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TWITCHER

Education Kit for Teachers

This education resource assists teachers and students of all ages, connecting artwork to the NSW Curriculum for both Art and Science. The *Twitcher* exhibition is on at Maitland Regional Art Gallery until 26 February 2025.

THIS RESOURCE OFFERS

- insight into the conception of *Twitcher* and the practice of participating artists
- curriculum activities and questions for primary and senior school students under the specific visual arts and science frameworks
- case studies, exercises and curriculum-based questions for secondary students
- links to short videos about the artists to help you and your students quickly learn about the talent in the exhibition

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Education Kit for Teachers

The pleasure of birdwatching has captivated enthusiasts and artists alike for centuries. The thrill of spotting a rare or beautiful bird in its natural habitat is a tribute to humanity's enduring fascination with the avian world. While modern technology has made it easier to access images and videos of birds, the intersection of birdwatching and art history spans centuries, reflecting both the scientific curiosity and artistic appreciation of local bird life.

Contemporary artists from across Australia showcase birds in many forms across their work in *Twitcher*, an exhibition that also coincides with the great Aussie Bird Count 2024.

12 October 2024 – 16 February 2025

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About the artists in this exhibition **Abdul-Rahman Abdullah, Michelle Cawthorn, Tracey Deep, Philip Drummond, Mandy Francis, Todd Fuller, Anna-Wili Highfield, Martin King, Nigel Milsom, Leila Jeffreys x Melvin J. Montalban, Ginger Riley Munduwalawala, Nyangulya Katie Nalgood, Meagan Pelham, Hermannsburg Potters, Ben Quilty, Michael Riley, Joan Ross, Peter Speight, Bridie Watt, Trevor Weekes, Clare Weeks, Brett Whiteley**
22-53

Anna-Wili Highfield with sound by Bree van Reyk
Mating dance 2021, archival cotton paper, brass,
watercolour and sound
installation view

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Exercises and questions for primary students



Nigel Milsom, *Judo-House part 10 (plain crazy)* 2023
oil on linen, installation view

TWITCHER

ONE

Begin the exhibition outside the gallery. Looking around for birds both living and in art form. Listen until you hear bird song. Do you know what bird it is? What does it sound like?

TWO

Create your own bird art. It can be a realistic animal or one from your imagination. What colours would you include? What are different ways to represent birds? Do you want your bird to have special features? Magical feathers? Can your bird fly? What materials does it use to make its nest?

THREE

In the last 200 years, over 29 Australian bird species have gone extinct. What can we do to stop any more birds from going extinct? Pretend you're a scientist. Tour the exhibition and learn about the different birds. Use the scientific inquiry method including questioning, planning and conducting experiments to determine the best way to make sure birds are thriving in Australia.

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FOUR

Birds are beautiful and wonderful to learn about, but some of them are not native to Australia and unfortunately do harm to the ecosystem. Pretend you are an environmental advocate and activist. How can you learn more about invasive species?

What is one way you can communicate this information to a range of people? How can you justify ideas based on evidence? Would you hold a march? Have a talk at Town Hall?

FIVE

Combining art and science, create a poster to take to an environmental march or rally that has impact to look at and contains information that will help bring awareness to protecting birds. Can you come up with a slogan or a saying to help protect the endangered Regent Honeyeater?

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Explanations, exercises, questions and case studies for secondary students

THE PROCESS

Long before high-definition documentaries and live bird cams, artists played a pivotal role in bringing the natural world closer to human understanding. From as early as the late fourteenth century, artists have dedicated themselves to capturing the intricate details of birds through drawings, prints, and paintings. Their work not only documented avian diversity but also contributed to scientific knowledge and the appreciation of nature's beauty across different continents.

It was this fascination with colourful flying creatures that brought artist, Nigel Milsom – a twitcher himself (*twitcher: a birdwatcher whose main aim is to collect sightings of rare birds*) to MRAG with an idea to showcase our long-held obsession with bird watching.

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Artist case study

ANNA-WILI HIGHFIELD

sculpture

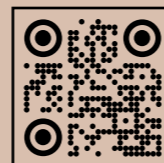
Anna-Wili Highfield is an Australian artist, living and working on Gadigal land, Sydney. Her works represent life in an immediate way that conveys the energy, movement and physical character of different creatures. Her aim is to engineer a moment of contact with nature, in a way that emphasises both the differences and startling similarities, of human and animal forms and consciousness.

ABOUT ANNA-WILI'S TWITCHER ARTWORK

Anna-Wili's work consists of two enormous brolgas in courtship formation. These sculptures were a homage to Australia's principal dancing bird. Composer and musician Bree van Reyk created an accompanying sound piece. Van Reyk's composition joined the dancing birds with instrumentals inspired by the brolga's bold trumpeting.

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Watch this short video
on Anna-Wili's craft



VISUAL ARTS FRAMEWORK QUESTION

- *Would you describe the 'Mating Dance' as a postmodern piece? Is it mainstream or is it outside the mainstream? What is challenged in art practices - classifications, conventions, art movements/styles?*

SCIENCE QUESTION

Brolgas probably mate for life, and bonds are strengthened during elaborate courtship displays. The white (blotched with brown and purple) eggs are laid in a single clutch of 2 eggs. The nest is a large mound of vegetation on a small island in a shallow waterway or swamp. Both adults incubate the eggs (32 days) and care for the young birds.

