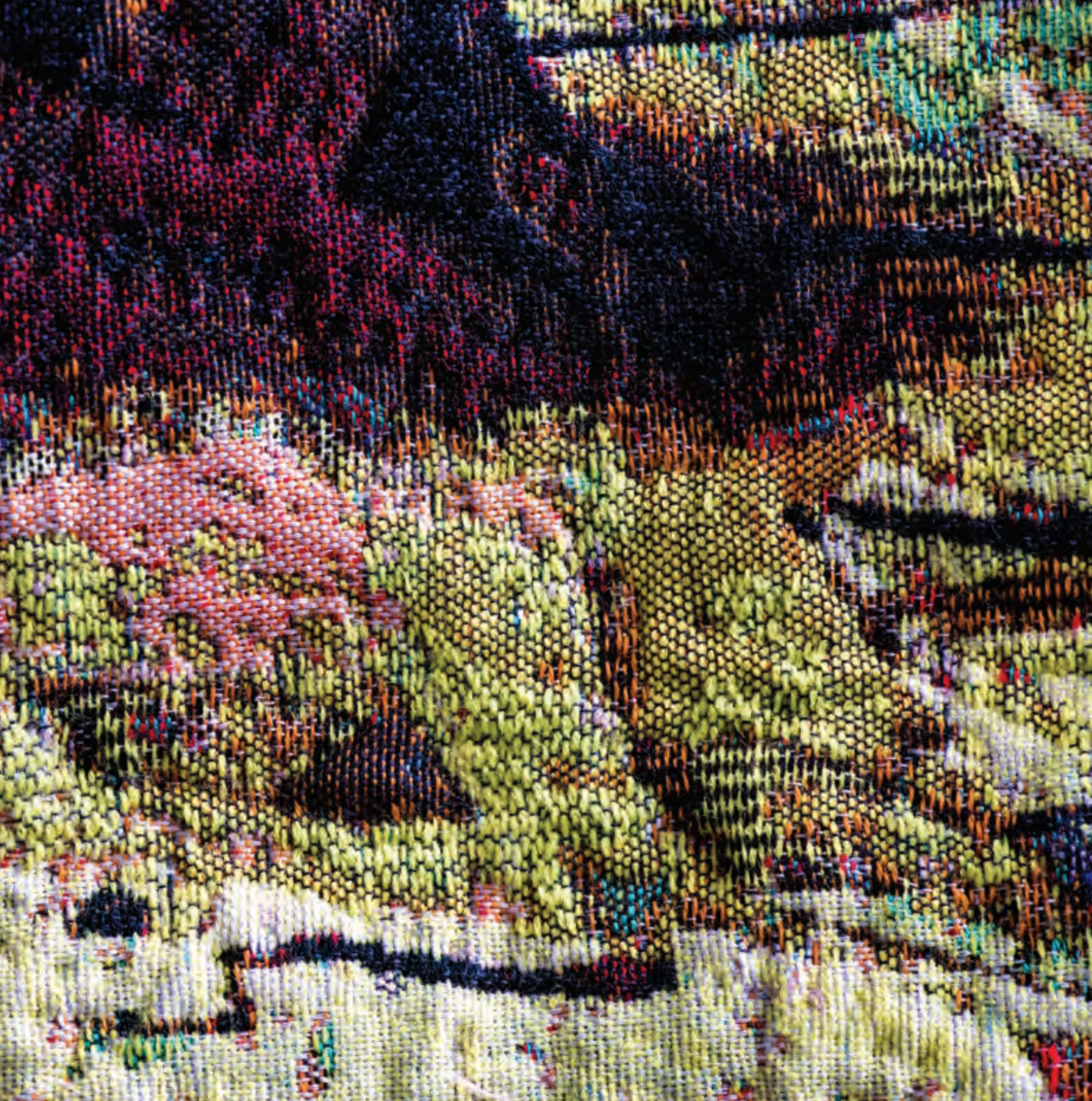


FROM WILL  
TO FORM

CURATED BY EMILY CORMACK





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Claire Lambe *Witnessing Bacon* 2018 (detail)





## FROM WILL TO FORM

Emily Cormack

*In art, and in painting as in music, it is not a matter of reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing forces.*

— Gilles Deleuze<sup>1</sup>

This exhibition tracks forces as they flow into and out of form. These forces are our will, and they flow like water, running always, soaking, seeping, respiring and perspiring. Will is our most important faculty: without its deliberate action and force our progress falters, and we become inert and unproductive. It is in and of us. It is at the heart of all things, and yet will, in itself, is fluid and formless.

This exhibition developed in response to my experience of the wilful properties within various artists' practices. I was drawn to art works that overflowed or expressed an idea or feeling that could not be contained, and that was in wilful rebellion against the constraints of more orthodox, static approaches to art. These works were driven by the processes of art-making, irrespective of medium or the anchoring attempts of art history. Writing on Friedrich Nietzsche's *Will to Power*, Gilles Deleuze states: '[T]he will to power is 'the primitive affective force' from which all other feelings derive.'<sup>2</sup> In my research I began to notice that what Deleuze understood in Nietzsche's writing as a dynamic 'affective force' was the same idea or feeling that overflowed from the art works I was drawn to. These works opened access to something innately generative that was in the process of becoming, something that was exchanging wilful energy or 'affective force' for form.

My understanding of this wilful energy was that it did not originate singularly in the artist's materials but was captured in them. I focused attention on that which lay below or within the process of art-making, rather than inscribing meaning onto the object, or harnessing the artwork to an external intellectual framework. I wanted to begin with the object's will, focusing on its force, and tracking its path to form.

Isadora Vaughan *Canker Sore* 2018 (detail)

In doing so, I realised that this wilful energy is in fact a coming together of many forces in the artworks, which swirl like small eddies within a larger, dynamic waterway. This exhibition, then, is an arrangement of eddies whose forces flow into and around each other, open to the viewer, to the architecture and to our present context.

