

Home is more than a place

Curated by Sophia Cai

A Hamilton Gallery and NETS Victoria
digital exhibition for the 50/50 series



Hamilton Gallery, NETS Victoria, and the artists and curator of *Home is more than a place* respectfully acknowledge and celebrate the continuing culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across Australia. We extend this respect to all First Nations people across the world.

Cover Image:

NC Qin & Felix Esteban

Birdsong (detail) 2020

Glass, photography, digital
print on aluminium panels

80 x 50 cm

Courtesy of the artists

Image on next page:

Les Kossatz

Tapestry - The Hamilton Wool
1984 (detail)

Wool, embroidery thread

237 x 292 cm

Made by the Australian
Tapestry Workshop,
Melbourne

Funded by the 150th
Anniversary board and
the Victorian Tapestry
Workshop. Hamilton Gallery
Collection

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Abdullah
Howard Arkley
Atong Atem
Karima Baadilla
Francis Bacon
Paul Baxter
Anney Bounpraseuth
Jess Bradford
John Bulunbulun
Chloe Caday
Nicholas Chevalier
Brian Dunlop
Makeda Duong
Hannah Gartside

Gwyn Hanssen Pigott
Maggie Hensel-Brown
Kait James
Les Kossatz
Holly Macdonald
Kent Morris
Chris O'Brien
Margaret Olley
NC Qin & Felix Esteban
James Quinn
Elvis Richardson
Suwa Sozan
Ishikawa Toraji
Katie West

Makeda Duong
Mixed Race Sweater 2020
Hand knitted merino wool
Dimensions variable
Photograph: Radhe Osborn
Courtesy of the artist



Preface

Hamilton Gallery is thrilled to be a part of this fantastic project initiated by the National Exhibitions Touring Support, Victoria, which has enabled Hamilton Gallery to engage with talented contemporary curator, Sophia Cai.

Every collection is unique and Hamilton Gallery's collection has a fascinating 60-year history. Like many art galleries across Australia, the impetus for building Hamilton Gallery was due to a major donation by a generous benefactor, and in our case the benefactors were Herbert and May Shaw. The 781 works donated in 1958 remain the foundation of the collection, a collection which has seen an abundance of significant donations since that time. Currently Hamilton Gallery's collection includes over 9,000 objects, and has multiple collection focuses.

Projects like this are extremely important for galleries like Hamilton; a digital exhibition of this kind places the collection in a modern context, and affords the viewer a fresh perspective on our artworks. It is an enormous task for a curator to develop a concept, sift through thousands of objects and object records, narrow it down to 15 works and then relate these to contemporary works outside the collection.

Great curation gives the viewer new perspectives and insights into an artwork or group of artworks. It can also add to the story, history and life of an artwork. Through hard work, creativity and talent, Sophia has opened our eyes to new connections, and enriched our appreciation and understanding of works in our Hamilton Gallery collection.

I would like to thank Claire Watson, Director of NETS Victoria, Curator Sophia Cai, and Hamilton Gallery staff Ian Brilley, Collections Coordinator, and Digitisation Officers Madi Whyte and Claudia Ross, for all their efforts to see this project come to fruition.

Joshua White

Artistic Director, Hamilton Gallery

Foreword

NETS Victoria is delighted to present the digital exhibition *Home is more than a place*, curated by Sophia Cai and developed as part of our digital exhibition series 50/50.

Presented in partnership between NETS Victoria and Hamilton Gallery, the exhibition provides a remarkable opportunity to explore the Hamilton Gallery Collection and its resonance with contemporary stories.

Conceived by NETS Victoria, 50/50 has provided research grants to three independent curators. Each curator selected a regional Victorian gallery to research their collection and develop an exhibition of up to 30 artworks where 50% of the works are from the venue's collection and 50% are from living contemporary artists. Each curator has determined a unique exhibition theme and paired artworks based on a visual and/or conceptual rationale.

Sophia Cai has brought together stories and interpretations around the concept of home through artists' studies of dwellings and domesticity. Her pairings create an enriching dialogue that foregrounds the shifting Australian life both urban and rural, old and current.

