

# STILL

NATIONAL STILL LIFE AWARD  
2017

EDUCATION RESOURCE  
FOR TEACHERS

SUITABLE TO USE WITH K-12, TAFE AND  
OTHER ART LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



**BRYANT MCKINNON  
LAWYERS**

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ELDERS BOTH PAST AND PRESENT AND PAY RESPECT TO ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES OF TODAY.

# STILL: NATIONAL STILL LIFE AWARD:

Building on the ten year foundation of Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery's still life painting award, *Still* is a biennial, acquisitive award for works in the genre of still life, in all media, open to artists at all stages of their careers. *Still* seeks to highlight the diversity and vitality of still life in contemporary art practice, broadening the interpretation of this enduring genre.

**STILL 2017 SELECTED ARTISTS** Tony Albert \ Louise Allerton  
Kelly Austin \ Tanya Baily \ Elie Begg \ Annette Blair  
Rene Bolten \ Mechelle Bounpraseuth \ Terri Butterworth  
Fran Callen \ Tom Carment \ Angela Casey \ Tiffany Cole  
Karl de Waal \ Trisha Dean \ Mary Donnelly \ Scott Duncan  
Sarah Edmondson \ Nicolette Eisdell \ Merran Esson  
Ben Fayle \ Guy Gilmour \ Sarah Goffman \ Ronnie  
Grammatica \ Linda Greedy \ Colleen Greig-Canty  
Vanessa Holle \ Alana Hunt \ Susan Jacobsen \ Laura Jones  
Helle Jorgensen \ Paul Kalemba \ Laura E. Kennedy  
Myriam Kin-Yee \ Zai Kuang \ Michael Langley \ Sam Leach  
Kellie Leczinska \ Alison Mackay \ Josh Mackenzie  
Kiata Mason \ Julian Meagher \ Robert Moore  
Stephen Nothling \ Susan O'Doherty \ Sarah O'Sullivan  
Sassy Park \ Victoria Reichelt \ Elvis Richardson  
Damien Shen \ Brendan Smith \ Tim Snowdon  
Richard Spoehr \ Vipoo Srivilasa \ Nathan Taylor  
Samantha Thompson \ Anselm van Rood  
Prue Venables \ Lilli Waters \ Kati Watson \ Greg Weight  
Mirra Whale \ Cleo Wilkinson

# FOREWORD

CATH FOGARTY

On behalf of the team at Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery I'm proud to present this education resource to accompany *Still: National Still Life Award*.

Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery has a longstanding association with the still life genre and in 2017 this new award opened to all Australian artists working in any medium. It has brought a fresh and contemporary exploration of still life's enduring themes; life and death, reverence for familiar objects and the meaning and memory they carry.

The new phase of the award aims to expand interest in still life and reveal the treasure trove of ideas and conversations it allows us to have and this education resource aims to assist that discussion in the classroom.

With sponsorship support from leading local businesses and professional services including Major Sponsor, Mercedes-Benz Coffs Coast and Supporting Sponsors; Bryant Mckinnon Lawyers, saso.creative and Moving Art; *Still: National Still Life Award* has come into being.

Particular thanks go to Heather McKinnon of Byant Mckinnon Lawyers Coffs Harbour whose focus on the importance of the arts in education has enabled this resource to be commissioned.

It is designed to be freely available as a downloadable kit to Australian teachers of the K-12 syllabus but also has value for other art learning environments including TAFE and will be updated biennially alongside the award.

We hope that teachers and students across Australia find it useful and inspiring.

CATHERINE FOGARTY

Cultural Development, Gallery and History Services Coordinator  
Coffs Harbour City Council

# INTRODUCTION

This K-12 education resource has three components. There are two PowerPoint Slideshows '**Still Life — A History**' and '**STILL 2017 Exhibition**' and one document of '**Still Teachers' Notes and Activities**'. All of these are also saved as PDFs for ease of printing.

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The first PDF '**Still Life — A History**' gives a definition and context for the genre of Still Life in western art history. The PDF shows historical examples of still life which connect to the contemporary responses to still life found in the Still exhibition.

The second PDF '**STILL: The Artists 2017**' focuses on sixteen contemporary Australian artists selected from the more than sixty artists featured in the exhibition. The PDF shows a slide of the artist's work and their artist statement. The images are grouped by four themes: Illusion, Symbolism, Personal & Political, Identity.

This document '**Education Resource for Teachers**' is designed to accompany the PDFs. The notes can be printed out or used as an adjunct to the slideshows. The notes feature questions (**Q**) and activities (**A**) for primary age students and secondary age students grouped by the four themes.

The teachers' notes also include an "**Introduction to the Genre of Still life**" which relates to the information found in the first slide show and background information about the National Still Life Award.

This resource is designed to be ready to use in the classroom and in conjunction with your visit to the Coffs Harbour Regional Art Gallery.

THEME ONE  
ILLUSION

STILL TEACHERS NOTES AND ACTIVITIES



# LAURA E. KENNEDY

Born 1982, lives and works in Hobart, Tasmania.

Persephone had always longed for profound fame but she realised upon the chill of her deathbed that few would ever acknowledge her singularity and that they would instead solely objectify the grace of her lifeless form (*After Oudry*) 2017

Coloured pencil and chalkboard paint on panel and frame  
44 x 38 x 5cm, Courtesy of .M Contemporary

## ARTIST STATEMENT

This work appropriates a still-life figure from the height of art in the Western Canon (The Old Masters) and reimagines its exquisite beauty using materials most commonly aligned with children's education. By utilising such undervalued mediums, the work questions the motivations behind the allocation of value in art. While the exact title seeks to give the depicted bird a sense of narrative and identity, which is traditionally denied to animal still-life subjects.

## ABOUT THE WORK

Laura E. Kennedy's work returns to the history of still life and the virtuosity of the master painters. From the ancients to the Dutch painters of the 17th century, value was placed on their ability to marvel the spectator with the illusion of the real thing. Some of the most famous still life paintings of history include birds with this one by Frans Cuyck Van Myerop (Bruges ? C. 1640-Ghent 1689) *Trompe L'Oeil with Dead Birds* Signed c. 1670-80 oil on canvas 120x93cm hanging and tied just as Kennedy's bird is. She also acknowledges Jean Baptiste Oudry who produced many still life paintings and was

regarded as a master of illusion including works such as *The White Duck* 1753 or *Nature morte avec oiseaux morts et cerises* which translates as *Still Life with dead birds and cherries* from 1712.