As we move through an exhibition, sight-lines slide in and out of alignment, and materials appeal or repel. Our experience is contingent on the forces that dance in us, as well as in the works and their context—the forces of the building's architecture, the sensations in our body, the subjective forces of curiosity, hunger, distraction and illness that inform our connections within an exhibition.

But then, what of form? The exhibition is, after all, entitled *From Will to Form*. If will is the motivating factor within forces, what form might it take? What do these forms look like, and how do they manifest will?

Forms arise through our slowing down sufficiently to engage with a network of connections. Each encounter in the exhibition is as crucial as the next in this non-hierarchical process of formation. The content and the form of the works is indivisible, becoming so through connections between wilful forces.

In this exhibition and in these works, will is the cellular, self-generating force that extends out from an indefinite origin, perpetually seeking connection, interruption and release. As two or more forces of will meet, and meld or repel each other, they are captured in a moment of singularity when a form becomes. *From Will to Form* tells the story of the passage of will as it takes shape through the bodies of the artists, their materials and movements. The journey of will is told in five sections, with each section focusing on an area from which the artist drew their will. But, in the end, will is like water poured from a bowl back into a river.

*From Will to Form* is  
in and of the body,  
in and of the land/matter,  
in and of the psyche,  
in and of itself,  
in and of states of release.



# WILL IN AND OF THE BODY

‘Skin is faster than the word,’ Brian Massumi states. But what happens when our skin traps will in our body, when its role as a porous transmitter between ourselves and our world is compromised by the complications of self? We ‘hold our tongue’ or ‘brace ourselves’, thwarting the persistent flow of energy that tries to find an opening, a way out into the world. The body holds all our knowledge, our secrets. As a porous membrane it can open and release or harbour and conceal.

Hélène Cixous writes of an *écriture féminine* in ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’ (1975) where ‘woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement.’<sup>3</sup> *Écriture féminine* suggests that the body, with its attempts at release and sexual expression, could be written into language to bring about ‘the radical mutation of things . . . when every structure is for a moment thrown off balance and an ephemeral wilderness sweeps order away.’<sup>4</sup> Inserting the body into language is a sculptural act, and the works in this section of the exhibition are sculptural interpretations of *écriture féminine*. Such a ‘writing’ expresses the frustrations and difficulties of the body, with each work revealing the complicated relations we have with the world around us. In this current moment, when the agency and materiality of the body is becoming supplanted by digital, post-human and surveillance forces, a sculptural *écriture féminine* reveals the persistence of the intimate, transgressive, contested and liberated body, which holds and releases will according to its own desires, its own forces.

## The will in the body is unrestrained

Sometimes the maternal body seems too much. Flesh is open and obvious. Breasts, labia, lips and ears are our own, and yet for the mother they also belong to another. Their ownership is in dispute. Sanné Mestrom’s works from her series *Hush Hush*, 2018, depict the mother’s body, in this case her own, cast in bronze and concrete. These sculptures show bodies fragmented, with parts dispersed and isolated. In one work bent bronze knees emerge from the floor, and in another cast concrete legs emerge from the ground, with a bronze disc balanced between the thighs. Here the maternal form is exposed only in parts. There is no private realm; instead these fragmented bodies express the blurring of self and child as a mother’s edges crack and become open and porous. This new pre-Oedipal space between mother and child is between signification. As Julia Kristeva

writes, it is a ‘pre-symbolic’ site, offering an alternate form of meaning-making. Mestrom distils these ideas, enlivened with the hot, sharp pain and pleasure of giving and sustaining life, into abbreviated forms whose simplicity and elegance belie the mess of love that pulls life from our own, and goes on giving.

## Will is filtered through the body

A semi-permeable membrane, the body filters the world. At a moment of encounter the skin can bruise or open. Mike Parr’s works in this exhibition reflect its role as a porous processor of the flow of will. The artist purges his body of milk, vomiting violently in *White*, 2004–08, rejecting the imposition of the White Australia Policy upon his identity, and symbolically evacuating whiteness from his own body. And in the companion piece *Whistle White*, 2018, six young artists whistle continuously for three days. This work releases will in a prelinguistic, interspecies mode of communication. The whistle is not coded by language, nor is it lumbered with a physical form. Instead it offers a direct path, transmitting breath from the stomach and lungs directly to the ear of the listener, to the spaces of the gallery. The whistle encounters the gallery’s hard surfaces, the skin of other works, and rebounds or absorbs, filling the space with the most intimate of substances, breath, materialised as sound.

## The body disobeys

Entering the gallery, the viewer encounters Rob McLeish’s *Xenograft Couture (Rigged Composition in Black, 001)*, 2018, an almost-human form moulded from black molten epoxy. Thick and syrupy, this substance has a familiar texture that connects with the unconscious, bringing up emotions ordinarily reserved for quiet or dark moments. Hovering between figuration and abstraction, the indeterminate forms of this large-scale sculpture appear to push against their tarry entrapment. The work was moulded quickly, shaped in the moments before the epoxy set, with necessary and instinctive swiftness. With will struggling to come to recognisable form in this work, we confront in its congealed and concealing forms a reflection and an expression of something repressed and uncomfortably alluring.

## The body plays with will

As if propelled by an internal lyricism, Fairy Turner’s gestural sculptures saunter and then sway. Turner states that her found, readymade materials ‘dictate their own use’, and it is through her processes of ‘tuning into sensation’ that she is able to offer a communion between the object’s will and her own. She claims that she shows ‘tenderness’ toward her materials, as she combines their will into her forms. Inherent in the forms is an instability, as if they express the fragility of the failing world. But Turner’s steel, fibreglass and paper sculptures also capture a will that is free and open; as if dancing alone. Each seems imbued with an essential bodily flow, like a diagram of the feeling of dance, or of feeling free to fall.

