

COOL CHANGE CONTEMPORARY

7 - 29 JUNE , 2019

TESSA BEALE, BINA BUTCHER MONSEES
& PHOEBE CLARKE

CASSIE LYNCH, REBECCA ORCHARD, ANDREW
WILLIAMS & MEI SWAN LIM

PIP LEWI

LAUREN MCCARTNEY



**TESSA BEALE, BINA BUTCHER
MONSEES & PHOEBE CLARKE:
DRIFTING PROXIMITIES**

GALLERY 1

Water possesses the ability to demand of us to be present and this in turn elicits mental, emotional and physiological responses. The character of water is unbound and free but it has density, exerts pressure; effecting, changing its environment. Bodies of water present to us visually as an environment with which we have an instinctive empathy, a constant connection.

“The sun had not yet risen. The sea was indistinguishable from the sky, except that the sea was slightly creased as if a cloth had wrinkles in it.”¹

Due to its ever-changing nature, the surface of water offers ripe ground for considering texture in a living, moving body. The artists have explored the surface of water through hand-made ‘stop-frame’ immobilisations of waves and water-top surfaces. The generation of visual studies and constructs approached through different ways of seeing foreground different characteristics of the materiality of water.

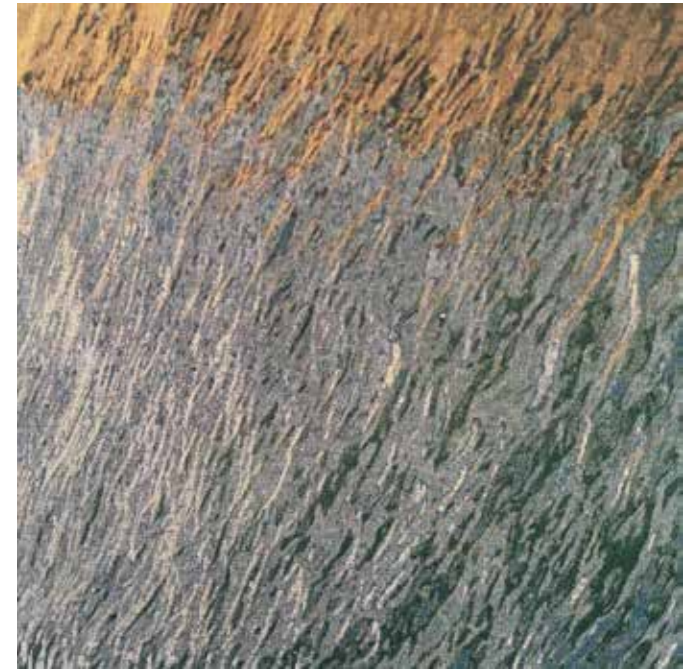
“Gradually as the sky whitened a dark line lay on the horizon dividing the sea from the sky and the grey cloth became barred with thick strokes moving, one after the other, beneath the surface, following each other, pursuing each other, perpetually.”²

There is a rhythm and ephemerality to the movement of water that is difficult to capture in a single static moment. Water is a medium through which to meditate upon and explore movement in material

practice in this exhibition. As the repetition, rhythm and movement of water is explored the dynamics between the works in the gallery lean towards ideas of capturing this act of perpetual motion. Water in motion is synonymous with acts of contemplation, lulling us until the pace of our thoughts matches the pace and cyclical rhythm of the ripples and the waves.

*"The river gurgles, and sometimes roars, and sometimes just swishes by."*³

Tessa Beale, Bina Butcher-Monsees & Phoebe Clarke



¹ Woolf, Virginia. (1931). *The Waves*. London: Hogarth Press

² Woolf, Virginia. (1931). *The Waves*. London: Hogarth Press

³ Chen, C., Macleod, J., & Neimanis, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Thinking with Water*. Montreal: McGill Queens University Press. Pg. 8.

Above: Tessa Beale, *Stir*, 2018, Digital Image. Below: Phoebe Clarke, *Oil Slick Study*, digital image



Bina Butcher, *Untitled*, 2019, Video still.

As an initial visual and material response to the subject, the artists use water as a point of departure to explore parallels in their respective practices. *Drifting Proximities* is a collaborative exhibition that investigates the visual, sonic and tactile qualities of water, in the work of three artists; Tessa Beale, Bina Butcher-Monsees and Phoebe Clarke whose practices converge in the ways that they approach the treatment of materials. The works reflect their shared understanding of water through installation, sound and textiles questioning the value they place on water as a material.

