

NATIONAL ANTHEM



**BUXTON
CONTEMP
ORARY**

BROOK ANDREW
ABDUL ABDULLAH
KAY ABUDE
HODA AFSHAR
TONY ALBERT
ALI GUMILLYA BAKER
ARCHIE BARRY
RICHARD BELL
DANIEL BOYD
JUAN DAVILA
DESTINY DEACON
JANENNE EATON
TONY GARIFALAKIS
EUGENIA LIM
TRACEY MOFFATT
CALLUM MORTON
HOANG TRAN NGUYEN
RAQUEL ORMELLA
MIKE PARR
STEVEN RHALL
TONY SCHWENSEN
CHRISTIAN THOMPSON
PAUL YORE
SIYING ZHOU

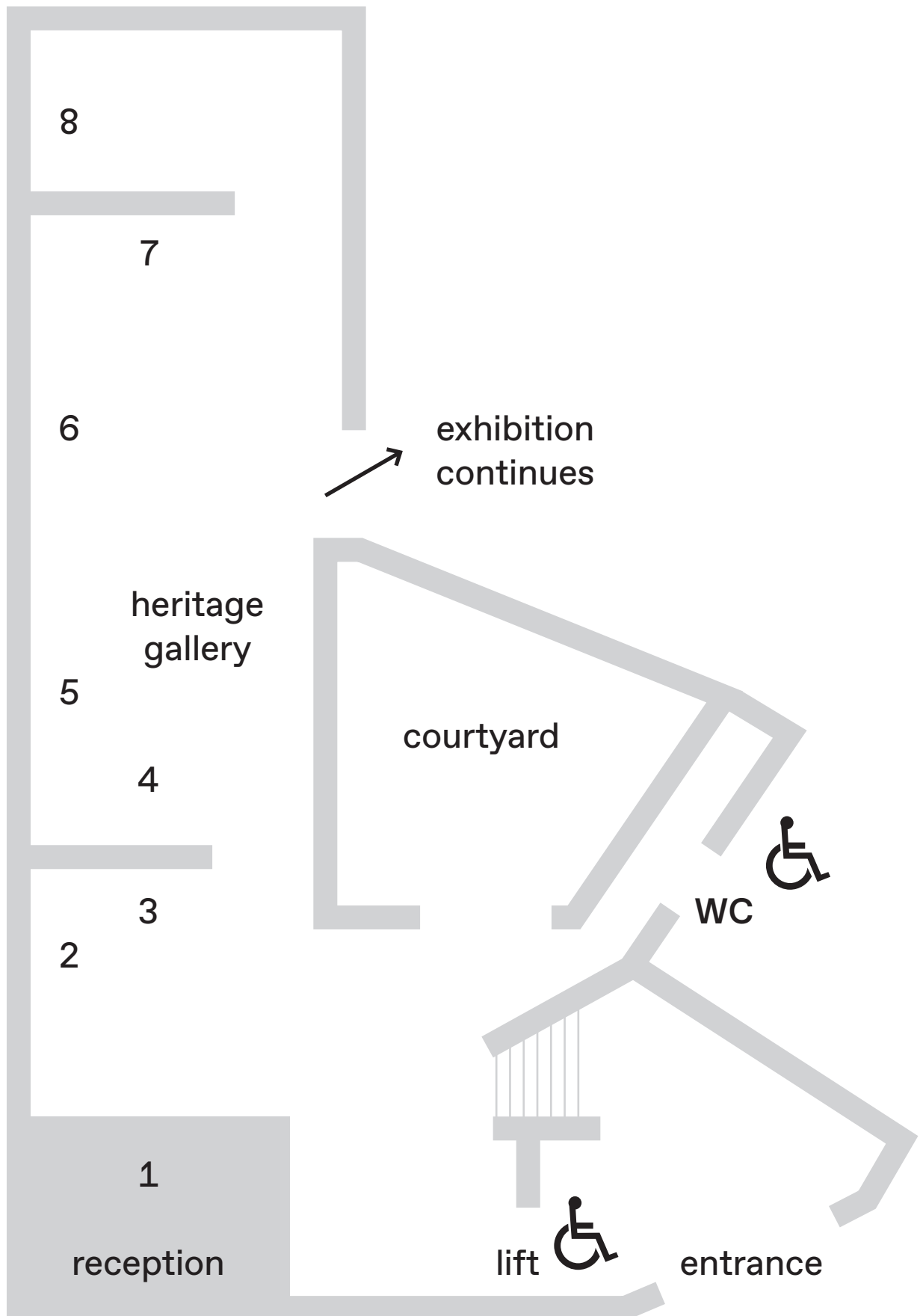
Main exhibition wall text

Presenting a cacophonous array of artistic voices and perspectives, *National Anthem* brings together 24 artists, from a range of generations, who critically address Australian national identity. Built around key works in the Michael Buxton Collection, together with works sourced from beyond the collection, this project reflects on the ways that the desire for a singular national identity often excludes Indigenous histories and denies the multiplicity of voices, cultures and experiences that enrich, contest and enhance Australian life.

Channelling humour and satire and engaging in tactics such as play, intervention and confrontation, the artists in *National Anthem* seek self-determination and collectively hold a mirror up to contemporary Australia, prompting new representations of who we are or who we might aspire to become.

Curated by Dr Kate Just

Ground Floor Floorplan



Reception area

1

Christian Thompson

Refuge 2014

digital video

duration 00:04:19

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents,
Melbourne

Refuge was recorded and produced in Oxford, UK, with an arrangement by James Young, formerly of Nico and the Faction. In this work Christian Thompson vocalises his ancestral Bidjara language in the form of a modern-day pop song. His lyrical melody creates an intimate space between artist and viewer, which yields an appreciation of the role of voice and language within personal, cultural and national identity.

2

Brook Andrew

Emu 2004

animated neon on anodised aluminium

edition 4/5

120 x 164.2 x 15.5 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

In his work *Emu*, Brook Andrew presents a neon image of an emu ingesting and/or regurgitating the letters U-S-A, installed over an image of the Union Jack. An iconic Australian animal, the emu is deeply connected to Aboriginal culture but is also one of the key symbolic elements of the Australian coat of arms. Through this flashing neon work, Andrew critiques the pervasive influence of American and British culture on Australia's identity and alludes to where we might find a more resonant national story.

