

the ArtHitects: Parlour Parlëur

9 September – 10 December

A half-forgotten story, a fiction of history, an illusion of our permanence in an uncertain world. Parlour Parlëur, by the ArtHitects, Gary Carsley and Renjie Teoh, is an immersive world where ideas of synchronicity, proximity and loss are imagined.

The parlour, a place within the home to receive guests, was the most public of a home's interior spaces. This site, once a private home, is now a public gallery - its domestic origins still very much part of the fabric here. The architecture of these histories and the shared connections we experience from one moment to another, are core to the artists creative practice, a collusion between art and architecture where circumstance and coincidence merge in a visually beguiling tableau.

Parlëur, the French verb that means to talk is enacted as a call and response between objects, imagery, and forms, while the ruination and loss of the image across the gallery is at once a reminder of the violence of loss, as it is a call for change and renewal.

Sarah Wentworth, in the form of a bust from Vaucluse House in Sydney's east, assumes lead character. Placed here at the western edge of Sydney, her presence brings forth a time when her husband and colonist William Charles Wentworth set off from Emu Plains across the Blue Mountains in 1813. This moment, like a fracture across the landscape is made visible in the room. An image of rupture and disruption in the name of human endeavour.

By borrowing furniture and objects from the Gallery's collection, and setting them against a fictional parlour scene, the ArtHitects engage in a relentless process of what they refer to as 'worlding' where nature, culture, subject and object are not seen as separate stories but as each other's context in which all are constantly developing with each other.

A Greek myth enacting a ritual of love and loss is visualised in large compositions, while lace pieces made by the OWLS (Outer Western Lacemakers Sydney), are embedded into the architecture. Like time travel the ArtHitects lay out stories from the past and entangle them with images and ideas from the present.

These moments are impressions. Circumstantial occurrences that all share a similar texture - a fabric of life that has rippled to come together to create a new architectural reality. The evidence of the artist's own labour in building this world, is seen in the form of penciled grid marks used to lay the foundations of applying the four thousand A4 paper sheets to create this richly entangled narrative.

Moving through this space we might consider ourselves characters in a place of fiction, walking between many worlds simultaneously. Witnessing its disappearance, while imagining the many possibilities for its renewal.

Working out of both Sydney and Singapore, the ArtHitects, Gary Carsley (1957) & Renjie Teoh (1983) combine their respective practices as artist and architect, while synthesising their different cultural backgrounds and generational outlooks. The ArtHitects are committed to evolving a transcultural visual language to express the lived experiences of contemporary Australia's increasingly blended communities. Their large-scale artworks, developed through a dialogue with community groups, curators, and public collections, are experienced as resonant, activated social spaces. In these immersive, richly visual, dimensionally beguiling environments, audiences can come together to form new networks; reflecting and celebrating the things they have in common.

Since beginning their collaboration in 2023, the ArtHitects have created a number of large-scale works including: *The Regency Made Me Blind* (2018), commissioned by the National Gallery of Singapore; *The Pavilion of Clear Memory When Scene From Waverley*, Bondi Pavilion, Sydney, 2023; *The Illawarra Pavilion*, Wollongong Art Gallery, 2022; *Braving Time – Contemporary Art from Queer Australia*, The National Art School, Sydney, 2023; *Two Views of the Garden in East Jurong*, Art Porters, Singapore, 2023.

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Images: the ArtHitects (Gary Carsley & Renjie Teoh), Parlour Parlëur, installation view, 2023. Penrith Regional Gallery. Courtesy the artists.

