



Merri-bek
City Council

(Be) Longing

Merri-bek Summer Show 2024

Counihan Gallery



Kareen Adam

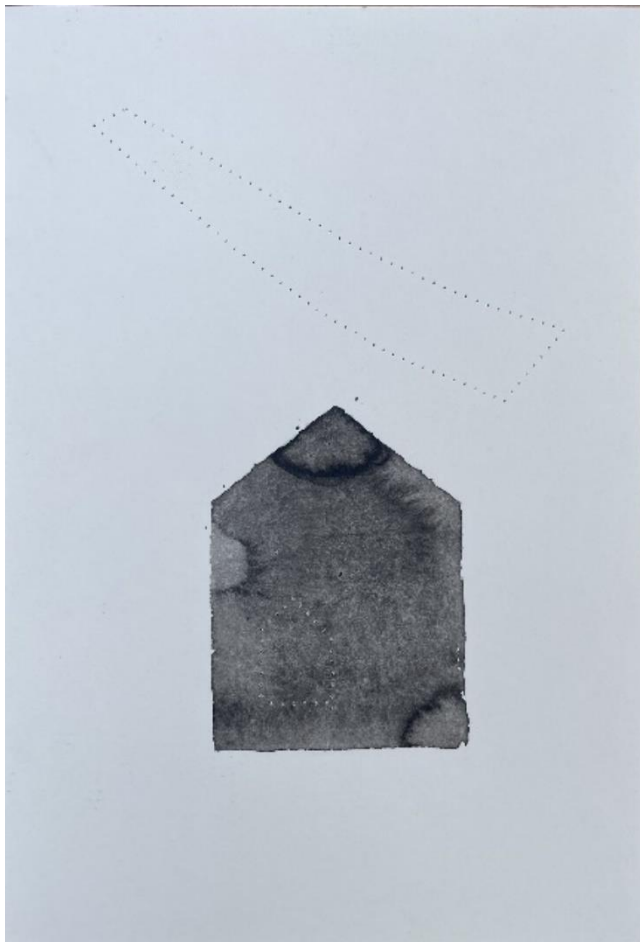
Invisible Threads, 2024

Ink on paper

29 x 20 x 10 cm

\$210

I use the universally recognisable symbol of the house or home to represent that sense of security and cohesion we crave. The quiet, ghostly shape above the house connects the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Brisbane and Melbourne along my flight paths. These four places I call home are physically distant but also not. *Invisible Threads* tether me to pockets of family, communities and friendships. Here, relationships were built and left behind, revisited and reconnected - never wholly lost, always cherished.



Freya Alexander

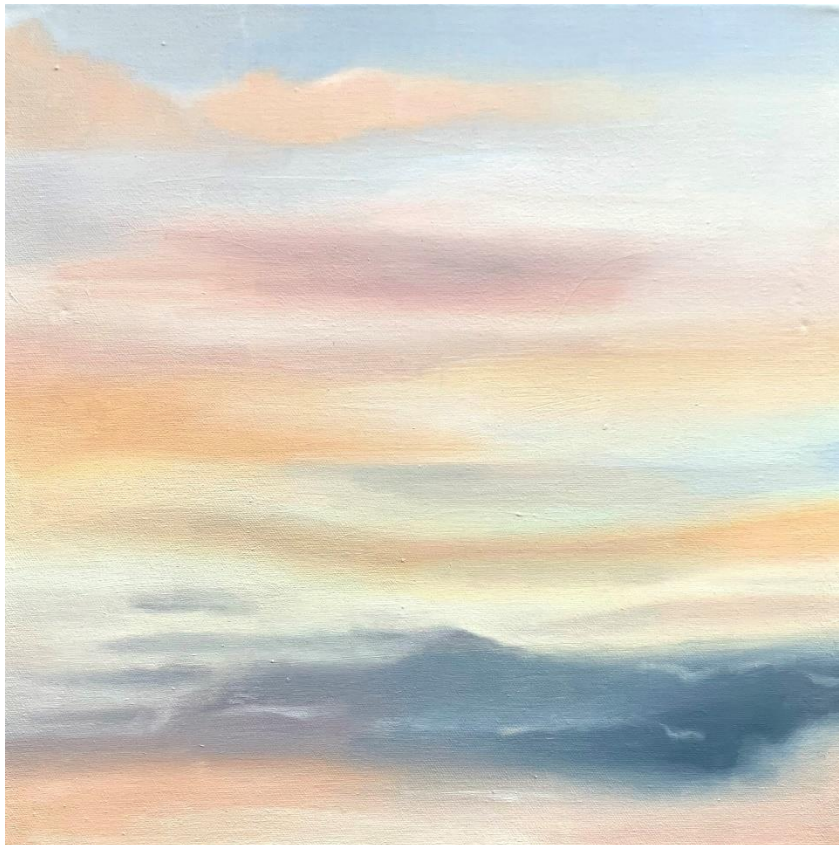
Coming home, 2024

Oil on reclaimed canvas

40.5 x 40.5 cm

\$160

In 2023, I lived overseas for a year. Upon return, I would often walk the streets, gazing at the sky in awe, especially in the beautiful Merri-bek area where I live. *Coming home* is based on a sunset I saw one evening as I made my way home from work. The colours capture the magical haze of dusk. After a year of feeling mostly like an outsider (in a country where I didn't speak the language well, in a place I was not familiar with), being back home (the place I'm from, the place I grew up) was such a relief. This work captures this sense of joy felt in my ecstatic return. In all my paintings I investigate the quality of being - the way it feels to move through this world. This work evokes the feeling of being and belonging, after so much longing for what is known (home).



