

A gallery space with a dark wood plank floor and white walls. Several white, abstract sculptures are scattered across the floor. One is a smooth, rounded form near a window. Another is a more complex, multi-lobed shape. In the foreground, two large, textured sculptures are prominent. The word "UNPREDICT" is overlaid in yellow text on the right side of the image.

**UNPREDICT**

We respectfully acknowledge the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin nation, the traditional owners of the land on which we work and create. We recognise that sovereignty was never ceded and pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging.



Unpredict: Imagining Future Ecologies





**Foreword**  
**Marie Sierra**

The Faculty of Fine Arts and Music is delighted to introduce *Unpredict: Imagining Future Ecologies*, a virtual exhibition featuring new work by students from the Victorian College of the Arts' Honours (Visual Art) program in collaboration with the Ian Potter Museum of Art at the University of Melbourne.

As a curatorial endeavour, *Unpredict: Imagining Future Ecologies* reflects upon our age of uncertainty and embraces artistic speculation as one possible way to re-imagine the near future. As the project has evolved, this proposition 'to unpredict' has opened a suite of interesting questions about future materialisations of art in a time that has seen our communication shift increasingly to screen based and virtual platforms.

Following a competitive selection process, eight student artists were chosen to develop new work in response to this curatorial theme, and each has offered rich contemporary perspectives. I congratulate the participating student artists: Christina May Carey, Giulia Kelly, John Lim, Jemima Lucas, Anna McGirr, Liv Moriarty, Elsie Preston and Narelle White. Together, these artists have engaged in a wonderful process of professional development at a pivotal time in their respective trajectories. They have worked with VCA Honours and Potter staff to present works in a virtual museum context, gaining exposure to the range of processes involved in developing and presenting work for institutions, participating in regular curatorial conversations, and working with professional videography team Common State to document their projects. I see the compelling results of this opportunity and know that they will take what they have learnt into their future careers.

The project was facilitated by a Potter/VCA team including Dr Cate Consandine, Senior Lecturer / Honours Coordinator and Dr Sean Lowry, Senior Lecturer / Head of Critical and Theoretical Studies/ Associate Director (Research); and Jacqueline Doughty, Head Curator, Dr Kyla McFarlane, Academic Engagement Manager, and Annika Aitken, Curator in the Art Museums team of the University of Melbourne's Museums and Collections department. I thank them for their insightful and dedicated contributions. Thank you also to staff across the entire Museums and Collections department, including the Science Gallery, in mentoring and supporting the students during various stages of the project.

*Unpredict: Imagining Future Ecologies* is supported by a Victorian College of the Arts Foundation Engagement Grant from the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music and the Museum and Collections Department, University of Melbourne,.

Marie Sierra is the Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music at the University of Melbourne.

The Ian Potter Museum of Art is pleased to launch *Unpredict: Imagining Future Ecologies* together with the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music at the University of Melbourne.

Following the success of *Performing Textiles* in 2019, *Unpredict* is the second major curatorial project developed in collaboration between the Potter and the Victorian College of the Arts' Honours (Visual Art) program. In early 2021, the *Unpredict* curatorium invited artists to consider the future of artistic imagination in the context of a present moment characterised by precarity and uncertainty. Following a competitive selection process, eight students have worked across the year to develop sophisticated new work in response to the premise. Appropriately, the physical exhibition was intended to be presented in the STEM Centre of Excellence in the recently opened Science Gallery, Melbourne: Australia's new centre for the intersection of art, science, and innovation.

The practical realities of the COVID-19 pandemic have demanded a fluid response to rapidly changing circumstances and capacities—and like so much of Melbourne's cultural programming over the past two years, and despite great effort on behalf of all involved—the physical exhibition at Science Gallery was not possible to realise. In defiance of repeated necessary shifts to the project, these artists have demonstrated remarkable resilience and dedication to *Unpredict* throughout rolling lockdowns. Months of virtual 'studio visits' and Zoom project meetings fostered a strong network of support between students, while gaining invaluable exposure to exhibition making processes and the presentation of work in institutional contexts. The impressive artistic outcomes of this challenging year were presented as part of the VCA Graduate Exhibition in December 2021 and are documented throughout this publication. In place of the exhibition's accompanying public programs, a video series launched by the Potter highlights each artist's project and evolving practice.

Along with the artists, I sincerely thank our selection committee for their careful consideration of proposals, and the project team for their mentorship and support: Jacqueline Doughty, Head Curator Art Museums, Dr Kyla McFarlane, Academic Engagement Manager; Dr Cate Consandine, Senior Lecturer / Honours Coordinator; Dr Sean Lowry, Senior Lecturer / Head of Critical and Theoretical Studies/ Associate Director (Research) and Annika Aitken, Curator, Art Museums. Thanks and acknowledgement is also due the Museum and Collections team for their expertise and unwavering support of the project, in particular Scott Morrison, Rohan Meddings and James Needham. From the VCA, Mark Friedlander and Jess Milne. Thank you also to *Unpredict* curatorial intern Yanlu Liu for her wonderful commitment and optimism throughout a placement conducted primarily over Zoom.



We are grateful, as always, to photographer Christian Capurro for his empathetic approach to artwork documentation, and to the catalogue writers Dr Cate Consandine and Dr Sean Lowry for their insightful introduction, and Annika Aitken, for her essay.

Finally I congratulate the eight *Unpredict* artists on their outstanding achievement: Christina May Carey, Giulia Kelly, John Lim, Jemima Lucas, Anna McGirr, Liv Moriarty, Elsie Preston and Narelle White. Their creativity and professionalism throughout this project has been inspiring. We all wish them all the best in the next steps in their careers and practices, and look forward to the vital contribution their art will no doubt play, as they imagine the new futures this project set out to invite from them.

Dr Simon Maidment is Associate Director, Art Museums, in the Museums and Collections department and Director of the Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

## Introduction

Cate Consandine and Sean Lowry

When tectonic historical events catch us unaware, uncertainty can sometimes feel like a contagious malaise. What is the future of artistic imagination in this age of precarity, polarity and uncertainty? To 'unpredict' is to retract or annul previous predictions. Applied broadly as a speculative proposition, this exhibition considers predictive retraction as a vehicle for reimagining the near future. We are living in a historical moment characterised by catastrophe, emergency, acceleration, and dystopian speculation. Although every time can lay claim to its own particular uncertainties, there is no denying that our present era is fraught with a unique constellation of urgent challenges and attendant anxieties. With ongoing issues pertaining to climate, First Nations sovereignty, gender representation, globalisation, economic precarity, digital surveillance, algorithmically driven democracy, and a global pandemic, many pre-existing concerns are reaching fever-pitch. In this context, *Unpredict* calls upon artists and audiences alike to reimagine the future.