NETS Victoria is the peak body for touring visual art, craft and design across Victoria and beyond; partnering and collaborating with art galleries, cultural institutions, artists and curators to present outstanding exhibitions and projects, complemented by high quality publications and programs.

NETS Victoria usually focuses on packing physical artworks in museum-grade crates and touring artworks to be enjoyed by regional audiences in Victoria and beyond. Home is more than a place, however, is entirely digital, making it accessible to a much wider audience than may otherwise have been possible.

On behalf of NETS Victoria, I would like to thank and pay tribute to the commitment and flexibility of our partner Hamilton Gallery led by Artistic Director Joshua White, working closely with Collection Coordinator Ian Brilley.

I would also like to congratulate the curator for this exciting project, Sophia Cai and the artists whose creative reflections continue to inspire us to question and re-imagine our past and contribute to our collective future.

Special thanks to Creative Victoria for their support of the exhibition; as well as all of NETS Victoria's supporting organisations that ensure we continue to innovate.

Nikki Lam

Member of NETS Victoria's Board of Management and Artistic Program Advisory Committee

Curator's Introduction

Home is more than a place pairs artworks from the collection of Hamilton Gallery with works by contemporary Australian artists to broadly consider the meaning of home as both an external and internal experience.

The exhibition was borne out of the collective experience of lockdown during 2020 ('stay at home'), but is also inspired by the history of Hamilton Gallery which began as a private collection in the homestead of Herbert and May Shaw. Together, the 15 pairings of artworks reflect everyday comforts and joys, but also comments on broader questions about belonging, migration, and the precariousness of home within the settler-colonial history of Australia. By placing complementary and contrasting pieces alongside each other, the works in this digital exhibition invite you to consider how home is more than a physical place, and that its meaning is political as well as personal. The following text is written as if to take you through the imagined 'rooms' of a house, grouping pairs of works together based on their visual and conceptual connections.

Entering the house

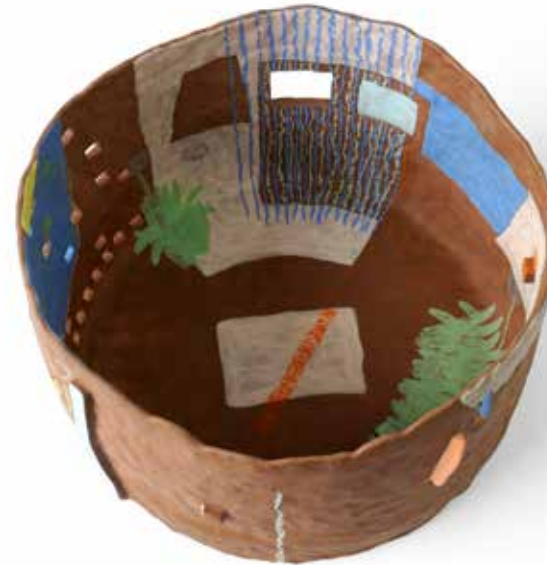




Howard Arkley
Australian home 1993 (Detail
on previous page)
Acrylic on canvas
175 x 255 cm
Purchased by Hamilton
Gallery Trust Fund with
assistance from VRGAFTF
to celebrate the 30th
anniversary of the Trust
Fund. Hamilton Gallery
Collection
© Howard Arkley/Copyright
Agency, 2021.

Chris O'Brien
*Mr Grumpy's House (he is
blue and he has a green hat)*
2018
Acrylic paint, cotton, foam,
thread, pins and wool
30 x 50 x 31 cm
Courtesy of the artist and
Arts Project Australia,
Melbourne

Howard Arkley's vivid paintings of houses, imagined through a vibrant Pop-art palette and sensibility, are compelling landscapes of suburbia and emblems of the 'Great Australian Dream' of home ownership. While Arkley's paintings are notable in their lack of identification or specificity, (that is, we never know the residents), Chris O'Brien's soft sculpture is instead drawn from the artist's personal life and experience. O'Brien works with repurposed fabrics and materials to recreate houses as sculptures, which can almost be viewed as portraits of the inhabitants. We may never see Mr Grumpy, but through the floral walls and the title of the work we gain an impression of his character.



