002

oil on canvas | 80 x 80

Stopping Place 2009

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Total 2016

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Town on the Edge 2003

watercolour on paper | 33 x 40

Transformation 2015

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

Transparent Nights 2015

watercolour on paper | 20 x 20

Travelling 2011

watercolour, gouache on paper | 76 x 57

EPHEMERA

**Leonora as a student with
Peter Laverty at Lavender Bay** c1956

photograph

**Leonora as a student.
Exhibition in the park** c1957

photograph

**Leonora in class with Mike Brown
and Colin Lanceley** c1957

photograph

Currency Magazine 1960

printed magazine

Leonora's student studio c1961

photograph

International Women's Year 1975 c1975

stamp and symbol

SAMUEL QUINTEROS

SPRING EXHIBITION SUITE



ARTIST STATEMENT

The central impulse behind the work of Samuel Quinteros is a desire to imbue into an image the ecstatic, fresh feeling of being alive, through an exploration of painting inspired by natural forms. The image can carry a dynamic and organic pattern that can communicate in an instant to the intuitive faculties of the viewer. There is a sense by which art is dreaming while you're awake, and the works are influenced by the perennial dream of the primordial state of wholeness of a paradisaical garden of pure beauty. To the end of partaking in prominent Australian art prizes, Quinteros has also worked in portraiture, through which he seeks to produce a testimony of character with the compositional techniques he has learned.

SAMUEL QUINTEROS

SPRING EXHIBITION SUITE

BIOGRAPHY

Samuel Quinteros [b.1992] graduated with honours from Sydney College of the Arts in 2013. Quinteros was awarded the Zelda Stedman Young Artist Scholarship in 2011, and the Australia Council Visual Arts Travel Fund in 2013. The first monograph on his work, *Quinteros*, was published in 2012 by AFAAAR Publications. Quinteros was selected for Hatched 2013, the annual exhibition of work by the best of the country's art school graduates, at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art, and in 2014 he exhibited in the *Australia Platform* at Art Stage Singapore, curated by Aaron Seeto [then Director of 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art]. In 2013, Quinteros was selected for the 12 month artist-in-residence program at Curwood's Lawyers, a boutique law firm in the Sydney CBD. To culminate this residency Quinteros presented a solo exhibition in the foyer of Australia Square Tower that was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Clover Moore. In 2015 Quinteros was awarded a Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship, which enabled him to undertake a 3 month artist residency at 3331 Arts Chiyoda in Tokyo. In 2017 Quinteros was a finalist in both the *Doug Moran National Portrait Prize*, at Juniper Hall, Paddington, and *The Shirl - National Youth Portrait Prize*, at Bega Valley Regional Gallery. Samuel Quinteros lives and works in Katoomba, NSW, and is represented by Galerie pompom, Sydney.



SAMUEL QUINTEROS

SPRING EXHIBITION SUITE

LIST OF WORKS



*Laughing, vanishing;
A wound in the side* 2016

False Dawn 2016

oil on canvas | 60.5 x 45.5 cm

Courtesy the artist and
Galerie pompom, Sydney

***Laughing, vanishing;
A wound in the side*** 2016

oil on canvas | 91.4 x 61 cm

Courtesy the artist and
Galerie pompom, Sydney

Montsalvat 2016

oil on linen | 60.5 x 45.5 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie pompom,
Sydney

Poison dripping dragon 2016

oil on linen | 60.5 x 45.5 cm

Courtesy Private Collection

Portrait of Paul Terracini 2017

graphite, acrylic and oil on canvas
95 x 64 cm

Courtesy the artist and
Galerie pompom, Sydney



Poison dripping dragon 2016



Portrait of Paul Terracini 2017

SAMUEL QUINTEROS

SPRING EXHIBITION SUITE

LIST OF WORKS CTD.



