

Deborah Kelly

CREATION

24 February - 28 May 2022

Climate catastrophe is upon us. And yet here we are, so far down the wrong road. Trumpeting a gas-led recovery. Watching wild lives wink out forever. Still stealing stolen lands. Letting liars lie. Is it possible to imagine a way away from this precipice?

I dreamt of a queer insurgent science fiction climate change religion.

I offered a premise and provocation to artists I admire. They handed back blood, stink, breath, heartbeat, foot thump.

SJ Norman lent soulful, gothic glory to CREATION's central text. Everything proceeds from *Liturgy of the Saprophyte*.

The liturgy consists of eight chapters. From the number eight (8) arises the organising rhythm of the religion, and its central metaphor: infinity (∞).

Poets, musicians, dancers, filmmakers, an oracle, a costumier, animators and friends worked through the pandemic to make this speculative, ridiculous, utterly serious work.

Hold holy, and rise.

- Deborah Kelly, Instigator

For Creation 2021

Multichannel video, colour, sound; looped 5:30 mins

Courtesy the artist

For Creation is an elaborate contemplation of the great weight, the myriad complexity, the glittering webs enveloping matter and sentience. Combining playful proposition, ardent queerness, elegy and homage, this new moving image artwork forms a call to congregants of CREATION. Made over three years, around entwined global crises of health, climate and justice, *For Creation* is animated paper collage constructed from the ruins of obsolete books. In Sydney, Kandos and Darwin, collage workshop participants collectively studied SJ Norman's glorious *Liturgy of the Saprophyte*, the new sacred literature at the heart of the CREATION project, and their resulting artworks form figure and field. Musical collaborators and queer legends Stereogamous composed the anthemic soundtrack, which features the voices of SJ Norman and emerging popstar Lupa J.

Made on the unceded lands of Gadigal, Wiradjuri, Jerrinja and Larrakia Nations. Honouring *Liturgy of the Saprophyte* (excerpt) written and recited by SJ Norman. Collage animation and editing by Melody Pei Li. Additional stop motion by Martin Fox. Original soundtrack Stereogamous featuring vocal composition by Lupa J.

Figures created by Deborah Kelly and in workshops hosted by:

- Women With Knives (Kandos): Joanne Albany, Bridget Baskerville, Karen Golland, Sarah Michell, Julie Williams, Wendy Williams
- Beloved Collective (Darwin): convenors Erica McCalman and Matthew Van Roden with Sarah Pirrie, Tarzan Junglequeen, Lee Harrop
- Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (Sydney): Kate Andrews, Mia Ardianto, Alia Ardon, Veronica Barac-Gomez, Tristan Chant, Elizabeth Chua, Alice Crawford, Stella Darling, Susana Depetris, Rebecca Gallo, Amanda Holt, Lex Lindsay, Judy-Ann Moule, Karan Singh, Floria Tosca.

Landscapes by Jenny More with special permission from Peter Swain, Dabee Wiradjuri man, to reproduce his depiction of the Murrayang mountains, Wiradjuri Country.

Dramaturgical/choreographic consultant Angela Goh.

Photography by Lucy Parakhina, Garry Trinh, Alex Wisser.

Karaoke videos 2020-2021

Single – channel HD video, colour, sound; looped

All works made in collaboration with filmmaker Alia Ardon. Courtesy the artist

Learn the CREATION songs here or practice at home.

See www.creationtheproject.com

The Call Upon The Bright Ones

5:55 mins

Written and performed by Brian Fuata, backing vocals Kit Spencer, Zaya Barroso.

Percussion: James Tawadros

Orison Voluptatem

4 mins

Written by Jinghua Qian, composed by Lex Lindsay, sung by Liza – Mare Syron, Eugene Choi, Kit Spencer, Zaya Barroso, Harriet Gillies and Alison Williams.

Percussion: James Tawadros

Orison Tempestas

3:41 mins

Written and composed by Lex Lindsay, sung by Liza-Mare Syron, Eugene Choi, Kit Spencer, Zaya Barroso, Harriet Gillies and Alison Williams. Percussion: James Tawadros

Creation: the dance 2021

Single-channel HD video, sound

6:43 mins

Directed by Deborah Kelly in collaboration with filmmaker Alia Ardon. Courtesy the artist

Here you can learn CREATION's steps and gestures. Or you can practice the dance at home by finding this video at www.creationtheproject.com

Led by dance artist Angela Goh, twenty children and adults worked together to devise the movements of this open-source speculative religion. Through a workshop embedded in Performance Space's 2020 LiveWorks Festival, a joyful week of collective embodiment produced a series of ritual movements. The first performance took place in a socially-distant and yet ecstatic event in the grandeur of Carriageworks, on Gadigal land, Darlington, Sydney. The second performance, by 80 students of Seet Dance, took place on the Winter Solstice, 2021.