3

Tony Garifalakis

Untitled #1 from the series Mob rule (Family) 2014

enamel on C Type print

60 x 40 cm

Michael Buxton Collection

In Tony Garifalakis's *Mob rule* series, faces of well-known, powerful figures, including royalty and politicians, are obscured with black enamel spray paint. This act of blotting out established authority figures queries, erases and censors established power structures.

In *Untitled #1*, the faces of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip are blacked out, prompting questions around the continuing role of the English monarch as the Australian head of state.

Heritage Gallery area

4

Destiny Deacon

Protecting paradise 2001

LightJet print from Polaroid original

95 x 77 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

Destiny Deacon frequently uses dolls and toys in her work to enact dark scenes that refer to complex issues pertinent to Australian national identity, including racism, colonial violence, Aboriginal deaths in custody and poverty. Her brightly coloured Polaroid prints and use of objects associated with childhood draw the viewer into an evocative and nostalgic space where beauty, desire, play, pain, hurt and loss overlap.

5

Abdul Abdullah

Home #2 2012

textile flag, flag pole, electric fan

flag 88 x 155 cm; overall installation dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Yavuz Gallery, Singapore

The tenuous definition of 'home' in colonial settler societies is often associated with the ownership of land and property. With this humorously fan-powered installation, Abdul Abdullah interrogates the artificiality and fragility of this flawed concept of identification and ownership.

As a Muslim, I feel I am part of a group that is perceived of as an existential threat here. Regardless of my 200-year lineage in this country, I am not at home, and I am not afforded a welcome in public spaces. I think there is a sense of ownership that corresponds with the national identity that leaves out many experiences, and explicitly excludes my own.

Abdul Abdullah

6

Juan Davila
Die Elsewhere 2014
oil on canvas
60 x 50 cm
Michael Buxton Collection

Detained 2014
oil on canvas
60 x 50 cm
Michael Buxton Collection

Un-Australian 2014

oil on canvas

60 x 50 cm

Michael Buxton Collection

Juan Davila's paintings critically examine the Australian political system, the structures of the art world, sexuality, capitalism and the treatment of refugees in Australian detention centres. In *Die Elsewhere*, *Detained* and *Un-Australian*, Davila presents a series of poster-style paintings of faces floating within painted borders. Tag lines or insults lobbed at migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in both news media and public spaces hover beneath each face in a looping cursive script. With a painterly flourish, Davila renders his subjects with subtle, sympathetic gazes that affect and move viewers.

7

Steven Rhall

Every 1's a Winger (Bingo Mode) 2018

LED display device, loop of 51 text entries

99 x 19 x 5 cm

Courtesy of the artist

The fifty-one words that sequentially appear on this flashing, bingo-style sign survey the themes and materials Steven Rhall encountered in the 2017 edition of the *Koorie Art Show*. This salon-style exhibition features a selection of works by

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and is presented annually at the Koorie Heritage Trust in Melbourne. Selecting words that highlight the multiplicity of forms and ideas across the show, Rhall addresses the narrow and stereotypical categorisations often assigned to 'Aboriginal Art' and advocates a broader consideration of art by First Nations peoples that sits outside of and beyond existing colonial frameworks.

8

Mike Parr

Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi, oi, oi [UnAustralian] 2003
video documentation of a performance at Artspace,
Sydney

