

# Up in the Sky



## Landing Points: Race, place and identity

**Up in the Sky | Landing Points  
Penrith Regional Gallery &  
The Lewers Bequest  
Summer Exhibition Suite 2017-18**

**Landing Points:  
Race, place and identity**



**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #1*  
 1997

offset print

61 x 76

edition 15 of 60

Donated through the Australian Government's  
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Penrith Regional Gallery &

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**75 years a celebration of life art and exhibition.**

**This year Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest celebrates 75 years of art practice and exhibition on this site. In 1942, Gerald Lewers purchased this property to use as an occasional residence while working nearby as manager of quarrying company Farley and Lewers. A decade later, the property became the family home of Gerald and Margo Lewers and their two daughters, Darani and Tanya. It was here the family pursued their individual practices as artists and welcomed many Sydney artists, architects, writers and intellectuals. At this site in Western Sydney, modernist thinking and art practice was nurtured and flourished.**

**Upon the passing of Margo Lewers in 1978, the daughters of Margo and Gerald Lewers sought to honour their mother's wish that the house and garden at Emu Plains be gifted to the people of Penrith along with artworks which today form the basis of the Gallery's collection. Received by Penrith City Council in 1980, the Neville Wran led state government supported the gift with additional funds to create a purpose built gallery on site. Opened in 1981, the gallery supports a seasonal exhibition, education and public program.**

**Please see our website for details  
[penrithregionalgallery.org](http://penrithregionalgallery.org)**

# Up in the Sky | Landing Points: Race, place and identity Introduction



Tracey Moffatt  
*Up in the Sky #2*  
1997  
offset print  
61 x 76  
edition 15 of 60  
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Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest Summer Exhibition Suite was shaped following the gift of Tracey Moffatt's major photographic series, *Up in the Sky*, to the Gallery collection by donors Jill and Michael Hawker. Produced in 1997, *Up in the Sky* is a complex consideration of post-colonial race relations in Australia. Mysterious cinematic images tell a story of alienation, and struggle wrought by church and mission life; of stolen generations and stolen culture.

This extraordinary artwork and gift is honoured in the current Main Gallery exhibition, *Landing Points: race, place and identity*. Eleven contemporary artists respond to Moffatt's work, and to the 20 year interval since *Up in the Sky* was first exhibited. This is a period where identity politics have been at the forefront of debates concerning civil and human rights across the Western world; a time where the call by First Nations for self determination, Reconciliation, and constitutional recognition, sits adjacent to growing xenophobia wrought by globalisation, Islamic fundamentalism, the War on Terror, and the flight of refugees. All have challenged cherished national myths of egalitarianism and a unified national self.

In turns both personal and polemical, each participating artist considers race, place and identity from the perspective of their own *landing point* among compatriots. Revealed herein are identities rooted in place, in the body, in time and relationships, yet made unsteady by the privilege offered to some.

*Up in the Sky / Landing Points: race, place and identity* is jointly curated by Gallery Director, Lee-Anne Hall and participating artist, Hayley Megan French.

Grateful thanks to artists: Cigdem Aydemir, Caroline Garcia, Victoria Garcia, Alana Hunt, Tim Johnson, Carla Liesch, Nicole Monks, Joan Ross, Mark Shorter and Jason Wing.

*Up in the Sky* is exhibited in Lewers House.

**Dr Lee-Anne Hall &  
Dr Hayley Megan French  
Curators  
Penrith Regional Gallery &  
The Lewers Bequest  
November 2017**





**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #3*

1997

offset print

61 x 76

edition 15 of 60

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**Up in the Sky | Landing Points:  
Race, place and identity  
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**Contains mature themes and strong language**



Tracey Moffatt  
*Up in the Sky #4*  
1997  
offset print  
61 x 76  
edition 15 of 60  
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# Up in the Sky

Tracey Moffatt's 1997 series *Up in the Sky* is a complex consideration of post-colonial race relations in Australia. Twenty-five mysterious cinematic images tell a story of alienation, and struggle wrought by church and mission life, stolen generations and stolen culture.

The open-ended and cyclical narrative of Moffatt's characters in the landscape is evocative of past and current histories, both remarkably Australian and global.

In the twenty years since this work was created, we have experienced a period where identity politics have been at the forefront of debates concerning civil and human rights across the Western world; a time where the call by First Nations for self-determination, Reconciliation, and constitutional recognition, sits adjacent to growing xenophobia wrought by globalisation, Islamic fundamentalism, the War on Terror, and the flight of refugees. All have challenged cherished national myths of egalitarianism and a unified national self - and twenty years on, Moffatt's work resonates as strongly as ever.

As essayist Tristen Harwood writes of Moffatt's work, "each scene of *Up in the Sky* appears as though it is staged after the decisive moment has taken place, producing an aftermath effect. While photographs have the potential to bear witness, making the past concrete historical 'facts', Moffatt gestures to the elusiveness of past experience. The photographs exist as total aftermath, as an effect of incomprehensible past moments that are obscured from our gaze."<sup>1</sup>

This seminal series of photographs was gifted to the Gallery collection, by donors, Jill and Michael Hawker.

## Tracey Moffatt

Tracey Moffatt is one of Australia's most celebrated artists having achieved significant international acclaim. Working across photography, film and video, Moffatt's work is deeply connected to Australia, while resonating with a global audience through her complex consideration of post-colonial race relations, gender, identity and place. Moffatt held her first solo exhibition at the Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney in 1989, and has since exhibited extensively in international exhibitions and museums including the Cannes Film Festival; Venice Biennale; Centre Pompidou, Paris; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; numerous international biennales. In 2017 Moffatt represented Australia in the 57th Venice Biennale with her new body of work: *My Horizon*. For many years Moffatt was based in New York. She now divides her time between Sydney and South East Queensland. Moffatt is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.

## Up in the Sky



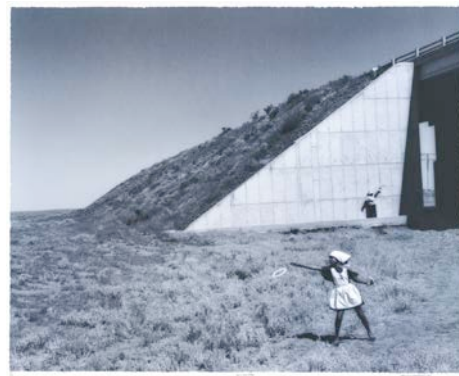
**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #5*  
1997  
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**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #6*  
1997  
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# Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #7*

1997

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**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #8*

1997

offset print

61 x 76

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**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #9*

1997

offset print

61 x 76

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**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #10*

1997

offset print

61 x 76

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**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #11*

1997

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**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #12*

1997

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## Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #13*  
1997

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## Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #14*  
1997

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## Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #15*  
1997

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# Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #16*  
1997

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**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #18*  
1997

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**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #17*  
1997

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**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #19*  
1997

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**Tristen Harwood:**  
***Seeing otherwise possibility:***  
***Up in the Sky***

## Seeing otherwise possibility: Up in the Sky

*Have you ever noticed how... the light comes through the trees a certain way, how the patterns of the future reveal themselves as a ghost language and you got to do more than just pay attention but use all the knowledge and wisdom you have ever gained to interpret it?*<sup>2</sup>

Light rings out from behind the wanton branch of a tree, holding the impossible weight of a lifeless bull as the sky withdraws behind the land's gradient and the shadows of two human figures are cast into focus. Looking at this scene, it's as though a decisive moment has just passed and we're left with only the aftermath. In this image and others from Tracey Moffatt's filmic sequence of photographs *Up in the Sky* (1997), tone and shadow tumefy drama initiating an affective response, while context, allusion to cinema and an ambiguous narrative unsettle ready modes of interpretation. It's necessary to look beyond what's given in the frame to construct meaning. *Up in the Sky* leaves a residue of the 'real' that opens us to *otherwise possibility*<sup>3</sup> – the *otherwise* announces the fact of illimitable alternatives to what *is*, to what exists, to how we inhabit and see the world – a way of thinking and acting outside dominant, sometimes violent ways of knowing and being.

What has sustained *Up in the Sky* across temporal and geographical borders since its initial exhibition 20 years ago is its irreducibility, the *otherwise possibility* that it creates. The tense uncertainty of the images is ruptural, prompting us to think into being that which is held from view. This is edified by Moffatt's reluctance to tie the work to a specific spatiotemporal location. 'Through a glass darkly' we're presented with an obscured vision of 'reality' that calls on us to look beyond cultural, social and colonial complexities that have sustained the Australian landscape through the 20 years that *Up in the Sky* has been in circulation.