Sarah Anthony

Tolerance, Love, Peace, 2024

Oil on board

70 x 60 cm

\$2,600

A photograph of Jacinda Ardern hugging a Muslim woman in the aftermath of the Christchurch Mosque massacre radiated around the world in 2019.

Soaring above the painted streets of multi-cultural, inner-city Brunswick, this painted silo image beams a message of tolerance, peace, and yearning for a community where everyone belongs.

(Original photo: Getty; silo art by Loretta Lizzio)



Pamela Bain

In Cosmic Dreams, 2024

Digital print, overlaid with pencil and paint

57 x 40 cm

\$250

In Cosmic Dreams is a response to grief – the isolating effect of loss that disrupts my sense of belonging within the communal world of everyday life. When looking into the dark skies of night, we are looking back in cosmic time, thus, this image of deep space nebula mediates a similar experience, fostering a metaphysical link to the past. Created to encourage private contemplation, a mindful reconnection with absent others is enabled – their nurturing, friendship, and trust. Here, I float in a dream-like state of remembrance before drifting back to the world's corporeal reality – the 'now' where I physically belong.

The image is based on deep space nebula formations - zones where stars are born, nourished, and grow. *In Cosmic Dreams* draws upon master's research of grief theory, death customs, and the coping mechanism of ritual. Roy Orbison's, 'In Dreams', a song about sorrow and longing, informs the title.



Joy Barrett

My inner world, 2024

Collage

55 x 45 cm

NFS

My inner world is an archetypal exploration of the underground of me. Are these images inherited blueprints of cultural and ancestral belonging? An African woman gaze's outward; a reference to my matrilineal descendant taken from Madagascar and forced into slavery.

The images hold veiled meanings, whispered words, eggs, candles, symbols, a floating figure in a pose of surrender, and eyes that watch. Symbols that are only partly knowable to me.



Lois Basham

Return to Work, 2024

Wood

90 x 25 x 25 cm

\$500

During the past five hours there have been a seismic shift in the work life balance of the urban dwellers of Naarm. Do we return to work or work from home?

Where do we belong? Mingling with our work colleagues at the water cooler or nestled in our home offices doing school pickup? Juggling, juggling ... the circus of life.



Madeleine Beatty

Everyday, 2024

Oil on board

42 x 52 cm

\$400

Most days while walking in our suburb, I pass someone who walks around in the same street at the same time. Each time I see them, they are wearing one chosen block colour, from their hat to their socks. We have never said hi but I really like this moment to see what colour decision has been made that day. For quite a while, I have made a note on my calendar about each day's colour. This painting is based on that very specific neighbourhood data. It represents ten days of their colour: red, green, often grey, occasionally lilac. The colour palette was not colours I am normally drawn to, but I was determined to let this person's colour choices influence the painting. Maybe belonging to a community is all about noticing each other, appreciating and being inspired by each other's choices and one day saying hi.



Melvin Berzamina

Flower by the Merri Creek, 2024

Photograph

420 x 29.7 cm

\$350

I had given up the comfort and familiarity of my home and moved cities two years ago. The unfamiliarity of living in a new city was exciting and inspiring, but I soon became disengaged as the loneliness of the Naarm (Melbourne) winter set in.

The Merri Creek was a place I kept returning to—a place of refuge, leisure, and escape from the hubbub of the city. I was becoming familiar with it without even realizing.

This photograph is part of an ongoing documentation and visual journal of my observations of the Merri Creek. It not only symbolizes my discovery of the place but also my discovery of the city as a whole.



Margaret Bishop

Getting the Job Done, 2024

Watercolour on paper

57 x 70 cm

\$400

Getting the Job Done

Longing for the drive then to arrive

longing for the project to start

for clear instructions about the task.

Longing for the bitter wind to drop

for a drink, something hot

for the rain to stop.

Longing for someone to say "Job's done."

End of the day in a cold hall

longing for some warmth

for dinner, for everyone to come.

Then there's dessert

followed by an insightful talk.

Everybody's cheering. Belonging.

Home and longing for something else.



Wendy Black

Bird orchid, 2024

Spray enamel on board

65 x 90 cm

\$1,200

Tiny fragile bird orchids, like other plant communities, rely on attracting an insect to pollinate the flowers. In their case a male wasp is attracted by odours and mimicry of the female wasp. The interdependency of species means we must love all participants that belong to the ecosystem, not just the pretty ones.



