

after the past

Joel Arthur

Esther Carlin

Bryan Foong

Louis Grant

Aidan Hartshorn

Alex Hobba

Jacquie Meng

Belle Palmer

after the past

13 April - 12 May 2023

What happened there - in the past? Did it stay there, or did it leak out infecting everything we see and do now? Did it happen to you, or to me, or to all of us? Should we be trying to forget it, or are we celebrating its endless return?

What makes a past? The artists in this exhibition share a past as undergraduates at the School of Art & Design. Their work addresses cultural memories, lived experiences, and material agency to explore collective identities and actions. They are not focussed on the past of History, but rather on attention and care of overlooked and unstable situations and relationships.

The works in *after the past* have been made now, in a period that is sometimes referred to as the Advanced Contemporary, a phrase which suggests being ahead, instead of after something. The phrase also implies complexity, advanced thinking and picturing, and the ways that art engages multiple perspectives. Gone, then are the strategies of building identity through direct representation of people, landscapes and situations. In their place are the approaches used by the artists in the exhibition to

bring audiences into extended conversations with objects, images, texts that foreground dialogues between artists and the world.

Looking around the room you can see a range of material approaches from those focused on direct relationships with the hand such as crafted glass objects, gestural drawings, and paintings to those that use cameras and other digital tools and processes to generate work. In this way these artists' works enact the questions common to many contemporary artists grappling with what comes after the safety and order of medium specificity. Can a painting or drawing be a documentation of a performance? Can our bodies feel an object when we can only touch it with our eyes? Can a photo show us an emotional truth? Can a video and its attendant request of time, bring the audience to an embodied emotional present?

after the past invokes time - time spent in the creation of the work, history under question, and audience attention. For Aidan Hartshorn time spent on Country, seeing and feeling what his Ancestors are communicating is crucial to finding a form that communicate their presence. Esther Carlin and Joel Arthur

both draw on the things they encounter on their daily commutes to work, small snippets of thinking time, that fuel their reflections in the studio. In Belle Palmer's work, time is visible through the gathering of marks. The time of practicing skills to gain technical 'mastery' is under question in Louis Grant's queer objects. Jacquie Meng's printed paintings float on silk gauze, momentarily suspended here in the gallery pausing on their digital and physical circulations. Bryan Foong and Alex Hobba use the form of non-linear narration and storytelling to draw us in to consider queer cultural and personal histories. Take some time here while these collected conversations last.

Dr Raquel Ormella

Senior Lecturer

ANU School of Art & Design

Joel ARTHUR

Joel Arthur's practice focuses on the intersection of genre and mode in painting, exploring the fusing of landscape and external elements such as still life, abstraction and representation. Arthur's interest in perceptual painting utilises retinal devices that generate visual problems and situational uncertainty that later resolve in an open manner.

In these paintings artificial forms weave and meld with the depiction of landscape as a kind of human intervention or obscured subject within a theatrical setting. The artist thinks of these forms as assembled materials, manmade structures which are entwined in a relationship with the environment in which they are situated. These works are drawn from observing the temporary shelters Arthur passes on his day-to-day commute. These assembled structures, whether put together out of people's need for refuge or out of bored amusement, are continual occurrences that appear then disappear within the designed green spaces in the heart of the city.

Joel Arthur graduated from the ANU School of Art & Design in 2014 with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours).

He has held a solo exhibition at Gallery 9 (NSW), was a finalist in the Waverley Art Prize (NSW) 2022, the Bayside Acquisitive Art Prize (VIC) 2022, and is a finalist in the 2023 Muswellbrook Art Prize (NSW). Arthur has been awarded funding grants from ArtsACT in 2020, 2021 and 2022, and completed a studio residency at Canberra Contemporary Art Space (ACT). His work has been acquired by Artbank and has worked on an edition project with Megalo Print Studio.

Esther CARLIN

A lost mother speaks to other lost things. They say that metaphor is about finding the outside inside. Daily jobs: art gallery, orchestra - moving things around. You're right she's just completely devastated.