How do you think scientists learned these fascinating facts about brolgas? What questions and experiments might they have done to determine that brolgas pair bond and mate for life?

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Anna-Wili Highfield with sound by Bree van Reyk
Mating dance 2021, archival cotton paper, brass,
watercolour and sound

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Artist case study

LEILA JEFFREYS

photography

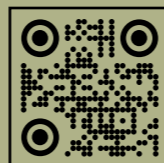
Leila Jeffreys is a renowned contemporary artist and writer who has exhibited across the world. She works across photography, moving image and installation. She is best known for images of birds, photographed at human scale, that explore and subvert the conventions of portraiture. Jeffreys' work is a result of years-long periods of research and exploration. In the tradition of artist-activists, she conducts fieldwork, collaborates with conservationists, ornithologists and sanctuaries and champions programs to protect and restore endangered habitats.

ABOUT LEILA'S TWITCHER ARTWORK

A key work in this exhibition, *Temple* by artist Leila Jeffreys and filmmaker Melvin J. Montalban who have created an immersive, reflective audiovisual installation that pays homage to the Australian cockatoo.

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Short video about
Leila and her work



VISUAL ARTS FRAMEWORK QUESTION

- *Explore Temple through the subjective frame. What is your first impression of this artwork? What do you see and feel? What are you reminded of? What do you like?*
- *Explore the conceptual frame. The conceptual framework is used by students to explore the practice of artists within its holistic existence. How does the artist create an experience for their audience?*
- *Think about the postmodern frame question. How do Leila and Melvin challenge traditional ideas of portraiture through their work?*

SCIENCE QUESTION

The Great Glossy Count is a citizen science event that collects data across the distribution of the South-eastern Glossy Black-Cockatoo (also known as 'Glossies'). Participant citizen scientists spend one hour at any time during the Count weekend exploring their selected survey site to collect data on Glossies and their feeding habitat. The Great Glossy Count happens on a different date every year, so check the birdlife.org for the latest info.

Does the Temple artwork help you understand and distinguish between different species of cockatoos? What has it taught you that you could apply to field and research skills like those required in the Great Glossy Count?

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Leila Jeffreys x Melvin J. Montalban, *Temple* 2022, digital work, multi-channel, continuous loop 6 minutes 26 seconds, Cinematographer Chris Bryan, Bird Trainers Ravi Wasan from Feathered, Friends Bird Sanctuary, Leila Jeffreys is represented by Olsen Gallery, Gadigal/Sydney

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Artist case study

BEN QUILTY

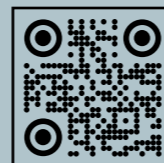
sculpture and painting

Based in the Southern Highlands of NSW, Ben Quilty is one of Australia's best-known and highly regarded contemporary artists. In 2019 the Art Gallery of South Australia presented the first major survey exhibition of Quilty's work. Quilty has been a finalist in the prestigious Wynne and Archibald prizes and won the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize in 2009 and the Archibald Prize in 2011 with his portrait of artist, Margaret Olley. Also in 2011, Quilty travelled to Afghanistan as an official war artist with The Australian War Memorial. He was invited by World Vision Australia to travel to Greece, Serbia and Lebanon with author, Richard Flanagan, to witness firsthand the international refugee crisis in 2016. His work is represented in numerous major public, corporate and private collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art and the Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection.



Ben Quilty, *Budgie After Streeton*, 2004, oil on canvas

Learn more about Ben Quilty



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ABOUT BEN'S TWITCHER ARTWORK

The budgerigars that feature in Quilty's work are cute, sometimes menacing, yet heavy with meaning. These birds represent Quilty's own identity and the impact on the Australian landscape through European settlement. Quilty's humble budgie asks us to look at what this bird once was before it was captured, bred and manipulated into this domesticated version. Quilty's large sculpture, *Poly* was exhibited in his exhibition *Young and Free?* at Jan Murphy Gallery in Brisbane 2004. Bred to be bigger and bluer than their native relative, this monumental polyurethane budgie is also a study in the classic form of a traditional portrait, the bust.

Budgie After Streeton was one of a series of portraits Quilty made of Australian artists featuring the budgerigar, including Albert Namatjira and Frederick McCubbin. This work pays homage to Australian landscape painter and environmental enthusiast Arthur Streeton, since European invasion.

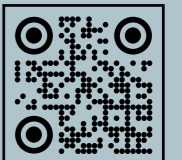
SCIENCE QUESTION

Since its introduction into captivity, the budgerigar (or 'budgie') has been bred into a variety of colour forms, including pure white, blue, yellow, mauve, olive and grey. In the wild, budgerigars are small green and yellow parrots, with black barring above, and a small patch of blue on the cheek.

