

AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
CONTEMPORARY GROUP
FREE EXPRESSIONS



No. 88 - AUGUST 2024

From the Editor

Welcome to edition No. 77!

This edition is exclusively dedicated to the Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize 2024 – it celebrates the winner and all the finalists.

The opening event on 17 August was well attended, including by a record number of finalists, and the President of the APS Greg McMillan.

The exhibition runs until 12 October 2024 at Muswellbrook Regional Art Centre, 1–3 Bridge Street, Muswellbrook NSW.

Next month “normal transmission” will return to *Free Expressions* with a mixture of articles and special features.

And, please remember that I am always keen to include works as mini-folios or even major features – from *all* members, but *particularly* from those whose work has not graced these pages before, or for some time. The broader the representation that appears in this magazine (and in the Group's other activities) the broader and more stimulating our discussions and creative endeavours can become.

Spring has sprung – get out there and make an image (or two).

Cheers!

Ian Skinner
Editor

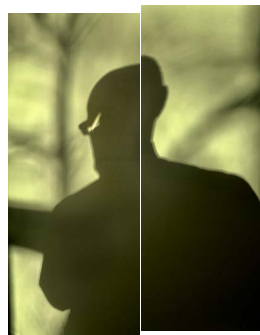


The Cover

Focus Infinity IV (4.41am, 09 May 2024, Maralinga village), 2024 [detail]

by Merylyn Fairskye

Merylyn is the winner of the Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize, 2024. Her work is featured in full within the body of this edition.



Palsy of the 4th Optic Nerve III.

Self portrait

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WINNER OF THE MULLINS CONCEPTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE 2024

***Focus Infinity IV (4.41am, 09 May 2024,
Maralinga village), 2024***

by Marilyn Fairskye

Focus Infinity IV is part of my ongoing *Long Life Project* www.longlifeproject.com

Since 2009, I have been visiting nuclear sites to make art, including Maralinga and Kakadu, Australia; Chernobyl, Ukraine; The Polygon Nuclear Test Site, Kazakhstan; Moscow, Russia; Sellafield and Dungeness, UK; and New Mexico in the US.

In my current work, the focus is on Australia and its looming nuclear future.

The locales are Australian sites of historic and emerging nuclear events, the environments, such as Maralinga, imbued with invisible pathologies and the memory of events long-gone or the weight of future events still to unfold. Apart from residual traces and decaying structures in the landscapes, there may be little to see.

My approach is anchored to the subjective human experience of 'being there' for both artist and viewer. Nuclear legacies, spread across time and space, can't be represented directly and exist in the artwork as affect, somewhere between image and viewer.

On a recent visit to Maralinga, site of British nuclear tests in the 50s and 60s, I wanted to



see what would be revealed if I photographed in complete darkness. I headed out into the village with my camera and tripod at 4am. The sky was speckled with countless stars. A pack of dingoes called to each other nearby.

My settings were f/1.4, 00:30 exposure, ISO 1600, focus ∞. Mid-exposure, I moved my camera from sky to earth.

HIGHLY COMMENDED MULLINS CONCEPTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE 2024

Blowin in the Wind, 2024

by Tamara Dean

Climate change continues to wreak havoc on the environment. No longer on our doorstep – we are now knee-deep in the crisis.

In *Blowin in the Wind*, rising sea levels have entered the urban environment. A businessman navigates his way through the flooded landscape, grasping at loose pages from the COP23 report which tumble, torn and discarded through the scene.

This series speaks to my despair at the shackled pace of change in Australia.

The question I keep asking myself: Do we sink or swim?



THE ADJUDICATORS

Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize 2024

281 ENTRIES FROM 176 ARTISTS – 35 FINALISTS – ONE WINNER



Lisa Sharkey



Len Metcalf



Eloise Maree

Lisa Sharkey

Lisa Sharkey has worked in visual arts throughout her career, working in motion film, advertising, photographic studios, and galleries.

Her photography is inspired by nature and historically still life architectural details and the works of artisans.

Recent exhibitions of her solo exhibition *Paeonia, The Beauty of Impermanence*, was held at Antiques and Decorative Arts Gallery, Potts Point, March 2024 and *Paeonia, The Beauty of Impermanence 1 & 2*, Tiliqua Tiliqua Gallery, Enmore, October 2023

Recent Group exhibitions:

Hill End Analogue Photography Festival, Hill End, November 2023

Small Works Show, Tiliqua Tiliqua Gallery, Enmore, December 2023

Out of Sight, Arthere @ Working Dog Gallery St Leonards, February 2024

Magenta, Tiliqua Tiliqua Gallery, Enmore, April 2024

Recent Curation:

Women of Hill End, Hill End Art Gallery, Hill End April 2024

Inaugural Hill End Analogue Photography Festival, Hill End, November 2023

Currently working on:

Curation of Hill End Analogue Photography Festival 2025, and an exhibition by Helene Couchard, about Sepsis, at Art Space, The Concourse, Chatswood in July 2024.

Eloise Maree

Eloise Maree is an artist and arts worker privileged to be living and working on and with Gundungurra and Wiradjuri land (Blue Mountains and Bathurst, New South Wales).

Eloise is a photographic artist utilising wet plate photographic processes. Eloise is interested in the relationships between people and place, in the history, and historical processes, of photography and in 'creative histories'. Eloise's camera-original wet plate photographs are both historical (hand sensitised using a silver nitrate solution, for example) and contemporary (shot using modern lenses, for example, and or lighting). This locates Eloise's photographic art in the past as well as the present, and this colocation enables Eloise's revisionings of histories and archives.

Eloise is experienced by way of Craig Tuffin as well as by way of Ellie Young of Gold Street Studios, a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) (Sydney College of the Arts, the University of Sydney) and a Master of Museum Studies (the University of Sydney).

Eloise has most recently exhibited in *Group 7* (inspired by Dorrit Black's Group 9) at Day Gallery, Blackheath (June, 2022), and in *Lumiere: Mount Victoria's Festival of the Moving Image* at Mount Vic Flicks, Rhomboid Studio and Performance Space and the Mount Victoria Manor (April – May, 2022).

<http://www.eloisemaree.com.au>

Len Metcalf

Len's journey towards photographic education began long ago, with the gift of his first camera as a young boy in the Blue Mountains, and his first teaching experience in a local Scout troupe at fifteen years old. After graduating from High School, Len took a job as an outdoor educator in Kangaroo Valley to support himself through a Visual Arts degree, majoring in Photography.

This was the beginning of a lifelong quest to combine his passions for adventure, education and photography. While studying Fine Art, Len had the opportunity to learn from fine teachers such as George Schwartz, Eardly Lancaster Julie Brown-Rrap and Lynn Roberts Goodwin at the City Art Institute (now Faculty of Fine Arts at NSW University).

He graduated with straight distinctions and received the coveted award for 'Most Outstanding Advanced Colour Photographer'. Turning down two corporate photography sponsorship offers, Len instead pursued a career in education and outdoor adventure. Photography became his unbridled passion and his escape from work. During his 30 year career in the education sector Len worked with numerous schools and businesses as an experiential educator, facilitating learning outcomes through experiences in the outdoors.

In the tertiary education sector Len worked at the University of Technology, Sydney in the Faculty of Adult Education as course coordinator and lecturer in the

Bachelor of Teaching program. Later, he took on a role in the TAFE system as a vocational trainer designing, developing, coordinating and running some of the best industry courses in the world for over twenty years.

After 30 years as a facilitator, educator and trainer, Len was ready to pursue a new direction. He completed a Graduate Diploma in Art Education at Sydney University and a Masters Degree in Adult Education at the University of Technology, Sydney.

In 2000 Len founded Len's School. Since then he has been teaching, mentoring and guiding photographers in some of the most spectacular landscapes in Australia, from arid deserts and windswept coasts to his backyard in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

<http://www.lenmetcalf.com>

THE ADJUDICATORS' COMMENTS

I am exceedingly fortunate to be adjudicating the 2024 Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize. The finalists are the ejecta of the stellar explosion that is photography and indeed expanded photography, both of which challenge and broaden the medium by way of technologies and methodologies new and old. Their works comprise pinhole cameras, closed-circuit television cameras, radiation from the ultraviolet spectrum, recovered silver from waste photographic film and paper, found photography and more, forming an exhibition that is a powerful and luminous portal of discovery of the diffuse expanded photography nebula.

Eloise Maree



Photo by Roger Skinner

It is an honour to be an adjudicator for the Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize, to be handing out such a nationally important award comes with so much privilege.

When I first start I am overcome by all of the incredible entries. So powerful. So interesting. So many amazing artworks, so many titles and names to take in. So many conceptual ideas to read, interpret and look at. I take days to decide, looking, thinking and most importantly remembering. For it is the artworks and concepts that I remember, for they are the ones that inevitably move me the most.

I am looking for artworks and concepts that push the boundaries of what photography is and means. Ones that challenge my own assumptions of this incredibly beautiful medium.

When I finally walk into the show, and see the finalists, I am completely overwhelmed. How could I possibly choose one, and how will that compare with what the other two judges think.

Yet again, I use time, my emotional and intellectual response guide me. Over days I look, and reconcile each artwork, to find where it sits in my heart and mind. Time answers so many questions.

Slowly the ones that speak to me the most rise to the surface. Each artwork has taught me something about myself in this process. Many have confronted me.

Then comes the other adjudicators. I am fascinated to listen and see what they see, think and feel. I am moved by their words, and my ideas change and grow. I am moved, so much that I find new artworks rising, perhaps ones that I had overlooked. My thoughts have changed yet again.

Collaborative adjudication is an incredible experience. We want a consensus. Not a majority rule. We negotiate, and we listen. We shift and change. We debate. We find beauty in our feelings and thoughts.

Understanding the role of the title and the artists statement about the conceptual nature of the work, seems to be underestimated by so many entries. How else can we consider conceptual art? It is not only the inherent power of the artwork, but the ideas that is contained in the method and concept, are as equally as important. Many incredible artworks fall aside, because of this. Think Hiroshi Sugimoto or Gilbert and George for incredible examples of the conceptual, and how important the conceptual is to your reading of their artworks.