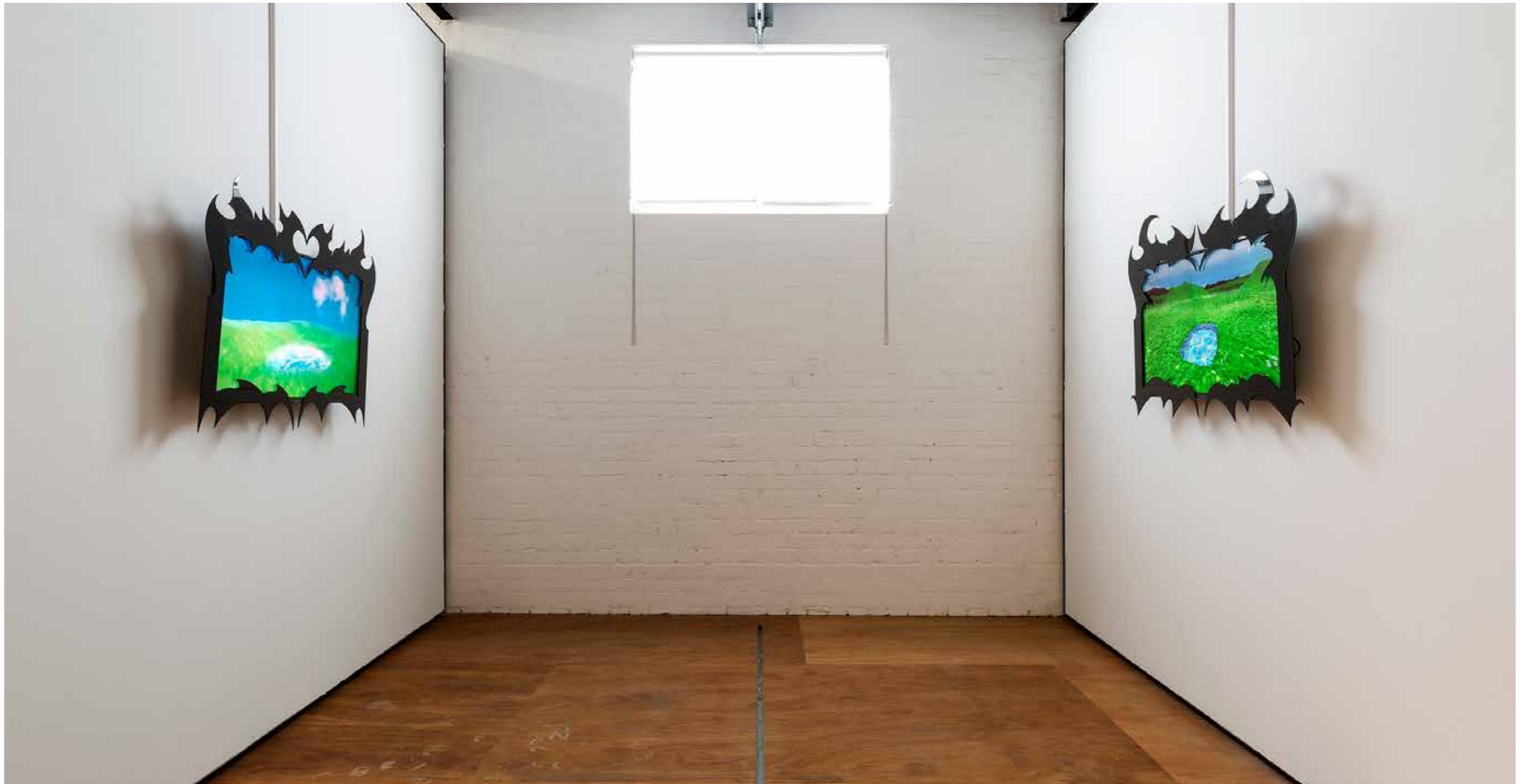
Against this backdrop of precarity and uncertainty, contemporary art is also facing long overdue questions concerning its sustainability, relevance, divisions of power and labour, and modes of circulation. With national and international travel curtailed, global economies facing unprecedented challenges, and screen-based interaction substantially increased for a significant percentage of the global population, artists and audiences alike are incentivised to radically reimagine the future, and in particular, relationships between digital and non-digital aspects of art and culture. This, in particular, is a challenge pertinent to us in adjusting this exhibition to the ever-changing public health settings of a pandemic. Although initially conceived to be a publicly accessible exhibition in the University's new Science Gallery, circumstances led us to re-imagine new pathways for the presentation and execution of works. Significantly, although we ultimately chose to pursue a virtual framing of works through documentation of their physical presentation, we—perhaps somewhat fortuitously—found that this process of adjustment only further activated the central premise of the curatorial theme, and by extension, opened new sets of relation between and through the works.

Interestingly, we also found that this particular alignment of circumstances added further complexity to the already well-established contemporary problem of unambiguously locating *where* and *when* a work of art is understood to be situated. With much art and culture already consumed as a spatially diffused distribution of elements presented across time and space, the mutual insufficiency of material and conceptual dimensions in art is only exacerbated by the substantial increase in screen-based cultural consumption and communication that has accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic. Where that which was once considered documentation or reproduction increasingly regarded as an alternative point of entry into the experience of art, today, the most dynamic and "visited" places for art are found in the communal spaces of screen-based

culture. Under such conditions, to what extent can we hold on to the traditional metaphysics of presence? How might we best optimise these unprecedented conditions of production and exhibition toward authentic experiences? Indeed, when faced with restricted conditions for production and reception, how can artists approach their work in such a way as to elide the labyrinthian natures of melancholy and cynicism? Importantly, *Unpredict* has manifested as an exhibition with a presence in both spheres—that is, direct sense-based experience, and the expanded realm of mediation. We are delighted to find that the final presentation of *Unpredict* has flourished under these conditions of multiple materialisation, and in turn, has motivated our students to explore new and more dynamic ways of working within and beyond conventions of traditional production and presentation. Consequently, we wonder if it is now our task to rethink the notion of authenticity altogether—both in terms of the human experience, and through art, if these are not mutually exclusive. Although the extraordinary works in this exhibition suggest that we have already begun to do so, there is still so much more to explore in relation to such questions. Perhaps, the task of making and exhibiting art under such conditions will require new approaches and ontologies. Is it possible to build hope, and a more sustainable vision, by radically fictionalising the near future through artistic imagination? If we look to a suite of new and emerging speculative currents, we see a new generation of discursive artistic mediations upon possible and impossible futures. We believe that it is high time to "unpredict" the near future.

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## AFTER SHOCK Annika Aitken

Fifty years ago, writers Alvin and Heidi Toffler propelled futurology into mainstream consciousness with their international bestseller *Future Shock*. They described the titular condition as the dizzying psychological whiplash experienced as the result of rapid change over a short period of time. The future is invading our lives via a ‘roaring current’ of upheaval, they declared. A current so powerful that it ‘overturns institutions, shifts our values and shrivels our roots’<sup>1</sup>. The Tofflers revised many of their ideas in the subsequent book *The Third Wave*, and again a decade later, in *Power Shift*. It was too late. The self-proclaimed ‘supercharged language’ of *Future Shock* had taken on a life of its own in corporate keynotes, management consultancy buzzwords and the rhetoric of political leaders from New York to Beijing. Change is an ‘accelerating force’. These are ‘exponential times’. ‘Information overload’ is upon us. How can we harness and profit from uncertainty?

Despite the great commercial success of *Future Shock* and the subsequent pop-futurology movement, the following decades produced very few useful forecasts for the future. Centuries of prior effort by physicists and philosophers fared little better. If we accept Laplace’s demon and Newton’s laws of motion, everything is predetermined. All you need is the position and velocity of every particle in the universe to calculate all that has and ever will happen. Unfortunately, this is less straightforward in practice. Quantum uncertainty means we can’t know the coordinates and speeds of all the particles in the universe, and even if we could, the computing power required to process this information won’t exist in any imaginable lifetime. So where does this leave us at the end of 2021, as we head briskly into another year of global uncertainty and incipient chaos?

*Unpredict: Future Ecologies* began with a speculative proposition: in this present moment of widespread anxiety about the future, how might artists engage ‘predictive retraction’ to reimagine new futures? The project was initiated by the Ian Potter Museum of Art and the Victorian College of the Arts in early 2021, during a hopeful reprieve somewhere between Melbourne’s six lockdowns. A physical exhibition was planned for the new STEM Centre of Education in the soon-to-be-opened Science Gallery Melbourne (SGM). As it happened, the Gallery didn’t open until 2022, and like most of Melbourne’s cultural programming scheduled for the second half of 2021, *Unpredict* didn’t go to plan. Looking back across those delirious months, perhaps the artists and project team sensed it based on the—now obvious—inputs of rising case numbers and previous lockdowns. After all, isn’t our tendency to anticipate future events bound up in our experience of the past and an assessment of present environmental conditions?

Quantum uncertainty and inadequate processing power aside, one of several issues arising from a deterministic approach to metaphysical thought is its necessary tenselessness. Though our understanding of time is conceptual, we consciously

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1. Toffler, Alvin. 1970. *Future shock*. New York: Random House. p.11.



perceive its passage or ‘flow’ experientially through events and reliable patterns of change across fixed intervals. This became difficult during lockdown six. Structures of the everyday and temporal markers like opening dates and content deadlines were replaced by an unwieldy new topography of time characterised by stagnation and delay. Time became increasingly elastic. Studio visits and work in progress sessions were replaced with lengthy Zoom calls. The exhibition timeline began to disintegrate. When the physical exhibition at SGM was eventually cancelled in late September, several artwork concepts blurred, by practical necessity, into works planned for the VCA grad show. Where *Unpredict* ended and final Honours projects began was no longer distinct.

