

# THE GARDEN OF FORKING PATHS

**MIRA GOJAK  
TAKEHITO KOGANEZAWA**



**BUXTON  
CONTEMP  
ORARY**



## Main exhibition wall text

*The Garden of Forking Paths* brings together the distinctive practices of Mira Gojak and Takehito Koganezawa, finding points of connection and divergence in the trajectories of these two highly accomplished artists. The project takes its name from the title of modernist Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges' intricate and magical short story from 1941. Part philosophy, part science fiction and part riddle, Borges' *The Garden of Forking Paths* is a richly multidimensional text that conjures up coexistent but dynamically shifting realms of time and space.

The exhibition similarly traces two very different time-frames, durations and approaches to making. Australian artist Mira Gojak presents new work alongside drawings, sculptures, installations and photographs spanning more than twenty years, while the practice of her Japanese counterpart Takehito Koganezawa is represented by performative video drawings and new improvisational works together with a sampling of earlier works on paper.

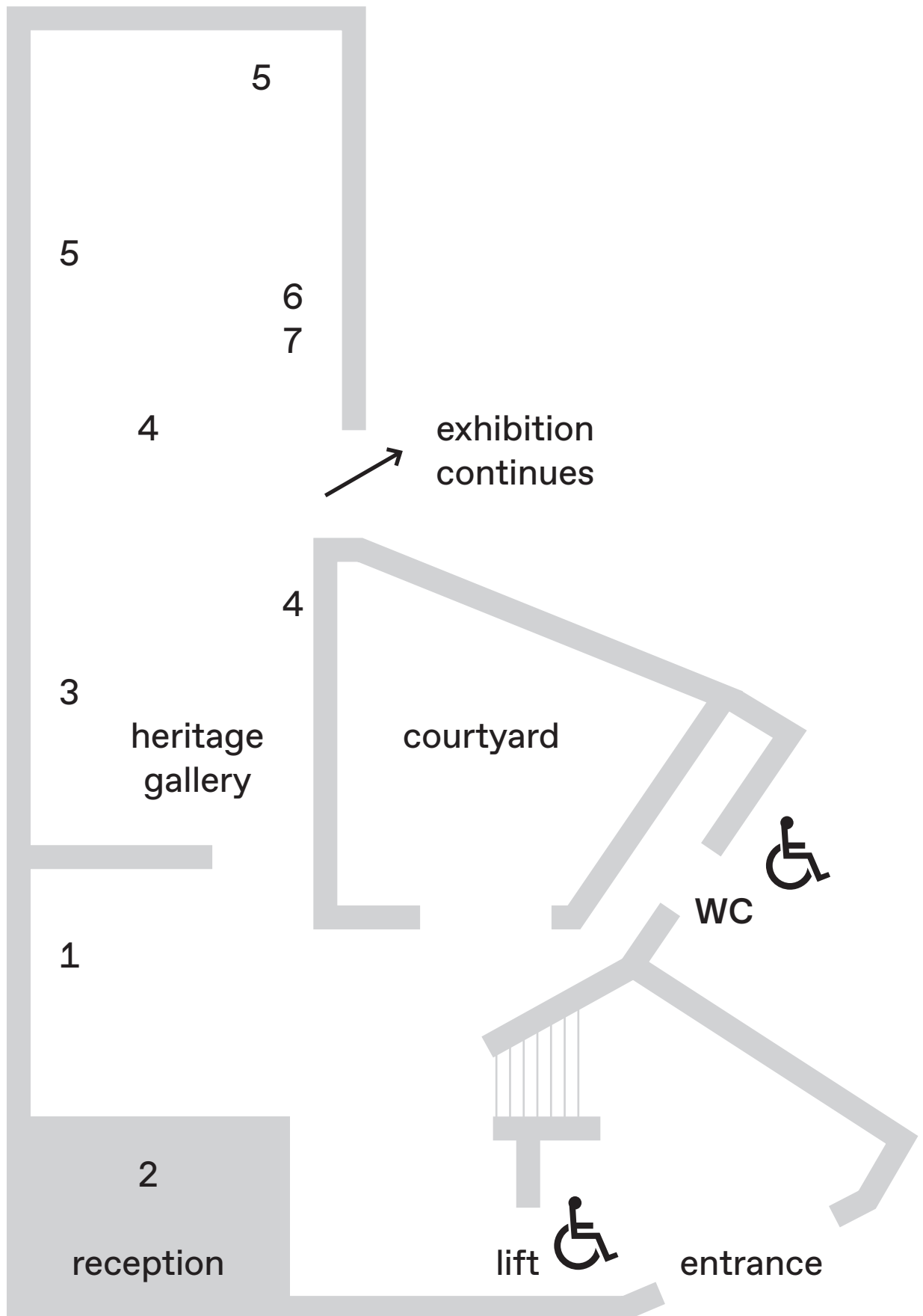
To varying degrees both artists lyrically register the fluid instabilities of existence and consciousness – shifting gravities interspersed with moments of weightlessness, the flux and passage of time, and the very elemental processes of growth, entropy and decay.