## The body protects and constrains will

Starlie Geikie stains the fabric of her large sculptural form *Abri*, 2018, then carefully stitches armour into it, constructing a trap ribbed with dowel. This body architecture, soft with its beautiful gradients of blues and greens and indigos, is initially designed to calm and protect. Yet it also constrains and restricts, thwarting the naturally generative will in the body. A series of photographs pictures Geikie in a mist-heavy landscape, gesturing, reaching and bending, awkwardly constricted by her sculptural frame. In the exhibition it is set high on the gallery wall, removed from the artist’s body, and hangs soft and loose alongside the photographs, like a spent and beautiful skin—a redundant monument to the surfaces we construct to protect us from what we need to see.

## The will of the body is in forms

John Meade’s smooth family of aluminium and horsehair sculptures have personality. Meade speaks of his objects as ‘phantom people’ whose appearance comes suddenly into view, and which he works into form through a process of intensive modelling. They appear in the world as everyday objects that have fallen into character: a drooping restaurant umbrella or a moulded piece of foam rubber, for example, are startling for their sense of caricature and ‘humanity’. Meade’s forms encapsulate a jaunty, saucy will; the group brought

together as *Set Pieces*, 2014–18, is like a buoyant playground, a family album or bustling civic square. Each sculpture is humanised or ‘feminised’—dressed in chains and beads that contrast with their smooth polished surfaces. Arranged on raw aluminium struts, this family of forms becomes a clamorous altarpiece, intently beckoning a narrative that is felt, but never found.

## Will is in the fire that connects our bodies to the earth

The bagu are an enduring symbol of the rainforest people’s cultural, spiritual and physical connections with country. Traditionally the bagu was a tool used to make fire, but it is also an object embedded with meanings that reflect family, community and belief systems. Alison Murray’s contemporary ceramic works vary those stories to talk about trees and plants in the scrub and what they convey about the bush when they are fruiting or flowering, stories that have been passed down through many generations. As Murray explains:

My stories come from country and my experience of being a Girramay person on country. The connection between the lump of clay I start with, the earth, and the finished work is amazing. Knowing that the clay has come from the ground, using my hands to shape it, thinking about how I’m going to make it different and what I’m going to create on the surface. There is an element of chance when you do ceramics and see the colours come out. It’s a bit like when you go fishing—you never know whether the fish are going to bite or what fish you might catch.<sup>5</sup>

# WILL IN AND OF THE LAND/MATTER

Earth is a complex, dynamic and combustible planet with a burning core. While we live in and with the planet, surviving because of its particular gaseous properties, most people see themselves as 'other' to it.

Indigenous Creation stories, however, express humanity's intrinsic relationship with the earth, and as we learn from their culture, our understanding is growing. The Anthropocene acknowledges our role in the earth's destruction, and with this awareness comes a knowledge of our own dependence and interconnectedness with its forces. Humans are immanent with the earth, and for many this immanence is cellular as well as philosophical. Mineralogists have even suggested that 'life begets rocks, and rocks beget life',<sup>6</sup> as research points to the possibility that life and the minerals of the earth evolved together, that the systems of the geosphere and the biosphere are inexplicably intertwined.

This knowledge is deeply felt—it is the difference between looking at a map and being in a landscape. An understanding of terrain and our place within it can be felt sensorially and precognitively, as well as intellectually. Will becomes indivisible from the land, from our mineral origins and the sense of connection that we feel with the earth. In Klee's words, 'the artist is nothing more than a tree trunk through which sap rises; but the fruit the tree bears is something no one has ever seen before'.<sup>7</sup>

## Will from the land

The majestic variation of the Norwegian fjords, with their soaring peaks and monumental valleys, is like a musical score as read through the bodies of Kusum Normoyle and Mette Rasmussen in *Magnesite Norway*, 2016–18. The forces in this natural environment are rendered audible, translated through the power of vocal chords and saxophone. The instinct to capture a landscape, to somehow own or contain it, is a lesson in our insignificance. The act of reaching for a camera has become embedded within our gestural vocabulary—almost as an exclamation of our appreciation. We snap fruitlessly away at the huge peaks and aching skies, hoping somehow to understand the land through its capture. Normoyle reorients this urge and chooses to become a channel through which the wilful energy of the land might travel, opening her body and her breath and her skin to expressing the immensity of the land through the vehicle of screaming.

## Will is the land

Erub art and culture is salty and volcanic. Large basalt stones are in abundance and form vast networks of fish traps that surround the island. The Erubam Le (Darnley Islanders) rely on the stones and the sea in equal measure, with creation stories and contemporary culture alike reflecting the interdependence between Erubam Le and the ocean. The traps encircling the island have been there long before anyone can say and maintain a deep social significance, as well as offering opportunities for food. Contemporary works such as *Sai Sai Le (People of the Fishtraps)*, 2018, reference the fish traps, with rocks sculpted from clay stacked into human-like form as if they are figures in the distance checking the traps, merged with their surroundings. Kiln-fired, these sculptures have been imprinted with rocks, sand and fish-nets, whose patterns bear witness to everyday contemporary life, and show how ancient landforms continue to resonate in the culture and practices of contemporary Erubam Le.

## When wills combine

A canker is an ulcer-like wound inside the mouth. As the title of Isadora Vaughan's large wave-like sculpture suggests, *Canker Sore*, 2018, is an angry opening to an exhausted landscape. The work articulates this porous connection between the energies of matter and the open body. The interior is soft like a mouth or a shell on the inside, and yet the exterior is eroded and infected like 'a deep quarry where the materials we search for are squeezing their jewels out'.<sup>8</sup> Vaughan is highly sensitised to her materials and is able to channel their often violent or jarring effects. Rising to meet the viewer, to encircle them, her overwrought, contested forms seem to have been forced into being from melted glass and fired clay. Experimenting with an improvised alchemy, Vaughan contaminates her surfaces with dust and debris, rubbing copper and dye, grit and sand into them. During firing the form is activated and transforms, opening to colour, becoming liquid or transparent. And then, as the sculptures cool, they calcify, becoming like core samples of conflict, testament to the angry agency of matter, and how all landscapes are created through change and combustion.