Lockdown’s cyclical fugue of waking up, turning on a screen, and resuming life in the digital ether is paralleled in Giulia Kelly’s *Genesis Pool*. Presented as a single channel video playing on a loop with no distinct start or end, the viewer drifts through a bucolic green landscape reminiscent of default Windows XP wallpaper ‘Bliss’. Timeless and location-less, the scene is everywhere and nowhere. Day and night fade into one, and few distinguishing geographical features characterise this limitless expanse. There’s no evidence of human life, and no reflection on the surface of the water. Coarsely-pixeled imagery rendered in low frame rate is reminiscent of 1990s and early 2000s video games and computer screensavers. In the decades before mainstream LCD technology, screensavers reduced ‘burn in’ on old CRT computer monitors, where static images displayed for too long left behind permanent phosphor traces or ‘ghost images’. Screensavers prevented this effect by reverting to a constantly shifting image during periods of idleness. Though new technology has rendered them obsolete, habit and a nostalgic fondness for older technologies mean that many operating systems still offer screensavers (perhaps now ironically – they burn energy that could otherwise be saved). Kelly’s work brings the feeling of ‘Future Shock’ into contact with another pop-phenomenon: Moore’s Law i.e. technology’s constant, rapid evolution towards its own self-fulfilling obsolescence. *Genesis Pool* invites us to retreat, momentarily, into virtual greener pastures of the past.

The entanglement of ‘real’ and digital life, sleep and wakefulness, is also central to Christina May Carey’s *Virtual Window II*. The work is a continuation of Carey’s earlier *Virtual Window 2020*, where idle time becomes a thing of the past altogether. As our circadian rhythms are ruptured by late capitalism’s 24-hour lifestyle, we slip further into the digital realm in search of a remedy. New apps and platforms that promise to restore mind-body equilibrium create an addictive cause and effect loop. Against a backdrop of digital nature images, *Virtual Window II* references attention-led breathing exercises and wellness industry strategies that peddle a return to deep physical embodiment. The hypnotic audio track is suggestive of YouTube’s countless hours-long binaural beats and repetitive isochronic ‘focus tones’ videos promising the activation of elusive gamma brainwaves, despite being interspersed with jarring adverts at regular intervals. The environment evokes the kind of looped, anxious listening patterns one might find themselves slipping into in the search of ‘flow state’ ahead of a deadline. In an adjacent space, sculptural video works *X* and *I* offer different routes to hyper self-awareness and bodily affect. A surgical theatre-like video installation references the image-inversion techniques of x-rays and medical imaging. The concept for these works draws from the Freudian notion that dream consciousness reveals certain psychological features that we ignore or ‘mask’ while awake. Together the works simulate a disjointed sensation of shifting between interior and exterior views of the self, as Carey explains, ‘the sensation of being inside one’s head, or conversely... of being outside of one’s body.’

Similarly disorienting perspectives of self and body are explored in Anna McGirr’s *Body Language*. Presented as a multi-channel projection across three large screens, the work examines the elastic and constantly shifting relationship between artist and subject in art and filmmaking. McGirr subverts intersecting conventions of dance, choreography and cinema through an embodied use of the camera: the camera as an extension of McGirr’s body while interacting with her subject, and body of the artist. Together, the screens offer a fragmented narrative linked by glimpses of direct experience and corresponding perspective. In later scenes, McGirr hands over a degree of cinematic control to her subject by placing a GoPro on the body of dancer Jessica Nicholls. McGirr’s own background as a trained dancer informs a deep understanding of choreographic practice through film, and her semi-fictional work offers traces of her own experiences more broadly through a blending of personal and fictional narratives. *Body Language*’s final scene features McGirr herself, repositioned as the central protagonist. These blurred boundaries are compounded by narrative themes of the relationship with one’s own body; and the bond between mother daughter, and the complexities that arise in this often-messy knot of roles, emotional obligation and control.

Personal narratives and blurred boundaries of convention and expectation are also explored in John Lim’s *Ngo Ka Ki*, a conceptual recreation of the iconic ‘five-foot way’ of Malaysian architectural vernacular. The zone is, as Lim calls it, an ‘intimate yet chaotic threshold’ where public and private life converge. Within this third space, nuances of intra-and-extra-personal action become enmeshed as complex social contracts collide with more personal moments of private life. Lim’s use of ubiquitous, readymade building materials offers unsettling cues relating to both domestic and

public space, while the work's deconstructed form allows the viewer to project their own ideas of home onto the structure and its surrounding environment. The work also brings Lim's memories of his childhood in Penang into contact with idiosyncrasies of Australian culture, and within this, the contrast between the aesthetics and standards of maintenance for Australian and Malaysian public space. Cracked tiles, quickly applied mortar and unsealed concrete is brought into relief against the polished VCA stables hallway – a shared space which has relatively recently received a multimillion-dollar makeover. Had the work been presented in the pristine STEM Centre at SGM as Lim intended, this contrast would have been highlighted further.

Presented almost in direct physical dialogue with Lim's architectural threshold, Jemima Lucas' *Tell me what you are. Will you hold me in your arms?* lingers on the threshold of physical tension. Filling the hallway, an enormous latex sheet is pulled taut against a needle halted on the precipice of puncture and release of pent-up energy. The soft, yielding latex surface is reminiscent of flesh and the body, and the work alludes to questions of agency, threat, perpetration, and resistance. Across the installation, presented in three 'parts', Lucas continues to push the zone between artist and material agency, experimenting with pressure, tension, gravity, and moments of acute material and physical opposition. A heavy composite cube made from pulverised oyster shells and mortar dangles precariously in a grapple mechanism and an aluminium-casting of the soft internal mollusc rests on a latex surface pulled drum tight by spiked hooks. Working in a present moment that primarily values resources based on their usability, Lucas explains that she is drawn to the 'associative powers' of her materials, seeking ways to subvert expectations of how they will 'perform' or function in a particular relationship or circumstance.

Heading upstairs, questions of material agency are further explored in Narelle White's assemblages of ceramic 'specimens' and sculptural forms. Arranged in a series of plastic sample boxes as though freshly retrieved from the ground, *Lively remains* is suggestive of the site management practices of geology digs. The careful organisation of specimens simulates the attempt to foster preliminary associations between 'things' that have not yet been subject to classification. Nearby, White's materials coalesce into larger, animated forms in *A herd of affectionate creatures*. Tense with movement, the amorphous beings resist definition with humour and personality, gathering momentum as they blob away from the sorting table. Amidst this display of autonomy, the self-formation of small groups indicates a subconscious drive towards social bonding. Tongue-like forms suggest communication and nascent language. Experimenting with found matter and soil, White engages in a form of 'material complicity', where chemical imperfections result in unpredictable colours and textures during the firing process. White describes this mercurial process as a form of co-creation, an 'unpredictable alchemy of art and science', where she accepts the limitations of her control over the outcomes of her material processes.

Unexpected outcomes of the artistic process are explored in Elsie Preston's *Cattle chute, or a catwalk*, with similarly open-ended consequences. Unfurling along a wordplay and rebus puzzle methodology, Preston creates a new visual language rendered in installation and object assemblage. Though there is no designated start or end point to the work, subtle spatial cues allow for self-orientation through the complex web of connections between objects. A recreation of Temple Grandin's famously

curved and narrowing cattle chute features a broken gate, inviting entry. This signals at once a directional flow, and that movement through the work is unrestricted. Deconstructed boots walk their own tight gait: *cat walk*. A pink rubber tongue-shape. A blue plastic wig. *Cow lick*. A Trench coat hangs over a bar in an 'act of service'. The process of wading through these loosely connected associations, sifting for the visual and linguistic clues that intersplice them, is as absorbing as it is disorienting. A stack of printed poems offers glimpses into complex written thought processes that underpin Preston's assemblages. This fluid framework allows the artist to bring the many material and ideational facets of her practice together 'in parentheses'.

Where Preston uses language as a sort of spatial travel methodology with an undefined endpoint, Liv Moriarty follows it to a carefully mapped destination. In *You Are Here*, Moriarty turns to the diagram to direct physical movement and sculpt relationships between language, concepts, and things. Starting at a dangling arrow (X), yellow vinyl lettering suggestive of urban signage guides through trails of abstract information. Throughout this journey, you can see exactly where you are, and where you are headed. The diagram is as often a tool for speculation as it is an after-the-fact theorisation of an event, representative of what Moriarty explains as a human 'ability to construct narratives and superimpose stable ground atop of an unstable world.' The work also reaches into the grey zone between actual/physical and virtual/conceptual space, looping back to ideas introduced by Giulia Kelly in *Genesis Pool*. In *You Are Here*, 'space' and 'time' span the interstitial space between solid ground and walls. For Moriarty, method is practice and planning is everything; her works must be carefully resolved before they can be scaled to site, produced and installed. The artist spends the majority of her studio time thinking through processes, and reworking notes. Her work is influenced by a personal practice of reading science fiction, using themes from the genre to 'create an active network for re-imagining the present moment.'

