

The Abyss

25 July – 28 September 2019

Exhibition
Labels

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The Abyss explores art that contends with the push and pull of seduction and repulsion. The artists in this exhibition employ strategies to generate schisms in the psyche: those moments where understanding is stalled, language fails, and chimeras are registered.

In a time of turbulent politics and mediated messages, these artists destabilise and recombine images, forms, and bodies to offer critical perspectives and new ways of being. Their works question normative ideas and explore contemporary issues of race and identity by utilising historical grotesques and various visual strategies — from the *horror vacui* of elaborate surfaces, through the abject and informé, to the ornamental, erotic, and transgressive.

Many of these artists approach materiality in enigmatic ways to suggest there is value to be found in not understanding. They invite us to consider our individual perceptions, fears, desires, and potential for metamorphosis.

Artists:

Tony Albert, Hany Armanious, Gordon Bennett, Krista Berga, Anastasia Booth, Juan Davila, Karla Dickens, Chantal Fraser, Karl Fritsch and Francis Upritchard, Ian Haig, Louise Hearman, Gordon Hookey, Natalya Hughes, Emily Hunt, Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran, Robert Pulie, Dieter Roth, Carolee Schneemann, Tim Schultz, Tyza Stewart, Sophie Takach, Wart, Jemima Wyman, Paul Yore

Curator: Naomi Evans

Tony Albert

Girramay/ Yidinji/ Kuku, Yalanji peoples, Australia

b.1981, Townsville, QLD

Old Sins Cast Long Shadows 2018

Ink on archival paper

Private collection, Sydney

The title *Old Sins Cast Long Shadows* is taken from a cautionary proverb which warns that punishment for past crimes is inevitable, and that their effects are long-reaching and intergenerational. Across four sheets of paper, Albert draws a caricatured silhouette of an Aboriginal man, standing on one leg with a spear in his hand, constructed from a cacophony of imagery collected from popular culture from Australia and the United States.

A member of the influential ProppaNOW collective, Albert has excavated these images from children's illustrations and cartoons, as well as from 'Aboriginal kitsch' that proliferated in mass-produced souvenirs in Australia. Many of these characters and cartoons are loved by many—from the Disney and Looney Tunes characters to the Gumnut babies from *Snugglypot and Cuddlypie*—and Albert's work highlights the continued depiction of First Nations Peoples through fictionalised white-washed paradigms.

Albert writes:

These images have been repeatedly pushed, exploited and trivialised since colonial times and have perpetuated negative notions and misconceptions about First Nations communities throughout recent social history. This reductive representation has obscured the serious issues that have plagued First Nations communities for years and has led to the creation of warped stereotypes that make it easier to ignore ongoing oppression.

Hany Armanious

b.1962, Egypt

Snake Oil 1997

Hotmelt, oil paint (free form), plastic crates

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

The work of Hany Armanious exploits the paradoxical, alchemical transformation, and the seductiveness of the unknown, or unknowable. Efforts to understand these phenomena are communicated in ways that cross belief systems and cultural products, including folklore, new age spirituality, psychedelia and politics. From his earliest works, esoteric ideas and linguistic plays have been steeped into his titles, materials and motifs.

Armanious's post-conceptual practice has a beguiling aesthetic that emerges in installations and assemblages that variously include peppercorns, hair, worm castings, fabric, clays or found objects. *Snake Oil* uses upturned bread crates as plinths, asserting a decisive horizontality, and presenting objects that have been cast from numerous sources. Their forms are uncanny and suggestive of arcane knowledge—like an elixir purporting to cure all ills.

Snake Oil shares its title across several works that use paints and pigments mixed with a commercially produced synthetic latex called Hot Melt. Armanious first experimented with Hot Melt in 1993 during a residency at the 18th Street Arts Centre in LA, where he poured the material coloured with oil paints and pigments into wine glasses of various proportions, and set the casts of their interiors on their matching long-stemmed glasses upturned as plinths. He pushed the medium further when he poured the molten product into baths of cold water which rapidly set, with the shock interaction of the liquids forming 'casts' that appear intestinal and visceral.

Gordon Bennett

1955–2014, Monto/Brisbane

Outsider 1988

Oil and synthetic polymer paint on canvas

Collection: The University of Queensland

Purchased with the assistance of the Visual Arts/Craft Board of the Australia Council, 1989

1989.03

Outsider is an exemplary early work by the late Gordon Bennett that contends with issues of displacement and identity. Informed of his Indigenous Australian and Anglo-Celtic heritage as a teenager, Bennett undertook study in art much later as an adult, graduating from the Queensland College of Art in the same year that this work was produced. It conflates Vincent van Gogh's paintings *The Bedroom* (1888) and *The Starry Night* (1889), inserting a decapitated brown-skinned figure into the scene. This headless man stands over two severed heads that lie on the bed, their white, marble appearance recalling the statues of classical antiquity.

