



Debra Porch and Friends

Exhibition Catalogue
6 November – 1 December 2018

Debra Porch and Friends

Thank you

The artists, for their overwhelming commitment to the project's concept:

Ali Bezer, Sophie Bottomley, Caitlin Franzmann, Chantal Fraser, Tor Maclean,
Carol McGregor, Julie-Anne Milinski, Sonya G Peters, Zoe Porter, Leen Rieth, Kat Sawyer,
Elizabeth Shaw and Justene Williams

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Publication essay: Professor Jay Younger, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University

Exhibition opening: Professor Ross Woodrow, Queensland College of Art, Griffith University

Publication design and photography: Alex Shaw and Robert Mercer

Publication editing: Ian Were

As the title suggests, *Debra Porch and Friends* brings together a group of artists who were protégés or students of Porch at some stage of their and her careers, at the Queensland College of Art or Western Sydney University.

Works on paper, paintings, objects, sculpture and video have been selected and presented by the following 13 artists: Ali Bezer, Sophie Bottomley, Caitlin Franzmann, Chantal Fraser, Tor Maclean, Carol McGregor, Julie-Anne Milinski, Sonya G Peters, Zoe Porter, Leen Rieth, Kat Sawyer, Elizabeth Shaw and Justene Williams.

The exhibition includes two recent text-based pieces by Debra Porch and some earlier 2D works by her not previously shown.

Front image: Debra Porch interacting with Caitlin Franzmann's *Soniconerator*, at Queensland College of Art, critique session, 2012. Work in progress; kraft paper, masking tape, helmet belt, headphone cushions. Photo: Robert Mercer

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detail: Debra Porch, *Untitled (Self-portraits)* 2015-16
photocopy, coloured wash, graphite
45 x 57 cm

Debra Porch and Friends

A Less Ordinary Legend

The premise of this exhibition is to draw together some of the many artists Debra Porch has taught and mentored over her life as testimony to her legacy as an artist-educator. Debra was a passionate teacher who was loved and respected by her students and to some degree part of the interest in bringing these artists' works together is to celebrate the resonances of Debra's artistic tutelage through the artworks of those who have been some of her treasured students: Ali Bezer, Sophie Bottomley, Caitlin Franzmann, Chantal Fraser, Tor (Victoria) Maclean, Carol McGregor, Julie-Anne Milinski, Sonya G Peters, Zoe Porter, Leen Rieth, Kat Sawyer, Elizabeth Shaw and Justene Williams.

An American Australian of Armenian heritage, Debra, was a highly respected installation artist with her initial studio training in printmaking. Her prime interests in her practice were place, culture and memory manifested from the everyday. The media incorporated in her installations included constructed and knitted textiles, hair, found and changed objects, electroplating, video and the occasional taxidermy bird. For *Debra Porch and Friends*, Ian Were, her partner, and José Da Silva, her protégé, chose recent works of Debra's: two printed card works — *Melbourne Conversations* (2017–18) and *Facts of Life* (2017) — and a series of four overpainted photocopies *Untitled (Self-portraits)* (2015–16). In her last year or two Debra was low on energy and suffered disabling side effects while receiving treatment for cancer. However, she was extremely driven to make art and shifted strategy a little to overcome these difficulties. In the *Untitled* works, Debra's hands are the subject. (These remind me of one of her first conversation works created with Armenian colleagues during her Armenian residency in 2012 where she and one other have come to the table for conversation and in the video we see only the two pairs of hands as the conversation unfolds.) There is an other-worldly quality to these images of Debra's hands which are so expressive of who she was as an artist and as a person always in conversation, always doing something. The circulating energy in the blackness surrounding the hands speaks of the unknown and the artist's quiet positioning — or is it conversing — with this space of uncertainty. *Melbourne Conversations* — one of the last works she made and was completed by Ian — is a process work about intimacy in the everyday, where she arranged with 23 friends and colleagues to take her on a walk to a place they were interested in. The small business-card-size works contained a quote from the friend about their walk. For most of these friends, this was the last time they saw Debra. Unfortunately, Debra's health deteriorated and she could only complete eleven of the walks. *Facts of Life* uses the same form, on this occasion, focusing on the meaning of words that suggest the elemental and fundamental nature of life, visually and at times onomatopoeically. Each of the nine cards is headed with SYSTEM – STRUCTURE; ORDER; METHOD; PROCESS; APPROACH (obviously Debra's conceptual methodology) and then at the bottom is the simplified definition of the words: water, whoosh, puff, flutter, breath, blow, aura, atmosphere, and air. I cannot help but think, in this work she is considering her own mortality.

The process-oriented works of **Julie-Anne Milinski** are concerned with the entanglement of living and non-living entities that make up our urban habitats. Her interest in the vitality of materials is explored through a time-consuming process of repeated handling through which the material's hidden attributes are revealed. In this artwork created especially for this exhibition, Julie-Anne has replicated the same process — of brushing gold leaf onto stones — as that used by Debra when they worked side by side preparing their installation works in 2014 in Philadelphia. This process of replication has been empathetically enacted to remember Debra and to consider her feelings as she repeated the difficult task of applying delicate gold leaf to robust stones. The coating of gold transforms the humble stones that receive this special treatment as if to mark those that are extraordinary amidst a sea of ordinary.

With a primary focus on drawing **Sonya Peters'** work considers blindness, a metaphorical and symbolic concept, as the method to examine and expand on drawing's presupposed dependency on sight. Her work processes extend from two-dimensional to three-dimensional space and various materials such as concrete, casting plaster and found objects are incorporated to trigger a sensory experience beyond sight. This body of work began with an artist residency at New Pacific Studio, New Zealand where the artist evolved a process of wandering and exploring the countryside of Pukaha National Wildlife Centre, Mount Bruce where each day she would collect objects of interest and bring them back to the studio to observe more closely and to draw from. She found that she was collecting dead birds and discarded nests and, later in the studio, noticed that these inanimate organic objects still contained an essence that lived on. Through drawing, Sonya further explored this energy, where the drawn line revived motion and brought to life these entities destined for disintegration. In casting the dead bird, moving its substance from fluid to a solid state, the bird's energy is commemorated and made tangible. The nest drawings, which are inextricably linked to the bird, also look to realise Sonya's perceptions of the life of the nests. The motivation of *The Imperceptible Sound of Silence* is to contemplate the phenomena of perception and the space between what is observed and what is perceived — the imperceptible in the perceptible.