As a genre, science fiction has certainly held its share of accurate premonitions, from the 1969 moon landing to video-calls, mood-adjusting medications, and global pandemic. Writing about the tendency for society to look to its science fiction writers and artists for predictions about the future, Ursula K Le Guin cautioned that it is not their burden, but the business of prophets (voluntarily), clairvoyants (on a fee for service basis), and futurologists (usually salaried, at least in the case of Alvin Toffler)<sup>3</sup>. One thing we now know, with the benefit of hindsight, is that well-remunerated futurologists like Toffler tended to fall short in one key area. They repeatedly, probably wilfully, underestimated the human ability to adapt in the face of unprecedented change and catastrophe. This present moment is no exception. Though the events of 2021 may have altered the trajectory of *Unpredict*, the complex ideas explored through the works in this catalogue offer multiple alternate pathways for understanding. Rather than attempting to foretell it, these eight artists demonstrate that the uncertain, yet inevitable future is a site for the possible.

Annika Aitken is Curator Art Museums in the Museums and Collections department, and the Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

2. Preface, Le Guin, Ursula K., Leo Dillon, and Diane Dillon. 1969. *The left hand of darkness*. p.19.

**Artists**

## Anna McGirr

Informed by a passion for cinema and cinematography, Anna McGirr explores the female gaze via an embodied approach to the moving image. Through a lens-based practice that employs processes of memory tracing, she creates multi-media installations underscored by partial personal and fictional narratives. Made in collaboration with Jessica Nicholls, *Body Language* is a semi-fictional process driven video work that explores the female gaze through a constantly evolving social ecology between camera and performer in filmmaking, and in particular, the unpredictable moments that require anticipatory and sometimes choreographic cinematography. Here, the use of the camera is central, and when placed on the dancer becomes an extension of the artist's body to form a complete embodiment of their experiences. This work imagines possibilities for future depictions of the mother-daughter relationship and more generally, female subjectivity on screen as it explores how one's lived experiences may impact the visual image when in control of the camera. In much the same way that one might watch a favourite movie five times over, McGirr attempts to comfort her viewer with a cinematic trace of reality. Ultimately, in working through intermedial processes of visual storytelling, she subtly reveals intimate details of her lived experience through dynamic combinations of the written word, photography, video and textiles.



**Anna McGirr**  
born Wagga Wagga, 1999; lives and works Naarm/Melbourne

*Body Language* 2021  
three channel HD digital and two channel digital audio, duration 15 minutes 51 seconds  
dimensions variable  
Featuring Jessica Nicholls (VCA Dance 2021)



Christina May Carey

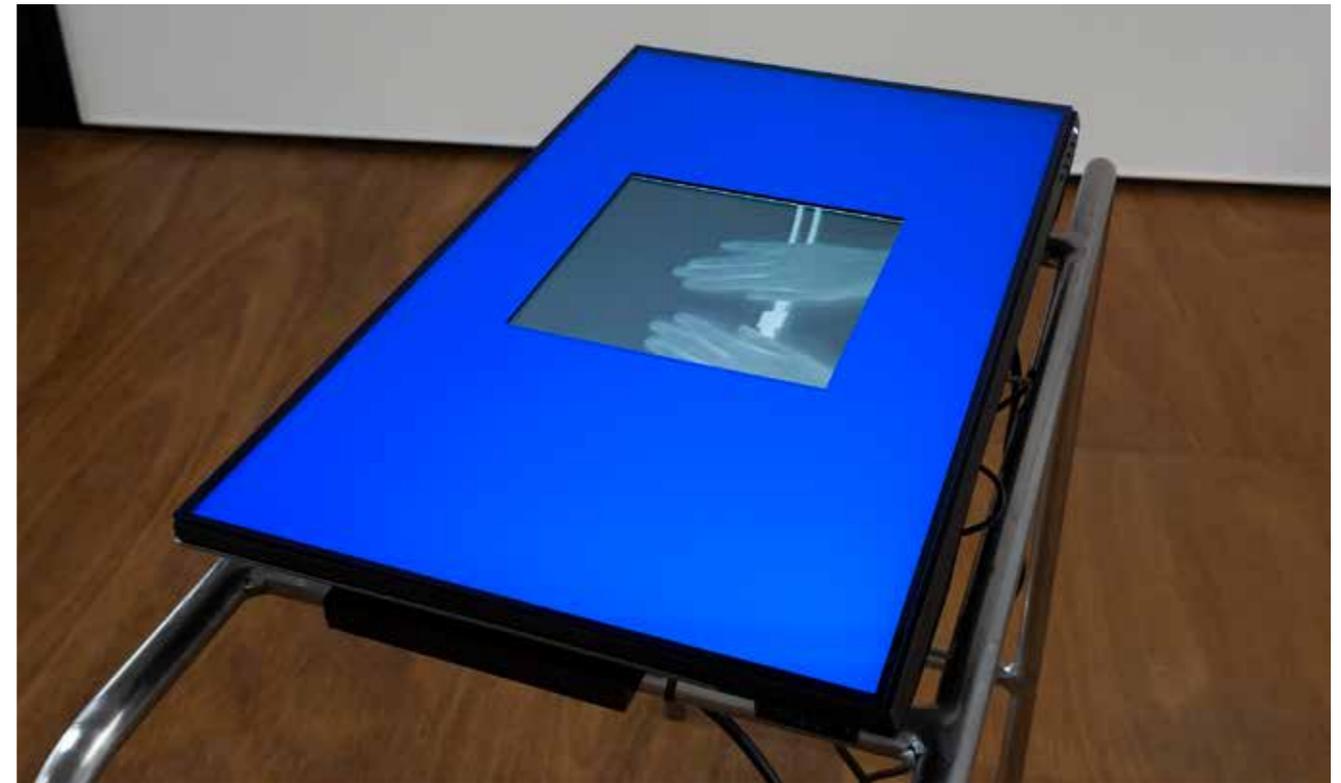
Syncopation in a rhythm draws our attention to the rhythm itself. The use of syncopations, gaps, discrepancies and ruptures in Christina May Carey's artwork aims to induce an awareness of breath and pulse. Carey is drawn to the idea that an installation might be capable of mimicking interior experience—like the sensation of being inside one's head, or conversely, like the sensation of being outside of one's body. This work draws from the way that dream-states can expose embedded parts of our psychology that are ignored or masked during waking states. Here, Carey's intention is to generate a feeling of self-scrutiny or self-surveillance in the installation space, invoking bodily affect, or an unnerving sense of self-awareness.



Christina May Carey  
born, lives and works Naarm/Melbourne

(left)  
I 2021  
HD video, iPad, magnifying screen with custom steel frame,  
steel and aluminium articulating arm, steel round tube

(right)  
X 2021  
HD video, computer monitor, steel stand, acrylic frame





(left)  
installation view

(right)  
*Virtual Window II* 2021  
HD single channel video, stereo sound

Sound design in collaboration with Camryn Rothenbury



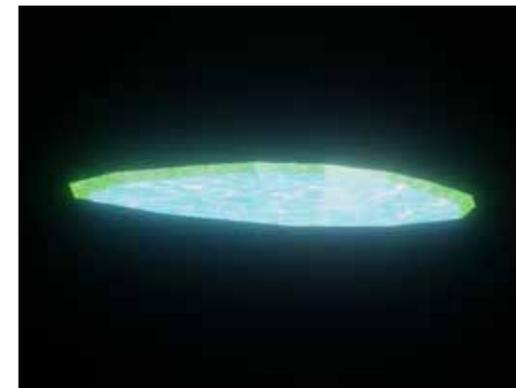
Giulia Kelly

You are waking up, falling asleep. Although the environment that surrounds you is representational of reality, it remains disconnected. It is synthesised to be like nature more than nature itself. You wander through crystalised grasslands, both familiar and unexplored. Refractions break the surface of water; you have no reflection. The ocean ends where the sky begins. You are floating through the clouds, disembodied. Phosphene stars twinkle behind closed eyelids, fading into nightfall. You respawn at the genesis. You remain caught in the virtual dreamscape of a screensaver destined to repeat and remain idle.