Rockingham Pottery
Pastille burner cottage – on circular base c. 1830
Porcelain
40.4 x 11.2 cm
Herbert and May Shaw Bequest. Hamilton Gallery Collection

Holly Macdonald
Latticework 2020
Terracotta, stained porcelain, porcelain slip, underglaze, ceramic crayon
15 (h) x 25 (di) cm
Courtesy of the artist

The Herbert and May Shaw Bequest consists of a broad range of art and antiquities, which reflected the personal taste and interests of the collectors. Over her lifetime, May Shaw amassed a varied collection of Staffordshire porcelain pastille burners, small cottage-shaped objects that housed perfumed pellets, which she displayed on a corner cupboard in her home. While the pastille burner shows the exterior of a house, Holly Macdonald's ceramic work *Latticework* shows an interior viewed through a number of cut-outs. This vessel is from a series of works made by the artist in 2020 after searching for new rental properties, and imagines the interior life of prospective new houses and neighbours.

Home is
where the
heart is





This portrait of May Shaw was painted posthumously and is based on photographs of the sitter in her evening gown. The Shaws had no children, and following his wife's death, Mr Shaw's interest in art collecting continued to grow. It is clear that Mrs Shaw played a major part in shaping the collection, and the inclusion of her portrait honours her legacy. Atong Atem's *Self Portrait on Mercury*, shows the seated artist gazing at the camera in a pose that mirrors that of Mrs Shaw. Through the use of framing and the inclusion of objects and colourful attire, Atem invites the viewer into a vibrant scene that firmly asserts the presence of the sitter while honouring her African diasporic roots. Despite their difference in medium and date, both these portraits command our attention by returning our gaze.

James Quinn
Mrs H. B (May) Shaw c.1950
Oil on canvas
103 x 77 cm
Herbert and May Shaw
Bequest.
Hamilton Gallery Collection

Atong Atem
Self Portrait on Mercury 2018
(detail on previous page)
Ilford smooth pearl print
150 x 100 cm
Courtesy of the artist and
MARS Gallery



Suwa Sozan I
Incense container or Kogo in the form of a dog c. 1900
Earthenware
5 x 4.5 x 6.8 cm
Gift of Lesley Kehoe
Hamilton Gallery Collection

Karima Baadilla
Big Blue Dog 2020
Oil on found painting
52.5 x 68 cm
Photograph: Janelle Low
Courtesy of the artist

What better companion is there to share a home than the loyal dog – man’s so-called best friend? Dogs and humans are both social animals, and a number of studies have shown the positive benefits of having a companion animal. During the extended periods of social isolation that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, animal shelters across the world reported an increase in pet adoptions. Whether or not this means our relationship to animals is changed irrevocably in the post-pandemic life, it is nevertheless clear that animals provide a degree of comfort and joy in uncertain times. The pairing of this incense container with the *Big Blue Dog* by artist Karima Baadilla expresses some of this optimism through the similar joyous expressions of the subjects.

Idle time, passing time





Brian Dunlop's lithograph captures a familiar sight, a curtain billowing in the breeze through an open window. The closely cropped framing of the work focuses our attention on the draped lines of the curtain. While Dunlop's lithograph suggests the movement of fabric, Abdul-Rahman Abdullah's work translates the drapery of fabric into a solid piece of carved wood. The resulting work appears to take on the appearance of a shrouded or covered canvas, immovable and stoic, and we can only imagine what is contained behind the curtain. In many regards, Abdullah's work is an apt metaphor for 2020, as the world as we knew it entered into a period of shutdown – where time felt frozen – and we did not know what would come next.