The ideas that inform **Elizabeth Shaw's** jewellery practice are about the possibilities of transformation from lost purpose and dysfunction. Her works commence with finding the broken remains of a manufactured item that can no longer perform as intended. Objects selected for upcycling include such things as bent nails, damaged tools, or broken ornaments. Responding to their form or shape, she reimagines the purpose of these lost or diminished objects. The works are inherently anthropomorphic, at least metaphorically, and evocative of lives past. They question the way we define value, made all the more pertinent in the field of jewellery where precious gems and metals dominate. An aspect of Elizabeth's practice, finds her making braces and articulating these dismembered fragments with the care and skill of a surgeon saving an incapacitated patient from a future of dysfunction and depreciation. The two works exhibited, *Foot* and *New Hand*, are in this vein and are powerful reminders of the possibilities of resuscitation and the potential of repurposed lives.

As a Wathaurung woman, **Carol McGregor's** art practice is motivated by a desire to unearth and to visually activate histories and memories to strengthen and further inform Australian Aboriginal identity and sense of belonging. A key source of inspiration for Carol is to counter the systematic blanketing and omission of Aboriginal perspectives and stories from accounts of Australian history and to convey the resilience of Indigenous cultural identity. Since 2008, an important focus of Carol's artwork has been the possum skin cloak which she sees as an authoritative medium for healing, cultural renewal and reclamation. This work, *not a calendar girl*, operates as a contrast to the possum skin cloak works, in that it focuses on the institutionalised colonial subjugation of Australian Aboriginal people. Carol has used tourist souvenir tea towels showing kitsch representations of Aboriginal people and motifs incorporated with an annual calendar. In this instance Carol relates the tea towel calendars to the historical calendar girl pin ups thereby specifying the sexualised reference in the domestic domain. The domestic context is extrapolated by turning the tea towels into aprons. The fabric, turned inside out, references the hidden history of Aboriginal women being removed from their families and the practice of enforcing the women to work as domestic servants. Sewing as a medium in this artwork, is to recall Carol's Aboriginal great grandmother who was a seamstress.

Tor MacLean's artwork has manifested predominantly as a quiet exploration of space, with found objects, traces or everyday materials that are embedded with history. A key strategy for Tor has always been making art wherever she is and embracing any specific constraints in her creative process. Since moving to Yurrwi (Milingimbi), a small community in north east Arnhem Land, her approach has been profoundly changed primarily because of the role of material and objects in this culture. As Tor has learned in traditional songlines all materials and objects have stories that connect the people to the land, sea and animals, she has stepped aside from her previous use of materials and objects to be respectful of cultural boundaries. Tor's current focus is to make work that explores what living in Milingimbi country means for her. Consequently she has shifted away from her previous methodologies to express her ideas through capturing her own movement in space. This series of video stills, started with the artist literally climbing the walls, and are produced from bodily experiments in the space between ceiling and floor where she attempts to float, to deny gravity, and falls. The two polarities of ceiling and floor represent two places, two cultures, between which she attempts to suspend herself albeit uncomfortably and with difficulty.

Generally in her artworks, **Chantal Fraser** explores cross-cultural representations and neo-colonialism within the form of cultural adornment through mediums such as installation, performance and digital media. She sometimes uses traditional processes such as stitching and sewing but these processes are deconstructed as a means of 'unlearning' the remnants of colonialism and the affects that this had on women. In this video work, *Ifoga*, a rarely seen ritual from the Samoan community is shown. Traditionally the *ifoga* is an act of self-humiliation — accompanied by the gift of toga or fine mats, speeches of contrition and food — made as a form of apology by one group for the conduct of one of its members to another offended group. This is done in ways that acknowledge and restore the damage done to the social honour of

the affronted person or party. Chantal has chosen Gubbi Gubbi country (Redcliffe Peninsula), just around the corner from the historical *HMAS Gayundah* ship wreck as the site for this *ifoga* performance.¹ She is interested in the cultural contrast of Redcliffe Peninsula's history with its present-day inhabitants' unashamed celebratory annual re-enactment of the arrival of settlers. For Chantal the symbolic performance of the *ifoga* invites reflection about alternate approaches to relationships and community.

Sophie Bottomley's interest is in expressing the experience of pleasure and desire, especially cravings for intimacy or touch. Rather than an explicit portrayal of the erotic, Sophie's sculptural installations explore various visual embodiments of longing and the body's quest for pleasure. The artworks most often find form through labour intensive repetitive processes that embed the rhythms of the body in combination with seductive sensual materials. Each new work, however, is generally created from new processes and materials that are meticulously researched. In these two works — *Slow Moment* and *The Longing* — the space of physical tension between two desirous bodies is evoked. *Slow Moment* features two glistening orifices presenting their interior spaces to one another while *The Longing* is a pointed phallic form suspended in a corner where it almost touches the alternative wall. Sophie's works about the dialogue of intimacy between couples and their longing to merge are primarily expressed through creating tension and desire in space.

Initially trained in printmaking, **Ali Bezer** considers herself a 'virtual' explorer documenting an up-side-down universe through her art making. Attracted by obscure ideas, Ali has never really felt present in the physical world and is more absorbed by the theoretical, speculative and imagined. Most of Ali's visual artworks originate from her primary inspiration — sound. While committed to this cross sensory process of translation, she enjoys the tangential explorations that arise when sound traverses myths, pseudo-science and bodily themes. For each new artwork she chooses materials to construct tangible metaphors and analogies for the unseen. In this work — *Body Dispensed no.4* — the inspiration has emerged from a book of essays about music and specifically an old Eastern myth about how the soul came to be in the body. While the story suggests the soul would only come into the body to feel the resonance of music, Ali inverted this, to imagine the soul being lured by music to inhabit a body as a form of entrapment. In this work, she ponders a potentially less amicable relationship between body and soul and tries to contemplate our matter becoming one with the universe unhindered by the soul's longings and frustrations.