*Up in the Sky* remains meaningful because Moffatt's excluded subjects, cast out into a landscape of deprivation, are today's excluded subjects. They resist being co-opted into a narrative

of 'man-made' progress. Thinking of *Up in the Sky* this way allows us to grasp *otherwise possibility*, not as new or counter-historical narratives, but as ways of being, stories, which already exist alongside and are marginalised by the codified order, defined by settler-colonialism, liberal-democratic ideology and capitalism. And because the *otherwise* already exists, to look seriously at *Up in the Sky* is to alter the way we see and think the world in order to get at the possibilities that are already there, but are obscured from our gaze. It is to be reminded that context is constructed.

*Up in the Sky* takes place in a 'wasteland setting'. While certain iconography, like corrugated iron housing, suggests an Australian location, the landscape is primarily a shadow place – the outskirts of the 'civilised world' inhabited by the abject subjects of the Western geopolitical universe. *Up in the Sky* destabilises the underlying assumptions that sustain the notion of a home place with an unmoored narrative presented against the backdrop of a ruinous desert town, inhabited by stricken, sometimes spectral human figures. The photographs shot in black and white, on location, under the light of an empty desert sky are devoid of the landscape's natural colour. Instead, images are washed through with blue and honey-brown tones. Here, place is a set of conditions, stories, lives, where the vanquished of history create space that is their own, where subjugated experience can be enunciated.

Imagining the conditions that hold this severe landscape together, we engage with subjects of dispossession, violence, misery and excess. In one photo a mother holding her baby sits in a broken room, as looking through her window we see three Catholic nuns approach. Framed in the violent history of colonialism, this dramatic scene can be viewed as a reference to the devastation wrought on Aboriginal peoples by the State, like the sanctioned abduction of Aboriginal children from their families, facilitated in part by Catholic nuns.

However, to view this image simply as tragic is to overlook *otherwise possibility*, or what it means to survive through violence that attempts to erase

## Seeing otherwise possibility: Up in the Sky

your world. The subjugated subjects of the Stolen Generation<sup>4</sup> are not stuck in the schism between worlds. Rather, they are spectral, they haunt and challenge colonial categories, rupturing worlds and boundaries, materialising as full and flourishing subjects. Throughout the work narratives are both given and held from view, which like the incomplete words painted on a window in this image, are always in excess of what's in the frame.

Each scene of *Up in the Sky* appears as though it is staged after the decisive moment has taken place, producing an aftermath effect. While photographs have the potential to bear witness, making the past concrete historical 'facts', Moffatt gestures to the elusiveness of past experience. The photographs exist as total aftermath, as an effect of incomprehensible past moments that are obscured from our gaze. It is here, in the reverberations of aftermath, that we find *otherwise possibility* – to make meaning of *Up in the Sky* we must think into being that which is held from view, drawing on the innumerable alternatives to what *is*. We become aware that excess and lack are constitutive elements of our understandings of the past. Excess, because past moments always exceed our experience of the present and lack, because the past is never the now. The impossibility of knowing 'how it really was' is tangible in these images, which effect a sense of excess that disrupts temporality, and ready ways of making sense of the world.

In this work, photography is not documentation, it's illusory, it unsettles the sense that we can fully capture the real. Moffatt seizes moments as they flash by with *Up in the Sky*, wresting the subjects and the landscape they inhabit from the orthodoxy that threatens to overwhelm them. Beyond the utopian desires of staging a corrective historical narrative, Moffatt insists the viewer project their own knowledge and experience to fill the gaps that exist between memories and the present, creating a polysemic, provisional vision of reality.

The associative labyrinths of Moffatt's 'realism' spread through her allusion to cinema. *Up in the Sky* visually and thematically alludes to Pasolini's filmic

masterpiece *Accattone* (1961) – most strikingly, the four honey-toned images of two shirtless people fighting, limbs entwined, as they stir the dust from the dry earth. A lyrical, expressive film, *Accattone* bears superficial similarity to Italian neo-realism, portraying material poverty in 'real' locations. Yet, it's more concerned with the sacred and existential in human experience than laying bare impoverished moral and economic conditions.

Like *Accattone*, *Up in the Sky* shares the tendencies of neo-realism, but with further consideration is not as intent on deconstructing the social experience of material deprivation as it is with *otherwise* modes of being that refuse to be co-opted into the hegemonic order. The tense drama of *Up in the Sky* can't be neatly resolved, as Moffatt's subjects are victims who refuse to be victimised; they inhabit a landscape of deprivation, which they fill with life and meaning. Moffatt stages a resolute and at times ritualistic identification with exclusion, which transgresses the very boundaries that are constructed to exclude. Here *otherwise possibility* exists in plenitude, 'always available and split from, while transforming into itself,'<sup>5</sup> so that it brings the constellations of asymmetrical power into light while breaking from their grip.

The sequence ends with the final image of a man who lies in a grassless patch of land, arms elevated towards the sky. It's an open-ended gesture to possibility, which keeps moving, letting meaning emerge and return. Ready modes of interpretation are challenged; Moffatt's images subvert temporal and geographical confines. Subjects and the marginal spaces they occupy are never rendered ahistorical. Rather, Moffatt's subjects are liminal: these exiles, not bound by a rigid narrative, rupture barriers of thought and experience, sustaining *otherwise possibilities* of meaning that enrich place and experience. With *Up in the Sky*, there is always a residue that exists beyond the reach of our finite senses, prompting us to alter the way we see and think the world.



## Endnotes

- 1 Tristen Harwood, *Seeing otherwise possibility: Up in the Sky*, 2017, in *Up in the Sky | Landing Points* catalogue.
- 2 John Keene, *Counternarratives*, New Directions Press, New York, 2015 p. 231.
- 3 Theorised by Ashon T. Crawley in *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*, Fordham University Press, 2017, *Otherwise possibility* is a phrase that bespeaks plurality, the ongoingness of alternatives to normative modes of being. It the fact of alternative modes ways of living and knowing that are often discarded in order to produce the coherence of the state.
- 4 The Stolen Generations refers to the Aboriginal children who were forcibly removed from their families between 1910–70 in accord with racist government assimilation policies.
- 5 Ashon T. Crawley *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*, Fordham University Press, 2017, p.2.

Tristen Harwood is a descendant of the Marra peoples from Ngukurr, living and writing in Wurundjeri Country. His writing on art and popular culture draws inspiration from cultural studies, Aboriginal philosophy, art theory and phenomenology. Recently, Harwood has published on curatorial practices and VR ethics in *un Magazine* and *Overland*. A member of the *un Magazine* editorial committee, Harwood holds a degree in Indigenous Studies and works at the University of Melbourne. Harwood's writing seeks to engage thoughtfully and productively with Aboriginal expressive culture and facilitate others to do the same.

## Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #20*  
1997

offset print  
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edition 15 of 60

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## Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky* #21

1997

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## Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #22*  
1997  
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**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #23*  
1997  
offset print  
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## Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**  
*Up in the Sky #24*  
1997

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## Up in the Sky



**Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #25*

1997

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## List of works

All measurements are in cm

(h x w x d)

### **Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #17*

1997

offset print

61 x 76

edition 15 of 60

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### **Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #21*

1997

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61 x 76

edition 15 of 60

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### **Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #19*

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### **Tracey Moffatt**

*Up in the Sky #24*

1997

offset print

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& The Lewers Bequest  
Collection

# Lee-Anne Hall: *Landing Points*

## Landing Points



Nicole Monks with Luke Butterly  
(collaborative photographer)  
*Native to this land*  
2017  
Series of 10  
c-print on custom wood, edition 1 of 6 +2AP  
18 x 24 in (per image)  
Courtesy of the artists

# Landing Points

## 20 Years.

20 years ago Tracey Moffatt's photographic series *Up in the Sky* placed the viewer in a dream-scape 'without language or streets'<sup>6</sup> - a place of fractured narratives, images and signs. People standing, people sitting, babies cradled, babies held aloft by nuns, figures wrestling on the ground, failing buildings, parked cars, the carcass of a steer caught in a tree in a storm of refracted light and dust. A figure prone upon the ground, eyes open skyward - alive or dead he sees what we do not. Some town in some place called Australia. Who are these weathered people, wearing rags, in the dust, in back alleys, along fence lines, under bridges?

20 years on, the wonderment of Moffatt's powerful and original vision is not diminished. It echoes loudly with the filmmaker poets, Roeg, Wenders and Weir. Grounded in dirt, the artist reveals a complex world of racial relations. Each image a fleeting memory, a dream, which we reach to grasp before we wake. The artist renders but does not tell. Our work is to look and having looked, to see.

20 years. Where have we been, what have we done?

Looking forward, we looked back, and released *The Stolen Children* report. We walked across the Harbour Bridge for Reconciliation. We signed cut-out hands with our names and goodwill and we planted them in the earth. We watched but did not see young men die on the streets and in incarceration. On morning television passenger jets slammed into the Twin Towers, and a world away we sent our young to fight the war on terror. We opened offshore detention. We watched as refugees sat in the sun on the Tampa's open deck. We called in the navy to turn the boats back, and dozens died one Christmas as the sea thrashed them against rocks. The intervention happened and families were pulled apart. We said sorry and grown men and women wept. We fiddled with the race discrimination act,

and claimed the right to be bigots. We cancelled passports, we raided homes. We closed offshore detention, left them fearful, hungry and thirsty, digging with their hands to find water. And we carried on.