Tessa Beale investigates the potential of material properties to explore ideas of transformation and transition working across the mediums of print, drawing, metal, sculpture and photography. Drawing inspiration from the surrounding natural environment, geology and flora she uses a process of collection and response, focusing closely on surfaces and details that are often overlooked. Tessa believes that materials have an intrinsic communicative value, which she seeks to explore in her work. Since graduating from Curtin University with Honours in 2015, she has exhibited in a number of group, collaborative and solo exhibitions both locally, interstate and overseas. This includes SIM in Iceland (2016), Mundaring Arts Centre (2015), Paper Mountain Gallery in Perth (2016/2017) and more recently Sawtooth ARI Gallery in Tasmania (2019) and Midland Junction Arts Centre (2018) where she was also an artist in residence. She has undertaken residencies both locally at Fremantle Arts Centre and internationally at SIM (Iceland, 2016).

Bina Butcher Monsees' practice is a way for her to understand and reflect on the direct and immediate world around herself by exploring unnoticed aspects of daily life and fleeting, ephemeral moments within the natural world. Impressions are left within the environment; traces of life and movement now preserved in a static state. Butcher's work aims to draw out unique moments, textures and surface qualities to enable quiet reflection and engagement with spaces we interact with on a daily basis which might otherwise go unnoticed. Primarily exploring the expanded field of printmaking, including photography, video, sound and sculpture, Butcher's process-led practice encourages interaction with instances commonly overlooked and allows for reflection on transitory moments. Since graduating from Curtin University (2016) with a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Butcher has been involved in several group exhibitions and a Residency at Midland Junction Arts Centre (2018). She has exhibited twice in the Fremantle Print Awards in 2016 and 2018, and most recently exhibited at Sawtooth ARI Gallery in Tasmania (2019) alongside Tessa Beale.

Phoebe Clarke is a multidisciplinary artist based in Perth. Working across the mediums of sculpture, drawing, video and sound; Phoebe creates works and installations that hold focus in materiality, mark-making and intrigue that is obtained through subtle tactics of alienation. Her work is a visual investigation and experimentation in how she can move between and on the border of the alienating and benign, seeking to produce small changes that persist their way onto the viewer's consciousness. The work Phoebe is presenting in the show has been developed throughout her recent residency at Midland Junction Arts Centre exploring the use of texture, mass, and buoyancy to implicate an aquatic environment.

CASSIE LYNCH, REBECCA ORCHARD, ANDREW JAMES WILLIAMS & MEI SWAN LIM: DEEP HERITAGE

GALLERY 2

FLOAT

On the southwest corner of the continental mass known as Australia, south to someone else's north, is pristine Serpent Country, created by the Wagyl. Something sits on this riverland though, on the banks of the estuary, hovering above the sedge, banksia, and marri.

A city.

Giant cables tether skyscrapers to the ground, oblongs of glass, steel and stone, swaying on the easterly breeze. When the wind changes direction the structures bob awkwardly, the corner of a government building coming down to gouge the earth, antennae wobbling furiously atop a telco. There are near collisions between banks and mining companies. They creak, and scrape, and crack, and rub. When the wind diminishes it takes time to settle again.

It is hazardous to live in a city that hovers. The pieces don't quite fit together: the road, the footpath, the buildings. There are gaps between that grow and shrink. The road undulates, the pavers wobble. The bricks feel like loose teeth beneath your feet. The people in the city step cautiously, each having experienced a painful slip at some point, of legs caught between road and curb and air. Even indoors, the lurching floors topple office workers, and the swaying horizon through the window turns the stomach.

The buildings themselves are apprehensive, hovering as they do above Serpent Country. Their ancestors are the stone dwellings of a far-away continent: their old people are cathedrals, courthouses, prison towers, and fortresses. They descend from the ancient stone dwellings dotting those distant green isles, their foundations hugged by the earth,

supported, ensconced. But these skyscrapers were born here on Noongar Country, far from their ancestral homeland, made of stone yet lacking weight. Tied down lest they be lost into space.

High up on the cliffs overlooking the city, the Jarrah trees of Kaata Gar-up look down at the strange collection of stone and glass as it bobs on the wind. Confused Country down there, the trees say. Smooth, empty mountains made of mixed up stone. Marble from Gundungurra Country. Granite from Badimaya Country. Ngadju gneiss. Thalanyji dolomite. And sandstone cut from the earth in Kaniyang Noongar Country, that smooth marbled rock whose layers tell a hundred million-year-old story of rivers winding through the south-west during the breaking up of Gondwana. The Jarrah trees can feel the holes in the earth left by that quarried sandstone, brought here, to Whadjuk Noongar Country, to be shaped and stacked, and floated on the wind.