The critical aspect of **Caitlin Franzmann's** practice quietly asserts experimental situations that encourage intimate multisensory experiences. Caitlin's artworks are motivated by deep listening, feminism and social practice and include a diversity of forms, such as audio walks,

¹ Acquired to deal with the perceived threat from the Russian Pacific fleet, *Gayundah* and her sister ship *Paluma* were the first vessels ordered by the Queensland government for the colony's Maritime Defence Force. Their names are Aboriginal words for 'lightning' and 'thunder' respectively. "HMAS *Gayundah*", Australian Navy, accessed 13 October, 2018, <http://www.navy.gov.au/hmas-gayundah>

wearable listening devices, experimental meditations and conversation-based artworks. Most recently her artworks are occurring in public spaces, including parks, coastlines and forests. Often there is a preference for sound or touch to slow the experience down and to permit the 'quiet' and 'small' qualities to poetically communicate the imperceptible. She often collaborates with other artists to raise awareness of current environmental, social and political issues. In *Drawn Together, Held Apart*, a table draws an audience to it, by lighting up in response to a person's presence. When in close proximity, subtle sound becomes faintly audible and can only be heard when the participant places their ear directly on the glass table top thereby completing the artwork. The table is the place where individuals — retaining their separateness — come together to negotiate, to listen to others and to share views. The found sound 'mash up' oscillates between: the political and the spiritual; public and private: and dialogue and feeling. This work asks us to keep listening, even though there is an unrelenting cacophony of differences.

The concepts which drive **Leen Rieth's** work are articulated in performance, sculpture and workshops within the field of institutional critique. Informed by queer studies of experience, Leen's current interest is focused on physical and social configurations generated in and by art institutions. Leen uses self-experimentation to study experience whilst participating in art institutions to reconsider operations, orientations and privileges present within these spaces. Leen is developing an artist-led pedagogy designed to study participation in art organisations and galleries. Their focus is on contemporary art culture in Australia, and how institutional logics are constructed, reproduced and resisted in tertiary art education and gallery spaces. Leen's research asks how artists, arts workers, and others can engage with their own participation in institutions. In *You and me [4]* (2018) Leen is considering how intimacy is formed with and within institutional spaces.

Kat Sawyer takes the everyday as her starting point by finding simple, not particularly interesting materials from her surroundings — in this artwork, paint flakes. The notion of exhibition as the primary vehicle of experiencing art underpins Kat's critical process-based practice. She creates groupings of objects or images that are presented in group discussions or studios visits and are kept unfinished to keep their experimental potential active. There is a general interest in that which is uncategorised — either in material or artform. At the heart of Kat's work, there is an inventiveness to create something in the gap between (such as activities that are also sculptures) or to make a presence between absences. Similarly, she is interested in sites and spaces that are empty, boring, unnamed, or transitory. The works included here engage with the idea of sculpture as an activity. The shapes and groupings of the paint flakes can be sounded out to create words. The artist's intention is that through the exercise of sounding out words the participant imagines new ways of perceiving and understanding. Alongside this, the kinetic work *Clouds*, is focused on the tension between structured and unpredictable elements where chance is built into the actions of the artwork.

The preoccupation of **Zoe Porter**'s art practice, is the animal-human hybrid. Rather than potential concerns of speciesism, Zoe's key interest is representing experiences of dislocation and in-between states in a narrative context. While she is known for her watercolour paintings and immersive performance works, her practice includes installation works, collage, soft sculpture, costumes and video. Generally, the starting point for the representation of her otherworldly universe, emerges from her drawing practice. These expressions are then translated into performance installations considered by Zoe as a 'moving drawing' using sound, physical performance, video projection and large-scale drawings. These performances reveal the processes behind creating a drawing live — so in some ways the different processes come full circle. In these art works, the ideas of becoming other or animal are manifested to raise questions about other ways of being. Additionally, they can also be seen as performance artefacts. *Performance Drawing* is a selected fragment of a larger performance drawing; the *Nat Geo* collages and *Fur Hat* are characters and a costume, respectively, that continue to explore theatricality and the possibilities in transformation.

Justene Williams focuses on the legacies of the Modernist avant-garde in her large-scale performance events. Through her somewhat absurd ritualistic performances, combined with the energies resonating from readymade objects, Justene is interested in conjuring mysticism and transformation in art and life. Earlier performance videos show Justene collaging materials and elements live which she then further layered with collaged elements in post-production. These two seemingly divergent works — *A Metal Cry* (video of a live performance) and *Nic the Butterfly* a 'bellowgram' print — reveal the diversity and inventiveness of Justene's approach to media. When creating *A Metal Cry*, Justene was pregnant and she wanted to communicate through the body and voice like a baby does pre- language. In this instance the performers cry, scream and make sounds via costumes. Justene created these 'sonic' costumes so that the bodies of the performers, wearing accordions sewn into their costumes, were transformed into musical instruments. The cameraless 'bellowgram' used in *Nic the Butterfly* is a new way of working for Justene that preserves indexical mementoes from performance detritus including costumes, masks, or wigs. In this bellowgram, a costume's butterflies and a wig's wisps were placed into the photographic enlarger's bellows area and on the photographic paper below. The unique image produced revitalises this alchemical, light-based photographic process.

