CCP DECLARES

on

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

MOHINI CHANDRA / MIRIAM CHARLIE / CHERINE FAHD
KATRIN KOENNING / PILAR MATA DUPONT
TOM NICHOLSON / ELVIS RICHARDSON
In *CCP Declares: On the Social Contract*, Pippa Milne applies a term from beyond the arts—perhaps harking to her initial training in the Law—as an entry point for considering the work she has curated. The social contract offers a way of thinking upon the relationship between art and its context, and celebrates a range of approaches to socially integrated and situated practice in the work of early career through to established artists from diverse geographical locations.

The social contract implies a two-way commitment and Milne’s first obligation is to the artists. I acknowledge her insightful selection and respectful engagement with Mohini Chandra, Miriam Charlie, Pilar Mata Dupont, Cherine Fahd, Katrin Koenning, Tom Nicholson and Elvis Richardson. I thank the artists for their participation. I also acknowledge their representatives, Hugo Michell Gallery, Gallerie Pompon, Milani Gallery and This Is No Fantasy.

*CCP Declares: On the Social Contract* takes up the challenge of a statement exhibition about current practice and is in keeping with CCP’s occasional series, the first of which was presented in 2012, *CCP Declares: On the Nature of Things*, curated by Kyla McFarlane.

Milne has achieved this exhibition on restrained funds, which she has miraculously undertaken with the generous assistance of Photography Studies College. Additional support has been provided by Colour Factory, Ilford, IAS Fine Art Logistics, Art Series Hotels, Tint Design and ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of the Emotions. We are grateful for assistance from Rhett Hamilton and Waralungku Arts Centre.

CCP exists within a web of unspoken contractual engagements that connects a broad range of actors and issues across the community. Through *CCP Declares: On the Social Contract*, CCP fulfills its mission and honours our social contract, for which I acknowledge and thank the artists, supporters, curator and CCP’s broad audience.
CCP Declares: On the Social Contract draws together emerging and established artists working at the forefront of Australian photography and video in its expanded field. The subtitle to this second iteration of CCP Declares acknowledges that these works examine or extend the idea of social contract theory; the idea that moral and political obligations and rights are bound upon an intrinsic agreements amongst the various constituents of a society.

Philosophers and political theorists have tested different definitions of the social contract over millennia. The Stoics in the 3rd century BC were perhaps the antecedents in social contract theory, but the most regularly cited proponents are Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau, whose theories gained momentum in the Enlightenment period. Their legacies can be seen in the likes of the American Declaration of Independence and the UN’s Declaration of Human Rights, where the individual and the society are set in dialogue.

At its core, a social contract provides the framework within which people and governments might interact: It is a complex and elastic web of contractual agreements, ranging from tacit (almost imperceptible, easily accepted in our quotidian lives) to overt, which overlays the workings of society.

Our world has changed drastically since Locke, Hobbes and Rousseau. Mass media now warps relationships so that we might be touched by something on the other side of the world, while remaining impassive about things in our neighbourhood. Advertising manipulates perceptions of need and want. Democracy is the accepted norm. Capitalism rules supreme. The social contract is being stretched in manifold directions.

Artists, like philosophers and theorists, offer ways to observe and conceptualise aspects of society that we otherwise struggle to see through the rush of the constantly unfolding present. Photography is particularly capable of highlighting elements of a social contract, as it gives form, focus and stillness to a slice in the endlessly spilling flow of time. The act of making a photograph (whether a studio portrait, photographic documentation of a performance, stills from surveillance footage, documentary photography, or a combinations of any number of genres) requires the thinker behind the image to partake in a social exchange. This engagement is dominated by conventions dictated to by some form of social contract. Additional to this inevitable contractual exchange is the Artist’s habit of questioning the status quo, tugging at the fabric of the social contract that governs the society that they experience.