## Will of the sky country

The blackness of night, a nebulous twinkling interconnectedness of unending sky country—a new installation by Gunditjmara Keerray Woorroong woman Vicki Couzens brings the will of country to meet that of the sky, through a spatial retelling of the story of Koorokeeyarr, the story of the Seven Sisters. Couzens translated this sacred story into Keerray Woorroong, bringing her mother tongue to life. The story of Koorokeeyarr is a women's story and tracks the origin of the Pleiades.

Couzens's installation uses cultural objects with song, movement and dance in a series of projections that express the interconnectedness of people, country and creation.

The will of the ancestors is manifest in the digging sticks: sticks that women made and provided for their families in foraging, harvesting and gathering, or used as serious tools of dispute resolution. The digging sticks here represent the will of women's Law and the place and role of women in carrying out and administering their Law. These fire-hardened tools are also strong and powerful weapons, and in this installation Couzens presents the digging sticks suspended in the formation of the Koorokeeyarr (the Pleiades): sisters, mothers, aunties, daughters and grandmothers.

Ethereal sounds and vocalisations accompany a film of abstract imagery that is projected onto remnants of a possum cloak. Here Couzens evokes a mystical sense of the presence and endlessness of Creation, where the vast time and space continuum of night sky country is integrally reflective of earth country.

## The land seeps its will into objects

The land can become malevolent when wrongdoings are concealed and forgotten. The forces of the land and the stories that have become embedded in it fester in quiet darkness, lying in wait. Trawlwoolway artist Julie Gough explored the remote country of Skullbone Plains in Tasmania as part of The Skullbone Experiment, a residency and exhibition hosted by the Tasmanian Land Conservancy in February 2013.

During the residency, Gough unearthed a single shoe, abandoned and forgotten in what was once a vast Aboriginal hunting-ground. This remnant of a life past acts as a fulcrum on which stories and impressions pivot, a means to fill gaps left by lost knowledge. Archival objects become repositories for will. They hold stories that are both their own and imposed. Here, the shoe had lain dormant for over a century, absorbing the energies of place, waiting for Gough's uncovering. This shoe, from the small left foot of a young woman, channels the will of the land, holding its darkness tight. Gough refers to her practice as a 'perpetual returning', an attempt to 'will things to return'. Always gathering and collecting, she brings together objects from near and far as 'tangible evidence of the violent explosion that was and is colonial invasion for our people'.<sup>9</sup>

# WILL IN AND OF THE PSYCHE

The lure of understanding ourselves through that which we hide is great. To Carl Jung the personal unconscious runs like a river within us, harbouring forces too powerful for us to know. Repressed or shaded feelings and memories and the process of deliberate forgetting are the psyche's secret codes, but the messages are never deciphered, never fully comprehended. Instead these repressed desires become part of us, as what Deleuze might think of as singularities of self. Unearthed from their dark places, the psyche's secrets are but another force in the assembly of self. Here the will to power travels through the unconscious on its way to form, emerging into form intense with grit and strangely familiar; the logic of such forms is precognitive, with connections formed without anchors in 'common' sense.

## Will in and of us

In her chosen medium of clay, Naomi Eller reads a flow of energies, detecting its emanations and sensing the forms into being. She channels these affective forces or pressures through her body and reveals them in the clay in a process of physiological triggering. Her work is annotated by systems of holes and plugs, or weight and lift that reach out to the viewer's gut. The gut responds: 'I know this, I know this'. Eller maintains a smooth, cleared space between herself and her materials, so that sensation may traverse freely between the clay and her body and back again. The forces of forming it are wilful, not figurative, and Eller's sculptural 'families' represent an essential, distilled force that reveals the feeling of human activity.

## Will in levitation

The lens of art offers access to a logic of living that is based in sensation. Through art we can sense the unknowable. But, as Deleuze writes on Francis Bacon in *The Logic of Sensation*, 'As a spectator, I experience the sensation only by entering the painting, by reaching the unity of the sensing and the sense.'<sup>10</sup> It is only in experiencing the work, absorbing its physicality and its luminosity into our skin that we can begin to

encompass its whole. In Claire Lambe's work, *Witnessing Bacon*, 2018, the site of Francis Bacon's London studio is memorialised in fabric, broken apart into a digital code and then retranslated into twine—it is a space woven into an image. Will and its architecture are collapsed into tapestry. Lambe's starting point for the work was the famous levitation scene in Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Solaris* (1972), a scene where memory and imagining merge, activated through art, where the camera/eye wanders over a Bruegel painting unlocking access to psychic undercurrents. Lambe interprets this scene through arranging a collection of artworks that hover before each other, like a levitating mind-map of will and its flows: images of women peering behind doors, a bronze hair-washing basin and a two-way mirror are arranged in front of a large tapestry depicting Bacon's studio, a transformative place where will becomes matter becomes sensation. Lambe's installations are assembled intuitively—currents of knowing intersect with materials and research until gradually her process reveals a web of sensation through which the viewer might activate their own psychic levitation.

## A knotting of will

In Michelle Ussher's new works the fragmented, intergenerational self is reassembled with a dispersed collection of bodily forces deposited in sculptural and painterly forms. Ussher inherited a collection of her mother's prolific crochet practice after she passed away, along with her grandmother's embroidery. Crochet is a multitude of knot forms, a decorative maze that both entangles and fastens. By combining the crochet and embroidery with her own painting on linen, Ussher creates a narrative of her own. Her weaving binds together what women's fingers have touched over three generations, and their industrious creation of meditative freedom and escape. Coloured doilies are reassembled as mandalas representing the breasts of the mother or the 'sexy tarts' from 'Girlie' cartoons that Ussher drew with her mother as a young teenager. These female forms are a far cry from the weight of the excessive mother—the too-much mother—who dwells in the excess of Ussher's boob vases, and contrast with the volatility of the too-little father, ghosted in a new collection of orchid paintings.