20 years on, Moffatt's rear view images - grotesque and distorted, staggering to some uncertain place called the future now appear ahead of us. The current exhibition, *Landing Points: Race, place and identity* brings together eleven contemporary artists in response to Moffatt's dream-scape and to the 20 year interval since its creation. It asks: where have we landed? It considers *becoming*, who we might be as compatriots. The vision of each artist is at turns singular, political, upbraiding, humorous, wondering, motioning to those others who share these concerns.

Space exists, place is peopled and thus created. A landscape is space curated – a way of looking. Thirty years ago Paul Carter wrote of Australia as palimpsest, written over by each who have walked it.<sup>7</sup> Named by explorers, it became a place claimed by empire. Through naming, the settler eased into place and called it home, as if it was ever thus. Upon this first lie of the land we built a country.

Returning to this first lie of the land, *Landing Points* artists attempt to wrestle space into some known shape, some shape into which they might fit.

## An Uneasy Fit

In mathematics, nine is a magical number, and so too artist *Tim Johnson* intends it to be in painting. The magic of nine is nine, whether added, subtracted, multiplied or divided to and of itself, the answer is always nine. Johnson's *Crop Circles* - nine panels, nine truths, at once indivisible and equivalent, without hierarchy of faith, knowledge or God.

Johnson has long produced these 'floating worlds' - the universe on a starry bed, heaven and story drawn upon the earth. This painting began in



thought and conception over four decades ago, with Johnson sitting on the ground with the old men of Papunya trading paint for knowledge. Each painting since, an expansion upon the ever-expanding universe, an attempt to capture everything: Pteradactyl, flying saucers, Buddha, Goddess, lotus flower, pagoda, shrine, Mayan cities, corporate symbols, desert painters, storytellers, bluesman Robert Johnson, steps to be climbed, walls to be scaled, heaven to be reached. Great civilisations, great mysteries, the trials of faith, all is grounded.

Within each panel, a central motif, a crop circle encircling creation's great repetitions, Fibonacci sequence rendered in Mandelbrot patterns alongside pop cultural references, space invader, alien, and Tjukurrpa painting. And there at the bottom edge of panel nine is Big Foot, making his escape. It is all too much to bear.

Landscape abstractionist, *Hayley Megan French* has spent years in the back and forth to land's end in north-west Australia. In painting, French is processing place, her place among others. Her suite *Eight vertical perspectives* is a consideration in two parts of land's great beneath and our anxious belonging. A singular large painting, a sea of white contained and marked by black. Adjacent, seven paintings arranged in vertical grid formation as if photos of the earth scanned by satellite, each small painting part of a larger piece of earth. White paint passes like a cloud over the earth's formations; white through which we can't quite see, save sketched shapes. White washes over black, and from white a trembling line emerges to reveal the shape of mountains, of boulders, of routes, of scars in dust. And beneath this celestial cloud, dark smudges: the colour of skin and the site of white anxiety.

In 2014 Chinese street artist Hua Tunan was commissioned to spray a six by three metre painting of his homeland upon the Gallery wall.<sup>8</sup> The artist produced a psychedelic mountain-scape of peaks

and troughs. When the exhibition concluded, the wall mural was painted over, once, twice, grey, white, white, grey, white, black, white and white.

Invited to create a landscape, *Carla Liesch* unpaints this Gallery wall. She sands and scratches, using power tools and paper to reveal the colour and form of a mountain view. Liesch is looking for history. If her power tool slips, the colour she seeks will become dust, the wall will be gouged, the story lost. So she is tender in her movements.

Revealed in small sections are the colours of another's story, and an endless whiteout. Liesch, archeological painter, knows that the future must know the past.

In *Waterwalker*, artist *Mark Travers Shorter* reintroduces his alter ego Schleimgurgeln<sup>9</sup> as a 'fiction to address a reality'.<sup>10</sup> This is perhaps Shorter's most complex work to date. In parlaying 19th century archival photographs of the Nepean River (Yandhai)<sup>11</sup> the artist trades in reversals, doubles, oppositions, historical truth and fictions. Through Schleimgurgeln, the wonder and disgust of first apprehension is imagined. Here is the white *Other*, a primitive and ludicrous creature, an old white bird lost his feathers and power.

But look closely now, for little is as it seems.

Atop a museum cabinet sit illuminated glass plate negatives. Each negative a precious artefact, a precious truth telling. In glass negative, the figure of Schleimgurgeln is transformed, near disappeared, perhaps an apparition. No longer seen by the genteel men and women of Yandhai land and waters, he now watches them. He walks upon water, he peers from the bushes, he stands before others. He waits. He waits to be recognised.

Adjacent, in positive, upon the wall, a man in a hat rows his boat, lonely in the face of Yandhai's great cutting.<sup>12</sup> To the near side, Schleimgurgeln, steps from the water onto rocky ground. His back is turned, oblivious to our watching presence. This white ghost is set to make trouble.

# Landing Points

Artist *Alana Hunt* is finding her feet on the land of her husband and child. In doing so, she offers up the remote township of Kununurra in an examination of the spaces 'between' racial experience and recognition – the spaces which divide.

In her suite of 15 Polaroids, *Between me and you* the township is a backdrop for the placement of collaged figures, cut from 20th century pages, 20th century moments. These cut outs have a dull familiarity, yet their posture and actions are alien in this setting. With Tracey Moffatt's work in mind, we must enquire, what are they doing in this place? For whose history do they stand? How did these cut-outs take the place of others?

Accompanying this photographic series are two digital films. In *Between neighbours and nations*, the camera moves slowly along the town's fencelines, each animated by a play of shadows. Each fence, the sturdy and the porous, the very broken-down is a material study in borders and transgression. This work is paired with *Between home and the police*, a 21 minute exploration of the journey taken between home and the local police station. Languid and mesmerising, without speed or siren, the camera follows a route through a town not yet woken. House upon house, tree upon tree, fence upon fence, shops, park and government buildings pass by before arrival at the station. This is a route made familiar by colour.

Identity and affinity are familiar tropes in the work of *Jason Wing*. This artist's home in self is crowded - Aboriginal, Chinese, Australian - each is found in his face and being, and so he has borne the curiosity of others. In *BruteForce>>MergeSort>>*, Wing approaches the question of identity through a broader lens. Using the search and sort algorithm *BruteForce>>MergeSort>>*, a complex 'divide and conquer' technique,<sup>13</sup> Wing questions identity by digital means. Used in camera facial recognition, it is a technology which will soon allow identification

and tracking of our every movement in public life - caught as we walk through doors, stand at counters, enter and leave each country.

For Wing, his Aboriginal self, this is all too familiar. A life lived under scrutiny. An identity under question. In *BruteForce>>MergeSort>>*, Wing appears upon multiple screens, in head and shoulder shot. A box shaped scan passes across the face of the artist. The scan repeats, the red lined box enlarging and minimising trying to plot, to recognise and to authenticate the person. The digital seeker cannot get a fix upon this face, this identity. Its algorithms denied by war paint upon the artist's face. Ready for battle, the artist will determine knowing and identity.

20 years

The tide has turned at being at war with the self.

**Dr Lee-Anne Hall**  
**Curator**

## Endnotes

- 6 Protagonist Travis Henderson, description of place in Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas*, 1984.
- 7 Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay – an essay in spatial history*, Faber and Faber, 1987.
- 8 Hu Tunan, 2014, commissioned mural, for Wondermountain – Globalised Landscapes, Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest, curator Johanna Bayndrian.
- 9 Schleimgurgeln, trans. from the German 'slime gurgler'.
- 10 Interview with the artist 31 Oct 2017.
- 11 Yandhai, Darug, Nepean River
- 12 'Rising Mists', Nepean R. NSW (H. King photo Sydney) Coll. Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences
- 13 The algorithm <<BruteForce<< MergeSort was invented in 1945 by John Neumann.

## Landing Points



**Mark Travers Shorter**

*Waterwalker*

2017

lightbox, digital print and glass negatives from the  
Tyrell Collection

(Photographer Henry King c.1880 – 1900)

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist



# Hayley Megan French

## *Landing Points: The body weaving*

# Landing Points: The body weaving

*The land, as it breathes out warm night*

1. Twenty years ago Tracey Moffatt's twenty-five cyclical images of *Up in the Sky* peopled an iconic Australian landscape with an open-ended narrative, at once of its time and place and something wholly outside of it. The landscape in Moffatt's work is not specific—it is there, it is here—but it is active, it is another identity, another body in relation to those pictured, in relation to ourselves. We see this same relationship of embodiment in the works created for *Landing Points*. A multiplicity is present through the body, through the landscape.