Conceptual photography pushes the boundaries of what photography is. This years incredible prize and exhibition, clearly show us how far these boundaries can be pushed. An exhibition worthy of an international stage.

I am so thankful for being asked to adjudicate, it is an educational experience and deeply rewarding. I am thankful to all the artists who entered, and their incredible works of art.

Congratulations to the deserving winner. Please find extra pleasure in knowing all the judges agreed on choosing yours. Many thanks to the incredible work of Roger Skinner and Brian Rope.

Len Metcalf

COMMENTS FROM THE APS PRESIDENT

Having returned from a few days away via Canberra to attend the Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize (MCP) in Muswellbrook I wanted to share just a few thoughts with members.

The APS is a broad-based group of photographers with a common interest in photography in a diverse range of genres such as nature, street, monochrome through to AV and CAPA, and contemporary groups.

Some members are active participants in APS Honours, others find pleasure in photobooks and many members of course participate in a wide range of genres and activities.

I was a newbie on the Management Committee (MC) when the MCP was first proposed and supported and each MC since then continued that support.

Of course we acknowledge and extend great appreciation to Brian Rope (MCP Chair) and Roger Skinner and all those who work diligently to bring the MCP to fruition each year.

It was unfortunate that the sound was less than effective for those who were listening online and perhaps missed Brian's speech.

As you would anticipate, Brian spoke eloquently and gave attendees an informative and positive message about APS and the evolution of the Mullins story.

This was my second year of attending the launch as the APS President and again it was a pleasure and interesting opportunity to chat with several finalists

and adjudicators. I dislike such terms as mainstream or traditional when it comes to art. All art has creative elements to it and we each find our own way to express ourselves with our art.

In this context it was very interesting to listen to the MCP winner Marilyn Fairskye and the story behind the winning image *Focus Infinity*. It was evident that story behind the image resonated in an emotional way in the eyes of one adjudicator as the image is perhaps as powerful as what it highlights for the future as for what it represents of our past.

I connected quickly with Orland Luminere's *Wasted View* and Hilary Wardhaugh's *A Meditation of Death*. I also know I have a soft spot for anything monochrome but to paraphrase the adjudicators comments – each image will connect with the viewer in different ways and it is perhaps why any of the finalists could have been the winner with a different combination of adjudicators.

I add I was as equally fascinated with Aiden Gageler's approach to his image *Loom* as I was with the image itself and perhaps my favourite was Aldona Kmiec's image *Veil White* and the story it represented.

All in all a terrific APS Exhibition, well organised and well run (online sound issue aside) and if you can manage to get to Muswellbrook to see the Exhibition I am sure you will not be disappointed.

Greg McMillan GMAPS AFIAP



Photos by Roger Skinner



THE FINALISTS

Mullins

Conceptual

Photography

Prize

2024

A record number of Mullins finalists (9) personally attended the exhibition opening and winner announcement at the MRAC on 17 August 2024.

Back row from left: Sam Holt; Orlando Luminere; President of the APS, Greg McMillan; Aidan Gageler; Hilary Waudhaugh; Joint Adjudicator, Len Metcalf.

Front row from left: Shelly Watters; Joint Adjudicator, Eloise Maree; Ian Skinner; Caleb Arcifa; Lynne Roberts-Goodwin; Simone Rosenbauer.

Inset: 2024 winner, Marilyn Fairskye. *Absent:* Joint Adjudicator, Lisa Sharkey. *Photo by Roger Skinner.*

Sonant Autograph #001 (Joini), 2023

by Caleb Arcifa

Sonant Autograph #001 (Joini), explores the multimodal capacity of photography to convey the essence of the individual. This novel technique utilises sound to augment traditional processes with the subject's energy, resulting in a unique print that is 'signed' by their sonic identity - in this case, Joini and her faithful rendition of *If I Ain't Got You* by Alicia Keys.

The ephemeral portrait obscures yet captures more than a visual likeness, questioning the underlying notions of the self.



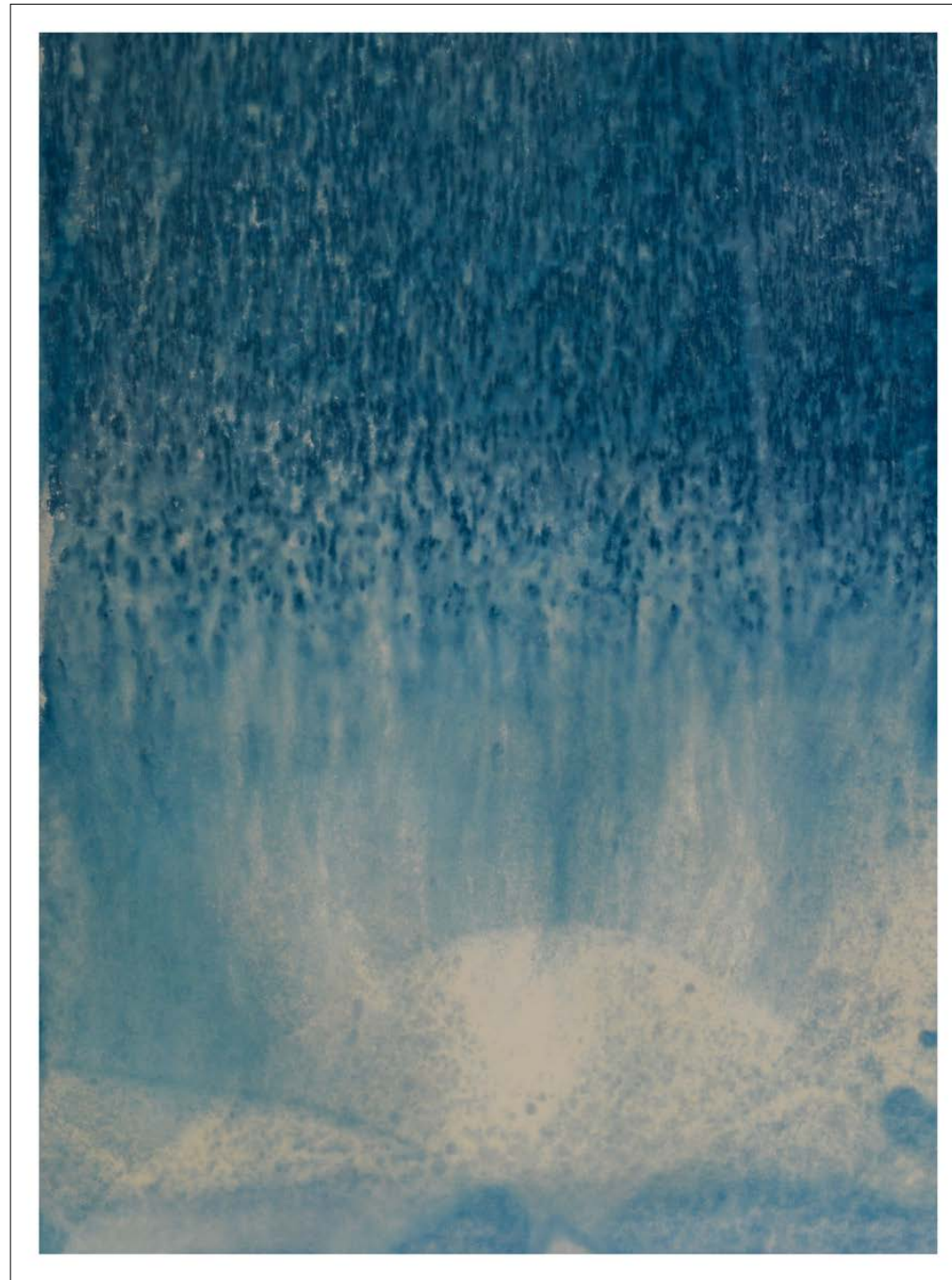
What happened to my home, 2024

by Aurelie Beeston

In 2022, a rain bomb flooded my home, destroying most of our belongings while we were away. This cyanotype, created with rain and water from the creek that inundated us, represents that event. Not being there when it happened means that every storm induces anxiety.

Through this process, I aim to take control over the elements that brought chaos into our lives. The outcome is always dictated by nature in the end, making every cyanotype unique and somehow unpredictable.

And I now embrace it.



Skies Over Roubaix, 2023

by Joseph Blair

Skies over Roubaix utilises the control functions of an unsecured surveillance camera, shifting its low-resolution gaze from a public wall to the sky. Over several hours, I documented the shifting digital sky.

This intervention questions the legitimacy of private surveillance in public spaces, while exploring new modes of image-making.

It contrasts the unease of surveillance against the serene, questioning what deserves attention and reflecting on the pervasive impact of constant observation.



Here And Now I Am Alive, 2023

by Stephen Burdett

In a dark space, I breathed onto silver gelatin paper, pressing my face into it so that vapour in my breath traced out my face. I placed the paper in the sun briefly. Where vapour touched paper, it changed colour. I fixed the image and produced a large digital negative. I wished to reduce my story – “I live, I breath, I am.”

It is everybody’s story. In the final analysis it is the only story that matters.





***Sequential Yellow Light,
Dawn to Sunrise, 2023***

by Chris Byrnes

A random or accidental 'human act' alters the image. Altered states allow a new conceptual basis linking the photograph to an experience embracing other art forms and mediums.

The overall strength of the original image should be evident and remain at its core.

The Death of Images, 2024

by Melanie Cobham

At the intersection of landscape and language lies silver, a light-sensitive metal that is the cornerstone of the photographic industry.

As silver resources dwindle world-wide, they force us to consider new ways in which to document the world around us.

Recovered from spent photographic fix, the silver droplet holds the memory of all the images it once materialised. It highlights the precarious double-bind between media and landscapes, and the socio-ecologic repercussions of image-making.