Robyn Blaikie

Heading home from Mass (Coburg), 2024

Mokulito print on paper

34 x 55 cm

\$300

Grandmothers the embodiment of resilience, perseverance, loss, grief and love
we are, we live, we laugh, we pray we also long for passed loved ones and a life forever
changed. Heading home from Mass in Coburg.



Elisabeth Bodey

Euphony, 2024

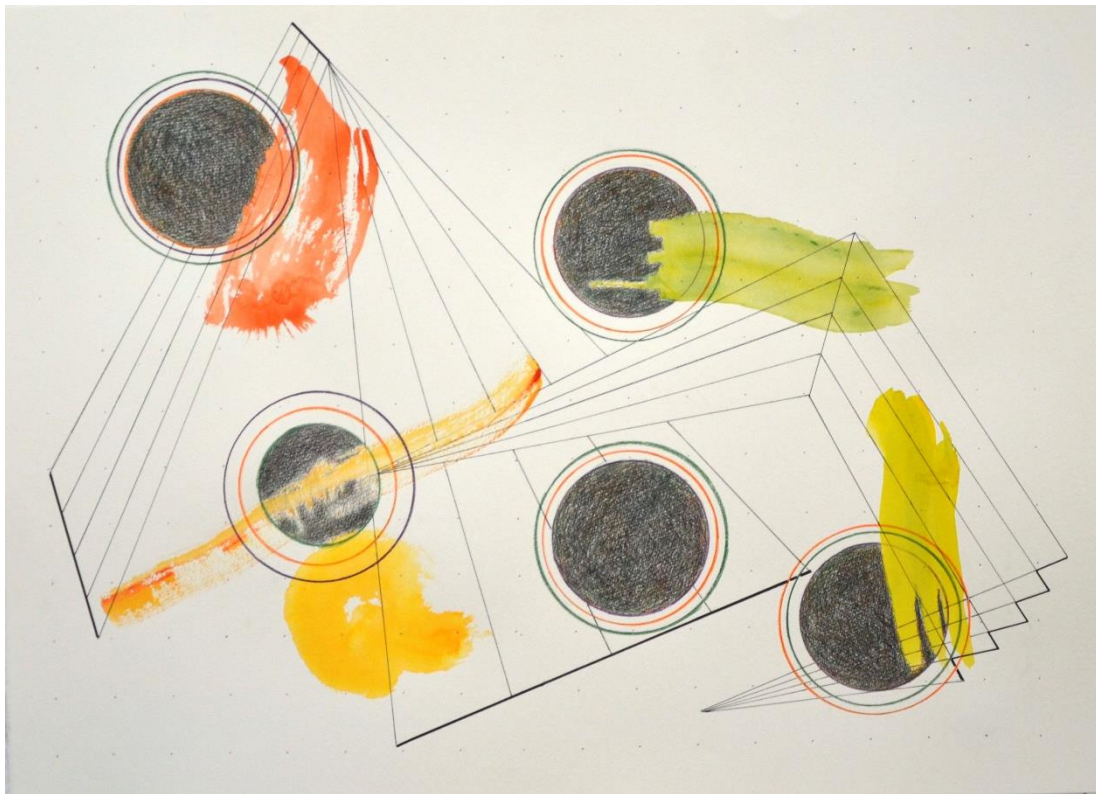
Ink, pencil and acrylic on paper

56 x 76 cm

POA

My painting practice explores the connections between visual and musical abstraction and specifically, my engagement with abstraction is informed by my interest in contemporary classical or western art music. Fuelled by my family's professional musical engagement going back three generations, my musical engagement with the visual is now "my Be-Longing". It is a continually evolving process providing new challenges through this shared language of abstraction as exists in both visual and auditory forms.

Colour, tone, structures, space, order, randomness and texture blend with musical notation and the temporal. *Euphony* suggests a composition, possibly dissonant, where notation and colour relationships can be experienced in both a visual and auditory sense.



Heinz Boeck

Blue House, 2024

Found various materials

70 x 70 x 35 cm

POA

As an individual and artist, I have a 'longing' to 'belong'.

My sculpture, *Blue House*, is created from crafted and found materials. It represents a house in miniature, a doll's house, and perhaps a return to a simpler existence involving an artists' community e.g. Van Gogh's Yellow House in Arles, Martin Sharp's Yellow House, Potts Point and also the Montsalvat artist community in Eltham.

This artwork is a reference to an idealised, creative and somewhat surreal fantasy where anything is possible but may only ever exist in my own imagination.



Annie Bolitho

Lasting Memories, 2024

Solar dyeing on to fabric and thread

45 x 49 cm

POA

I have a home, its safety and continuity. As an illegal migrant, I longed to settle, be, (be)long. Now I long for the conditions of belonging for every person in an unjust, violent, shattered, war torn society.

I found a fabric bag airline memento at Savers. It bears the words 'Beautiful destinations often lead to everlasting memories' in English and Arabic on the two sides. It was the start of the war. I wrapped mordanted Australian plant materials inside it and left it out to solar dye. I would open it when the war was over. The war is not over. More than human processes have worked on the fabrics disintegrating and fragmenting them. Women all over the world commonly use dressmakers' pins. I mourn the women whose sewing stuff once belonged in a place at home, who have been killed, injured and displaced.