Self-portrait with tea utensils 2017

Self-portrait with tea utensils 2017

ink, acrylic & oil on canvas

91.5 x 61 cm

Courtesy the artist and
Galerie pompom, Sydney

The children of water and light 2016

oil on canvas | 91.4 x 152.4 cm

Courtesy Private Collection

***The vast wave of
the world's breath*** 2016

oil on linen | 60.5 x 45.5 cm

Courtesy the artist and Galerie pompom,
Sydney

Waters flamed 2016

oil on linen | 60.5 x 45.5 cm

Courtesy Private Collection



Waters flamed 2016



*The vast wave of
the world's breath* 2016

GARAGE GRAPHIX

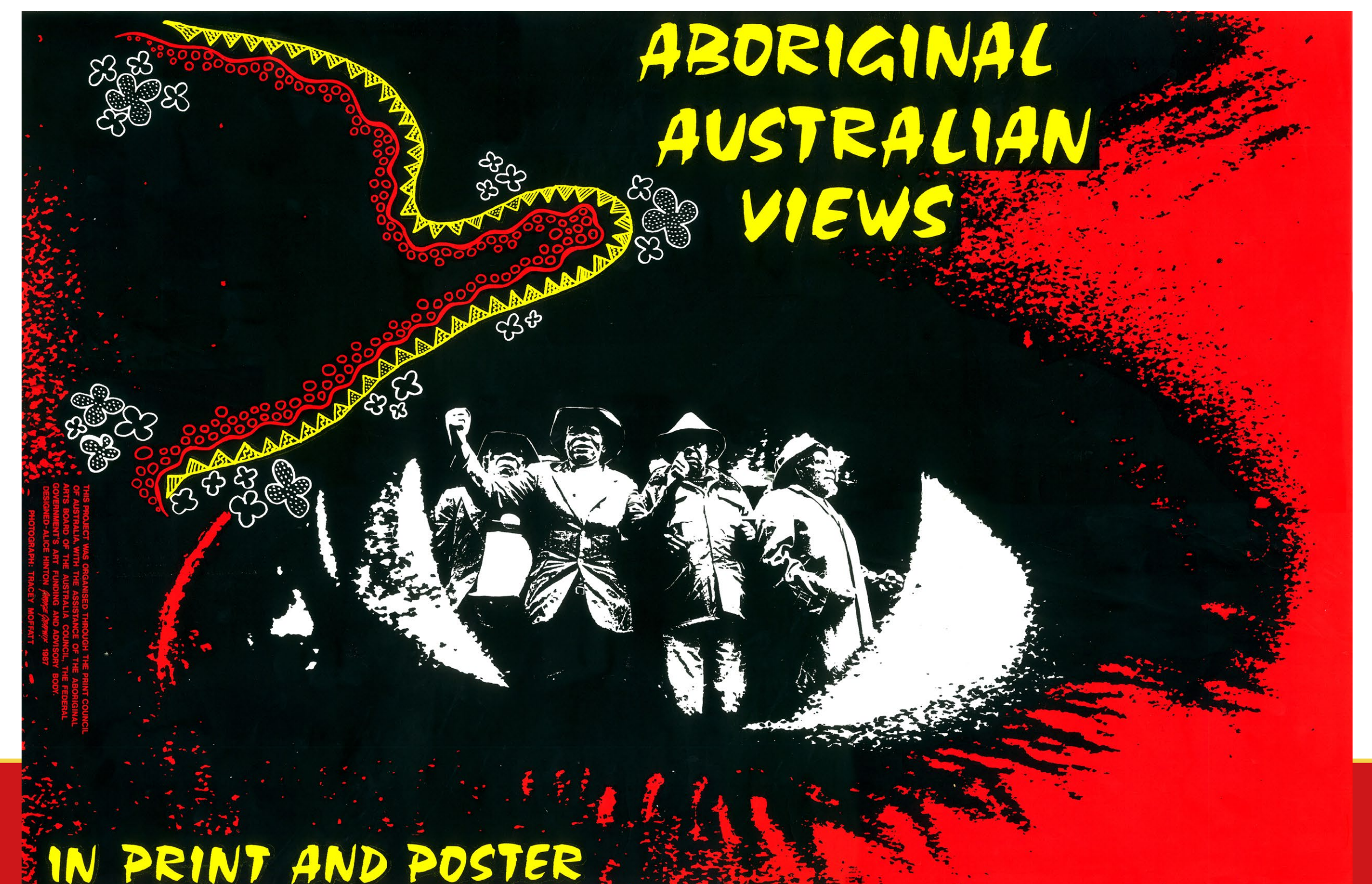
SPRING EXHIBITION SUITE

Garage Graphix Community Arts Inc was a community art, design and screen printing workshop, based in Mount Druitt, Western Sydney [1981-1998]. The 'Garage' was established by artworkers active in the women's movement, who were committed to enabling community members to express their own culture and beliefs and to illuminate issues of concern. In achieving its objectives, the Garage operated with collaborative decision making principles. In its time it was at the forefront of community arts practice and artist activism. It shared many of its attributes and political activism with like organisations across Australia including; Tin Sheds [University of Sydney], Redback Graphix [Sydney], Redletter Press, Another Planet Posters [Melbourne], CoMedia [Adelaide] and Megalo Press [Canberra].

Operated as a professional arts organisation, Garage Graphix employed artists and cultural workers to develop, train and mentor local community, students and artists in the collaborative production of posters. As seen in this exhibition, posters articulated and promoted a range of concerns and issues including; education, health, environment and pollution, Aboriginal rights, deaths in custody and women's rights. In the 1980s the Garage further developed its capacity by operating a design service, and uniquely and importantly, an Aboriginal Arts Program This mode of practice was supported by Commonwealth and State funding agencies across the arts, health and education sectors.

In the collaborative production of posters, many individuals participated in the processes of conceptual development, discussion, design, printing and distribution. Posters were first and foremost produced under the banner of Garage Graphix, using the equipped space and skills of the artworkers to varying degrees. Those individuals involved in the critical period of the 1980s when these works were produced, include long term Garage Graphix arts workers, Alice Hinton-Bateup, Maxine Conaty, Marla Guppy, Karen Vance and Lin Mountstephen.

The Gallery would like to thank Alice Hinton-Bateup, Maxine Conaty, Lin Mountstephen and Marla Guppy for their critical insight, and generosity in the loan of artworks for display.



GARAGE GRAPHIX