Giulia Kelly  
born Bern, Switzerland, 1997; lives and works Naarm/Melbourne

*Aeon Field* 2021  
single channel video loop with audio,  
LED flatscreen with perspex frame,  
duration 1 minute 21 seconds  
107 x 85 cm



(left)  
*Respawn 2021*  
single channel video loop with audio, projected onto MDF  
duration 1 minute 21 seconds  
120 × 90 cm

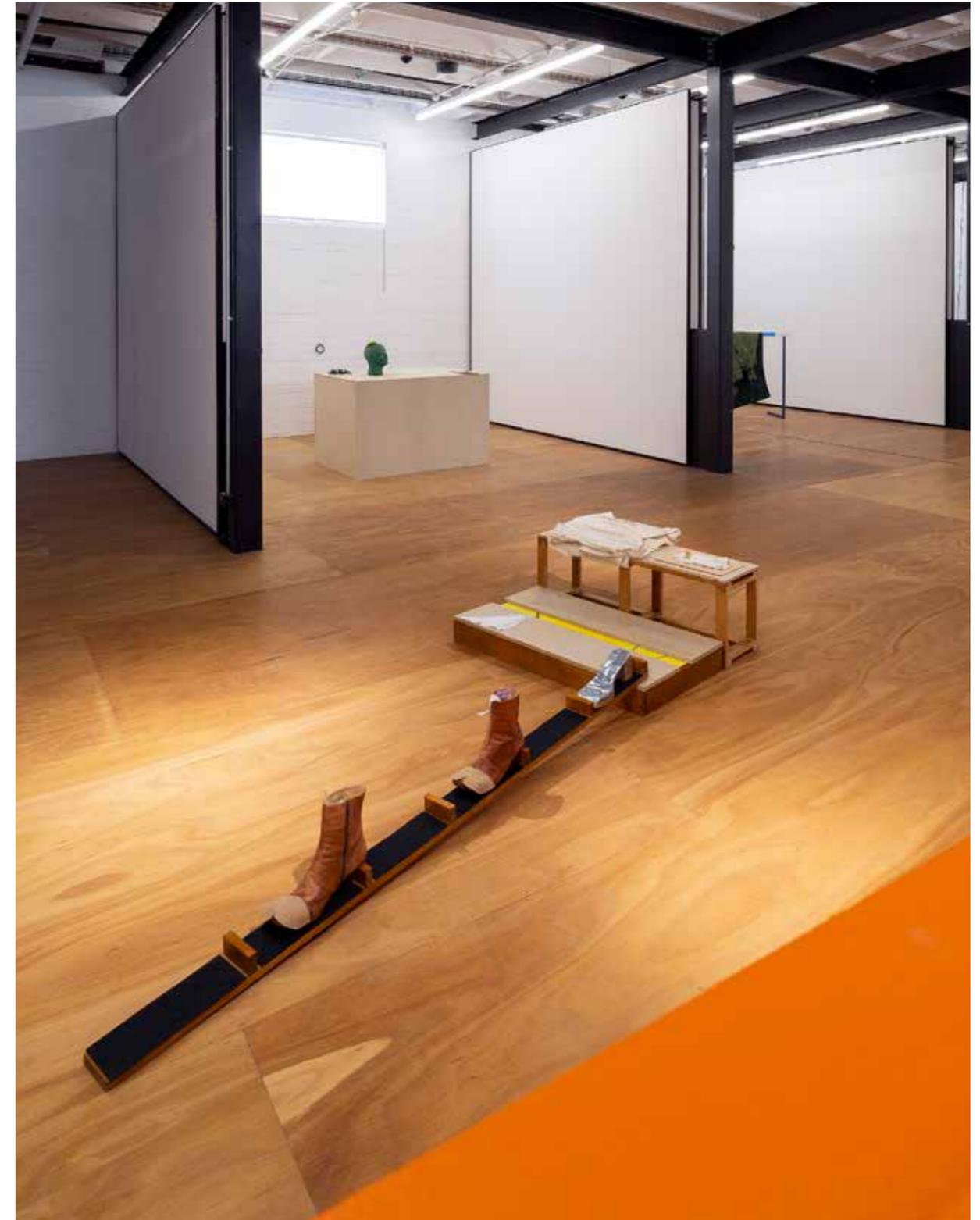
(right)  
*Genesis Pool 2021 (stills)*  
single channel video loop with audio  
duration 2 minutes 28 seconds

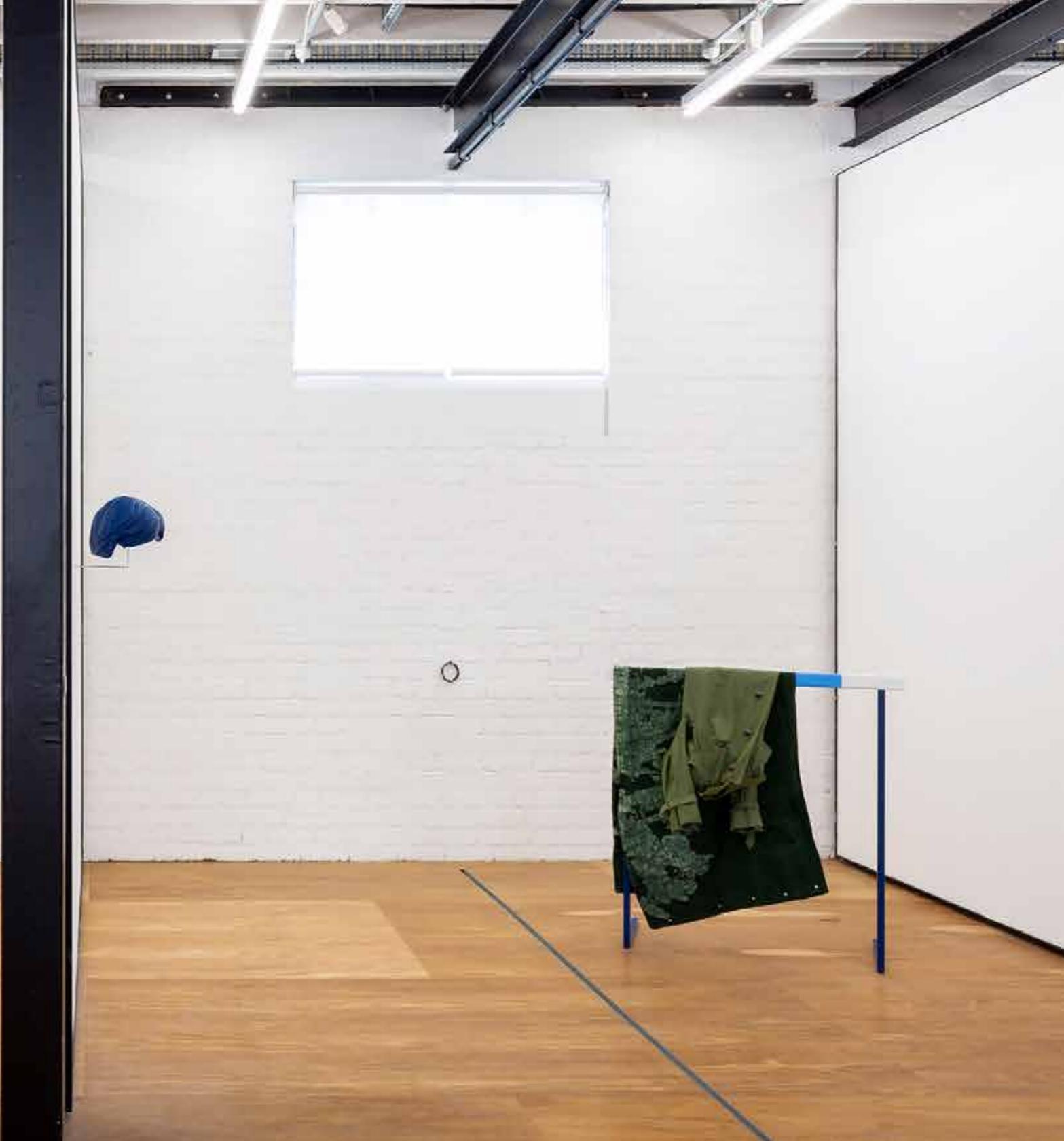
## Elsie Preston

Elsie Preston seeks to hold many things at once in parenthesis (painting, sculpture, dressmaking, fabricating, writing). She produces assemblages as a way to construct her own language of objects. These assemblages then in turn perform as metaphorical objects and riddles. Here, there is a pleasure that is activated in the viewer as they attempt to decipher encoded information while being rewarded with insight (i.e. an aha! moment). Preston investigates the semiotics of fashion, borrowing words and garments to extend their aesthetic associations into the context of art. Significantly, the function and behaviour of garments that might otherwise be overlooked is foregrounded. She embraces material behaviours in object assemblages—i.e. to entrench the trench coat! Consequently, methods of wordplay, particularly the rebus puzzle, are re-deployed to re-code a language that speaks of the material associates of the garment (such as the cow and the tongue that touches texture). Thus, in these assemblages, objects behave like garments, insofar as although they exist away from the body, their aesthetics continue to dress the senses.

