



COOL CHANGE CONTEMPORARY

MEDIA RELEASE

EXHIBITION PROGRAM 24 NOVEMBER - 15 DECEMBER

OPENING NIGHT FRIDAY 23 NOVEMBER 6-8PM

AARON CLARINGBOLD & REBECCA MCCAULEY:
SPEAKING TO THE SURFACE OF A LAKE
Gallery 1

MATT AITKEN & MEI SWAN LIM: *LAND SALE*
Gallery 2

TESSA REX: *SEQUESTERED*
Gallery 3

JAMES DOOHAN & BIANCA SHARKEY: *ASTRO MORPHS ASCENSION*
Project Space

Speaking to the surface of a lake by Aaron Claringbold & Rebecca McCauley in Gallery 1 ruminates on the Australian landscape as a narrative of human impact on the environment, looking particularly at the impact of post-colonisation.

In Gallery 2, Matt Aitken and Mei Swan Lim investigate altered landscapes, sweeping sub-divisions, freeway extensions and early-phase industrial sites of Perth's northern suburbs for their collaborative exhibition *Land Sale*.

Sydney-based artist Tessa Rex presents *SEQUESTERED* in Gallery 3, a live experimental documentary unfolding over COP24, the UN's ongoing climate change conference. Rex presents 'solutions' to global warming inspired by the conference and a residency in sub-arctic Canada.

In the Project Space, *Astro Morphs Ascension* by James Doohan & Bianca Sharkey combines live action, animation, costume making, and music to tell the story of Yow and Sox, hybrid beings, who survive their death only to be utilised by microbes on a strange planet.

For more information on any of the exhibitions or events included in this media release please contact Communications Manager, Jess Boyce
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Cool Change Contemporary acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, the traditional and rightful custodians of the land on which we operate.

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AARON CLARINGBOLD & REBECCA MCCAULEY:
SPEAKING TO THE SURFACE OF A LAKE
Gallery 1 | 24 November - 15 December

How do we define 'natural'?

If you alter a place beyond recognition is it still the same place, of the same nature?

What constitutes responsibility?

If you do one thing here, how does it change there?

How does the landscape serve you?

Shot across Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia since 2015, the works in *Speaking to the surface of a lake* record transient and seasonal formations of salt in ancient river systems and lakes, and different direct and indirect interventions of human activity. Some trace the stagnant remains of paleochannels from the side of the road; others record waterways that travel vast distances across the continent from above. Many of these places have been revisited; days, weeks, years apart. Sometimes change was markedly visible, a red fetid drain transformed into a lush waterway, yellow water to green. Other time scales jostle here too, water tables raised, rainfall altered. In some places agricultural run off turns the lakes acidic, in others eager eyes probe for lithium, and mine for the condiments to go with the next meal.



Rebecca McCauley and Aaron Claringbold are artists based in Naarm-Melbourne who work across image-based practice to interrogate ideas around Australian national identity, land use, and the 'natural' environment. Recent work has been shown collaboratively at Kings ARI, and independently at CCP (Claringbold) and published in *un Magazine* (McCauley).

This exhibition was developed with support provided through the Fremantle Arts Centre's Artist In Residence program (2017-18).

Image: Rebecca McCauley, *Lake King (Nyaki-Nyaki)*, 2018, photograph.



MATT AITKEN & MEI SWAN LIM: *LAND SALE*

Gallery 2 | 24 November - 15 December

The Urban Sprawl keeps moving. Biodiverse areas are erased in the blink of an eye - a process so commonplace that it is hard for us to recall what exactly existed before these brickies' sand moonscapes. Top soil is scraped away, yellow fill sand is trucked in from an unknown place and layered smooth like icing. Whole streets exist in a limbo like state - a developmental pause in the terraforming. This 'clean slate' is the blank surface upon which we can project our desires of the dream home & lifestyle package.

Land Sale looks to the altered landscapes, sweeping sub-divisions, freeway extensions and early-phase industrial sites of Perth's northern suburbs. Taking their collective experience and memories of these sandy, barren and changed landscapes, artists Matt Aitken and Mei Swan Lim will investigate these familiar and yet largely invisible spaces. Through video and folk craft, *Land Sale* looks below the surface of the shiny brochure to try and understand the relationship between development and geology, urban sprawl deserts and dune systems, land and sales.



Land Sale has been commissioned as a part of International Art Space's *Know Thy Neighbour* program of context-responsive projects, asking artists to create new works in response to their own neighbourhoods.



Image: Matt Aitken & Mei Swan Lim, *Land Sale* (still), 2018, single channel video (12:00)

Mei Swan Lim is a practicing sound and visual artist whose work centres on the environmental, emotional and spiritual importance of place, interdisciplinary investigation and cultural storytelling. Her works have appeared at Proximity Festival, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth Festival and Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. Lim completed her Bachelor in Visual Art at Edith Cowan University in 2017.

