

Artist Statements

2023 Majlis Travelling Fellowship

Delphine Byrne, Lucca de Clario, Lewis Egan, Luca Feldman, Caitlinn Foord, Grace Fuentealba, Alexandra Gowing, Darcy Guttridge, Indi Jennings, Demi Kromidellis, Alula McGlashan-Rabik, Georgia Naughton, Casey Nicholls-Bull, Molly Shears, Fiona Shewan, Jessie Spencer Smith, Justine Walsh, Olivia Wood, Wei Ziyi

Delphine Byrne

Delphine Byrne's practice explores the unsolved disappearance of Juanita Nielsen, an heiress who disappeared in 1975. Juanita was the face of Victoria Street's anti-development protests where violent evictions of tenants were being enforced. A coronial inquest determined that Juanita had been murdered, and although never officially solved it is widely believed she was killed by agents of developers. This work examines the rumours surrounding Juanita Nielsen's disappearance and subsequent death. Byrne performs a musical score written by conjuring and channelling the path of Juanita's final steps and the rumours surrounding her disappearance. The score is wrapped within a sigil spell and is played using an amplified violin and a theremin, the latter creating its own sounds; responding to the movements and gestures of the violin. By using witchcraft as a lens Byrne seeks to locate negative energy attached to Juanita's disappearance and transform it into healing resonances. More broadly the work is concerned with violence against women and the way gendered violence is made invisible.

Lucca de Clario

This year began with a blunt intrusion; my mother was admitted into the ICU with a failing heart. Unknowingly, the lease on her apartment had been terminated. And so began the process of shifting; wrapping up her home and shifting it into another space whilst simultaneously shifting into a potentially mother-less new reality; Abrupt evacuations, fast and unsolicited exits. Embedding one's identity in external, fragile and uncontrollable entities, compels an examination of the potential that exists between competing states. Through investigations of the shape of relational existence I dissect, reorganise and dissect again. Amidst the entanglement of kinetic devices, found objects, sound and performance, these competing states transpire. And oftentimes, absurdities emerge, echoing both trauma and tenderness. My mother survived the valve-transplant and subsequently, her home was transplanted into a new shell.

Lewis Egan

My name is Lewis Egan. *I'M WALKING TO SIRCUIT* is my first live, gallery-based performance. On a treadmill, **each day at 2pm**, I walk the distance from my family home in Williamstown to Fitzroy queer nightclub, Sircuit. Covering 13.4km, it takes 2 hours. This project explores ways in which solitude and transit inform queer connectivity in queer spaces. Walking to albums by Pop icons including Kylie Minogue, Madonna, Beyoncé and others, this work asks: how does Pop enable queer subjects to confront the shame and fear of living honestly by assembling temporary configurations of queer, radical acceptance? As western culture disconnects from organized forms of religion and spirituality, increasingly incentivised by hypercommodified individualism, to what extent do queer nightclubs provide spaces of meaningful congregation? Celebrating queer nightlife as a transient, utopic space where new hymns and rituals facilitate miracles of faith and community, *I'M WALKING TO SIRCUIT* performs this pilgrimage.

Luca Feldman

The central concern of my practice is the psychology of the home, interrogating our human desire for shelter, security and comfort. My sculptural installations explore the architecture of transitional space by utilising doors and windows to examine the transformative potential of these spaces. By isolating these architectural elements, I aim to blur boundaries and evoke shifts in perception and states of being. My own interest in suburban renovation informs my installations through the use of domestic construction materials, evoking a sense of material familiarity. Employing the concepts of modularity and precarity, I examine our relationship with personal space in contrast to the broader environment, questioning the underlying values and systems that shape our spatial experiences.

Caitlinn Foord

The series of paintings that constitute *Paula Taught Me How To See* (2023) contemplates light and colour and their primordial, affective dimensions. The methodical and deliberately slow layering of oil paint generates illusory vibrations. The transparent materiality of the combined oil and pigment causes the refraction and diffusion of light on the surface of each canvas. The works pulsate rhythmically, just out of time of the drumming, human heart. The archetypal circle is repeated and modified with each composition, encouraging a hypnotic act of continuous, comparative looking. Red functions as a physiological and psychological stimulant; it increases blood flow and floods the brain with adrenaline. The colour is sumptuous, libidinous, emphatic and vivid. It is a warning. It opens up the possibility for transfixed looking or unnerved glancing. Are you stilled? Should you run?