Elsie Preston  
born lives and works Naarm/Melbourne

*Cattle chute, or a catwalk* 2021  
structural timber, mdf board, mannequin, wig, hairnet,  
canvas garment, boning, soil, non-slip flooring, leather  
boots, fabric, aluminium, silicone, hay, wax, airbrushed  
steel, quoit, coloured plaster, mirror, stitched text,  
oil and acrylic paint  
dimensions variable





## TONGUES

A garment made of lace  
will address with immaculate articulation, accent  
and detail.

No wonder the French have claimed it.  
Whereas a sweater might stutter,  
get caught on loose ends,  
trying exhaustively to weave words.

To the body the garment speaks in tongues,  
tongues with textures, like the cat's all raspy.  
The garment bitches when it itches,  
rubs and moans,  
cuts and cusses,  
the skin weeps.  
The garment makes it sweat.

Garments taste our bodily mixtures.  
On our BO  
and on the sweetness of wet dreams  
the garment slurs,  
for alcohol is a lubricant.  
Think of the smell of jeans,  
after a night at the pub.  
Garments co-exist in our seepages,  
stew in our juices.  
When things start to go sour,  
how can we ferment this process?



## TRENCH COAT

The trench coat gets down and dirty  
from the literal trenches to the concealment of the flasher's phallus.  
Abject horror pastiche,  
a horizontality of form,  
on par with the shit, mud, blood, and piss.  
The overcoat is over it,

*over it.*

So how to give it a night out:  
stiffen it with starch  
or slice it in half, mix and match, DIY style.  
Embrace its dappled hem that looks like mould is on trend,  
consider it a new take on the plaid,  
a kilt with concertina pleats,  
when extended fully  
reveal V shaped gaps,  
like the gaps in the earth where the trenchcoat was once stuck,  
lodged like in the gaps between teeth.  
Imagine if parsley greens and poppy seeds became fashionable items.



## REBUS



Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy

Sailor



Aquascutum



Streamlined

Moisture from within  
How do things feel on the skin?



Tracing a hairline

'Sludge is a stand in for bodies unwanted..  
Water unites and breaks us'.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marten, Helen, *Fixed Sky Situation* (Koenig Galerie), 13/04/21,  
<https://www.koeniggalerie.com/exhibitions/16067/fixed-sky-situation-nave/#:~:text=FIXED%20SKY%20SITUATION%20%7C%20NAVE%20%7C%20K%C3%B6nig%20Galerie&text=Helen%20Marten%20works%20across%20sculpture.and%20our%20place%20within%20it.&text=Fixed%20Sky%20Situation%20unfolds%20a.and%20a%20'you'%20sculpture>

## Jemima Lucas

Jemima Lucas' practice seeks to illuminate productive tensions at play between psychologically and materially opposed gestures of control and release (power and agency). For Lucas, materials perform as a vehicular manifestation of this tension, and by extension, these material assemblages hold an allegorical capacity to function as active conduits for the body. Here, through balanced manifestations of perpetration and yield, antithetical forces negotiate their respective impact and interplay. In particular, Lucas draws our attention to the gravity that is felt when mixing sand into cement, working with scoria, welding steel, pouring latex, and cast aluminium. Lucas acknowledges First Nations peoples and lands from which these materials are sourced, and accordingly pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

1.

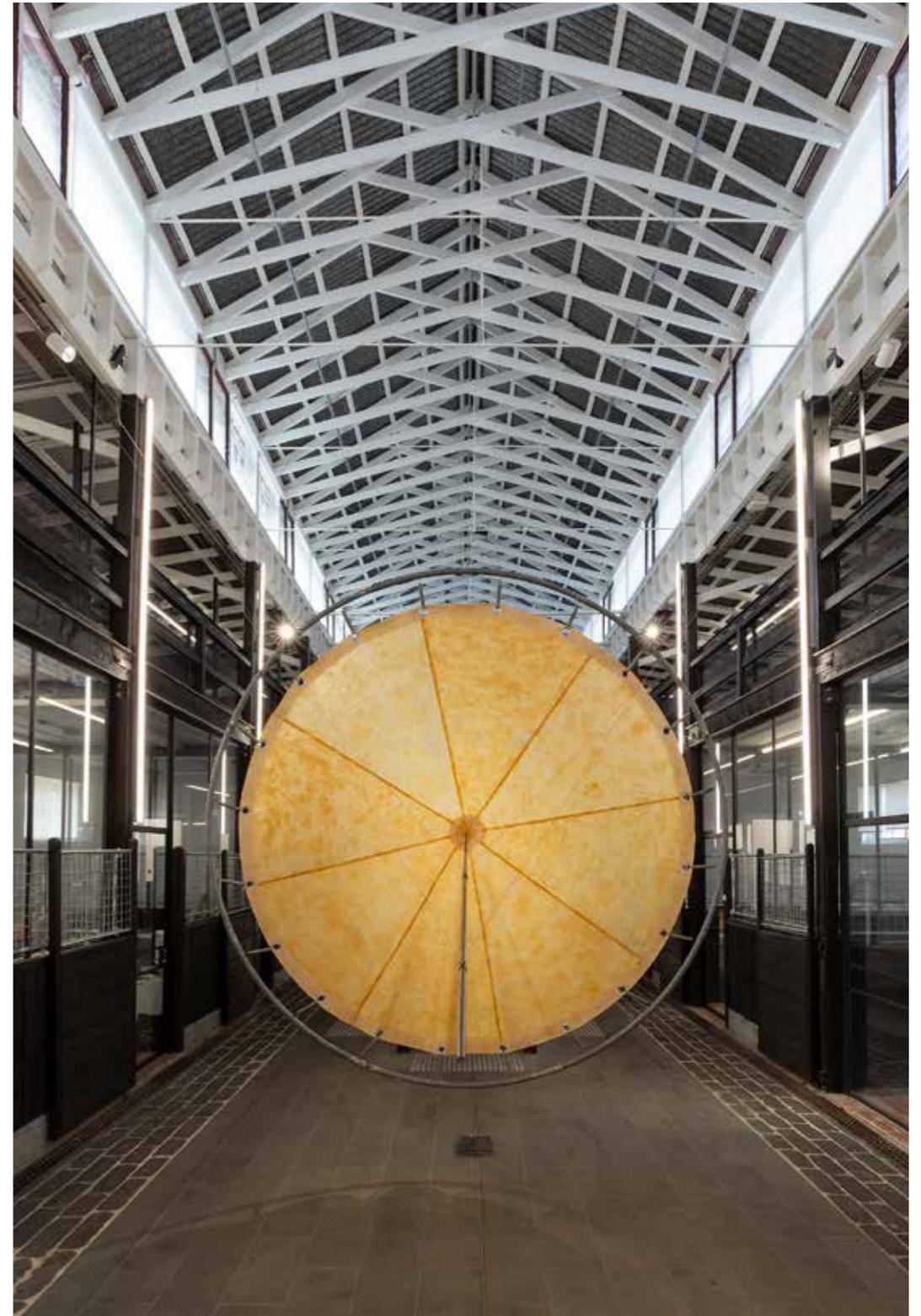
I want the work to hold you in that intensity.  
A moment that perpetuates and yields.  
So when you feel it emotionally, there's a sense of empathy. There's a sense of a body.  
Through the material body, your body, too, is implicated in the experience because you know what it is like to be both powerful and vulnerable  
Hard and Soft.

2.

Will you still recognise me de-limbed?  
Legs torn asunder.  
Will I still be able to conjure the feeling of being propelled into the atmosphere?  
I want you to remember that feeling of being thrust into the space. Being suspended in that moment where you're neither pushed up or pulled down.  
Slow down.  
Slow down that moment when your body defies the laws of gravity. Feel your stomach in your arse and your lungs pressing up against your diaphragm all at once.  
Focus on that feeling  
That feeling off floating.  
Transcending the boundaries of time.  
Your body fighting the equal and opposite force of gravity and levitation.