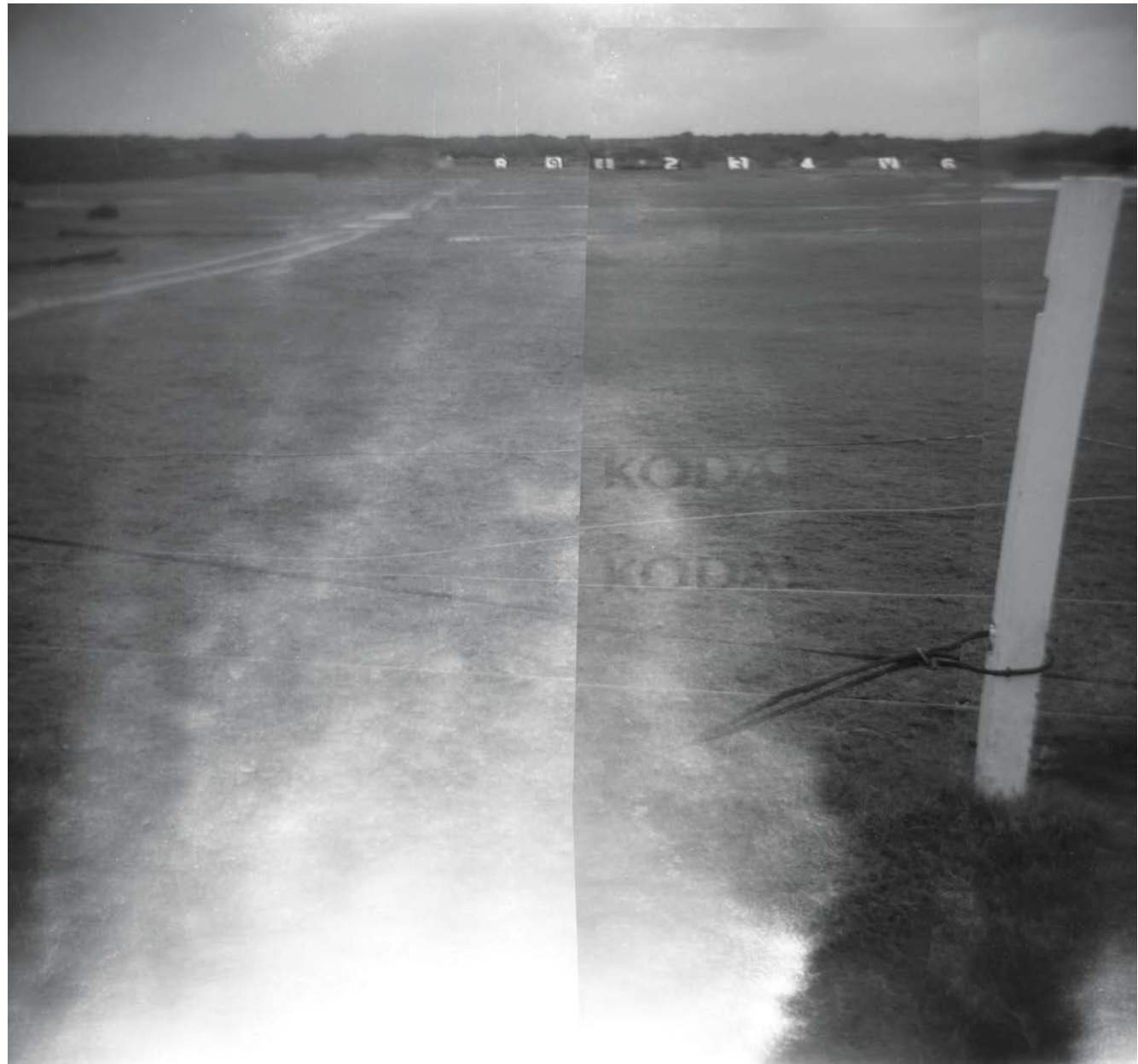


Shoot, 2024

by **Damian Dillon**

Shoot ironically shot on Malabar rifle range Sydney, breaks down digital and analogue processes to explore how representation of the landscape shapes our post-colonial understanding of place.

Shot on pre-soaked film using a crude camera, it has been scanned and printed using the latest digital technologies, commenting on technological change, neglect of subject, and image entropy whilst, questioning the flow of images and the impermanence of images in our era of image overload.





Scenario, 2024

by Rozalind Drummond

Each body of work I produce obliquely refers to how groups of people come together and inhabit locations; exploring real or imagined places.

Here an ensemble of figures appear and who, through participation and collaborations, test a series of actions that are variously improvised and took place in a disused room of an old building in Melbourne.

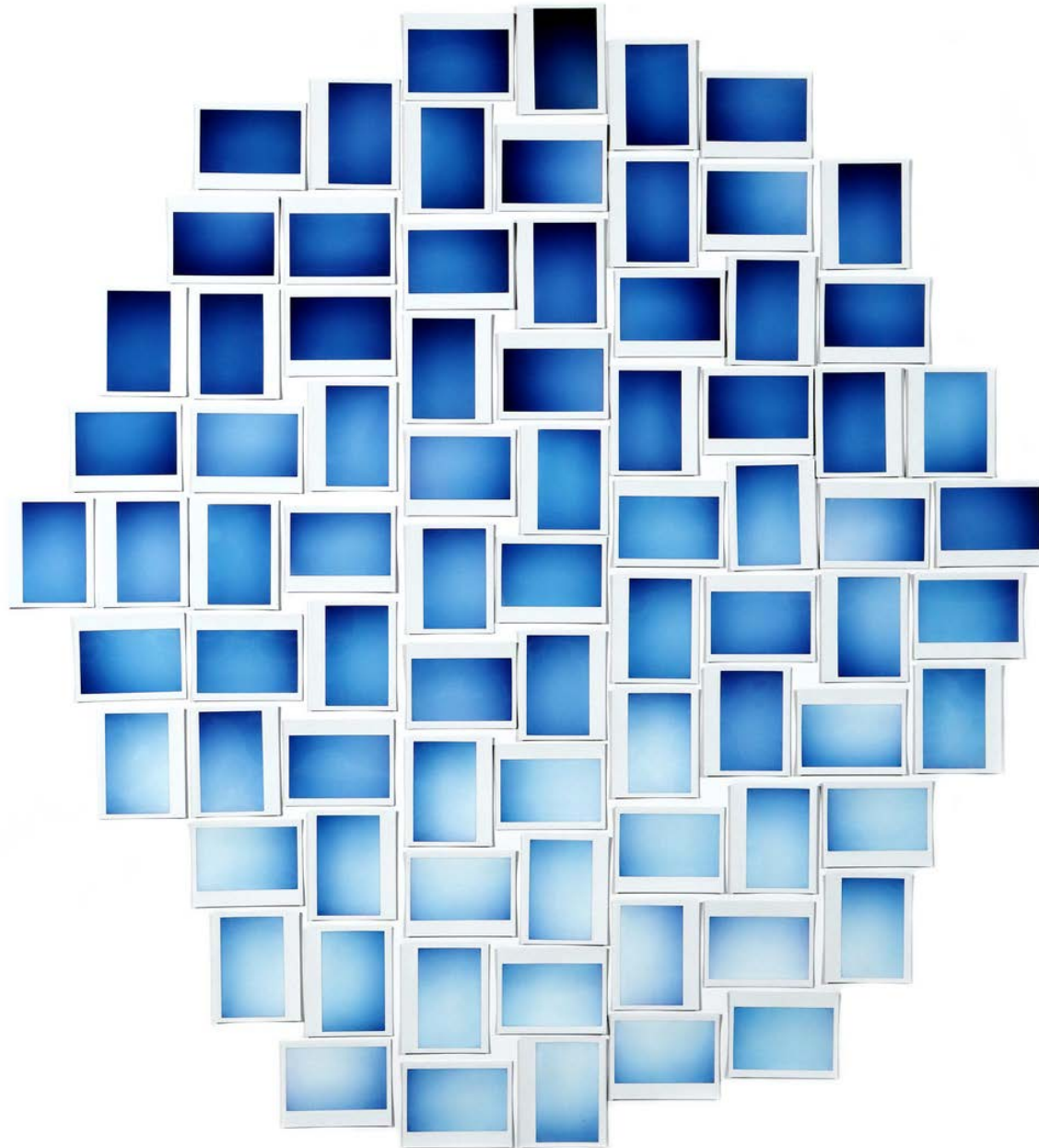
Loom, 2024

Aidan Gageler

Loom offers its audience an encounter with photography in its most immediate form, inscribed only (and slowly) by light, time, and chemistry.

Made without a camera, using photographic sheet film that expired in the mid 1950s, this work is ungoverned by intelligible markers and avoids being read as a picture or symbols. Instead, it opens up the possibility of being felt or experienced, affordances offered commonly to music but rarely visual art.





June 11, 2024

by Lisa Gipton

Intrigued with ideas of place and atmosphere, *June 11* explores the temporal, observing and capturing the effects of light and air across the sky. The idea of time is intrinsic to the work – 75 unique Fujifilm Instax Wide prints seize moments in time over one day.

The works are mysterious, abbreviated monochromatic, colour soft, misty and ethereal with a strong emotive content – their quiet quality is poetic and lyrical.

