



Caption: Installation Shot, 'Here and Now' exhibition now showing at Hamilton Gallery.

## **LOCAL FEMALE ARTISTS SHOWCASE 'HERE AND NOW'**

A new contemporary exhibition at Hamilton Gallery brings together a variety of works by four female artists based in South West Victoria, complemented by one of their most ambitious creative programs to date.

*Here and Now* showcases four contemporary artists identifying as women living and working on Gunditjmarra, Tjap Wurrung and Bunganditj country in the Western District; Kathryn Ryan, Jasmine Mansbridge, Anne Middleton and Madi Whyte.

Employing their own genre, medium and subject matter, these artists converge in one Place (*Here*). Informed by place, they provide important local cultural commentary, with the works predominantly devoid of the human figure and either examining landscape, still life or abstraction to understand identity and to give insight into their unique lived experience (*Now*).

Director, Joshua White said that the focused observations and powerful artworks in the exhibition encourage personal contemplation for gallery visitors.

"The entire exhibition is themed around that strange juxtaposition between strength and fragility that we see not only in nature and the landscapes of this region, but in ourselves as human beings," said Mr White.

"The works on display by these four talented local artists speak to that balance, that search for self and our relationship to the here and now that we seem to be more attuned to since the pandemic."

Eleven engaging events are scheduled to connect audiences of all ages with the artists and their work before the exhibition closes on Sunday 26 February.

Artist talks on four weekends during the exhibition will provide casual, intimate opportunities for the public to connect with creatives, hear anecdotes about their artistic processes and learn about the challenges faced in bringing their visions to fruition.

Hamilton-based artist, Jasmine Mansbridge pushed the boundaries of her recognisable work in developing a compelling new film piece for *Here and Now*.

"I wanted to somehow bring to attention the power of the present moment we live in, using fire, breath, heartbeat and dance as metaphors that take us beyond actions in the moment. The film asks us to consider this space in time, the many small actions and decisions that make up our lives and impacts our future. There is so much at

stake for our collective future, from environmental to quality-of-life outcomes... what's ahead is always being influenced by what's in the past," said the artist.

Also featured in the exhibition is Anne Middleton, who will welcome tour participants to her garden on the edge of Tower Hill for an open studio visit with garden picnic and group sketching experience.

The artist's *'Gates of Paradise'* oil paintings are inspired by the scale, colour and storytelling of the Sistine Chapel, joining to form one huge final installation of over 100 square metres.

"This series has been a labour of love for nearly half of my working life," said Ms Middleton.

"A real technical challenge was the design, each panel needed to look good and work individually, but also interdependently, and as a series in the whole collection," said the artist, who won the Archibald Prize People's Choice Award in 2018 for her portrait of the actor, Guy Pearce.

Another acclaimed artist providing thought-provoking works in the exhibition is Warrnambool-based artist, Kathryn Ryan, whose atmospheric oil paintings and intricately detailed charcoal drawings are inspired by Western District landscapes.

"I am always drawn to the intricate and detailed beauty in the natural world, exploring in depth with tonal layers and placement of trees within the landscape. Capturing the light, atmosphere and mood is such an integral part of my work. I am more interested in the emotive use of light than depicting a realistic landscape," said the artist.

"It is a real privilege to have my works included in *'Here and Now'* alongside such talented and dynamic women artists from our region. Hamilton Gallery has such a significant collection and a reputation for important exhibitions, so I am honoured to have the opportunity to exhibit a body of my work here."

A neon orange sculpture, *'The Bends 2'* by local artist and photographer, Madi Whyte stands outside Hamilton Gallery. The artist said of the work, "the paperclip is largely symbolic of connection, this is something I see the sculptures connecting with the land as well. I work with line-based sculpture so the work can sit in the landscape without blocking the view."

"I love exhibiting my works regionally, it is a great chance to show in town where I grew up. These works were started in this area with a love of this local landscape and an eagerness to make larger works that could sit within in the Australian landscape," concluded Ms Whyte.



Caption: Works included in *'Here and Now'* exhibition now showing at Hamilton Gallery, clockwise from top left:

- Jasmine Mansbridge, *'We Put This Fire Out'*, 2022 (still), digital video. Collection of the artist.
- Anne Middleton, *'Plegadis falcinellus - Herald of the Flood, and Healer of the Sacred Eye'*, 2016 (detail), oil on linen. Private collection.
- Kathryn Ryan, *'Bastikya 2'* (detail), 2021, charcoal on paper. Collection of the artist.
- Madi Whyte, *'The Turn'* (detail), 2022, photographic print on textured rag. Collection of the artist.

In the final artist talk of the series, Madi Whyte will share insights into her photography and sculpture process. Young creatives can partake in school holiday sculpture workshops with the artist, who will also host a 'Grampians & Grazing' photography workshop in the National Park, followed by a visit to Paper Scissors Rock Brew Co. in Halls Gap.

In January the gallery will once again hold a 'Creative Mixer', bringing together creatives of all kinds from across the region.

Throughout the exhibition all ages can participate in a large-scale art project, 'paper.power'. The audience become the artist in this community take-over, creating paper peonies to adorn the walls and pop-up garden bed in one of the gallery's creative spaces.

The official Exhibition Opening event on Saturday 10 December from 2pm is a joint celebration of *Here and Now* and the gallery's notable collection exhibition opening the same day; *Icons: Australian Art*.

Featuring landscapes, people and stories from the Hamilton Gallery collection by Australia's most iconic artists, *Icons: Australian Art* invites the viewer to consider visual narratives of 'Australia'.

Highlights include the Hamilton Gallery Trusts' latest acquisition, Eugene von Guérard's expertly rendered *Mount Arapiles towards the Grampians*, Sidney Nolan's powerful *Crucifixion*, Sir Hans Heysen's mesmerising *In The Wonoka Country*, and Albert Namatjira's remarkable *Areyonga James Range*.

Audiences are invited to contemplate their own defining narrative of Australia whilst soaking up profoundly unique perspectives in this carefully curated collection.

Both exhibitions are free to visit and are on display at Hamilton Gallery until Sunday 26 February.

For exhibition and event details see the website at [hamiltongallery.org](http://hamiltongallery.org) or connect with @hamiltongalleryvic on social media.

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**IMAGE LIBRARY:** See links for captioned images and contact for photo/filming opportunities.

> *Here and Now* - **IMAGE FOLDER**

> *Icons: Australian Art* - **IMAGE FOLDER**

#### **ABOUT HAMILTON GALLERY:**

Hamilton Gallery has been the heart of visual arts in the Southern Grampians for over 60 years. Visitors can discover touring exhibitions, curated highlights from the permanent collection and engaging public programs and events that stimulate understanding, awareness and enjoyment of visual arts. Hamilton Gallery's internationally significant 9000+ object collection boasts unique strengths in decorative arts, European, Australian and Asian Art. Alongside regular opportunities for all ages to create and learn, the gallery also has a shop stocking goods by local and national artisans.

For more information see [hamiltongallery.org](http://hamiltongallery.org), @hamiltongalleryvic on social media or [join the mailing list](#).

**FREE ENTRY | OPEN 7 days | Mon-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat & Sun: 10am-2pm**

#### **MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

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