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After a continual process of seeing and discussing art with Debra it is clear to me that she respected art that revealed the artist's view with a very light touch in the way the artist used materials or combined elements. It is beyond difficult to properly summarise the effect that Debra might have had on any of these artists. However, without question, Debra's legacy is quite profound. Some of the shared differences that might be considered to be remarkable in the practices of the artists here that can be seen to emanate from Debra's emphasis are: a questioning of traditional forms of art making and exhibition; themes related to the body, memory, women's work, the familial, or the domestic; poetic, slow, quiet and intimate

expressions; materials and actions derived from the everyday; conversation or dialogue or collaboration within the artwork process; translation of the visual to sound and language and vice versa; feminist and social justice concerns; in-between states; and making art from what is at hand.

In the process of gathering information about the artists included in *Debra Porch and Friends*, I asked each one if they were aware of any crossovers with Debra's practice and whether they remembered anything specifically that she said to them. While some artists have made beautifully poetic works dedicated to Debra, such as Julie-Anne's, I must say I laughed out loud when I read:

Debra's rules on art making

- no plinths
- no fishing line
- no mirrors
- no lights

And my heart melted when I read:

The way that I learned from her stemmed from watching her interact with art, objects and spaces. That's the most valuable way of learning. She sensed a secret life of things and knew how to draw it out enough for others to sense as well, and without over-stating it.

Justene described Debra's remarkable ability to see something in the artist that they themselves don't see.

It was 1990, I was in second year at UWS Nepean and Debra was one of my teachers. I remember her being disappointed in two works I made that year, because I never had the drive or gumption to carry through with them fully.

One was a suite of drawings I didn't know how to expand on. Debra suggested, that I should think about covering all the walls with paper and work on a larger scale, creating a drawing installation. I stupidly never tried out this great idea.

In Justene's case and shared with many here, Debra's suggestion pointed to an approach that became fundamental to their practice.

As we can see from the image of Debra interacting with Caitlin's work in a 2012 crit, Debra brought art to life. It seems fitting to close with one of Debra's favourite quotes via Annette Messenger: 'Art should make life more interesting than art'.²

Jay Younger 2018

² The original quote, 'Art is what makes life more interesting than art', is from French poet, artist and Fluxus associate, Robert Filliou (1926–1987).



Ali Bezer

A while back I borrowed a book featuring a collection of essays about music. In the first essay was a reference to an old myth about how the soul came to be in the body. At the time I didn't think much of it but the story has since played on my mind.

In essence, the myth suggests the soul would only come into the body to feel the resonance of music, which at first seems a beautiful concept. Then, in my typical style, I started to think the opposite. It's unsettling because it implies the soul didn't like the idea of being in the body to begin with and was sort of lured in by sound like a moth to light (not a good relationship). I doubt this is the intended interpretation but it got me thinking differently about many things to do with the body and mind relationship.

Religious and meditative concepts are largely concerned with freeing the soul, ensuring the soul's happiness and achieving transcendence but how does the body feel about it all? And what was the body like before the soul came in? Did the body have an existence similar to plants, absorbing and returning nutrients from the planet and having a simpler, elemental existence? At times I don't think my body is very happy about this arranged marriage with my soul. The myth also explains why the only time I feel the two get along is when listening to sound because that was the agreement for the union in the first place.

The artworks presented form part of a larger series that imagines the body momentarily freed from the mind and its containing shell. I tried to contemplate our matter becoming one with the universe unhindered by the soul's longings and frustrations, listening instead to my body's need for a break.

Body Dispersed no. 4 2017
Acrylic paint, Conté pencils, wax pencils, pastel, Arches paper
116 x 85 cm framed
Photo: Alex Shaw





Sophie Bottomley

Sophie Bottomley's artwork explores how the physical body experiences desire. What bodily sensations do we experience when we desire someone, when we crave intimacy or touch?

Bottomley creates sculptural objects that capture moments of physical tension between two bodies. These tensions reference shared experiences of bodily pleasure and anticipation, such as flirtation, suspense, arousal and climax. Using seductive and sensual materials, she conjures and abstracts the moment of excitement in each object.

Bottomley's work highlights the encounter between the masculine and feminine, where tension is heightened through contrasting materiality, the creation of interior cavities and the space between forms. The abstraction of experiences of the desiring body allows for a suggestive rather than explicit portrayal of the erotic, articulating how thin the veil is between fantasy and reality. Her objects expose how the human body longs for and loses itself in its quest for pleasure.

Slow Moment 2016-2018
Beads, thread, wire on painted steel stand with cast rubber weights
146cm high x 18cm deep, width variable with the two elements





Caitlin Franzmann

Drawn Together, Held Apart is composed of a glass table with an inbuilt surface transducer speaker. On entering the space, audiences are drawn to the low table, which lights up on approach, seeming to engage personally with them. A faint sound can be heard from a distance but it is only when an ear is placed directly on the glass that the full sound spectrum is experienced. This is due to vibrations being pushed through the glass by the transducer. Thus, we hear the sound component of the work, not in the usual way of hearing through air, but by listening directly to the vibrations resonating through the tabletop; the glass becomes a container for vibrations. The sound itself is a mix of found recordings with an unclear but palpable political content from news reports, ritual chanting and spiritual guidance, woven together with electronic music composed by collaborator Andrew McClelland.

Franzmann creates works that invite people to mindfully contemplate their surroundings and social interactions. Influenced by deep listening, feminism and social practice, she creates experimental situations that encourage intimacy, conversation and reflection. These situations have included audio walks, wearable listening devices, experimental meditations and conversation-based artworks.

Franzmann's work is based on the notion that our conscious awareness of the world around us is rooted in bodily experience. When creating new work, she asks how can understanding of the context or concept be generated through multi-sensory experience? Sometimes the work requires dialogue, sometimes no words.



Drawn Together, Held Apart 2017

Custom built timber and glass top table with proximity sensors, LED lights, surface transducer speaker and audio.

