

# **NEVERTHELESS, SHE PERSISTED**

**6 FEBRUARY – 2 MARCH 2019**



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**GRACE BLAKE**  
**SABELLA D'SOUZA**  
**LEILA EL RAYES**  
**BROOKE LEIGH**  
**EUGENIA LIM**  
**CAT MUELLER**  
**CLAUDIA NICHOLSON**  
**EBONY RUSSELL**  
**GEORGIA SAXELBY**  
**NAOMI SEGAL**

**EXHIBITION OPENING:  
WEDNESDAY 6 FEBRUARY FROM 6-8PM**

# GRACE BLAKE

Grace Blake is an emerging digital media and installation artist base in Canberra. Central to her practice is a tension between the virtual and tangible, which is developed by using 3D modelling and editing software to generate hypothetical architecture and objects, which are increasingly placed within accompanying installations. Using a number of digital and fabrication technologies, Blake considers her cross-disciplinary practice an act of creating speculative realities and questions what is compelling about creating science fiction futures. While studying at ANU school of Art and Design, Blake has exhibited extensively in Sydney and Canberra and is the program's manager of Canberra based ARI Tributary projects.

Blake's recent work routinely explores hypothetical bodies. Considering Silicon Dioxide, a compound found in various living things, as a common thread connecting ancient and future organic, artificial and hybridised life on earth, recent works seek to establish commonality between human and nonhuman beings. Drawing from non correlationist thought and new perspectives on ecology, as discussed by Donna Haraway, Timothy Morton, and Steven Shavero, Blake's artworks act to extrapolate a near post anthopeance future where human ruins house new life. By removing the human as central to the exploration of the present and future experience of life on earth, Blake strives to craft a speculative reality and examine what is compelling about creating science fiction futures.





Grace Blake

*Untitled 1*\_2018-19

Kodac Endura metallic photograph, acrylic, PLA 3D printed frame

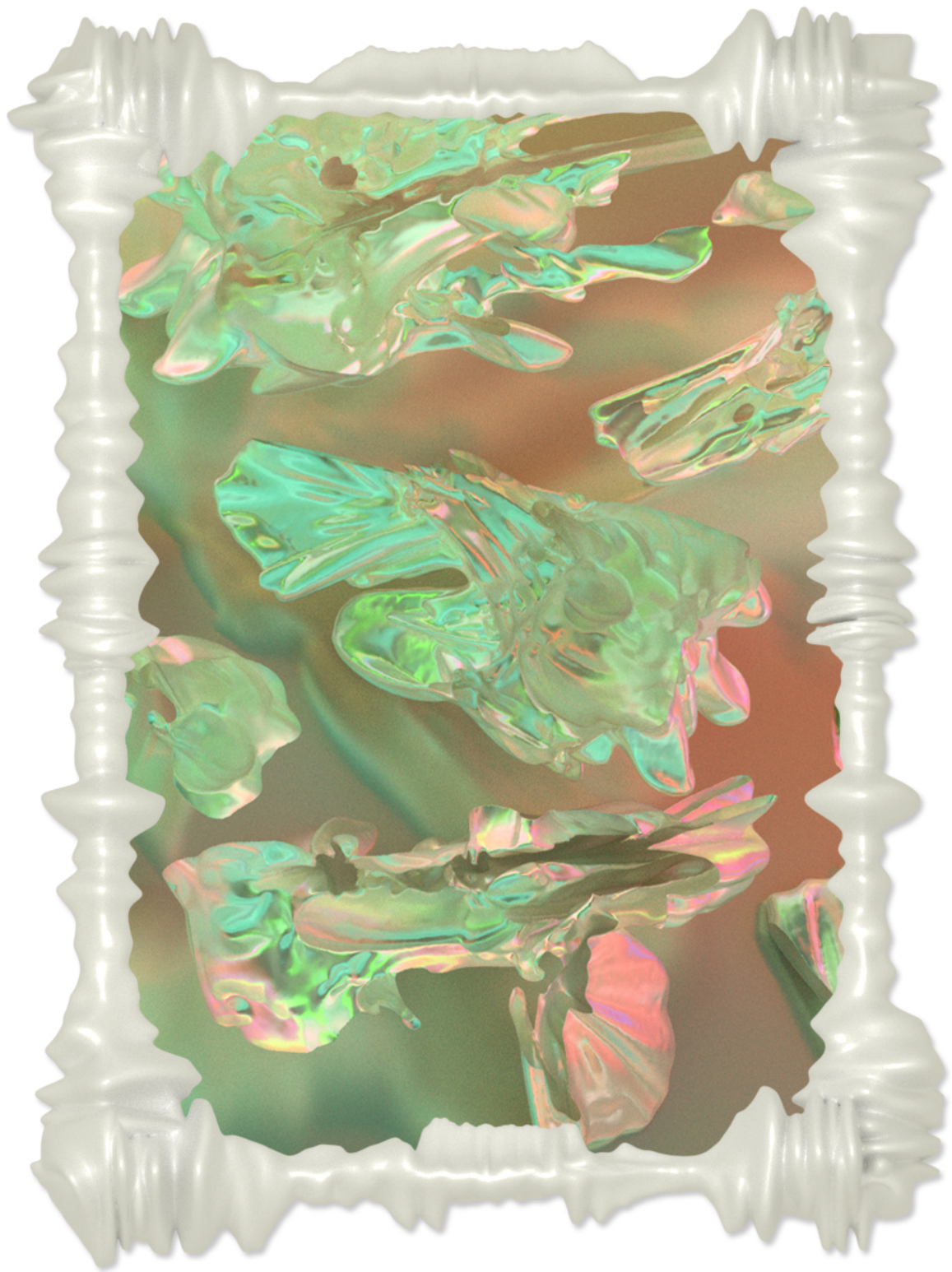
Edition of 3\_45cm x 35cm

\$1,200



Grace Blake  
*Untitled 2\_2018-19*  
Kodac Endura metallic photograph, acrylic, PLA 3D printed frame  
Edition of 3\_45cm x 35cm  
\$1,200