The BOOreaucrats

Fieldwork: Investigating Mungo (Settling in...), 2024

Digital print on paper

69.1 x 100 cm

\$850

Performing their emblematic and complex work, The BOOreaucrats continue their investigations into cultural superimpositions on the Australian land mass. Their Mungo Fieldwork in the dry lakes of the Paakantji, Ngayampaa and Mutthi Mutthi people, sees them out of place and struggling to belong to this ancient, contested land.



Matt Bottos

Whispers of (Be)longing, 2024

Sculpture and poetry

23 x 19 x 11 cm

\$200

From the earth's soil, a worm crawled up to the light,
Busy with plans and his future in sight.
He was sure of his purpose, so focused, so sure,
Moving too quickly to see nature's allure.
But beside him stood a mushroom, calm yet strong,
Its voice barely a whisper, it uttered: "Belong."

"Be-long?" said the worm, "I'm long as can be!
Just look at my tail, it stretches, you see!
I've no time for riddles, no patience for play,
Too much work awaits, So I'll be on my way."
Yet the mushroom stood still, in the shadows so strong,
And quietly repeated with one single word: "Belong".

"Don't take me for a fool" said the worm, "Let us be clear,
I've no need for your whispers, or to stay here."
But then the worm felt a tug, something deep in his core,
A longing for something, he was compelled to explore.
His certainty cracked as the feeling grew strong,
And the mushroom, again calmly whispered: "Belong".

The worm stopped and breathed, for the first time aware,
Of the earth underneath and the life in the air.
The trees seemed to sing, the soil felt so warm,
He realized at last, he was a part of nature's grand form.
"No need for the stress, I've belonged all along!"
The mushroom just nodded then whispered, "Belong!".



Ashleigh Briggs

Salad Sandwich, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

43 x 32.5 cm

\$380

Salad Sandwich delves into the chaotic rituals and behaviours shaped by a lifelong battle with an eating disorder, exploring how the tension between belonging and longing defines my relationship with food. My ritual of undressing and sitting alone outside to eat a meal, reflects both a desire for control and my isolation that fractures my sense of self. Through the fractured depiction of this compulsive ritual, I examine how the disorder shapes not only my identity but also my connection to the world around me. The longing for peace, for a body and mind at ease, contrasts with the consuming nature of my experience - an existence both drawn towards and alienated from the very act of nourishment. This piece reflects how the yearning for acceptance within myself and society is disrupted by the disorder, while longing itself remains a powerful force in defining my fractured sense of belonging.



Bronwyn Calcutt
Pandemic Days, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
45 x 60cm
NFS

This painting represents how some of us remained connected and embedded in our communities during the Pandemic, having Zoom calls instead of choir practices, tending our gardens like we never had before, grateful for small comforts and our inner worlds of creativity.