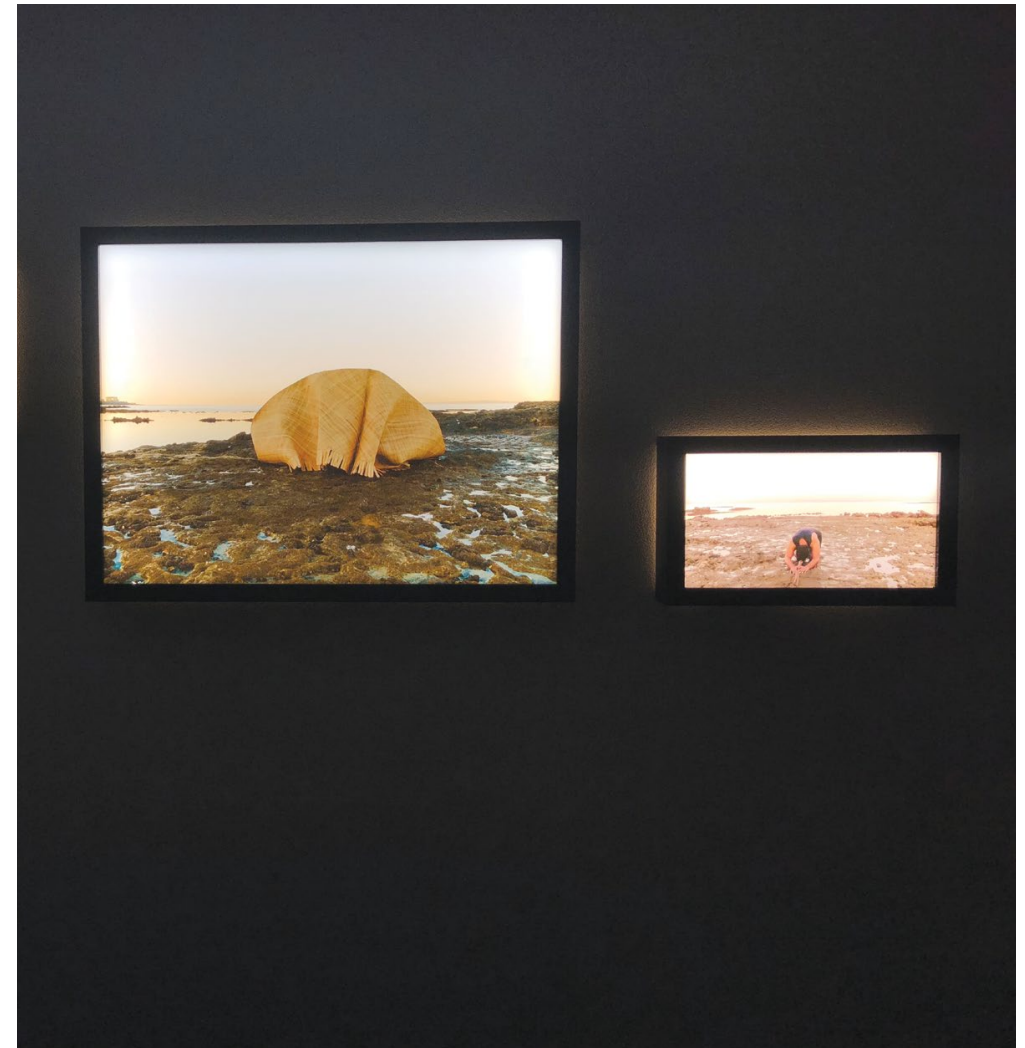


Chantal Fraser

This artwork references a rarely seen ritual from the Sāmoan community called the *ifoga*, a shared gesture of atonement and penance. The ritual involves covering oneself in front of a community to show humility and penitence and, essentially, ask for forgiveness. The gesture has been performed on Gubbi Gubbi country (Redcliffe Peninsula), just around the corner from the historical HMAS Gayundah Ship Wreck.

This ritual became a metaphysical act of artistic, social and cultural penance; a durational, slow, silent ritual performed along the Redcliffe Peninsula, Woody Point, as jet skis sped past and residents walked by with their dogs, some stopping to look.

The peninsula offers an iconic geographical history but its cultural contrasts are as iconic and rich, particularly within its demographics. It's also a region that unashamedly re-performs the arrival of settlers at a yearly festival. This symbolic performance considers reflection and alternate approaches to relationships and community, and how circumstance and history determines the speed of which one lives their life. It enacts the vast contrast between communities who work and reside on the same land. One that reflects and one that does not.



detail: *To Be Humble* 2018

Triptych

Digital film, timber box frame and LED strip lighting
30 x 22.5 cm, 55 x 41.2 cm and 30 x 16.8 cm



Tor Maclean

My practice is a quiet reflection on materiality and space. Living and working in Milingimbi community for the past two years I am very conscious and respectful of cross-cultural references and the politics of living here. I usually work using elements or objects that have a loaded or embedded history and stories of the places where I live and call home.

Everything here has an exquisite songline that connects all things to Traditional Knowledge and culture. The works that I have created for this show have been drawn out from a process of filming and dancing in isolation. Working quietly in my home trying to find a space between the floor and the ceiling; trying to capture a sense of flying or falling and holding on to that space between.

This series of images is about being between two places and not knowing your place in either. It's an uneasiness of calling someone else's home yours.

I would like to thank the Traditional Owners of Yurrwi (Milingimbi) for permitting me to live and work on your land and experience your culture, families and friendships.

detail: *falling ga floating* 2017–18
Series of 12 digital prints (stills) derived from experimental video works
Each print 6 x 4 cm





Carol McGregor

not a calendar girl explores the contradictions and complexities surrounding the representation of Australian Aboriginal people.