Grace Blake

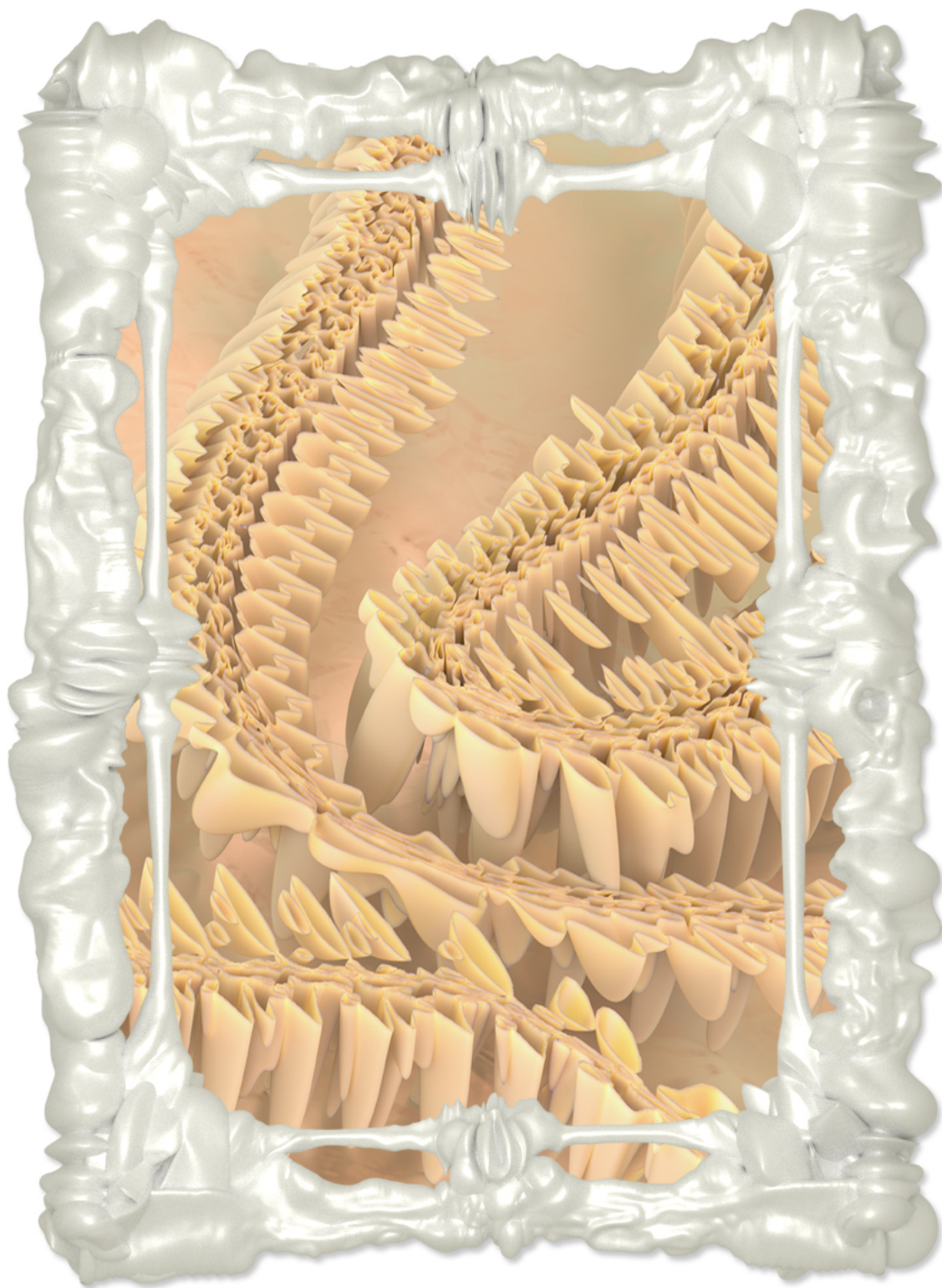
*Untitled 3\_2018-19*

Kodac Endura metallic photograph, acrylic, PLA 3D printed frame

Edition of 3\_45cm x 35cm

\$1,200





Grace Blake

*Untitled 4*\_2018-19

Kodac Endura metallic photograph, acrylic, PLA 3D printed frame

Edition of 3\_45cm x 35cm

\$1,200

# SABELLA D'SOUZA

Sabella D'Souza is a video artist whose performance-based practice is concerned with colonial spectatorship, virtual identity and the transnationality of the internet.

*22/f/aus* (2017) is the artists answer to the age-old internet question: asl: Age/Sex/Location; unpacking with it the complexities of existing as a brown migrant body online, and physically within the Australian political climate. Referencing racial passing, digital white-black face, and the exoticized brown body *22/f/aus* defines itself as a wiki-how-survive-guide for bodies of colour in the face of racial, gendered, and queer erasure in virtual spaces. Utilising the conventions of YouTube make up tutorials, *22/f/aus* seeks to demonstrate what it means to occupy a space when you are considered white by default.