Brian Dunlop
Curtain 1981
Lithograph
70 x 25 cm
Purchased by Hamilton Art
Gallery Trust Fund, 1981.
Hamilton Gallery Collection
© Brian Dunlop/Copyright
Agency, 2021

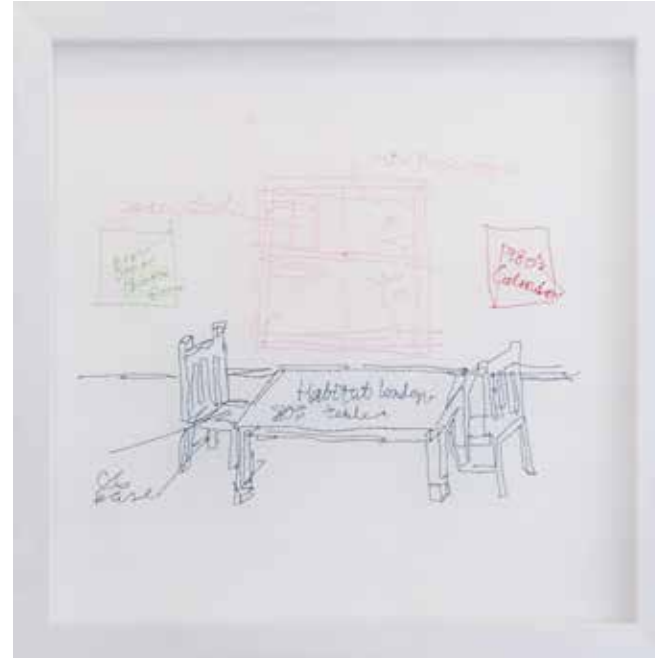
Abdul-Rahman Abdullah
Another time, another place
2020
Painted wood
160 x 105 x 15cm
Private collection. Courtesy
of the artist and Moore
Contemporary



Ishikawa Toraji
Leisure Time 1934
(detail on page 14)
Woodblock print
37.5 x 49 cm
Donated through the
Australian Government
Cultural Gifts Program by
Lesley Kehoe. Hamilton
Gallery Collection

Maggie Hensel-Brown
Untitled (Covid Floor) 2020
Silk, needle lace
18 x 25 cm
Courtesy of the artist

The experience of passing idle time connects these two works by Japanese artist Ishikawa Toraji and Sydney-based artist Maggie Hensel-Brown. Ishikawa's woodblock print captures a woman enjoying reading material, sitting on a red rug next to a reclining cat. Hensel-Brown's intricate lacework on the other hand shows a number of the artist's articles of clothing detailed through the intricate art of lace-making. For Hensel-Brown, lace-making is a laborious and time-consuming process that instils ordinary and mundane moments with a sense of purpose and wonder. It reminds us to appreciate the beauty in the everyday, and take a closer look at the things which surround us on a daily basis.



Gwyn Hanssen Pigott
Still Life – Sentinel 2011
Wood-fired porcelain
Dimensions variable
Valerie Sheldon Bequest.
Hamilton Gallery Collection
© Courtesy of the artist
Hamilton Gallery Collection

Hannah Gartside
*69 Queen Elizabeth's Walk
kitchen sketch by Mum* 2019
Silk fabric, cotton thread,
wood, paint
70 x 70 x 2.5 cm
Photograph: Chris Bowes
Courtesy of the artist

Gwyn Hanssen Pigott was regarded as one of Australia's most pre-eminent potters, and is particularly renowned for her stilllife groupings of porcelain vessels. *Still Life – Sentinel* was made late in her career, and includes 3 upright bottle-shaped vessels with a rounded bowl. Together, the pieces stand as if in dialogue with each other, almost like a family in conversation over a shared meal. It felt apt to pair Pigott's ceramics with the work of Hannah Gartside, who captures her family dining table at her former home as sketched by her mother. Gartside uses embroidery thread to mimic her mother's handwriting, and the resulting piece is an intimate portrait of family history and home.

Over a shared table





Davenport porcelain
Trio: teacup, coffee cup and saucer 1815 – 1830
Dimensions variable
Gift of Dr Roger Cross and Jennifer Carter. Hamilton Gallery Collection

Katie West (Yindjibarndi)
Gently give attention 2019
Images from performance
Photograph: Michaela Dutková
Courtesy of the artist

Hamilton Gallery's Collection is rich in European decorative arts, and includes a number of Davenport tea sets. While this porcelain tea set is quintessentially British, the history of tea is one that spans across multiple cultures over thousands of years. Katie West's performance *Gently give attention*, originally shown at Bundoora Homestead Art Centre for the exhibition *Healing Practices* (2019), curated by Rachel Ciesla, invited visitors to share a cup of tea in the gallery space. The artist gathered herbs from local surroundings, and also grew some on the table at the gallery, laid out alongside a number of re-usable items with which visitors could brew their own tea.