Tracing the affinities, differences and overlapping and divergent impulses that link and separate Gojak's and Koganezawa's work, *The Garden of Forking Paths*

seeks to enter into the evocative, multiple parallel possibilities, realities and territories that they each poetically create.

This exhibition is curated by Melissa Keys, Curator of Buxton Contemporary, and Shihoko Iida, Chief Curator of the Aichi Triennale 2019.

# Ground Floor Floorplan



# Reception area

1

**Mira Gojak**

*Prop for instabilities 2* 2013

wire, steel, copper, aluminium, wood, photographic  
masking tape

250 × 130 × 100 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection Donated through the

Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by

Michael and Janet Buxton 2018

*Prop for instabilities* was inspired by a photograph of Kenrokuen Garden, a seventeenth-century masterpiece of Japanese design located in the city of Kanazawa. Gojak was intrigued by the way that the ancient trees in the garden are encouraged to grow horizontally through the use of hand-crafted timber props and by being suspended from elaborate sculptural structures. These timber and bamboo scaffolds are often incised into the very structure of the tree to stabilise them while shaping and binding them into elegant forms. Gojak was intrigued by the way that culture and nature are inextricably intertwined by these surgical interventions.

Once this work was made, the artist also saw a formal reference to the disturbing scene in Buñuel and Salvador Dali's influential surrealist

silent short film *Un Chien Andalou* where the camera zooms in on an eye being slit with a razor. The looping wires form the eyeball and the jagged base becomes the threat of the razor's edge.

2

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*Fly drawing* 2010

digital video, sound duration: 00:01:00

Courtesy of the artist

## Heritage Gallery area

3

**Mira Gojak**

*Herd of unending blue* 1998

synthetic polymer paint on wire

27 parts, 285 × 870 × 29 cm overall; installation dimensions variable

Bosci Collection, Melbourne

A herd of grazing deer can be identified in this installation. 'Drawn' using fine threads of wire the animals are clustered together, composed as trceries of metal lines pinned across the gallery wall. The combination of simple forms with the play of shadow and colour gives the installation a dynamic, immaterial and even spectral quality.

This wall piece was made at a time when the artist was particularly interested in the relationship between predator and prey and the ways that certain behaviours, colours, patterns and optics enable animals to disappear into their surrounding environments. Gojak has commented that when audiences gaze at this piece they occupy the position of the hunter, viewing its prey.

The artist applied an ultramarine blue paint to the wire as a reference to the enigmatic post-war French artist Yves Klein. The pigment is known for its potential to stimulate optical effects and generate spatial ambiguities. For Klein these indeterminate voids and masses suggested realms beyond those that can readily be perceived through vision or touch.

Recently Gojak has remarked that, in retrospect, she views this piece as melancholically suggesting a gradual emptying out or dissolution – a consideration of time itself as the ultimate predator.