*22/f/aus* has been shown extensively overseas, including the UK, USA, and Europe. In 2017 it was shown as a finalist for the National Digital Portraiture Award in Canberra, as a contemporary finalist in the 2017 Fishers Ghost Prize and received the Kudos Emerging Artist & Designer award in 2017.



Sabella D'Souza

*22/f/aus* (video stills)\_2017

Single channel HD digital video\_7 minutes and 20 seconds\_Edition of 5 + 2AP

\$500

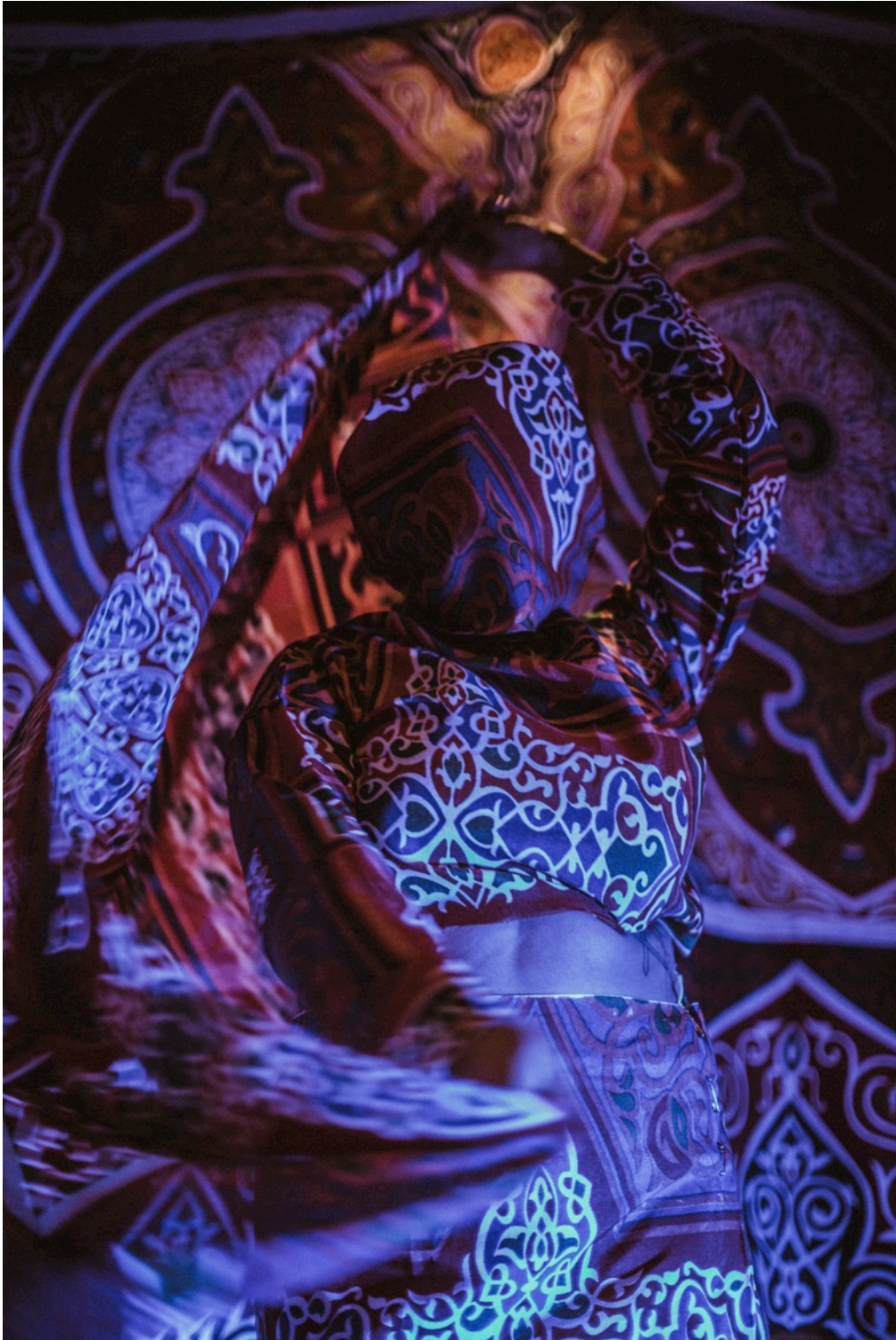


# LEILA EL RAYES

Leila El Rayes explores and celebrates vulnerability between melding identities and contexts. Using themes of hardship, desire and uncertainty as a vehicle to intricacy, fragility and beauty. Existing somewhere between the fine line of being visible and invisible; a kaleidoscope of individuality within cultures.

Leila El Rayes is a Sydney based early career artist whose practice spans performance, photography, video and installation. Recently graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) from UNSW Art & Design, Leila has exhibited and performed in group exhibitions and festivals across Sydney and in 2016 was the winner of the 20th anniversary Jenny Brit Award.

In 2016 Leila was the winner of the 20th anniversary Jenny Brit Award. Since then her work has been exhibited at the National Museum of Australia, UNSW Galleries in Sydney, and various ARI's and commercial gallery spaces.