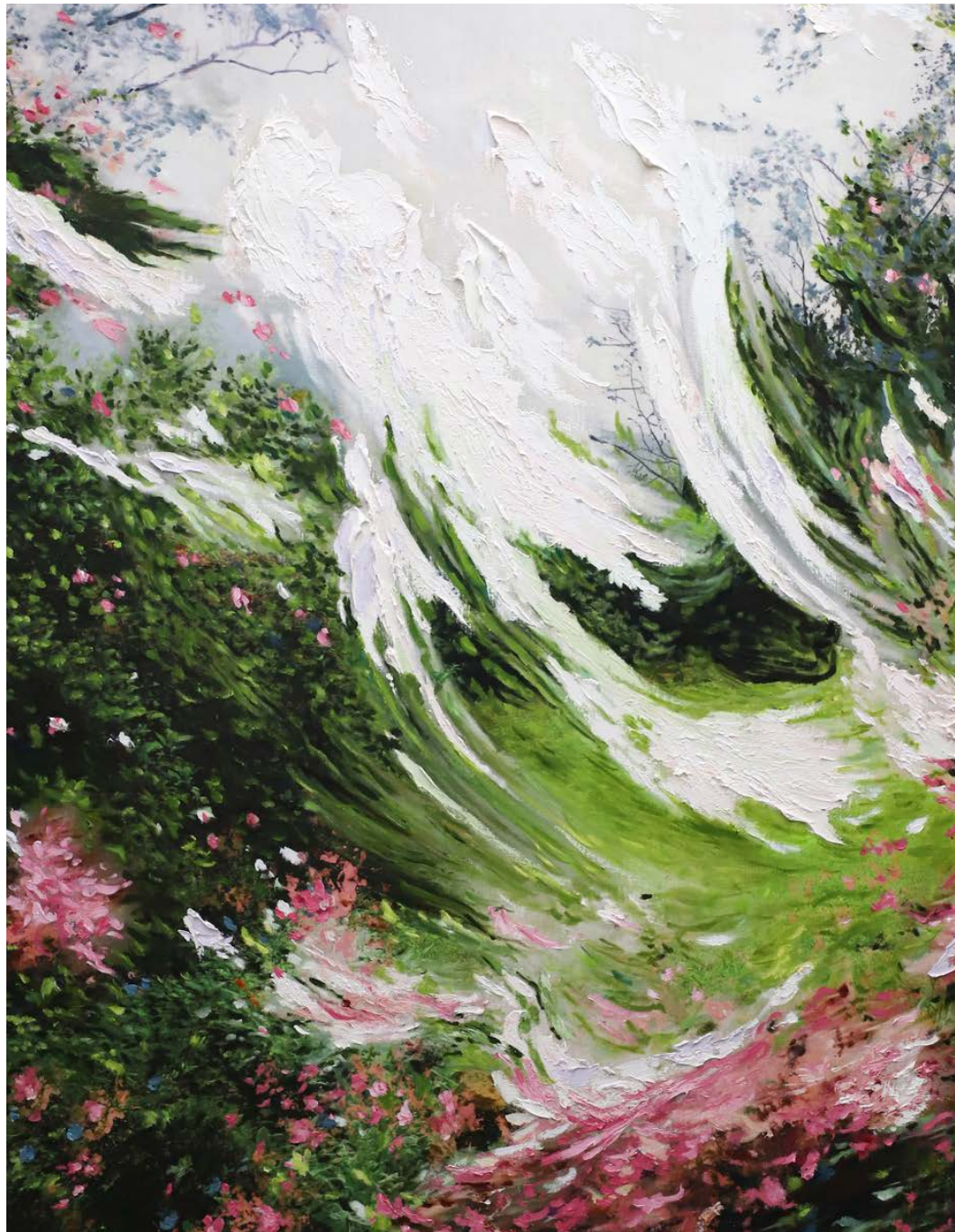
Savoured some more, 2024

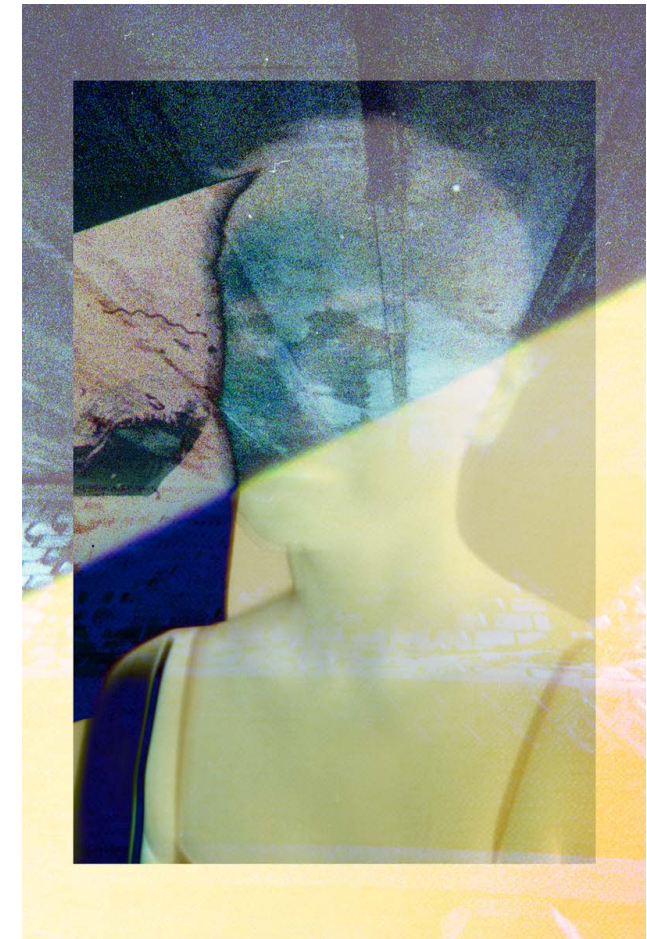
by Sam Holt

The painting *Savoured some more* is a futile attempt to document a memory, mimicking the abstracting nature of a memory.

The initial snap on my phone looking out from my parents' place in Kangaroo Valley, was then abstracted through digital painting, then digitally printed and stretched in the studio for which it morphs again to my intuition through acrylic and oil paint.

Abstracting at every whim to become not a landscape of a place, but a journaled portrait of my feelings savoured.





How it happened, 2024

by Minami Ivory

How it happened (triptych) is a work from a series - *Weapon of Choice*, which revisits a summer of violence and trauma that I experienced and witnessed as a teenager.

Through self-portraiture, I delve into my past experiences trying to make sense of why this happened and the impact it has had on my life to this present day.

While haunting and at times difficult to recall and represent, my work also celebrates the resilience of the human spirit, and acts as a vehicle of acceptance and healing.



Waves Under My Skin, 2023

by Eunie Kim

This meeting of water and rock is on the coastline of my distant country of birth. The images represent my identity in flux, the shifting forms of memory, and the roiling tension between what I most love and hate about that place.

The surface traces of foam are the branching veins under my skin. They are printed using a silver gelatin emulsion applied by brushstroke.

Saude #25, 2024

by Mark Kimber

This work employs the 150-year-old tintype photographic process, an archaic and painstaking form of photography, involving creating images on a coated metal plate. The process produces unique, one-off images to confront the pervasive issue of plastic waste.

Through my efforts to subvert the familiar, disposable nature of plastic products, and their “invisibility” (it is only what is contained within these plastic forms that concerns us), the “shell” being regarded as fundamentally ...



Veil, white, 2024

by Aldona Kmiec

The longer I live, the less I remember.

Photography is a vital activity that preserves the fragments of my life. My partner and I come from vastly different worlds – he grew up in suburban Melbourne, while I was raised on a farm in Communist-era Poland.

This work reflects my need to explore themes of identity and the emotions tied to moving to a foreign country. It provides a broader narrative and context for dialogue around migration, the concept of 'fitting in,' and the complexity of belonging.





Wasted View, 2024

by Orlando Luminere

I explore our increasing bias towards using technology, such as smartphones, to perceive the beauty of the world. Utilising a camera obscura crafted from a repurposed steel rubbish bin, I transform discarded detritus into a way of re-seeing our environment. The kaleidoscopic imagery within the piece reflects the endless cycles of digital reproduction and dissemination.

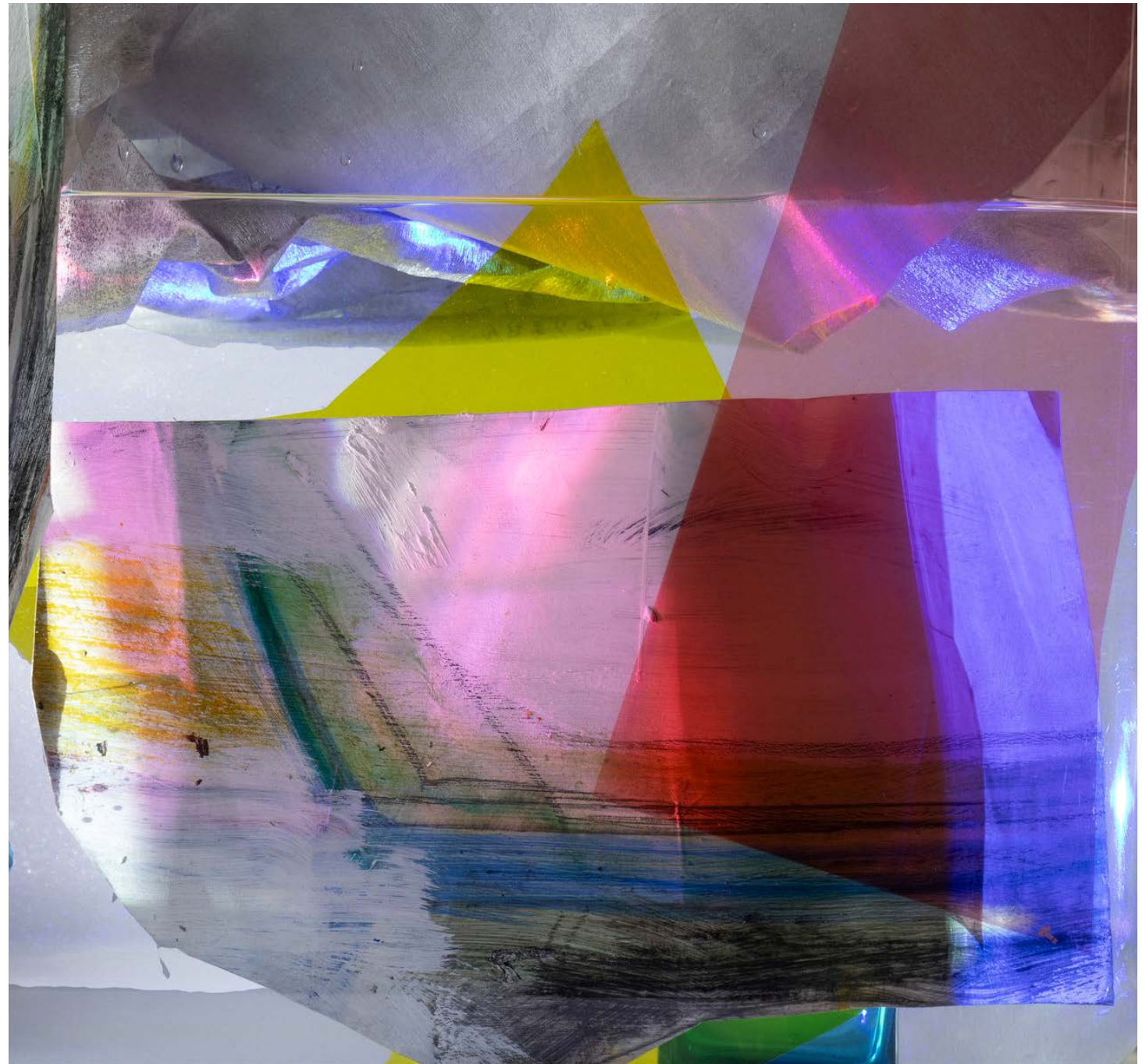
Viewers are invited to question the authenticity of their connection with the tangible world.