Matthew Carey

But will you?, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

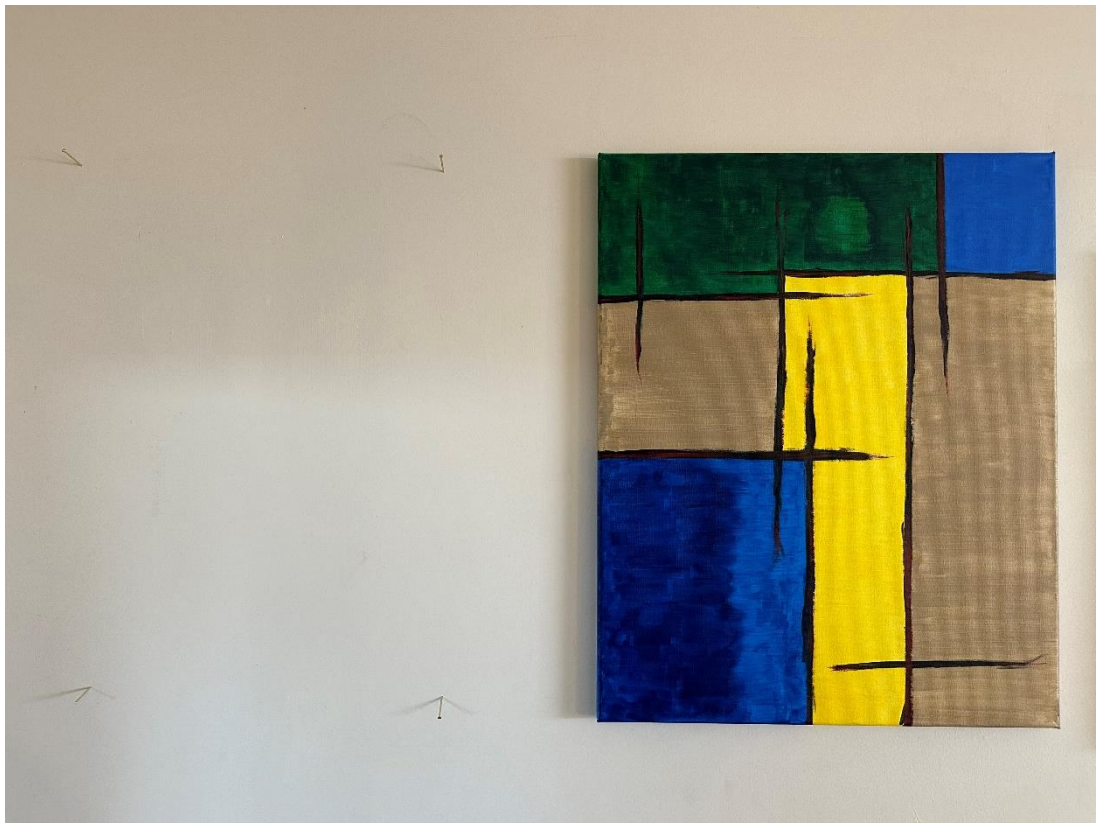
50 x 87 cm

NFS

Who belongs in a gallery? And is desire enough to make it happen?

But will you? examines what it takes to be exhibited in these spaces.

A seemingly simple and to many, “bad” painting, this work has been developed, created and submitted to an exhibition for audiences to view, critique, and potentially pass by to claim they could have done it themselves - raising the question – but will you? The physical painting sits alongside four pins securing no art, representing a possible future for patrons - will they produce their own works for exhibition, or simply move on knowing they could have.



Carmelina Casely

Figure Looking In the Mirror, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

40 x 40 cm

\$670

Figure Looking In the Mirror

The mirror reflects more than one's physical self.

It glimpses beyond and perceives what we yearn and long for.

A longing for love and for friendship, for acceptance and for understanding, for hope and for happiness, for strength and for courage, a longing for yesterday and for tomorrow.

A longing for purpose ... and for a sense of belonging.



Alessia Catalano

Can I See, 2024

Acrylic and inkjet print

40.6 x 50.8 cm

NFS

My artwork relates to the theme of (Be)Longing as I explore the fragility of memories and how they can become fragmented over time. The longing to keep these memories as I connect back to my innocence.

I deeply resonate with this painting as it encapsulates a precious moment shared between my brother and I. The pixelated effect symbolises how memories can fade and blur over time, but still remain nostalgic in the feelings they evoke. The phrase "can I see" is a poignant reminder of my curiosity as a child, the yearning to witness the photos and videos taken in the moment. This is the essence of my childhood memories with my brother. I tend to remember just words I used to say and visual photos which then spark a memory.

Placing the coloured one and black and white one side by side reflect over how memories change over time. the coloured one provides a clearer and more definitive version of the memories of now looking back. The coloured version of the artwork represents the warmth and light that it brings knowing that this memory is still alive and perceived in reality, from a moving image of a video.



Margaret Christianson

Morning Gossip, 2024

Corten steel

134 x 65 x 30 cm

\$870

Morning Gossip captures the essence of community and belonging, as three Superb Fairy Wrens gather on their favourite bush for a lively morning chat.

Hand-cut from Corten steel, this garden sculpture not only celebrates the beauty of nature but also symbolises the warmth and connection found in shared moments, highlighting the importance of togetherness in both nature and life.



Thomas C. Chung

As Far As I Could See... (I), 2024

Single channel 4K video

Duration: 5:10 minutes

NFS

As Far As I Could See... (I) is the first video in Thomas C. Chung's three-part series. The three video works form a pivotal component of the larger solo exhibition "The Sea That Stands Before Me...", featured in December 2023 at the Chinese European Art Center (CEAC) in Xiamen, China.

This series of digital landscapes captures the essence of dreamlike wandering and solitude, embodying the universal experience of dreaming. Set against the backdrop of the broader theme, it explores the depths of human consciousness and emotion, seamlessly blending the lines between reality and imagination. The pieces in *As Far As I Could See...* embark their viewer onto the path of contemplation of life's uncertainties, personal quests, and the human condition, offering a profound visual journey into the realms of introspection and the unknown.

Sound Design by Paul Leadbetter.



