

The essayist

3 to 31 August 2019

THE CROSS
ART PROJECTS 

Benjamin Forster (Sydney), Ida Lawrence (Sydney), Jac Ball (Perth), Magda Stanová (Prague), Mark Hislop (Melbourne), Mitch Cairns (Sydney), Nina Ross (Melbourne), Phuong Ngo (Melbourne), Pilar Mata Dupont (Rotterdam)
Curated by Jasmin Stephens | Opened by writer Astrid Lorange

The essayist is an exhibition inspired by the literary form of the essay. It presents work characterised by the exacting thinking, careful observation and increasingly confessional aesthetic associated with contemporary essay writing. It is a mode of writing that has come to prominence through writers such as Maggie Nelson and Teju Cole. Against this backdrop of recent attention to first-person writing and the rise of digital readership, today's essay making – at turns memoir, poetry, philosophy and criticism – is shaped by theoretical shifts relating to feminist, non-binary and embodied approaches to thought and feeling.

The exhibition and its works are not intended to replicate the format of the essay. Rather their cumulative effect might be to represent or elicit similar qualities. In this exhibition, the artists are addressing a range of concerns. Their works explore private and shared cognition, sensation and allegiances across the body, language, landscape, history and family and include citations and influences drawn from disciplines such as cultural geography, environmental humanities and neuroscience. While reflecting a kind of essayistic disposition, they express different relationships to materials and to considerations of sensibility, structure and form.

List of Works LEFT TO RIGHT

Jac Ball

LEFT-HAND WALL

Flatpack, 54 x 34.5 cm

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Peach fuzz and mascara, 45 x 24 cm

Island cuts on the old meridian, 40 x 24 cm

Paint box mid-blue, 40 x 59 cm

Hot pixel mess, 44.5 x 26 cm

MIDDLE ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Prepper, 54 x 35.5 cm

Micro-dosing, 80 x 25 cm

Soft serve, 54 x 36 cm

Tender fat relocation, 50 x 30 cm

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT

Hotspot, with bed separation, 49 x 27.5 cm

Dolphin camp, 40 x 24.5 cm

Aquamarine, 40 x 32.5 cm

Making the most of scooter practicalities, 45 x 23 cm

All works, inkjet print on rag paper, 2019

Jac Ball has described these works as a 'trial and error approach to self-imaging'. Personally revealing, they proceed from Ball's absorption in the pleasures and complexities of queer and non-binary self-representation online.

Nina Ross

That takes Balls, 2019, single channel HD video, 9:30 minutes

Cara, Edith, Eden, unnamed, Rhonda, Maddison, unnamed, Kym, unnamed, unnamed, unnamed, Bette, Michelle, Toyah, unnamed, Erana, Jacqueline, Dannyll, Kristie, unnamed, Gayle, Nicole, Julie, Beverley, Mara, Pamela, Fahima, Kristina, Dawn, Mary, unnamed, Samantha, Laa, Nicole, Michelle, Fatima, Amanda, Jan, Larissa, Eurydice, Qi, unnamed, Caroline, unnamed, unnamed, Karen, Cynda, Katrina, Debbie, unnamed, Cecilia, unnamed, Kay, Teah, unnamed, Simone, Katherine, Kerrie, unnamed, Marija, Le Ngoc, Sally, Radmila, Mary, Nowra, Nancy, Amelia, Antonia, Margaret.

These 69 women were murdered in Australia in 2018 – their 'names' compiled by the researchers of 'Counting Dead Women Australia' from feminist collective Wreck the Joint.

This work which is a response to the culture of gendered violence against women was first exhibited facing onto the street at CCP, Melbourne, earlier this year. Amelia Wallin's accompanying essay is kindly made available to The Cross Art Projects.

Mitch Cairns

First Names, 2018, oil on linen, framed, 85 x 74 x 5 cm
\$8,800

Mitch Cairns' self-portrait displays his characteristic paring back of extraneous detail and meticulous application of pigment. His initials are suspended within the work's distilled composition and taut surface in such a way that they are simultaneously present and hidden.