Leila El Rayes

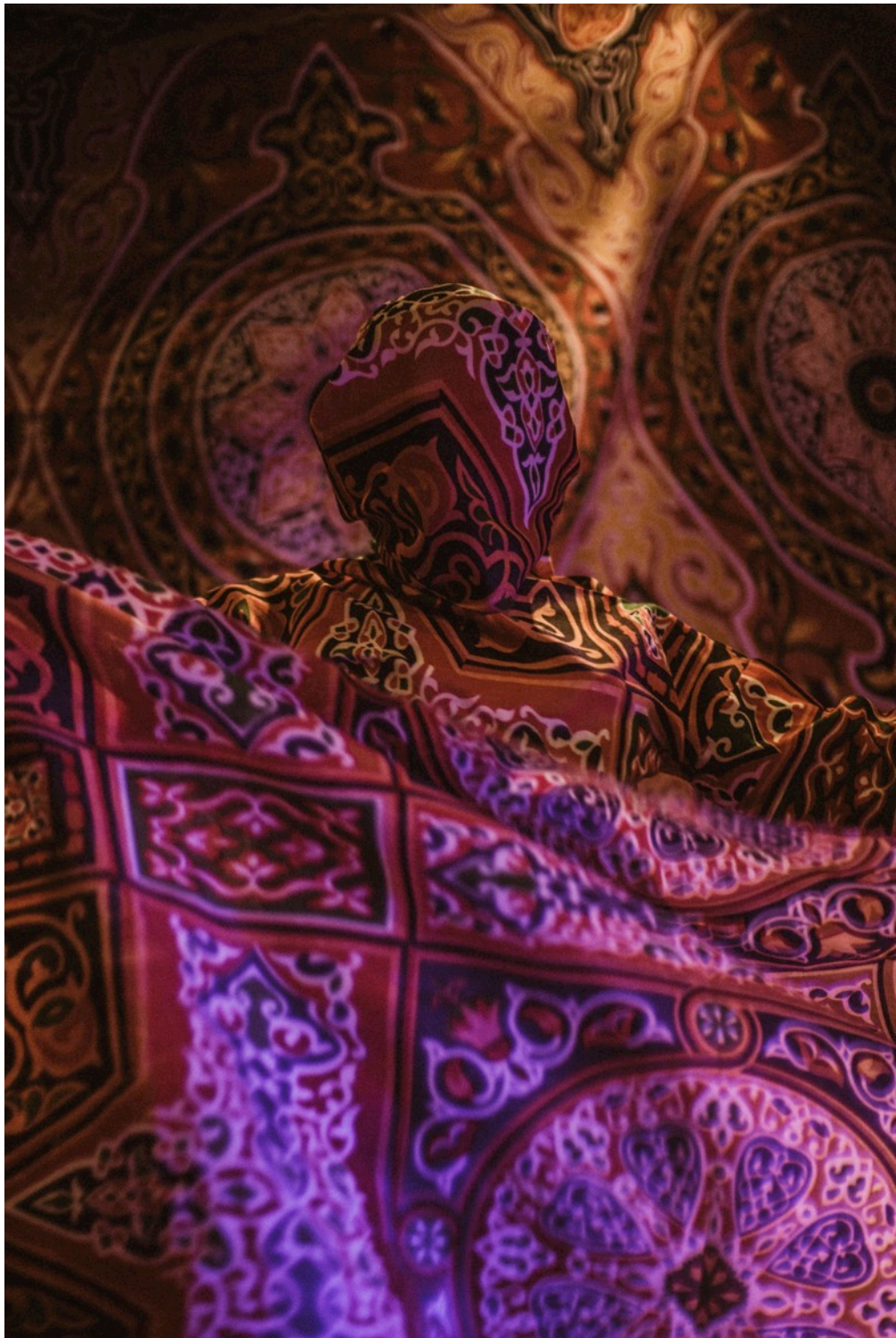
*Dancing in the crevice of desire I*\_2018

Digital inkjet print\_ Edition of 3\_84cm x 59cm

Photograph by Maria Boyadgis.

\$800 unframed





Leila El Rayes

*Dancing in the crevice of desire II*\_2018

Digital inkjet print\_ Edition of 3\_84cm x 59cm

Photograph by Maria Boyadgis.

\$800 unframed





Leila El Rayes

*Dancing in the crevice of desire III\_2018*

Digital inkjet print\_ Edition of 3\_84cm x 59cm

Photograph by Maria Boyadgis.

\$800 unframed

# BROOKE LEIGH

For the past six years Brooke Leigh's practice has been dedicated to exploring the relationship between drawing and performance. Drawing, through its qualities of fluidity and immediacy, is a process that is always in stages of becoming.