Grace Fuentealba

My art practice interrogates the reverberation of intergenerational immigrant experiences as passed down through the eldest daughter. I assess my family history and own experiences through the lens of a queer Latina (Chilean) in the Australian colonial setting. Through moving image and an experimental approach to found objects, I attempt to explore mourning and loss of culture in being removed from one's motherland and mother tongue, but also seek to celebrate and reclaim the spaces we occupy when displaced.

I attempt to examine how the diasporic experience can mirror patterns in natural phenomena, following earthquake patterns in Chile that surge towards the shores of the Asia Pacific, to the acidification of the ocean etching away at pteropod shells, forcing disappearance. Interwoven with these themes is a keen interest in borders; who determines them, how are they realised and who they marginalise.

Alexandra Gowing

My relationship with Noise music within my practice has always been linked with visual imagery. I rely on sonic experiences to inspire creative visualisation and vice versa; the image, particularly the moving image explored in my work, motivates the desire to compose. The chemistry between Noise and the image is a transformative and magical process, a cocktail of frequencies and energies manipulating reality. In my work, I explore Themes of the Occult, indigenous cosmologies, and religion and critique global capitalism's infrastructures through video and sound mediums. *Dark Energy Manifesto* is an inquiry into the intersections between *Ancient Greek* and *Biblical Cosmologies in contrast to Animism*, deconstructing cultural influences lurking within the fabric of societies consciousness.

Darcy Guttridge

My practice explores the mediation of sincerity and honesty when presented in published media. This exploration focuses on how the truth of a situation or person is often curated before being shared to others, and hones in on social media and art. Confronting this theme through large scale paintings and considered installs, I am able to allude to broad signifiers of fine art and social media cultures. My paintings, when figurative, depict everyday scenes akin to social media posts and when abstract mimic that of hard edge minimalist painting, both becoming renditions of what they reference. These works leave audiences an impression of awkwardness and insincerity in social media sharing and pompous high art.

Indi Jennings

Informed by the sonic and material ecologies of place, I investigate the contemporary conditions of remnant grasslands within the Western suburbs of Naarm (Melbourne). There is a dialogue, a response to a site that has never been developed, grazed, one of the last remaining. Industrial materials are softened as they act as supports for fragments of organic matter, that I have grown from seed, and cared for in methodologies of solicitude. I collect seeds from plants that have always grown here. Seeds that have resisted excavation, compression, suffocation. This place holds a history that is violent, and a landscape that has persevered. As the Eryngium flowers, it's deep blue thistles are the colour of heated steel. And when they die off I collect their bones. These are the materials I work with, in acts of reciprocity; to create a landscape that poses the question of what comes after.

Demi Kromidellis

My practice focuses on migration and the navigation of changing environments and sense of belonging. I am a 3rd Generation Greek migrant. I use large scale photography to delve into my family experience, focusing on the household as a medium to retain cultural elements significance. My recent work is inspired by my grandparents. I use the deep colours elicited from the darkroom process to highlight how the components of their home and garden setting reflect the culture of a country left behind, yet allow them to feel a sense of familiarity and belonging. In this process, I find myself navigating how my Greek background has impacted my sense of belonging in Australia.

Alula McGlashan-Rabik

The built environment informs my practice, which considers our impact on the natural world. My response to problematic structures in the world is to explore the way in which we dwell. I see dwelling as passing through, feeling home - inhabiting. Alternative building materials and craft contrast formally with products of manufacturing and industry. These come together in installations that question the limits of belonging, portraying an earthiness that is linked to the idea of survival.

Georgia Naughton

Georgia's work combines painting with textural wall installations to tease the viewer to touch before considering the content, a process intended to mimic desire. Sourcing imagery from the Internet and re-cropping as an act of accentuation, pleasure addiction and excess are explored through ideas of good taste and bad taste, perversions, and power. By capturing and disrupting the continuous trail of moving images in our saturated landscape, Georgia's work raises questions as to whether we are chasing transcendence in the excess or self-destructing in a spiral of dissociative hedonism, examining if our bodies are a place for salvation or corruption.