The beauty of flowers lies in part in their transience; once plucked from the plant, their full brilliance lasts only momentarily. Both Margaret Olley and Anney Bounpraseuth have depicted the bright blooms of flowers, yet they both reveal a distinct artifice. Olley's painted vase of geraniums is a joyous celebration of spring, and the canvas is saturated in bright colours and vivid tones. Bounpraseuth's work, which no longer exists, was an arrangement made from fake flowers on board. The words 'PRESENT PARADISE' are a reminder of the passing of time, and a reminder that things, both good and bad, are not forever.

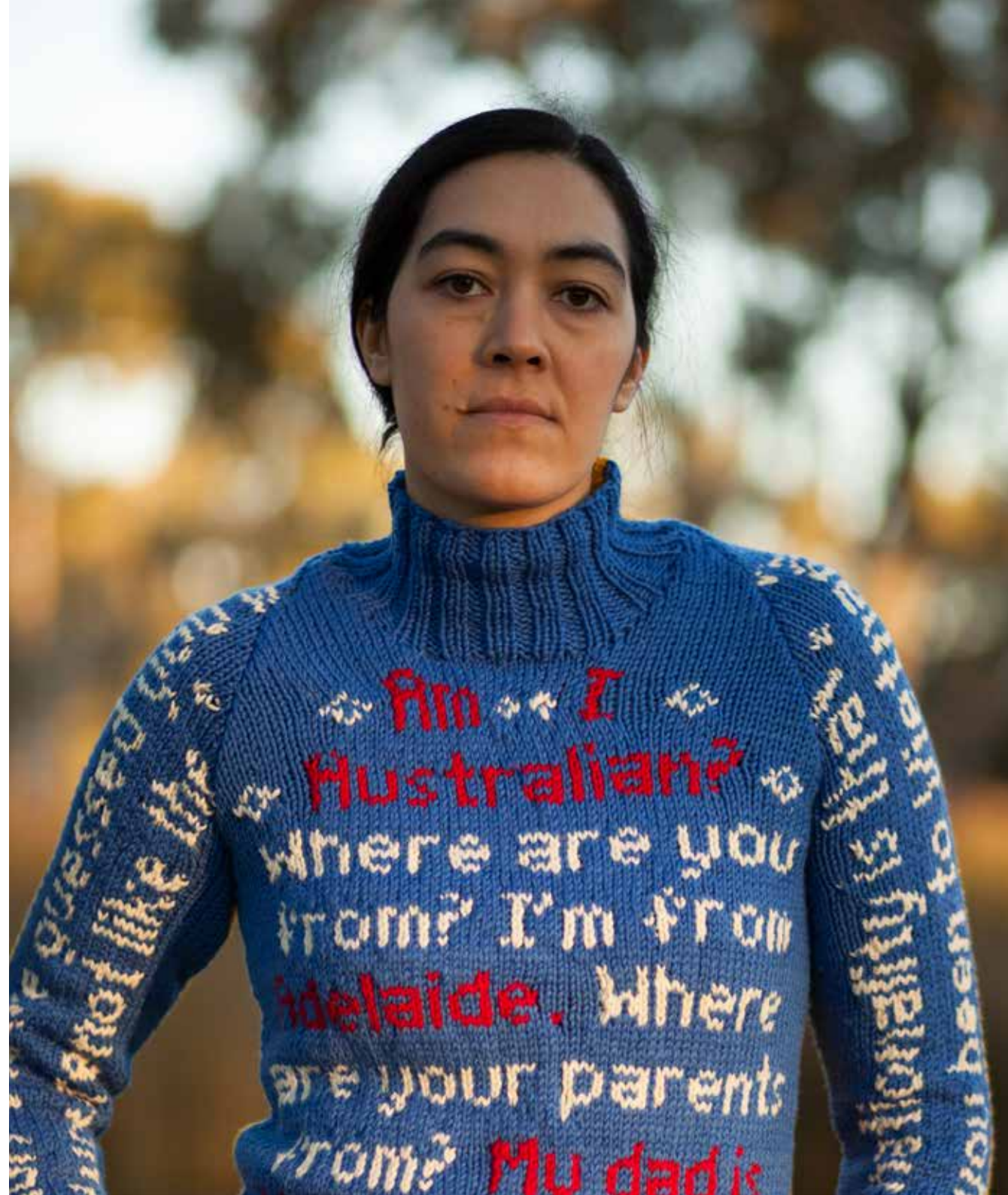
Margaret Olley
Geraniums 1966
 (Detail on previous page)
 Oil on board
 38.3 x 30.6 cm
 Purchased with annual
 Council allocation 1975.
 Hamilton Gallery Collection
 © Margaret Olley Art Trust