Pippa Milne
Two women, identically dressed, meticulously presented, come together and slowly hug in Pilar Mata Dupont’s *The Embrace*. Filmed in Korea, these women play out a version of the reunification process between Korean citizens separated by political and ideological discord; two vastly different enactments of a social contract. The process documented is not uncomplicated. As the film rolls, the pair experiences elation, emotional abundance, but also awkwardness. The process seems to lack the sanitised cheer one might expect from a nationalistic narrative, instead it is tinged with trepidation and raw unease at the newness of their situation.

Facing this embracing pair are twenty studio portraits/self portraits by Cherine Fahd. In each *Shadowing Portrait*, a proponent of Australian photography poses for the photographer. This is their portrait, but they are also a façade for the artist who mimics their pose, noticeable only in fragments as a penumbra to the main subject: two extra feet; a nose protruding from behind a shoulder and echoing the nose of a plaster bust; elbows only; a spotty sock; a flank that doesn’t line up. The artist is both
hiding from and playing for the camera, revealing and concealing herself in her actions. Her presence extends and complicates the relationship between photographer and subject as she engages playfully with the power dynamic and contractual obligations at play.

Mohini Chandra’s installation, comprising both static and moving images, looks across the Pacific to the artist’s birthplace at Kikau Street, Suva, Fiji. Here, her father had a photographic studio and was charged with recording the rites of passage and formalities that are held in place by aspects of the social contract—passport photos for those who might travel, family portraits to record kinship groups and wedding photographs to show changing statuses throughout a life within a community.

Chandra’s ancestors were indentured labourers who came from India to Fiji, before dispersing to other lands—Australia, New Zealand, Canada. Fiji, a complex nexus of colonial and postcolonial contradictions around migration and cross-cultural identity, is also a ‘paradise’, known for its idyllic nature and pacific sensibilities. Through fragments of vernacular photography, as well as portraits, landscapes and video, Chandra brings together spaces, objects and actions that relate to the colonial labour systems and migration patterns that have shaped her history.

A post-colonial investigation into memorialisation plays out in Tom Nicholson’s photographs, bronzes and plinths. *Indefinite Substitution* was realised through a series of participatory public actions over four days, involving two wet clay busts, one of colonial explorer, John Batman and one of colonial convict, William Buckley who spent many years with an Aboriginal community. The busts were carried (by boat, by ute, by trolley and by hand) between important sites in and around Geelong before being cast in bronze; the quintessential material of monumentalisation.

This work fits into Nicholson’s ongoing endeavour to refigure the colonial monument. Buckley and Batman occupy contrasting positions within Australian settler history. During the performance their clay busts become disfigured as they are handled and transported from place to place, much like our understanding of colonial figures, which is shaped by the people who document such stories, their own political and social agendas inscribed in the act of telling.

Katrin Koenning’s series, *The Crossing* considers Man’s fractured relationship with the natural world. Creatures, figures and land formations emerge from her dark frames, proffering a world that oscillates between apparent paradise and a looming dystopia. Sublime waterfalls suspend from great heights. Animals appear frequently, albeit dead, dried-out, in captivity or sometimes in the wild. People are relegated to the role of mute witness—a crowd on an eerie beach stands in the dark, as if witnessing an apocalyptic scene unfolding on the horizon, an arm hangs limp and a runner streaks through lush bush, no one engages with nature. *The Crossing* embodies various registers of reaction to the current political climate of conservatism. It registers the fact that, in the last 200 years, humanity and the planet have transformed radically and interdependently. Koenning presenting a bleak yet exquisite take on the blinkered attitudes toward the impact of industry on the natural world and its resources.
The way that we survey each other is an uneasy aspect of modern society. Many public spaces have become observed spaces, encouraging the sense of being both safe and spied on in our monitored environment.

To make *The Invisible Hand*, Elvis Richardson has taken stills from a surveillance camera in Russia that she was able to control from her computer in Melbourne. She witnesses people unaware of (or unperturbed by) being observed. Rousseau's social contract theory relied on the existence of an 'ideal society' that agrees to be bound by certain obligations and forgo certain privileges in order to be both governed and protected by a sovereign—it's hard to know whether Richardson's work highlights the tools with which such a social contract might be enforced, or the absurdity of such an agreement.