Kennedy gives her work a lengthy title — so who was Persephone? The namesake of this bird is from Greek mythology. She was the daughter of Zeus and Demeter, the goddess queen of the underworld, wife of the god Hades (Hades). She was also the goddess of spring growth returning to earth each spring to oversee the blooming of plants and harvest then retreating to the underworld each winter. Kennedy works in the style of the old masters and even manipulates the ornate frame bringing the audience attention to it as part of the reading of the work. The work speaks of beauty and excess — the rich carved frame, the exotic trophy bird, lying inert before us. She speaks of the capacity for still life to inspire pain, pathos, regret, death, loss.

That Kennedy has used the modest materials of coloured pencils and black board paint seeks to elevate their humble status. It also firmly places her work within a contemporary framework where artists draw on the everyday in creating potent symbols of their times.



# LILLI WATERS

Born Armidale, NSW 1983, lives and works in Melbourne, VIC.

## Our Love is Plastic 2017

Photography, archival pigment print, edition 1 + 2AP | 155.15 x 111.21 cm (unframed)

### ARTIST STATEMENT

The Plastic Fish series is an invitation into a vibrant world abundant with iridescent objects, where fish dwell amongst opulent objects, an illusion of beauty & life. Depth and space evoke a sense of the mysterious and time appears to slow down. Beneath the surface, beauty reveals a darker truth, fragility, futility and the acute vulnerability of nature at the hands of humans, as we overwhelm all living things with our own disposable culture.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Waters makes an environmental statement in her work for the exhibition STILL. She draws on the old Dutch master's tradition of still life, recreating the formal elements whilst introducing a twist. The Lobster is made of plastic. The pear is protected by a foam mesh. Suddenly the abundance, the metaphor of decay and death is replaced by a darker layer — what is the impact on the planet of this love of plastic? How does it affect the oceans? The romance of still life is replaced by environmental destruction.





# ANNETTE BLAIR

Lives and works NSW.

## A Place for Everything 2017

Hand blown, hot sculpted and cold worked glass, steel |  
36 x 110 x 24.5 cm. Courtesy of Beaver Galleries

### ARTIST STATEMENT

A Place for Everything (and everything in its place) is a tribute to the simple things often overlooked. Objects from the home seem to have an inherent ability to tell a story of their previous function, evident through visible wear and tear which evokes a nostalgic sense of the hands which held them. Recreating these utilitarian objects in black glass removes their primary function while at the same time preserving it.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Annette Blair's work alludes to the history of the prowess of still life. The fact that these seemingly ordinary household objects are made of blown glass transforms them into something extraordinary. They are now delicate and fragile in opposition to their original function — the hammer, nails, apple core, paint bucket. They embody all the formal elements of still life the — passing of time, the objects imply work, activity, construction. They suggest toil.



# RENE BOLTEN

Lives and works NSW.

## Salt, Water and Fish 2017

Oil on canvas | 60 x 70 cm

### ARTIST STATEMENT

Salt, water and fish: a painting of subjects ultimately connected in their elemental states.

Shadows and light with colour used sparingly, linking the 3 together to represent their familiarity.

### ABOUT THE WORK

A study in dark and light. Bolton brings the poignancy of opposing forces like dark/light, death/life in this still life oil painting done in a traditional academic style. Here is a modest arrangement — a salt shaker, glass of water and fresh fish. The canvas has vast dark space; he has reduced his three objects plus plate and table to less than a third of the composition. The fish stares lifeless from the canvas, teased by the representation of the elements of the ocean. If only the water in the glass were combined with the salt in the shaker then it might still draw breath. However the finality is apparent: the fish dead, the salt absolutely separate from the water, its use here to season the fish before Consumption.

Bolton shows his bravado as a painter, capturing the light reflections in the glass, the texture of the fish, the plastic salt shaker lit like a beacon. The painting shows that even in a sparing still life composition there is visual poetry.

## PRIMARY STUDENTS

### THEME ONE: ILLUSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

#### Q&A.

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Each of these works uses the technique of Trompe-l'œil. This connects to a story about still life painters from antiquity. You will find the story in the Slideshow 'Still Life — A History' (slide 5–7)

#### READ THE STORY AND DISCUSS –

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Using coloured pencils on black paper. Create a small drawing. Try to copy in as much detail as possible — a feather, a leaf or a shell that you've found. Study all the patterns on the feather/leaf/shell. Alternatively you could photocopy the leaf or feather and trace it or create a monoprint. Press the feather onto the inked surface or roll printing ink across the feather to then print it.

- Q.** Looking at Laura E. Kennedy's "Persephone..." Can you describe the bird? Then use birds as your theme. Using food packaging cut out the body, beak, wings, tail, legs. It could be a magpie, an owl, a local bird? Collage onto the card using old children's books, coloured paper. You may like to create some ink splashes or rubbings to cut up for the collage. The birds can then hang from fishing line like a mobile.
- Q.** Imagine you are a detective — what do you make of the objects arranged here in these still life artworks? What is it evidence of?
- A.** White paper bags can be turned into a bird also. Blow air into the bag turn towards you and fold one corner this becomes the beak — add two circles for eyes turn the other corner upwards and it looks like a crest.

## SECONDARY STUDENTS

### THEME ONE: ILLUSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Q.** Compare Lilli Waters' "Our Love is Plastic" with Laura E. Kennedy's "Persephone had always longed for profound fame but she realised upon the chill of her deathbed that few would ever acknowledge her singularity and that they would instead solely objectify the grace of her lifeless form (After Oudry)". What is similar about the themes explored? What is different in the media and intention of the work? Are they similar sizes?
- Q.** In each of the works in this theme the artists connect with the history of the genre of Still Life. They seek to create an illusion of the actual object depicted. Look at the subject matter in the work by René Bolton and Annette Blair. Describe what you see. Why do you think the artists chose to depict these objects? If they are symbols what do they symbolise?
- Q.** Look at the work by Lilli Waters "Our Love is Plastic". Describe what you see. How does it relate to traditional Still Life? What makes it contemporary?

#### Q&A

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Whilst these artists have depicted dead birds, skulls are another very popular image in still life works. Find some other famous examples of still life which depict skulls and create a PowerPoint or short film with as many skull art references and even skull popular culture references as you can find. (for eg. A work by Michael Zavros contains both a reference to death and a skull covered scarf by the Designer Alexander McQueen entitled **Phoebe is dead/McQueen**, 2010, oil on canvas, 110 x 150, which won the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize, and is part of the Moran collection) You could even include some of your own drawings, prints paintings of skulls.