SPRING EXHIBITION SUITE

LIST OF WORKS

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton Bateup

Dispossessed no date

screenprint on paper | 49.5 x 74.5

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Maybe You Don't Think no date

Screenprint on paper | 76 x 50.5

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Garage Graphix and Aboriginal students
from Dunheved High School

Aboriginal Week September '85 1985

screenprint on paper | 75.5 x 49.5

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton-Bateup.
Photograph by Tracey Moffatt

Aboriginal Australian Views 1987

screenprint on paper | 50.5 x 76

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton Bateup
and Evans High Aboriginal Students

Black is our Colour 1987

screenprint on paper | 75.5 x 50.5

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton-Bateup

Lost Heritage 1987

screenprint on paper | 51 x 76

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton Bateup
and the Aboriginal Student Centre UNSW

National Aboriginal Week 1987

screenprint on paper | 50.5 x 75.5

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton Bateup
and Marla Guppy

Now let's crack the system 1987

screenprint on paper | 65 x 50

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup
and Maxine Conaty

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton Bateup
and Marla Guppy

We Have Survived 1987

screenprint on paper | 65 x 50

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Garage Graphix with Garry Jones,
Alice Hinton-Bateup and Maxine Conaty

Koori Culture

1988 | screenprint on paper | 50 x 71.5

Penrith Regional Gallery &
The Lewers Bequest Collection

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton Bateup,
Marla Guppy, Communities Evans High School
and Dunheved High School

**Making a pathway against
the odds** 1988

offset print on paper | 70.5 x 50.5

Courtesy of Alice Hinton-Bateup

Garage Graphix with Alice Hinton-Bateup
and Jenny Pitty and Karen Vance

Women's Dreaming Continues 1988

screenprint on paper | 50 x 68

Penrith Regional Gallery &
The Lewers Bequest Collection

EDUCATION

CLASSROOMS WITHOUT BORDERS: SCULPTURES IN THE GARDEN

A Visual Arts Learning Program for Home Schooled Children 5-12 years

Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest is offering an opportunity for home schooled children to participate in a program of three art appreciation and art making sessions inspired by the in-situ sculptures in the Gallery's Heritage Garden. Workshop for 5-8 year olds will include an introduction to drawing; hand-built clay sculpture; and acrylic painting and workshops for 9-12 year olds will include an introduction to animation.

Mondays 10am-11.30am
27 August, 10 & 24 September

\$60 per child

All art materials supplied.
Parents don't pay but do stay.