Magda Stanová

From the series *Algorithms in Art*, 2015–19

Ambiguity, ink on paper, 42 x 30 cm, 2019

The new becomes ordinary. The complex becomes simple. Every cliché was once an original thought, ink and acrylic on paper, 35 x 53 cm, 2019

The phantom could represent an artist, and the detectives, people who visit his/her shows, ink, acrylic, and inkjet print on paper, 35 x 53 cm, 2019

Algoritmy v umení, book, 128 pages, 22.2 x 18.4 cm, digital offset printing, published by Academy of Fine Arts, Prague, 2015

Algorithms in Art, book, 128 pages, 22.2 x 18.4 cm, digital offset printing, published by NAVU/Academy of Fine Arts, Prague, and CEE PhotoFund, Humenné, 2016

Magda Stanová presents a suite of drawings and books related to her recent enquiry into what triggers intensity. This enquiry has led her to investigate the effect of a spectrum of experiences associated with jokes, magic tricks, board games, solving a mathematical problem and art.

Benjamin Forster

Romances, 2019, infinite edition of unique romance novels, 13 x 20 cm, variable page count
\$50

Benjamin Forster's pulp genre eBook is created by an algorithmic process which collates language used by the top ten romance novels. While aligning the erotics and mechanisms of contemporary romance, Forster is also asserting how our shared construction renders the idea of individual authorship a form of fiction.

Ida Lawrence

Idris, 2018, acrylic on canvas, 138 x 108 cm
POA

Ida Lawrence's painting heralds the birth of her nephew Idris. Here, Ida concurs with her sister, in an anecdotal narrative propelled by an image search for Elba's good looks:

Long before my nephew was born, my younger sister and her husband decided his name would be Idris. My brother-in-law (a devout Muslim) liked the name because it is the name of a prophet. I googled "Idris prophet" and learned that he was "trustworthy" (islamtoday.com), "pious" and "constantly occupied with the study of the holy books" (sacred-texts.com), "tall, with a white complexion... little body hair and a lot of hair on his head" plus "a light discolouration on his chest, different to skin diseases like leprosy" (islamichouseofwisdom.com), and "the first man who was given the knowledge of astrology and mathematics" (linkedin.com/prophet-idris). My sister, on the other hand, liked the name because "Idris Elba (the English actor) is hot". I did an image search of Idris Elba. Yeah, it is true, he is hot.

Mark Hislop

My punctuation is my breath, 2019, graphite on paper, framed, five of 13 drawings, 23 x 30 cm each
POA

Based on a photograph of acclaimed Brazilian novelist and short story writer Clarice Lispector (1920-77), the work's sequential structure and Lispector's trance-like appearance conveys the quotidian and kinaesthetic aspects of both writing and smoking.

Phuong Ngo

Untitled (lost and found), 2019, inkjet print, acrylic shelf, found postcard, 65 x 45 cm and 8.9 x 13.8 cm

Phuong Ngo installs an image of the Notre Dame (de Paris) fire alongside an historic postcard of the Catholic Cathedral in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City),

erected 1863-80 on the site of a forgotten pagoda. Despite the ubiquity of such media, Ngo is sharpened by his archival intention to bring the mis-registration of the vernacular and the monumental across centuries of colonialism into view.

Pilar Mata Dupont

The Madman is a Dreamer Awake #1, 2013-15, glicée print, 80 x 120 cm, edition of five
\$3,300 (inc GST)

Pilar Mata Dupont's photographic series entwines her own experience filming in the mountains of Schönau am Königssee in Bavaria with Sigmund Freud's account of a dream while holidaying in Schönau in 1898, and the centrality of the Obersalzberg, Hitler's mountain retreat, to the mythology of National Socialism. This contemporary expression of Freud's dream, which takes its title from Freud's referencing of Emanuel Kant, suggests a landscape imprinted with layers of European cultural superiority.

MARK HISLOP IS REPRESENTED BY WAGNER CONTEMPORARY, SYDNEY; MITCH CAIRNS IS REPRESENTED BY THE COMMERCIAL, SYDNEY; AND PILAR MATA DUPONT IS REPRESENTED BY MOORE CONTEMPORARY, PERTH

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We acknowledge and respect all Traditional Owners & Custodians on whose Lands we live, work and travel through.



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