AQUEOUS Site 3, 2024

by Kathy Mackey

In this work, I explore the conceptual similarities and differences between analogue and digital markmaking and allude to physical and chemical relationships between water and paper.

This considers the visual possibilities of what was originally an en plein air field drawing by immersing the original work within a “contained site” of water. By allowing the fibres of the paper be disrupted within a narrow depth of field, I create a new interpretation of the site.



Data Composite, 2024

by Annabelle McEwen

As technology extracts resources, the body has become a commodified data asset. This work interrogates virtual surveillance by repeatedly filtering the self portrait through social media editing software fabricating a compression artefact.

Printing into plaster transposes my visual data into a physicality as an antithesis to the virtual images we consume via the luminosity of screens. My body is atomised and disseminated throughout the ether of the cloud and my legacy is written in data.



An Island Memory, 2024

by Michaela Meadow

An Island Memory is 35mm long exposure caught at dusk, taken at the edge between land and sea, waking and dream – on the very real island of Formentera. Through my gaze, and the alchemical process of capturing light, this moment also became transmuted into myth.

My camera is a device for communicating with liminal realms. The photoshoot itself, is a performance; a ritual in transfigured time.





Nameless, Faceless, 2023

by Sara Nash

This self-portrait series is in response to the tragic increase of gendered violence in Australia.

Though my features are obscured, the trauma and fear is unmistakable. The soft colour palette imbues the piece with a sense of sensitivity. There is a heaviness to the atmosphere, conveying the weight of grief and loss.

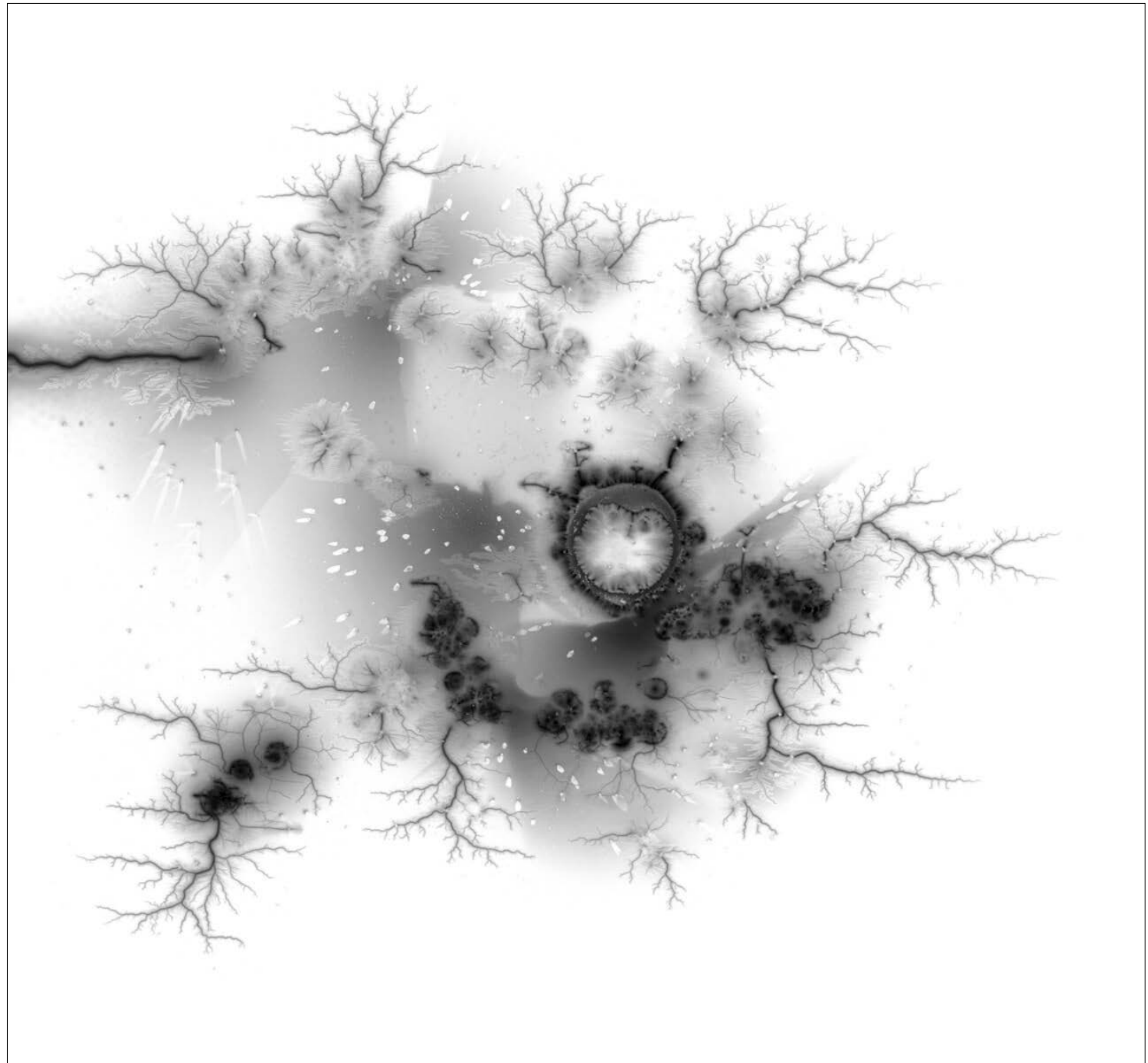
This diptych is a poignant tribute to the victims while also challenging viewers to confront the societal factors that perpetuate injustice.

Ruins of the Rainbow Chalet
- *electric ground, 2024*

by Sean O'Connell

This image is of remains from the ruins of the Rainbow Chalet on the shores of yingina / Great Lake, in subalpine Tasmania. Corroded copper pipe, rusted nails, pottery shards, and a handful of dirt, were laid directly onto 8"x10" film and exposed through high voltage electricity.

The electricity of the Hydroelectric scheme, that doomed the chalet as the water levels rose, is used here to visualise the decaying remains, as they slowly disintegrate back into ground.





Coming Forth by Day, 2024

by Helen Poyser

'Coming Forth by Day' is a diptych created by me, Helen Poyser, and my partner of 16 years, what. The photograph was taken by what on his Leica Monochrom of a tree we both touched that was as warm as flesh, on the first walk we took after I came out of a two week long coma.

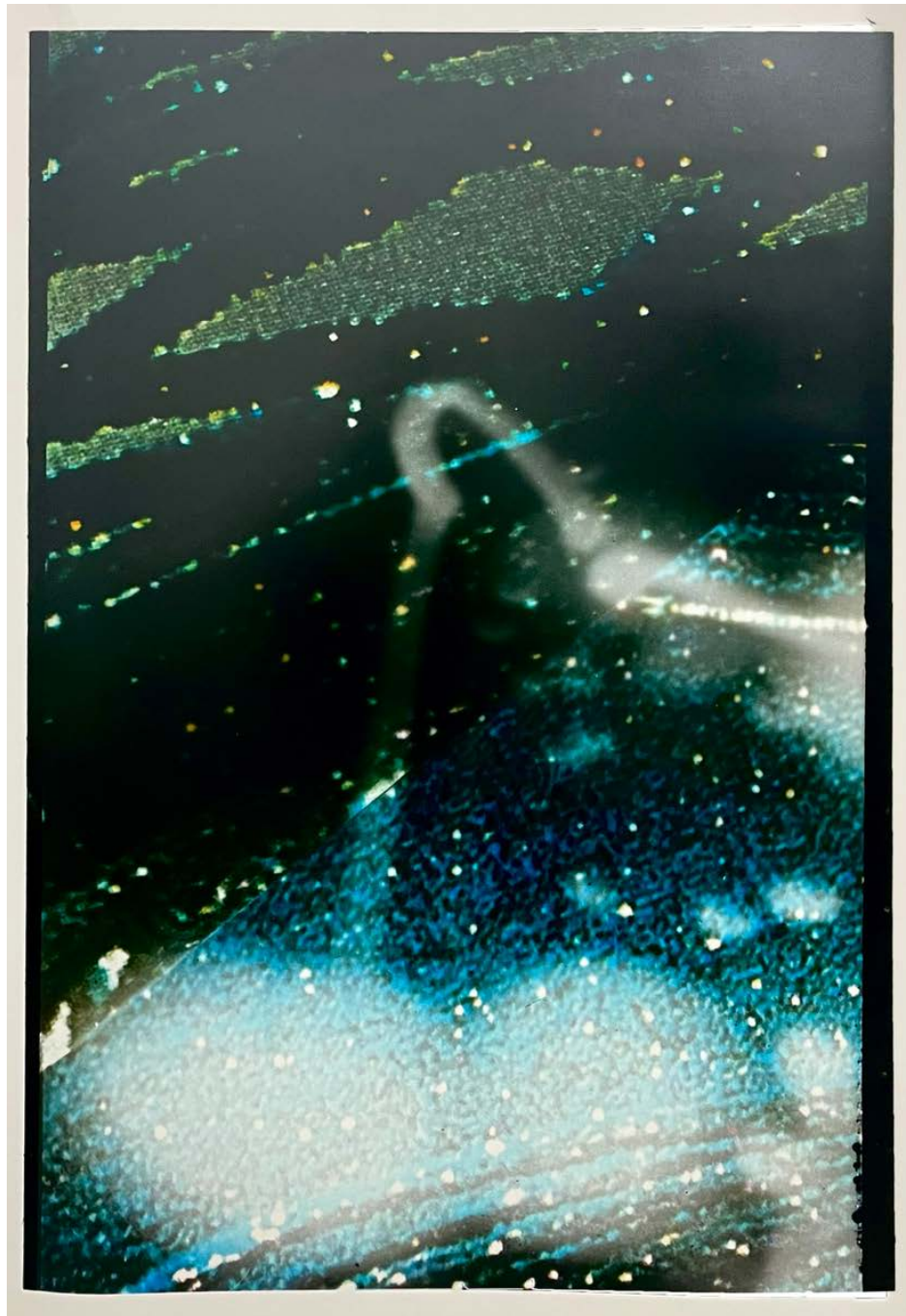
The watercolour element of the diptych is my response to the coma, the walk, the tree, and what's image of it.