Liturgy of the Saprophyte 2020-2021

Single – channel digital animation

13:44 mins

Courtesy the artist

SJ Norman's *Liturgy* commissioned by Deborah Kelly forms the heart of CREATION. Every aspect of CREATION proceeds from this new sacred literature. Animated by Martin Fox.

Regalia 2021

Cotton, wool, silk, linen, lace, mother of pearl, glass, wire, papier-mache, felt, paint, glue, rope, beads, pearls

James Lionel King design and construction.
Courtesy the artist

The regalia represents the holy orders of CREATION: The Serpent, The Spider, The Vulture, The Rat, Bacteria and Fungus. Additionally: Infinity representing the 8 chapters of the Liturgy, and The Moon, according to whose cycles many CREATION events occur.

Procession Banners 2021

Cotton, wool, silk, linen, lace, mother of pearl, glass, wire, felt, paint, glue, rope, beads, pearls

Courtesy the artist

Eight thematic banners were created to exemplify the Holy Orders of CREATION through a series of intensive workshops. Produced by Eleni Christou and led by Kasi Albert with assistance from James King, Lucy Latella and Katie B Plummer, the group designed and implemented a suite of ornate new textile artworks constructed entirely of biodegradable second-hand haberdashery. While the group devised, Shahmen Suku read inspirational texts aloud. We listened to SJ Norman's *Liturgy of the Saprophyte*, essays by Tyson Yunkaporta, Michelle Westerlaken, Ross Gibson and Scott Ludlum and poetry by Evelyn Araluen, Virginia Barratt and Ellen Van Neerven.

C	Serpent	Amanda Holt and Lindsay Kelley
R	Rat	Sharon Williams and David Kavanagh
E	Vulture	Kasi Albert and Lucy Latella
A	Fungus	Brigitte Anttilla and Linda Baranov
T	Spider	Helen Duckworth and Eddie Bosnich
I	Infinity	Kathryn Bird with Alice Crawford
O	Moon	Tessa Zettell and Jonathan Nolan
N	Bacteria	Thunder Love and Eliza Amery

From left:

Speculation I 2020

Collaborative paper collage reproduced as woven tapestry, wooden poles and finials

Collaboration with Angela Goh. Courtesy the artists

Song I 2020

Collaborative paper collage reproduced as woven tapestry, wooden poles and finials

Collaboration with Lex Lindsay. Courtesy the artists

The Holy Orders 2020

Collaborative paper collage reproduced as woven tapestry, wooden poles and finials

Collaboration with the Beloved Collective, Darwin, with embroidery by Alice Crawford. Courtesy the artists

Speculation II 2020

Collaborative paper collage reproduced as woven tapestry, wooden poles and finials

Collaboration with Angela Goh. Courtesy the artists

Song 2 2020

Collaborative paper collage reproduced as woven tapestry, wooden poles and finials

Collaboration with Lex Lindsay. Courtesy the artists

For Creation (cast) 2019-21

Collage on handmade paper metallic pigments, watercolour, ink, glues, saltwater pearl, found frames

Courtesy the artist

Local Luminaries 2021

Photographed by Mia Forrest

Courtesy the artist

Andrew Parry as *The Vulture*

Elyatta - Adelaide Manton as *Infinity*

AñA Wojak as *The Spider*

Kirk Page as *Bacteria*

Simone O'Brien as *Fungus*

Noah Mead-St Clair as *The Serpent*

Uncle Tea Cosy as *The Rat*

Ginger Dickens as *The Moon*

Local Luminaries presents 8 Lismore locals dressed in the *regalia* of *CREATION*.

Born in Flames 2022

Floral installation

Made in collaboration with Vien Rose. Courtesy the artists

This installation was made by Queensland College of Art student Vien Rose in collaboration with Deborah Kelly and in response to CREATION. Kelly has worked with a group of Griffith University Fine Art, Acting and Law students and alumni to develop responses and discussions to CREATION throughout a 2021-2022 Arts Education and Law Summer Scholarship program.

This floral installation will evolve as elements are added and taken away throughout the exhibition period.

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