## Evidence of will

Sometimes the veneer that divides our psyche from the world is marked by abrasions or ruptures, which open the world to our interior. Psychological tics, complexes, and habits wear away at our defences, imprinting themselves like evidence, giving us away. Justine Varga's cameraless photographs are just this, the pressing of life onto film. The film offers an autobiographical witnessing of the world, a memoir rather than a representation. Each work is a haptic registering of the forces of the world, with film either treated with performative gestures, drawn on, handled, scratched, spat on or weathered. The resulting small marks are then printed large, anchoring the evidence and highlighting these moments when wilful forces are revealed.

## Intuiting will

Humour is an excellent psychic defence. It provides a buffer that deflects attention from ourselves and relays it back into the world of stimulus-response, so that we can construe conceptual logic where we feel there is none. Michelle Nikou's sculptures invite us to feel and to connect with uneasy psychic forces. They lead us into the abyss and then with a wry humour change the landscape, gently rebutting our sincerity. These poetic and absurd sculptures deflect our fall, as Nikou combines objects with contrary and wilful forces buried within them. The artist reorients familiar objects, adjusts them and re-presents them, offering fragments of narrative but with great currents of knowing. Her work taps into what Nick Cave refers to as 'truths that lie beneath the surface of the words. Truths that rise up without warning like the humps of a sea monster, and then disappear.' Art's aim, he continued, is to 'create a space where the creature can break through what is real, and what is known to us. This shimmering space, where imagination and reality intersect, this is where love and tears and joy exist. This is the place. This is where we live.'<sup>11</sup> Nikou's work occupies this shimmering space, and in *Progeny*, 2016–18, she numbs the idealisation of procreation and possibility, presenting a huddle of unpolished brass eggs illuminated by the ordinary light of dusty domestic globes.

# WILL IN AND OF ITSELF

It is a large space, the cleared open plane where things are formed. In this space we hover, vacillating between inside and out, between self and the world. This space, where things can become, is open sufficiently that things may be distilled to their most affective force, that forces can interact with each other and endlessly form and reform new connections and intersections. In this exhibition space, the work of art becomes a porous plane upon which the forces of intention and materiality open to the forces of context and the viewer, each informing the other. In this transitional space the forces are open like a raw nerve, exposed and becoming anew 'in order to exchange actions and passions with it, or to construct a more powerful body with it.'<sup>12</sup> On this plane of becoming the subject loosens its hold on the object, and instead allows will to move in and out of form. In this space, where will is in the process of forming, we can 'hear' the imperceptible, the unspoken and the precognitive within a work of art.

## Two memories of will

As a Bidjara, Ghungalu and Garingbal man Dale Harding is of the land in Central Queensland. Stories of becoming are familiar in Aboriginal concepts of country. For Harding this is Yoondhalla, meaning 'one in the one place', a concept that speaks of the interconnectedness of everything, the shared substance of will that we draw from and pour back into at the same time. Here, in a forty-metre wall drawing, Harding brings up the earth from his grandmother's Garingbal country in the Carnarvon Gorge area, carrying the will of the land with him from Central Queensland to TarraWarra. Harding and his young cousin Jordan each engrave a memory of the Carnarvon Gorge's undulations onto the Vista Walk's eastern wall that reflect the ridgeline visible through the windows opposite. This collapsing of space and time is extended through the stencilling of local flora using the vibrant earth of elsewhere. The red Ghungalu earth is mixed with saliva and blown and rubbed into the Museum's wall, becoming a vast field of colour, which both folds into and transcends the aspirational language of American colour field paintings. Freed from an objective context the pigment can resonate and emanate in itself.

## Will in transit

In looking through a window one journeys from inside to out, or vice versa, making the window a metaphor for other passages and transformations, a way of describing how we pass from feeling to meaning or from form to formlessness. And yet, although the eye can look through from either direction, a window still divides. Gothe-Snape's work is frequently situated in the contested space of transformation, in the transition between call and response, where meaning is lost as often as it is found. For Gothe-Snape a window is a medium of energy, a surface upon which the viewer's will is embedded as they impose their territorialising gaze on the framed vista beyond. For *The Five Unknowables*, 2018, she prints a text on the western windows of TarraWarra Museum of Art, which chases the 'unknowable' secret of good sculpture. The riddle can be read fleetingly, in the correct light, when the text becomes sculpture as it is projected onto the floor and walls of the gallery. As written in the work, 'It has to be behind you in front of you around you. You have to feel it. Feel it. I felt it.' The sun comes out and Gothe-Snape's sculptural enigma moves from text to shadowed form, apparent for a moment and then gone, with the sun.

## Envisioning will

Belle Bassin's interrogation of form stems from her research into, and practice of, mystical modalities. Her attunement to the invisible psychic forces that influence our world of bodies and objects has given her a vocabulary of shapes and structures that she processes through various mediums. In *Your Place, An Empty Space*, 2018, presents the viewer with a section of the gallery that has been energetically induced by mystics. Within this charged space Bassin brings together a network of expressions that she has been psychically processing for several years. Central to her enquiry has been an examination of the figure eight, a loop pattern into which she shapes dirt from the TarraWarra grounds. The figure eight is further presented within this charged and opened space as physical movement, smell, biological forms, spoken text and in a musical score. These foundations will be built on throughout the exhibition as Bassin works collaboratively to enact a series of responses incorporating movement and film—each of which articulate the passage of psychic forces as they have been pulled into form.