This *landscape* is one that encompasses the multiple personal, social and political relationships, histories and stories embedded within it.<sup>16</sup> So it is with the body. It is this multiplicity that in the past twenty years we have come to experience as the underpinning of identity.<sup>17</sup> The weaving together of these stories creates a narrative of embodied, lived experience of *being* in Australia today. It is not a passive *being*, but an active assertion: in, with, against; making and remaking Australia. What then can we learn from these actions? How do they transform our understanding of race, place and identity? We ask these questions through making, through curating, through writing, through the body. The body weaving.

2. Stories in time. *Michael Mohammed Ahmad: I ride the sound of that train going past Punchbowl two years back. I ride the sound of that bus on Stacey Street eighteen years back.*

Inversions: *I'll ride with you. Cigdem Aydemir* cinematically rides the outback terrain, ninety times with ninety bodies, veil billowing back. This landscape, like Moffatt's, is archetypically Australian and simultaneously anywhere, but nowhere. But the characters are not the archetype that we see in Australian art and cinema. The driver is muslim, and female. The destination unknown. Her presence challenges the predetermined dichotomies of identity and culture to create an alternate, open-ended narrative. Aydemir questions what narratives, what belief systems we are privileging by asking *good white people*<sup>18</sup> to ride pillion, to hold on tight.

The body performs *The Ride*. How do we react?

3. With mutability. With movement. *Caroline Garcia* presents the female body of colour, asserting her body, her movement, upon the river, upon the

bank. Enacted, performed, repeated. The twerk is an interruption, withdrawn from Jamaican culture, once inserted into the suburban landscape of Sydney, and now the more 'natural' surrounds of Emu Plains. This place of Emu Plains has its own projected identity:

*Looming above the hot flatlands, cupping humid counties of thick air during the unremitting months of November through to April, the mountains mark the municipal boundary inland.*<sup>19</sup>

This *lack of infrastructure* place, this *smog-catching*<sup>20</sup> place, is ruptured, and with it experiences of space, identity, and self. The twerk is yet another diasporic identity, given a new context as an unconscious presence. And together, these coexisting identities move in Garcia's photographs, displaying more than one way of seeing. Through these works, we see Steven Van Wolputte's summation of the body: emerging in our time, as 'a changing relationship that, at the same time, unfolds as an ethical horizon – and challenge – for the (un) making of self, identity, and belonging.'<sup>21</sup>

*As you drive into the setting sun.*<sup>22</sup>

4. Deborah Rose tells us that 'country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life.'<sup>23</sup> We see this local landscape, Darug country—this Nepean country, the growth of decades of agricultural activity upstream—alive in *Nicole Monks'* work. The body of reeds, native and introduced entwined, emerges from somewhere between the physical geography and the cultural settings of the Nepean River.<sup>24</sup> An embodiment of *unseen truths*. Blinded, it moves out. It is a warning. This body is with us now, and we can't look away. Body of the river, *telling of the times*.<sup>25</sup>

5. Centuries earlier, Schleimgurgeln haunts the rising mists of the Nepean River. *Mark Travers Shorter's* performative alter ego questions European imaginings and colonial idealised constructions of the landscape. Schleimgurgeln is at once the powerful *Waterwalker*, yet another blind body in the landscape, groundless. His body retells this moment in nineteenth century Nepean history, questioning the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and where we come from. He reminds us that context is constructed. He exists in this local landscape, beyond space and time,<sup>26</sup> embodying these uncertainties and opening possibilities of a re-reading of the past.

6. The coalescing of past, present and future. *Tristen Harwood* writes of the otherwise possibility

# Landing Points: The body weaving

of Moffatt's photographs, presenting: 'illimitable alternatives to what is, to what exists, to how we inhabit and see the world.'<sup>27</sup> I see the otherwise possibility of *Alana Hunt's Between me and you*. Divinations in video and collage re-produce global memories in Hunt's local present. Historical figures lurk like ghosts, or shadows, evoking the hidden present, and threatening the future. The invisible social boundaries of her home in Kununurra, on Mooriwong country, are traced by the body, challenging the dominant ways of seeing this place. Hunt acknowledges the unease and fury from which this work emerges. These violent histories could be here or there, she says—but they are *here* and they are *ours*. And together we sit in the midst of these moments re-produced; as we sit in midst of more than six-hundred men left behind on Manus Island.

Hunt is the woman sitting on the bed by the window, black baby in her arms. Now Hunt's body weaves painfully slow through the streets of Kununurra. This action points to our historical, and ongoing inaction. The land breathes, and we have chills down our spine. *The body remembers*.<sup>28</sup> The body knows.

7. Between the collective body and the individual body: how do we translate our experience into something we can share, to have resonance with a context other than our own? How do we acknowledge and explore multiplicity without subsuming difference? *Victoria Garcia* creates an intensely personal landscape of Australian Filipino memory and places herself, camouflaged within this landscape. Flora and fauna are detailed and unified in a dream-like landscape that is both imagined and real. It is a meditation on the multiplicity of her identity, her earliest memories of the bush which framed her first home in Australia. It is a coming together of the self. Victoria Garcia invites us to step into this landscape, somewhere between the collective and the individual body.

*Joan Ross* visualises the timeline of our collective and individual bodies. Lured in to colonial narratives, land narratives, power narratives, *Australian* narratives—each time we travel *through* the body and its gesture, into landscapes that hold this cognitive dissonance within them. Iconic flora and fauna are manipulated again, and again they resist and reform. Identities resist and reform.

8. In writing on the current *place* of Australian

artists, Nina Miall writes of a recognition that 'there are no longer any stable, undivided positions but rather degrees of hybridity, indigeneity and diaspora that are heavily determined by context.'<sup>29</sup> From Tracey Moffatt's *Up in the Sky*, to the new works created for *Landing Points*, this mutability is always present, always questioned and constantly re-enacted.

Cultural activist Justin O'Connor reminds us what is at stake here: 'the great questions of ultimate value: of how we can live together and what the quality of our collective experience should be.'<sup>30</sup> If we are to reflect on our embodied and collective experiences of race, place and identity in Australia over the past twenty years, it begs the question of where we want to be in twenty years time. How do we engage and respond? How do we acknowledge difference and explore our relationships to this place and each other? The artists, writers and curators in *Landing Points* are posing these questions with urgency. Perhaps this is the destination of Aydemir's ride: a conversation that weaves many different experiences together, that makes room for a better understanding of identity and place through constant and active listening, discussion and questioning.

**Dr Hayley Megan French**  
**Curator**

## Endnotes

- 1 David Malouf, *An Aside on the Sublime*, (excerpt) Earth Hour, 2014, University of Queensland Press, 22-23.
- 2 Andrew Frost writes on our shifting understanding of the landscape: from the idealised representations of nature reflective of the values of Western European cultures, to an expanded field of practice encompassing the entirety of the biosphere and all relationships therein— *Another Green World; The Landscape of the 21st Century*, curated by Dr Andrew Frost, Western Plains Cultural Centre, 2017, 2.
- 3 In his review of anthropological studies of the body in the last twenty years, Steven Van Wolputte writes of the contemporary fragmentary body-self, often incoherent and inconsistent because it arises from contradictory and paradoxical experiences, social tensions and conflicts. He summarises that the anthropology of the body focuses no longer on the abstract or idealised body, but on those moments during which the body and bodiliness are questioned. See P263-264: Steven Van Wolputte, *Hang on to your Self: Of Bodies, Embodiment, and Selves*, Annual Review of Anthropology, Vol. 33 (2004), 251-269.
- 4 Michael Mohammed Ahmad, *I'll Ride With Muslim Men*; A series of vignettes inspired by the works of Cigdem Aydemir (excerpt), 2017.
- 5 Ross Gibson, *26 Views of the Starburst World*, 2012, University of Western Australia Publishing, 80-82.
- 6 *ibid.*
- 7 Steven Van Wolputte, *Hang on to your Self: Of Bodies, Embodiment, and Selves*, 251.
- 8 Ross Gibson, *26 Views of the Starburst World*, 80-82.
- 9 Deborah Bird Rose, *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal views of landscape and wilderness*, Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1996, 7.
- 10 Ross Gibson writes of the construction of a 'landscape': 'Between the physical geography and the 'cultural' settings that get created in imaginative tale-telling and picture-making, there always lies a landscape—a place where nature and culture contend and combine in our history.' In: Ross Gibson, *Seven Versions of an Australian Badland*, 2002, University of Queensland Press, 2.
- 11 Chico Monks, *Native to this land* (excerpt), artist statement for Nicole Monks.
- 12 Steven Van Wolputte, writing on Elizabeth Grosz, 'Distances have narrowed, and remoteness in space has evolved into a remoteness in time,' *Bodies-cities, in Places Through the Body*, ed. H Nast, S Pile, Princeton: Princeton Arch. Press, 42-51.
- 13 Tristen Harwood writes of the otherwise possibility: 'a way of thinking and acting outside dominant and sometimes violent ways of knowing and being.' Harwood draws on the theory of Ashon T. Crawley in *Blackpentecostal Breath: The Aesthetics of Possibility*. In Tristen Harwood, *Landing Points*, 2017.
- 14 Tracey Moffatt's new body of work *My Horizon* includes the work *Body Remembers*, asserting her own body in the work, speaking to past histories parallel to current histories of forced migration. In Tracey Moffatt, *MY HORIZON*, 2017, Australia Council for the Arts and Thames & Hudson.
- 15 Nina Miall, *Anxieties of the Self*, In *The National 2017: New Australian Art*, 2017, co-published by Art Gallery of New South Wales, Carriageworks & Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, 24.
- 16 Justin O'Connor, *After the Creative Industries: Why we need a cultural economy*, Platform Paper 47, Quaterly essays on the performing arts from Currency House, No. 47 May 2016.