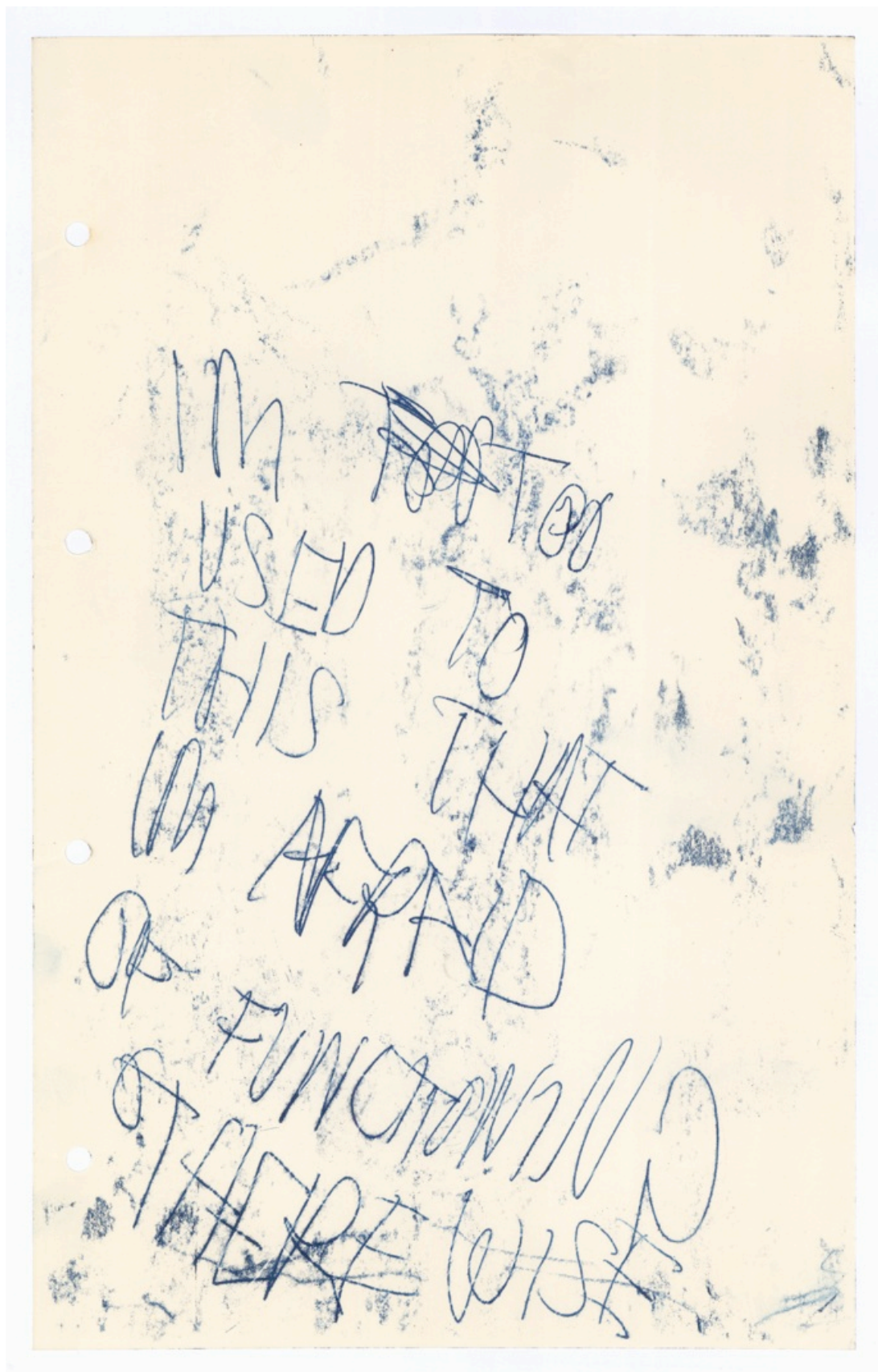
Leigh's work explore how this performative aspect of drawing can become a cathartic experience. Leigh explains: "During the drawing process I challenge my bodily limitations—by way of repetition and duration—in order to encounter intense physical, psychological and emotional states. This encounter enables the discharge of repressed emotions and internalised suffering. The material traces made by my body in motion gives voice to the pain. This is an empowering and vulnerable act.

*Bodily Trace* is a drawing of physical labour and persistence. Kneeling on the ground with my arms outstretched, I push a 3kg lump of chalk back and forth until my body reaches the point of exhaustion.

*I'm Too Used to This That I'm Afraid of Functioning Otherwise* belongs to a series of one hundred and sixty-three monoprints entitled Scores. The title of the series is a double entendre referring to both the conceptual realisation of a performance or musical composition, and score as an incision or mark relative to the severe effects that anxiety has on the body.

Together, these works discover the reassertion of control through externalisation and the possibility that the mark and performance allow one to express, recognise and thereby come to terms with bodily and emotional suffering."





Brooke Leigh

*I'm Too Used to This That I'm Afraid of Functioning Otherwise (Scores series)\_2017*

Monoprint on notepaper\_30cm x 21cm

\$800 framed





Brooke Leigh

*Bodily Trace*\_2016-18

Residual chalk and sweat on concrete from one hour performance,  
archival pigment print on cotton rag\_Edition of 5 + 2AP\_103cm x 39cm  
\$850 unframed / \$1,150 framed

# EUGENIA LIM

Eugenia Lim is an Australian artist who works across video, performance and installation. Interested in how nationalism and stereotypes are formed, Lim invents personas to explore the tensions of an individual within society – the alienation and belonging in a globalised world.

Referencing Virginia Woolf's 1929 feminist text *A Room of One's Own*, this 2017 series of portraits by Eugenia Lim continues an ongoing project. 'Woman's Work' surveys the contemporary state of female financial, creative and sexual independence in the 21st century and the ambiguities and challenges women still face in defining their identity within domestic, professional and social spheres. At a time when feminism is being co-opted by celebrities – from Beyonce to Ivanka Trump (whose Women Who Work 'initiative' and book targets the super-affluent and power-class woman and includes, as Lia Tolentino says, mostly "artless jargon" such as 'All women benefit immeasurably by architecting their lives' and inspirational quotes you might find by Googling 'inspirational quotes.'). Lim's project seeks to playfully subvert and reclaim the pejorative term woman's work by presenting everyday feminism at work, in its own habitats.