- A.** Create a still life arrangement of food — it could be "healthy" food or "party" food it might contain a mixture of "junk" food and fruit. Take a few photos of the arrangement. Draw or paint the arrangement. You could do a series of drawings from different angles. Then eat the food leaving the apple core, wrappers etc close to where the intact food had been take a new set of photos. Then draw or paint this new arrangement.
- A.** Each of the works are poignant with stark formal contrasts like dark/light, delicate/solid ... write a list of words that might include a subjective response to the works for example ... dark, foreboding ... etc. Use these works as a starting point for a still life composition. Once you've arranged the objects try to think about adding lighting and shadows.

THEME TWO  
SYMBOLISM

STILL TEACHERS NOTES AND ACTIVITIES



# SAM LEACH

Born 1973 Adelaide, lives and works Melbourne, VIC.

## Helmet for Cosmist

Oil on linen | 60 x 60 cm | Courtesy of Sullivan+Strumpf

### ARTIST STATEMENT

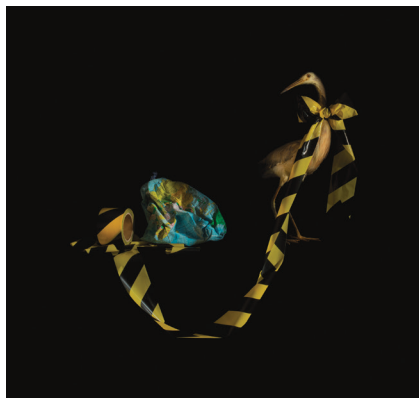
This is a painting of a slightly modified helmet used in testing high altitude, high speed aircraft associated with the cold war and the space race. I am interested work in the origins of the space program with the Russian Cosmists and their utopian techno mysticism. I like to imagine Fyodorov would enjoy wearing this helmet.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Fyodorov was a Russian philosopher who talked of trans humanism and cloning, he was interested in human immortality and is credited with being the inspiration for the Russian space program. Sam Leach has entitled his work **Helmet for Cosmist** as an ironic nod to the genre of still life ... the helmet is for someone interested in resurrection and immortality, yet the genre of still life is best known for the notion of being a reminder of mortality — a memento mori. He contrasts the soft lilac feather with the cool metallic retro helmet. He paints with bravado and photographic realism in the tradition of master painters seeking to create the illusion of the thing itself.

The purple plume? Could it be a feather in one's cap which is a reference to an achievement ... or in a quick internet search in the world of gamers a purple plume is symbolic of honour and justice, it marks a warrior of particular valour and conspicuous honour.

In 2010 the artist won the Archibald and the Wynne prize something that only William Dobell and Brett Whiteley has done before. He tends to paint on a small scale which he describes as more intimate, opening up a conversation between artist and the viewer.



# ANGELA CASEY

Born 1969 Launceston, lives and works Launceston, TAS.

## Cautionary Tales #1

C-type print | 80 x 83.5 cm

### ARTIST STATEMENT

The darkness of Beatrix Potter's animal tales for children is channelled in an exploration of the increasingly dystopian world which we have created and are bound to.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Angela Casey is a Tasmanian based artist who has recently had residencies at the Port Arthur Historic Site and Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery. In her words the native birds of Tasmania are surrogates for human occupation. They are harbingers of the human impact on our environment. The black background provides a quiet space for contemplation.

From an exhibition entitled Exit. Nature meets culture in her works – a deflated plastic globe, so suggestive of earth's expiry. She uses barricade tape to wrap the bird or trap the bird – the yellow and black stripe representing a physical hazard. The tape is tied in a bow an ironic dressing up of the captured bird. The image is constructed within the Dutch still life tradition.

# PRUE VENABLES

Born 1954 England lives and works  
Castlemaine, VIC.

## Esme's Dressing Table

Hand thrown porcelain, silver, copper, thread, bristles, 29  
x 140 x 140 cm (overall) | Photograph by Terence Bogue |  
Courtesy of Beaver Galleries



### ARTIST STATEMENT

A central lidded jar portrays the contained anonymous grey ash, dispersed long ago, Esme's remains. Positioned around are objects of porcelain, metal, bristle and thread — still, quiet memories of my grandmother's dressing table. I imagine her once touching and using such object

### ABOUT THE WORK

Prue Venables has made an homage to her grandmother.

The objects speak of grief, contained.

They are functional objects representative of life and death with the inclusion of the urn of ashes.

Venables studied her craft in at the Harrow studio in London, she is a master of her medium working in porcelain to create delicate beautiful forms.

The work incorporates the symbolism of still life and the evocative nature of objects so suggestive of a human life.

*"The forms of still life are strong enough to make the difference between brutal existence and human life: without them there is no continuity of generations, no human legacy, only an intermittent and flickering chaos; with them, there is cultural memory and family, an authentically civilised world."*

Quote from Bryson, Norman. 1990. Looking at the overlooked: four essays on still life painting. London: Reaktion. pg 138





# KIATA MASON

Born 1978 Sydney, lives and works Lake Cathie NSW.

## Midnight Oysters

acrylic on canvas, 2017. 91x91cm

### ARTIST STATEMENT

Painting images of my grandmother's sea side home, celebrating her life and the way she has chosen to live. This work depicts a midnight snack of my Grans as she loves oysters. It also has a section of one of her paintings in the background.

### ABOUT THE WORK

The painting is as much about colour and pattern as it is a personal story of the artist's relationship with her grandmother. Mason uses the potential of still life for allegory. She indicates being by the coast with the light, white cloth and striped linen and the oysters. The lemons are full of zest and life the work is breezy yet with symbolic references to her grandmother, three paintings within the painting including Manet's *Olympia*, books suggesting learning or knowledge, her cutlery is silverware suggesting wealth. The food is laid out on decorative porcelain plates, the flowers fall elegantly across the scene, the work has an easy quality, it is relaxed sunny and bright. It follows the tenets of the genre of still life by building an arrangement of objects which convey a particular story.

## PRIMARY STUDENTS

### THEME TWO: SYMBOLISM QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

#### SYMBOLISM: ALLEGORY, PERSONAL STORY, SUBJECTIVE

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- Q.** Inspired by Sam Leach's **Helmet for Cosmist** which includes an unlikely combination of a silver helmet and purple feather — have you heard of Plants vs Zombies — lets mix it up! How about creating space suits and beetle suits? Use silver spray paint on card board boxes, plastic bottles could become oxygen packs, if you're a bug the antennae could be card covered in foil, the body shaped from a box. You could video the wearable art and create a movie trailer using Ipads or phone apps.