Space Junk, 2024

by Kiah Pullens

Space Junk is not just a constructed hand-printed c-type photograph, it's a visual narrative echoing the complex relationship between humanity and the vast expanse of space. In this work, I delve into the profound implications of human interference, shedding light on the pressing issue of space debris and the lack of boundaries in managing our celestial surroundings.

The scattered fragments and overlapping elements symbolize the chaos and clutter that we have introduced into the cosmic realm.





Various Small Fires I + II, 2024

by **Jacob Raupach**

Various Small Fires take the industrial and social histories of Creswick and Ballarat as their starting point, aiming to collapse the co-existent heritages of gold mining and forestry and draw out how these industries have shaped our current social and environmental realities.

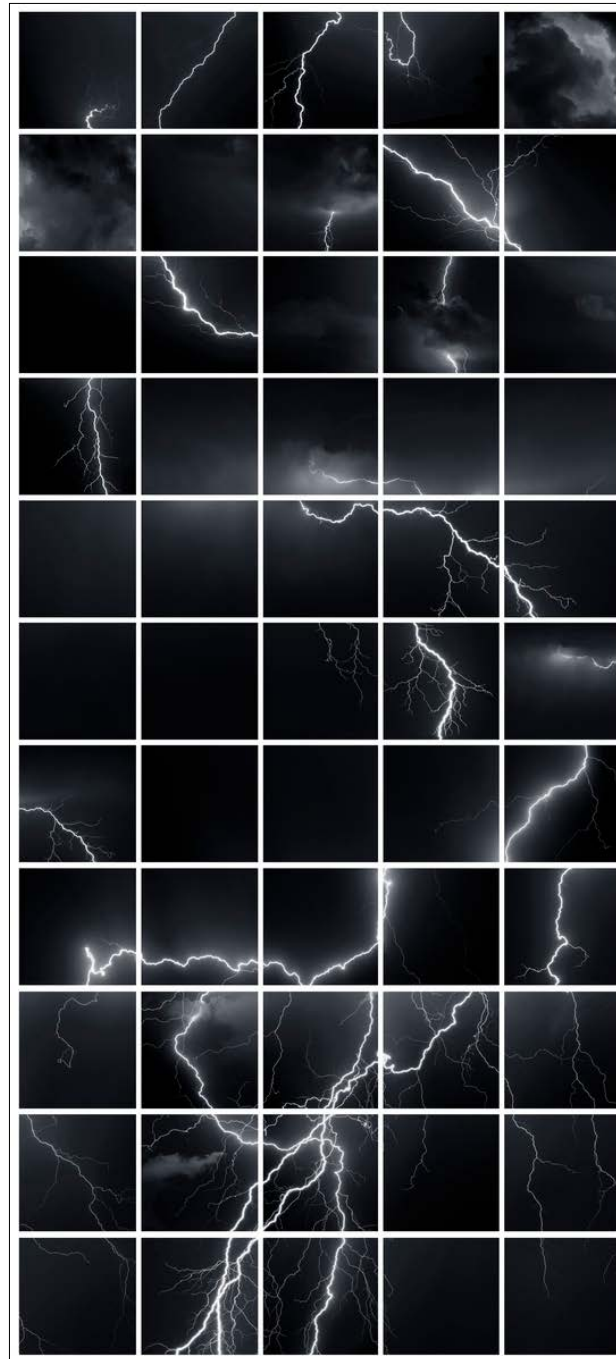
The works take their sculptural forms from the street networks of Creswick, creating formal, grid-like structures to support photographs using Victorian Blackwood as the substrate.

Light Strike 55, 2023

by Lynne Roberts-Goodwin

Light Strike 55 conceptually seeks to explore the aesthetics of lightning and relationship to time to reveal insights into both the nature of aerial terrains and perception. From one image captured nocturnally, I have used the grid to divide the single image into fifty-five randomly chosen sections.

I feel this conceptual random approach challenges traditional perceptions of time and sequence and narrative, emphasising the disjointed and ephemeral nature of lighting, both sublime and terrifying.



***Like Ice in the Clouds I #106,
(Japan), 2024***

by Simone Rosenbauer

Like Ice in the Clouds I is a photographic series created during my residency near Mt. Fuji.

The work captures the silent dialogue between the eternal and the ephemeral, the serene and the dynamic, celebrating the beauty of impermanence. Each ice cream, serving as a metaphor for the human condition, stands against backgrounds that reflect Japan's rich cultural and environmental nuances.

Through this series, I invite viewers to discover the beauty in the transient reflections of human emotions.



The essence of self , 2023

by **Matthew Schiavello**

This series explores the concept of healing our past, through intervention of the medium it has been captured on.

Salt has been used across history in cleansing and purification rituals. Using a rediscovered roll of film, documenting a time of sadness and loss in my life, select images are presented for healing and purification through a process of soaking them in salt.

The images metamorphose leaving non objective shapes of texture and vivid colour.

A renewed sense of self emerges.



A Pale Blue Dot – Eclipsed, 2024

by Ian Skinner

This is fragment of plastic was found on a small Australian beach.

The oceans are awash with a micro-plastic soup that can even be found in our own bodies.

The title of this work references the image NASA's Voyager I took of Earth in 1990 as it departed the solar system; and earlier Apollo Mission images of the blue planet set against the blackness of space. These images challenged us to really see Earth in a more profound way, as Carl Sagan said "Look again at that dot. That's here. That's Us".





Mother Site II: for Eleanor (with Selfies), 2024

by Linda Swinfield

Mother Site II: for Eleanor (with Selfies) 2024 is a hybrid printmaking work tracing family stories and history within the layers of the work. It is the story of my long-deceased ancestor Eleanor Meredith. *Mother Site II* is a feminist story attempting to underline women's collective history in colonial Australia.

The selected images submerge and reemerge themselves, inviting what is hidden to be revealed again just as history does in revision.

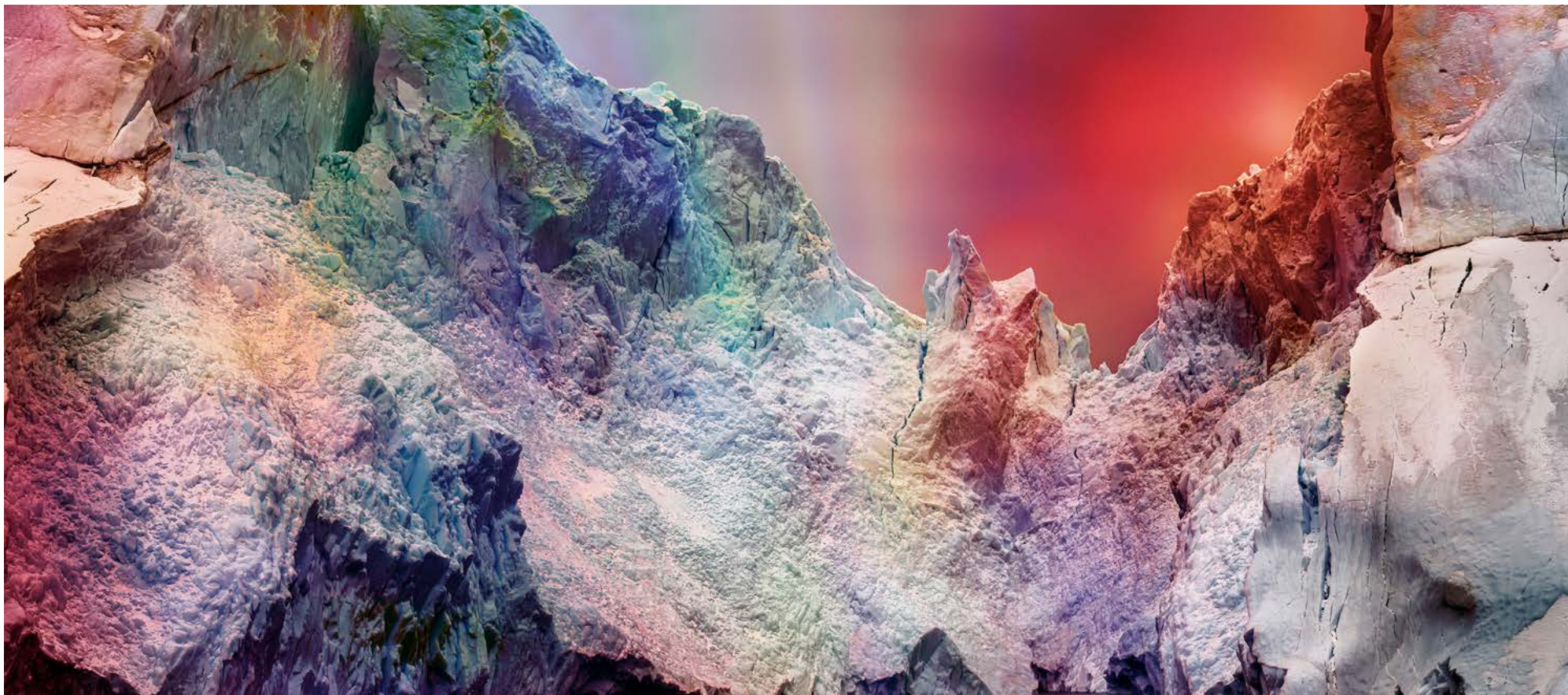
When the Dust Settles (Clouds #2), 2024

Darren Tanny Tan

When the Dust Settles centres on the reworking of historical photographs of conflict made prominent by the so-called “history of photography”.

Elements from these photographs are montaged and subjected to physical interventions involving the expedient misuse of photographic chemicals. The resulting works, which bear resemblances to aged photographs, are represented as ersatz traces of the past - intimations of the longevity of images and their attendant failings.