Mothers' Mothers relates stories of a lost mother to other lost objects and speaks to the anxiety of being without words. Footage taken at work, as well as on the way to and from work, combines with a voiceover that examines photography, memory and connection. It is a reflection on labour and process, objects and their value, that touches on inherited grief, voyeurism, loneliness and the nature of found objects. In particular it is about two different kinds of images - the images you see and collect and document, and the images that are missing, that must be imagined, analysed or described in order to be brought into being.

Carlin graduated from the ANU School of Art & Design in 2019 with a Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours).

She has held solo exhibitions at KINGS Artist-Run (VIC) and Australian National Capital Artists (ACT). She received the 2022 Combined Arts John Monash Scholarship and has been commissioned by ANU and Melbourne Art Library. Film screenings include Prototype (online) and Monash University Museum of Art (VIC). Carlin is currently studying a Masters of Art Practice - Critical Tools at Erg - école de recherche graphique in Brussels, Belgium.

Bryan FOONG

Hands are burning is a component of a larger installation (*The Ladder is now a...*), first shown in 2020, a work that dealt with the political management of bodies during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the video, disembodied declarations and narratives relate to the different modes of subjectivity, sovereignty and desire-seeking as a result of the lockdown.

The sound component was produced in collaboration with Gadigal Nura/Sydney-based queer artist California Girls. We appropriated this elegiac rhythm of 'An Eye for Optical Theory', from the composer Michael Nyman (in Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract*), in hopes of refreshing it as an anthem that liberates yet disciplines...I think the written brief was 'Foucault finds himself at a rave after a night of cruising, but he knows he has a deadline'

Bryan Foong (he/they) is an artist of Chinese-Malaysian heritage living and working on unceded Ngunnawal and Ngambri country

(ACT), with a background in clinical medicine.

Their solo and collaborative practice converges contemporary bio-politics, queer poetics and visual culture. Foong's work takes the form of installations combining painting, writing, moving image, sound and reading performances to provoke ideas of power, pathology and control.

Bryan Foong graduated from the ANU School of Art & Design in 2019 with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours).

They were the recipient of the Peta and Lena Karmel Anniversary Prize in Art for that year. They have been in solo and group exhibitions at Canberra Contemporary Art Space (ACT), Blindside Gallery (VIC) and Firstdraft (NSW), with upcoming showings at KINGS Artist-Run (VIC), LAILA gallery (NSW), West Space (VIC), and QCA Galleries (QLD). They have been awarded funding grants from ArtsACT and CAPQ, alongside participation in local and international residencies in Bundanon (AUS) and Pilotenkueche (DE).

Louis GRANT

Louis Grant is an interdisciplinary, early-career artist whose practice focuses on glass as a main material to speak of a queer identity, notions of fluidity, instability, care and fragility. Firmly embedded in the technical understanding of glass (from undergrad studies in glass through to ongoing work at Canberra Glassworks and as a technical assistant to senior artists) Grant works to shift the positions within the discipline and the (traditionally largely masculinised) spaces of production, queering the medium and deviating from what is understood as 'proper' form and finish.

The artist's practice responds to the discipline of glass - taking the 'mastery' of traditional craft beyond a skill set into a subject position to speak of gender and power issues. Glass is a fluid medium that is constantly becoming, continually at the enticing precipice of neither 'this' nor 'that', it exists outside of a binary definition as it is scientifically an amorphous solid. Grant uses this material to speak of social and psychological activities

that can themselves be seen as
'unstable compounds.'

Louis Grant graduated from the ANU School of Art & Design in 2018 with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours).

He is currently exhibiting at Sabbia Gallery (NSW) and has held solo exhibitions at UNSW Galleries (NSW), Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (WA), and Canberra Contemporary Art Space (ACT). He was awarded funding grants from ArtsACT in 2019 and 2021. Grant received the 2019 Klaus Moje Glass Award, the 2020 Talente at International Handwerkmesse, Munich (DE), the 2022 Woollahra Small Sculpture Prize, and was Highly Commended in the 2020 National Emerging Art Glass Prize.