Ryley Clarke

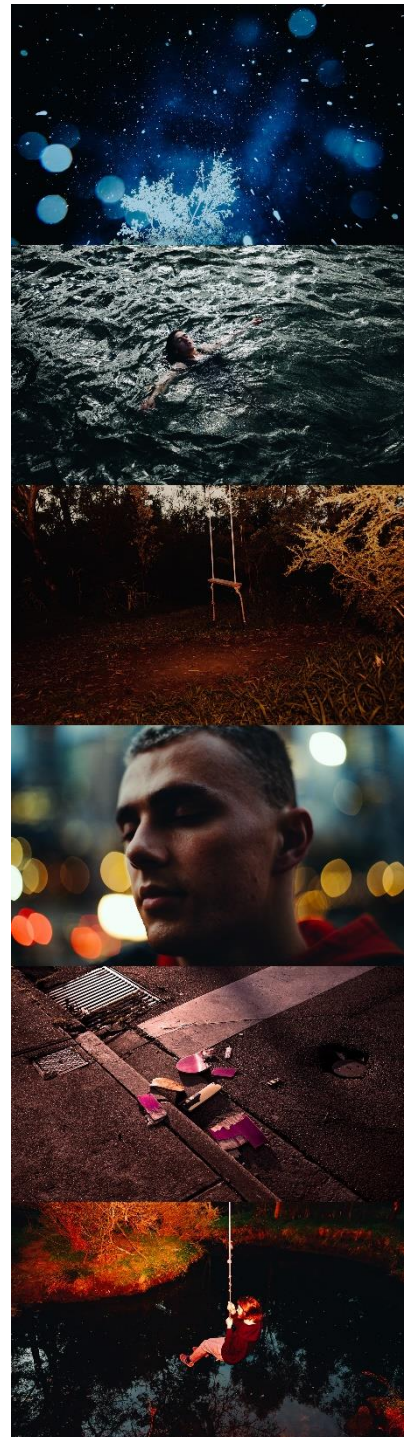
Dark Signs of a Red Summers Shadow, 2024

Photograph printed on Canson Lustre

125 x 45 cm

\$800

In this moment of social, political and economic fracturing, young adults are perpetually navigating a fragile and changing world. A generation shaped by the pandemic, climate change, proliferating wars, have found their transition into adulthood interrupted, disrupting a void of lost experiences and sensations. Coming of age in a time of escalating global challenges has affected the way young adults perceive their present dreams and futures. This narrative aims to shed light on the experiences and sensations which underpin the affective moments of becoming. Through photographic storytelling, I delve into a cinematic exploration to examine how ominous shifts in our social world disrupts the transition from youth to adulthood. The work aims to capture and convey the tension of transitioning into adulthood. Weaving together portraiture, lyrical, cinematic and speculative documentary storytelling techniques, this documentary seeks to process what was a confusing time in my life and contemplate the uncertain future of a generation in a world transformed.



Elizabeth Cleland
Come, sit, 2024
Kiln cast glass
20 x 35 x 12 cm
\$1,200

We all know or recognise the desire to belong to something real, meaningful.

And when that is not open to us, or we cannot find it, we also know or recognise the longing, hollowness.

So, reach out and make the invitation to "come, sit"

To join in that we may all belong.



NFS

A 4x4 grid of 16 small images. The images show various indoor and outdoor scenes. Top row: a blue and white patterned object (possibly a bag or umbrella) hanging; a doorway with a painting; a blurry indoor scene; a person sitting on a bench outdoors. Second row: a bicycle parked on a wooden deck; a room with a wooden cabinet and shelves; a blurry indoor scene; a window with a metal grate. Third row: a blurry indoor scene; a concrete floor; a hallway with a doorway and a lamp; a person sitting on a bench outdoors. Fourth row: a blurry indoor scene; a concrete floor; a hallway with a doorway and a lamp; a person sitting on a bench outdoors.

J Davies

(Sholto & Nick) Kiss, 2024

35mm photograph

29.5 x 21 cm

\$600

(Sholto & Nick) Kiss explores the intimate connections that anchor us in love and safety. For queer people, belonging often feels like a distant dream, something we long for as we navigate spaces that don't always hold us. But in the tenderness of love, we find refuge—moments of intimacy where we feel seen, understood, and safe.

My work captures these moments: the quiet exchange of a glance, the safety of a lover's embrace, the joy of shared spaces where we can let our guards down. It's in these connections that we find a deeper sense of belonging, built not by societal acceptance but through the intimacy we create with each other.

Through this series, I celebrate the ways we care for one another, turning longing into love and vulnerability into strength. This is about the power of intimate connection—the places where we find security, warmth, and the freedom to be.



Elain Della Rocca
Grace, 2024
Copper and silver
15 x 13 cm
POA

This striking neck piece captures attention with its intricate checkered pattern, where copper and silver alternate like the interplay of light and shadow. The surface shimmers, with the warm glow of copper contrasting against the cool gleam of silver, symbolising the balance of opposing forces. At the heart of the design are two different interlocking circles, their smooth curves blending yet retaining their individuality. These circles are gracefully bound together by a single silver loop, unifying them in a delicate embrace.

The piece speaks to themes of connection and duality. The circles, though distinct, cannot exist without one another, embodying the idea of belonging. The silver loop that links them suggests a longing - a desire to unite and create something whole yet acknowledging that the strength lies in their individuality. It is a visual representation of how belonging doesn't erase differences, but instead brings them together into a harmonious, interlinked existence.