#### Q&A

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From the dress up box! Use two pieces of a costume to create a subject for a still life. Contrast two pieces of costume that might not ordinarily go together. Create a continuous line drawing of the two things or a lino print. You could paint it using a combination of drawing, painting and collage. What might this new costume symbolise? Consider the separate parts and then together. Describe the costume and who it might be for? Can you find identify a famous person from history to whom it might belong? It could be a jockey, writer, tennis player, philosopher, astronaut, artist, musician, politician....etc?

Once you've selected, you could create a cartoon featuring this character wearing their unusual attire.

## SECONDARY STUDENTS

### THEME TWO: SYMBOLISM QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

#### SYMBOLISM: ALLEGORY, PERSONAL STORY, SUBJECTIVE

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- Q.** In Dutch vanitas painting, artists would paint objects to reveal something of the wealth or status of the owner. Consider Angela Casey's objects as part of this tradition what do they tell us about the artist? the audience? The context in which they were produced?
- Q.** Look at the objects in Kiata Mason's work. Play detective — what do they tell you about the subject of this still life, in this case her grandmother? Imagine the objects placed differently — would the meaning in the work shift and change?
- Q.** Both Prue Venables and Kiata Mason have created a work about someone important in their life. Create your own still life about someone you know. It could be a friend, family member or even a celebrity? Do you know what food they like? Flowers they prefer? Objects they have in their house? What objects would you include to represent them? You could create the still life in clay, assemblage, charcoal, lino print, screen print ...
- A.** Make a conscious decision in still life to limit yourself to an arrangement of 4 objects which might represent you. Develop a painting or a sculpture in wire from the arrangement.
- A.** Inspired by Angela Casey's photograph, play with hazard tape, gaffer tape, flouro tape in the construction of a sculpture. You could take animals or birds as a start point.

#### Q&A

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Still Life presents a unique opportunity for allegory. Create a still life arrangement using only red objects or only green objects. Make a print or draw your response. Is there a story in your monochrome still life?

THEME THREE  
PERSONAL &  
POLITICAL

POST MODERN FRAME



# TONY ALBERT

Girramay/Yidinji/Kuku-Yalanji peoples, Townsville, Queensland, Australia born 1981, lives and works Sydney, NSW.

## Mid Century Modern — snake, fish, shield

pigment prints on paper, 2016, 120x120cm

### ARTIST STATEMENT

Tony Albert questions how we understand, imagine and construct difference. Certain political themes and visual motifs resurface across his oeuvre, including thematic representations of the 'outsider' and Aboriginalia. Albert's 'Mid Century Modern' series uses hundreds of collected vintage retro ashtrays and tablecloths depicting Westernised stereotypes of Aboriginal culture, assembling them to create a vibrant and relentless photographic series that examines cultural appropriation and the erasure of Aboriginal racial and cultural identity.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Tony Albert's **Mid century Modern — snake, fish, shield** comes from a series. In each, his ashtrays acknowledge a bygone era, their modernist aesthetic a nod to the times they were produced — 1950s Australia. If we consider an Indigenous timeline of the 1950s versus a Western timeline, it was as late as 1967 that Aboriginal people were granted Australian citizenship. Albert draws on a kitsch and abject aesthetic, one can almost smell the stench of a full ashtray. Yet the imagery is familiar as the appetite for Aboriginalia was huge in the late Twentieth century. An appetite for home décor without reflection. Albert's still life is provocative of what is cultural appropriation?

There is also a sense of a narrative in this series – who has just been gathered around the ashtray? Two people, three people, a large group of people in some cases — still smoking while stubbing and ashing on the images and faces of Aboriginal Australia. Two things are significant here; smoking ceremonies and the notion that cultural imagery is sacred. So what do we make of these images? They speak of cultural annihilation in the strongest terms — the smell of the ashtray lingers indeed.



# SARAH GOFFMAN

Born 1966 Sydney, NSW, lives and works Sydney NSW.

## Asian table 2017

PET plastics, other plastics, enamel paint, permanent marker, 2017, 20 x 100 x 35cm

### ARTIST STATEMENT

This work is a copy of a set of Asian ceramic pieces in the Wollongong Art Gallery collection. I made contemporary reproductions of these pieces, using plastics to highlight the tradition of plastic arts and our reliance on petroleum based products to facilitate consumerism.

### ABOUT THE WORK

In her work, Sarah Goffman explores many of the key concepts of still life. Firstly, the idea of collections. Many early museum collections stemmed from curios depicted in still life paintings. The Dutch masters were keen to document every type of flower be it in bloom at the same time as others or not, their works were about historical classification. Another notion of still life was Vanitas, a display of wealth. Luxurious tea pots, rugs, vases signifying riches and power. Here the artist has used objects of value existing in the collection of the Wollongong Art Gallery and then reworked them in plastic, enamel paint and permanent marker. Like the artists of the avant garde who used still life to innovate and create something new, Goffman's is a contemporary practice where she uses the discarded materials from everyday life to recreate an object of value. She also employs the concept of illusion where at first glance the viewer perceives the objects to be made of porcelain. By doing this she questions high art and low art and the decadence of consumerism. The work also has an environmental message — what is this reliance on petroleum based products and where is it leading us?



# ELVIS RICHARDSON

Born Sydney 1965, Lives and works Melbourne VIC

## Settlement 2016

HD Video, 2016, 9.06mins

### ARTIST STATEMENT

The still life interiors depicted in *Settlement* are images sourced from real-estate for sale advertisements and selected for their compositions, lighting, textures, surfaces, angles and photographic staging. The images while filled with only inanimate objects still loudly speak to a human presence through their idiosyncratic personal yet recognisable arrangements; like a chair placed facing the light of a window or a kitchen sink under a frilly curtained window with a view of a back yard.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Elvis Richardson's video work entitled **Settlement** sources images from real estate websites. The parameters of her search was anywhere in Australia, 2 bedrooms, and selling for less than \$250 000.

She thwarts the message of traditional still life which was to show the abundance and wealth of a person and their objects. As Melinda Rackhame writes "These houses are undressed, unbeautiful, superseded — shocking to us as sophisticated consumers of the style industry. They have slipped through the gaps of renovation and design, unadorned by granite bench tops, Italian mosaic tiles, stainless steel appliances, marble bathrooms. Failures in the revolving door of fashion. Losers in the investment market.