## Landing Points



Caroline Garcia  
*Pon de River / Pon de Bank 1* 2017  
lenticular photograph  
42 x 29.7  
Courtesy of the artist

# **I'LL RIDE WITH MUSLIM MEN**

**A series of vignettes inspired  
by the works of Cigdem Aydemir  
Michael Mohammed Ahmad**

# I'LL RIDE WITH MUSLIM MEN

## A series of vignettes inspired by the works of Cigdem Aydemir

### Michael Mohammed Ahmad

#### Good White People

I ride the sound of that train going past Punchbowl two years back. The morning after the Sydney Siege, I stood on Lakemba station like a sad case gronk. I must have looked scared because this white girl with black braids and bright blue eyes in tight white pants and a tight white singlet smiled gently at me and said, 'I'll ride with you.' Before I could respond a big-nosed Lebo in a Nike cap scooped up from behind me and said to her, 'How about you ride me instead.'

#### Hairy Arabs

I ride the sound of that bus on Stacey Street eighteen years back. I was a student at Punchbowl Boys High School, which was surrounded by nine-foot fences, barbed wires and cameras. We were on a bus heading for a sports carnival when fifteen of the boys suddenly flopped their dicks out on the windows, at a bus driving alongside us full of schoolgirls. Our driver, an old Irish guy with black glasses like a sheriff, suddenly halted the bus, screaming that we were all rapists and demanding that we get the fuck out, even the teachers. Then, once we were standing on the curb along the Hume Highway, somewhere between Bankstown and Liverpool, the driver took off without us. While our teacher Mr Romeo, whose head was shaped like an eggplant, shouted about our behaviour, I whispered to Hassan Al-Husseini, 'Why are all your balls shaved bro?' Hassan replied, 'The imams say you have to do it every forty days, cuz, it's halal.' As punishment for flopping out their dicks, Mr Romeo made us walk back to school, which took over an hour. And that's the story of how Punchbowl Boys were banned from all sports carnivals for the rest of 1999 and why I started shaving my pubes.

#### Woodstock Women

I ride the sound of that van parked in Lidcombe Macca's twelve years back. While on his way to the

fish market, my father was driving me to Campsie library. There must have been a car accident further down Canterbury Road because we had been stuck in traffic and moving slowly since we got on from Willeroo Street, which was across from the Halal Red Rooster. After five minutes of us sitting silently in his van, a 1989 Toyota HiAce that had no radio, my father, staring straight ahead, finally said to me, 'Mohammed, what's wrong?' I was surprised by the ease in which he addressed me. I expected him to be more assertive; to speak as he usually did, in a deep and commanding voice, his entire face carved out of stone like The Thing in The Fantastic Four. His arms looked like stone too, muscles and veins rippling as he tightened his hands over the steering wheel. 'Nothing,' I whispered, staring ahead also, at the number plate of a Nissan Skyline that spelt HECTIC. Then my father turned to me with a tired smile and said, 'You're not in love, are ya?' I was so shocked that straightaway I said, 'No, no, no.' Why did he ask? He wouldn't have even allowed me to be in love at that age. I was supposed to wait until I was at least twenty-one and then I'd have to marry an Arab Muslim Alawite like me. Why couldn't he just think I was worried about my HSC exams? Was it so obvious that I had a white girl on my mind? That she had a hickey on her neck the last time I saw her? That I wasn't the one who gave it to her? I started to wonder how I was going to explain any of this to my father when suddenly he looked beyond me, his frown bending into a grin, and said, 'Haaahaaa!' He had spotted a woman standing in front of a car yard. She was wearing baggy beige pants and a bright red jumper. Her hair was long and blonde, but not like the women on television; it was dry and dirty like I only ever saw on the lesbians and hippies when we lived in Newtown. The woman had her fingers through the diamond wires of the car yard's chain-link fence, and standing peacefully before her on the other side was a guard dog, a large rottweiler with shoulders like boulders. I watched her massage the dog's chin, her fingers moving sluggishly back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. I saw the dog's

# I'LL RIDE WITH MUSLIM MEN

A series of vignettes inspired  
by the works of Cigdem Aydemir  
Michael Mohammed Ahmad

face sedated and seduced, receiving with no will to resist, as though he was at the mercy of a slow and oily special. 'Saahibtou,' my father said, this time in his deep voice, 'She's befriended him.' Then he went back to laughing, like a small boy, his goatee flickering and arm muscles flexing as he released the gearstick and the van started to move. 'What's funny?' I asked. He was staring straight ahead again, his Arabian nose sticking out above the steering wheel like a wooden spear. 'Woman,' he said. 'Woman is funny.'

## Dog Lebos

I ride the sound of that car in front of Super Cheap Auto seventeen years back. Cruising down the street in a two-door Celica with the pop-up lights. Osama drove. Isa Musa got the passenger seat, Mahmoud Mahmoud and me wedged in the back seats. I'd just skolloed a whole bottle of vodka. Tupac's voice shot out through the subwoofer: He fucked a fat motherfucker's bitch. 'I'll burn in hell-fire for drinking,' I said to the boys. Osama scoffed, 'This guy. Relax, bro. You think this is gonna matter when you do hajj and get all your sins cleared.' Smoke made its way through my nose and mouth as the Celica moved down Canterbury Road, tar intertwining out in front. 'Ay, it's hot in here, open the window,' I called out. Osama tightened his grip around the steering wheel, pressed hard against the accelerator. 'Nah, cops'll smell the weed,' Isa replied, or maybe it was Mahmoud Mahmoud. We floored it down the woven road, lights along the streets and from the narrow shops becoming beams slipping away from the rear window one by one. Isa turned up the music and Tupac screamed that he was gonna hit a nigga up. I shouted, 'Siiiiiiick!' Felt a great smile swell across my face. 'You know what, you're a freaken good bloke, Osama, I never say it, but you're a good bloke man, always drive us around and shit, wallah you're a good bloke, hey boys, isn't Osama a good bloke, Osama, you know the prophet said that intoxicants are forbidden.' Osama jerked his head. 'This guy. Relax your ball sacks, bro, it's not gonna mean anything when we're

older.' Car stopped, Osama's glare sharpening as his eyes locked on me from the rear-view mirror, red traffic light zapping out beyond his bloated cheeks. 'Forget about the prophet, we're all going to Mecca one day.' The smile continued to grow, spreading so that I felt my lips crack open like a sardine tin. I said, 'You know, you're right, Osama, have I ever told you you're right, I really like it when you're right.' Then Isa Musa tried to open his flaps, 'This guy, when he's,' and I cut him off with, 'Shut the fuck up, Isa, all right we get it, you're Palestinian, fucken rock thrower.' Mahmoud Mahmoud chuckled, Tupac was cussing, engine was revving, and I kept babbling. 'Ay, boys, you know what I reckon we should do, get some water, I'm thirsty, are you guys thirsty, I'm thirsty, and I have to piss, you should pull over, I have to piss.' Smoke continued to pile up inside the car, could no longer see anyone's face, just the red butts of joints. 'I'm hungry,' Mahmoud Mahmoud groaned. My head spun as the car flew and the pockets of air began to stretch like I was inside Lakemba Mosque where emptiness filled the night. 'Hey man, pull over, I'm getting dizzy,' I mumbled, my stomach twisting. 'Ouf,' someone inside the car said, or maybe it shot out from over the yellow arches of McDonald's. 'I got all these sluts,' Mahmoud Mahmoud shouted – could feel him against me. My eyes shut. I popped them open. Shut again. Popped them open. 'Boys!' Dropped my head on Mahmoud Mahmoud's shoulder. 'Get off me!' he groaned, pummelling my right temple with his elbow; don't think I felt it, head bounced back the other way, tried to hold it in place. 'Argh!' I gasped, taking in as much air as possible, sucked up smoke instead. The fumes seeping into my eyes stinging. My head against the small window as Osama turned hard, bashing my left temple upon the glass, then my right temple falling back on Mahmoud Mahmoud's shoulder. 'I'm hungry – get off meeh!' Elbowed me in the head again, back to centre. The boys snarled with laughter and Tupac roared with grief, 'Nigga we hit em up.' I screamed, 'Brothers, what would Allah think?' And Osama sneered, 'This guy. Don't worry, bro, it won't matter when you're older...'