This series was originally shown as part of *Unfinished Business: perspectives on art and feminism* at ACCA, curated by Max Delany, Annika Kristensen, Paola Balla, Julie Ewington, Vikki McInnes and Elvis Richardson.



I love to write in the State Library, it helps me to focus and I find it inspiring. I started taking writing a bit more seriously later than most people, after finishing a Masters in urban planning. I found it comforting that Helen Garner started writing *Monkey Grip* in this library in her early 30s after being a high school teacher for many years. I imagine her sitting here pouring out this novel about her painful love life. But what really attracts me is that her creative pursuits came later in life after she had worked in another industry. I think we are over-exposed to success and 'greatness' that's achieved in youth. I hope I am still writing in my 70s.

I don't want writing to define me, but when you are invested in something that has a pull comparable to the feeling of romantic love, it's hard to distance it from who you are. Sometimes I really like the idea of writing being a hobby or a passion rather than a career. If writing defines me and I never achieve something great or publish a book does that mean I am a failed writer?

Overall, I'm fairly reserved in public and private. But I resist and resent that we need to have a public self. I like the idea of having space to grow creatively but sometimes I feel that this is compromised by the need to have a public image. So often, even emerging writers like myself are required to have a profile pic for events and to be posting edgy statements on social media to create a sexy, likeable image. Creating a public self requires a certain level of emotional work which I would much rather invest in developing my technical skills as a writer. I often feel judged

at openings and launches where there is a lot of pressure to perform the role of the 'creative' and talk about all the exciting projects you are working on. When you are starting out in any career, it's difficult. I remember my first office job - I was completely flabbergasted by the social norms of the office. I didn't fit in at all and I felt held back because of it.

My mum is Ballardong Noongar from York, WA, and my dad is Anglo-Australian from Broadford, Vic. I spend a lot of time with my mum so I've been able to learn about our culture and heritage and we go back to York to visit family regularly. I am exceptionally proud to be a descendant of one of the oldest living cultures and am constantly amazed by the incredible work First Nations writers are doing.

I think feminism and even intersectional feminism as a methodology often fails. I think it is easily diluted to serve a white corporate feminist agenda which erases other identities. I am often astounded that Aboriginal matriarchies aren't respected more widely within Australia. Professor Aileen Moreton-Robinson's ground-breaking *Talkin' Up to the White Woman* was written in 2000 yet it talks about the issues we are still grappling with today! If we want to be feminists, we need to show this through action and solidarity with women who don't have the advantages that we do. Not indulging in mainstream whitewashed pop feminism. Roxane Gay's *Bad Feminist* also blew my mind. I can safely say it is the text that made me want to write.

Timmah Ball, 33  
From Melbourne

Eugenia Lim

*Timmah in the library*\_2017

Giclee prints on photo rag

Edition of 5 + 2AP\_119cm x 84cm

\$2,950 (framed)





When I was four, my family migrated to Kenya. I married at 17 and went back to Somalia. It was a big culture shock - I didn't feel I belonged. Then the war happened and I found myself in a small boat, seeking asylum. I held a Kenyan passport, so the authorities said I could stay, but that I had to leave my children behind. They were two and three years old. Refugees came from Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi, and Kenya could not cope. I always identified as Kenyan and thought Kenya would come through for me. I was with other refugees who did not speak the language, who did not know what their fate would look like, who were put on a football field as their camp. In the end, we stayed. I was always a very lucky refugee.

What I do keeps changing. I see myself as a storyteller, a visionary storyteller who creates the world I want to be part of. I write my chapter as it unfolds. We forget as human beings, especially as women, that we can tell our stories and own them. If you don't tell your story, someone else will. When I first came to the west, the story the media told about Africa was not my story. After a few years, I saw myself telling my children: "Finish your food; there are children starving in Africa." I come from a tropical land where I walked to school in cornfields taller than myself. I ate mangoes and guavas for breakfast that were free and bountiful. I'd never seen starvation, yet here I was talking that way. If you tell a story again and again - it becomes the story. I live in East Brighton and it's very white, Anglo and affluent. When I came, there weren't many Africans and we were visibly black and poor. I projected uncertainty into the outer world which drew racism and uncertainty back at me. I call culture a currency. You must make an effort to strengthen your cultural currency. Unless you do that, people cannot relate; they don't know who you are or where you come from. So I went into the Australian community and started a business called Cook with Mariam. My mother taught me the food of Somalia and my stepmother taught me Swahili food. And when I lived in the Arab world, I learnt about Arab and Chinese culture and food. I became an intuitive cook and had that business for five years and even shared my story with other Australians on national television. It was daunting. I came as a very fearful woman from another culture, not sure of my footing. But I did it anyway.

The Somali author Nurrudin Farah writes: "When it rains in Mogadishu, the umbrellas are

out in Toronto." If there is pain in Mogadishu, we Somalis can feel it. And you're not self-made, you have family and connections: their pain is your pain. A few weeks ago, 500 people were killed in Mogadishu. How do you deal with it? Do you engage or let it go? Everything that happens in the world affects us. Through prayers, spiritual teachers and religion - I am of the Muslim faith - these helped me. The same verse of the Quran cannot impact me and you in the same way, because it speaks to specific experience. So you take responsibility, you become self-aware. You can let go of doubt and arrogance.