We glimpse the tropes of suburban horror and true crime in **Settlement**. A doll upon a single bed stares squarely at itself in the mirror, ominous nicotine yellowed cupboards sit below a ceiling manhole cover, slightly ajar."

The video explores our existence and culture through the interiors of our homes.

[www.elvisrichardson.com/settlement.html](http://www.elvisrichardson.com/settlement.html) date cited 4/10/17 Author Melinda Rackham

NB. The artist Elvis Richardson is also the writer of a blog — The Countess Report: women count in the artworld [www.thecountessreport.com.au/index.html](http://www.thecountessreport.com.au/index.html) which published data on gender representation in the art world.



# JULIAN MEAGHER

Born 1979 Sydney, lives and works Sydney, NSW.

## Space Blanket # 1

Oil on linen, 2017, 120 x 120 cm

### ARTIST STATEMENT

I have recently been working with a lot of reflective surfaces, looking for allegory within objects. They are also simply a great subject matter to paint. I made this work one day heavy with disappointment over our government's response to one of the biggest refugee crises in recent history.

### ABOUT THE WORK

It represents still life but is also a political work absolutely located in 2017 where refugees are detained in Australia and washing up on European shores fleeing adversity. Contemporary Chinese dissident artist Ai Weiwei is also taking on the refugee crisis, releasing a new film. Many of his works are direct responses to humanitarian crises.

Meagher's work is influenced by the history of still life where the artist attempts to capture an illusion. His handling of paint, light reflections on the blanket and texture of the fabric is evocative. Seemingly, the viewer peers at a shimmering piece of cloth. The light handling is poignant but it is the context and subject which makes this work matter. The artist states he is disappointed by the government's stance on refugees, where the refugee is someone seeking asylum. He was driven to create the work to create something for the thousands of displaced people.



## PRIMARY STUDENTS

### THEME THREE: PERSONAL AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Q.** How many colours can you see in Julian Meagher’s work? Create your own painting in watercolour or acrylic using just two colours and their tones and shades adding hints of white and black.
- Q.** A space blanket is used in rescue situations – in this case to comfort refugees looking for safety. Brainstorm what other items you can think of which represent rescue and or safety in your school or suburb. Create a collage using drawing incorporating the objects into a still life.
- A.** Use plastic bottles to make a bird

#### Q&A

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In a quest to reuse and recycle, cash for the return of plastic bottles (originally just running in SA) is being introduced across Australia — create a poster to promote and encourage people to use this new venture.

- Q.** Make a still life sculpture based on flowers using recycled materials.

## SECONDARY STUDENTS

### THEME THREE: PERSONAL AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Q.** Tony Albert's work explores post colonial ideas from an Indigenous perspective. Discuss the ideas in his work. You could consider Albert's work in reference to other artists included in recent exhibitions like *Defying Empire* held at the National Gallery of Australia. [www.nga.gov.au/defyingempire/](http://www.nga.gov.au/defyingempire/) or *Sovereignty* held at ACCA Melbourne [www.acca.melbourne/exhibition/sovereignty/](http://www.acca.melbourne/exhibition/sovereignty/)
- Q.** Elvis Richardson has also spent time writing a blog which explores gender representation in the art world. Called the *The Countess Report: women count in the artworld*, and similar to the Guerrilla Girls in the USA, her blog seeks to call out discrimination in the artworld. Have a look at the blog and the images of the Guerrilla Girls. Do a quick count for this show ... how many female artists? How many male artists? What about the curators and the judges.
- Q.** Many of the artists in *STILL* express environmental concerns or political viewpoints — develop a still life arrangement where the objects represent a particular issue that might be making headlines in the news. Brainstorm objects which could be a stand in for a particular issue.
- Q.** Create a still life arrangement using a skull — it could be human, animal or bird — this could explore the idea of memento mori or reflect environmental concerns.
- A.** Use recycled materials to create a still life sculpture based on fruit or flowers. After creating the still life in plastic — paint, draw and or photograph the work. You could also use an animation App to show the flowers, destruction or gradual wilting.

#### Q&A

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Using symbolism to give meaning, arrange a selection of objects into a still life

Paint it, print it, draw it, remake it out of wire.

Applying the idea of symbolism to the works you see in *Still*, consider three of the works together — Ask yourself why did the artists choose to paint/draw/sculpt those particular objects? What ideas do the objects convey?

THEME FOUR  
IDENTITY

CULTURAL FRAME



# MEHELLE BOUNPRASEUTH

NSW

## Living the Nug Life

Glazed Earthenware, 2017, 17 x 50 x 34 cm

### ARTIST STATEMENT

Bounpraseuth explores the ironic and tragi-comic moments of ordinary life. Of particular interest are the disdained birds of the Australian landscape. Birds like pigeons are celebrated and transformed into humble monuments. Drawing out their human qualities and placed amongst common detritus, as if bit players in an imagined theatre of suburban life. By presenting mundane instances and commonplace materials as still-lives Bounpraseuth celebrates the deep pathos of the minutia and the beauty the everyday.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Mechelle Bounpraseuth has chosen to use humble subject matter in her still life a pigeon, chips and discarded cigarette butts — the work is humorous. The pigeon stands amongst litter — a bird sometimes referred to as the rats of the air — and is here immortalised in ceramic. The work is ironic and playful, it is a common suburban scene exalted to a ceramic installation. Contrary to ceramic which is often decorative and delicate these earthenware forms are chunky and heavy. The scene is familiar, tragic, comic.



# SARAH EDMONDSON

b. 1963 Sydney, lives and works Sydney, NSW.

## Please do not Bend

needlepoint tapestry, 2016, 32cm x 32cm

### ARTIST STATEMENT

This artwork responds to my interest in the impermanent. Based on a parcel from an ebay order, I was impressed by the obvious care and sentiment taken by the sender. In reinterpreting this package in needlepoint tapestry I am bringing it longevity and permanence. In this ephemeral age perhaps the tapestry will give the viewer reason to slow down and ponder for a moment about the time taken to build up the work.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Internet shopping, a parcel scrawled in smiley faces shipped from the UK on your doorstep, like the lyric 'brown paper packages tied up with string', Sarah Edmondson has embraced the simple pleasure of receiving a long awaited package. Here she recreates a parcel she received on Ebay. She presents her audience with a unique vision of our age, using old technologies — tapestry, with subject matter that reflects contemporary life. She says she is 'interested in chance occurrences and extending traditional approaches to printmaking' by working in for example, tapestry, a medium usually set aside for standardised reproductions of quaint scenes. Here the artist is reproducing an object from her own life, printing it in needlework. Something fleeting, ephemeral, usually ripped open on arrival, is made permanent.