4

**Mira Gojak**

*Everywhere and nowhere* 2005

synthetic polymer paint on wooden door

2 parts: 205 × 170 × 126 cm; 148 × 31.5 × 35 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne



This pair of contrasting sculptural forms appear to be paused between dynamic movements. Cut from a single wooden door, Gojak's objects retain the kinetic suggestion of opening and closing. By inverting the spatial relationships between internal and external, as the title *Everywhere and nowhere* suggests, Gojak aims 'to make the void a place'. This kinetic approach is particularly recognisable in the way that the artist incorporates a spiralling formation into her work, the black structure curving in on itself. The yellow scissor-like structure, Gojak explains, 'has escaped the spiral'. For the artist, these separate but interrelated abstract figures are male and female and suggest fecundity and pollination, abundance and emptiness.

## 5

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*RGBY* 2004

digital video, silent

duration: 00:09:35

Courtesy of the artist

*RGBY* (red, green, blue, yellow) comprises a series of hand-drawn lines scanned and animated through video software so that they glide across the screen. Sometimes the lines travel in different directions and appear in variable thicknesses and densities. It's like watching a landscape that seems to move past the window of a vehicle or viewing a series of rivers or pathways snaking

across the countryside from above. One line becomes connected to the next, forming a procession of floating and subtly shifting textures and widths that become strangely compelling and hypnotic.