## Countering digital will

Epigenetics is the study of how changes to gene expression can be influenced by our environment and interactions. This emerging science identifies the flow of forces as they move from the world around us and into our bodies, highlighting the body's porous perimeters. Hiromi Tango's immersive installations hover in this permeable space, as they highlight the wilful energy that transmits between materials, our environment and ourselves. In *Healing Chromosomes*, 2017, Tango interrogates technology's ability to dictate the pace and shape of our lives, asking what effect this might be having on our ability to hear the resonance of deep wisdom or natural forces. In this work, Tango weaves human bodily systems and electrical cables and circuits into a double helix formation. In doing so, she reveals a shared language of frayed wiring and arterial systems, establishing a new integrated script for the building-blocks of our being, where we might manage the flow of digital will through the forces of nature.

## Will finds form in steel

The passage from will to form is also the passage from language to matter. Words are spoken but meaning lands in the listener through a maze of meta-linguistic messages; truth is always subjective, but gravity and how it plays with steel is not. Michael Snape's formalist sculptures bring the complexities of language together with the certainty of physical form, folding one into the other in a battle for clarity. While these steel sculptures are non-figurative, they are also insights into Snape's worldview, with the titles revealing what words weigh and how they stand to him. In *Lean To*, 2015 and *The Truth*, 2015, Snape offers concise visual analogues of the works' titles, opening us to sculptural ways of feeling the world. Where these sculptures with their visual puns might seem to state the obvious, they also reveal the infinite complexity of language and the subjective inference that gives will to form.

## Will washing between body and form

As a structure the gallery always frames and contains its content; it is always present, though sometimes it appears to be asleep. Bridie Lunney's performative installation *All for Nothing*, 2018, holds the gallery firmly, asserting its presence by delineating the corners with large brass forms and pitting the walls with holes lined with gold. During the exhibition a vocalist will wake up the gallery space, animating it with their voice. To Lunney the body is always open, variously feeling and throwing forces between itself and the world. So too is architecture. With previous work Lunney has embodied built forms through dance and movement, and here human breath given voice casts the building as a listener. Lunney focuses on the forces of contraction and expansion, with voices filling the entire space, touching all corners and then contracting back into the body, which then withdraws into the world.



*Physical Doorway (Three Ways) 2016*  
installation view, 20th Biennale of Sydney,  
Cockatoo Island, Sydney

OPPOSITE:  
*You and everything that is not you*  
(Museum of Contemporary Art) 2012–17  
bronze, c. 4.5 kg  
18 x 28 x 1 cm, edition 3 + 1AP

OVERLEAF:  
*You and everything that is not you*  
(Art Gallery of New South Wales) 2012–17  
adhesive vinyl, certification and instructions  
variable to site, TCG21194





**AND THEN TO CLOSE  
THE GAP BETWEEN YOU  
AND EVERYTHING THAT IS  
NOT YOU AND IN THIS WAY TO  
PASS FROM FEELING TO MEANING**

National  
2017  
New  
Australian  
Art

The Gallery  
of Contemporary  
Art

1970s  
1980s  
1990s  
2000s  
2010s

1970s  
1980s  
1990s  
2000s  
2010s

# WILL IN AND OF STATES OF RELEASE

*And do you know what 'the world' is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror? This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end . . . as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces.*<sup>13</sup>

Facing the vastness of the valley beyond the Museum through the large north window, it is time to let the grip loosen. Here, the exhibition lets will slip free from its many guises – its bodily constrictions and psychic meddling. Let will fall away from self-analysis or its passage through matter. Constricted and striated, will has been put to the test, run the gauntlet, and now it can just be. It can be the monster of energy, without beginning, without end. Released back into the world and realised in the world, will is recognised flowing in the viewer, in the building, and out into the valley beyond.

## Will becoming

The ancient Zen Buddhist calligraphic practice of flung ink involves calligraphers meditating for a period of time to clear the mind of 'ego/self', so that the will of the world can flow through them unimpeded. A cup of ink is taken up and splashed across a sheet of paper. The resulting mark is the calligraphy of the universe. It is the embodiment of everything that subtends the universe in that exact moment. All conditions and relationships reside there. So too with Lindy Lee's flung bronze works, in which elemental energy is transformed through heat, as the bronze shape-shifts, becoming open to the forces of the world for a moment, capturing them, and holding them. These flung bronze works belong to an infinite web of becoming, like Indra's cosmological net within which each object portrays the entire universe, where there is no centre and no beginning, only infinite reflection and endless origination.

- 1 Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, (trans. Daniel W. Smith), New York: Continuum, 2003, p. 56.
- 2 Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, (trans. Hugh Tomlinson), London and New York: Continuum, 1983, p. 51.
- 3 Hélène Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', (trans. by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen), *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 4, Summer, 1976, p. 875.
- 4 Cixous, 'The Laugh of the Medusa', p. 879.
- 5 Alison Murray, email to the author, 28 June 2018.
- 6 Robert Hazen, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/life-and-rocks-may-have-co-evolved-on-earth-180957807/#0Bb1BJSg1R8v7kSx.99>
- 7 Paul Klee, cited in Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*, Deleuze and the Arts, vol. 3, New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 114.
- 8 Isadora Vaughan, email to the author, 27 June 2018.
- 9 Julie Gough, *An Artistic Detective in the Museum Archive: A Creative Response to Repatriation and its Historical Context*, WAC8 Kyoto, 1 September 2016.
- 10 Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, (trans. Daniel W. Smith), New York: Continuum, 2003, p. 38.
- 11 Nick Cave in '20,000 Days on Earth', 2014, quoted in Michelle Nikou, *An Elegant Mystery*, 'The Shimmering Space', Blog, 9 May 2015. (accessed 30 October 2016), <https://anelegantmystery.wordpress.com/2015/05/09/the-shimmering-space/>.
- 12 Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 314.
- 13 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, (trans. Walter Kaufmann), New York: Random House, 1967 (1901), p. 550.