Using tourist souvenir tea towels bearing kitsch representations, the printed images are reversed to signify turning my back on the systematic corruption of our Indigenous culture. In making aprons, I draw attention to the hypocrisy of celebrating and romanticising 'traditional' culture when the grim historical reality is that many Aboriginal women were removed from their families and forced into involuntary servitude as domestic workers.

detail: *not a calendar girl* 2018
Vintage linen, white bias, found objects
120 wide x 90 deep x 100 cm high



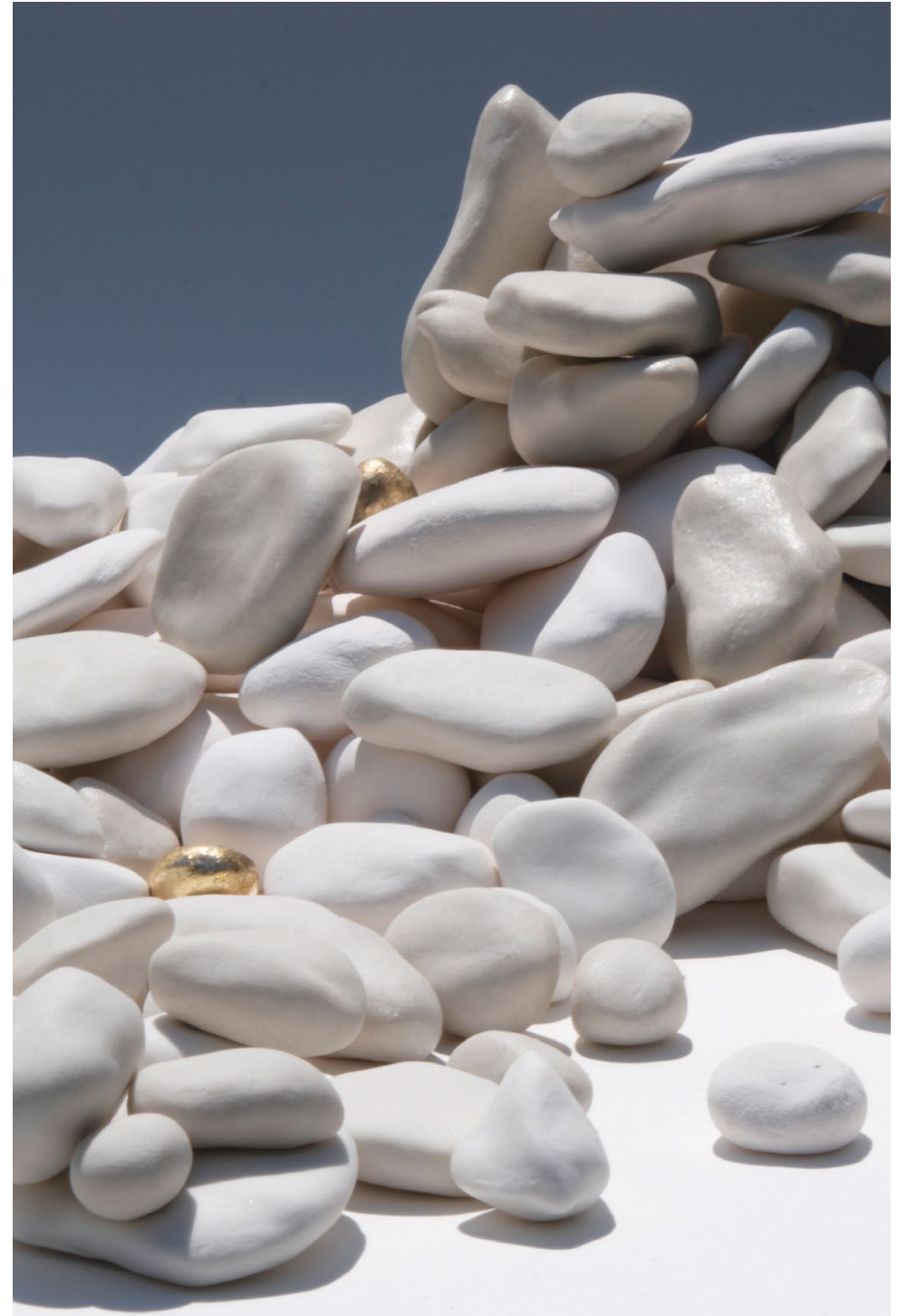


Julie-Anne Milinski

I have an image of Debra sitting at a small table in a studio in Crane Old School, Philadelphia, completely absorbed in the process of carefully applying gold-leaf to a collection of stones. These gilded stones formed part of her work *Remembering Louise in Philadelphia 2014*, exhibited at Crane Arts.

Sinter (remembering D remembering L in Philadelphia) uses material and process to reflect on memory and permanence. Sintering, the coalescence of particles that occurs when clay is fired, renders the once pliable material into a permanent form. While the fired porcelain pebbles have a seemingly solid state, they retain an inherent fragility, exacerbated by their precarious arrangement.

detail: *Sinter (remembering D remembering L)* 2018
Porcelain, imitation gold leaf
Dimensions variable





Sonya G Peters

The lost, the forgotten, the broken and the banal become for Sonya G Peters the objects of perception. Drawing from the found object, Peters contemplates the phenomena of perception and the space between what is observed and what is perceived and asks, 'What is it that we see and cannot see?' and 'Is blindness a condition of seeing?' To explore ideas of perception with a primary focus on drawing, she considers blindness a metaphorical and symbolic concept, as the method to further consider these ideas. To extend seeing as beyond observation Peter's works with various materials such as concrete, casting plaster and found objects that, as triggers, work to provoke an awareness of the senses to elicit a sensory experience — haptic perception.

The Imperceptible Sound of Silence is a body of work that for Peters began with an artist residency at New Pacific Studio, New Zealand that was made possible by a letter of reference from Debra Porch — work that has come full circle beginning and ending with Porch. It was during the residency that Peters was able to explore the interrelationship between material, process and concept to articulate how the object has the potential to metaphorically transform meaning to arouse the senses. From intimate drawings of what was found and observed scouring the countryside of the Pukaha National Wildlife Centre, Mount Bruce, to casting and making concrete, these material processes act as the means to make the invisible visible and the imperceptible perceptible. It is through this exchange that the mark manifests as the material trace between what is observed and what is perceived.



detail: *The Imperceptible Sound of Silence* 2018
Charcoal on tracing paper, photocopy, found material and casting plaster
Object 30 x 40 cm (approx.); two drawings unframed 21 x 28 cm each



Debra Porch

For over 20 years my artwork has focused on concerns of memory, mortality, and the relationship between 'presence' and 'absence'. Memory can be a potent phenomenon, and has the capacity to transform what may have appeared as the everyday into the extraordinary.