I'm a wife, a mother and a sister, and more. With my children, I hope to be fully present. In work, I want to be fully present. When I'm telling my stories, I'm nervous every time, not because of who I'm about to serve, but for those who were never heard. I represent my mother and all the women I lived with who never had this platform. My mother was a nomad. She had no education but she was wise, very intuitive. She was a weaver. I'd watch her sitting on her old mat while weaving a new one. The old mat was too thin so she would improve and thicken the future mat: memory and imagination in the same moment. The mistakes we made can be fixed by us in the future.

I talk about three things with women. One: self-worth. As women, it is very low. We must understand we are worthy to have what we want in life. Two: autonomy is within us. Anything we want to cultivate or be, we can. Three: self-lead. If you have to be a pioneer, stand up and do it. And in self-leadership, you become a leader for others as well. I went into the not-for-profit sector and started RAW (Resilient Aspiring Women). RAW backwards reads WAR. I had a lot of war and unworthiness in me. But I looked in the mirror to transform these feelings into resilience. And I did this in my own backyard - an invitation to the community I had come into. I am not here randomly. I came from a communal culture to a place where independence is applauded. But you need both independence and dependence for interdependence and self-actualisation, where you're fulfilled and you want that for others as well. Family exists beyond blood relations. There's a beautiful saying in our culture: it takes a village to raise a child. I add to that: when you nurture the woman, you nurture the village. Our relationships have become transactions. It's time as women we came back to this space of nurturing. Women haven't been nurtured for a very long time.

Mariam Issa, 49  
Born in Kismayo, Mogadishu, Somalia

Eugenia Lim  
*Mariam in the garden*\_2017  
Giclee prints on photo rag\_  
Edition of 5 + 2AP\_119cm x 84cm  
\$2,950 (framed)

# CAT MUELLER

Cat Mueller explores colour perception: the relativity of colour and how we perceive depth through colour. Her current practice includes vibrant paint-marker drawings and large-scale airbrushed paintings, where she applies acrylic both onto stretched polyester and directly onto gallery walls. In her installations she uses the gallery space to her advantage, locating her airbrushed compositions in corners so that perspective shifts as the viewer traverses the space. While at once challenging preconceptions of painting, she confines her wall paintings to the traditional rectangular compositional frame, acknowledging painting's history and discourse.

In her paintings areas of expressive patterning are segmented into sharp rectangular frames. This creates the works pictorial structure but also its tension and creates a view to multiple scenes at once. The compositions are frames within frames, a continual reference to the object they are painted on. Airbrushed effects that she uses include digital-like gradients and line-work on partially exposed gesso grounds. The clarity of the airbrushed line varies, appearing to move in and out of focus. She uses kitsch patterning and motifs such as camo, flames and dolphins roused by 1990s sentimentality and her Instagram feed. The element of chance creates imperfections such as drips or splatters, which break the illusion that the work is digitally rendered.

In her dense fluorescent paint-marker drawings Mueller explores colour relationships, repetition and optical effects in order to create pictorial depth and visual movement. A limited set of colours is repeated with the occasional variant of one colour, which creates a subtle gradient. Certain colours within this repetitive system appear to cluster together, generating optical figure-ground shifts and depth on a flat plane. The width, size and direction of line further warps pictorial space and encourages movement of the eye.





Cat Mueller

*they were only satellites, is it wrong to wish on space  
hardware?*\_2017

Acrylic on polyester\_162cm x 122cm

\$1,600





Cat Mueller

*Colour Clusters I*\_2015

Archival and fluorescent paint markers on paper with Perspex frame\_42cm x 29.7cm

\$400 framed





Cat Mueller

*Colour Clusters II*\_2015

Archival and fluorescent paint markers on paper with Perspex frame\_42cm x 29.7cm

\$400 framed





Cat Mueller

*Colour Clusters III*\_2015

Archival and fluorescent paint markers on paper with Perspex frame\_42cm x 29.7cm

\$400 framed





Cat Mueller

*Colour Clusters IV*\_2015

Archival and fluorescent paint markers on paper with Perspex frame\_42cm x 29.7cm

\$400 framed

# CLAUDIA NICHOLSON

Claudia Nicholson's practice examines psychic and real connections to place through multidisciplinary forms of art making. Inherent in her work is a desire to connect to heritage through the incorporation of established modes of artisanal practice with her own, specifically practices local to Central and South America. The work she makes is a type of reverse erosion, an aggregation of symbols, experiences and cultural practices. Nicholson is interested in creating acts of collective remembrance, exploring the ways in which we navigate the complexities of identity in a post-colonial context.

In 2017, Nicholson was selected as a finalist and invited to create a work for the National Self-Portrait Prize at the University of Queensland Art Museum — the theme of which was 'Look at me looking at you'. Responding to this, Nicholson interpreted the theme *"as an invitation to the audience to look at me looking at the above-mentioned women to see myself reflected back, an ongoing attempt to situate myself in a history from which I am separated but enamoured with."*

*The title of this work comes from the song 'Taki Ongoy' by Mercedes Sosa, a revered Argentinian folk singer and political activist. One of the opening lines translates to 'Endless Rain'. Taki Ongoy was an Indigenous movement, which arose in the Peruvian Andes during the sixteenth century in opposition to the Spanish invasion.*

The imagery draws from various Central and South American folklore and colonial depictions of Indigenous peoples of the Americas.. *I have repatriated these figures through self-portraiture and conflated them with significant historical, folkloric and contemporary Latinx figures who have informed my understanding of my own history."*



Claudia Nicholson

*Endless Rain II: For The Taki Unquy, the Ice Maiden, the Amazons, the daughters of the sun and the moon, La Llorona, La Malinche, The Brown Berets, Las Sillateras de Santa Elena, The San Antonio 4, Mercedes and Maria (full of grace)*

2017\_Watercolour, pearl pigments, diamantes, bronze leaf, ground down human teeth and glitter on paper  
 55cm x 75cm (paper size) / 66.5cm x 85.5cm x 2.75cm (framed size)\_Photograph by Document  
 Photography.  
 \$3,000 framed



# EBONY RUSSELL

Ebony Russell is a Sydney-based artist whose practice spans sculpture and installation with a particular focus on ceramics.