Michael Mohammed Ahmad is an Arab-Australian writer, editor and community arts worker in Western Sydney. He is the founder and director of Sweatshop: Western Sydney Literacy Movement. Ahmad's work in community cultural development earned him the 2012 Australia Council Kirk Robson Award. Ahmad's essays and short stories have appeared in the Sydney Review of Books, SBS Online, The Guardian, The Australian, Heat, Seizure, The Lifted Brow and *Coming of Age: Australian Muslim Stories* (Allen & Unwin 2014). His debut novel, *The Tribe* received the 2015 Sydney Morning Herald Best Young Novelist of the Year Award. Ahmad adapted *The Tribe* for the stage with Urban Theatre Projects in 2015, which received the 2016 Fbi Smac Award for Best On-Stage Production. He received his Doctorate of Creative Arts at Western Sydney University in 2017. His forthcoming novel is *The Lebs* (March 2018).

# Landing Points Artist Biographies & Statements

## Artist Biography

Cigdem Aydemir is a Sydney-based artist strongly influenced by her identity as an Australian Muslim woman with Turkish heritage. Her performative works expand on the veil as a culturally constructed site and as a material realisation, while exploring the veiled woman cipher as resistant female other and as lived experience. Aydemir's work questions established relations of power through critiquing, decolonising and queering mechanisms. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, receiving major prizes and grants including a New Work Grant, Australia Council for the Arts, and the Edna Ryan Award for Creative Feminism. Aydemir presented her one-on-one performance *The Ride* as part of the 2017 Proximity Festival in Adelaide.

## Artist Statement

### *The Ride*

*The Ride* was a one-on-one performance piece in which two actors (the artist - a veiled Muslim woman - and participant) shared a simulated motorcycle ride through an archetypal Australian landscape. At the end of the ride, each participant was given a polaroid photograph taken from the journey with the hand-written caption “#illridewithyou xo”. As a humorous subversion of the #illridewithyou hashtag, this work examines the discourse surrounding the trend, which although came from a will to express solidarity and support, could also be seen as revealing undertones of patriarchal protectionism and the white saviour complex.

It borrows from the aesthetics of Australian art and cinema, specifically Tracey Moffatt's series *Up in the Sky* (1997) and *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*, both set near Broken Hill. I am drawn to the melodrama in Moffatt's photographs, for their ability to reveal complexities and create open-ended narratives. And like Adam/Felicia from *Priscilla*, I too, wanted to insert myself into that quintessential narrative and explore the nature of that terrain on my terms, as a Muslim woman.

This artwork has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

## Landing Points



Cigdem Aydemir

*The Ride*

2017

video

duration: varied

Courtesy of the artist

This artwork has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.



# Hayley Megan French

## Artist Biography

Hayley Megan French currently lives and works in Parramatta where she paints, writes, curates and collaborates. In 2015 French was awarded a PhD from Sydney College of the Arts on the influence of Aboriginal art on an Australian ontology of painting. This research was driven by her questioning of what it means to be living and working in Australia today as a non-Indigenous artist increasingly influenced and informed by Aboriginal Australia. French continues her research into the ability of painting to inhabit the land imaginatively and move between experiences of being in Australia. French is represented by Galerie pompom, Sydney and Alexandra Lawson Gallery, Toowoomba.

## Artist Statement

### *Eight vertical perspectives*

Eight vertical perspectives responds to the personal, social, spatial, temporal and political contexts that give rise to an artwork. My work exists in the realm of painting, in the philosophies of abstraction, in the mindscape of landscape; in painting as a site of reciprocity and critical thinking played out in actions recorded on the canvas. Actions layered over time; erased and retold in white paint. I am informed by my context, working in Australia, and driven to learn more of the colonial and postcolonial histories and stories of this place. I am informed by my research into the influence of Aboriginal art on how we think about and make painting in Australia and what that means for myself and others. I am informed by the networks of influence that inspire and challenge me to make, think, write, curate and collaborate. My paintings are my embodied experience of this context.

## Landing Points



Hayley Megan French  
*Eight vertical perspectives I*  
2017  
acrylic on canvas  
102 x 102  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie pompom, Sydney

# Caroline Garcia

## Artist Biography

Caroline Garcia is a culturally promiscuous, performance maker. She works across live performance and video through a hybridised aesthetic of cross-cultural dance, ritual practice, new media, and the sampling of popular culture and colonial imagery. Caroline's practice is shaped by alterity, echoing notions of cultural ambiguity and displacement by adopting the role of shape shifter - sliding into the gaps between cultures, experiences of otherness, and timeless clichés of exotic femininity. She takes an intersectional approach to contemporary dance (read: twerking), the politics of cultural identity and the diasporic body. Garcia has presented and performed at The Art Gallery of NSW, The Institute of Modern Art, Underbelly Arts Festival, The Art Gallery of Western Australia and Proximity Festival, MCA ARTBAR, and Art Month Sydney. Garcia's latest work *Flygirl*, was just developed at The Curtis R. Priem EMPAC Residency in New York, facilitated by the Australia Council for the Arts.

## Artist Statement

*Pon de River / Pon de Bank*

*Pon de River / Pon de Bank* is a photographic installation that expands on Garcia's early video and concept, *Autotwerk* - when the surrealist notion of automatism is applied to the phenomenon of twerking. The act of twerking performed as an automatic gesture in the everyday creates a tension between histories, body and space. In the context of the Yandhai (Nepean River), the twerk is utilised as an intervention in the environment. By inserting a foreign body and movement into the landscape of the Penrith region, a new Australian identity emerges through cultural remixing.

## Landing Points



**Caroline Garcia**  
*Pon de River / Pon de Bank 3*  
2017  
lenticular photograph  
42 x 29.7  
Courtesy of the artist



# Victoria Garcia

## Artist Biography

Victoria Garcia is an artist and textile designer based in Western Sydney. Through drawing, textile design and interactive installation, Garcia creates immersive environments which both question and reenact her Filipino Australian identity, narratives of diaspora and colonialism, and our complex relationship with nature. Garcia has worked extensively in fashion and film producing work for major brands such as Sass and Bide and Warner Bros, and has also been commissioned for large-scale public artworks for Wollongong Central and Ambush Gallery (2017), Broadway Shopping Centre (2016) and Oxford Art Factory (2013). In 2017 Garcia was awarded the Southlands Breakthrough Emerging Artist Award from Penrith Performing and Visual Arts and a Summer Studio Residency with Penrith Regional Gallery.

## Artist Statement

### *UNITY*

*UNITY* is a layered, interactive graphic installation that examines landscape and identity. Audiences are encouraged to become part of the artwork and the landscape it depicts, by wearing the garments adorned in the same pattern, documenting their experiences through photograph, and potentially sharing it in the digital landscape.

The artwork depicts an alien, floating landscape populated with native flora and fauna, inspired by my personal experience of Australian bushland growing up in Leumeah. It explores a series of contrasts—personal and universal, belonging and not belonging, Western and South East Asian values, chaos and order, the natural and the man-made, and our real, imagined and digital lives. This work is also informed by the scientific precision of Eugene Von Guerard, the 1971 film *Walkabout*, Chinoiserie, and the notion of ‘belonging to the land’ found in Indigenous groups in both Australia and the Philippines.

## Landing Points



Victoria Garcia

*UNITY*

2017

pigment ink printed on cotton linen, mixed media

installation

360 x 250

Courtesy of the artist

# Alana Hunt

## Artist Biography

Alana Hunt's practice is grounded in the capacity of art and ideas to shape the public sphere and the social space between people. She makes contemporary art, writes, produces media, and occasionally curates. Influenced by the (post)colonial worlds of Australia and South Asia the politics of nation-making and the fabric of community run through her work in quiet yet consistent ways.

Since 2009 Alana has orchestrated participatory art and publishing projects that have sensitively activated different media forms in the public sphere to shed light on the challenging narratives of Kashmir's struggle for freedom. In mid-2016 the 7-year participatory memorial *Cups of nun chai* circulated as a newspaper serial in Kashmir reaching thousands of people on a weekly basis during a period of civilian uprising and state oppression. This work won the 2017 Incinerator Art Award.

Alana has studied at universities in Sydney, Halifax and New Delhi. From 2011-15 she worked at Warmun Art Centre under the guidance of senior Gija artists. Alana now lives on Miriwoong country in the remote north-west of Australia and works across the Asia-Pacific.