My installation works have integrated visuals and objects within the space to trigger in the viewer the presence of memories, stories, or physical ties that are invisible.

The installations incorporate a range of materials and mechanisms, including constructed and knitted textiles, hair, found and changed objects, electroplating, photography and video to operate as visual metaphors. The works question if visual installation or the art object can translate the ordinary into the remarkable, linking past to present, and particularly, the potential that objects have to evoke that which is invisible or absent from a viewer's sight.

Growing up as part of the Armenian Diaspora outside of Chicago I reflect on situations that could be referred to as 'second-hand' memory — or events remembered through another's recollection or narrative of history.

I have been able to investigate these ideas through diverse artist residencies in several locations including in Thailand, Vietnam, Paris and Armenia; my work bears direct influences from this research.

detail: *Untitled (Self-portraits)* 2015-16
4 framed works on paper: photocopies, coloured wash, graphite
Each work: 45 x 57 cm
Photos: Alex Shaw





Zoe Porter

Zoe Porter is an interdisciplinary artist exploring primarily a drawing practice, which also extends into painting, collage, installation, performance, sculpture, site-specific works and video.

For 'Debra Porch and Friends', Porter has produced a set of collages made up of collections of found magazine imagery sourced from vintage *National Geographic* magazines. Human and animal forms have been rearranged into new configurations to form surreal and strange hybrid beings. Sculptural costume work, *Fur Hat and Performance Drawing* are part of past live performances suggestive of transformation and traces of the artist in action.

Porter's work frequently depicts hybrid forms in an attempt to cross boundaries between the animal and the human, real and imaginary states, chaos and order. Much of her work explores a female experience through a personal mythology often depicting the human form undergoing transformation or alteration, presenting possibilities for other ways of being or existing. Her performance-based works are immersive and collaborative, merging art, theatre, sound and physical performance. Porter's performance-based and site-specific works have taken place in both gallery and festival contexts including the Prinzessinenstrasse Garten (Berlin), Brisbane Street Arts Festival, BARI festival, Woodford Folk Festival, The Judith Wright Centre and the Brisbane Fringe Festival. Porter has undertaken a number of international residencies including Burgundy, France (2006); Geidai University, Tokyo (2010); and Crane Arts, Philadelphia (2012).



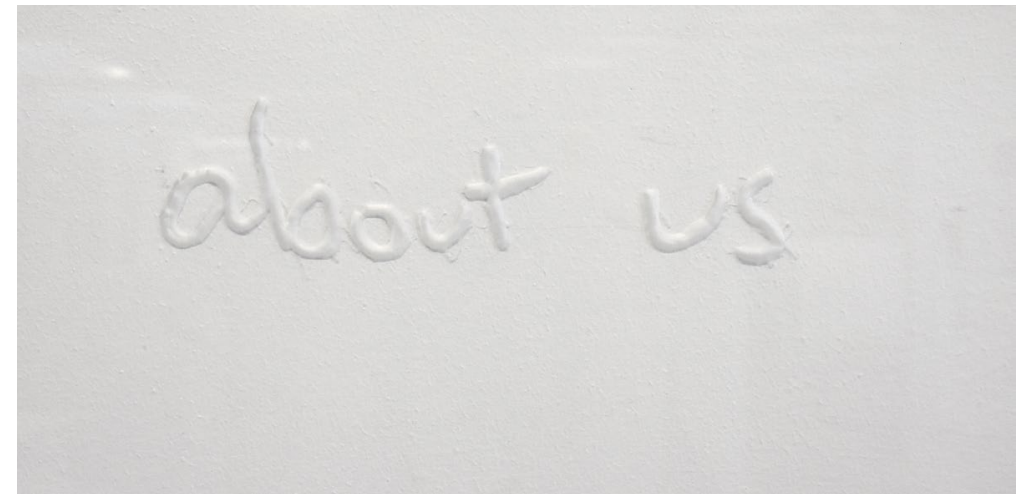
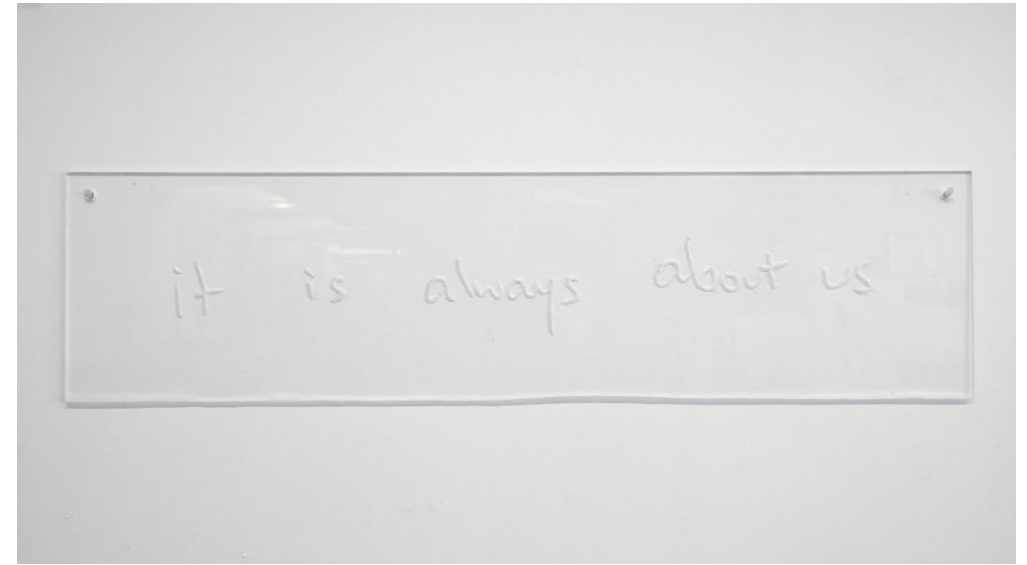
Pierced 2018
Magazine images, embroidery thread and tape
42.5 x 32.5 cm



Leen Rieth

In *You and me [4]* (2018) I am thinking about how intimacy is formed with and within institutional spaces. Although art, artists and institutions appear to be the central focus of making and showing art, it is through relationships with each other that all the other stuff can occur. On a broader level, I am interested in who 'us' might be. It can have a collective and supportive meaning, but can also be exclusionary, and that holds a tension that I find interesting within institutional art spaces. My research asks how artists, arts workers, and other participants can engage with their own participation in institutions.