In Northern Territory, Miriam Charlie, a Garrawa/Yanyuwa woman, has been photographing and interviewing her neighbours. The Borroloola area has been hit by cyclones since the ‘80s. Temporary housing has been patched and repaired while communities wait on government decisions about access to resources. Between portraits of Borroloola locals, Miriam Charlie gives details about the way that they live. Children play in an inflated paddling pool on a lush lawn, but vines creep between a floor and wall in another house. A bathtub shows through the wall of a dwelling. The tidiness of carefully potted plants is set contrastingly against the precariousness of the tarpaulin shelter that they adorn.

The artist provides another layer of context in the conversations she has recorded. Topics vary. Jack Green discusses the waiting game he has played with government officials. Penelope Sing tells of the white ants that fill the walls of her house in the wet season. Kathy Jupiter says: "I find it a good little house, you know? Easy to clean, easy to keep things packed." Miriam asks: "What about the things you don’t have, like water, a toilet...?" "Well, the one thing we’re missing is electricity...and for the toilet you gotta walk, it’s four hundred metres away...we all share."

This is a functioning community; they speak of their homes fondly, but still seek to understand why the social contract hasn’t been fully maintained in their town.
MOHINI CHANDRA  
Born Canvey Island, UK 1964  
Lives and works in London  
www.mohinichandra.com

A descendant of Indian indentured labourers in Fiji, Mohini Chandra migrated to Australia as a child. She creates installations using photography, moving image and sound and has an ongoing interest in the narration and expression of alternate historical experiences of cross-cultural identity, particularly in the Pacific. Kikau Street is based on Chandra’s father’s childhood home in Fiji, and the histories that emanate from it.


Chandra’s work is in international collections and has been included in publications such as Phaidon’s Art and Photography (ed. David Campanay). Her current work is supported by the Australia Council’s Individual Artists Projects Grant, 2015 and she has been awarded an Arts NSW funded Asialink residency in India for 2016.

MIRIAM CHARLIE  
Born Borroloola, Australia 1965  
Lives and Works in Borroloola

Miriam Charlie is a Garrwa, Yanyuwa woman from Borroloola in the Northern Territory. Charlie began to make photographs following a photography training program run by Desart, the industry body for Australian Aboriginal art centres. Charlie’s work is rooted in the everyday life and interests of the indigenous community of Borroloola.

Miriam Charlie has exhibited in as part of the Tarnanthi Festival, Adelaide, 2015 and in the group show We are in Wonder LAND at UNSW, Sydney 2015. She has been a finalist in several photography competitions: Desart Indigenous Photography Competition, 2013; and Point, Click, Capture, Upload, Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne 2013. Charlie received 2nd Prize and the People’s Choice Award in Desart Indigenous Photography Competition in 2012.

Miriam Charlie has been the Gallery Coordinator at the Waralungku Art Centre since 2005.

CHERINE FAHD  
Born Sydney, Australia 1974  
Lives and works in Sydney  
www.cherinefahd.com

Cherine Fahd’s wide ranging practice currently investigates the complex relationship and power dynamics between photographer and subject within portraiture.

Fahd has a Master of Fine Arts from College of Fine Arts, Sydney and in 2016 was awarded her Doctorate (Fine Arts) by Monash University, Melbourne for her research titled, Hiding From the Camera For the Camera. She has exhibited extensively including: Australian Art, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, 2015; Globalization – Connections – Time - A dozen Worlds or the day has 45 hours, Hannover, Germany 2012; In Camera In Public, Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne, 2011; Perfect for every occasion, Photography Today, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne 2007; Light Sensitive, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne 2006; and Supernatural Artificial, Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography, Tokyo, 2004.

Fahd’s work is represented in public and private collections and she has received numerous awards such as the National Photography Prize 2010 and the 2005 NSW Women & Arts Fellowship from Arts NSW.