## Artist Statement

Between me and you

*Between me and you* is made of the things that lie between my partner and I; between the town of Kununurra where we live; and between all of us and the world.

It is also about implication. And violence. There are memories that ruminate under the grass, no matter how thick and lush we try to make it. They thump under the bitumen. They do this still, because they're not solely of the past. These memories are re-produced everyday. We are making them.

This artwork has been generously supported by Culture and the Arts WA, a division of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries.





**Alana Hunt**  
*Between me and you*  
2017

series of 15 images  
collage on enlarged polaroids printed on canson  
edition etching rag and mounted on aluminium  
37 x 29 (per image)  
Courtesy of the artist

This artwork has been generously supported by  
Culture and the Arts WA, a division of the  
Department of Local Government, Sport and  
Cultural Industries.



# Tim Johnson

## Artist Biography

Tim Johnson has made a significant contribution to Australian art since the late 1960s, in particular the space between Aboriginal and non-Indigenous painting. Drawing from memory and personal experience, Johnson responds to a landscape that he experiences now, one that both physically and imaginatively encompasses different cultures, crosses boundaries and re-imagines the place in which he lives. His work constructs social landscapes that offer a poignant recognition of difference, and an acknowledgement that these differences do not constitute a border. Johnson has exhibited extensively in Biennales, Documenta IX and has had a major survey exhibition in the Art Gallery of NSW, 2009. Johnson is represented by Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney.

## Artist Statement

These 9 panels cover quite a lot of ground. Spaced across the middle of the work are designs from 5 crop circles. These designs have no obvious origins and appear overnight in fields, often in the UK. This unexplained phenomena is linked here to various cultural traditions that all embrace the idea of extra-terrestrial visitors, creation beings and ancestors that came to earth bringing knowledge and law.

The imagery is dispersed over an abstract dotted landscape, an intended reference to the Papunya painting tradition that originated in Central Australia. This approach to painting with story telling, an aerial view and mapping, has influenced many artists. *Crop Circles (Mt Kasuga)* includes imagery that references the following subjects and traditions: the Shinto shrine at Mt Kasuga in Japan, Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhist art, Native American tribes, Afro American music, the history of crop circles, Aboriginal artists at Papunya, Ufology and also some western art styles using stencils and stamps.

## Landing Points



Tim Johnson  
with Daniel Bogunovic  
*Crop Circles (Mt Kasuga)*  
2017  
acrylic on linen  
183 x 61 (per panel, series of nine panels)  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Dominik Mersch Gallery

## Artist Biography

Carla Liesch is a multidisciplinary artist based in Western Sydney. Liesch's place-making practice works between painting, sculpture and installation to respond to specific sites and create an affective gallery-scape. Her installation work is often the result of an unseen performance that explores the nature of painting and blurs its material limits. Her works are at once meditative, and playful; inviting the viewer in. Liesch has exhibited widely in Sydney and interstate, as an invited artist at Galerie pompom and has been curated into exhibitions at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; Verge Gallery, Sydney; and the Australian Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide.

## Artist Statement

### Time Prolapse

*Time Prolapse* reveals the layering of memory and history in place. Over 6 days I have slowly and carefully enacted a process of removal, sanding one of the gallery's floating walls to reveal traces of past exhibitions, past histories. In this same action I enact my uneasy relationship with painting and its potential to disrupt our understanding of place. All the things that painting can do and be are already present in this wall. This act finds and uncovers these histories and processes: remnants of stories, labour, murals, screws, holes, star plugs, paint, putty and cuts from beneath the surface. Previous incarnations of the gallery space are recalled, tracing back to a history rewritten and reimagined seasonally. This timeline is disrupted, there is a slipping of time, out of place.

The artist wishes to thank Richard Kean, Parramatta Artist Studios and Penrith Regional Gallery for their technical support in realising this project.

## Landing Points



Carla Liesch  
*Time Prolapse*  
2017  
trace of past labour on gallery wall  
600 x 350  
Courtesy of the artist



# Nicole Monks

## Artist Biography

A Wajarri Yamatji woman from Western Australia, Nicole Monks is an artist and designer of Aboriginal, Dutch and English heritage, currently based in Sydney. Informed by her cross-cultural identity, Monks calls into question the learned behaviours we attach to objects and places—in particular the similarities and differences between Western and Aboriginal cultures. Monks founded the company *blackandwhite creative* to generate cultural awareness and weave Aboriginal philosophies of sustainability, innovation and collaboration into contemporary art and design projects. In 2016 Monks received an Indigenous Design Mentorship from ArtsNSW, a NAVA Australian Artists' Grant, and won the Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D Award, as part of the 33rd Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards.

# Nicole Monks

## Artist Statement "Native to this land"

Some thought it lived back then  
Others believe it lives right now

I saw with my very own eyes  
Not in my dreams at night

It's now, I saw last week  
Rose from the river deep

Murky toxic chemical stink  
Alive barely able to breathe

Slow, it did not notice  
As I sat right on its path

Cautious but not scared  
Like eel it moved on land

Moist and wet and cold  
The river was its home

But the river now is clogged  
Polluted and unclean

On Land, it starts to search  
Blinded by the sludge

A low and worrying bellow  
Telling of the times

Unseen truths are bare  
The cloak of impact worn

Overgrown with fear  
Time moves slowly now

Its creeping up the bank  
And into our lives

Thoughts begin to form  
To how we move along

What we will do  
Now you have seen it too

Chico Monks

# Luke Butterly

## Artist Biography

Luke Butterly graduated from the Sydney Institute of Technology with a Diploma in Photography in 2003. He has actively practiced as a professional photographer for over 16 years running his own photography studio in Sydney. Inspired and influenced by photographers such as Walker Evans, Lewis Baltz, Ron Jude and Paul Graham, Butterly has simultaneously developed a body of work that reflects his interest in contemporary photography. This work has been exhibited in the Perth Centre for Photography and published in *Use This if You Want to Take Great*

*Photographs: A Photo Journal* by Henry Carroll. Butterly has collaborated with Nicole Monks for the ten photographs *Native to this land*. Nicole Monks with Luke Butterly Nicole Monks has worked collaboratively with photographer Luke Butterly to create the series of ten photographs: *Native to this land*.

## Nicole Monks & Luke Butterly

Monks and Butterly have worked together previously on *Money Can't Buy Me Love*, curated by Carly Lane at the Perth Centre of Photography in 2015. Their collaborative process is essential to telling the story of Monks' embodied river monster who, emerging from the Nepean River, haunts our local landscape as a warning of the long-term and ongoing effect of our intervention.

## Landing Points



Nicole Monks with Luke Butterly  
(collaborative photographer)  
*Native to this land*  
2017  
Series of 10  
c-print on custom wood, edition 1 of 6 +2AP  
18 x 24 in (per image)  
Courtesy of the artists



# Joan Ross

## Artist Biography

Joan Ross works across a range of mediums including drawing, painting, installation, photography, sculpture and video. Her bold and experimental practice investigates the legacy of colonialism in Australia and its effect on Indigenous Australians. Ross has exhibited extensively across Australia since the late 1980s and her work has been recognised in many significant awards. In 2017 Ross won the Sulman Prize, the Inaugural Ravenswood Women's Art Prize and a New Work Grant from the Australia Council for the Arts. Her work is held in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and a number of regional galleries, university and private collections. Ross is represented by Michael Reid Gallery, Sydney and Bett Gallery, Hobart.

## Artist Statement

### *Colonial Grab*

*Colonial Grab* creates a world of dissonances: of scale, of aesthetics, and of environmental custodianship. A rich metaphorical language animates complex power relations between indigenous and colonial, country and capital, luck and exploitation. In *Colonial Grab*, the symbols and desires of Australia's colonial history are located firmly in the present, to remind us of colonialism's ongoing presence and effects. And yet there is nuance and resistance: narratives of Australia, the land, peoples, culture and nature assert, lose and reassert their dominance over one another in an allegorical yet ambiguous cycle. These narratives form the different worlds of this animation, accessed through the play of a poker machine - the *Colonial Grab*, where you can try your luck, seek your fortune, fluke a windfall, chance a win and gamble on the future. But of course the odds are always with the House.

## Landing Points



Joan Ross  
*Colonial Grab*  
2015  
video animation  
7 mins 37 secs  
Courtesy the artist and  
Michael Reid Sydney

# Mark Travers Shorter

## Artist Biography

Mark Travers Shorter is a lecturer in Sculpture and Spatial Practice at the Victorian College of the Arts. Shorter has developed and performed identities such as the bawdy country music singer Renny Kodgers, the quixotic journeyman Tino La Bamba, and the time-travelling landscape painting critic Schleimgurgeln. These performance investigations express a unique contemporary grotesquerie and propose a criticality in art that is guttural, visceral and funny. Shorter has exhibited internationally and throughout Australia, including EIDEA House in New York and Dark MOFO festival in Hobart. In 2013, *Acts of Exposure* presented three Schleimgurgeln works as part of a joint venture between Contemporary Art Tasmania and the Tasmania Museum and Art Gallery.