Biology can be used in conjunction with other disciplines to help inform decision making. Examine the biological, social and ethical aspects of birds bred in captivity. How could breeding budgies have both positive and negative effects on the Australian ecosystem?

VISUAL ARTS FRAMEWORK QUESTION

- *Explore Poly through the cultural frame. What ideology is revealed in ideas, concepts, manifestos, shared beliefs?*
- *What can the choice colour of blue tell us about the structural frame in this artwork? Learn more about the connection between British colonialism and the colour blue*



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Artist case study

PETER SPEIGHT sculpture

Peter Speight was a Newcastle based artist who grew up in Maitland. Predominantly known as a sculptor who used recycled wood and found objects, Speight was a prolific artist and his personality is now embedded in everything that he made.

ABOUT PETER'S TWITCHER ARTWORK

Peter Speight's *Cassowary*, is a large painted sculpture complete with a touch of humour, which was often seen in the late Hunter-based artist's work.

VISUAL ARTS FRAMEWORK QUESTION

- *Explore the Cassowary through the Structural Frame. What materials and processes are used?*

SCIENCE QUESTION

Cassowaries are one of many bird species considered endangered in Australia. Examine factors that affect population sizes such as seasonal changes, destruction of habitats and introduced species. Ask questions and investigate this problem scientifically. Design field or experimental methods to explore this further.

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The artists in this exhibition

ABDUL-RAHMAN ABDULLAH

Abdul-Rahman Abdullah is an artist based on *Wadjuk Nyungar* country, on a cattle property in the Peel region of Western Australia. Working primarily in sculpture and installation, he explores the intersections of identity, culture and the natural world. Living and working in an agricultural environment, his practice offers alternative perspectives across diverse, and often disparate communities.

Since graduating from Curtin University in 2012, Abdul-Rahman has exhibited widely around Australia, notably at the Adelaide Biennial 2016 and 2022 (Art Gallery South Australia), The National 2019 (Museum of Contemporary Art) and Tarrawarra Biennial 2023. In late 2023 he was appointed to the council for The National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

I dreamt I could not sleep 2024

painted wood

Absence of light 2024

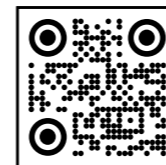
painted wood

*Creaky grating squawks** 2024

stained & painted wood, bronze

On loan from the artist and Amesyavuz Gadigal/Sydney NSW

*On loan from Wadih and Lucija Hanna



Learn more about
Abdul-Rahman

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MICHELLE CAWTHORN

Michelle Cawthorn is a Dharawal/Sydney-based artist whose multidisciplinary practice invokes personal and collective memory through her distinctive visual language of repetitive mark-making. In her work she examines themes related to childhood, identity, time, and place. Though grounded in drawing, her work intersects with collage, painting, sculpture, and installation. She places emphasis on the role of intuition in studio-based practice, resulting in works that meld figuration and abstraction.

Michelle trained at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, where she completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) and later a Master of Fine Arts.

Caroola 2021

pigment print, ink and acrylic on archival cotton rag paper

Grays 2021

pigment print, ink and acrylic on archival cotton rag paper (pictured)

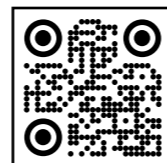
Kimberley 2021

digital collage, archival ink and acrylic on Hahnemuhle Museum Etching cotton rag paper

Michelle Cawthorn is represented by Olsen Gallery, Gadigal/Sydney



Learn more about
Michelle Cawthorn



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TRACEY DEEP

Sydney-based artist Tracey Deep recreates natural beauty with 'living art' sculptures. Over the decades her love of the environment has helped her build unique sculptures and installations made from organic resources. Tracey is inspired by the great outdoors, always looking for patterns, shapes and shadows. Tracey has exhibited her work in numerous venues and galleries including Saint Cloche Gallery in Paddington, National Gallery of Victoria and Macquarie Bank.

Bird Spirt 2022

kelp, fibre, wire (pictured)

Mother Bird 2022

charred willow and mixed fibres

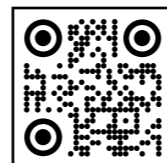
Sea bird 2022

kelp, mixed fibre and wire

Tracey Deep is represented by Saint Cloche, Sydney/Gadigal

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Learn more about
Tracey Deep



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PHILIP DRUMMOND



A full-time self-taught painter for the last 20 years, Philip is hugely influenced by the 'golden age' of Spanish still life painting. He lives and works on Wonnarua land/Cessnock.

More than 25 years ago he stumbled upon a book about the 'Golden age of Spanish still life (1600-1650)' and was immediately struck by the ageless quality, the directness of the image and the dramatic lighting. He infuses his own work with those same qualities using Australian flora, seasonal produce and a collection of rustic Spanish ceramics. He uses Western Australian native flowers for their unusual and spectacular blooms. His paintings are as much about the old world as the new and to a window into his life spent between rural Australia and Spain.