KATRIN KOENNING  
Born Ruhrgebiet, Germany 1978  
Lives and works in Melbourne  
www.katrinkoennning.com

Katrin Koennning grew up in Germany’s Ruhr region, moving to Australia at 25. This history of movement and relocation has contributed to her artistic inquiry into the connection between people and environment, place and belonging. The Crossing looks at the contract between humans and the environment in a time where our impact has become permanent.

Koennning has won numerous awards and has both in Australia and abroad. Solo exhibitions include: Indefinitely, Wallflower Photomedia Gallery, Mildura, 2015; Fieber, Phototrieland, Dublin, 2015; Dear Chris, Queensland Centre for Photography, Brisbane, 2014, and Edmund Pearce Gallery, Melbourne, 2013. Group exhibitions include: the Athens Photo Festival 2015, Terra Australis at Galerie Pavlova, Berlin, 2015; This is not Detroit, Musisches Zentrum, Bochum, Germany, 2014; and Australian Photography - Projections, Chobi Mela Photography Festival, Bangladesh, 2013.

Koennning is currently a Curatorial Advisor for Wallflower Photomedia Gallery, Mildura and has been featured in a number of in print and online publications including: Momento Pro Magazine; Self Publish Be Happy; GUP Magazine; New York Times; Der Spiegel Magazine; The Guardian; and Capture Magazine, UK.
PILAR MATA DUPONT  
Born Perth 1981  
Lives and works in Western Australia and the Netherlands  
www.pilarmatadupont.com

Pilar Mata Dupont’s predominantly film and video based practice embraces themes of national identity, memory and mythology. In The Embrace, the artist creates a space to reflect on political and social reunification.

Mata Dupont has a background in Music Theatre and completed a MFA at the Dutch Art Institute, Arnhem, Netherlands in 2016. In 2010, her collaborative work with Taryn Gill showed in the 17th Sydney Biennale and won the Basil Sellers Art Prize. As a solo practitioner, Mata Dupont has exhibited broadly. Solo exhibitions include: Zauberberg, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Perth, 2015; Pilar Mata Dupont — Kaiko, Pori Art Museum, Finland, 2014; and Berlin Ring Cycle, (Hold Your Horses), Australian Embassy, Berlin, 2013. Group exhibitions include: 19th Contemporary Art Festival Sesc, Videobrasil, Sesc Pompeia, São Paulo, Brazil, 2015; An Internal Difficulty, Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts, Perth, 2015; SeMA Biennale: Mediacity Seoul at the Seoul Museum of Art 2014; and The List, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, 2014.

Mata Dupont has received numerous awards, residencies and fellowships, including the Residency Prize for the Wexner Center of the Arts at 19th Contemporary Art Festival Sesc, Videobrasil, São Paulo, Brazil and a Mid-career Fellowship from the Western Australian Government, 2012.

TOM NICHOLSON  
Born Melbourne 1973  
Lives and works in Melbourne  
www.tomn.net

Tom Nicholson’s practice roves across disciplines such as performance, photography, drawing and sculpture to interrogate colonial and postcolonial history, political culture and social memory. He has shown extensively in Australia and internationally.

Solo exhibitions include: Comparative monument (Ma’man Allah), Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2014; Camp Pell Lecture, in collaboration with Tony Birch, Artspace, Sydney, 2010; Lines towards another century, in collaboration with Andrew Byrne, Parco delle Rimembranze, Venice (Performance with the Italian contemporary music ensemble, L’Arsenale), 2008; After action for another library, Te Tuhi Centre for the Arts, and Pakuranga Library, Auckland, New Zealand, 2008.

Group exhibitions include: Conflict: Contemporary responses to war, University of Queenslands Art Museum, Brisbane, 2014; Concrete, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2014; Future Memorials, TarraWarra Museum of Art, Healesville, 2013; Parallel Collisions, Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia, 2012; and Since we last spoke about monuments, Stroom Den Haag, The Hague, 2008, among others.