# SARAH O'SULLIVAN

Born Sydney 1984, lives and works Lithgow, NSW.

## "Perminerala"

Stained porcelain, glass and timber, 2016, 32 x 100 x 40  
(approximate as work is made up of multiple pieces)

### ARTIST STATEMENT

Perminerala is an assemblage of slip cast porcelain pieces representing commonplace elements of the Australian bush landscape. Both death and regeneration are embodied within these, acting like fossils immortalising the robust and yet delicate Australian ecosystem.

### ABOUT THE WORK

Delicate and decorative, O'Sullivan references the Australian bush in her still life arrangement. Burnt twigs are trapped and displayed inside a bell jar as is the banksia pod vase. Fire is rejuvenating for the Australian bush although there is a delicate balance hinted at by the works being preserved inside the jars yet unable to breathe. The three forms outside the jars stand as if ready to face the elements.

The title is based on the scientific term Permineralization, which is a process of fossilization where casts of internal organisms are created by mineral deposits carried in water. It's interesting to consider this natural process together with the slip casting process in ceramics. The artist notes she enjoys the link between the artist immortalising natural forms in ceramics and fossils immortalising plants in nature.

## PRIMARY STUDENTS

### THEME FOUR: IDENTITY QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- A.** Rubbings — take a walk through the bush if possible or garden create rubbings from the plants, leaves, trees you find.

Using pods from Australian natives — create little 3d creatures. For the wings use wire covered by masking tape, paint the masking tape with shellac to give the creature a more natural appearance. You could add eyes, wings, antennae etc.

- Q.** The works in this theme have very Australian characteristics. Look up the Australian sound archive, each year new sounds are added to the archive. [www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/sounds-australia-2017](http://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/curated/sounds-australia-2017) Listen to the 2017 entries — See if you can listen to the Lyre Bird or the Wiggles entry. What other interesting sounds can you find.
- Q.** Create a still life arrangement based on food — can you make a rap song about your decaying still life?



## SECONDARY STUDENTS

### THEME FOUR: IDENTITY QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

#### Q&A

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The works in this theme have very Australian characteristics. Look up the Australian sound archive, each year new sounds are added to the archive. Discuss some of the recent additions. Use the source sound material to create something new. It could be a story, poem, song, or artwork.

- A.** Take a walk through the bush look for interesting leaves, pods, etc, use these as source material for Ceramics: create pinch pots based on found shells, leaves, plant forms. Or drawings in charcoal. Build a still life arrangement based on your walk.
- A.** Use modelling clay or plasticine to recreate a bird, your pet, you have seen or your pet cat — take your small figurine out into the world and photograph it in such a way that its size is less obvious. Can you get your figurine to interact with some scraps like Mechelle Bounpraseuth's work?
- A.** Draw a still life arrangement on a piece of fabric it could include words like a line from a song. The drawing could be a continuous line drawing — then use a needle and thread to stitch your design, the piece of cloth could be used to sew a simple 3d shape like a soft toy ... shaped like a heart/bear/alien/apple/
- Q.** Make a comparison of a range of still life works from history ... Warhol Brillo boxes, Oldenberg soft hamburger — compare to Mechelle Bounpraseuth's and Vipoo Srivilasa's work.
- Q.** Pose the question to your students: is Duchamp's famous readymade entitled Fountain part of the genre of still life? And why is Duchamp considered so important in art history?

#### Q&A

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Vipoo Srivilasa has created a shrine to a football team — are you a fan of something — create a shrine to your favourite team/band/youtuber?

- Q.** Visual Poetry — Representations of still life can be like visual poetry. Create a still life arrangement based on food — Can you make a rap song about your decaying still life? Alternatively use it as a starting point for an art work.

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRIZE

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## ARTWORLD | CONTEXT | PRIZE | AUDIENCE

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These artworks are part of a national prize based at the Coffs Harbour Regional Art Gallery. This prize was formerly a Still Life painting prize. Just this year, in 2017, it has opened up to a diverse range of media including photography, printmaking, ceramics, glass, sculpture, video, painting, drawing, printmaking and textiles to be more reflective of contemporary art practice. The new prize acknowledges that the genre of still life has moved beyond just painting and recognises that innovation has always been part of the genre of still life, think Duchamp's Fountain or Picasso and Braque's 's cubists collages.

There were 605 entries from every state including the ACT. This was then narrowed down to a shortlist of 63 artists who will all be contenders to be awarded the prize of \$20 000. There is also a people's choice award of \$5000. The shortlisting panel comprised Director of Lismore Regional Gallery Brett Adlington, Sydney art collector and former board member of the Museum of Contemporary Art Lisa Paulsen, along with Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery Coordinator Cath Fogarty and Curator Jo Besley. The award itself will be judged by Lisa Slade, Assistant Director Artistic Programmes, at the Art Gallery of South Australia.

The 63 artist finalists are: Tony Albert, Louise Allerton, Kelly Austin, Tanya Baily, Elie Begg, Annette Blair, Rene Bolten, Mechelle Bounpraseuth, Terri Butterworth, Fran Callen, Tom Carment, Angela Casey, Tiffany Cole, Karl de Waal, Trisha Dean, Mary Donnelly, Scott Duncan, Sarah Edmondson, Nicolette Eisdell, Merran Esson, Ben Fayle, Guy Gilmour, Sarah Goffman, Ronnie Grammatica, Linda Greedy, Colleen Greig-Canty, Vanessa Holle, Alana Hunt, Susan Jacobsen, Laura Jones, Helle Jorgensen, Paul Kalemba, Laura E. Kennedy, Myriam Kin-Yee, Zai Kuang, Michael Langley, Sam Leach, Kellie Leczinska, Alison Mackay, Josh Mackenzie, Kiata Mason, Julian Meagher, Robert Moore, Stephen Nothling, Susan O'Doherty, Sarah O'Sullivan, Sassy Park, Victoria Reichelt, Elvis Richardson, Damien Shen,

Brendan Smith, Tim Snowdon, Richard Spoehr, Vipoo Srivilasa, Nathan Taylor, Samantha Thompson, Anselm van Rood, Prue Venables, Lilli Waters, Kati Watson, Greg Weight, Mirra Whale, Cleo Wilkinson.