In his renowned text 'The Manifest Toe', Bennett describes his artistic development as follows:

At first my painting was characterised by an overt expressionism informed by theory. My first interest in a theoretical basis for my painting came from theories on postmodern deconstruction and strategies of appropriation as well as the 'grotesque'. I quoted in an essay for my Classicism elective in 1988 a passage from *The Critical Idiom: The Grotesque* by Philip Thompson:

The characteristic impact of the grotesque, the shock which it causes, may be used to bewilder and disorient the spectator, jeopardise and shatter their conventions by opening up onto vertiginous new perspectives characterised by the destruction of logic and regression to the unconscious – madness, hysteria or nightmare. Thus the spectator may be jolted out of accustomed ways of perceiving the world and confronted by radically different and disturbing perspectives.

Bennett's work soon moved to a more conceptual approach; however, he continued to note that it retained elements of the grotesque as a strategy.

Krista Berga

b.1970, New Zealand

My rage fingers my strength 2018

Black bronze, edition 1/5

Collection of Beth Jackson, Brisbane

Krista Berga's bronze sculpture *My Rage Fingers My Strength* powerfully elicits a sense of a raw psychological state fused with extreme bodily sensations. The torso and pelvis are contorted, wrung and distended, with ball-jointed, truncated limbs that recall Hans Bellmer's *poupeé* as well as the transgressive expressivity of Louise Bourgeois's sculptures.

Previous bronzes have heads like rats or chimerical beasts. Triangular compositions, formed of spread legs and headless, tapering torsos around the region of the heart, are found throughout her small works, but are most vividly exemplified in her largest work, *Un* (2000), a 4-metre public artwork located at Sydney's Republic building. *My Rage Fingers My Strength*, however, rather than delivering the body sensuously, depicts the vulvic region as swollen and straining forward, while the labia are violently rendered, cut at.

Anastasia Booth

b.1988, Brisbane, QLD

Anasyrma 2018

Single channel video, 16:9, colour, sound, no dialogue, 2:32 mins (loop)

Performance at *Netherworlds*, curated by Amy-Clare McCarthy and Kieran Swann, Spring Hill Reservoir, Brisbane, 2018.

Courtesy of the artist

Anastasia Booth's performance and sculptural practice materialises her research into classical mythology and the navigation of sexual desire in cultural production. Using kink methodologies, Booth's work elaborates and abstracts restraints, fine leather apparatuses, and the tools of erotica, among other forms. The artist brings historical and religious images of the feminine into highly affective works of ecstasy, power and agency.

In *Anasyrma*, Booth's identity is partially obscured by a leather costume, which includes a phallic, club-like leather object adorned with bells that ring as she shakes the appendage. 'Anasyrma' or 'anasyrmos' denotes the gesture of lifting a skirt or kilt to expose the genitals. Its etymology can be traced to ancient Greece, with the homonym *ἀνρά* or 'ana' in the artist's name meaning 'up, against, back'. Invoked in this performance is the figure of 'Baubo', known as the Goddess of Mirth, important in her associations with the Orphic religion (from Orpheus) and the underworld, and echoed in René Magritte's *Le Viol [The Rape]* (1945). The effect of surprise or mockery within the gesture of anasyrma has been used across many cultures for positive and negative effect—for example, in war and to aid emotional healing. Booth has reflected on the legacy of Freudian psychoanalysis throughout her oeuvre, and importantly, this work features a Greek mask made by the artist's father, who is a prolific amateur maker of Greek Dionysian masks and pottery.

Juan Davila

b.1946, Chile

Holy Family 1985

Oil on canvas

Collection of Alex and Kitty Mackay, Brisbane

Juan Davila is an important exponent of art as social commentary. His work often includes references to pop culture, gay sex, pornography, and politics, which he explores without censorship. In Santiago, Davila studied law before pursuing art education. He emigrated to Australia in 1974 from Chile following the fall of Salvador Allende. *The Holy Family* was exhibited as part of Davila's solo exhibition in Sydney titled *Hysterical Tears* (1985), three years after his work *Stupid as a Painter* was infamously impounded by the NSW Vice Squad on charges of obscenity.

On the right-hand margin of the picture, Davila has signed his own name alongside the names Michelangelo and Roy Lichtenstein. Michelangelo's *Pietà* is pictured as a stone sculpture, with Mary's face and robe perhaps damaged by iconoclasts or decaying with the ravages of time. The lower portion of her robe is painted with in Lichtenstein's signature Ben Day dots. This print-making technique underscores the constructedness of the image and references magazine covers, including a colour-checking motif and barcode. Instead of the Madonna cradling her dead son, as in Michelangelo's marble, Davila depicts her cradling a carefully painted erect penis, while holding its scrotum firmly in hand.