Aidan HARTSHORN

Within its landscape, Country holds memories of the past, communicating to us in many forms - visual, physical, and spiritual. This retention of memory is itself a living entity that lay dormant, resting, waiting patiently to surface; these memories are too our Ancestors, *They*. Within the *They* series, our Ancestors are given the space to reveal themselves to others and through an exploration of the destructive nature of the Snowy Hydro Scheme, reveal themselves through the shape of water. Referencing the repeat motifs of Wiradjuri diamond and rhombus designs, this body of work allows us to see that through adversity, the memory of what was still remains and continues through many forms.

The *They* series stands as a continuation of Walgalu and Wiradjuri cultural connection to place and serves as a reminder of what we have lost through ideas of societal "progression."

"These violent delights have violent ends..."
William Shakespeare.

Aidan Hartshorn graduated from the ANU School of Art & Design in 2019 with a Bachelor of Visual Arts.

He held a solo exhibition at Tuggeranong Arts Centre (ACT) and was Assistant Curator at the National Gallery of Australia for the 4th National Indigenous Art Triennial in 2022. Hartshorn has made written contributions to VOGUE Magazine and the National Gallery of Australia's ArtonView. He is currently an Associate Lecturer in Contemporary Art at the ANU School of Art & Design.

Alex HOBBA

Alex Hobba's practice has found her increasingly turning to the moving image to tell the story. Alongside this moving image are what the artist privately considers to be 'artifacts' that accompany the story; documents, images, and sculptures. Hobba's storytelling is an example of a more general idea of fiction as intervention in, and augmentation of, existing reality.

Alex Hobba graduated from the ANU School of Art & Design in 2016 with a Bachelor of Visual Arts and completed her Honours Degree at Monash University.

She has held solo exhibitions at TCB Inc. (VIC), CCAS (ACT), MOANA Project Space (WA) and Photo Access (ACT). She has been included in group exhibitions at Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (WA) and the National Gallery of Australia (ACT). Hobba has completed a residency at Ponderosa, Stolzenhagen (DE) and is currently based in Naarm / Melbourne.

Jacquie MENG

Jacquie Meng works with painting, sound, and installation. Her work redefines diasporic cultural identity beyond national and geographical specificities, rather seeing it as unfixed. Through consideration of posthumanism, performativity, and the migration of objects and imagery between cultures, Meng's work breaks down binaries of "East"/"West", real/imagined, and human/non-human. This often involves a fusing of mythology and folklore with memories, fictions, and contemporary aesthetics.

Jacquie Meng graduated from the ANU School of Art & Design in 2022 with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) / Bachelor of Art History and Curatorship.

Her work has been included in group exhibitions at Tuggeranong Arts Centre (ACT), CCAS Manuka (ACT), Stanley Street Gallery (NSW), Canberra Contemporary Art Space (ACT) and Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (WA). Meng was a finalist in the Churchie Emerging Art Prize and the Schenberg Art Fellowship, 2022. She received the Brett Whiteley Travelling Scholarship in 2021 and

was awarded a funding grant from ArtsACT in 2022. In 2023, Meng will be undertaking residencies at Kunstraum LLC, New York (USA) and Pilotenkueche, Leipzig (DE).

Belle PALMER

Belle Palmer explores their frustration as an artist in a patriarchal and capitalistic world. As an emerging artist, Palmer believes this experience is purported by the imbalance of representation within fine art institutions which inherently celebrate sexism through art history, and underrepresenting marginalised people. Palmer's release is through the act of drawing with sex toys - cock rings, vibrators, and dildo's becoming tools to create ephemeral art wank.

Belle Palmer graduated from the ANU School of Art & Design in 2018 with a Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours).

They were a finalist in the Grafton and M16 Artspace Drawing Prizes 2022, and completed a residency at Fremantle Arts Centre (WA). Palmer is currently curating a touring show that will be exhibited at Fremantle Arts Centre (WA), Red Gallery (VIC) and Sawtooth ARI (TAS) throughout 2023 and 2024.



Australian
National
University

School of Art & Design Gallery
ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences
The Australian National University
Cnr Liversidge St & Ellery Cres
Acton ACT 2601, Australia

soad.cass.anu.edu.au/gallery-exhibitions

10:30am - 3:00pm, Tuesday to Friday