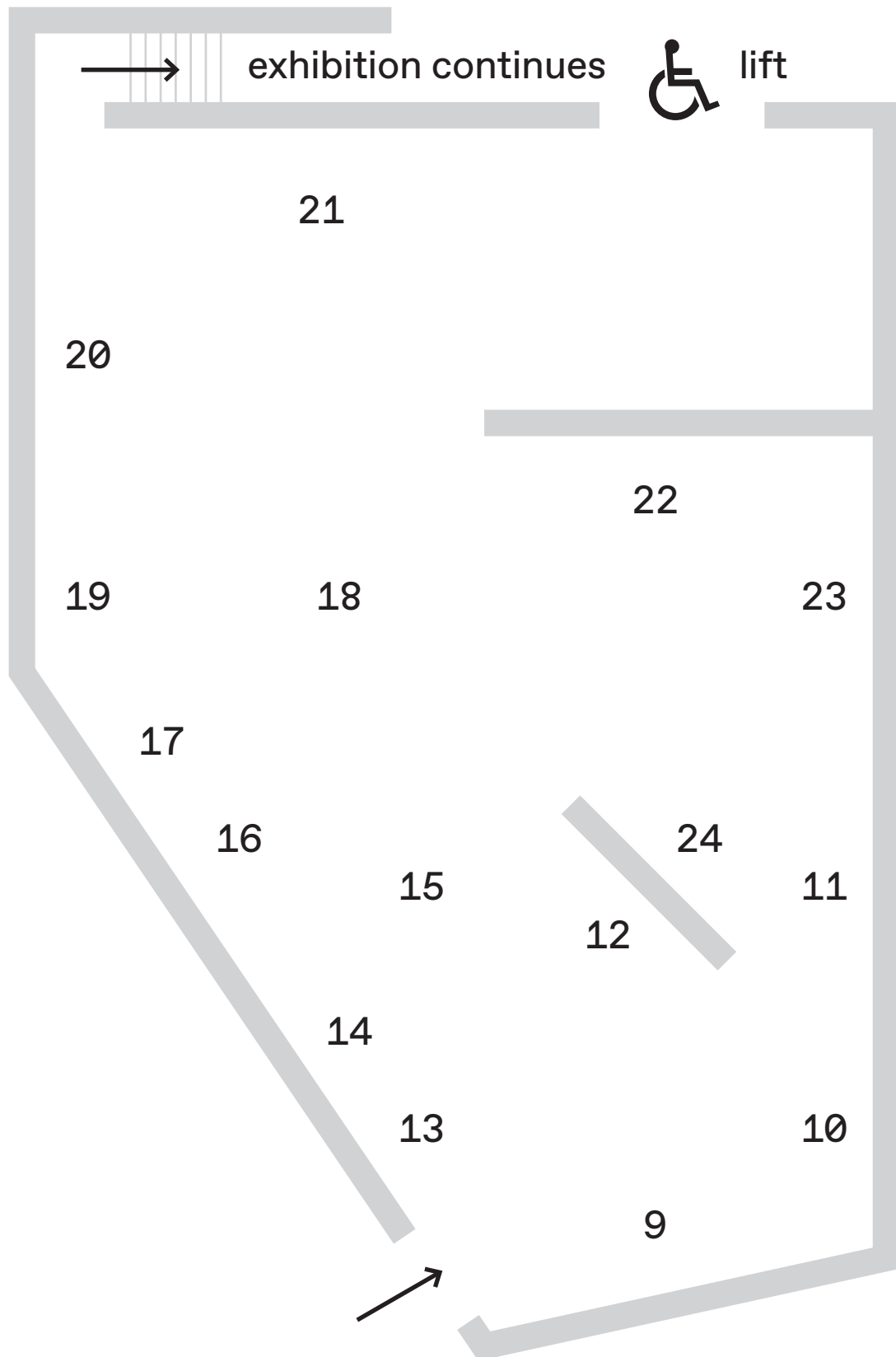
duration 00:38:04

The University of Melbourne Art Collection, Michael Buxton Collection, donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton 2018

Mike Parr's cathartic performances attend to suppressed or underacknowledged forms of violence in the world, including colonialism, war and traumatic personal histories. In *Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi, oi, oi [UnAustralian]* Parr addresses Australian human rights abuses both here and overseas. His face is sewn up by an assistant (his wife, Felizita Parr) as a small Australian flag hangs limply from the stump

of his arm. Parr grimaces and grunts in pain as the needle pierces his skin, viscerally evoking the act of sewing one's mouth closed, a gesture of protest known to have been performed by incarcerated asylum seekers. Behind him, the wall is interspersed with newspaper headlines, including BLOODBATH, HUNTING PACK, FILLING HOLES IN A BULLET-RIDDLED NATION, KILLING ROOM, HUNDREDS OF VICTIMS IN COFFINS, CHILDREN WERE BURNED ALIVE, CRITICS BRANDED WITH HOT IRONS, END GAME and PLEASE DON'T HATE OUR DADS. The title *Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi, oi, oi [UnAustralian]* ironically imbues the work with a nationalist jubilation that belies the stark brutalities within our nation's history that we are being asked to confront.

Ground Floor Floorplan (Continued)



Ground Floor Gallery

9

Janenne Eaton

BORDERLANDS 2018/2019

enamel, Hi-Impact Styrene, wood, metal

120 x 773 cm

Courtesy the artist and Nancy Sever Gallery, Canberra

Janenne Eaton's *BORDERLANDS* evokes both physical borders and non-physical border zones. The phrase KEEP CLEAR is inscribed across the work's dark, mirror-like surface. These words reverberate with multiple possible interpretations, such as a refusal of entry or an appeal to maintain rational clarity. Reflected within the work's surface, the viewer is contained and framed within a fence-like architecture of gridded structures – drawn in as an active participant in the work's narrative. The viewer occupies multiple vantage points, having seemingly breached the barricade and appearing, ghostlike, on both sides of it simultaneously. We look at ourselves looking and the screen looks back at us, prompting the internal question, 'Which side of the fence are you on?'

The work is made in the spirit of opposition, not only to our government's willingness to establish an omnipresent surveillance regime in order to sort one group of people from another, but to those ordinary 'barriers', those multiple zones of

exclusion embedded in our society – that relate to issues of social equity and marginalisation, identity, and ‘otherness’.

Janenne Eaton

10

Daniel Boyd

Untitled (GMGCC) 2018

oil pastel and archival glue on canvas

86.5 x 86.5 cm

Michael Buxton Collection

Untitled (GMGCC) depicts the Spanish king and queen, Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, who financed and supported Christopher Columbus’s voyages to the ‘New World’ and his barbaric invasion of the Caribbean islands in the late fifteenth century. Boyd’s distinctive pointillist technique operates as a layered screen that destabilises a ‘benign’ image of royalty and prompts reflection on the devastating impact of European colonisation on First Nations people around the globe.

11

Ali Gumillya Baker

sovereignGODDESSnotdomestic (1) 2017

digital print on lightbox

140 x 110 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Ali Gumillya Baker's lightbox series *sovereignGODDESSnotdomestic* acknowledges and transforms the unwritten history of Aboriginal domestic servitude in Australia. Her grandmother's own experience as an unpaid 'domestic' and its generational impact inspired Baker to create heroic illuminated images of female agency. The AFI Award-winning actor Natasha Wanganeen, who forged powerful representations of Aboriginal women in Australian films such as *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002) and *Cargo* (2017), is cast here as a fiery goddess of resistance.

12

Siying Zhou

National anthem of AO-SSU-CH'IU-LEE-YA 2016

digital video

duration 00:02:13

Courtesy of the artist

Siying Zhou's karaoke video *National anthem of AO-SSU-CH'IU-LEE-YA* asks viewers to sing along to the Australian anthem with Wade-Giles phonetics, a Romanisation system for Mandarin Chinese that is widely used by English speakers in order to pronounce Chinese words. In this video, the lyrics are the result of two successive

phonetic translations: English to Chinese and Chinese to Wade-Giles symbols. Reflecting her belief that multiple voices and languages are integral to an inclusive national identity, Chinese-born Zhou uses this work to resist government-defined protocols demanding that the Australian national anthem be performed only in English.

The Australia that I know is formed by Australian Indigenous cultures and multi-ethnic immigrants. In reality, national identity is moored in a constant process of intercultural negotiation, reconciliation and intersection.