Chantal Fraser

b.1981, New Zealand

Maiden Prismatic Taupou #1 2011

Hand cut photo-composite

Griffith University Art Collection. Purchased 2011

Maiden Prismatic Taupou #1 presents a portrait of the artist as topographical structure comprising hundreds of photographs of Chantal Fraser wrapped in cloth. Throughout her career, Fraser has had a sustained engagement with adornment as a cultural practice that constructs identity at the same time as concealing it. Her work reflects on her Samoan heritage and as well as notions of cultural inheritance, status, performance of roles and the mutability of self.

The Samoan term 'taupou' has history, and can be used in a traditional and contemporary sense for a person who has been bestowed with the role of host or public identity at an event. This was once a female of high rank (for example, a daughter of a chief), but is now performed by other people with presence, including fa'afafine (peoples of a third gender), who are integral to Samoan society. Fraser conflates her role as an artist with reference to this system, and yet resists the imposition of photographic portraiture which identifies a person, breaches privacy, and instead adopts the safety of a shroud and the potentiality that prismatic thinking can offer.

Karl Fritsch & Francis Upritchard

b.1963, Germany/New Zealand; b.1976, New Zealand/England

Give me four 2019

Mixed media

Courtesy of the artists, Gallery Funaki, Melbourne and Ivan Anthony, Auckland

What I find really fascinating, and one of the reasons why it's so interesting to make jewellery, is the moment of recognition when something that comes across as cute and pretty, has on second glimpse an almost obscene grotesqueness. I would say this quality probably works best in jewellery, where politeness and cold-blooded anger can clash mercilessly into one another.

—Karl Fritsch, 2009

My work is really reacting to my life, not only to what I've read and observed, but unconsciously to my entire experience ... It's a kind of processing, a bit like dreaming. —Francis Upritchard, 2018

In *Give Me Four*, an assortment of rings is worn by a kid-gloved hand with four fingers. The fine stitching of the glove, with scalloped edges at the severed wrist, gives a daintiness to the hand, which accentuates the handmade quality evidenced in the adornments it wears. The precious gems set in the rings resemble a multitude of things—perhaps floral or aquatic, unwrapped chocolate (or is it a hat?), interlocked ruby-studded tongues, fencing, and antiquities. This work visually relates to the macabre practice throughout history of displaying severed hands, often as warnings against misdeeds, and tales in medieval or occult folklore attribute supernatural powers. Karl Fritsch and Francis Upritchard's work is perturbing perhaps because it is covered on all sides, so we can only imagine what comprises the armature.

Louise Hearman

b.1963, Melbourne, VIC

Untitled #983 2003

Oil on masonite

Collection of Alex and Kitty Mackay, Brisbane

Of her paintings, Louise Hearman says, 'It has to be shape and light'. They are populated with strange, possessed figures, forms and disembodied heads—both human and animal—that are set against a dark ground. Hearman draws from scenes lodged in her mind, photographs she takes out in public, and images that float up from her subconscious, often layering different elements in her work—her 'pictures', as she refers to them.

In *Untitled #983*, a bright pair of thighs and exposed vulva are centrally positioned. The rest of the figure is missing—perhaps lurking beyond vision, absorbed by the dark of night; perhaps disassembled by some unknown violence. We view this strange, fractious corporeality through a v-shaped gap between a stand of stark, snow white pines lit up as if by camera flash. The formal consonance between the open legs and the opening in the trees redoubles the fraught eroticism of the painting.

Gordon Hookey

Waanyi people, Australia

b.1961, Cloncurry, QLD

Payback Painting 2005

Acrylic on linen

Griffith University Art Collection. Purchased 2017

One of Australia's foremost painters, Gordon Hookey has consistently deployed his practice in strident opposition to colonial rule. Based in Brisbane, he is a member of the influential ProppaNOW collective. His leadership through art builds on the work of previous generations to continue to demand Indigenous Australian rights and to criticise racism.

Payback Painting depicts two stories of retribution. The first is pictured in the painting within the painting, shown propped on an easel, which recounts a story told to Hookey by an uncle of a traditional payback that took place in a distant time. The person who performed the payback is shown as the crocodile that has eaten its prey.

The second violent act is represented in Hookey's bold iconography and graphic composition. Created during the time of John Howard's prime ministership (1996–2007), Hookey firmly asserts the need to right the enduring wrongs of colonisation. *Payback Painting* depicts an anthropomorphised crocodile as artist giving the 'thumbs up' to the payback story, standing in a studio reminiscent of van Gogh's bedroom at Arles. A porcine man lies speared and dead on the floor, drawing on the iconography used by Black Panther artists such as Emory Douglas, who represented police officers, and later politicians, as pigs.