Anney Bounpraseuth
Present Paradise 2018
 (on following page)
 Fake flowers on board
 100 x 200 cm (approx.)
 Photograph: Peter Morgan
 Courtesy of the artist

MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE

Who belongs here?





The town of Hamilton has a strong history of sheep grazing and wool production, and has been referred to as the 'wool capital of the world.' The Hamilton Wool tapestry, based on a design by artist Les Kossatz and woven by Cheryl Thornton, Chris Cochius and Joy Smith at the Australian Tapestry Workshop, pays homage to this rich local history. While wool as fleece is a raw material, it can be spun into yarn and knitted into fabrics, as depicted in Makeda Duong's *Mixed Race Sweater*. Duong's hand knitted sweater merges the colours of the Australian flag on the front with the colours of the South Vietnamese flag on the back to explore the complexity of being biracial in Australia, and poses questions of belonging and place.

Les Kossatz
Tapestry - The Hamilton Wool
 1984
 Wool, embroidery thread
 237 x 292 cm
 Made by the Australian
 Tapestry Workshop,
 Melbourne
 Funded by the 150th
 Anniversary board and
 the Victorian Tapestry
 Workshop. Hamilton Gallery
 Collection
 © Les Kossatz/Copyright
 Agency, 2021

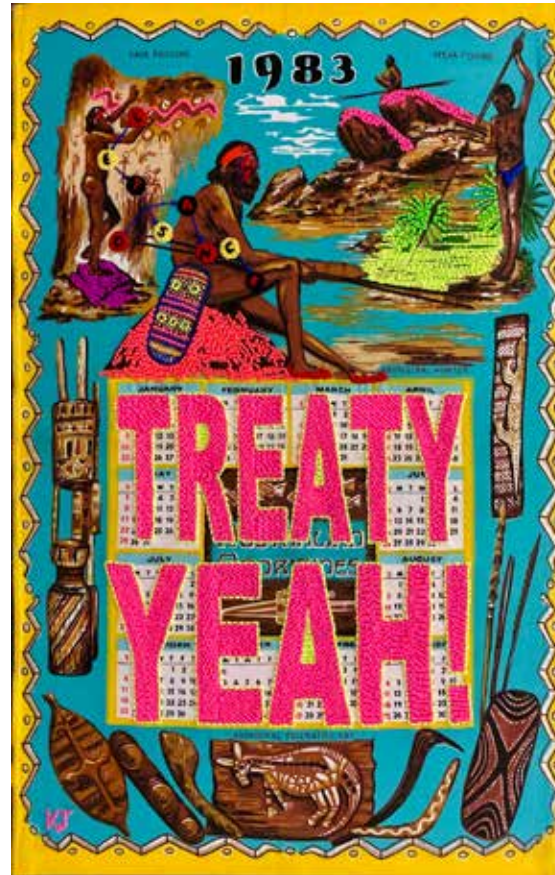
Makeda Duong
Mixed Race Sweater 2020
 Hand knitted merino wool
 Dimensions variable
 Photograph: Radhe Osborn
 Courtesy of the artist



Reflection and agency connect the pairing of Francis Bacon with NC Qin & Felix Esteban. In Bacon's aquatint, we see a figure at a washbasin, the form so exaggerated and distended as to appear almost abstract. The curved, sinuous forms of Bacon's figure are visually mirrored in *Birdsong*, a contemporary glass reimagining of masks worn by European plague doctors. Modelled by the artist, the resulting photograph confronts the anti-Asian racism that followed the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Qin's case, is the mask a method of protection, or imagery of ostracization?