Siyong Zhou

13

Eugenia Lim

New Australians (Yellow Peril 1980/2015) 2015

screenprint on mylar emergency blanket

210 x 160 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Eugenia Lim

New Australians (Welcome Stranger, 1869/2015)

2015

screenprint on mylar emergency blanket

210 x 160 cm

Courtesy of the artist

This diptych is from a 2015 body of work titled *Yellow Peril* that Eugenia Lim created to explore ideas of Australian nationalism and Australia's fraught relationship with Chinese immigration. *New Australians (Yellow Peril 1980/2015)* is a reprint of a family snapshot taken in 1980, when Ron Robertson-Swann's sculpture *Vault* was located at Melbourne's City Square. The couple pictured in front of the sculpture are Lim's Chinese-Singaporean parents, who were then recently-arrived migrants to Australia. Facing the camera with determination, the couple unwittingly bear the weight of *Vault*'s racist moniker, 'Yellow Peril'.

In *New Australians (Welcome Stranger 1869/2015)*, Lim pays homage to the history of Chinese presence in Australia during the nineteenth-century gold rush and beyond with a Victorian-style portrait of the artist in a custom-designed gold lamé Mao suit. Lim serenely holds a papier-mâché replica of the so-called 'Welcome Stranger', the world's largest alluvial gold nugget, found in Victoria's goldfields in 1869.

Lim's reproduction of both images on mylar emergency blankets, commonly used in survival and rescue situations, materially extends ideas about adapting to, or being received by, another culture. For Lim, the gold blanket is a loaded symbol that represents both a welcome and a warning. The shimmering gold hue of these allusive banners also seems to recast Lim and her family as new Australian heroes.

Nationalism and stereotypes offer a powerful existing language to break apart. To me, Australian politics currently represents regression, bigotry, torture and climate denial. I make the work I do because I want to shape our understanding of who we are into something contested, nuanced, plural and compassionate. So we might understand Australia through difference, specificity, migration and welcome. So that one day, I can feel proud to say I'm Australian.

Eugenia Lim

14

Abdul Abdullah

The re-introduction of Australian knighthood 2014

giclée print

145 x 110 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Yavuz Gallery, Singapore

This portrait of the artist wearing a balaclava and draped in symbols of Australian nationalism is a critical response to then prime minister Tony Abbott's controversial 2014 decision to reinstate the 'knighthood' within the Australian honours system. Abdullah links these knighthoods with forms of crusader imagery exploited by far-right Australian nationalist hate groups. Stepping into the clothes and shoes of his oppressors, the artist processes and inverts his own personal and familial experiences of exclusion as a Muslim in Australia.

I have used symbols of Australian nationalism to examine the increasingly adversarial nature of the 'Aussie' identity, what being Australian means, and what being Australian doesn't mean. I want to explore the perpetuation of the 'us' and 'them' mentality that permeates Australian culture and was revealed to the world during the 2005 Cronulla riots.

Abdul Abdullah

15

Tony Schwensen

C'mon 2006

colour DVD

duration 8:00:00

The University of Melbourne Art Collection, Michael Buxton Collection, donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton 2018

C'mon features the artist alone on a tennis court. Schwensen walks back and forth across both sides of the net, serves to the other side and screams 'C'mon!' for eight hours. The video evokes the larrikin Australian tennis player Lleyton Hewitt, who frequently shouted 'C'mon!' to psych himself up or express disappointment with himself. By reperforming this gesture, Schwensen satirically questions the Australian national obsession with sport. The incessant repetition of the same gesture as a cry for better outcomes also evokes the struggle for social and political change.

16

Raquel Ormella

Wealth for toil #2 2014

cotton, acrylic and Australian currency

164.5 x 206 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

Through her deconstructed sewn textile banners and flags, Raquel Ormella questions the efficacy of the Australian flag as a national symbol. *Wealth for toil #2* is adorned with Australian currency that forms the text WINNERS ONLY. Ormella addresses a culture she believes is obsessed with venerating winners, not only in sport but also in the banking and mining industries, where labour and land are exploited for the gain of the few.

17

Tracey Moffatt

Job Hunt, 1976 from the series *Scarred for Life I* 1994

offset print, edition 19/50

80 x 60 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

Useless, 1974 from the series *Scarred for Life I* 1994
offset print, edition 19/50
80 x 60 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

Doll Birth, 1972 from the series *Scarred for Life I*
1994

offset print, edition 19/50
80 x 60 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

Tracey Moffatt's *Scarred for life I* series consists of nine offset lithographs of images drawn from the artist's childhood memories. Mimicking photo spreads from the idealised American magazine *Life*, these works reveal the ways that race, class, gender and sexuality define and restrict us from childhood, sometimes in traumatic ways.

A person can make a passing comment to you when you are young and this can change you forever. You can be 'scarred for life' but it isn't necessarily a bad thing. The photographs can be read as both tragic and comic – there is a thin line between both.

Tracey Moffatt

Richard Bell

A prelude to imaging victory 2012–13

synthetic grass, beach umbrella, signs, outdoor chairs, esky

installation dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

A prelude to imagining victory refers to the original Aboriginal Tent Embassy, set up in 1972 by Aboriginal activists Michael Anderson, Billy Craigie, Bertie Williams and Tony Coorey on the lawns of Parliament House (now Old Parliament House) in Canberra to protest the then McMahon Liberal government's statement rejecting land rights in favour of leases to Aboriginal communities. Restaging this historic act of resistance nearly fifty years later, Richard Bell's installation invites audiences to consider the losses and gains that have been made over five decades.

Propped near the esky, Bell's video *Broken English* (2011), provides a further context for assessing the state of race relations in contemporary Australia. We watch Bell as he witnesses the re-enactment of John Oxley's landing as part of the First Settlement Festival in the Brisbane beachside suburb of Redcliffe. The performance to a receptive crowd affirms the fantasy of a peaceful settlement. The video also presents Bell and others conducting vox pop interviews with Australians who deny the violence

of colonisation or openly share their ill-informed and often racist views. Intercut with footage of Bell debunking these scenarios over chess with Aboriginal Gumbainggir activist Gary Foley, the video articulates Bell and Foley's determined resilience in the face of white ignorance and denial.

19

Callum Morton

Glenville Souvenirs, Mt. Irvine, NSW 2001

digital print, edition 2/30

59.4 x 84 cm

Glenville souvenirs is one of eight digital prints in a series. The images have been created through the use of computer software in order to transform private modernist homes into retail or restaurant franchises. This souvenir outpost in the outback proudly hawks the recognisable commodities and tourist artefacts of Australian national identity, including 'Akubras, wombats, backpacks, koalas, penguins, keyrings'.