Summer Fruits 2021

oil on canvas

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Philip Drummond, 2022

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MANDY FRANCIS

Mandy Francis lives and works on Darkinjung land/ Ettalong Beach NSW. Beyond her Fine Art degree (majoring in sculpture), from the National Art School, Sydney, Mandy has also undertaken research at the University of Newcastle, completing a Masters and a Doctor of Philosophy, specialising in public sculpture and installation art. For over two decades Mandy has worked as a painter, sculptor and installation artist. Her career path has led to art residencies nationally and internationally. Mandy has exhibited in major group exhibitions including The Dobell Drawing Prize, Blacktown Art Prize, Sculpture by The Sea, Underbelly Arts, Sydney Fringe Festival, Gosford Art Prize, The Harbour Sculpture Prize, Japan Australia Art Musings, The Art Of Sound, National Sound and Film Archive.

Bibby 2024

Sparkle 2024

Billabong Babe 2024

*Going for the mix-master
match look* 2024

Singing in the rain 2024

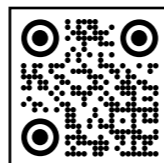
Freedom 2024

Purple Hazel 2024

all artworks papier mâché,
galvanised wire, paint palette

Croella D'Ville 2024

Learn more about
Mandy Francis



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TODD FULLER

With a practice that integrates sculpture, moving image, performance and painting, Sydney-based artist Todd Fuller is, at his core, a draughtsman. Underpinning all aspects of his practice is a love of drawing and a belief in its power as a democratic medium to connect, engage and delight audiences.

For ten years, Todd has been crafting hand-drawn animations that grapple with love and loss, as well as ideas of place, identity and community. Often narrative in form, these award-winning works are derived from Todd's experiences with different communities, sites and histories. He has been awarded a number of residencies that have informed and developed his practice, including time spent at Bundanon Trust, Hill End, Grafton Regional Art Gallery, as well as international stints at the Cite Internationale des Arts in Paris, the British School of Rome, and recently the NG Creative Residency.

His name was Icarus 2017

acrylic, chalk and charcoal
on paper

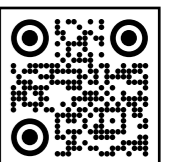
Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Purchased by Maitland Regional
Art Gallery, 2017

Icarus on the hill 2017

ed 7/8, hand drawn animation
on paper, duration 4:50 min

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Purchased by Maitland Regional
Art Gallery, 2017

Learn more about
Todd Fuller



12 October 2024 – 16 February 2025



ANNA-WILI HIGHFIELD

with sound by Bree van Reyk

Anna-Wili Highfield is an Australian artist, living and working on Gadigal land, Sydney. Often made by commissions, Anna-Wili's sculptures are collected worldwide. They have been featured in numerous publications and held the cover of *Sculpture Review USA*. Highfield has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The National Art School, Sydney. Her works have exhibited broadly nationally and internationally.

Anna-Wili's works explore the organic qualities and resistance of materials, generating a tension between a complex realism of form and the limitations and economy of materials used. They represent life in an immediate way that conveys the energy, movement, and physical character of different creatures. Her aim is to engineer a moment of contact with nature, in a way that emphasises both the differences and startling similarities, of human and animal forms and consciousness.

Mating dance 2021

archival cotton paper, brass, watercolour and sound

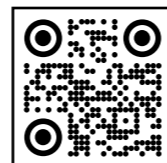
Mating Dance by Anna-Wili Highfield is an installation of courtship formations. The sculptures are an homage to the Brolga - Australia's principal dancing bird. Suspended like marionettes, the birds are sewn from waxed cotton and have stopped mid-ballet. They gesture, call, respond and mimic.

Composer and musician, Bree van Reyk has created an accompanying sound work. Bree's piece will intermittently surprise us, with music inspired by the Brolga's bold honking.

Anna-Wili's aim is to engineer a moment of contact with nature, in a way that emphasises similarity of form and consciousness shared by both humans and animals.

On loan from the artist

Learn more about
Anna-Wili Highfield



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MARTIN KING

Martin King's wide-ranging art practice is underpinned by an abiding interest in the Australian landscape, most visibly by making connections between land, sea and air.

Martin's earlier works on paper traced the movement of rain shadows and the effect of weather patterns across undulating terrain and vast tracts of desert. His more recent works express the fragility of our relationship with nature using creatures of the sky as simple motifs that convey a paradoxical vision of the Australian landscape as both tranquil and unsettling.

Martin's works are held in numerous corporate collections and regional galleries and four state galleries in Australia plus collections in the USA, UK and India. He occupies an important place in printmaking in Australia and is acknowledged widely as one of the leading printmakers in the country. Since 1994 he has enjoyed holding the position as senior printmaker at the Australian Print Workshop.

Blind Faith 2016

graphite on drafting film
and pigment on paper (pictured)

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Purchased by Maitland Regional Art
Gallery, 2017

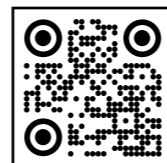
Silent Witness III 2016

graphite on drafting film
and pigment on paper

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Donated under the Australian Government's
Cultural Gifts Program, 2018

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Learn more about
Martin King



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NIGEL MILSOM

Newcastle-based award-winning artist Nigel Milsom is a past winner of Australia's best-known art prize, the Art Gallery of NSW (AGNSW), Archibald Prize (2015). Milsom's powerful Archibald Prize winning portrait portrayed criminal barrister, Charles Waterstreet.