Francis Bacon
Figure and Washbasin 1976
 Aquatint
 47 x 36.5 cm
 Gift of Mrs Minya Lipkes.
 Hamilton Gallery Collection
 © The Estate of Francis
 Bacon. All rights reserved.
 DACS/ Copyright Agency,
 2021. CR: 76-12, 1976

NC Qin & Felix Esteban
Birdsong 2020
 Glass, photography, digital
 print on aluminium panels
 80 x 50 cm
 Courtesy of the artists



Thinking about home in an Australian context requires an acknowledgement of Indigenous sovereignty and connection to land. Johnny Bulunbulun's *Man and Animals* is one of the few Indigenous works in the collection of Hamilton Gallery, and its pairing with Kait James' *Let's Dance* reflects the ongoing and lasting effects of colonisation on Indigenous people today. James repurposes kitsch found tea towels to comment on questions of identity and cultural appropriation, critically examining the ways in which Indigenous culture has been consumed and sold without meaningful political action. The bright words that emblazon the tea towel are a vivid reminder of the work that still needs to be done.

Johnny Bulun Bulun
Long-Necked Tortoise, Spirit Hunter, Spirits and Prawn
 1979
 Screenprint
 66.4 x 57 cm
 Gift of Mr K. O'Shannessy
 1980. Hamilton Gallery
 Collection © Johnny Bulun Bulun/Copyright Agency,
 2021

Kait James (Wadawurrung)
Let's Dance 2019
 Wool & cotton on printed
 cotton
 74 x 47 cm
 Private Collection
 Courtesy of the artist

Local landscapes





Nicholas Chevalier
Mt Sturgeon, the Grampians
1864
Chromolithograph
22 x 31.6 cm
Gift of Mr T. Menzel 1986.
Hamilton Gallery Collection

Chloe Caday
At Golden Hour 2020
(Detail on previous page)
Oil and wax on wood
61 x 45 cm
Courtesy of the artist

The Hamilton Gallery collection contains a number of notable artworks that are connected closely to local landscapes and landmarks. Nicholas Chevalier's chromolithograph of Mt Sturgeon/Wurgarri shows the façade of the mountain in transcendent lighting, evocative of the brief moment before the sun sets over the horizon. Chloe Caday's painting *At Golden Hour* similarly evokes this quality of light, and was painted by the artist en plein air near her home in She Oaks, Victoria. For Caday, working en plein air in her local surroundings is a way to explore her personal and cultural connections to place, and she translates this through gestural markings to capture the artist's own presence within the landscape.



Paul Baxter
Nigretta Falls 2013
Etching
49.5 x 205.8 cm
Purchased by Hamilton
Gallery Trust Fund.
Hamilton Gallery Collection
© Courtesy of the artist