Art prizes can be a very important part of building an artist's career. In this exhibition you could look at the resumes of some of the entrants to see the trajectory of their art career. Some of the better known art prizes in Australia include the Archibald Prize and the Doug Moran Prize with new prizes emerging each year including Hadley's Art Prize for landscape in Hobart. Sponsorship is another key aspect of art prizes. Mercedes Benz Coffs Coast is the major sponsor of STILL alongside supporting sponsors Slater & Gordon, saso.creative and Moving Art.

*"The forms of still life are strong enough to make the difference between brutal existence and human life: without them there is no continuity of generations, no human legacy, only an intermittent and flickering chaos; with them, there is cultural memory and family, an authentically civilised world."*

Bryson, Norman. 1990. Looking at the overlooked: four essays on still life painting. London: Reaktion. pg 138

These notes accompany the Powerpoint entitled: 'STILL LIFE – A history INTRODUCTION' and add to an understanding of the contemporary works in the exhibition STILL

# THE GENRE OF STILL LIFE

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## STILL LIFE – DEFINITIONS

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The English words come from the Flemish term **Stilleven** meaning “still” things — inanimate objects, fruit, dead animals (motionless). According to the Merriam Webster dictionary it is a picture consisting predominantly of inanimate objects and when the word “genre” is added, refers to the category of graphic arts concerned with inanimate subject matter. In Graham Hopwood’s Handbook of Art still life is ‘the depiction of lifeless things such as ornaments, fruit and musical instruments.’

What is understated in these definitions is the Still Life capacity for rich allegorical and symbolic themes. The selected objects depicted in still life can mine the human condition, they are imbued with desire or banality, hope and despair, they take on symbolic resonance, referring to the transience of life and the passing of time.

Unlike for example landscape painting where the artist finds a sublime view, the still life painter arranges and

selects potentially ordinary objects, while seeking the divine. Objects offer rich opportunities for artists working in the studio to explore their ideas. The compositions might celebrate materiality, create tension between forms, explore the play of light and shadow. Likewise possessions have the capacity to speak about who we are. The objects we own reflect the life we live. In traditional still life the status and class of the owner was explicit in the painting. In contemporary still life this idea continues.

In contemporary still life the chosen objects reflect our day to day existence. Luxury magazines play on a desire for expensive goods. We make choices about what to wear, how to decorate the places we inhabit, these objects and possessions speak about our context in the world. The works in STILL take inspiration from the origins of the still life genre to being reflections on contemporary culture.

## WHAT ABOUT THE ORIGINS OF THE GENRE OF STILL LIFE?

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### ILLUSION

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In painting prior to the 20th century, the ability to create an illusion was most valued and the genre of still life was where painters could flex their artistic muscle. In a famous story from antiquity, an art competition is staged between two still life painters known as Zeuxis and Parrhasius (context is Greece around 400 BC). The stakes are to create the most convincing illusion. Zeuxis paints grapes in a bowl so realistically that birds attempt

to peck them. Assuming the competition won, the artist went to view his competitor’s work. Attempting to pull back the curtain to reveal the artwork, Zeuxis realised he had touched the painting. He conceded defeat that his work had tricked birds but Parrhasius had fooled a human being. This notion of creating an illusion of reality, to indeed trick the viewer, is a key idea in the history of still life painting.

# DUTCH STILL LIFE TRADITION

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The genre of still life flourished in the Netherlands in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. One motive for this was religious ideology as Protestants did not believe in adorning the altar with pictures. Artists had to look beyond the church to maintain a livelihood. The still life genre offered painters an opportunity to show their prowess at representation while celebrating the status and power of the person by depicting their worldly goods. Subjects included fruit, flowers, skulls, weaponry and the objects of learning found in a prosperous households and the popular tulip\*.

While the objects could represent the trivialities of everyday life, conversely they could allude to the transient nature of human life. The moralising of the church was still possible within the genre. Vanitas and Memento mori are key concepts of still life. Vanitas, literally meaning vanity, where a work would depict worldly goods and Memento mori a reminder of death. Together the concepts ask the viewer to ponder the value of worldly possessions to remember that we are not immortal. Images of decaying fruit, spent flowers, clocks ticking, blown bubbles, skulls, flickering and or extinguished candles were all used symbolically in vanitas paintings as indicators of mortality, death and the passing of time. That the sensual beauty of worldly things is fleeting, that the best bloom is cut, dead, and will wither and die. That the ripest fruit will decay

and rot, that death and according to the Church, final judgement, await. See Christian Thum, **Vanitas Still Life**, c.1670-80, oil on canvas 68.5x84cm as a good example of this.

The rise of still life was in line with economic advancement in the Netherlands particularly the urbanisation of society which led to increasing emphasis on homes and personal possessions. Food settings, floral displays, books of learning, musical instruments through to luxurious items known as 'pronk' were included in the paintings. One example features a Ming vase by Willem Kalf **Still Life with Fruit, Glassware, and a Wanli Bowl** 1659. Margareta Haverman (Dutch, active by 1716–died 1722 or later) **A Vase of Flowers** 1716, features a sumptuous display of flowers yet a fly lurks in one of the petals and a snail makes its way up the leaves.

\*During the frenzy of speculation fuelled by the **trade in tulips**, painters became cataloguers of the possibility of the bulbs and the flowers yet to bloom. Bulbs were traded and lead to the first stock market crash in history when the tulip trade collapsed. See the work by Jan Brueghel the Younger, **Satire on Tulip Mania**, 1640 oil on canvas 31x49cm which documents this.

# SYMBOLISM

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If earlier still life was an opportunity for displays of illusion later it was a platform for meditation, symbols and metaphors.

The objects depicted defined the person, see for example Pieter Claesz (Dutch, Berchem? 1596/97–1660 Haarlem) **Still Life with a Skull and a Writing Quill**.

It was later in France where the term **Nature Morte** literally meaning **dead nature** was applied to Still Life, acknowledging the symbolic connection to life and death.

In terms of the hierarchy of genres in Western Academic painting, Still Life was considered to be the lowest. With History painting, Portrait painting, Genre painting and

**Still, silent = contemplative**

**Dead = transience, mortality**

**Symbolic = visual poetry**

**Skulls = death, mortality**

**flowers = beauty, transience, desire**

**Rich foods = wealth, abundance, greed, lust**

Landscape painting taking priority. Despite its humble subject matter it has presented a unique opportunity for artists as a site for experimentation and has continued to track the shifts and changes within art history.

Arrangements of fruit allowed Cezanne to investigate form and thereby influence the radical experiments of the Cubists, Picasso and Braque who invented collage in a still life art work. In the name of still life Andy Warhol scoured the banality of the everyday with his Campbell soup can while producing soul searching political messages in inanimate images of the electric chair.