Hookey explains:

[...] It's called *Payback Painting* because, you know, in our traditions, or some of our traditions, if you do wrong by someone you have to pay consequences. And of course our ex-prime minister done some horrid, terrible, wrongs in his time, you know and it's against humanity basically... and this is an offence you know, the reckoning, or the day of reckoning.

Beyond the studio window is painted an industrial zone built on Aboriginal land; the Land Rights flag in the background reminds us of the sustained resistance to colonisation. Similarly, the colours of the Land Rights flag are used as the backdrop to the portrait of Aboriginal athlete Cathy Freeman, its central yellow disk working to canonise the Olympic champion.

Natalya Hughes

b.1977, Macksville, NSW

Left to right:

Woman I 2018

Woman V 2018

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

In *Woman I* and *Woman V*, Natalya Hughes establishes an explicit dialogue with Willem de Kooning's 'Woman' series, reappropriating the women from these canonical paintings of abstract expressionism. For de Kooning, the female figure was a vehicle for formal experimentation and invention, and the subjects of this series were seen to express his male genius. Hughes explains:

...I am not content to dismiss the unnamed women, who are the 'vehicle' for this, as the least important part of [de Kooning's] visual language. De Kooning's women are menacing. Their foreboding, castrating, looming grotesqueness is primary in his painterly experiments. I have been repainting them to understand them and bring them into my own visual language, sympathetic to their status in the history of painting.

Hughes repaints the women from this series in her own distinctive style, blending abstraction, figuration, and decorative patterning. The women remain familiar, but the coarse, painterly expressionism of de Kooning's paintings is displaced by Hughes's dynamic and strategically ornamental vernacular. In both paintings, she meticulously constructs the figure from fragments of designs sourced from 1950s' fabrics that were contemporary to de Kooning's creation of the *Woman* paintings.

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran

b.1988, Sri Lanka

3 Legged Deity #2 2017

Earthenware, glaze, lustre, bronze, acrylic

Collection of Rosco Goodworth and Kurt Crowther, Brisbane

Three Legged Deity #2 depicts a monkey god, inspired by various mythologies, in lustrous glazes and gold over hand-built earthenware. Self-taught in ceramics, Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran is acclaimed for his radical experimentation and his ability to push the boundaries of a medium associated with traditional artisanship and domestic functions. Phalluses, breasts, animals, chimera and spiritual aesthetics are syncretised in genderfluid and idiosyncratic works that destabilise dominant narratives and structures of power.

The figure here turns, Janus-like, open to past, present and future. His stance is contrapposto, a device used in classical sculpture to convey a psychological attitude expressed by shifting weight. Numerous depictions of Saint Sebastian (widely adopted as a queer and homoerotic icon) are presented in this pose, with his torso and abdomen pierced by arrows. In Nithiyendran's work, reference to this saint is made overt by the bronze twig that pierces the figure. A mouth, set below wound-like orifices, is lined with dental-grade porcelain teeth.

Robert Pulie

b.1969, Sydney, NSW

Optic Grotto (Series: works with no series) 2015

Spectacles, oyster shells, concrete render, brass, copper, beeswax

Collection of Karina Harris and Neil Hobbs, Canberra

Robert Pulie is yet another 'artist's artist'. His practice is wide-ranging and thinly spread, rhetorical and thereby free, just like that of so many others. Mildly humorous, Pulie's work also pursues an eroticism that finds pleasure in the vulnerability of the symbolic order to the paradoxical ontology of an artwork.

Optic Grotto secures spectacles and oyster shells in concrete, like a wrong retail display that has been ossified in the most ubiquitous form of building material. Despite the fact that concrete is cheap and not eco-friendly, the work has a romantic quality and evokes a range of associations from arte povera, brutalist architecture, or mid-century modern case-studies to kitsch Italianate fountains and grottos. The varied magnification of the space behind (or in front of) the façade of lenses incorporates an awareness of subjectivity as a membrane, foil or tint for perceptions.