He has won multiple art prizes across Australia. In 2012 Nigel was awarded the AGNSW Sulman Prize for his painting *Judo House Pt 4 (Golden Mud)* and the Doug Moran Prize in 2013 (*Uncle Paddy*).

Judo-House part 10 (plain crazy) 2023

oil on linen

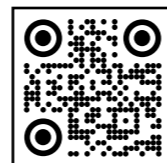
Judo house part 10 (plain crazy) is from an ongoing body of work that has been inspired by the 1897 painting *The spirit of the plains* by Sydney Long, Japanese crane painting, and the song 'On a plain' by the band Nirvana.

This painting featured as a finalist in the 2024 Sulman Prize at the Art Gallery of NSW.

Nigel Milsom is represented by The Commercial, Sydney/Gadigal

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Learn more about
Nigel Milsom



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LEILA JEFFREYS

Gadigal land/Sydney-based Leila Jeffreys is a renowned contemporary artist working across photography, moving image and installation. She is best known for images of birds, photographed at human scale, that explore and subvert the conventions of portraiture. Jeffreys sees her avian subjects as living beings, part of a practice that expands viewer's hearts by drawing attention to interdependence between species. Jeffreys' work is a result of years-long periods of research and exploration. In the tradition of artist-activists, she conducts fieldwork, collaborates with conservationists, ornithologists and sanctuaries and champions programs to protect and restore endangered habitats.

Leila's work has exhibited both nationally and internationally.

Leila Jeffreys x Melvin J. Montalban *Temple* 2022

digital work, multi-channel,
continuous loop 6 minutes 26 seconds
Cinematographer Chris Bryan
Bird Trainers Ravi Wasan from Feathered
Friends Bird Sanctuary

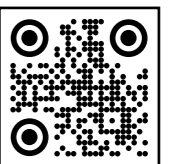
Leila Jeffreys is represented by Olsen Gallery, Gadigal/Sydney

MELVIN J. MONTALBAN

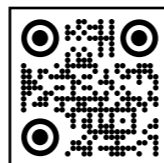
Melvin J. Montalban is a filmmaker and artist who has established himself as a director for TV drama, commercials, music videos, and short films. His work is typified by evocative storytelling, technical executions and emotional truth.

He has recently made his TV directorial debut with *The Unusual Suspects*, produced by Aquarius Films and starring Miranda Otto and Aina Dumlaog. He is also developing his first feature film *Flesh Without Blood*, with *Unusual Suspects* creator Jessica Redenbach screenwriting, with support from Screen Australia and produced by Thumper Pictures. Melvin also recently exhibited his first large-scale public art installation, multi-channel film *Temple*, in collaboration with visual artist Leila Jeffreys at Vivid Sydney 2022.

Learn more about
Melvin J. Montalban



Learn more about
Leila Jeffreys



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GINGER RILEY MUNDUWALAWALA

Ginger Riley Munduwalawala saw the work of western Aranda watercolourist Albert Namatjira as a young man in the 1950s. This meeting with Namatjira made a lasting impression. Much later it inspired Ginger to pursue painting in acrylics when the Northern Territory Education Department offered a painting course at Ngukurr, where Riley was living, in 1987. Ginger rapidly developed his own distinctive style and iconography and he established an independent career at the Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne. Ginger exhibited both nationally and internationally and was awarded an Australia Council Fellowship in 1997, the same year that the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, mounted a retrospective of his work.

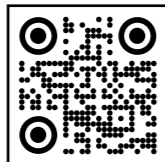
Ngak Ngak 1997

(from *Crossroads - Millenium Portfolio of Australian Aboriginal Artists*)
screenprint on paper

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Leo Christie, 2011

Learn more about
Ginger Riley Munduwalawala



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NYANGULYA KATIE NALGOOD

Nyangulya Katie Nalgood is a Walmajarri elder who has spent much of her life moving between Looma in the Kimberley region and South Hedland in the Pilbara region. Over the past four years, Nyangulya has matched the strong creative application of her late husband, Nyaparu (William) Gardiner and has developed and refined her landscapes and fauna studies. Her most notable forays into the contemporary Australian arts landscape have been her bird collaborations with her children Zenith and Crystal Gardiner, which in 2018 captured audiences at the Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair and TARNANTHI Art Fair, both major events on the Australian arts calendar. This year was an expansive year for Nyangulya with her first solo exhibition *Jirrugu Wanti (All the Birds)* at Galerie Zadra in Luxembourg, and professional trips to Perth, Adelaide, Darwin and Alice Springs. Nyangulya has a strong affinity with birds, so much so that she has begun the task of documenting the birds of Western Australia. These diverse feathered creatures fill her personal history as well as cultural life. They are as much a part of her country as she is, and their songs are the sound memories of her home.