It has been really important to me to make something specific for this show. When I think about Debra, I don't so much think about anything specifically about art, I think about her person and the way she brought people together, I think about being her student and talking with other students about what she said to us. In that way, Debra brought my attention to what I think is the most important thing to consider not just as an artist, but as a person, and that is how we are with the people around us, and how powerful that can be.



You and me [4] 2018
Acrylic sheet
80 x 20 x 1 cm



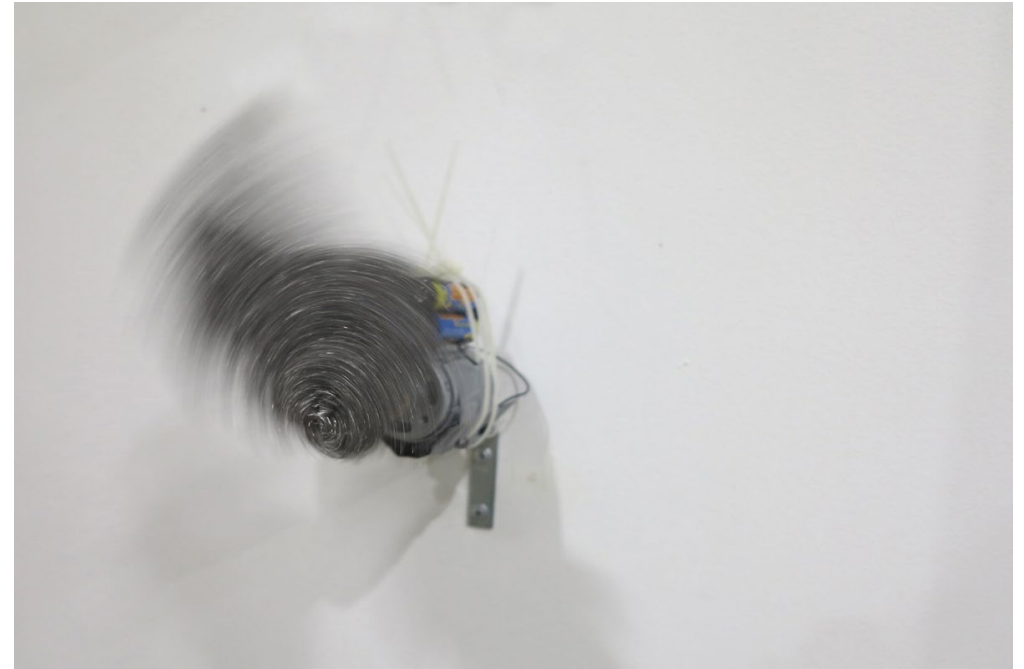
Kat Sawyer

Using commonplace materials, these works explore the way language can emerge from noise, shape and order of objects. Both works engage with the idea of sculpture as an activity — through the exercise of sounding-out of words.

The kinetic work involves tensions between formal and informal elements, or structured and unpredictable elements. Assembled by attaching loose, flexible rubber tubing to a hobby motor, the energy output creates an unpredictable movement, form and sound as part of the work. In spoken language, the resulting sound can be repeated as onomatopoeia — *kthumpf*. Experimental words can be applied to refer to an experimental object.

The static work is comprised of a grouping of paint flakes, peeled over time from the ceiling of my room in an old terrace house in Sydney. The order and shape of the paint flakes can be sounded-out to create words that are familiar or new. Using this approach, the works title themselves — determining their own meaning through phonetics, association and simile.

Kat Sawyer is an interdisciplinary artist with a process-based visual arts practice. She has a studio at Our Neon Foe, Leichardt, and also often works while in transit from hotel rooms and airport lounges. In 2009, she studied with Debra Porph at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University.



top: *Clouds*, 2018, motor, batteries and found object

bottom: *Untitled (ij)*, 2018, paint flakes from domestic spaces



Elizabeth Shaw

I am interested in the material traces left by people, specifically objects that were discarded or accidentally dropped, particularly objects that are broken or incomplete. These are things like a tool squashed by traffic, bent nails or a broken ornament dug up in my garden. It is when an object that was once useful can no longer serve its purpose that I collect it to work with in my studio.

I am conscious that what I collect is worthless waste, and yet the raw materials they were made from are of real value in our economy. In my studio I reconsider their purpose; in response to their form or shape I use them as components to build something new. I intend to use them in a way that both highlights and saves them from obliteration. My additions are intentionally obvious, though the origin of the found component may not be.

The works for this exhibition started with a small section of hard plastic found in my garden not far from where the original householders had their incinerator. The small piece is partially melted and resembles a wounded foot. I have worked to repair it and give it a new life.

Foot 2018
Found plastic, nail, recycled silver





Justene Williams

Justene Williams creates large-scale multi-sensorial video installations and live performances which then result in installations, usually at the site of the performances. She draws from art history, popular culture, personal narrative and dreams to examine sex, body and gender — via the suburbs. Williams transforms the prosaic and ordinary through material, action, energy and emotion, conjuring invisible forces in movement sound and performance to reveal a magic of sorts in the real world and a world in art.

Williams' performance installations celebrate the avant-garde dream of the 'total artwork', while deconstructing it with the female body — domesticating and situating it in the reality and absurdity of now.



A Metal Cry 2017 (detail)
Still from video; video edited to 6 minutes

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