*"My recent series of ceramic works, 'Piped Dreams' explores imbued objects and notions of nostalgia and desire. Objects can stir memories and are used mnemonically to create, store and retrieve a sense of past. My work is a response to aspects of my experience, focusing on the personal connection to these objects through childhood reverie, identity and contemporary collecting practices.*

*As a child I was obsessed with ornaments and anything frilly and pink, cake decorating was a particular focus and I longed for the most decorative cake on my birthday each year. I wish to investigate how these objects and decorative processes have a capacity to evoke memories and aid the return to childhood reverie in adult life. I am interested in exploring decorative practices traditionally performed by women as the main construction method for my practice. Currently the environments and structures I create utilise cake-piping techniques with porcelain, allowing my imaginings and reveries to take shape. These sculptures are teetering on the brink of disaster, often burdened by the weight of their own structure or heavy with gold lustre drips."*  
- Ebony Russell, 2019.

Ebony Russell studied a Bachelor of Applied Arts (Ceramics) at Monash University, graduating with Honours in 2003. Ebony received the award for Outstanding Applied Arts Student at Monash University 2003. In 2006 Ebony received a Graduate Diploma in Education of Visual Arts from the University of Melbourne. Since graduating as a specialist art teacher she has worked in several colleges as Head of Department in Victoria and Queensland while continuing to exhibit and maintain her art practice. Working with large-scale stoneware, slip casting, porcelain as well as resin and printmaking.

Ebony is currently a Masters of Fine Arts candidate at the National Art School in Sydney. In 2018 she was selected as a finalist in the annual Saint Cloche Gallery - Little Things Art Prize and the biannual Sydney Living Museum - Meroogal Women's Art Prize. She has also been awarded the International Franz Rising Star Award for excellence in porcelain along with winning a Franz Rising Star Project Scholarship.



Ebony Russell

*Piped Dream - Pink Tiara (Nothing Breaks Like a Heart)\_ 2019*

Stained porcelain and luster\_16cm x 24cm x 30cm\_Photograph by Kurt Schwerdtfeger.  
\$900



Ebony Russell

*Piped Dream (Pink Pony)*\_2018

Stained Porcelain\_39cm x 17cm x 15cm\_Photograph by Kurt Schwerdtfeger.

\$900 unframed





Ebony Russell  
*Piped Dream (Pink Ombre Pony)*\_2018  
Stained Porcelain\_31cm x 14cm x 7cm  
\$750

# GEORGIA SAXELBY

Georgia Saxelby is a Sydney-born installation artist based between New York and Washington DC who works at the junction between ritual, gender and architecture. Her installations re-contextualise ritual and disrupt spatial hierarchies to question the symbolic spaces in which identities and values are performed today. By combining sculpture, architecture, performance, and participatory systems, Saxelby invents her own sacred spaces in which the audience are invited to collaboratively perform a symbolic task, from feasting, breaking, burning or archiving the art objects, in order to undergo an emotional and social transformation.

In the performative installation *The Architecture of a Witch's Hut*, Saxelby imagines the agency of the witch in building her own home and reconsiders the archetypal figure as a powerful symbol of female independence. The structure was built by the artist alone during a residency in upstate New York, and references the surrounding New England architecture and the real history of the burning of accused women in the area 300 years prior. Probing historical and cultural imagination, the project culminated in a ceremonial and collaborative burning of the structure with resident artists and the local community, reclaiming fire from a destructive and violent force to one of healing and regeneration.



Georgia Saxelby

*The Architecture of a Witch's Hut III*\_2017

Archival pigment print on cotton rag\_82.5 x 55cm (paper size) / 108 x 80.5 cm (framed size)\_

Photograph by Subodh Samudre

\$1,250 unframed / \$1,650 framed



# NAOMI SEGAL

Naomi Segal is an artist who works with her family's photos and stories to understand her own experience as a Shanghainese-Australian. Her recent work is a meditation on the love and generosity of her family — especially the way that this love traverses cultural and linguistic barriers. In her work, Segal traces the significance of food, gestures and gifts (including abalone shells from her uncle). Through suggestive mark-making and printmaking, Naomi aims to transmit the sensation of a cultural identity that is constantly emerging, disappearing and punctured with absence.



Naomi Segal

*Naomi has arrived!*\_2019

Mixed media on paper; abalone shell\_13cm x 9.5cm (excluding shell)

\$295





Naomi Segal

*I love you, old lady\_2019*

Mixed media on paper; abalone shell\_13cm x 9cm (excluding shell)

\$295



Naomi Segal

*Reminder\_2018*

Mixed media on paper; abalone shell\_13cm x 9cm (excluding shell)

\$295





Naomi Segal

*What are you thinking about?\_2019*

Mixed media on paper; abalone shell\_12cm x 9.5cm (excluding shell)

\$295



Naomi Segal

*I am thinking about you\_2019*

Mixed media on paper; abalone shell\_12.5cm x 8cm (excluding shell)

\$295

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