TO BOOK OR FOR MORE INFORMATION
Limited places bookings essential
Call [02] 4735 1100
naomi.mccarthy@penrith.city

NESA ACCREDITED

Art Appreciation and Visual Literacy Professional Development Workshop

For Visual Arts Teachers [Secondary]

This professional development program is designed to increase the capacity of each recipient to deliver diverse visual literacy learning experiences for secondary students. The course content will focus on Justene Williams: *The Curtain Breathed Deeply*, and will position Williams practice as the catalyst to a case study on video art.

Standards 2.1.2 | 4.1.2 | 6.2.2 | 6.4.2

Tuesday 18 September
Registration 3.30pm
Workshop 4pm-6pm

\$110.00

TO BOOK OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call [02] 4736 0381
EKN@westernsydney.edu.au

REGISTRATION:
<https://onestop.westernsydney.edu.au/OneStopWeb/EKN/menu>

CREATIVE PORTFOLIO WORKSHOP

For Emerging Educators

This workshop has been developed to introduce a range of materials, techniques and projects suitable for delivery in educational contexts from early childhood to upper primary school. Four expressive forms will be explored and each component will include an introduction to materials, techniques and an art project adaptable to a range of themes and ages. The workshop will include an interactive gallery tour modelling a range of art appreciation strategies for children. This workshop is for tertiary education students only.

Tuesday 23 October May
10am-3pm

\$90 per participant

TO BOOK OR FOR MORE INFORMATION

Bookings essential
Call [02] 4735 1100

SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

The Gallery's Education Programs offer outstanding opportunities for students to engage with the Gallery's changing exhibition program and heritage site, through lively, syllabus linked exhibition tours, hands-on studio-based workshops and site visits.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact our Education Coordinator to arrange your visit.

Christine Ghali
Call [02] 4735 1100
christine.ghali@penrith.city



Leonora Howlett | *Untitled* [detail]

date unknown | acrylic on canvas board | courtesy of the artist

EDUCATION

SCHOOL HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS

8-12 October 2018

Workshops

10am-12pm

Ages: 3-12 years

TERM CLASSES

Wednesday Drawing School

24 October - 12 December 2018

Every Wednesday 4-5.30pm

Ages: 8-12 years

Art Attack Saturday Workshops

Every Saturday 10am-12pm

20 October - 8 December 2018

\$180 [term]

Mixed media

Ages: 5-9

Illustration and animation

Ages: 7-10

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Education for participation details