Matt Aitken is an interdisciplinary artist and educator. Drawing from his background in Cultural Anthropology and DIY music, Matt's practice centres around collaboration and empowerment. In past creative works he has partnered with PICA, Perth Festival, Museum of Water & City Arts Space. Matt is currently investigating youth radio and experimental film with Indigenous and CaLD young people in the community.

Both based in Western Australia, Lim & Aitken have collaborated on social practice projects such as *Swamp Clubb* (TRANSART), *Walyalup Water Walk* with Sharyn Egan (Perth Festival) and *Freeway Meditation* with Katie West (Revelation Film Festival).



TESSA REX: *SEQUESTERED*

Gallery 3 | 24 November - 15 December

Sydney-based artist Tessa Rex presents *SEQUESTERED*, a live experimental documentary unfolding over COP24, the UN's ongoing climate change conference. Inspired by a residency in sub-arctic Canada - with advice from ecologist Dr James Hitchcock - she creates three representations of 'solutions' to global warming.

These absurd real-life scenarios could have been sci-fi films: fertilising the Indian Ocean with iron filings; cooling coral on the Great Barrier Reef with fans; spraying sulphur dioxide into the stratosphere. In *SEQUESTERED*, Rex shows these three scenarios in micro-scale as representative experiments.

Adjacent to these experiments is a projection from sub-arctic Dawson City, Canada. In January 2018 the local government tried to construct an 'ice bridge' with a water cannon to connect West Dawson and Dawson City. Usually in winter with temperatures plunging to -40C the Yukon River freezes enough for cars to drive between the territories. For the last two years the once reliable thoroughfare has only partially frozen.

SEQUESTERED will be shown concurrently with an online exhibition *EVERYTHING'S SHIT IT'S REALLY BAD*, at Sister Gallery. www.sistergallery.com.au

Tessa Rex is an emerging documentary artist and former climate change activist working with digital and analogue film and installation. In 2018 she was a resident fellow of The Weight of Mountains in sub-arctic Dawson City, Canada. In 2016 Rex had her second solo installation, *No Matter* at GAFFA Gallery in Sydney and two-person collaborative installation *Vapid Cut* with Patch Sinclair. She has made short documentaries about the Arab spring in Bahrain, the Night Bus in Brooklyn and The Williamsburg Houses. In 2015 Rex was a collaborative fellow at Union Docs Center for Documentary Art in Brooklyn, New York. She has exhibited in Sydney, Istanbul, Berlin, Mexico City, Taiwan, Dawson and New York.

Rex is the Head of Video, Digital, at Bauer Media Australia, as well as a board member of RUNWAY Australian Experimental Art Journal and a member of new Sydney-based celluloid collective The Highlighter Brigade.



Image: Tessa Rex, *SEQUESTERED Chloroculture experiment x*, 2018, chloroculture, filtered water, nutrients, conical flask.

Bacteria or microbial growth will reach capacity and after exploiting a niche of resources will search for another. How is this different from the human species looking for a new home post Earth? Why else strive towards Mars?

Astro Morphs fast-forwards to a time and planet where being human costs too much energy to be viable and microbes reign supreme. Yow and Sox, probe into the future, achieve the impossible, they survive their deaths and become members of a thriving biofilm in the throws of making up the future. Unbeknown to our protagonists they are being harvested for their minerals and must learn how to speak a molecular language to survive.

Astro Morphs is a project that fights to exist; constantly faced with limitations but choosing to keep on going. With a belief that this chemistry is necessary for story telling, *Astro Morphs* combines experiences of animation, video, movement, costume making, writing and music, to challenge the ways in which we think and communicate.



Image: James Doohan & Bianca Sharkey, *Astro Morphs, Ascension* (still), 2018, single channel video.

James Doohan graduated from Edith Cowan University (ECU) with a Honours Degree in Visual Arts in 2006. He has since participated in several group exhibitions including the *Hatched National Graduate Exhibition* at Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (2007) and *Coming Unstuck* at Free Range Gallery (2015). In collaboration with Perth music label Badminton Bandit, Doohan released the book *Mystery Meats* in 2010 presenting a collection of his drawings and poster designs.

Bianca Sharkey is currently studying a Bachelor of Biomedical Science at ECU after graduating with a Bachelor of Communications (Major in Scriptwriting and Minor in Creative Writing) also at ECU in 2011. Sharkey has also previously trained in classical ballet (Vaganova method) and performed as a songwriter.

In 2016 Doohan & Sharkey co-founded *Astro Morphs* which was nominated for Best Musical at its debut at Fringe World in 2017.