OPPOSITE: View from TarraWarra Museum of Art's North Gallery





# SELECTIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Suzie Attiwill

This page opens an invitation to think about space as a confluence of forces. This is a different concept from thinking of space as a neutral void, a container or a backdrop for objects and subjects—which is the main way we tend to think of space, if we do at all.

Entertaining an idea of space in relation to forces introduces time: time not as the chronological time of history or the abstract time of schedules, but as flow in which everything is immersed. Thinking time in this way means approaching space as a production in time: slowing down, selecting and composing forces into a provisional stability that enables habitation:

Every morning the *Scenopoetes dentirostris*, a bird of the Australian rain forests, cuts leaves, makes them fall to the ground, and turns them over so that the paler, internal side contrasts with the earth. In this way it constructs a stage for itself like a ready-made; and directly above, on a creeper or a branch, while fluffing out the feathers beneath its beak to reveal their yellow roots, it sings a complex song made up from its own notes and, at intervals, those of other birds that it imitates: it is a complete artist. This is not synaesthesia in the flesh but blocs of sensation in the territory—colours, postures, and sounds—that sketch out a total work of art.<sup>1</sup>

The bird's habitat is composed through a process of selection and arrangement in the midst of dynamic forces where the inside becomes 'an operation of the outside'.<sup>2</sup> Leaves are cut from one context—a tree—and become something else as they are turned inside out and laid horizontally on the ground, activating a relational field where sensations can be extracted and rendered visible or sonorous.

In this move to thinking about our environments as selections and arrangements, where the relation between interior and exterior becomes dynamic, static architectural containers open like Pandora's box. The function of architecture becomes recast as a 'framing of the earth',<sup>3</sup> and the architectural frame becomes a sieve that selects outside forces.

Like the cut leaves turned over to reveal a paler side, the surfaces of walls and floors extract sensations. Sunlight and moonlight filters in and moves across surfaces. Windows interiorise the outside as landscape; a moving image held but not stilled. Invisible forces become visible and non-sonorous forces sonorous.<sup>4</sup>

This confronts the image we have of ourselves as producers of experience. It invites us to experiment with bodies as surrounded and produced in a confluence of forces, to increase 'powers of affecting and being affected', through 'a responsiveness to a selected world and an openness to *interaction*',<sup>5</sup> like a spider in her web who contracts in response to sensations, vibrations and variations in a relational field from which she is inseparable. Her responsiveness is visceral and bodily, she 'sees nothing, perceives nothing, remembers nothing'.<sup>6</sup>

This is a different responsiveness—and selection—to that of a centred subject who seeks to recognise and identify in order to have power over the environment. This subject is the rational, autonomous self, the Cartesian subject well-known for the expression 'I think therefore I am.' Another is the phenomenological subject who, while not privileging the visual 'I see' as all-knowing, is nonetheless a centred, conscious self that prevails and presides. For these subjects, responsiveness is a matter of selecting on the basis of already-established criteria to find correspondences, resemblances and analogies.

As a selection and arrangement, *From Will to Form* presents an opportunity for experimentation on ourselves in the midst of forces, 'to enter into the creative unfolding of the cosmos, to participate in a metamorphic experimentation on ourselves and our world in the hope of bringing forth something new that enhances our capacities for affecting and being affected.'<sup>7</sup>

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson), London: Verso, 1994 (1991), p. 184.
- 2 Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, (trans. Sean Hand), New York, London: Continuum, 2010 (1986), p. 81.
- 3 Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- 4 Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, (trans. Daniel W. Smith), New York & London: Continuum, 2004 (1981), p. 56.
- 5 Ronald Bogue, 'Immanent Ethics', in *Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics*, Aldershot, United Kingdom: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007, p. 12.
- 6 Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, Theory Out of Bounds series, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000 (1964), p. 117.
- 7 Bogue, 'Immanent Ethics', p. 15.

# LIST OF WORKS

Measurements are height  
before width before depth

## Belle Bassin

*In Your Place, An Empty Space* 2017–18  
dirt, rocks, movement, video,  
sound, perfume, shifting forms  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist

## Vicki Couzens

*Koorokeeyarr—The Seven Sisters* 2018  
timber, projection, sound  
7 digging sticks, each approx. 200 x 3 cm diam.;  
installation dimensions variable  
Conceptual development and  
artwork creation: Vicki Couzens  
Soundscape, projection design and  
production: Rob Bundle and Peter Worland  
Courtesy of the artist

## Naomi Eller

*Single weights, plugged & unplugged  
plus 3 x single hole weights with supports  
and rope* 2018  
various clays, wax and rope  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist

## Artists from Erub Arts

*Sai Sai Le (People of the Fishtraps)* 2018  
woodfired stoneware  
120 x 120 x 240 cm overall  
Courtesy of Erub Arts

## Starlie Geikie

*Abri* 2018  
hand-dyed cotton calico, cotton thread  
dimensions variable  
*Abri I–III* 2018  
archival pigment inkjet prints on  
Hahnemühle photo rag  
3 works: each 74.5 x 111.8 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

## Agatha Gothe-Snape

*The Five Unknowables* 2018  
adhesive vinyl  
variable to site  
Courtesy of the artist and  
The Commercial, Sydney

## Julie Gough

*Ode* 2014  
found shoe; HDMI colour video, sound,  
16:9, video duration 00:04:53  
Video editor: Jemma Rea  
Courtesy of the artist

## Dale Harding with Jordan Upkett

*Wall Compositions from Memory* 2018  
red ochre, charcoal and incision into wall  
Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery,  
Brisbane

## Claire Lambe

*Witnessing Bacon* 2018  
wool, silk and cotton tapestry; digital prints;  
bronze basin  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist; Sarah Scout Presents,  
Melbourne; and Francis Bacon Studio at Dublin  
City Gallery The Hugh Lane, Dublin, Ireland