Brolga Dancing 2023

acrylic on canvas

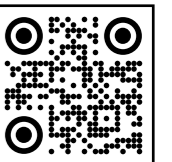
Two King Fishers 2023

acrylic on canvas

Kite Hawk Flying 2023

acrylic on canvas

Learn more about
Nyangulya Katie Nalgood



On loan from the Spinifex Hill Studio Kariyarra Country/South Headland WA

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12 October 2024 – 16 February 2025



MEAGAN PELHAM

Meagan Pelham is the ultimate romantic, someone who creates and lives by a philosophy of true love. The imagery in her artworks invites audiences to see the world through rose-coloured glasses and to embrace moments of beauty that surround us.

Meagan is a multidisciplinary artist practising painting, poetry, drawing and performance. She was selected as a finalist for the 2022 Archibald Prize with her watercolour portrait *Romance is LOVE*, depicting friend and collaborator Anna Plunkett of Australian fashion label Romance was Born.

Meagan is a captivating performance artist, presenting live works at the Biennale of Sydney, the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and the North Sydney Children's Festival. In 2017, in an unforgettable performance, she inhabited the Owl Bride in *birdfoxmonster*, a sold-out production at Carriageworks, in collaboration with Erth Visual & Physical Inc.

***Mr & Mrs Fancy Parrots in Love* 2024**

watercolour, wool and
posca on paper

***Pinky Pinky Parrot* 2024**

posca and watercolour
on canvas (pictured)

***Punky Parrot* 2024**

posca and watercolour

***Sparkles the Lorikeet* 2023**

posca, glitter and ink

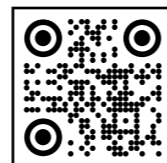
***Two Cockatoos* 2024**

acrylic and watercolour
on paper

On loan from the Studio A,
Camberaygal/Sydney

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Learn more about
Meagan Pelham



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HERMANNSBURG POTTERS

Hermannsburg Potters has developed a niche market for their ceramic works. Their art supports the local artists and their families and supports the growing local economy of Hermannsburg. Their pottery has been exhibited and collected within Australia and abroad for the past 25 years.

The Hermannsburg Potters are a group of Western Arrarnta artists working in the hand-coil and pinch technique, using terracotta clay to create their artworks. The artists build small and large terracotta pots which often feature an iconic sculptural lid referencing elements or characters in the painted body of their pots. The artists use a vibrant palette of ceramic underglaze to depict their Western Arrarnta landscape, flora and fauna, contemporary community life, family, traditions and histories.

Irene Mbitjana ENTATA

White Bird 2005

Lindy Panangka RONTJI

Finch 2004

Carol Panangka RONTJI

Black Cockatoos 2005

Budgies 1999

Rahel Kngwarria UNGWANAKA

Kurrkurrka / Owl 2005

Galah 2011

Kite 2004

all painted terracotta
and underglaze

On loan from the City of Moreton Bay Art Collection. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Simon Turner

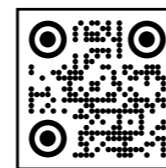
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MICHAEL RILEY

Michael Riley was a Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi photographer, filmmaker and video-artist, was one of Australia's most influential Aboriginal contemporary artists. Born in Dubbo, Michael moved to Sydney in the late 1970s, setting aside his carpentry apprenticeship in 1982 and taking photography courses at Sydney University's Tin Sheds Gallery and the Sydney College of the Arts. Michael and his work became integral to the emerging movement of Indigenous artists working in photography and new media. He was one of the co-founders of the Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative in 1987 and exhibited in the groundbreaking Indigenous art exhibitions *Koori Art '84* at Artspace and *NADOC '86 Exhibition of Aboriginal and Islander Photographers* at the Aboriginal Artists Gallery. He also worked at Film Australia, where he wrote and directed his first film *Boomalli: Five Artists* (1988). His first solo exhibition, *Portraits by a Window*, was held at Hogarth Galleries in 1990.

Untitled, [galah] from the series *flyblown*, 1998, is one of nine images in the series, in which the Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi artist reflects upon the beauty, and decay, in the Australian landscape. This image of a dead galah on the cracked red earth was featured in the 48th Venice Biennale in 1998, displayed in the gardens during the day and projected on the palazzo wall at night.

Untitled, [crow, right wing, closed] is from Michael's most acclaimed photographic series, 'cloud', 2000. This image is an outstretched crow's wing set against an expansive Australian blue sky. It is one from a series of ten images, each which feature a singular icon.



Learn more about
Michael Riley

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Untitled, [crow, right wing, closed]
from the series *cloud* 2000

chromogenic pigment print

Untitled, [galah] from
the series *flyblown* 1998

chromogenic pigment print

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Penelope Seidler, 2019

12 October 2024 – 16 February 2025



BEN QUILTY

Based in the Southern Highlands of NSW, Ben Quilty is one of Australia's best-known and highly regarded contemporary artists.

In 2019 the Art Gallery of South Australia presented the first major survey exhibition of Ben's work. Curated by Lisa Slade, the exhibition toured to the Art Gallery of NSW and Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA). Quilty has been a finalist in the prestigious Wynne and Archibald prizes and won the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize in 2009 and the Archibald Prize in 2011 with his portrait of artist, Margaret Olley. Also in 2011, Ben travelled to Afghanistan as an official war artist with The Australian War Memorial. He was invited by World Vision Australia to travel to Greece, Serbia and Lebanon with author Richard Flanagan, to witness firsthand the international refugee crisis in 2016. His work is represented in numerous major public, corporate and private collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Art Gallery of South Australia, National Gallery of Victoria and QAGOMA.