[Written with Robert Pulie]

Dieter Roth

1930–1998, Germany/Switzerland

Insel (Schokoladenpyramide) c.1971

chocolate, iron and plaster on wooden board in Plexiglass box,
mounted on wooden board

Collection: Art Gallery of New South Wales - Gift of Geoff Ainsworth
AM 2015. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural
Gifts Program

Carolee Schneemann

1939–2019, United States of America

Interior Scroll – The Cave 1975-95

Single channel video, 3:4, colour, sound, dialogue, 7:30 mins

Edited and produced: Maria Beatty

Cave participants: Lilah Friedland, Jade, Jackie Lipton, Sativa Peterson, Naomi Schechter, Carolee Schneemann. Voices: Maria Beatty, Kathy Brew, Cynthia Gaasch, Carolee Schneemann. Camera: Maria Beatty, Abigail Child, Caroline Koebel, Ethan Mass, James Schaeffer. Online editor: Karen Heyson

Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Carolee Schneemann's kinetic painting and expanded cinema works hold a canonical place in art history, attesting to the site of the female body as a source of power and knowledge, and radically asserting personal authorship and subjectivity. The performance *Interior Scroll* was enacted twice by Schneemann, in 1975 and 1977. This video, *Interior Scroll – The Cave*, presents documentary photographs and a video of a later performance with 'The Cave Group'. Here the sound of Schneemann's voice and images of her ageing body are interspersed with the voices and bodies of her companions. Text is overlaid in the first frames of the video of a quote by Schneemann, where she describes the premise for *Interior Scroll*:

The image of extracting a source of knowledge, a message from the interior of my body, from my other 'mouth' originated in a dream. I thought of the vagina as a sculpting form, an architectural referent, the source of sacred knowledge, ecstasy, birth passage, transformation.

This work reveals Schneemann's fascination with kinaesthesia or learning through the body, which in other works extends to visual and sensory subjects such as sexuality or mortality in ways that evade pornography or medical science. Schneemann's commitment to transgressing boundaries and to the value of personal experience and expressivity continues to resonate with deep urgency today, some four decades after the original performance.

Tim Schultz

b.1960, Sydney, NSW

Hippies 2004

Acrylic on canvas

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

The title *Hippies* supplants the sophisticated wit and frivolity associated with eighteenth-century French Rococo with a linguistic stroke, melding to the central figures ideas that are associated with 1960s' counter-culture. While this scene is based on François Boucher's *The Four Seasons (Spring)* of 1755, Schultz has transformed the composition through depicting it in greige pastels, editing the content, and focusing on parts.

As in Rococo (Rocaille) works, *Hippies* shows movement in all directions, which makes it particularly difficult to study and apprehend. Schultz commandeers the movement of our eyes. Shell-like scrolls, convoluted ribbony lines, and smoky vestiges offer a sense that everything here is an illusion, a simulacrum played out across the painted surface. The work moves as an inchoate flux—solidity is rent asunder and appearances comingle, as if the work is under the influence of psychedelic drugs.

Tyza Stewart

b.1990, Moura, QLD

Screen shot 2013-01-04 at 10.49.11 PM 2 2013

Digital image

Courtesy of the artist, Brisbane

Screen shot 2013-01-04 at 10.49.11 PM 2 is one of a series of portraits Tyza Stewart created over a year. Available to view via Stewart's Tumblr.com account, the image records a composition of photographs in viewing windows, a navigation page, computer folders, and desktop files across and within the dimensions we read as digital layers. Stewart's self-portrait here deftly plays with the simulacrum of representation that flattens and makes equivalent every viewable component but without denying inherent fissures or asserting seamlessness. But, of course, like Stewart's paintings, this work is highly personal and associative, affirming the complexity of lived experience, the contingency of memory and ideals, and the nature of selfhood.

The screen shot includes a past photograph of the artist's face, which has been lined up to match another photograph of a nude male body, the genitals obscured by the placement of a folder icon. Files of research and current projects form the backdrop to the combined portrait. Stewart had previously used this layering technique to assist in the composition of preparatory drawings which were later refined in Photoshop and used as references for larger-scaled drawings and paintings. Here, the work is complete in and of itself, not printed nor made into an object. It remains located as a screen in a screen. In the context of Stewart's accomplished post-conceptual painting practice, which engages with ideas of identity and archetypal gender narratives, this work asserts contingency, multiplicity and the right to contradict, change and also to inscrutability.

Sophie Takách

b.1979, England

Evert Manifold [80 cc, 51cc, 48cc] 2017

Bronze, modified leather tool belt, performative action

Collection of Alex and Kitty Mackay, Brisbane

Sophie Takách's works engage with perception and sensation through tactile encounters. Working primarily in metals and using processes of casting and fabrication, Takách exploits the physical properties of organic materials and mechanical forces to reconsider the creative act in modes of art production. The resulting sculptures are both activated by the body and respond to surrounding environmental conditions.

The group of three bronze sculptures titled *Evert Manifold* are differentiated through the recording of their volumetric measurements in cubic centimetres (80 cc, 51cc, and 48cc). 'Manifold' means 'many and varied' and is also associated in fluid mechanics with 'a pipe or chamber', such as the piston casing in a combustion engine. To create these forms, Takách employs a material used in the creation of dental casts, which she inserts into her vagina, where it sets. This process captures a finely detailed record of the cervix and vaginal wall. A bronze sculpture is then created from this temporary positive using a lost-wax casting technique. As the surface is left uncoated, over time it develops a natural patina in response to contact with air, moisture, and to being held, as oils and matter are taken up from hands and fingers.