## Artist Statement

### Waterwalker

The installation rethinks early colonial photographs of the Nepean River from the late 19th century. These pictures are from a series titled, "*Rising Mists*" taken by the Sydney photographer Henry King and are now part of the Tyrrell Collection at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. I have inserted a character called *Schleimgurgeln* into King's glass negatives to challenge and complicate the legitimacy of his images and how they present the landscape. *Schleimgurgeln* is a time-travelling landscape critic that was created to explore and reflect upon 2000 years of imagined antipodean space. From observations made by Aristotle in *Meteorology* (350 BCE), to Dante's *Inferno* (1314) and Gabriel De Foigny's *The Southern Land Known* (1692) the South has been a region where Europeans have projected their fears and desires. By haunting King's archive *Waterwalker* suggests that King's images are part of this history of European imagining and its inherent complications.

The artist acknowledges that these photos were taken on Darug Country, which was never ceded and remains and always will be Darug Land. This project was made possible by the Faculty Small Grant Scheme, Faculty of VCA and MCM, University of Melbourne. Thank you to Jack Halls, Nina Gilbert, Eliza Dyball and the staff of the VCA School of Art Photography Studio.

## Landing Points



Mark Travers Shorter

*Waterwalker*

2017

lightbox, digital print and glass negatives from  
the Tyrell Collection

(Photographer Henry King c.1880 – 1900)

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist



## Biography

Jason Wing is a Sydney-based artist who strongly identifies with his Chinese and Aboriginal heritage. Working between photomedia, installation and painting, Wing repurposes everyday objects and images to question our understanding of Australian history and our current social and political reality. In 2012 Wing won the Parliament of NSW Aboriginal Art Prize for his work *Australia was Stolen by Armed Robbery*. His work is held in both private and public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Artbank, Blacktown Council, and the Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, Virginia, USA. Wing is currently completing a Masters of Fine Arts at the Australian National University.

## Artist Statement

*Brute Force >> Merge Sort >>*

This work hatched from my experience marching in the 2017 Invasion Day protest. Surrounded by police, we were being filmed. Upon asking of the purpose of the filming, I was threatened with arrest and obstruction: "Move on." We were marching peacefully, and yet we were being intimidated. Why were they filming? What is the purpose of this data collection?

This violation of privacy reduces us to data: a constant re-producing of the dehumanisation of Aboriginal people from the early ethnographic portraits to the Basics Card of the Northern Territory Intervention. Algorithms and control. This is our current social, political, cultural, financial, personal landscape. Brute force, merge sort, divide and conquer.

My appropriated face paint is both a reclaiming of, and a barrier to, the [mis]representation of Aboriginal people, and my own identity as an Aboriginal man. It is a disruption to the endless scanning: a questioning of the ethics of surveillance and the lack of accountability, transparency, ethics, protocols and dignity in its collection.

And now we are all confronted by the National Facial Recognition Database. How will this be used against us in the future? Who benefits?

## Landing Points



**Jason Wing**  
*Brute Force >> Merge Sort >>*  
2017  
video installation  
dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist

## List of works

All measurements are in cm (h x w x d)

All works courtesy of the artist unless otherwise stated.

**Cigdem Aydemir**

*The Ride*

2017

video

duration: varied

**Hayley Megan French**

*Eight vertical perspectives I*

2017

acrylic on canvas

102 x 102

Courtesy of the artist and  
Galerie pompom, Sydney

**Hayley Megan French**

*Eight vertical perspectives*

*II - VIII*

2017

acrylic on board, framed

38.5 x 30.5

Courtesy of the artist and  
Galerie pompom, Sydney

**Caroline Garcia**

*Pon de River / Pon de Bank 1*

2017

lenticular photograph

42 x 29.7

**Caroline Garcia**

*Pon de River / Pon de Bank 2*

2017

lenticular photograph

42 x 29.7

Courtesy of the artist

**Caroline Garcia**

*Pon de River / Pon de Bank 3*

2017

lenticular photograph

42 x 29.7

**Victoria Garcia**

*UNITY*

2017

pigment ink printed on cotton  
linen, mixed media installation  
360 x 250

**Alana Hunt**

*Between me and you*

2017

series of 15 images  
collage on enlarged polaroids  
printed on canson edition  
etching rag and mounted on  
aluminium  
37 x 29 (per image)

**Alana Hunt**

*Between neighbours and nations*

2017

video

9 mins 30 secs

**Alana Hunt**

*Between home and the police*

2017

video

21 mins

**Tim Johnson**

**with Daniel Bogunovic**

*Crop Circles (Mt Kasuga)*

2017

acrylic on linen

183 x 61 (per panel, series of nine  
panels)

Courtesy of the artist and  
Dominik Mersch Gallery

**Carla Liesch**

*Time Prolapse*

2017

trace of past labour on gallery  
wall

600 x 350

**Nicole Monks**

*Native to this land*

2017

performance and wearable  
sculpture: Vallisneria Australis  
(eel reed) native, Egeria  
Densa (Brazilian waterweed)  
introduced, agricultural pipe,  
zip ties and anti bird netting,  
fish net and cow leather  
duration: variable

**Nicole Monks with Luke**

**Butterfly (collaborative  
photographer)**

*Native to this land*

2017

Series of 10

c-print on custom wood, edition

1 of 6 +2AP

18 x 24 in (per image)

**Joan Ross**

*Colonial Grab*

2015

video animation

7 mins 37 secs

Courtesy the artist and Michael  
Reid Sydney

**Mark Travers Shorter**

*Waterwalker*

2017

digital print

**Mark Travers Shorter**

*Waterwalker*

2017

lightbox, digital print and  
glass negatives from the Tyrell  
Collection (Photographer Henry  
King c.1880 – 1900)  
dimensions variable

**Jason Wing**

*Brute Force >> Merge Sort >>*

2017

video installation

dimensions variable

# Up in the Sky | Landing Points Education Programs



# Education

## School Visits

The Gallery's Education Programs offer outstanding opportunities for students to engage with the Gallery's changing exhibition program and heritage site, through lively syllabus linked exhibition tours, hands-on studio-based workshops and site visits.

Contact our Education Manager  
to arrange your visit:

Naomi McCarthy

Telephone 4735 8701

[naomi.mccarthy@penrith.city](mailto:naomi.mccarthy@penrith.city)

## School Holiday Workshops

Dates: 3- 6 October

All Workshops 10am – 12pm

Ages: 5-17

Cost \$30 per class

## Term Classes

Wednesday Drawing School

Every Wednesday 4 – 5.30pm

18 October- 6 December

Ages: 8 – 12

## Art Attack Saturday Workshops

Every Saturday 10 – 12pm

21 October- 9 December

Cost: \$180 (term)

## Mixed media

Ages: 5- 9

## Illustration and animation

Ages: 7 - 10

## Art Blocks for Tots

Ages: 3 – 6

Time: 10 – 11am

Dates: 29 September, 27 October, 24 November

Cost \$12 (individual classes)

Carers do not pay but must stay

## Tuesday Art Club

Dates: 24 October – 28 November

Studio based workshop program for adults who identify as living with a disability

Tuesday 10:30 – 12:30pm

Cost: \$120 (term)

Contact Education for participation details

All Materials provided

Bookings are essential

Telephone 4735 1100

For more details visit

[penrithregionalgallery.org](http://penrithregionalgallery.org)

[gallery@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au](mailto:gallery@penrithcity.nsw.gov.au)

# Acknowledgements

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## Artists:

*Up in the Sky*

Tracey Moffatt

*Landing Points*

Cigdem Aydemir

Hayley Megan French

Caroline Garcia

Victoria Garcia

Alana Hunt

Tim Johnson

Carla Liesch

Nicole Monks with Luke Butterly

Mark Travers Shorter

Joan Ross

Jason Wing

## Writers:

Tristen Harwood

Michael Mohammed Ahmad

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Dominik Mersch Gallery

Galerie pompom

Michael Reid Sydney

## Exhibition Team:

Dr Lee-Anne Hall

*Director and Co-Curator*

Dr Hayley Megan French

*Co-Curator*

Marian Simpson

*Exhibition Manager*

Graeme Robinson

*Lead Technician*

Naomi McCarthy

*Education Manager*

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## Other Creators/Contributors:

Dr Hayley Megan French, author.

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Tristen Harwood, author.

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## Cover image:

Cigdem Aydemir, *The Ride* 2017, video, duration: varied

Courtesy of the artist

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Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest  
86 River Rd Emu Plains NSW 2750  
[penrithregionalgallery.org](http://penrithregionalgallery.org)



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