Casey Nicholls-Bull

My work is rooted in specific landscapes and ecologies, and the interaction these have with the histories, bodies, and mythologies that have moved with and through those spaces, both personally/emotionally and from a broader cultural perspective. I aim to give attention to these landscapes and natural materials as a form of devotion. The two ecologies I'm interested in are the Scottish Highlands – in particular, The Isle of Skye, where parts of my family line stem – and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung country, where, as a settler, I live and work. My primary medium is a combination of oil painting and pyrography, which I often use as a method to burn back parts of my paintings. I use paints made with pigment from quarry by-products, rocks from old Scottish coalfields, and a blue paint made from a small ethical spirulina plant farm in the UK. I also occasionally use hand-sourced pigments.

Molly Shears

My practice is led by feeling, textures and obsessions. I engage in dichotomies between power and play, pleasure and harm, comfort and discomfort, the familiar and the unfamiliar, providing conflict unaccompanied by any sort of resolution. Through materials, often hypertextual and hyper synthetic, I work to manufacture a sense of discomfort. I aim to disrupt space allowing room for human intrigue and impulse to fester.

I want to elicit a sense of danger in my work but with allure and desire. I feel heavily influenced by fashion runways and their transgressive vision of beauty, dominance and desire. I want to emulate this power and relationship between model and piece. *What is wearing and what is worn?*

Walk All Over Me came to fruition as I was fixated on car tyres, their physicality, and perpetual motion. A repetitive impact branded with a demand that is simultaneously powerful and powerless, *Walk All Over Me* is both brutal and sensual.

Fiona Shewan

Time is fragile and the analogue process draws attention to this through its physicality. The tactile nature of the medium means it is prone to disintegration and decay. My art practice explores disappearance and the way the mind processes change. I am interested in the relationship between physical environments and how this affects and mirrors emotion and thought. All living matter is subject to movement. Growth, destruction, and renewal occur within the environment and through the impermanence of matter and memory. Imbued with fragility, my practice exposes the fragility of analogue. flow depicts the movement of lava from its vibrant fluidity to its black and hardened state. Reversing this movement, these colour darkroom prints, spiral back through time, with the image gradually disappearing into the surface of the paper. The tail end of the image still exists but its exposure to light has been restricted through the technique of dodging.

Jessie Smith

My painting practice centres on investigating themes of ornamentation and amusement, with a particular interest in capturing perversions of nature as they appear in both these domains. My current fixation is the absurdly tacky, dizzyingly nostalgic carousel. With a rich history dating back centuries, these child-gearred sources of amusement combine music, motion, and craftsmanship to create an experience that is sickeningly sweet and disconcertingly kitsch. Perfectly depicting the Western impulse to distil elements of nature in an attempt at joy and comfort, they exist simultaneously as pieces of eerie, lifeless machinery. My draw to them as a painting reference comes from their rich use of colour, the relentless curve of decorative architecture, and the strangeness of animal figures frozen in time. architecture, and the strangeness of animal figures frozen in time.

Justine Walsh

Torsion is unfixed, balancing, and subject to the energy and forces of the world. Informed by Arte Povera, and Joseph Beuys' *Terremoto in Palazzo*, the work is both materially volatile and robust, expressing a tension of opposites that references psychosomatic and metaphysical dynamics.

Justine Walsh is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice subtly poses questions of absence and being through voice, performance and installation.

Ziyi Wei

Wei Ziyi examines the structures of social relations, she seeks to unearth, contest, and transmute the conventional reality, all while reckoning with the profound trauma and suffering that plagues the feminine identity. A queer woman from Guiyang City, China, confronts the difficulties of integrating into Western society while preserving her cultural identity in Australia. Her experiences of absence of protection, sexual violence, and ideological oppression have deeply shaped her resilience. She explores the complex interplay between the human psyche and materialistic reality, with a focus on the body, desire, and morality. Through diverse mediums such as painting, sculpture, and digital collage, she creates vibrant, eerie, and psychologically charged artworks with an intriguing, almost fetishistic allure.

Olivia Wood

In my expanded painting practice I investigate simulation through a framework of psychoanalysis. Large scale coloured pencil drawings on canvas are heavily layered with tinted rabbit skin glue, creating a surface like that of stained glass. The anthropomorphic installation of the canvas panels encourages reverent acts of worship. Embedded animal and human hair form the DNA of the image with a single red lock split in two creating a watchful gaze over the viewer. Within the comforting presence of the herd and the watchful eye of the spiral, transgressions are forgiven as you are enveloped into a surrogate holding space of the equine.