These sculptures also have a performative dimension, as Takách wears them in a modified leather tool belt and intermittently offers them to exhibition visitors to view and hold. When someone receives the work, a literal transfer of energy from Takách's body, in the form of latent body heat, is also transferred.

Jemima Wyman

b.1977, Sydney, NSW

Aggregate Icon (Blaze) 2011

Hand cut photo collage

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Jemima Wyman's artworks frequently draw on strategies of optical assault and symbolic patternation. *Aggregate Icon (Blaze)* references the operation of 'razzle dazzle'—a camouflage strategy developed in World War I, where warships were covered in bold, black-and-white geometric patterns designed to obscure their exact form and location. Wyman also references the work of Bridget Riley, whose black-and-white abstract *Blaze 1* (1962) spirals and evades stasis. Wyman likewise activates an 'embodied eye' or gestalt experience, which has a primary interest in 'unit-forming, unit-breaking' in relation to vision.

Wyman's intentionally handmade processes reveal her research into the aesthetics of grass-roots politics and activism. For *Aggregate Icon (Blaze)*, Wyman documents liberation army attire ranging across various patterned fabrics—animal prints, checked flannel shirts, and army camouflage prints. Masks also represent a low-tech and readily available device that provides anonymity against the threat of surveillance. About the series 'Aggregate Icon', Wyman states:

Individual figures are collaged together to create a thriving mass that suggests another body, or a face, or a portal for the viewer. I was thinking about what it is to bring multiple bodies together as one, what those bodies can do or form, politically or socially. I see the 'Icons' as DIY corporate emblems, like the pirates' Jolly Roger—a warning sign to the viewer, for and of the people.

Paul Yore

b.1989, Melbourne, VIC

Happy are Ye Poor 2017

Mixed media textile appliqué including found materials, iron-on printed fabric transfers, wool, beads, sequins, buttons

Private collection, Melbourne

For me, making textiles is nothing short of a survival mechanism, a form of therapy, a mode of resistance, a vehicle for seeking actuality in an ostensibly meaningless world. —Paul Yore, 2019

A complex mixed media and textile work that comprises a network of horrifying and toxic aspects of Australian culture, *Happy Are Ye Poor* depicts Pope Francis and Rupert Murdoch as central characters. The Gippsland-based artist Paul Yore's incisive portrayals describe the hatred and discrimination distributed through Murdoch's media empire and the perverse entitlement made manifest in the leadership of the Catholic Church. The artist's earliest works utilised petit point embroidery to image texts and scenarios relating to his queer experiences of intimacy and sexuality, as well as highlighting the toxic slurs and homophobia that are still rampant and normalised in many aspects of our society.

The word 'aporia', specifically named in the lower margin, refers in philosophy to a puzzle or "an expression of real or pretended doubt or uncertainty especially for rhetorical effect" or to a "logical impasse or contradiction". This concept is particularly useful in appreciating *Happy Are Ye Poor*, in which a revelry in materials, colour and adornment evidences a scathing denouncement of capitalism and structures of domination. A bevy of pop cultural references sloganeer and signpost ideologies, both positive and negative. Yore's juxtaposition of ideas reveal the dynamics that exploit human rights to fatal ends.

Karla Dickens

Wiradjuri people

b.1967, Sydney, NSW

Top to bottom, left to right:

Sleeping Beauty I 2016

Sleeping Beauty II 2016

Sleeping Beauty III 2016

Mixed media

Courtesy of the artist and Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane

Sleeping Beauty IV 2016

Mixed media

IES Indigenous Art Collection, Brisbane

Karla Dickens's practice spans sculpture, painting, photography and poetry. Dickens has Wiradjuri heritage, and her works are both exquisite and painful, taking on dark and sometimes taboo subject matter, like the violence against women, violence against Aboriginal people, female sexuality and death. As Djon Mundine wrote in 2008:

In the 1970s, feminists spoke of being three times discriminated against: being Aboriginal, being a woman, and being gay. Karla's Aboriginality and sexuality do profoundly inform her work yet her insight and breadth of artistic practice both embraces the notion of identity politics deeply and yet works with universal human experiences.

Dickens's series *Sleeping Beauty* utilises found fabrics with floral and other motifs to build layered compositions. Across four canvases, Dickens depicts the brutal rape and death of Lynette Daley, an Aboriginal woman from Northern NSW and a mother of seven, who died at age 33 at the hands of two known men. A *Four Corners* story titled "Callous Disregard" that screened in 2016 was instrumental in reigniting the investigation into Daley's death. It asked how the NSW Department of Public Prosecutions failed, twice, to charge these white men. On 6 September 2017, the men were finally convicted of crimes related to Lynette Daley's death.