The buildings envy the trees, with their deep roots tying them to Country. The Jarrah speak to the city, sending their words down on the wind. We are shelter, we are sustenance. Who are you if you are not a home for birds? What are you if your fallen body doesn't shelter frogs and burrowing creatures? Country is not just the ground, but the plants, the animals, the water, the people, the spirits. You float because you've made the earth porous, a legacy of air and emptiness.

So the buildings drift, dreaming of a place where their foundations touch soil, leaning into the breeze to hear the words of trees. Just out of their reach, Serpent Country lives in the shadows cast by their bulk. The wetlands have survived despite the intermittent light, and there are places in the city where you can peer down and catch glimpses of Country in the gaps. A swan coming in to land, the fin of a dolphin, a tiger snake moving in the sedge. The tops of swamp banksias and peppermint trees reach toward the light filtering between the floating roads and pavements, their leaves always seeking the sun, their roots forever anchored in earth.

Cassie Lynch



Rebecca Orchard, *Fragments Of A Shifting Landscape*, 2016, wood fired terracotta clay some with house paint (burnt clay), dimensions variable.



Mei Swan Lim, *Limestone Variation 1*, 2017, photograph.

Deep Heritage is inspired by the work of 80 year old local geologist, Norman Harrison, who meticulously catalogues various rock found in Perth's heritage buildings, dating and tracing them back to their origins. Perth city as we know it was almost built yesterday, yet its walls and foundations contain ancient rock, formed over deep time. Cassie Lynch, Rebecca Orchard, Andrew Williams and Mei Swan Lim have come together to each translate their meaning of the phrase 'Deep Heritage'.

Deep Heritage has been supported by the City of Perth.

Rebecca Orchard is a multi-disciplinary artist living and working on Noongar Boodja (Perth, Western Australia). Her work was selected to show in Hatched National Graduates Exhibition at Perth Institute of Contemporary Art in 2011 and has since exhibited widely in group shows in Perth and interstate including 'Object Lessons III: Pattern Recognition' at Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, PICA Salon, 'Radical Ecologies' (2016). and held solo exhibitions at Paper Mountain and Free Range Gallery. She is one half of the music duo Erasers, creating sounds together since 2009.

Cassie Lynch is a writer, consultant and academic living in Perth. She is currently researching a creative writing PhD investigating colonial ideology and the intersection of Aboriginal cultural memory and scientific concepts of Deep Time. She is a descendant of the Noongar people and belongs to the beaches on the south coast of Western Australia. She is a student of the Noongar language, and was the artistic director of Woylie Fest, the all-Aboriginal storytelling festival.

She spends a lot of time thinking about the wetlands buried beneath the pavers of Perth City, and sees the ghosts of swamp banksias in skyscraper lobbies.

Andrew James Williams grew up on Ngarluma country in the Pilbara region of Western Australia to migrant parents. His early life was moulded in an archipelagic state, and he sought to connect to the mainland after high school finished. After a decade of working in different music projects around Perth, a change of trajectory was pursued in North America. What started as a romantic inquest, turned into an unofficial mentorship in heritage restoration by master craftsmen in Vancouver, British Columbia. Working on several notable projects across the continent, including a restaurant by award winning designer Joyce Wang, an appetite for design in construction had aggregated, and now Andrew has returned to Perth to gain qualifications venturing deeper in this field. This will be his first foray into expressing his passion for material in a less technical, more artistic application.

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 storytelling. Her works have appeared at Proximity Festival, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth Festival, Lawrence Wilson and Janet Holmes á Court Gallery. Lim makes work with her partner, Matthew Aitken. Together they've collaborated on social practice projects such as Swamp Clubb (TRANSART), Walyalup Water Walk with Sharyn Egan (Perth Festival), Freeway Meditation with Katie West (Revelation Film Festival) and Land Sale (International Art Space). She is also an electronic musician who has been performing and writing under the name Mei Saraswati since 2010.

PIP LEWI: SUBURBAN MUSINGS AND OTHER CURIOUS FINDS

GALLERY 3

A letter~

To the suburbs and those that dwell within them,

I follow your streets like veins, from the heart of the city through to the homes, houses and vacant lots at your fingertips.

I've seen witches hats at strange heights atop broom-like poles that could only be explained by Wiccan skullduggery and urban jinxes.

I've seen lost trolleys stray too far from home and collapse, exhausted from a perilous journey, on some stranger's sun-dried driveway.

Half drunk bottles of water, or wine, and an already nibbled snack, considerably placed on a park bench to nourish the passerby in need.

An empty can of mother, crushed at a curbside. Collecting crumbs and remnants. She told me of children that weaned themselves and lamented that they do indeed grow up fast.

I saw an odd sock in a bush, waiting to be picked up by their partner. It had already waited a long time, maybe they broke up. I can't say for sure. I will ask next time if it isn't too rude an inquiry.

I've seen nangs the morning after the night before. Strewn across parking lots like many drunkards.

Cryptic messages etched in concrete, secret codes only meant for the eyes of observant voyeurs.

To the suburbs and those that dwell within them, I thank you.

I appreciate your personality, your moods and sense of humour.

I see it everywhere I go.

I hear you, I listen.

I know you now.

It was lovely meeting you.

-(not)pipe



Pip Lewi, *suburban study*, 2018, texta, highlighter and pen on sketchbook paper, 210 x 297mm



Pip Lewi, *parked trolley and bins*, 2018, texta and highlighter on sketchbook paper, 210 x 297mm

Suburban Musings and Other Curious Finds reveals the secrets lives of neglected oddities residing within suburban terrains. Pip Lewi appropriates the demeanour of the flâneur but radically strips it from its conceited, Baudrillardian sensibility. As this peculiar persona, her fascinated gaze absorbs the disjointed qualities of contemporary banality. Left abandoned and unkempt, the prosaic landscape manifests into the bizarre, subterranean late capitalist residue of hyperproduction and consumption. Her work is not of the usual reaction of alarm that one may experience witnessing the exterior results of generational trauma under the multitude of oppression and deprivation. In this sense, she is not a mere tourist amongst the poor, corresponding to the 19th-century bourgeois pastime. Instead, Lewi submerges herself within its reality. She denotes significant value, or rather, a perceptive attraction towards the landscape of plastic curiosities.

It is an accidental object culture that demands to be documented in a sincere and compassionate musing. Her casual saunter among objects and the receptive subjects of complex alienation results in a series of technicolour illustrations with permanent ink on rough paper. Lewi produces a lively sketch replicating a realist style in a hurried fashion with a perceivable omission of detail. This form signifies her slight panic within the moment of anticipating the discomfort of her subjects of interest, once they become aware of themselves through the perception of the artist.

Even with the nuance of the complex power dynamic between artist and subject, the work is an authentic documentation that opens a fragment of reality that is otherwise forgotten. Although situated within Australian suburbia, Lewi's work is a homage to the avant-garde strategy of *Dérive*, a revolutionary idea

produced by Guy Debord and the Letterist International. The objective of this movement is to relieve one from severe ennui of modernity. This comprises the direct action of harnessing the geography of the urban landscape and to transform it into an artwork, with new architecture and sensory amusements. This is with the momentous effort to dissolve the boundary between the depths of the psyche and the surface of the physical environment. Lewi's art is a ghost to the potential pleasure of urban landscapes. However, it is an expression of realism without illustrative allude to an emancipatory manifesto. Rather than proposing something provocative that corresponds to the avant-garde, Lewi exposes the truth of late capitalism with a vivid imagination, evoking sincere compassion towards its subjects.

Evangeline Perry

Evangeline Perry is studying Honours Media and Communications at The University of Western Australia. Her passions are radical politics, cinema and psychoanalysis. She intends to write short stories once she completes her thesis.

Pip Lewi is an emerging artist from Perth, Western Australia currently working on Whadjuk Noongar land. She is interested in capturing the essence of 'the everyday' within the mediums of painting and drawing. Her work aims to explore how culture and identity relate to place through reconnaissance of suburbia and using motifs and symbols to channel a realised middle-class Australian aesthetic.

LAUREN MCCARTNEY: HERE, WITH A BANG!

PROJECT SPACE

Q&A BETWEEN LAUREN AND AMBER MCCARTNEY

AM: The performance in this exhibition explores how women can subvert the male gaze through expectations of gender performance or enactment. Could you begin by talking about what inspired you to create the work and how it developed?

LM: In 2018 I had the privilege of attending an intensive, intersectional Feminist Art Collective residency on the Toronto Islands (that are traditionally owned by The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation). It was during this time that, with the support of those partaking in the residency, I first developed, tested and filmed the footage on the beach near my studio which became the artwork, Here, with a bang!.

In this work, it was important for me to reclaim the autonomy and symbols of female sexuality that have been used to objectify those who identify as women. I was interested in creating work that challenges how, within a Western context, the nude female body is seen as a consumable product by cis-gendered heteronormative men. I wanted to defy this construction in my work through enticing the viewer with an interpretation of the burlesque balloon pop dance as a catalyst for female sexuality. However, this anticipated consumption is disrupted, as every pop of the balloons is amplified to create repetitive, abrasive sounds that provide a contrast to the indulgence of the soft, feminine imagery of the nude woman. This is further

obstructed by the body being coated with the creamy goop that is inside each exploding balloon.

AM: Although viewing the work is jolting and unsettling to experience, it is also quite funny to watch, as it makes use of humour to disarm male pleasure. Can you describe how the use of humour and the manner in which you use your body deconstructs and challenges male entitlement?

LM: Women have only very recently been recognised for their humour. If we look into the canon of Western comedy, it has a very long male history, where women have often been used as subjects of humiliation. Humour, particularly corporeal feminist humour, is an important aspect of my work because it resists stereotypes that make up dominant constructions of mainstream femininity. It threatens the structure of western patriarchal culture and succeeds in breaking it down. It also contributes to how a collective feminine experience can be communicated through a language that is recognised and understood by those who identify as women.

The humour in my work is expressed in the way that I attempt to pop a ridiculous amount of cream filled balloons as I dance, while trying to seduce the viewer and maintain eye contact. It is a visually alluring task that becomes more and more difficult to achieve as the dance progresses. Although more of my nude body is revealed with each pop, it is smeared with the oozing, messy, sticky substance that is mixed with sand from the landscape – far from the slick act of professional burlesque.

AM: Can you tell me about your choice of sound? Why did you choose to contrast the lightness of your persona with such unsettling distortion?



Lauren McCartney, *Here, with a bang!* (still), 2019, digital video, 11:27.



Lauren McCartney, *Here, with a bang!* (still), 2019, digital video, 11:27.

LM: As funny and self-liberating that the imagery of the performance may be, it is layered with dark undertones that reflect my experiences of identifying as female. This resonates in the pops of the balloons. To be a woman can be painful, it can be terrifying, it can be exhausting. The overwhelming loud bangs take up physical space; they are the disruptions, the threats, the violence that women face every day. I really want the audience to feel that.

AM: As a dancer I connect with this work because I am interested in the ability to completely transform oneself via performance quality. During your performance, how does your mind and body respond to the task? Do you notice your thought process? Are you aware of your naked body or do you transform your whole self into a 'coy', 'playful' character?

LM: As feminists, we work really hard to resist and counter feminine stereotypes that have been put in place to keep us submissive. This can get exhausting and in my everyday body I still feel the pressure to seek and maintain an 'ideal' feminine figure and submit to performing mainstream femininity. However, I find that when I create art using my body, particularly my nude body, I can disconnect. I imagine you feel something similar as you dance, you have your 'work' body and your other body. When my body is in front of the camera it becomes a tool I use to make art. It is quite liberating because so many layers of vulnerability can be shrugged off and I can focus on performing my gender to produce the bodily actions for the work. We also need to continue to insert more images of women into the world that haven't been manipulated and controlled by the patriarchy and media. I want to contribute to that in this work.

Here, with a bang! is an exhibition of a video based performance that parodies the seductive burlesque balloon pop as a catalyst to explore how women engage with absurd and playful approaches to performing their bodies seductively. The work provokes constructed expectations of feminine sexual expression, offering a corporeal feminism that defies them.

The loud pops of the balloons break up and juxtapose the soft, overtly feminine dance with sounds that have violent undertones, further distancing the performance from an indulgence in pleasurable imagery.

Lauren McCartney is a multidisciplinary, feminist artist, who is based in Wollongong, New South Wales. Her work parodies objectification and conventions of appropriate female behaviour. She creates situations where her body is humorously exaggerated to the degree that she becomes a spectacle and an object of laughter, whilst simultaneously disrupting stereotypes and myths about femininity and misbehaviour. McCartney's practice offers the concept that through failing with her materials and her body, she succeeds in creating her work.

McCartney holds a PhD (2018) through Curtin University and a Bachelor of Creative Arts (2010) (Honours Class I) from the University of Wollongong. Her work has been collected by the Art Gallery of Western Australia and she has exhibited her work and participated in presentations on her practice both nationally and internationally.

Cool Change Contemporary acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation, the traditional and rightful custodians of the land on which we operate. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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