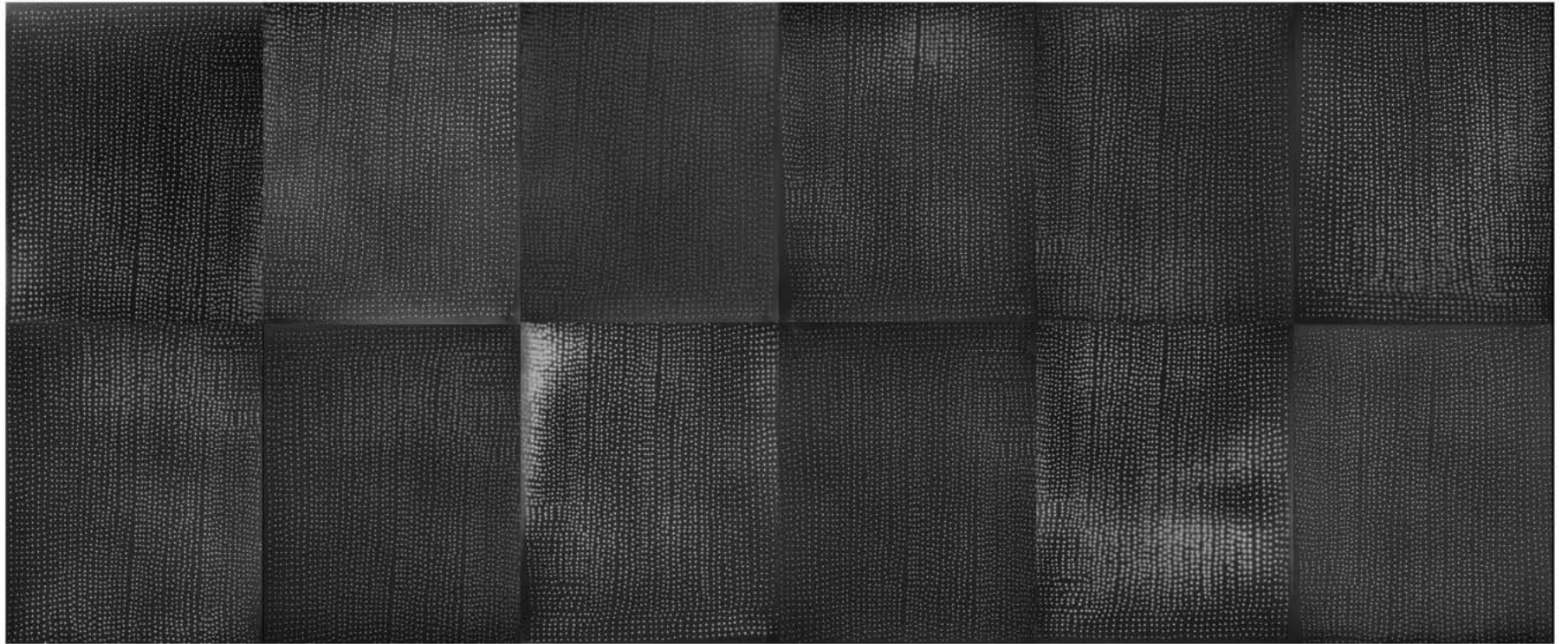


Glitch I, 2024

by Janet Tavener

This image is part of a series titled *Glitch*, it features 250,000 year old icebergs from the Quaternary Ice Age. The images allude to a light leak, a mishap, or malfunction.

A glitch in the image that parallels the glitch in our fragile environment.



A Meditation of Death, 2024

by Hilary Wardhaugh

Comprising 12 8"x10" digitised lumen prints created by piercing 2000 tiny holes into black card and used as a stencil placed over light-sensitive photo paper exposed in sunlight. The conceptual foundation of this work draws

inspiration from the Maranasati meditation, a contemplative practice centred on the inevitability of death, encouraging introspection on the consequences of humanity's violence and impermanence.

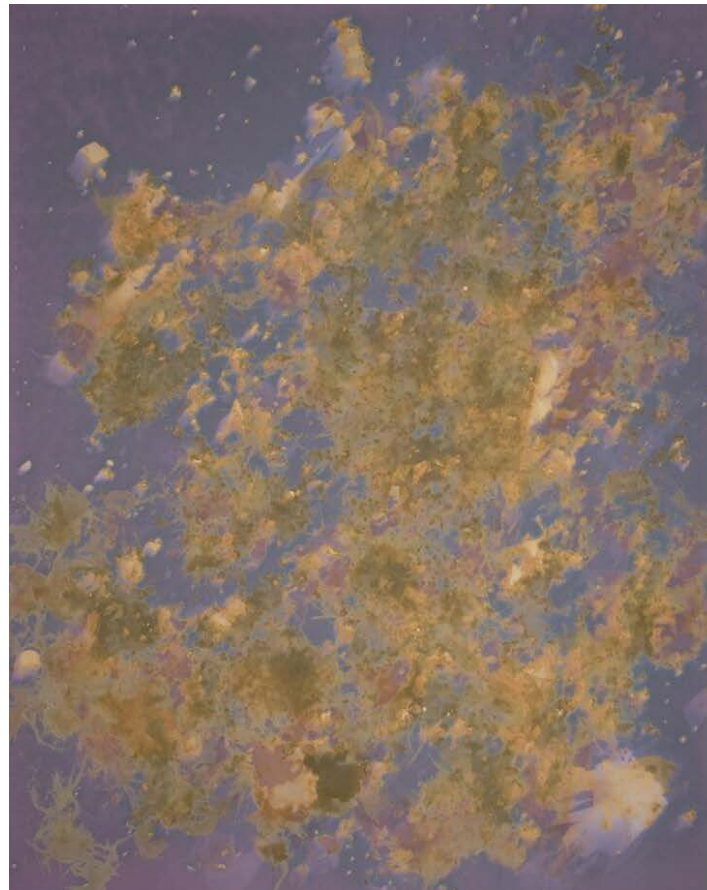
The 12 images together represent the 24,000 people killed as of the 3rd January 2024.

Transforming Matter II, 2024

by Shelley Watters

My compost (ing) is an embodied artistic practice and methodology inspired by the concept of sympoiesis, or “making with” coined by Donna Haraway. *Transforming Matter II* is a pair of lumen prints of compost material, one is unfixed so it will decompose throughout the exhibition.

My passion for compost stems from its power to transform, to evoke wonder and awe, and the potential it holds to generate energy, capture carbon, and create fertiliser.



*The story of the
Mullins Conceptual
Photography Prize –
where it is from and
where it is going.*



Roger Skinner, Chair of the APS Contemporary Group, and member of the MCPP management team.

Self portrait

THOUGHTS ABOUT ART Mighty Oaks...

by Roger Skinner

2018 – 2019

The Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize had its beginning when the Management Team of the Australian Photographic Society and President Peter Kewley, approached Brian Rope concerning the setting up of an acquisitive prize hosted by the APS. Brian readily accepted and began – organising the initial event to be shown at Magnet Gallery in Docklands Melbourne, choosing adjudicators organising sponsorships which came from near and far. The number of entries was strong, and were largely from Melbourne-based artists. The adjudicators were a mixture of art academics and practising artists – Denise Ferris, Head of the School of Art & Design at the ANU; Roger Skinner the founder of the Contemporary Group within APS; and Annie O’Heir a Curator of Photography at the National Gallery of Australia. From a field of 196 entrants, 30 finalists were chosen and exhibited at Magnet Gallery in Melbourne as the Australian Conceptual Photography Prize.

The winner was Deb Gartland (an APS Member) with her work titled *Self-Reflection*. The work was a photograph heavily layered in encaustic and mixed media, which is broadly described as a form of painting that involves a heated wax medium to which coloured pigments have been added. The exhibition judging was all completed via electronic views of files. This work became the property of Magnet Gallery as the first prize of \$10,000 was acquisitive.

Anne Papalardo received the Emergent Design Award for her work *When the Son Becomes a Father*.

2020

Some years prior, in 2009, Barbara Mullins had provided the APS with a bequest in memory of her late husband, Doug Mullins, President of the Society 1964–1966. This bequest was part of the proceeds from the sale of Mullins Gallery, the former headquarters of the South Australian Photographic Federation of which Doug had been patron. At that time the bequest was intended to support the regular publication of an APS book of members’ work. In 2011 the first edition of APS Gallery was published. In 2012, the APS celebrated its 50th anniversary and a second book was published. After this no further books had been created and the balance of the bequest had grown through interest earned.

Seeking to ensure the long-term future of its new Australian Conceptual Photography Prize, the Society approached the Mullins family with a proposal that would satisfy the intent of honouring both Doug and Barbara’s significant contributions to the APS. There was much synergy in the proposal with the style of Doug’s exhibition photography in the Prize, and in Doug and Barbara’s generous support of the arts and the Art Gallery of SA. In early December 2019, approval was received to apply the balance of the bequest funds to the Prize. The Prize was renamed as the Mullins Australian Conceptual Photography Prize making it a permanent reminder of Barbara and Doug Mullins. Also, during this time Roger offered to assist with the running of the Prize and he joined Brian on the MCPP management team.

In 2020 the management team appointed Judith Nangala Crispin, Jacqui Dean and Julie William as adjudicators. As in the previous year this adjudication was carried out by reviewing electronic submissions of the 188 works submitted and eventually 35 finalists were selected. However, by then of course Covid-19 was raging across

the nation, lockdowns were put in place and lifted and then reinstated in an on-again off-again stop start process. As with many events at this time, the exhibition at Magnet, was not actually opened to the public, despite the works having been hung. A compromise was found using the huge, windowed shopfront at Magnet, to display the images on a rotation basis. Magnet also created a virtual gallery so as many people as possible could view them, under the circumstances. There is however nothing like being in a physical gallery, and that is a simple statement of fact.

The winning work for 2020 by Judy Parker (another APS member) titled *Dumpster Sketchbook Waterside* was acquired by the gallery.

Louise Alexander was awarded the Emergent Design Award for *Beige Chair*, and Anne O'Connor the Momento Pro Award for her work *The Price of Water*.