6

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*Untitled 2001*

coloured pencil on paper

48 × 63 cm

Courtesy of the artist

7

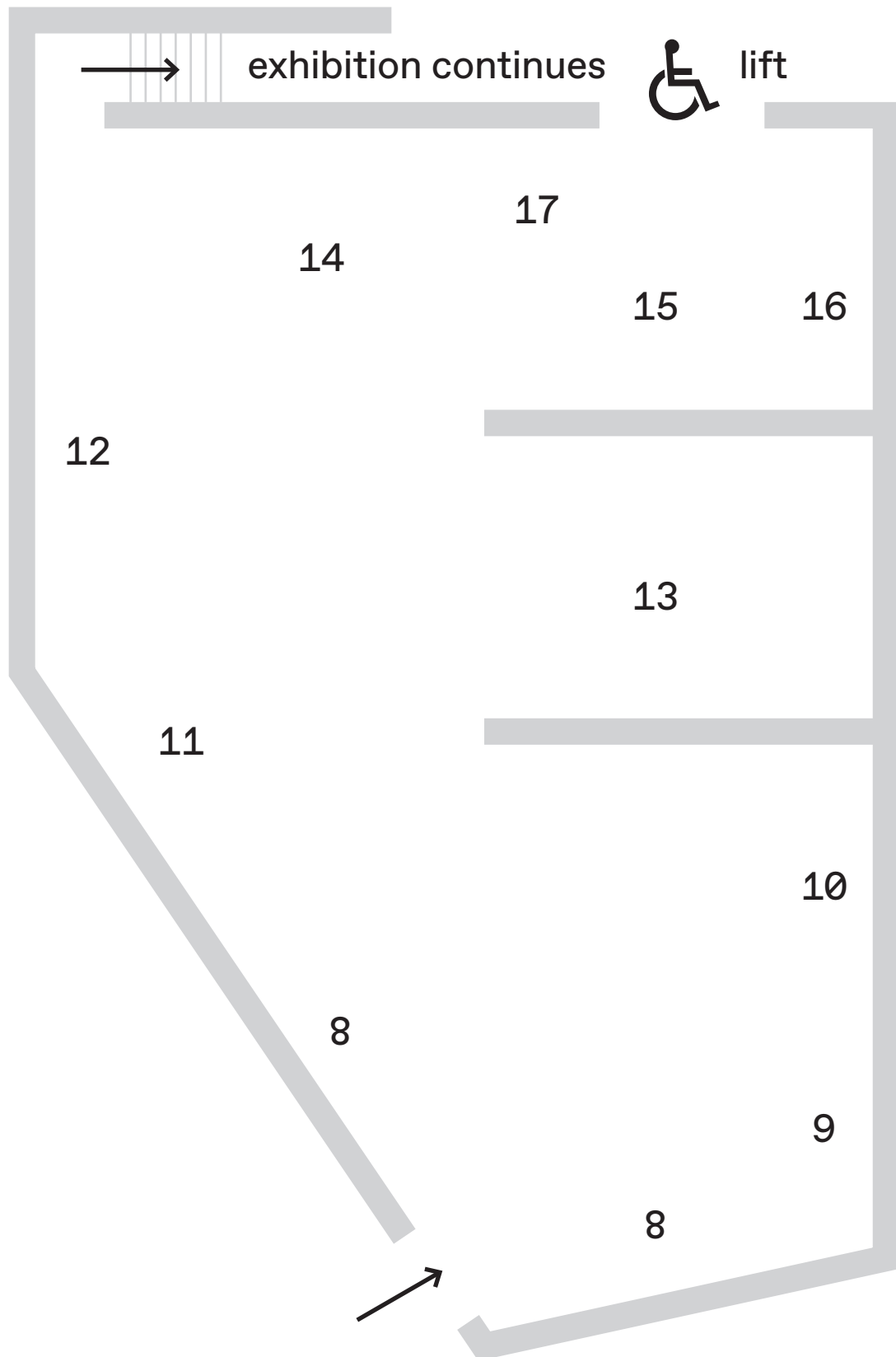
**Takehito Koganezawa**

*Untitled 2006*

coloured pencil on paper 29.5 × 42 cm

Courtesy of the artist

# Ground Floor Floorplan (Continued)



# Ground Floor Gallery

8

**Mira Gojak**

*Cutting through the vast plain of day* 2018

archival pigment prints photography by

Rhett Hammerton, Alice Springs

12 parts, each 103.5 × 83.5 × 6 cm

These photographs of the desert sky are variously perforated and folded. Shot at intervals over the course of a single day, each panel captures gradations of the blue sky from sunrise to sunset. Slicing through each image, the artist disrupts the monochromatic ground, creating shapes and forms by folding the underside of the photographic paper through to the surface.

Throughout the history of art the sky has frequently been co-opted as a field for creative expression. For example, the French artist Yves Klein, who has long interested Gojak, once famously stated that he 'began to feel hatred for the birds which flew back and forth across [his] blue, cloudless sky, because they tried to bore holes in [his] greatest and most beautiful work. [He declared that] birds must be eliminated.' While enjoying Klein's hubris, Gojak has commented that she 'cannot imagine anything without disruption, [she is] on the side of the birds'.

Gojak's gentle and poetic interventions allude to the passage of time and to the experience of space – reflecting her ongoing interest in consciousness and subjectivity. In *Cutting through the vast plain of day* these subtle sculptural surfaces are made available for the play of personal emotion and for the free association of ideas that may float through the experience of the image.

## 9

**Mira Gojak**

*Mountain* 2018

wooden wardrobe, acrylic yarn

192 × 110 × 57 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

In contrast to the furniture in Gojak's installation *Consolation*, this wardrobe is intact and is swaddled in yarn almost as if it is being bound or constricted. Titled *Mountain* and echoing a human figure, this sculpture alludes to aspiration and struggle. The tightly stretched threads suggest vast and even infinite horizons. The knots can be seen as disruptions and the loose hanging strands allude to a type of unravelling – to things broken or coming apart.

Gojak's work often invokes connotations of mortality and impermanence. The artist has commented that, while making this piece, she was contemplating personal aspirations and whether

the objectives that we each have as individuals close us down or open us up. 'Are your aspirations', Gojak asks, 'leading you to an existential emptiness? It seems to me that everything is becoming too thin.'

10

**Mira Gojak**

*Consolation* 2005

wooden wardrobes, mirror, magnets

2 parts: 250 × 213 × 140 cm; 133 × 140 × 385 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

This installation consists of an arrangement of disassembled furniture, each piece deconstructed into its elementary parts and then subsequently reconfigured. This work reflects Gojak's interest in 'opening up, creating space and a sense of movement, around and through form'. Once designed to store, arrange and potentially to conceal tokens of domestic life, the wardrobes are stripped into fragile-looking skeletal structures alive with cultural references and redolent with personal histories and mystery.