Tony Albert

CLASH 2019

collaged Aboriginalia on aluminium

118 x 550 cm (approx.)

Courtesy of the artist and Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney | Singapore

Tony Albert's *CLASH* continues the artist's ongoing series of large-scale word-images, which use text as a provocative device to examine the historical representation of Aboriginal people and culture. The text is composed of black letters, ashtrays and a range of other 'Aboriginalia', a term employed by the artist to describe his use of kitsch objects and domestic and tourist artefacts that are adorned with naive depictions of Aboriginality. The word 'clash' suggestively alludes to discord in general, but also to a clash of taste, perspectives, experiences or cultures, a mismatch of colours or a collision, fight or battle.

I want the work to question the idea of difference and its relation to ways in which we understand, imagine and construct identity. By adorning words with particularly provocative resonances with misrepresentations of Aboriginal people, these images are reappropriated in a way that both interrogates the legacy of colonialism and examines the ways in which that legacy informs the construction of

both Indigenous and non-Indigenous identity in contemporary Australia.

Tony Albert

21

Hoda Afshar

The Westoxicated #1, #2, #4, #5, #6, #7, #9 2013-14
digital prints

7 parts, each 100 x 87 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Hoda Afshar satirically ‘Westernises’ women wearing chadors to explore negative and pejorative Western gazes upon veiled Muslim women in Australia and beyond. Each photograph is given an Andy Warhol-style pop-colour treatment and the subjects are endowed with a range of stereotypical props, including a cigarette, a gun, a lapdog, a can of Coke, Minnie Mouse ears and a blonde braid. By humorously conflating supposedly binary images, Afshar challenges preconceived ideas about liberation and suppression and asks us to question the ways we view one another.

I recognise pre-judgements over my identity, especially as an Iranian female migrant. Your identity becomes a name tag that you wear every day – you have to constantly work against an image that is imposed on you.

Hoda Afshar

Christian Thompson

Dead tongue 2015

digital video

duration 00:03:40

Courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents,
Melbourne

Through his work with photography, sculpture and video, Christian Thompson explores notions of identity, cultural hybridity and history. His video *Dead tongue* was inspired by David Bowie's 'Let's Dance' music clip, shot in Carinda, New South Wales, which featured young Indigenous performers. For Bowie, the video was a 'simple and direct' statement against racism. Christian Thompson has commented, 'The video was a very significant cultural reference point for me and probably for most Aboriginal people who grew up in the 1980s and '90s'. Thompson composed *Dead tongue* in his community's language of Bidjara to foreground the importance of First Nations voices and representation. At first glance, the positioning of the British flags in Thompson's mouth suggests a suppression of language. However, the grace and determination in the artist's expression and the eloquence of his singing act as evocative testament to the resilience of culture.

Paul Yore

THIS MOMENT IS CRITICAL 2014

mixed media textile: found objects/material, beads, buttons, sequins, felt, wool, cotton thread

290 x 250 cm

Michael Buxton Collection

WELCOME TO HELL 2014

mixed media textile: found objects/material, beads, buttons, sequins, plastic flowers, felt, wool, cotton thread

290 x 260 cm

Michael Buxton Collection

TODAY AT THE EXPENSE OF TOMORROW / WHAT WAS STOLEN YESTERDAY IS SOLD 2014

mixed media textile: felt, wool thread, cotton thread

280 x 260 cm

Michael Buxton Collection

Paul Yore is well known for his intensely layered, psychedelic, hand-sewn 'quilt' forms, which continue the historical adoption of domestic handcraft techniques by artists for political purposes. Vibrant and seductive, Yore's work lures us into complex webs of imagery, patterning and information, often sourced from adult magazines, pop culture and Australiana. Through his work Yore addresses issues of capitalism, consumerism, Australian identity, colonisation, politics and homophobia.

This triptych replicates the structure of a traditional Catholic altarpiece. It was also inspired by German Renaissance artist Hieronymus Bosch's masterwork *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1490–1500), which pictures Eden, Earth and Hell through a series of chaotic, imaginative scenes. Through this structure, Yore materially manifests a topsy-turvy world in the throes of celebratory distress. The left panel replaces Bosch's pink fountain with a giant spouting phallus, underscoring the phallogocentric nature of Western thought, and reclaims visual iconography associated with queer identity. In his carnal depiction of everyday life on Earth in the central panel, Yore overlaps imagery of Parliament House on fire with graphic depictions of queer sexuality. The right panel features an upside-down map of Australia, layered with references to pre-invasion Aboriginal languages. This work pictures Australia as a wildly contested nation-state confronting its problems and undergoing radical revision.

It's not a coincidence that sewing has been used in feminist art, in queer art and in other art from minority communities, because I think it does directly oppose the principles of mass consumer culture in an industrial-techno society.

Paul Yore

Hoang Tran Nguyen

Working class man 2009

Like a version 2009

We built this city 2009

Video sequence

durations: 00:04:08; 00:03:38; 00:04:51

The *Like a version* suite of karaoke videos features footage sourced from Australian popular culture juxtaposed with media produced by the Vietnamese community. Nguyen blends scenes from the Australian soap opera *Neighbours*, footage of a Vietnamese wedding and of tourists walking the Kokoda trail, and news footage of a diasporic return to Vietnam. This material has prompted his consideration of the multiple ways that national identity is imagined and performed. Nguyen arrived in Australia from Vietnam in early childhood and throughout his youth often performed karaoke with his Vietnamese family, friends and neighbours. This musical activity became a way of processing and thinking through the difficulties of assimilation. Viewers are strongly encouraged to disrupt the usual quiet of the gallery space by singing along with Nguyen's work.

The anxiety 'to sing or not to sing' is one of the qualities inherent in karaoke. I imagine a similar tension exists for many, including myself, regarding this country's national song.