Tom Nicholson is represented by Milani Gallery in Brisbane and his work is held in collections such as the National Gallery of Australia (Canberra), National Gallery of Victoria (Melbourne), National War Memorial Museum (Canberra) and the Art Gallery of South Australia (Adelaide).

ELVIS RICHARDSON  
Born Sydney, Australia 1965  
Lives and works in Melbourne  
www.elvisrichardson.com

Much of Elvis Richardson’s interdisciplinary artist examines how technology mediates social interaction. The Invisible Hand takes a peculiar situation where civilians can watch each other through state surveillance technology, offering a meditation on an unexpected connection between people and place.

Richardson holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Masters of Arts from the College of Fine Arts, Sydney and a Master of Fine Arts from Columbia University, New York. Her solo exhibitions include: FEMMO™, BoxCopy, Brisbane, 2015; Its about Time, Death Be Kind, Melbourne, 2011; Televisauls / Salute Elvis, Utopian Slumps, Melbourne, 2008. Group exhibitions include: Octopus 15, Lost and Profound, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne 2015; Transmission: Legacies of the Television Age, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2015; Benglis '73-'74, Sutton Project Space, Melbourne, 2014; Ocular Lab Inc, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne, 2012; and Photographer Unknown, Monash Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2009.

Elvis Richardson is represented by Hugo Michell Gallery, Adelaide and Gallery pompom, Sydney. She is the author of CoUNTess, an online blog presenting data on gender representation in Australia’s contemporary art world.
PILAR MATA DUPONT
The Embrace (이상적인 포옹) 2013
single channel video with sound, colour
5 minutes 4 seconds courtesy the artist

CHERINE FAHD
Shadowing Portraits 2014-2016
with Anne Ferran, Marilyn Fairske
with Daniel Mudie Cunningham
with Daniel Palmer
with Suzanne Buljan
with Eleanor Ivory Weber
with Anne Zahalka
with Kyle Banyard
with Salote Tawale
with Eugenia Raskopoulus
with Megan Philip
with Isobel Parker Philip
with William Yang
with Julie Rrap
with Siri Hayes
with Clare Rae
with Jacqui Stockdale
with Patrick Pound
with Darren Sylvester

ALL WORKS
pigment print on cotton rag art paper
courtesy the artist

MOHINI CHANDRA
Kikau Street
Untitled from Kikau Street 2015-16
90 x 78.5 cm

KATRIN KOENNING
The Crossing
Assembled Constellation #1 (EY 1997, World-Wide World) 2016
80 x 80 cm

A Great Wind 2015
80 x 80 cm

Furore, Mute 2015
30 x 30 cm

Half Way 2011
30 x 30 cm

Assembled Constellation #2 (Eden, Stagnant Sun) 2009
30 x 30 cm

Assembled Constellation #3 (EY 460, Neopangea) 2016
30 x 30 cm

Rumble 2015
30 x 30 cm

A Common Language 2012
30 x 30 cm

Neopangea 2015
30 x 30 cm

Plate Tectonics 2011
30 x 30 cm

Uncertain Placement 2011
30 x 30 cm

Participants included:

“This is how my mother... when she wanted the little outboard to come and pick us up... and she would shine this. This was a signal for the boatman to come... and then we used to get on the boat and go.”
— Excerpt from video work