**Jemima Lucas**  
born Australia, 1995; lives and works Naarm/Melbourne

*Tell me what you are. Will you hold me in your arms?* 2021  
stripped trampoline, cast latex, springs, mild steel hammered spike, eyelets, stainless steel fixings, pressure, tension, gravity; stripped trampoline, cast latex, aluminium oyster, eyelets, tempered mild steel spiked hooks; mild steel hammered spikes, pulverised oyster shells, mortar, chain, shackle, gravity, tension  
dimensions variable





## Liv Moriarty

This work is an attempt at articulation, that is, of comprehension or interpretation of processes and events that make up the world. Expressing the diagrammatic nature of these relationships, the work discusses interconnectedness through the lens of the diagrammatic. Here, a diagram displays a process of becoming that is in flux and continual— like spaces, time, people, and objects, orienting and leaning on each other and affecting one another. A diagram can be a plan, or a proposition for a future action. It can also display a reality or map out an event. The map attempts to predict the future by creating a constant present, but ultimately falls short, as time moves around it, and people move through space.

I am interested in relationships between things and how they affect each other, together with ways of displaying and organising these relationships to help make sense of the world. In my work, relationships and connections are used as a way of getting something across. By focussing on the idea of interconnectedness, relationships and the connections themselves, an idea becomes a complex web of processes and becoming.



Liv Moriarty  
born, Adelaide, Kaurua land, 1997; lives  
and works Melbourne, Wurundjeri land

*You Are Here* 2021  
vinyl decal  
1800 × 200 cm (variable)



time

X  
↑  
- - - - -  
muscle memory

proximity

## Narelle White

Narelle White presents her work for UNPREDICT in two parts: *A herd of affectionate creatures* and *Lively remains*. Arising through experimental ceramic processes, they are intertwined works which explore the generative effects of befriending the unknown.

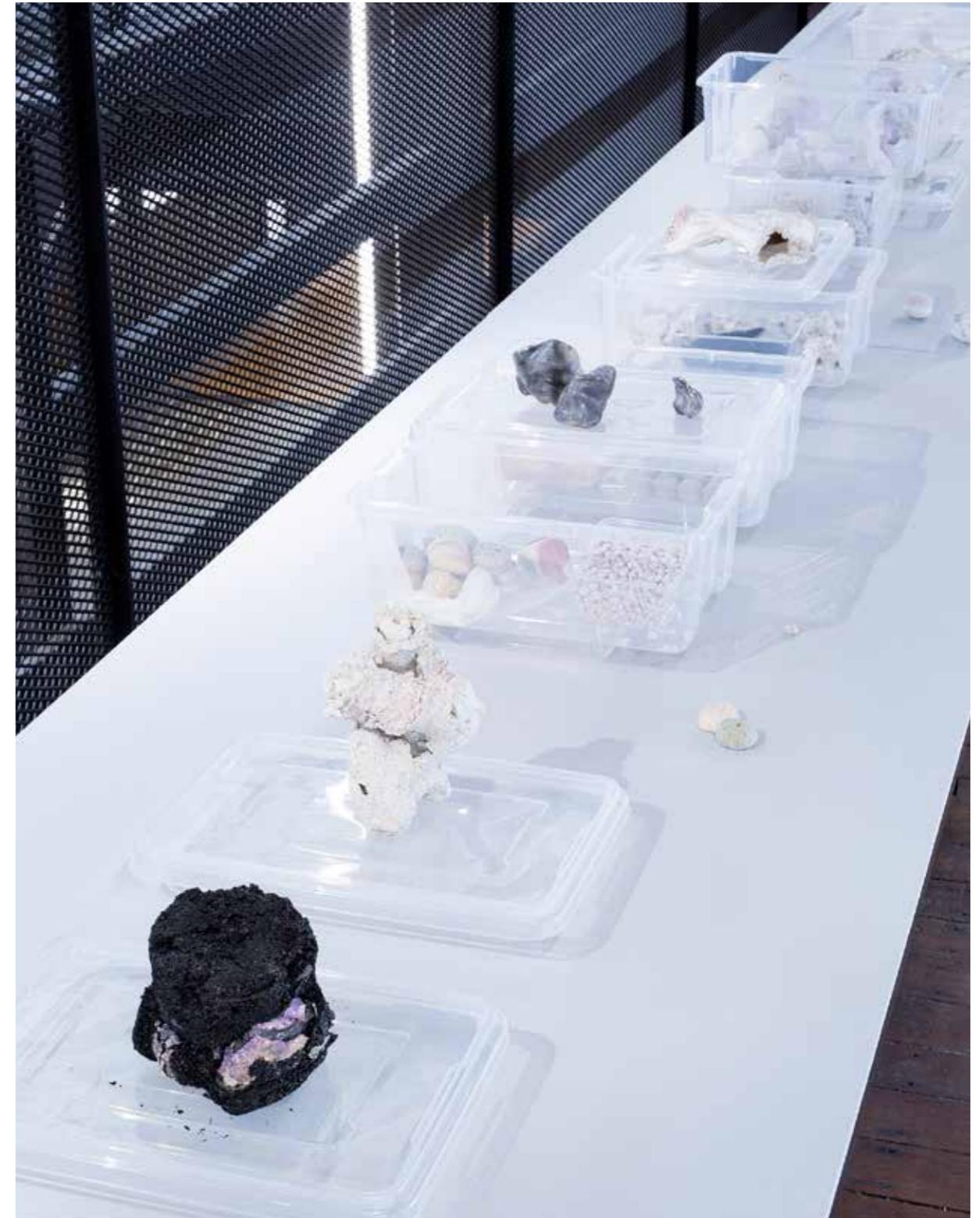
*Lively Remains* unpacks the wonderment of an emergent material ecology. An armature of plastic tubs gives presence to the care that sustains an artwork's possibilities, while referencing our desire to grasp and decipher the worlds around us. A network of invisible threads connects one discovery to the next, but also gives way to new associations.

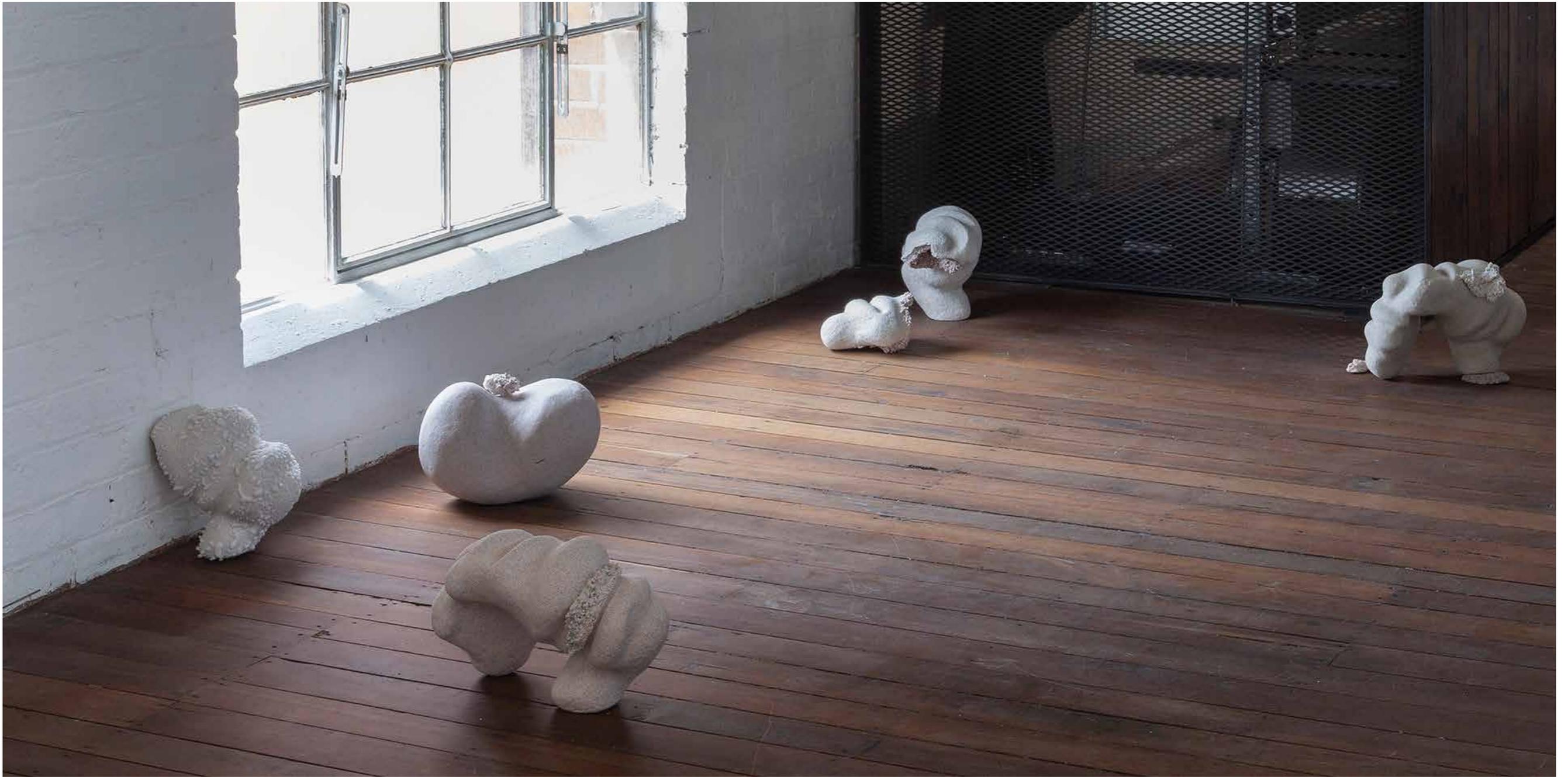
In *affectionate creatures*, the artist considers the companionate kinship she feels when collaborating with vibrant matter. Conceived amidst the estrangements of Covid lockdown, the formation of a herd speaks to our felt radars of belonging. In these figures, the material innovations of *Lively remains* cohere as lively mass. Amassed in provisional assembly, they propose an ethic of empathy and recognition, made legible in the organic and animistic qualities of porous, restive things.