Hoang Tran Nguyen

Performances:

Kay Abude

POWER 2018

hand-printed silkscreen on linen, sewn into 100 garments
dimensions variable

This work comprises 100 garments of various forms, including high-visibility vests, full-length and half aprons, lab coats and smock aprons, that reference and suggest the types of labour often undertaken and positions held by migrant workers. Abude has screenprinted these garments with the word *POWER* and an image of herself with Lara Chamas and Ceren Sinanoglu, who, like Abude, are first-generation migrant artists of colour. These women form a self-initiated artists group that meets regularly to discuss artworld inequity and dynamics of exclusion, particularly in terms of gender, race and class.

In this work Abude adopts the word *POWER* as a form of positive self-definition, a reversal of the types of negative labels and social categories often imposed on new Australians or groups outside the mainstream.

For the opening night of *National Anthem*, Abude invited artists of colour and their families to don these garments as a political act of solidarity. Collectively, the participating artists and their families made a stand against processes of

exclusion and raised questions around notions of membership, authority and privilege within both the art world and the wider community.

POWER brings together people of diverse cultures that make up an 'Australian identity'. My identity as a first-generation Australian stems from a working-class background with a relentless work ethic at its centre. My experience is different from that of my immigrant parents and possibly quite different from a white Australian identity. My identity has been also fostered within the creative arts sector.

Kay Abude

Archie Barry

BREATH MARK AND MUSCLE SONG: rest and only say what's necessary

In a series of scheduled performances, Archie Barry turns a stethoscope into an instrument for capturing their heartbeat as musical accompaniment to their voice. The resulting song gently yields an appreciation of the way an individual uniquely embodies the processes and rhythms of love, loss and change.

Eugenia Lim

The Ambassador performances

At scheduled intervals during the exhibition, Eugenia Lim's gold-suited *Ambassador* will inhabit Buxton Contemporary. Wandering through the museum, Lim's *Ambassador* will respond to the space through movement – her body a living medium between the artworks, architecture and 'anthems'.

A NEW ORDER



**BUXTON
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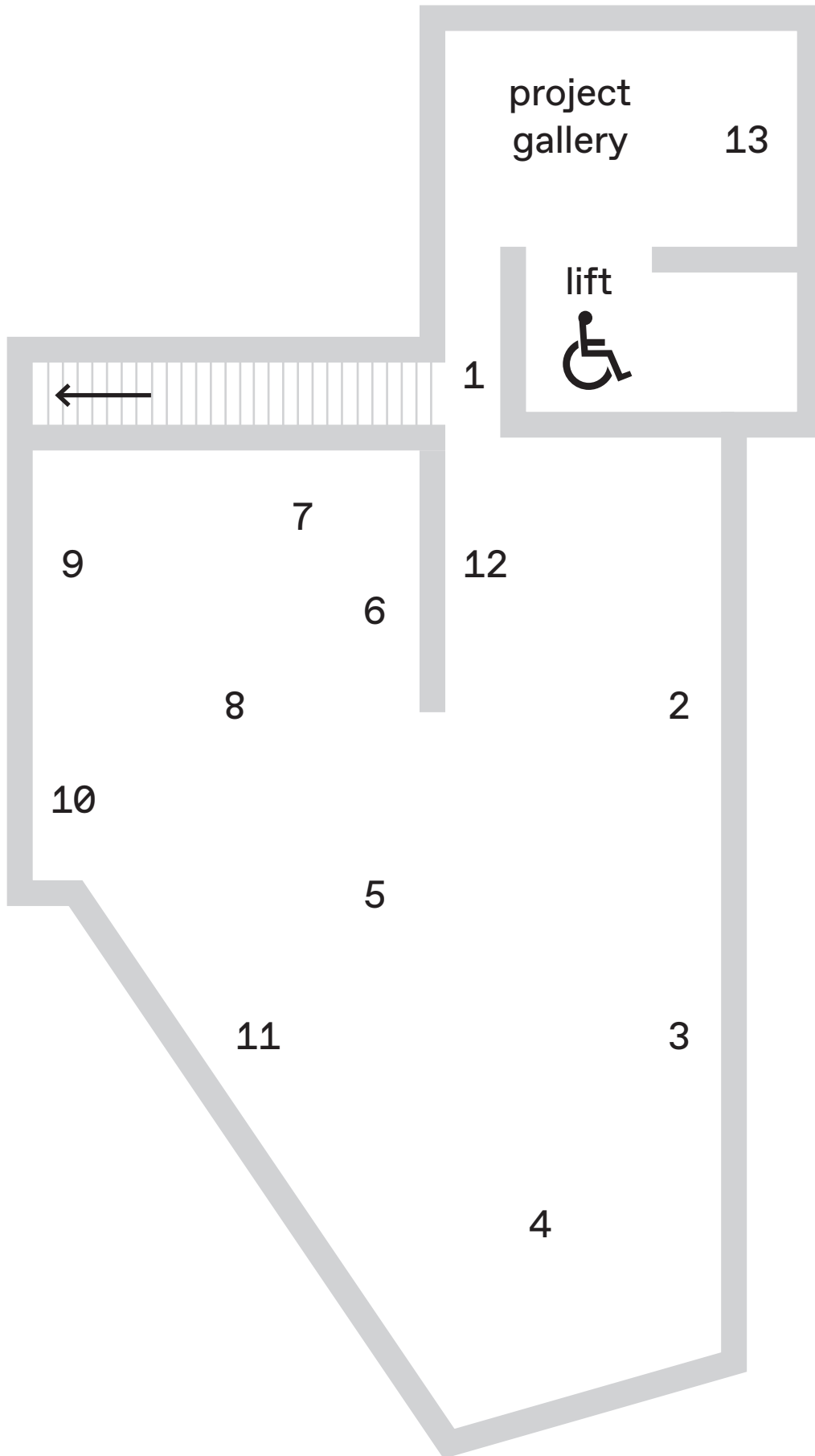
STEPHEN BRAM
TONY CLARK
DANIEL CROOKS
EMILY FLOYD
MARCO FUSINATO
ROSALIE GASCOIGNE
DIENA GEORGETTI
JOHN NIXON
ROSE NOLAN
MIKE PARR
DANIEL VON STURMER
CONSTANZE ZIKOS

Main exhibition wall text

There are innumerable ways to join the dots and build connections between the works in *A New Order*, all of which have been selected from the Michael Buxton Collection. Within the exhibition and the work of the 12 artists represented, we encounter many interconnecting styles and themes: a will to order or to react against it, a tendency for systematic and serial methods, a push and pull within processes that favour chance as much as rules. Patterns become structures that can be seen as more than compositions, as intrinsic to the content of a work or even as its central subject. Found materials are repurposed and given new logics, from simple objects to complex systems such as language. Time and space are also used as kinds of 'assisted readymades'. The cultural matrix of art history is sampled and brought into the present. The immaterial becomes material in works that shift our senses and challenge our perceptions. We might view all of these conceptual and manual activities – even the exhibition itself – as products of a simple starting point: that is, by varying something pre-existing, we set in motion something new.

Curated by Linda Short

First Floor Floorplan



First Floor Gallery

1

Constanze Zikos

There were two young icons 2004

enamel and laminex on board

150 x 106 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

2

Constanze Zikos

Intercity 4 2000

laminex on board

70 x 140 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

At first glance, or from a distance, we might view *Intercity 4* as a perfectly executed abstract painting. However, with close attention, we find its seamless geometry is hand-built from pieces of laminex, a material that signals 'domestic interior' before 'work of art'. Unsettling the boundaries between high and low aesthetics

is part of Constanze Zikos's catch-all form of abstraction. He brings together a diversity of cultural references in carefully orchestrated designs. This can be seen in another of his works on display nearby, which unites the colours and shapes of pop culture and Greek classicism in a hard-edged abstract pattern. Robyn McKenzie skilfully summarised the artist's approach when she wrote, 'In his manipulation of geometric order Zikos locates a point where different worlds lock gear; pattern and abstraction, decorative design and avant-garde aesthetics, high art and kitsch, Greece and Australia, ancient and modern'.

3

Tony Clark

Lontani 1999

synthetic polymer paint on canvas boards

12 parts, each 30.5 x 22.9 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

Lontani could easily be mistaken as an abstract turn in Tony Clark's long career as a painter of landscapes, albeit one who brings an unconventional approach to the genre. However, his momentary shift to abstract imagery is not a stylistic diversion. It is, rather,

a continuation of an ongoing concern. For Clark, no subject is ever an end in itself but a vehicle for a conceptual framework. As such, his orchestration of simple elliptical shapes across multiple (and interchangeable) panels, leaves him free to expand his preoccupation with questions of pattern and variation, colour and form, reductivism and ornamentation. 'My own perception of my work as a whole is that it is a kind of Heretical Abstraction and I have often felt that I have more in common with my hard-line abstract peers than with anyone else', he has said.

4

Daniel von Sturmer

The truth effect 2003

installation of five single-channel videos in DVD format, five custom-made screens, table
table 80 x 580 x 600 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

Questions concerning the nature of time and perception are built into the structure and apparatus of Daniel von Sturmer's installation as well as the videos playing on its screens. Set atop a tilted support, the screens display 'studio tests' of everyday objects behaving in ways that

challenge the eye and the mind. We can view these video loops in any order and timeframe, effectively editing our own experience of the work. The encounter is deliberately open-ended, referencing the to-and-fro of our own psychological space in which we transport ourselves from one moment to another. Similarly, the visible transmission of video – from projector to screen – alludes to the input and output of information in our conscious appraisal of the world.

5

Rose Nolan

Big Word Combos - RN 4 ME/DILL 1998

oil paint on hessian with embroidery thread

330 x 220 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

Since the 1980s, Rose Nolan has been making banners in tandem with different types of painting and construction to engage us, as viewers, with architectural space. Her use of the banner format connects with other histories, too. It is informed by the propagandist traditions of revolutionary art movements, such as Russian Constructivism, through to the custom of do-it-yourself sign-writing. Nolan's work

is characterised by a shifting back and forth between such extremes as public and private, grand and small, precise and rough, word and image. Even her signature white-with-red palette contrasts a non-colour we think of as quiet and pure with a brilliant hue that is loud and bold. Moreover, the fragments of text she repurposes from 'the slipstream of conversation' are given a voice that is open to interpretation, ownership and reception. As the artist has noted, these words can take on multiple meanings depending on 'the mood in the room'.

6

Rosalie Gascoigne

Conundrum 1990

sawn retro-reflective road signs on wood

183 x 152.5 cm

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Between 1989 and 1998, the year of her death, Rosalie Gascoigne made 100 works from discarded road signs, which she salvaged from roadsides and refuse tips around her rural home near Canberra. She saw beauty in their weathered surfaces and light-reflecting properties, as well as potential in their text. Sliced-up, rearranged and

composed in grid formations, the reflector boards offered endless ways of representing her sense of the landscape – its forms, tints and rhythms. The titles she gave to these works often imply ‘the nature’ of the constructions themselves, suggesting material or emotive qualities. Her naming of this assemblage can be seen to refer to the jumble of word fragments and letters we instinctively try and decode. When asked about her working methods, Gascoigne spoke of a ‘will to order’ that was tempered by a tendency to follow the ‘lyrical derailments’ that pleased her eye.

7

Stephen Bram

Untitled (two-point perspective) 2012

synthetic polymer paint on canvas

198 x 152cm

The University of Melbourne Art Collection, Michael Buxton Collection, donated through the Australian Government’s Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton 2018

The shapes creating spatial depth in Stephen Bram’s painting follow a logic that has sustained his work for years. Put simply, Bram nominates two or three coordinates in space, usually beyond the canvas frame, then draws lines towards them across the picture plane, establishing a perspectival field ready for colouring. These

‘vanishing points’, as he describes them, are a fixed part of his process but also offer scope for variation; he can generate new work by adjusting the distance of these points from the canvas while maintaining constancy within the ongoing series through his geometric scheme. Bram also makes use of the scheme’s ‘ambiguous and mobile identity’. As he has related, thinking about these points in space generates as many colourful propositions as the paintings do themselves. Bram himself asks, ‘Do the points exist as part of the work or not? Are they unique and fixed or not? Identifiable and real or notional?’

8

Emily Floyd

New ways of thinking 2006

MDF, hoop pine, huon pine, paint, lacquer

132 x 60 x 53 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

Is art a truth procedure? Does it provide new ways of thinking about the world?

This two-part essay question about contemporary art is from a series posed by philosopher Justin Clemens as part of a collaborative project with

Emily Floyd. It became a departure point for Floyd's sculpture *New ways of thinking* and a related series of works. Floyd responded to the question by proposing a different way of thinking about sculpture, one that finds a place for the value of education, play, community and diversity in the systems of art. As such, her sculptures have come to be described as 'philosophical toys', a term that references both their playful appearance and the progressive schools of thought that inform them, such as the community movements Floyd grew up with and a language of toy-making and design inherited from her grandmother. Reformating knowledge to make it hands-on and meaningful is at the heart of Floyd's practice. And the emphasis she places on embodied learning would seem to be a perfect answer to the question cited above. As the world and our lived experience change, art and its inquiries follow suit.

The full set of questions resulting from this collaboration is available here as a printed edition, produced especially for this exhibition.

9

Marco Fusinato

Mass black implosion (Anestis Logothetis) 2008

ink on archival facsimiles of scores

7 parts, each 81.9 x 102.7 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

In Marco Fusinato's ongoing series *Mass black implosion*, the artist follows a process that is methodical and disciplined. However, what it proposes is truly anarchic. Taking copies of original scores by avant-garde composers, Fusinato rules lines from each note to a randomly chosen point on the page. His reworkings form a new composition wherein every note is to be played at once, reducing the music to what he has called 'a moment of singular impact' and simultaneously expanding its acoustic potential to greater extremes. The scores that form the basis of these ten drawings are by Anestis Logothetis, a composer known for his pioneering system of graphic notation using visual symbols that could be freely interpreted by orchestral performers. In Logothetis's musical arrangements, Fusinato finds a combination of structural intricacy and improvisation that corresponds with his own scheme, which invites us to imagine sound and its effects through the visual realm. When five related drawings were exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the curator wrote, 'If Fusinato's piece were ever performed, the orchestra would produce the most explosive five notes ever heard'.

Mike Parr

Blind obedience / Silent majority 1998

two-channel digital video

duration 00:05:24

The University of Melbourne Art Collection, Michael Buxton Collection, donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Michael and Janet Buxton 2018

This video work by Mike Parr is the outcome of a conceptual project that relied on chance as much as systematic order. On one monitor, eighty words unfold sequentially according to a simple set of rules. The artist looked up a synonym for the word 'synonymous' and continued the process for each subsequent word, in order to produce what he has described as 'a blind semiotic drift'. Coincidentally, Parr's eighty moves ended on the word 'dead', bringing a linguistic finality to his semantic game. The neighbouring monitor presents the same words rewritten as numbers, which flow from the screen through the eye as mere code. Although the words and digits tick over silently, in an almost clinical manner, they combine to speak volumes about language and its politics. The alphabet – a twenty-six-part set of forms – can expand to create a constellation of meaning and yet it remains a governed system that can deny poetic possibility.

Diena Georgetti

Cartoon kapowee bouquet 2011

acrylic paint, pencil, crayon and marker pen on
canvas board

94 x 94 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

Photographers ocular record cover 2011

acrylic paint, pencil, crayon and marker pen on
canvas board

73 x 73 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

Split panelled shadow chart 2011

acrylic paint, pencil, crayon and marker pen on
canvas board

83 x 63 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

Diena Georgetti tunes in daily to other people's
visual accomplishments in art, architecture,
design and fashion, searching for a pure

connection between what has been made and what she wants to paint. She then edits her findings into new compositions, importing colourways, patterns and shapes until she conceives a painting that feels 'alive'. Georgetti describes the role she assumes as that of editor, not artist. For her this distinction is important; it means the paintings cannot be classified according to one creator and, instead, can be 'of any time, place, gender or age'. When these three works were originally exhibited at Hamish McKay Gallery, Georgetti distanced herself further from their authorship with the aid of some instructions. The paintings could only be purchased as a set, for the price of one work, and had to be displayed under one roof (though they could be located in different rooms). Georgetti's conditions were not based on economics or constraint but, rather, on creative agency. They allowed her to act as curator and stylist and to keep the group intact.

12

John Nixon

Untitled (black and white monochrome) 2013

enamel on canvas and wood

75 x 60 x 4.5 cm

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Untitled (white monochrome) 2011

enamel on canvas and wood

62 x 76 x 4 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

Untitled (pink monochrome) 2012

enamel on canvas and wood

60 x 45 x 4.5 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

Each of these three paintings represents an iteration of John Nixon's long-term endeavour known as the Experimental Painting Workshop or EPW. In progress since 1978, Nixon's project is not a physical space as its title suggests. It is instead a speculative space in which to construct an intellectual framework for expanding the field of non-objective painting. Nixon's EPW builds on the legacies of modernist abstraction, specifically Minimalism, Constructivism and the monochrome. He limits his enquiry to the constituent elements of painting – colour, texture, dimension and form – and uses these basic principles to generate multiple ideas that are explored as variations on a theme. Works with a common aesthetic are developed and exhibited together as installations, and a distinguishing

feature running through the set invariably implies the artist's next move. While the works shown here have a three-dimensional quality, they still operate firmly in the realm of painting. The canvas frames act as foundations for their scaffolded forms.

Project Gallery

13

Daniel Crooks

An embroidery of voids 2013

single-channel digital video, 16:9, colour, stereo
sound

duration 00:19:25

Michael Buxton Collection

Daniel Crooks manipulates the moving image as though it were a hand-held tactile material, cutting and collaging video frames as he might pieces of paper or fabric. By doing so, he constructs simulated experiences that dramatically alter our perception of time and space. *An embroidery of voids* leads us on a journey full of unsettling moments and incisive play between reality and illusion. Crooks alters the course of time in this work, challenging Western representations of it moving in one direction.

'The future is always at the right', he has said in reference to the linear format we usually encounter in filmmaking and in Western writing. Here, however, as our eye tunnels through the video's collaged spaces, multiple moments are unfolding on-screen simultaneously.