TOM NICHOLSON
from Indefinite Substitution 2014
Traces from public participatory actions between four sites, Sorrento, Indented Haed, Eastern Beach and Geelong Gallery, with two wet clay busts, five pairs of wooden platforms, and transportation by boat, ute, custom-made trolley, and hand over four days 6-9 July 2014: bronze casts of two remnant clay forms; two wooden platforms, each 100 x 100 x 40cm; 18 framed Type C photographs, each 100 x 66.7cm, Photography: Christian Capurro. Commissioned by NETS Victoria as part of The Cinemas Project, curated by Bridget Crone.
courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery.
Howqua #1 (Falsche Gezeiten) 2016  
30 x 30cm
Malaise 2015  
30 x 30cm
Amnesiac 2013  
30 x 30cm
A Hundred Sets of Laws, a Single
Desert Exile 2013  
30 x 30cm
Swollen River 2016  
30 x 30cm
Vessel of The Seas 2013  
30 x 30cm
From earth To Earth (EY 460) 2016  
30 x 30cm
Nothing Given 2015  
30 x 30cm
March of The King 2015  
30 x 30cm
Adieu au Langage 2009  
30 x 30cm
Heaviest Dwelling 2015  
30 x 30cm
Astronaut Humanity 2015  
30 x 30cm
Queen surrounded by Clouds 2016  
30 x 30cm
Largest Castle 2012  
30 x 30cm
The Hours 2015  
30 x 30cm

ALL WORKS  
archival pigment print  
courtesy the artist

ELVIS RICHARDSON
Elvis Richardson with sound by
James Hayes
The Invisible Hand 2014
single channel HD Video with sound
13 minutes 41 seconds
courtesy the artist and Hugo Michell
Gallery, Adelaide and Galerie
pompom, Sydney

MIRIAM CHARLIE
My Country No Home
Jacob Riley, Mara Camp 2015  
60 x 100 cm

Kids in the pool: Lester and Jodie
Timothy's yard, Yanyuwa 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Dinah Norman, Yanyuwa Camp 2015  
60 x 100 cm
Bathtub showing through the wall:
Miles Timothy's house, Yanyuwa
Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Pot Plants, Kathy Jupiter's house, Mara
Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Billy Miller, Yanyuwa Camp 2015  
60 x 100 cm
Power Point, Penelope Sing and Lindy
Anderson's house, Garrwa One
Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Jemima Miller, Yanyuwa Camp 2015  
60 x 100 cm
Plant growing through the wall,
Neremia Kidd's house, Garrwa One
Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Window, Neremia Kidd's house, Garrwa
One Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Family photos, Neremia Kidd's house,
Garrwa One Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Nancy Kidd, Garrwa One Camp 2015  
60 x 100 cm
Jack Green and his family, Two Dollar
Creek outstation 2015  
60 x 100 cm
Penelope Sing and the Anderson /
Johnson Families, Garrwa One
Camp 2015  
60 x 100 cm
Kathy Jupiter, Mara Camp 2015  
60 x 100 cm
Wesley Owen's hat collection, Kathy
Jupiter's house, Mara Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Shelving in the Yard, Kathy Jupiter's
house, Mara Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm
Nancy Kidd inside her house, Garrwa
One Camp 2015  
30 x 50 cm

ALL WORKS  
c-type print  
courtesy the artist

CURATOR
Pippa Milne, Curator, CCP
CATALOGUE DESIGN
Joseph Johnson, Designer, CCP
ISBN
978-0-9875976-9-4

Centre for Contemporary Photography, CCP, Melbourne
27 May—10 July 2016

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CURATOR’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
It has been a pleasure to work with this group of artists, who have been so receptive, intelligent and inspiring. Chloe Gibbon of Waralungku Arts Centre and Rhett Hamilton, thank you both for your work, I’ve appreciated your advice and help. Naomi Cass and CCP staff have been very supportive of this exhibition, and Sinead Kennedy has been a wonderful intern to work with. Joseph Johnson, thank you for this nimble, exciting catalogue.

Principal supporter for this exhibition is Photography Studies College. Thank you for engaging with us, your support has been essential to the realisation of this project and is greatly appreciated. Valued and vital supporters of this exhibition are: Colour Factory, Ilford, IAS Fine Art Logistics, Art Series Hotels, Tint Design and ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of the Emotions.

I have learnt a lot from my predecessor and mentor Dr Kyla McFarlane, who curated the first iteration of CCP Declares. I acknowledge her support, which I feel in this exhibition.

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Centre for Contemporary Photography is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria and is assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its principal arts funding advisory body. Centre for Contemporary Photography is supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments. CCP is a member of CAOs Contemporary Arts Organisations of Australia.

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