Gojak has evocatively described the field of upright pieces as the innards of the closet pooled around the small forest of frames like reeds in an estuary. No longer in service, the dismantled ghostly cabinets in Gojak's *Consolation* suggest

states of becoming and transforming and are portals between tangible and imagined worlds and desires.

11

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*Setting the butterfly free* 2018

digital videos, sound; felt-tipped fibre pen on notebook pages

5 notebooks, each

15 × 20 × 8 cm open

5 videos, durations: 00:03:55, 00:0:19, 00:04:07, 00:04:04, 00:04:17 (left to right) Courtesy of the artist

*Setting the butterfly free* is part of an ongoing series of animated notebooks in which the artist draws and then activates a series of dots by flipping through the pages. Each dot is created by holding the point of a felt-tip marker on the surface of the paper for an extended period of time. The ink leaks through the layered pages to create a series of circular vertical drawings or stains.

Moving through the pages, the flutter and movement of colourful dots playfully evoke sensations of weightlessness and release, like a butterfly in flight.

**Takehito Koganezawa***Mountains* 2009–

coloured pencil on paper

250 sheets, each 21 × 29.7 cm; overall installation dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Takehito Koganezawa grew up on the mountainous western edge of the valley occupied by Tokyo, where his familial home was surrounded by peaks. The colourful cone-shaped crests that comprise this work take their distinctive shape from Mount Takao, a small mountain near the city of Hachiōji, about 40 kilometres west of the city centre. The local mountain defined the landscape of Koganezawa's youth. The artist has described each of these individual sheets of paper as balanced compositions of colour and as 'three-note cords' that comprise a chromatic melody. Assembled together, the separate compositions form larger wave-like patterns that evoke the sensory experience and rhythmic movements of the sea – giving rise to a gentle topography or mindscape of ceaseless harmony and motion. Koganezawa's work often suggests endless possibilities and emerges from an understanding that nothing in nature or life remains static or fixed. In Japan, the artist says, 'we see mountains as waves'.



**Takehito Koganezawa***Paint it black, and erase* 2010

digital video, silent duration: 04:44:00

This rhythmic and optically arresting video work foregrounds gesture and impermanence. Each trace and spectral impression is swiftly erased and replaced by another, the artist working into a fast, fluid ground. The title refers to the Rolling Stones' melodic evocation of a dark and colourless world. For Koganezawa the word 'erase' is also a reference to *Eraserhead*, David Lynch's cult psychological horror film from 1977, which belongs to the surreal world of the unconscious.

This composition unfolds as if it's being made in the moment – evolving in real time. Traces of painterly activity and a flurry of calligraphic marks give the work an internal meditative energy and create the impression of unbroken, ongoing action. *Paint it black and erase* underscores Koganezawa's enduring interest in transformation, performativity, and our malleable relationship with time.

14

**Mira Gojak**

*Transfer station 1* 2011

synthetic polymer paint, steel, copper, wax

318 × 330 × 270 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

15

**Mira Gojak**

*Silence* 2005

dissected plastic chairs

4 parts: 45 × 110 × 325 cm; 50 × 95 × 305 cm;

50 × 105 × 295 cm; 49 × 95 × 275 cm; overall

installation dimensions variable

Monash University Collection Purchased 2005

Courtesy of Monash University Museum of Art |

MUMA, Melbourne

*Sometimes you see things when all is quiet and still. For instance, you may glimpse insects and other phenomena that might usually go unnoticed. In these moments things can be the same and then instantaneously change, or you register or apprehend something that you may have known was there, but that you repressed, or that never consciously held your attention or that was unknown to you.*

—Mira Gojak

Assembled from plastic chair legs, Mira Gojak's *Silence* transforms simple manufactured objects into an encounter with the uncanny. Arrayed in the gallery these articulated serial forms are animated with the promise that at any moment they may suddenly scurry across the floor. In Franz Kafka's landmark novella *The Metamorphosis* (1915) his protagonist, Gregor Samsa, wakes to discover that he has transformed overnight into a giant insect. This horrifying realisation is a striking metaphor for the unfathomable and traumatic complexities of consciousness.