## SOME FAMOUS EXAMPLES OF STILL LIFE

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### TROMPE L'OEIL AND THE DUTCH MASTER PAINTERS

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Jacopo De'Barbari (1440-1516) **Still Life with Partridge and Gauntlets** 1504 oil on wood 49x42cm Alte Pinakothek Munich. A small work measuring just 49x42cm captures the idea of illusion and deception. Possibly created for a Hunting Room, like a trophy it looks as if the spoils of the hunt are displayed for the viewer as well as a deceptive note for the taking. It is **trompe l'oeil** at its finest, a term used for all types of illusions. Something artists would strive to achieve to be in the same league as Zeuxis and Parrhasios and continue to do so.

The work by Adriaen van der Spelt (Leiden, c.1630-Gouda, 1673) and Frans van Mieris (1635-81) **Still Life with Flowers and Curtain**, signed and dated 1658, oil on wood panel, 47 x 64.5cm Chicago, The Art Institute, Wirt D. Walker Fund alludes to the famous story. And a further example of trompe l'oeil is by Alexander Pope

(1849–1924) **The Oak Door** 1887 oil on oak 127 x 104.1 cm Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund, 1965 AN 65.168 The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Look up Cornelius Norbertus Gysbrechts (Antwerp 1610-after 1675) **Painters Easel with Fruit Piece** 1665-75 oil on wood, cut out, 226x123cm) a still life painting within an arrangement of easel, palette and the back of another painting in a minimalist studio, all done with such illusion that it appears you could be viewing a 21st century installation.

17th century Dutch master flower painters included Rachel Ruysch, Margareta Haverman, and still life painters included Willem Claesz Heda, and Pieter Claesz amongst others.

# ARTISTIC EXPERIMENTATION

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Michelangelo Merisi da Carravaggio **Basket of Fruit** 1599 oil on canvas signalled the genre as a space for artistic experimentation and is hailed for its handling of light.

Despite being a lowly genre, the artist Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin (1699-1779) managed to secure a place in the academy with still life. The artist chose the objects according to form, composition, and colour. He focused on the relationships between objects, the tension created by opposing forces like fragility and solidity, light and dark, much like the 20th century Italian painter Giorgio Morandi.

## BEAUTY IN NATURE

Albrecht Dürer **Wing of a Blue Roller** watercolour and gouache on vellum 1512, representative of the study of beauty in nature.

## NATURAL HISTORY

In Australia in the early colony artists such as John Lewin and Joseph Lycett painted still life as did William Gould in his famous book of fish.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography too is not new to the genre of still life. Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre 1787-1851 was a key player in the invention of photography, creating one of a kind images on a silver plated sheet of copper which he called daguerreotypes — these works from as early as 1839 were compositions in still life. The genre lent itself to the limitations of this new medium which needed still subjects and good lighting.

# EARLY HISTORY OF STILL LIFE — SYMBOLS

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As early as the Egyptian period, tombs of the pharaohs were decorated with the bounty of earthly objects as a promise in the afterlife. Similarly in Pompeii frescoes depicting fish, fruit, flowers, animals were a tribute to the status of the owners and represented the success of commercial activity in the city. In the middle ages religious paintings took hold and worldly objects were of lesser interest. During the Renaissance, religion and still life could be in symbiosis. In works by Giotto for example, everyday objects appeared in religious paintings, each loaded with specific symbolism, a visual language for the faithful. For example a pomegranate — a single fruit containing many seeds — represented

the church, a fish or lamb, Jesus Christ, a rose the Virgin Mary or Goddess Venus. (Paraphrased from Petry, Michael page 6.)

To return to the work by De Barbari, there is also symbolic references in the title. The partridge is also known as a perdix. Perdix is another name for a great inventor from antiquity whose uncle became so jealous of his talents that he was thrown from a cliff. Athene saved the nephew by turning him into a partridge. The work raises questions about art/creative invention depicted in the story of “Perdix” and power depicted literally by the weapons.

# CONTEMPORARY STILL LIFE

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## IDENTITY / PERSONAL & POLITICAL

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Displays of painting, photography, sculptural prowess as well as symbols of wealth, pleasure, desire, grief — what of these 21<sup>st</sup> century still lives — what can they tell us of the artist? Of the world?

In contemporary hands it is a platform to explore our contemporary world. The distraction of human activity is kept out of the frame ... yet much human activity/struggle/invention is present ... it is precisely the process of creating the work. Artists utilise the genre to speak about the political and the personal, to explore the human condition and everyday experience. Many of the artists in the show use as a source objects from their own environment. The chosen objects are like relics or objects of evidence.

With the 17th century Dutch Masters as the corner stone of Still Life, artists from the twentieth century embraced its capacity to reflect the tenor of its time. From the intellectualism of Cubism, Pop Art's search for the quotidian object, Jeff Koon's kitsch commodities of capitalism, to Damien Hirst's pill cabinets and butterfly paintings reflecting on death, the genre continues to offer grounds for experimentation. Arguably Duchamp's innovative readymades are indeed representations of Still Life. Two further artists of note in the genre of still life are Giorgio Morandi (1890-1964) and Gwyn Hanssen Pigott (1925-2013). Morandi is noted for his numerous works of still life which explore tensions between form, subtleties of colour and light. They are quiet contemplative

works. Likewise Gwyn Hanssen Pigott is recognised for bringing ceramics into contemporary practice by creating arrangements of still life, the influence of which permeates a number of the ceramic works selected in the exhibition STILL.

The finalists drawn from across Australia have embraced a range of media — photography, ceramics, painting, glass, drawing, printmaking, video, sculpture, and installation. Some suggest an acknowledgment of consumerism, a search for sustainability, a political ideology, a recognition that there are objects we value for generations and those that become landfill. In all the works there is a desire to reflect contemporary experience, while acknowledging the historical resonance of the genre of Still Life.

NB. An appetite for still life! As we go to print there is currently a still life work by Rembrandt (1606-1669) being shown as part of an exhibition entitled Rembrandt and the Dutch golden age at the AGNSW. The work includes a flickering candle, a peeled lemon, flowers, wine, pearls, nuts it is an image of abundance. Front and centre are four tarts one of which is half eaten. A Sydney bakery, Bourke Street bakery has teamed up with the gallery to recreate the tart. A nod to the spice trade at the time, the bakery has called it 'The Rembrandt' featuring spiced custard and crumbled macaroon. Your chance to truly sample the Dutch Masters.

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## LINKS TO ARTISTS ONLINE:

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