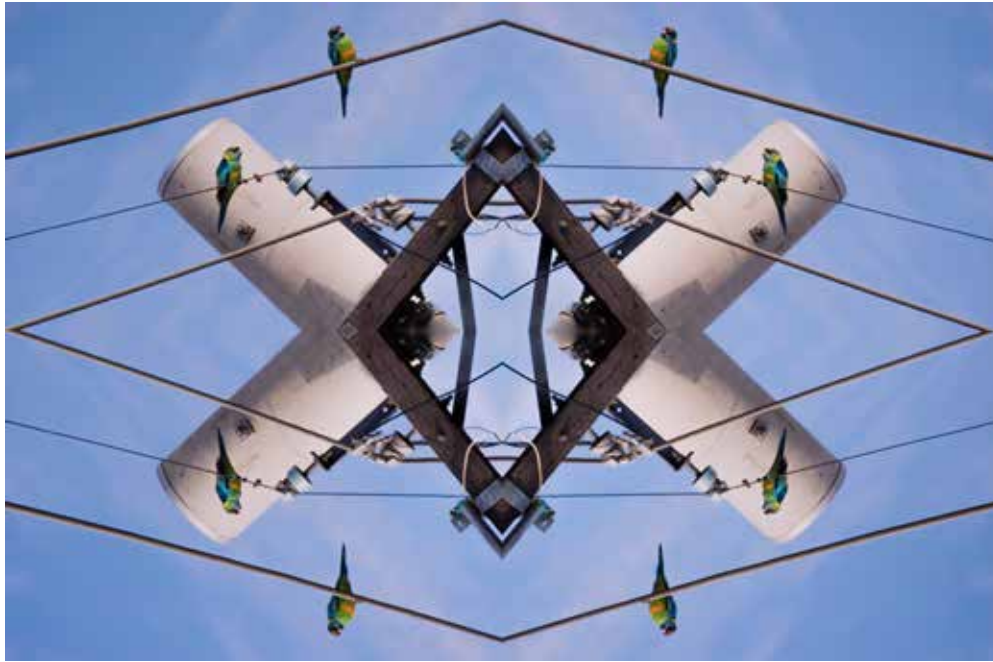


Jess Bradford
Haw Par Villa Water Study #3
2018
Underglazed porcelain
5.4 x 18 x 15 cm
Courtesy the artist and
Galerie pompom
Photograph: Garry Trinh

Paul Baxter and Jess Bradford's works both depict the motion of bodies of water, although separated by a great geographical distances. Baxter's etching of Nigretta Falls captures a larger-than-life impression of the waterfall, situated against a surrounding scenery of lush greenery and rock formations. On the other hand, Bradford's depiction of water through the rolling forms of porcelain is an exercise in imagination, removed from any 'real' body of water. Bradford's work takes its inspiration from Haw Par Villa, also known as Tiger Balm Gardens, a theme park located in Singapore that is filled with constructed dioramas based on Chinese folklore and mythology. By visually drawing on the artifice of the theme park, Bradford's work questions notions of authenticity and cultural translation throughout time.

Close the gate
behind you





Kent Morris (Barkindji)
Cultural Reflections – Up Above Series 2 #8 Barkindji (Broken Hill) – Mallee Ringneck 2016

Archival print on canson rag paper
 60 x 90 cm

Purchased with annual Council allocation. Hamilton Gallery Collection

© Courtesy Kent Morris and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne © Kent Morris

Elvis Richardson
The Gatekeepers (Red #2) 2020 (detail on previous page)

Enamel paint on bent mild steel
 170 x 95 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Hugo Michell Gallery
 Photograph: Sam Roberts

Kent Morris' photographic series *Cultural Reflections – Up Above* combines elements of urban architecture with depictions of native birds to comment on the continuing presence of Indigenous culture in contemporary Australia. This work is a recent acquisition of Hamilton Gallery and contributes to the Gallery's collection of Indigenous artwork. The geometric grid of Morris' photograph is similarly maintained in Elvis Richardson's work, *The Gatekeepers*, which takes the form of a red painted steel door. Richardson's work is a critical comment on the history of settler-colonisation in Australia, and the barriers of access to the 'Great Australian Dream' of home ownership. Coming full circle from Arkley's painting, the pairing of Morris and Richardson can be read together as a critique of Australia's treatment of Indigenous people, and a question of who has rightful access to a 'home' within this context.

Curator's Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the artists who are part of *Home is more than a place*, and for sharing your work with us. Our lives are richer because of the continued contributions by artists, and art that comforts, challenges, and holds a mirror to the issues of the world, now more so than ever.

Thank you to Claire Watson and the team at NETS Victoria for inviting me to participate in the 50/50 project, and your continued support for independent curators and artists.

Thank you to Joshua White and Ian Brilley at Hamilton Gallery for enthusiastically supporting the project from day 1, and for making me feel so welcome visiting your collection both virtually and in person. I hope one day we can work together again.

Last but not least, thank you to my friends and family, your ongoing love and support held me during the challenges of 2020. In particular I'd like to extend my thanks to Malcolm, Rosie and Rocket for teaching me that home is truly where the heart is.

NETS VICTORIA.

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Curated by Sophia Cai

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NETS Victoria pays tribute to the ongoing culture of
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. We pay our
respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and
acknowledge the Boon Wurrung and Woiwurrung
(Wurundjeri) Peoples of the Kulin Nation as the
traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which
our office operates.

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