Poly 2004

polystyrene, hardcoat,
acrylic paint

The Joseph Banks Project no.1 2011

steel, fencing wire, resin, enamel

Budgie After Streeton 2004

oil on canvas (pictured)

The Joseph Banks Project no.2 2011

steel, fencing wire, resin, enamel

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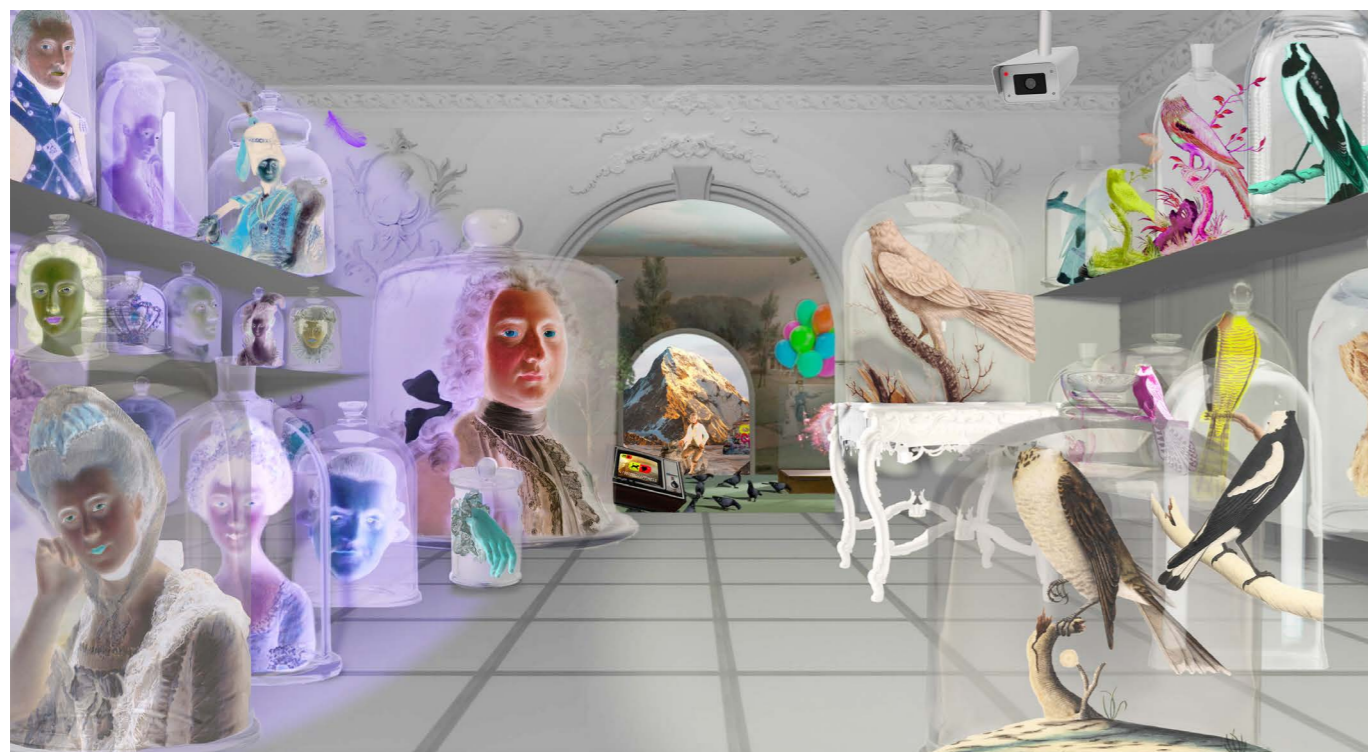
Learn more about
Ben Quilty



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On loan from the Artist

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JOAN ROSS

Bold and experimental, Joan Ross investigates the legacy of colonialism in Australia with a particular focus on reconfiguring the colonial Australian landscape and drawing attention to the complex and ongoing issues surrounding the effects of globalisation and colonisation.

Since the late 1980s, Joan has exhibited across a range of mediums, from drawing, painting, photography and sculpture to installation, video, and virtual reality. Her experimental works combine colonial iconography and landscape painting with collaged elements of western commodity culture connected to land tenure and Aboriginal peoples' active presence on the land.

Recent projects include designing the hoarding for The Art Gallery of New South Wales' Sydney Modern expansion and illuminating the façade of The National Gallery of Australia during the 2021 Enlighten Festival. Joan was awarded the National Art School Fellowship in 2023. In 2024 she was the subject of a major solo exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery.