Change of hosting gallery

The chequered nature of the Magnet shows, with ongoing Covid-19 problems in Melbourne, and the associated cost to the APS for the exhibition, had prompted Roger to thinking about, then asking Brian, if it might be worthwhile shifting the prize to Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre. MRAC had begun collecting photography in 1987 via the Muswellbrook Photographic Award, but after 2014 when the sponsors pulled out of the sponsorship and left the Hunter Valley, that process of collecting via an acquisitive prize had ceased. Brian's initial response was "all we have to do is convince the management team about the sense behind such a move". Roger then approached Elissa Emerson from the MRAC about staging the Mullins Australian Conceptual Photography Prize at the Centre – her response was immediate and positive. And so Roger began assembling arguments supporting such a move – his

first being that regional Australia, including the Hunter Valley, were Covid-19 free, and secondly that a significant cost reduction to the APS would be achieved. Meanwhile Brian noted and told Roger that the charter of the management team was not beholden to anyone and that such decision rested exclusively with the team.

Becoming closely aligned with the MRAC involved changes to terms and conditions as one would expect, but more significantly, it also opened up the field for the artists that management team and MRAC were trying to attract, and the types of works that could be exhibited – gone was the old paradigm! Roger meanwhile spoke at a Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce breakfast, beginning by saying, that "history was being made! The collection of photography was returning to Muswellbrook" via the move of the Prize to MRAC and that all businesses at that meeting would be approached by him for sponsorship. At the close of the breakfast however, Bengalla Mining the Central Arcade and MACH Energy all approached Roger indicating a positive response to the idea. Discussions began! In the meantime, he had also been negotiating with Ilford regarding their sponsorship and they happily came on board.

The name of the award was also simplified to the *Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize*.

2021

Because the adjudicators (nor anyone else for that matter) had not been able to attend the 2020 opening, the management team decided to invite the same adjudicators for a second year in the expectation that a grand opening could be held, and they would have their chance to attend and meet the artists. Julie Williams had had a number of phone conversations with Roger as to whether it would be possible to select the finalists from image files, and then

come to Muswellbrook and do the final adjudication of the works on the wall, this required the attendance of the adjudicators in town for a couple of days. Roger said it was the perfectly logical and reasonable step, and so another change was implemented.

Covid-19 of course had other plans and as finalists works began arriving, so did Covid-19. Jacqui and Julie were both unable to attend due to lockdowns – Judith however, living away from a major urban, area slipped up the "back way" through Hill End to arrive at Muswellbrook. Soon after, Muswellbrook Shire Council closed down all events, and so the opening was only attended by Judith, MRAC staff and the MCPP management team. Never have I seen such dedication to the cause. Judith readily accepted the challenge and spent an hour and a half talking to Jacqui and Julie on her phone on Face Time Video, examining in real life the final choices.

With the support of an increasing list of sponsors, the prize was maintained at \$10,000.

Ian Skinner's (an APS Member) work *Ashscapes 01–04* was awarded First Prize which was acquired by MRAC.

Ian Terry's work *A Night on the Tier* received the Emergent Design Award, and Anne Pappalardo received the Momento Pro Award for her work *A New Place to Stay*. Both these works were purchased by Roger Skinner and are on permanent loan to the MRAC.

The opening was live streamed on Facebook > [Facebook](#) and "Zoomed" as well – a different world.



Deb Gartland *Self-Reflection*, 30 x 30cm

Winner of the inaugural Australian Conceptual Photography Prize, 2019

Artist Statement

Photo Encaustic and Mixed Media Ocean photography is exhilarating at any time of the day. Pre-dawn early mornings, long exposures, and close-ups. Sunsets, night skies and winter storms. Playful and experimental shutter speeds, water and atypical results sees deliberate manipulations that calm the Great Southern Ocean's turbulence. Encaustic and Mixed Media additions consciously highlight individual components while softening others. Creating a truly individual environment of texture, fluidity, and vastness. Self-Reflection encourages the viewer to immerse themselves in the sometimes tempestuous and uncontrolled, the ocean soothes the soul and brings a contemplation of life and our place in it.

In the interim, Brian had approached Magnet to ask if they would donate the two previous winners to the MRAC which they very graciously did, and so those two works *Self Reflection* and *Dumpster Sketchbook Waterside* entered the Muswellbrook Shire Collection

2022

With the security of increased funding, it was decided to increase the first prize for 2022 to \$15,000.00. The increased funding had come from sponsorships and community partnerships from again, Bengalla Mining, Ilford and MACH Energy. This incredible amount of support from local businesses was rewarding to see and their commitment to the support of arts in our community is gratifying.

At this point, the ancillary prizes were discontinued.

The process for selection of judges was also altered – each year's judges would choose the next year's judges. This effectively removed the management team from any part of the process – it is always a good thing to see such matters at arms-length from the organisers. From 266 entries, the judging team of Bill Bachman, Heidi Romano and Alex Wisser spent an agonising time, selecting 30 works. Unfortunately, Heide was unable to attend – but Bill and Alex again via the technology to hand included her in their discussions. Further the President of the APS Margaret O'Grady was unable to attend the opening due to an extensive rain event, and so a familiar pattern of disasters seemed to plague the Prize.

The adjudicators for the 2022 award had all liked the eventual winner and when seen "in the flesh" as it were, its compelling presence made the decision easier and they were pleased to award Sammy Hawker First Prize for her work titled *Mount Gulaga*.

Once again the opening was live streamed on > [Facebook](#).

2023

So it rolled on to the 2023 iteration of the Prize and another team of adjudicators were selected – Cooper+Spowart, Eloise Maree and Len Metcalf – they assessed a record 405 entries to select a show of 30 finalists to be displayed at the arts centre.

The works chosen this year constituted a step change for an exhibition that was already a step change in terms of APS exhibitions. Four works were what I call earth interaction works, whereby elements of the earth have taken part in the production of the works via the burial of negatives or film in the earth, a river estuary or submerged during flooding, or reliant on roadkill on treated papers exposed under rain light for 50 hours! The second major change was that artists actually submitted a concept rather than the illustration of a concept, via the use of three-dimensional display devices. So, the entire concept was on show at the arts centre.

The judging process was different in that each judge chose ten works, and then the group met to discuss any differences of opinion and, as there were none because each adjudicator chose different works! Then when it came to the final judging on site in the arts centre, they considered the works within the space and arrived at the same conclusion!

An amazing set of circumstances coming together to present a unified choice of the winner Chris Bowes' *Sunkissed #1 #2 #3 #4* as winner of the Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize 2023.

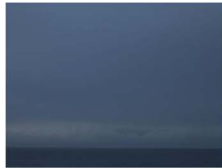
EDITOR'S NOTE: This article first appeared in edition No. 77 and so was up-to-date at that time. It reappears in this edition for those who may have not read the full history of the Prize.

You are here: Home / Galleries / Contemporary Group Gallery

C-Group Gallery



Sense of Place - 2019 Virtual Exhibition



Boundaries - 2020 Virtual Exhibition



Lifestyle - 2021 Virtual Exhibition



CG Council Images



CG Challenge - May 2020 - COVID



CG Postal Folio (Retired)



Friends of APS Contemporary Group

Private group · 322 members



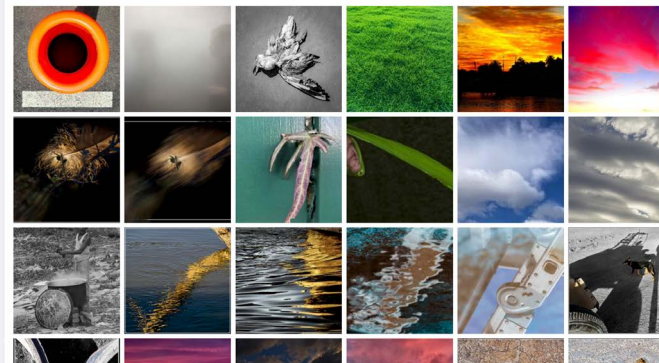
+ Invite Share

Discussion Featured Members Events **Media** Files

Media

+ Create Album Add Photos/Video

Photos Videos Albums



Contemporary Group Online

Australian Photographic Society website

There are a number of Contemporary Group 'virtual exhibitions' with the images (and artist statements) posted in galleries on the APS website.

[You can view them here >](#)

[The Group's recent virtual exhibition Mundane is here >](#)

Facebook

Currently our private Facebook page allows 297 people (members and non-members of the Contemporary Group) to share their contemporary images with each other in a non-competitive environment. And there is some wonderful discussion that takes place.

It's notable that of these only around 40 folk contribute. Don't be afraid! Post your images!

If you are not a member of APS when you submit a request to join the page, we may ask you privately via Messenger to tell us about your interest in contemporary photography just to ensure we keep the page focused on its purpose.

We are not a conventional photographic group. We challenge all things photographic through our images. We are not about competitions and getting it "right".

We are all about the ideas and concepts that drive our photography into something that is often not seen on other photographic sites.

Free Expressions is published by the Contemporary Group of the Australian Photographic Society.

Editor and design: Ian Skinner

Foundation design: Lyndall Gerlach

Editor-at-large: Helen Carpenter

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Be seen in Free Expressions

We would love to see your images for consideration for inclusion in *Free Expressions*.

Please email the editor: ian.skinner@mac.com or, alternatively, share a Dropbox (or similar) folder to him at the same email address.

If you would like to be the Featured Artist in an edition of *Free Expressions*, then you need to provide a series of 10 to 12 – or more, of your contemporary images on any theme. You should also provide 100 to 200 words about yourself as a contemporary photographer, plus a portrait of yourself indicating who created that photograph. Links to your image websites and ‘socials’ can also help.

Technical stuff

Image files should be JPEG in sRGB colour space, at a resolution of least 280 DPI, with no borders or watermarks.

Captions:

Ideally your caption should be obvious in the filename of the image you supply, or in an attached text file. If no caption is provided, your work is likely to be captioned “untitled”. In addition, a statement explaining what makes your image/s contemporary, should be provided.

Image size guide:

Free Expressions is A4 landscape size, (i.e. 3507 pixels wide by 2480 pixels high.) Images should be at least 280 dpi for good reproduction. If you can’t resize, the bigger the better.

*“The camera makes you
forget you’re there.
It’s not like you are hiding
but you forget – you are just
looking so much.”*

– Annie Leibovitz