Chelle Destefano

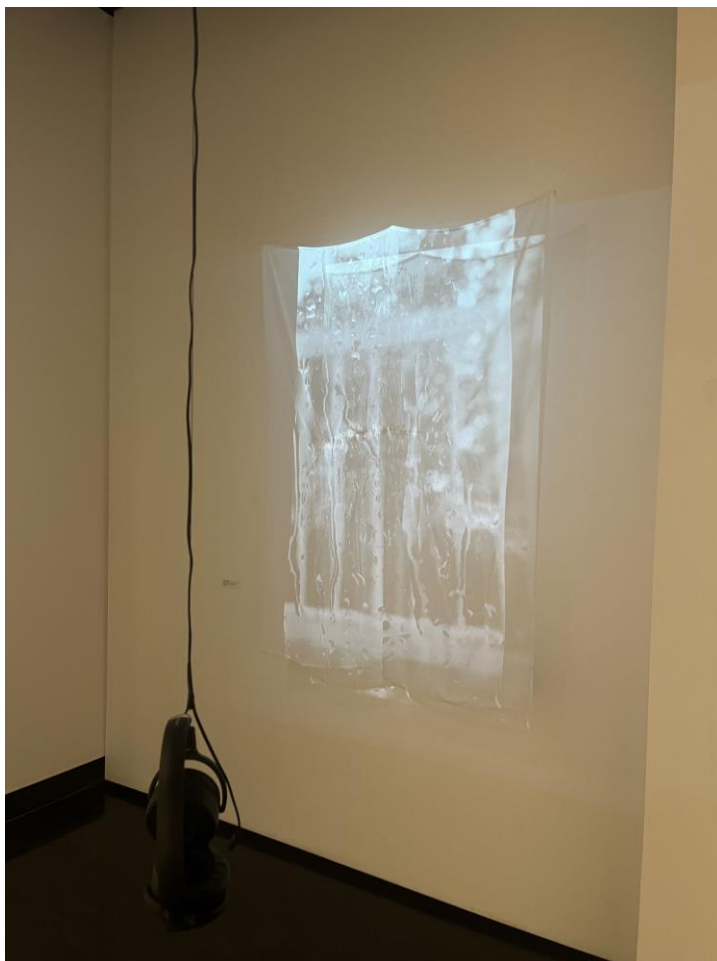
Who Does Family Think I Am??, 2024

Single channel video and textile sheet

150 x 120 cm

POA

Someone thought I was used to my family's way, but after seeing this, they realised I had been trying to tell them that I wasn't. Being the only Deaf person in a hearing family, heard but not really nor seen, the silent abuse endured. Crying behind a raining window, and sheer textile sheet with almost unseeable text in white and visual audio lines tell of the silent world I live in and what I'm trying to say in spoken word. The song 'Sleepwalk' by Santo and Johnny matches my experience. Be(Longing) but never really felt belonged, in the family. The isolation I have felt most of my life, coupled with being given things to entertain me instead of including me in everything has made me realised that not all was what it seemed in the family home. Unpacking my experiences is informed through the video performance and poetic (justice perhaps) textile.



Julian Di Martino

A friendship (Lila and Lenu), 2024

Found wood

68 x 150 cm

\$1,600

The work was inspired by 'My Brilliant Friend', an Italian-American television series which follows two young women from childhood to old-age in Naples. With their lives going in different directions, the women reunite in early adulthood. Their greeting in an unhesitating hug shows the ache of their longing and affirms the bond of their enduring friendship.



Sofie Dieu

About Giir (Hibiscus Flower and Hummingbird), 2024

Digital Photograph

53 x 30 x cm

\$480

As New Australian women, making Australia our adoptive home is a source of joy though it can be very testing. It takes so much to belong. Friendship and connection to one's tradition are important ways to prevent acculturation and isolation.

About and Sofie have known each other for a few years. With other women of their multicultural community, they make art and exhibit together. In this photo, Sofie captures a sacred moment of 'cultural re-rooting': About immerses herself in a textile that she designed. She was inspired by the hibiscus flower, a plant culturally significant to Sudanese people. Through this simple act, she reconnects to her family back home, to her birth land.



Andrea Draper

The Celebration of Friend & Fruit, 2024

Giclée print on smooth cotton rag

85 x 85 cm

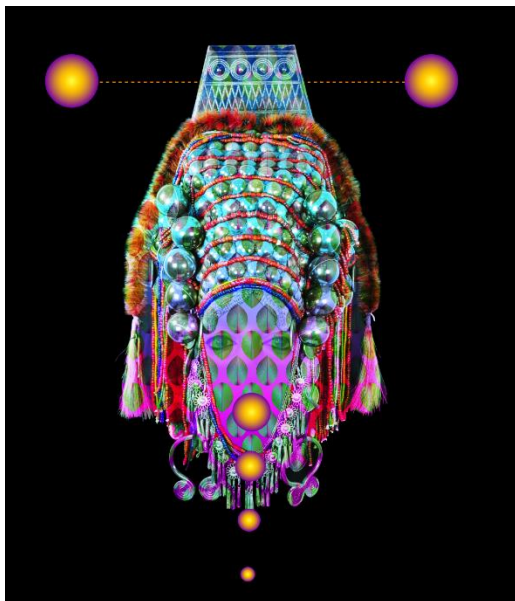
\$550

It started with a sip, I was captivated, it tasted of cartoons and colour. Passiona was sparkling and exciting. When Lydia offered me a passionfruit flavoured soft drink, it was the start of my first Australian friendship. I was nine years old with a new friend and a fresh connection to Melbourne's Southeast suburbs.