I give you a mountain 2018

high-definition video animation,
sound, duration 06:30min

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Purchased by Maitland Regional
Art Gallery, 2020

GRAB IT - Phil's chicken shop 2019

handcoloured pigment print
on cotton rag paper

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Purchased by Maitland Regional
Art Gallery, 2020

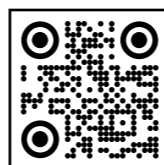
Collectors Paradise 2019

pigment print on cotton rag paper
(pictured)

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Purchased by Maitland Regional
Art Gallery, 2020

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Learn more about
Joan Ross



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PETER SPEIGHT

Peter Speight was a Newcastle based artist who grew up in Maitland. This piece is from Maitland Regional Art Gallery's 2016 *Against Convention* exhibition. *Against Convention* was a retrospective celebration of Peter's unique sculptural practice since he started exhibiting in the late 1990s. Peter was a prolific artist and this exhibition was only a small representation of what he produced during his lifetime. Predominately known as a sculptor who used recycled wood and found objects, his work is embedded with his personality.

Cassowary 2007 wood and paint

Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Geoffrey Hassall, 2016



BRIDIE WATT

Bridie Watt is a Newcastle-based artist. Her art-making practice is centred around painting and drawing with her work largely inspired by natural forms and colours. Bridie's work often features birds, which symbolise aspects of her life; the bird hurriedly on its way somewhere or crouching in the quiet, bathed in the beauty of the world around.

Bridie has also created various landmark murals around Newcastle which have become very popular and well known within the community.

Beneath the wattle's watchful eyes 2024

acrylic on canvas blind, hung from a wooden pelmet

Moment of Stillness 2024

acrylic on board

The Air Hums with Possibility 2024

acrylic on board

TREVOR WEEKES

Trevor Weekes is a practicing artist and educator.

Exhibiting regularly, with both solo and group shows throughout Australia, Trevor's art practice embraces drawing, painting, sculpture, artists book production and more recently animation. Music has always played an important role in his life and is an area he has been involved in, producing sound works that have featured in several of his installations. His love of animals has been a major topic of interest, focusing on birds specifically and flight.

Exhibit 51 2005

bronze

Exhibit 54 2005

painted bronze

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Gift of the artist, 2014

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CLARE WEEKS

Newcastle-based Clare Weeks is a photo media artist working primarily in digital and performance video art; known for her distinct interdisciplinary practice and autographic portraits of illness, health, beauty, loss, and order. No stranger to the illness experience, Clare completed a PhD in 2020 titled "Theatre, autopathography and the medicalised self: imaging health from the shadows of illness," a creative research project catalysed by a diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis in 2011. Since this time she has documented her lived experience of this condition through visual, text and oral means.

Clare is a highly respected Arts and Cultural Sector professional having shared her unique and sought-after expertise developing innovative programs and successful funding submissions, educating generations of artists as photo media Teacher at the University of Newcastle and Newcastle Art School (Hunter Street TAFE) and supporting the development of the Hunter region's Arts and Cultural Industry as freelance Curator and Arts Mentor.

***Crested pigeon* 2012**

Ink jet print on cotton rag

***Noisy minor* 2012**

Ink jet print on cotton rag

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Purchased by Maitland Regional Art Gallery, 2012

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BRETT WHITELEY

Brett Whiteley is one of Australia's most celebrated artists. As a multiple recipient of the Art Gallery of NSW's Archibald Prize, the Wynne and Sulman prizes, his artistic career was bolstered by his celebrity status in Australia and overseas during the 1980's. He worked across painting, sculpture and the graphic arts, and is best known for his sensual and lyrical paintings of interiors, nudes and harbour scenes.

Brett's art was intimately connected to his tumultuous, creative life. From the late 1970s, his self-portraits – such as *Art, life and the other thing* 1978 – began to trace his heroin addiction, which increasingly impacted his life and career. His last studio and home in Sydney's Surry Hills is now an art museum managed by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Wren II, 1983

ink on silk

Maitland Regional Art Gallery Collection
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Pauline Hunter, 2013

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SCHOOL VISITS, EDUCATION MONDAYS & WORKSHOPS

MRAG is a significant local resource valued by educators, not only for its exhibitions and art collection, but for its public spaces, big backyard and workshop facilities. We enjoy working with educators to create a gallery experience that meets the needs and interests of their students

Education Mondays are exclusive access for students and schools on Mondays when the gallery is closed to the public. Each school term we welcome teachers and students for exclusive Gallery access, workshops or self-directed activities. The Cafe will remain closed on Mondays, so there's plenty of space indoors for your lunch or breakout sessions. Bookings essential. Contact Alex to confirm your visit.

ALEX MORRIS

EDUCATION PROGRAMS LEAD

Alexandra.Morris@maitland.nsw.gov.au

02 4934 9785 | Maitland Regional Art Gallery

MAITLAND REGIONAL ART GALLERY

ART GALLERY & STORE

Tuesday – Sunday, 9.00am – 4.00pm

Address: 230 High Street,

PO Box 220, Maitland, NSW, 2320

Phone: 02 4934 9859


Email: artgallery@maitland.nsw.gov.au


CAFÉ SERAPHINE

Tuesday – Sunday, 8.00am – 2.00pm

Phone: 02 4934 7264

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Education Kit for Teachers

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