*Silence* also evokes the pioneering time and motion studies of English photographer, artist and researcher Eadweard Muybridge. These metrical sculptural arrangements suggest the flickering, punctuated movements and sequences of locomotion captured by Muybridge's high-speed shutter.

16

**Mira Gojak**

*Floating eclipse* 2013–14

felt-tipped fibre pen, gouache on paper

3 parts, each 150 × 100 cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection

Michael Buxton Collection Donated through the

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Michael and Janet Buxton 2018

17

**Mira Gojak**

*Propositions for escape 2005*

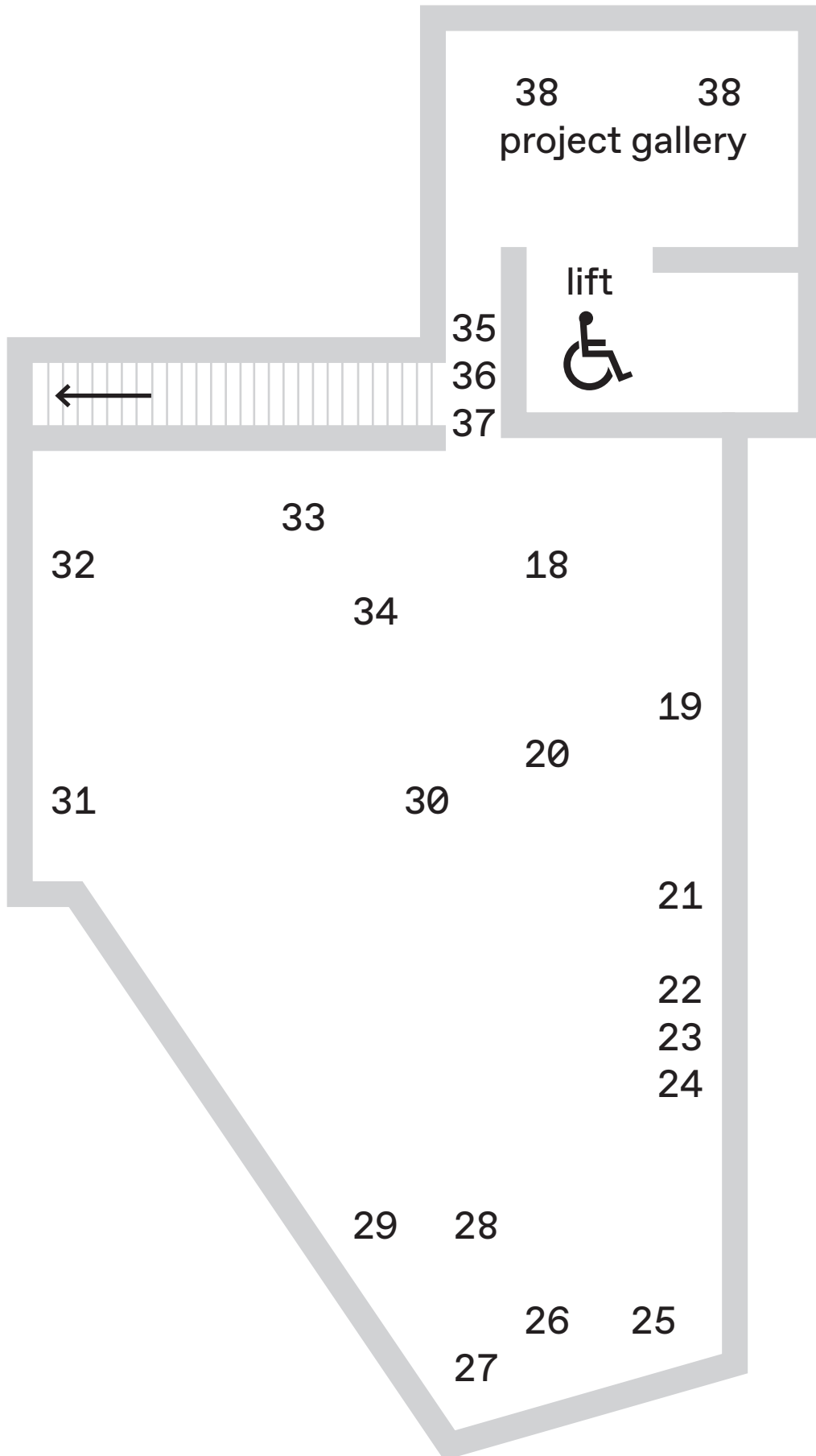
synthetic polymer paint on wood

3 parts: 37.5 × 15.8 × 4.5 cm; 38 × 15.8 × 12.5 cm;

38 × 15.8 × 6 cm

Collection of Benjamin Armstrong

# First Floor Floorplan



# First Floor Gallery

18

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*Drawing in pursuit* 2018

digital video, silent duration: 00:17:59

Courtesy of the artist

19

**Mira Gojak**

*Something has to go 4* 2006

felt-tipped fibre pen on paper 100 × 150 cm

Private collection, Brisbane

20

**Mira Gojak**

*From the outside to the outside* 2009

epoxy paint on wire, steel, copper 350 × 220 × 170 cm

Monash University Collection Purchased 2009

Courtesy of Monash University Museum of Art |

MUMA, Melbourne

21

**Mira Gojak**

*Whale* 2009

felt-tipped fibre pen on paper 100 × 150 cm

Collection of Donald Williams

22

**Mira Gojak**

*Making room* 2009

felt-tipped fibre pen, gouache on paper

100 × 150 cm

Collection of Danielle Besen

23

**Mira Gojak**

*Denials and accumulations 3* 2011

felt-tipped fibre pen, gouache on paper

100 × 150 cm

Collection of Danielle Besen

24

**Mira Gojak**

*Another ground II* 2009

pencil, pen and ink, felt-tipped fibre pen, gouache,  
watercolour on paper

100 × 150 cm

Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide

South Australian Government Grant 2009

These drawings came serendipitously out of a period when Gojak was exploring alternative processes of making due to an injury that she had suffered. The artist needed a smooth, frictionless surface that her hand could glide

across to prevent physical strain. It can be said that her ailment determined the materials, method and process of making the drawings, and led to her finding ongoing pleasure and creative satisfaction from mark making without any imperative. The works are in part performative and gestural responses to music. While making these drawings the artist often listens to *Music for 18 Musicians* by Steve Reich, which is based on Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* and evokes suggestions of both the violence and fecundity of spring.

These freely composed calligraphic marks are physical and intuitive expressions of feeling, sensation and unbounded energy that suggest constant movement, competing fertile and corrosive forces and the 'desire to dissolve and disperse into the world'.

25

**Mira Gojak**

*Distant measures* 2016

steel rods, acrylic yarn

10 parts: 18,356 metres, 230 × 135 × 190 cm; 14,248 metres, 63 × 110 × 43 cm; 13,689 metres, 47 × 84 × 30 cm; 923 metres, 230 × 142 × 262 cm; 4,888 metres, 121.5 × 79 × 45 cm; 3,926 metres, 113 × 90 × 142 cm; 20,059 metres, 76.5 × 168 × 94 cm; 9,009 metres, 49 × 26.5 × 72.5 cm; 1,755 metres, 92 × 92.5 × 95 cm; 1,092 metres, 57 × 151 × 84 cm



Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

26

**Mira Gojak**

*Clutch* 2017

steel rods, acrylic yarn

2 parts, 180 × 241 × 215 cm overall

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

27

**Mira Gojak**

*Exhaled weight* 2017

steel rods, acrylic yarn

3 parts, 230 × 198 × 152 cm overall

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

28

**Mira Gojak**

*Places stored* 2017

steel rods, acrylic yarn

129 × 79 × 79.5 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

**Mira Gojak**

*Stops* 2017

steel rods, acrylic yarn

140 × 180 × 76 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

The length of blue yarn bound around these metal forms represents the distance from the surface of our planet to the very outer margins of Earth's atmosphere. Within the light spectrum, blue is the shortest wavelength in the prism, and the Karmen line, which is 100 kilometres above sea level, is considered the precise point at which outer space begins. However, Gojak is less interested in reaching outer space than in looping up to what she sees as the limit of blue sky (50,000–60,000 metres of the stratosphere) and back down to the ground. In previous work, Gojak has explored time; here, she explores distance, drawing together the finite and the infinite, the tactile and the immaterial.

These relic forms are also suggestive of insects and cocoons in their appearance, in part, inspired by the Odradek, an enigmatic thread-bound creature that appears in a famous short story by Franz Kafka, *Cares of a Family Man* (1917). According to Gojak, Odradek is neither an object nor entirely 'of the body'. It is nomadic and located in the in-between spaces of the house, evoking our sense of displacement and disconnection from the world.

30

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*Drawings 1996–2017*

coloured pencil, ink, watercolour, oil pastel, collage,  
pencil, felt-tipped fibre pen, ballpoint pen on paper  
selection of 51 drawings, various dimensions

Courtesy of the artist

31

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*Dust 2010*

digital video, silent duration: 00:59:30

Courtesy of the artist

32

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*Drawings 2005–17*

coloured pencil, ink, watercolour, acrylic, oil pastel,  
collage, gouache, monoprint on paper selection of  
37 drawings, various dimensions

Courtesy of the artist

**Mira Gojak**

*Grey's sun* 2018

archival pigment prints photography by Cameron  
Candy, Alice Springs Desert Park

4 parts, each 64 × 71.5 × 4 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room,  
Melbourne

This suite of photographs captures in close-up the large eyes and fine profile of the native Bush Stone-curlew. These ground-dwelling, mostly nocturnal birds adopt an eerily still position when sensing threat. The enigmatic Bush Stone-curlew is often associated with death due to its disturbingly shrill and mournful call. Gojak's photographs register the bird's ever-watchful gaze and the contraction of its pupil in relation to the glaring light of the sun. While these images are silent we cannot look at or think about this bird without recalling its unsettling, mysterious and haunting call. Long after hearing it, like some sort of auditory memento mori, the curlew's desolate sound continues to resonate and, for the artist, 'play out in one's mind'.

**Mira Gojak**

*Petitions 2005*

wax, light bulbs

18 parts, each approximately 20 × 23 × 23 cm; overall installation dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Murray White Room, Melbourne

Comprising clusters of light bulbs covered in yellow wax, these bulbous organic forms are evocations of spring and the pollens that are windborne during this season. The artist is interested in the way that springtime draws people out of their houses. The bulbs are concealed from view, invisible like the fine seeds and pollens that aid germination and stimulate our senses. This installation is a meditation on the tangible and intangible dimensions of experience – on the physical and the spiritual worlds embodying both invisible micro and macro natural systems and the metaphysical dynamisms of life and consciousness.

# Top of the stairs

35

**Mira Gojak**

*Close by* 2015

felt-tipped fibre pen, gouache on paper

50 × 50 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

36

**Mira Gojak**

*Blinded 1* 2013

felt-tipped fibre pen, gouache on paper

50 × 50 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

37

**Mira Gojak**

*Blinded 2* 2013

felt-tipped fibre pen, gouache on paper

50 × 50 cm

Private collection, Melbourne

# Project Gallery

38

**Takehito Koganezawa**

*From warm mud* 2018

digital video, silent

duration: 00:30:42 and 00:30:32

Courtesy of the artist

Takehito Koganezawa's two-channel video work *From warm mud* 2018, suggests a return to an era of primordial ooze. Depicting the mesmerising interaction of fluids such as oils, detergents, pigments and toxic materials, the two 30-minute sequences shot with a macro lens unfold simultaneously. Flowing and intermingling substances and small crystalized forms evoke the swirling cosmic origins and evolving complexity of life – suggesting at once the micro and the universal. Koganezawa's compelling visual narrative stimulates our environmental consciousness by also bringing to mind the meteorological imagery transmitted by weather satellites, which forecast and forewarn of natural disasters. The artist has said that for him, 'the moving image is a way of addressing the instability of time and existence'.