Bookings are essential Call [02] 4735 1100

www.penrithregionalgallery.org

gallery@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au

TUESDAY ART CLUB

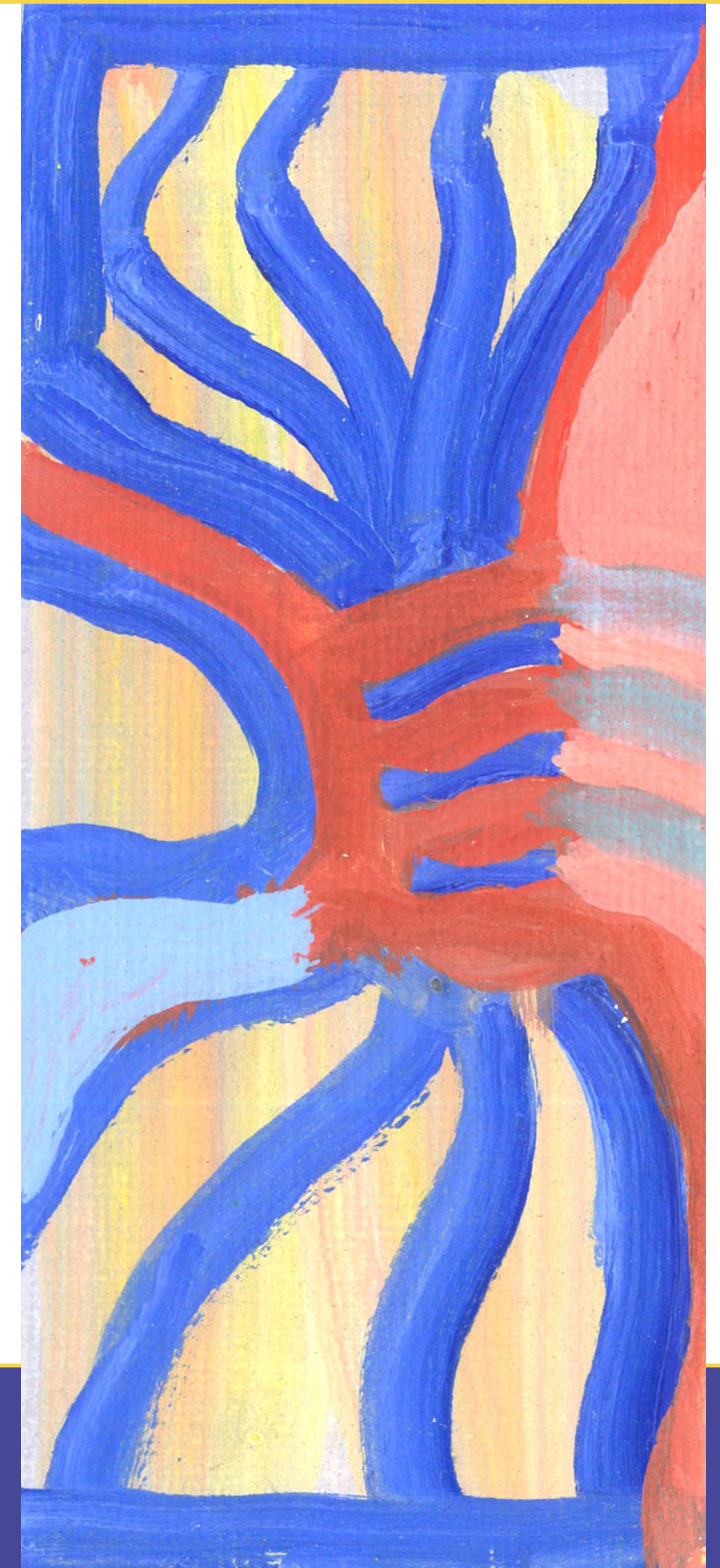
30 October - 4 December 2018

Studio based workshop program for adults who identify as living with a disability

Tuesday 10:30am-12:30pm

\$120 [term]

All Materials provided



Leonora Howlett | *Untitled*

date unknown | acrylic on canvas board | courtesy of the artist

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SPRING EXHIBITION SUITE

Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest would like to thank the following participating artists, organisations and individuals:

JUSTENE WILLIAMS: **THE CURTAIN BREATHED DEEPLY**

Justene Williams
Museums & Galleries of NSW
Artspace
Sarah Cottier Gallery

LEONORA HOWLETT: **THE HEAD AND THE HEART** [Lewers House]:

Leonora Howlett

SAMUEL QUINTEROS [Lounge room]:

Samuel Quinteros
Galerie pompom, Sydney

GARAGE GRAPHIX [Ancher House]:

Alice Hinton Bateup
Marla Guppy
Maxine Conaty
Lin Mountstephen

OPENING EVENT

Opening Address: Michelle Newton [Artspace]
Councillor Karen McKeown OAM
Penrith Symphony Orchestra Trio: Anna Smith [Violin],
Margaret Bournes [Violin], Sybbi Georgiou [Cello]

EXHIBITION TEAM:

Director, Dr Lee-Anne Hall
Exhibition Manager, Marian Simpson
Curator - Leonora Howlett, Dr Shirley Daborn
Lead Technician, Graeme Robinson
Gallery Assistant, Fiona Knoke

EDUCATION TEAM:

Education Manager, Naomi McCarthy
Education Coordinator, Christine Ghali

MARKETING TEAM:

Marketing Director, Krissie Scudds
Marketing Coordinator, Malvina Tan
PR Coordinator, Jaala Hallett



The Curtain Breathed Deeply was curated and developed by Artspace and is touring nationally in partnership with Museums & Galleries of NSW.

The generous bequest of the Catalyst: Katherine Hannay Visual Arts Commission has enabled Artspace to support Justene Williams in the development of this major new work at a pivotal moment in her career. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest is operated by Penrith Performing and Visual Arts. It receives the funding support of Penrith City Council and Create NSW.



ISBN 9781875143689

A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia