



COOL CHANGE CONTEMPORARY

MEDIA RELEASE | DECEMBER 2019 EXHIBITION PROGRAM

Amy Mills: *Can I Pray For You*
Gallery 1

Tarryn Gill & Thea Costantino: *In Therapy*
Gallery 2

Mariaan Pugh: *I Miss You Stephen, I Keep Watching Barbarella*
Gallery 3

Opening Night: Friday, 29 November, 6-8pm.
Exhibition Continues: Saturday 30 November - Saturday 21 December.
Wednesday - Sunday 11AM - 5PM



'*Can I pray for you*' is a body of work by Sydney-based artist Amy Mills that draws attention to the everyday absurd conversations and interactions that people living with disabilities encounter.

'*In Therapy*' stages a conversation between two artists with a long history of friendship and collaboration. The title is a playful nod to our shared investment in mental health and the influence of psychoanalytic concepts in our art practices.

'*I Miss You Stephen, I Keep Watching Barbarella*' is centred around a friendship quilt, an ode to a beloved friend who moved to New York to follow his fashion dreams.

For more information on any of the exhibitions or events included in this media release please contact Paul Boyé hello@coolchange.net.au | 0484 500 838

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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'*Can I pray for you*' is a body of work drawn from a lifetime of awkward and, oftentimes, insensitive interactions with people who have just learnt that I am terminally ill. This text-based textile installation deconstructs these interactions, amplifying phrases, questions, and statements that I hear over and over, highlighting the absurdity of our reaction to mortality. Death, and dying have always been taboo subjects. People living with terminal illnesses are automatically viewed through a binary lens: are you an inspiration or a tragedy? I am neither, existing somewhere in the liminal space in-between.

Snippets from these conversations, and how I really want to respond, 'Stop telling me about your dead friends!' have been sewn into large, colourful quilts that the audience is invited to interact with. These quilts reconceptualise one made and given to me in hospital by a women's auxiliary group. They are intended to make visible the way we emotionally engage with people who live with disabilities, highlighting the powerful and lasting effect these communications can have – even when we are too desensitised to truly comprehend.



Amy Claire Mills, *Do I Need To Manage Your Grief*, 2019, Mixed Media Textiles, 142cm x 202cm. Image courtesy of the artist.

Amy Claire Mills is a Sydney-based emerging artist, whose art practice explores identity and self-preservation through immersive installations and performance, by which she becomes both the artist and subject.

With a broad range of skills, Amy has worked with community and art organisations, local councils and fellow artists to curate exhibitions and community events. In 2017 Amy travelled to Iceland to partake in a textiles based artist residency at Textilmiðstöð Íslands (Icelandic Textile Centre), where she facilitated cross cultural workshops. Born 29th of August 1988 Amy lives and works in Sydney, Australia. Graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) from UNSW Art and Design in 2017. Amy is a Founding member of Show Us Your Teeth, the all-female feminist performance Art collective founded in 2014.

This exhibition stages a conversation between two artists with a long history of friendship and collaboration, reflecting on changes and challenges in personal life, identity and relationships. The title is a playful nod to our shared investment in mental health and the influence of psychoanalytic concepts in our art practices; using the framework of a therapeutic conversation the exhibition explores autobiographical content such as dreams, memory, trauma, gender, relationships, existential issues and spirituality.

In the background to this exhibition are some unstable dyads that leak and overlap, in particular the apparently opposed rationalism of Freud with his disciple Jung's mysticism. Thea takes the Freudian path while Tarryn follows Jung's approach; other fragile oppositions such as masculine/ feminine, ego/ id, life/ death will also be explored. At its heart this is an exhibition about the self and the relationships that define it, and love, loss, rivalry and projection play a role in the working dynamic as well as the content of works. Cool Change provides an incubating space for us to explore this process.



Tarryn Gill, Exhibit A (detail); 2019; Mixed media including hand stitched fabrics, foam, artificial eyes, pipe cleaners, sequins, gemstones, feathers; Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist.

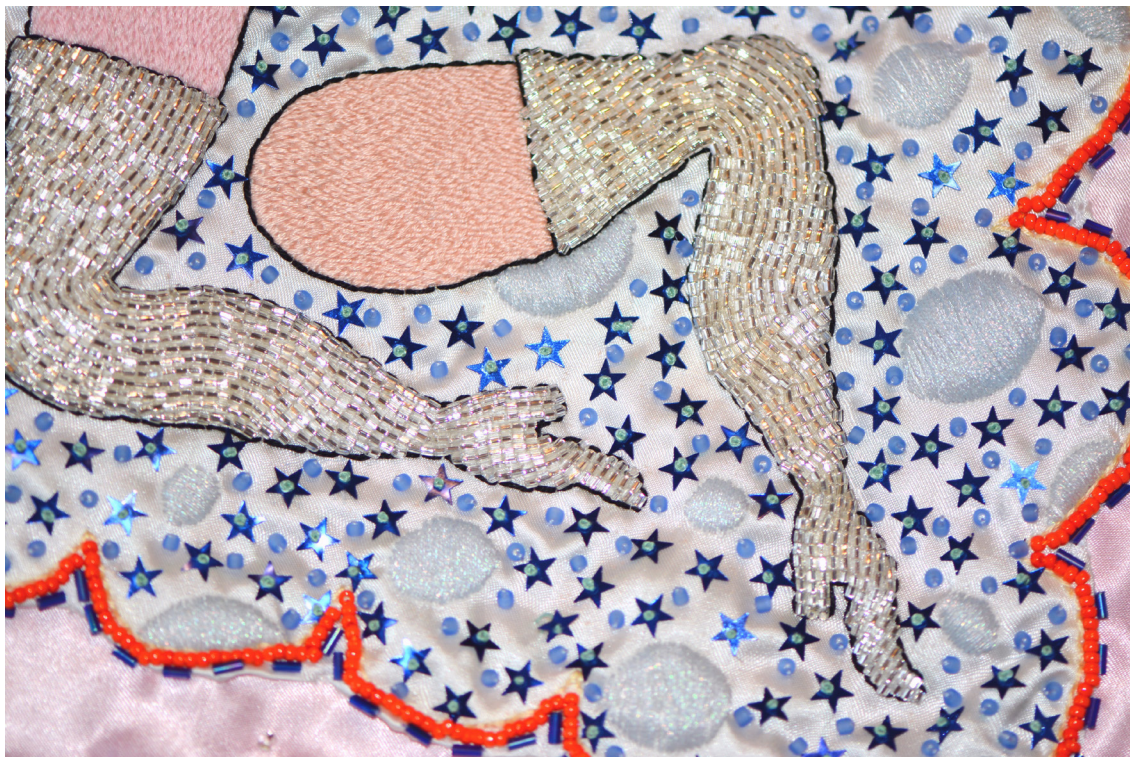
Tarryn Gill is a WA based multidisciplinary artist who makes artworks spanning the mediums of sculpture, photography, film, drawing, set/costume design and performance. Notably, she has exhibited works in the 2016 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Magic Object; in the 17th Biennial of Sydney; at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography; the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; the Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane and Akademie der Künste, Berlin. Tarryn's works are held in numerous public and private collections nationally. She is represented by Gallery Sally Dan Cuthbert, Sydney.

Thea Costantino holds a PhD (2011) from Curtin University and undergraduate degrees in Fine Art and Literary Studies. Costantino received a 2015 Visual Arts and Craft Mid-Career Fellowship from the WA Department of Culture and the Arts, the 2013 Hutchins Art Prize, a 2011 Qantas Foundation Encouragement of Australian Contemporary Art Award and the 2012 Artsource/ Gunnery Artist Exchange. The artist's work is held in collections including the Art Gallery of South Australia, Art Gallery of Western Australia, The Cruthers Collection of Women's Art, Murdoch University, John Curtin Gallery, City of Perth, and City of Joondalup.

'*I Miss you Stephen, I Keep Watching Barbarella*' started as a series of beaded embroideries, exploring a friendship initially formed from a shared interest in costuming, as well as camp cinema. The embroideries have slowly evolved into a quilt.

Quilting which traditionally recycles scrap fabrics was revived in the 1960s prompted by an anti-materialist movement, contrastingly, in the same decade the decadent and very materialistic cult film *Barbarella* was released. Based on a French comic series of the same name, director Roger Vadim presented his then-wife Jane Fonda as a highly sexualised Sci-Fi superhero in an incredibly camp universe.

The imagery of the embroideries are derived from *Barbarella*, and have been assembled into a friendship quilt. Friendship quilts traditionally bring to mind dear friends and beloved relatives showing their care through a quilt. They were often made for loved ones who were moving to a distance place. This friendship quilt was made as an ode to Mariaan's dear friend Stephen who moved to New York to follow his fashion dreams.



Mariaan Pugh, *I Miss You Stephen, I Keep Watching Barbarella*, 2019. Image courtesy of the artist.

Mariaan is an emerging textile artist and fashion designer based in Perth. Her practice is currently exploring heightened fondness for loved ones during long-distance relationships through traditional textile techniques.

Mariaan has exhibited locally and in Iceland after completing a textile residency in Blönduós, Iceland.

Mariaan holds a Bachelor in Textiles from Curtin University (2013) and a Advanced Diploma in Fashion and Textiles from North Metropolitan Tafe (2016). She now teaches at The Children's School of Contemporary Art.