## Lindy Lee

*Neither Choice, Nor Chance* 2018  
flung bronze  
installation dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist, Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney,  
UAP Brisbane and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne  
This project has been assisted by the Australian  
Government through the Australia Council,  
its arts funding and advisory body

## Bridie Lunney

*All for Nothing* 2018  
brass, concrete, gold, voice  
dimensions determined by  
the architecture of the site  
Courtesy of the artist

## Rob McLeish

*Xenograft Couture (Rigged Composition in Black,  
001)* 2018  
epoxy resin, steel  
320 x 160 x 135 cm  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Neon Parc, Melbourne

## John Meade

*Set Pieces* 2014–18  
arrangement of 11 sculptures with  
painted aluminium display supports

*Aurora* 2014  
cast aluminium, auto enamel  
70 x 16 x 16 cm

*Lilium* 2014  
cast aluminium, auto enamel, steel  
68 x 30 x 20 cm

*Rayon* 2014  
cast aluminium, auto enamel,  
plastic beads, sandalwood, cotton  
56 x 38 x 22 cm

*Silvia* 2014  
cast aluminium, auto enamel,  
horsehair, linen thread  
52 x 48 x 18 cm

*Urania* 2014  
cast aluminium, auto enamel,  
found lock  
56 x 25 x 17 cm

*From Bauhaus to Our House* 2016  
aluminium, auto enamel,  
and plastic beads  
56 x 22 x 60 cm

*Girl with Pneumatic Curl* 2016  
aluminium, auto enamel,  
plastic and steel  
27 x 21 x 51 cm

*Green Stacked Heel* 2016  
aluminium, auto enamel,  
mild steel, and leather  
67 x 48 x 25 cm

*Paco Rabanne* 2016  
aluminium, auto enamel, stainless  
steel and polyester thread  
30 x 24 x 50 cm

*Twin Sex* 2016  
aluminium, auto enamel,  
and chrome-plated steel  
66 x 27 x 24.5 cm

*Asterisk & Friend* 2018  
aluminium and auto enamel  
30.5 x 24.5 x 44 cm

Courtesy of the artist and  
Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

## Sanné Mestrom

*Hush, Hush* 2018  
concrete, bronze and steel  
6 works: life-size;  
installation dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney

## Alison Murray

*Bush Tucker Bagu* 2018  
earthenware, slips and glazes  
6 works: each approx. 70 cm high  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Girringun Aboriginal Art Centre,  
Cardwell, Queensland

## Michelle Nikou

*Progeny* 2016–18  
bronze, lightbulbs, plaster, nails  
28 parts, installation dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Darren Knight Gallery, Sydney

## Kusum Normoyle with Mette Rasmussen

*Magnesite Norway* 2016–18  
dual-channel video and sound installation,  
video duration 00:20:00  
Videography: Nick Garner  
Video Editor: Kusum Normoyle  
Sound: Kusum Normoyle  
Courtesy of the artists  
This project has been assisted by  
the Australian Government through  
the Australia Council, its arts funding  
and advisory body.  
This project has been assisted by  
Arts Council Norway.

## Mike Parr

*White* 2004–08  
performance video, sound, 4:3  
video duration 00:20:46  
*Whistle White* 2018  
performance video, sound, 16:9  
Courtesy of the artist

## Michael Snape

*Lean To* 2015  
steel  
166 x 159 x 70 cm

*The Truth* 2015  
steel  
144 x 124 x 290 cm

Courtesy of the artist  
and Australian Galleries,  
Melbourne and Sydney



**Hiroimi Tango**

*46 Healing Chromosomes* 2017  
mixed media

200 x 520 x 48 cm

*Electric Human Chromosomes 3* 2017

pigment print on paper  
80 x 114 cm

edition of 6 + 2APs

Courtesy of the artist and  
Sullivan+Strumpf, Sydney

**Fairy Turner**

*Conflicted* 2018

wire, paper, fibreglass, wood,  
paper pulp, enamel, varnish  
dimensions variable

*Fleeting at Best* 2018

paper, wire, powder-coated steel  
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

**Michelle Ussher**

*Orchis* 2018

oil on linen  
51 x 41 cm

*Orchis* 2018

oil on linen  
76 x 61 cm

*Saggy Boob Vase (Gritty Tits)* 2018

glazed earthenware, oil  
32 x 45 cm

*Saggy Boob Vase (Fruity Tutti)* 2018

glazed porcelain, oil and beeswax  
22 x 45 cm

*Skins* 2018

dyed cotton, bleach, acrylic  
56 x 46 cm

Courtesy of the artist and  
STATION, Melbourne

**Justine Varga**

*Marking Time* 2015–16

from the series *Memoire*  
chromogenic photograph  
141 x 115 cm

edition of 5 + 2APs

Collection of the artist

*Infection* 2016

from the series *Memoire*  
chromogenic photograph  
144 x 119 cm

edition of 5 + 2APs

Private collection, Adelaide

*Phlegm* 2016

from the series *Memoire*  
chromogenic photograph  
148.8 x 121 cm

edition of 5 + 2APs

Private collection, Adelaide

*Lachrymal* 2017

from the series *Photogenic Drawing*  
chromogenic photograph  
163.5 x 122 cm

edition of 5 + 2APs

Private collection, Sydney

*Maternal Line* 2017

from the series *Photogenic Drawing*  
chromogenic photograph  
157 x 122 cm

edition of 5 + 2APs

Private collection, Sydney

*Postimpression* 2017

from the series *Photogenic Drawing*  
chromogenic photograph  
158.5 x 122 cm

edition of 5 + 2APs

Private collection, Sydney

**Isadora Vaughan**

*Canker Sore* 2018

ceramic, epoxy, synthetic polymer sheet,  
steel, glass, silicon, crushed rock, sand  
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and

STATION, Melbourne

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# TO **FROM** WILL **FORM**

CURATED BY EMILY CORMACK

3 August – 6 November 2018

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