**Narelle White**  
born Waddawurrung country, Ballarat;  
lives and works Wurundjeri country, Melbourne

*Lively Remains* 2021  
artist's clay-bodies, porcelain, glaze, other  
ceramic matter, plastic tubs, composition  
board, acrylic paint  
896 × 88 × 55 cm

(p. 59–60)  
*A herd of affectionate creatures* 2021  
artist's clay-bodies, glaze  
dimensions variable, in 20 parts





## John Lim

In an attempt to expand the intimate, yet chaotic threshold in which private experience encounters public space, John Lim uses pattern, monochrome and texture to explore the depth of history, ingrained in his childhood experience at a 'five-foot way', a roofed continuous walkway commonly found between local cafes and street roads in Penang, Malaysia. Here, the vernacular corridor forms an intimate space between the private and public. It is a space to walk through, sit on the edge, smoke, chat and drink coffees on the corridor, with kids inevitably running as part of an implicit acknowledgement between store owners and people walking through without any preconceived notion as to how to behave, arrive or act. With this memory in mind, Lim is interested in the differences between understandings and aesthetics of public space in Australia and Malaysia. His work explores this contrast between the neglected and deteriorating community facilities in his hometown and the relatively pristine conditions in urban Australia. Investigating divergent narratives held by these two spaces, Lim's paintings, sculptures and installations fuse the fragmentation of memories of Malaysia within idiosyncratic features of Australian culture.



John Lim  
born Penang, Malaysia, 1999; lives and works  
Wurundjeri Land/Melbourne

*Ngo Ka Ki* 2021  
Mosaic tiles, grout, concrete, hollow steel  
bar, steel flat bar, steel mesh sheet, plywood,  
spray paint, weld marks  
364 x 100 x 250 cm











time

X  
muscle memory

X

articulate

articulate

articulate

OMEAS



## List of works in the exhibition

**Christina May Carey**  
Born Naarm (Melbourne)  
Lives and works Naarm  
(Melbourne)

**Virtual Window II** 2021  
HD single channel video,  
stereo sound  
duration 5 minutes 30 seconds

The artist collaborated with  
Camryn Rothenbury on the sound  
design for *Virtual Window II*, and  
would like to thank Camryn for  
his important contribution to  
this work.

**X** 2021  
HD video, computer monitor,  
steel stand acrylic frame  
85 × 90 × 50 cm  
duration 10 minutes 43 seconds

**I** 2021  
HD video, iPad, steel and  
aluminium articulating arm,  
steel round tube  
duration 1 minute 57 seconds

**Giulia Kelly**  
Born Bern, Switzerland 1997  
Lives and works Naarm  
(Melbourne)

**Aeon Field** 2021  
single channel video loop  
with audio, LED flatscreen  
with perspex frame  
duration 1 minute 21 seconds  
107 × 85 cm

**Respawn** 2021  
single channel video loop with  
audio, projected onto MDF  
duration 1 minute 21 seconds  
120 × 90 cm

**Genesis Pool** 2021  
single channel video loop  
with audio  
duration 2 minutes 28 seconds

**Anna McGirr**  
Born Wagga Wagga, 1999  
Lives and works Naarm  
(Melbourne)

**Body Language** 2021  
three channel HD video  
projection  
duration 15 minutes 51 seconds  
Featuring Jessica Nicholls  
(VCA Dance 2021)

**John Lim**  
Born Penang, Malaysia 1999  
Lives and works Wurundjeri Land /  
Doncaster, Melbourne

**Ngo Ka Ki** 2021  
mosaic tiles, grout, concrete,  
hollow steel bar, steel flat bar,  
steel mesh sheet, plywood,  
spray paint, weld marks  
elevated walkway  
(350 × 120 × 250cm) /  
Bench (320 × 45 × 730cm) /  
Archway (100 × 30.48 × 180cm)

**Igloo loggia** 2021  
concrete, steel tube, steel pipe,  
steel square rod, acrylic, marker  
320 × 45 × 73 cm

**Line and ham** 2021  
flat steel, shs steel bar, steel  
tube, spray paint, acrylic  
120 × 30 × 190 cm

**Warmth bata** 2021  
oil, oil stick, acrylic gloss  
medium, blue masking tape  
on canvas  
25.4 × 20.32 cm

**Styrofoam** 2021  
oil and acrylic on canvas  
17.8 × 12.7 cm

**Jemima Lucas**  
Born Naarm (Melbourne), 1995  
Lives and works Naarm  
(Melbourne)

**Tell me what you are. Will you  
hold me in your arms?** 2021  
stripped trampoline, cast latex,  
aluminium oyster, eyelets,  
tempered mild steel spiked hooks

mild steel hammered spikes,  
pulverised oyster shells, mortar,  
chain, shackle, gravity, tension

stripped trampoline, cast latex,  
springs, mild steel hammered  
spike, eyelets, stainless steel  
fixings, pressure, tension, gravity

dimensions variable

**Liv Moriarty**  
Born Adelaide, Kaurana land, 1997  
Lives and works Melbourne,  
Wurundjeri land

**You Are Here** 2021  
vinyl decal  
Courtesy of the artist

**Elsie Preston**  
Born Melbourne 1997  
Lives and works (place): Naarm  
(Melbourne)

**Cattle chute, or a catwalk** 2021  
structural timber, mdf board,  
mannequin, wig, hairnet,  
canvas garment, boning, soil,  
non-slip flooring, leather boots,  
fabric, aluminium, silicone, hay,  
wax, airbrushed steel, quoit,  
coloured plaster, mirror, stitched  
text, oil and acrylic paint  
dimensions variable

**Narelle White**  
Born Waddawurrung country,  
Ballarat  
Lives and works Wurundjeri  
Country, Melbourne

**A herd of affectionate creatures**  
2021  
artist's clay-bodies, glaze  
dimensions variable, in 20 parts

**Lively Remains** 2021  
artist's clay-bodies, porcelain,  
glaze, other ceramic matter,  
plastic tubs, composition  
board, acrylic paint  
896 × 88 × 55 cm

All works courtesy of the artists

## Unpredict

Published by the Ian Potter Museum of Art, the University of Melbourne.

*Unpredict* is a collaboration between The Ian Potter Museum of Art and Faculty of Fine Art and Music, University of Melbourne.

Curated by Dr Cate Consandine, Honours Coordinator, Victorian College of the Arts' (VCA) Honours in Fine Art (Visual Art) program; Dr Sean Lowry, Head of Critical and Theoretical Studies, VCA Art; Jacqueline Doughty, Head Curator, Art Museums, Museums and Collections; Dr Kyla McFarlane, Academic Engagement Manager, Museums and Collections; Annika Aitken, Curator, Art Museums.

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### Front cover:

Narelle White, *A herd of affectionate creatures 2021* (installation view), artist's clay-bodies, glaze, dimensions variable, in 20 parts

### Back cover:

Christina May Carey, *Virtual Window II 2021* (installation view), HD single channel video, stereo sound, duration 5 minutes 30 seconds

X 2021 (installation view)  
HD video, computer monitor,  
steel stand acrylic frame,  
85 x 90 x 50 cm,  
duration 10 minutes 43 seconds

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Patron  
Lady Potter AC

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