Ian Haig

b.1964, Melbourne, VIC

Analogue 2016

Single channel video (Maya animation, 1920 x 1080 HD), colour, sound, no dialogue, 10 mins (loop)

Sound: David Haberfield

The Video Hole 2016

Single channel video (Maya animation, 1920 x 1080 HD), colour, sound, no dialogue, 10 mins (loop)

Sound: Darrin Verhagen

Another Brutally Satisfying Video 2014

Single channel video (Mortal Kombat sources, 1920 x 1080 HD), colour, sound, no dialogue, 10 mins (loop)

Courtesy of the artist

Ian Haig challenges notions of beauty and the puritanical in his art. Working across installation and technologically driven sculptures, he is likewise recognised for his video, animation and film. Viscera and the digestive system are core subjects of Haig's, as he refuses to accept that the low and the base level are devoid of value and cultural meaning. He beckons us to consider our lives as organisms synthetised with technology and uses body horror and defamiliarisation, referencing cultural forms of fanaticism and cults to study this contemporary moment with critical and cerebral distance.

In *The Video Hole*, we are taken through an intestinal tunnel past brown accretions, its inner membrane and folds ever opening to darkness beyond. The sounds of digestive squelches and leaks underscore the experience. Haig's digital creation *Analogue* gives an emoji-like blob a face, with sphincters displacing eyes, nose and mouth. The methods by which we take in the world are shown as contiguous with the point of evacuation—where inner and outer intersect.

Another Brutally Satisfying Video takes its title from a review on YouTube where video game depictions of intense violence are shared. Haig's work multiplies various kill sequences from *Mortal Kombat* (created 1992), the success of which is often discussed online in terms of providing satisfaction for users and their desire for creative 'fatalities'. The high level of blood, gore and simulated violence in *Mortal Kombat* and other comparable games eventually resulted in censorship and the creation of the Entertainment Software Rating Board. However, the maelstrom of kills in Haig's work is abstracted and coldly dispassionate.

Dieter Roth

1930–1998, Germany/Switzerland

daily mirror book 1961

Artist's book of newspaper. Publisher: forlag ed, Reykjavík.

Printer: *Daily Mirror*, London. Edition: approx. 220. Unsigned proof

Quadratblatt (Quadrat Print) 1965

Artist's book, offset printed. Publisher and printer: Steendrukkerij de Jong and Company, Hilversum, The Netherlands. Edition of 1,000

Collected works, Volume 10 Daily Mirror (Deluxe edition) 1970

Variant of 'Quadrat Print' and 'daily mirror book', offset printed, stitched, softback. Printed by Staib + Mayer, Stuttgart. Published by edition Hansjörg Mayer, Köln, London, Reykjavik 1970. Edition of 1000, with 100 copies in multiple designed by the author, painted corrugated cardboard with 2 signed miniature books cut out of 'Daily Mirror' newspaper.

Collection of Noreen Grahame, Centre for the Artist Book, Brisbane

Formed from chocolate, this work known in English as *Island* (*Chocolate pyramid*) represents part of the late Swiss artist Dieter Roth's practice that incorporated organic materials linked to cycles of consumption—birdseed, sugar, cheese, bread, yoghurt, bananas. His output was diverse: he made furniture, jewellery, prints, and was prolific as a writer and maker of artist books. Famously subversive and unrelenting, Roth was the antithesis of the 'artist as shaman' persona invoked by his contemporary Joseph Beuys (Roth was a professor at Düsseldorf Art Academy from 1968 to 1971, where Beuys was professor of monumental sculpture from 1961 to 1972).

Decay and impermanence are key motifs in Roth's work, and the artist enjoyed the fact that his surname is pronounced 'Rot' (which also means red in German) and often signed his works with this spelling. Numerous works of his from the early 1960s survive made with chocolate, cocoa and lard, which have putrefied and decomposed until reaching a point of semi-stability. By 1968, Roth was using the title *Insel* (*Island*) for certain mounded works and prints, as well as *Pyramide* (*pyramid*).

The three objects presented here exemplify how art production is generative and cannibalised in the work of Dieter Roth. His interest in poetry and art began while staying with a foster family in Zurich for three years during World War 2. After being reunited with his family in 1946, he decided to leave school to begin a graphic design apprenticeship and later undertook an internship in an advertising agency. In his early poetry, publishing collaborations, op art and constructivist experiments, the separation between language and image is made manifest.

