

# Dissolving Worlds: Tim and Mic Gruchy

6 April - 3 June 2023

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Since their childhood years in Bundaberg, brothers Tim and Mic Gruchy have been insatiably curious about emergent innovations in image and sound technology. They have now worked in this field both collaboratively and individually for four decades, exploring the use of moving image, sound and the body not only in art contexts, but also club culture, theatre, opera, contemporary dance, musicals and commercial projects.

This exhibition features key artworks by Tim and Mic Gruchy which focus on the intersections of technological innovations with biological forms, human perception, artificial intelligence, and synaesthesia. An ongoing concern in their works is technology as a subject and a medium, where advances in automation, machinery and software can survey, traverse and mediate—as well as degrade and destroy—our bodies and the world around us.

The works included in 'Dissolving Worlds' explore subjects ranging from tides and flows of the great Australian rivers and oceans to the impact of development on the Moganshan region in eastern China; from bodies captured by sensors and transformed into images using artificial intelligence software to the degradation of the decommissioned Baoshan steelworks in Shanghai, once one of the largest steelworks in the world.

In a technological environment characterised by hyper-communication and social networks, the Gruchy brothers explore sensuous visions of an enhanced and rapidly changing world, while also considering its dissolution.

Curator: Angela Goddard

# Mic Gruchy

b.1962 QLD. Australia. Lives and works on Gadigal lands/Sydney, New South Wales

# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## Time & Tide 2017

synchronised three-channel 16:9 video, stereo sound, 21:36 minutes

## Coast 2023

synchronised three-channel 16:9 video, stereo sound, 25:53 minutes

Courtesy of the artists

*Time & Tide* is a three-channel video installation by Mic Gruchy, with an accompanying soundscape by Tim Gruchy. A meditation on the great Shoalhaven River at the Bundanon Estate Artist's Reserve in south-eastern New South Wales, it uses time-lapse, high-speed slow motion, and above and underwater video cameras, to explore the life of rivers, the tide, and changing flows and geography.

*Coast* is a recently completed companion work, which explores the tidal region along the coastline and uses footage shot by Mic Gruchy in Australia, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. Much of his life has been spent wandering the coasts of Australia and overseas, surfing and filming the natural environment.

Both works explore the delicate and timeless nature of our oceans and waterways, encouraging the viewer to contemplate, appreciate and protect our natural environment.

# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## Beauty Unbeauty 2019

non-synchronised five-channel 16:9 video, colour, stereo sound, 50 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

In *Beauty Unbeauty* Tim Gruchy explores the flower as a fundamental motif in which human notions of beauty are invested. The work is based on a set of flower images drawn from Gruchy's large personal photo library and, utilising the artificial intelligence (AI) program 'Deep Dreaming Generator', his process takes two paths: to beauty and unbeauty. These two sets of AI deep-dreaming are then animated and juxtaposed to prompt reflections on the differences between human and AI aesthetics.

# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## WORK-01 2019

single-channel 16:9 video, colour, 18:31 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

*WORK-01* is a meditation on abandoned work gloves found in the landscape of Shanghai's Baoshan District in China. It reflects the gradual degradation of the value of manual labour. As Tim Gruchy describes:

I began this series over 25 years ago – photographing discarded gloves whenever I came upon them. They are always untouched by the artist's hand and never disturbed in any way. Gradually it became apparent that nearly all the gloves were used for work, thus they became signifiers of work done, the collective physical toil and the disregard and devaluing of these labours that ultimately sees the gloves just cast asunder to decay or be swept up in the detritus of modern life. This draws a direct comparison to the disregard and undervaluing of all manual labour. The series now encompasses a score of countries and continues to grow, but for this first showing, a subset of 37 glove images from the Baosteelworks in the Baoshan district of Shanghai has been selected.

# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## STORM 2016

interactive digital display installation, 9:16, colour, sound, duration variable

Courtesy of the artist

Contemporary medical science examines, dissects, analyses, and models the human body at continuously higher and higher resolutions. As our digital selves become more sophisticated through pervasive technologies, hyper-communication and social networks that permeate so many aspects of our lives, Gruchy predicts that at some point there will be a transubstantiation between these realms.

*STORM* explores some of these dynamics in a nondeterminate real-time interactive audio-visual installation. Using combined mathematical and scientific visual and sonic generation principles, body sensing generates and moderates a highly resolute and complex visual display and soundscape. It probes the biomorphology and relentless evolution of humans from our increasingly redundant biological forms into an imagined future.

# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## Moving Mountains 2018

synchronised two-channel 16:9 video, colour and stereo sound, 11:53 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

Over the last two decades, Tim Gruchy has spent extended periods working and teaching in China. This work was made in the mountainous district Moganshan, in Zhejiang, three hours from Shanghai. The area was settled in the early 20th century by American and European missionaries and is currently undergoing rapid development.

*Moving Mountains* explores the duality between the natural landscape and development. The mirroring device used on the first screen utilises drone footage, panoramic camera arrays and standard still and video camera views to create a constantly morphing panorama. The second screen shows a series of selected interviews with local people responding to the question: can art and culture improve nature? Their replies traverse a more philosophical landscape.

# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## Baosteel 2019

synchronised two-channel 16:9 video, colour, stereo sound, 17:30 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

*Baosteel* was conceived as a mirror work to *Moving Mountains* (2018) and observes nature reclaiming a post-industrial site. The now-decommissioned 28-hectare Baoshan steelworks site in Shanghai was once one of the largest steelworks in the world. The gardens throughout the complex are now slowly overtaking the landscape whilst the site awaits redevelopment. Gruchy has composed a soundscape of field recordings and an animation from photographs to convey this surreal post-Anthropocene vision.

# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## Dissolving World 2021

single-channel 16:9 video, colour, 14:30 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

*Dissolving World* ruminates on change and impermanence. Influenced by themes in classical Chinese ink painting, the work hints at the ephemeral nature of human perception. Using the twin notions of fungal growth and fluidity to examine the changing nature of the world we inhabit, *Dissolving World* plays with the themes of biological breakdown and transformation via the changing states of solid to liquid to gas.



# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## Geomorphosis 2022

Single-channel 16:9 video, colour, stereo sound, 10:35 minutes

Courtesy of the artist

The study of landforms and their evolution is known as geomorphology, which has been described as a 'dark art' and open to interpretation. *Geomorphosis* is a poetic interpretation of Gruchy's contemplations around geomorphology, biogeology and biomorphism, specifically inspired by the extraordinary geology of the Limestone Coast in southeast South Australia. He uses mathematical visualisation techniques to allude to relations between lifeforms and the world we inhabit. Thinking about the extraordinary land formations of this region, Gruchy approaches it through his interest in biogeology, which examines biotic and hydrologic systems in relation to each other.

# Tim Gruchy

b.1957 Wales, UK. Lives and works Tarndanya/Adelaide, South Australia

## Naturae Vitibus (Nature Forces) 2021

Single channel 16:9 video, colour, stereo sound, 6:50 minutes

Documentation of 'Illuminate' festival in Adelaide in July 2021

Courtesy of the artist

This video documents Tim Gruchy's work *Naturae Vitibus* (Nature Forces) which was first exhibited in the 'Illuminate' festival on North Terrace in Adelaide in July 2021.

Utilising site-specific 360-degree 3D mapped projection with sound, a majestic Moreton Bay fig tree was given a different manifestation of life. This dynamic, high-colour, looping work explored notions of ancient timescales, and how we perceive time in relation to nature. It playfully portrayed the complexities and layering of growth cycles in nature, highlighting invisible underlying energies, elements and forces and set up a relationship with the audience of seeing, listening to, and taking time with nature anew.

The work was also exhibited in the 'Botanica' festival in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens in May 2022.