Roth is considered a major figure in the history of artist books, and his works were often conceived as editions. Itinerant and prolific, Roth questioned the role of the author in his works, often allowing for his books to be disassembled and reconfigured. *daily mirror book* and other miniature books from 1961 take these ideas to their extreme. This was the year in which he created 'stupidograms' and a 'Literaturwürst' piece (chopped up kitchen scraps, newspapers and

books that have been stuffed into sausage casings). *daily mirror book* is made from sections of the *Daily Mirror* newspaper, with apparent disregard for composition or readability.

Quadrat Print magnifies a selection of these snippets across 65 sheets. Presented in a loose-leaf album, the pages are printed on both sides to be arranged and reordered at will and by chance. In an important note written to the publisher, Roth identified that 'power = QUANTITY'. Many of Roth's works demonstrate his thinking about containers, and *Collected works, Volume 10, Daily Mirror* packages enlarged pages from *daily mirror book* in distinctive yellow painted corrugated cardboard, with two of the miniature newspaper books set into the cover. This enlarging and multiplying creates a cyclical and spiral-like absorption of the creative potential through time.

Wart

b.1958, Geelong, VIC

Left to right, top to bottom:

All oil on board

Bubble bath 2019

Courtesy of the artist

Smoking in the bath 2019

Private collection, Sydney

Kiss of gin 2019

Courtesy of the artist

Show us your Boombox Lady 2019

Private collection, Sydney

In the series 'Bathtub Babes', Wart reveals states of emotion with extraordinary precision. The bathtubs are painted as halos of iridescent colours, while finely selected shades depict flesh tones, rolls and liquids, providing her work with a vibrating and shimmering energy. In these moments of repose, sanctuary and pleasure, Wart's women are sumptuous, generous and have extraordinary beauty and sensuality. For Wart, however, the bath is also a place where your secrets are. There are menaces at work. In this way, the series is also reminiscent of a previous 26-panelled work of hers entitled *The Secret Phases of Fear* (2005).

Wart, also known as Jen Waterhouse, has been involved in the production of radical art with a commitment to creativity for over four decades. She works in illustration and cartoons, graphic design, painting, installation, performance and poetry. She has somewhat of a cult status for her works that combine raw emotions and expressivity in a similar way to Karel Appel or Jean Dubuffet. Whether solo or within the community of art-run spaces in Sydney, Wart has included fierce human rights material (under her freelance design business Wart an' All) in her work. Following her first mental health crisis in 1989—she has been diagnosed with schizoaffective disorder—her work has included mental health advocacy and she was instrumental in setting up the ARC art school within the context of institutional incarceration.

In 2017, Daniel Mudie Cunningham wrote:

Wart describes the experience of 'outing' her mental illness in the art world as 'sort of good and bad ... it was a good exposure thing, but I don't want people to see me as an Outsider artist'. [...] Furthermore, Wart is quick to assert that unlike her own trajectory, Outsider artists are generally untrained and removed from the art world, working in relative isolation from the support that comes embedded in a community of likeminded artists.'

Emily Hunt

b.1981, Sydney, NSW

*After Giorgio Ghisi (Italian, Mantua ca.
1520 – 1582 Mantua) I 2017*

*After Giorgio Ghisi (Italian, Mantua
ca.1520 – 1582 Mantua) II 2017*

*After Giorgio Ghisi (Italian, Mantua
ca.1520 – 1582 Mantua) III 2017*

Monotype: Akua ink on Indian silk; brackets: Ebinger-Schnass glaze
on stoneware; brass

Courtesy of the artist

Silks bought from India, where Emily Hunt trained in the exacting tradition of miniature painting, are the pliable support for these monotype prints. They reference the engravings of Italian Giorgio Ghisi, whose work *The Allegory of Life* (1561) Hunt was able to view in Melbourne's Baillieu Library collection. There are parallels in the application of Hunt and Ghisi's skills. From miniature painting to engraving they practice faithful representation of historic images and compositions – and whether this is taken up or not, their practices contain the possibility to add personal ideas and flourishes. Apparently Ghisi did so, and Hunt likewise embraces pictorial deviation.

The mysterious, unruly, vice-riddled, and free are hallmarks of Hunt's oeuvre. In her research and critical engagement with historical tropes and iconography, the grotesque and ornate are brought out, rarefied, and simultaneously untrammelled. This is perceptible in her works that revisit debauched characters from art and folk histories, as well as her images of female sexuality and prowess.

The monotype print works against the engraver's project to replicate and disseminate. In inking a plastic substrate, Hunt has to work in the negative, evacuating the ground of pigment, and a range of factors interplay. While photocopies of Ghisi's work were the starting reference point for Hunt's monoprints, her handling incorporates ideas of the *informé*, and reveals an aesthetic of the creative act, cognisant of the moment where art comes into its own being.