My family moved from Burma to the UK, escaping the military regime, and eventually moved to Australia. Our new home was in Springvale. On the porch trellis was a vine. With the developing season, I watched the flowers morph into globes of deep purple. Inside was a sweet deep-yellow tangy punch, so good I forgave the fruit for having crunchy gritty seeds.

Passiona, passionfruit, and friendship, connected me to our new family home.

The Burmese ceremonial headdress is worn during celebrations. A school friendship, a wonderful soft drink, and home-grown fruit is certainly something to celebrate.



Sandra Drummond

Place, 2024

Ink and paper

30 x 40 cm

\$660

Place is made of blue lake paper, handmade in Mt Gambier and the ink is made by Art Spectrum, a Melbourne based art supplies manufacturer.

The material is important to my sense of belonging to a place. In this work I reflected on the importance of belonging and the emotion of longing for that unity or connection. I looked up the meaning of Be/Longing and have explored themes of longing, yearning, wanting for something but also being, and belonging.



George Duckett

Piling Snow in a Silver Bowl, 2024

Synthetic polymer, lettering, silver and road bicycle stencil on board

30.5 x 61 x 5 cm

\$600

Piling Snow in a Silver Bowl is a phrase from the poem 'The Precious Mirror Samadhi' attributed to Dongshan Liangje (807 – 869), part of the Soto Zen Buddhist liturgy. In a nutshell, everything belongs. The piled white snow is indistinguishable from the silver bowl although compared, they are not the same. A silver bowl without snow holds absence, is unmoving. A pile of snow is something. A something that moves in the sense it is transitory. In this piece, the two elements have been separated to reflect our dualistic belief in the separateness of things, especially ourselves. Emptiness is the aperture, an absent bowl; form is a collaged pile of snow, a material addition. Longing is the recognition of an absence. Dongshan would have that you can't long without belonging, they are the flip sides of the same coin. We truly belong to the world as it is. If you didn't belong, you would not long, the two conditions are co-dependent.



Robyn Elliott

Live deliberately, 2024

Linen, cotton, feathers, ceramic and turmeric dye

87 x 112 x 26 cm

\$500



That one little bowl representing a childhood and adolescence of feeling different. Separate. A place in the family but longing to join that group of girls.

Familiarity breeds contempt said mum.

Couldn't understand this statement because I knew that friendships were important.

Finally found the lesbians and thought I'd found home. Truly belonging with my identity.

But later, after disappointments, grief and trauma, later I just looked for kind people. Eyes wide open in the workplace.

Found caring, thoughtful people with some commonality. With respect and honesty and decent human qualities.

Affirmed by Julia Baird in 'phosphorescence...

do not underestimate the soothing power of the ordinary'

These simple bowls represent quality friendships. Celebrating the ordinary each time we use these bowls, slightly misshapen, glazed with my favourite Shino.

Comparison is the thief of joy

Live deliberately.

Jane Farnan

Mary's Hands, 2024

Oil on canvas

43 x 53 cm

NFS

This image depicts my mother's hands.

I tried to capture the strength, power and beauty of these work worn hands using a simple burnt umber chromatic imprimatura.

These hands supported me through my life from birth until she died at 88 years old.

They were striking not just for the length of the shapely fingers and the resolute grasp but also for always being incredibly soft to the touch until her death.

I will never stop longing for their touch.



Ange Foster

The Unseen Woman, 2024

Fabric Sculpture

145 x 42 x 18 cm

\$145

This artwork depicts a sheer, ghostly figure of a woman, symbolising the growing invisibility that women often face as they age. Working with the theme of (Be)Longing, this piece explores the conflict between the desire to belong and the reality of becoming overlooked. The ethereal form captures the silent struggle of women yearning for recognition in a society that frequently sidelines them. Through this work, I aim to create a dialogue about the value of ALL women. We must acknowledge their presence, their contributions, their wisdom and their worth. ALL women deserve to be seen.



Lesley and Patrick Francis

The Wayfarer, 2024

Single channel video

Duration: 2:14 minutes

NFS

Our video, *The Wayfarer*, utilises pointillism to create landscapes that reflect the theme of (Be)Longing through their intricate details and vibrant colours. Each dot represents individual experiences and emotions, illustrating how our identities are shaped by moments of connection and isolation. The protagonist traverses these landscapes, symbolising the search for belonging amidst a fragmented world.

As the scenes shift, the pointillist technique mirrors the complexity of relationships—how they can come together to form a cohesive whole or remain scattered and distant. The rhythm of the visuals aligns with the ebb and flow of longing, emphasising both the beauty and pain of seeking connection. Through this stylistic choice, we invite viewers to contemplate their own paths and the interplay of solitude and companionship, ultimately highlighting our shared yearning for a place where we truly belong.



Flora Georgiou
ECLIPSE, 2024
Paper collage
31 x 39 cm
POA

Be - longing is like an eclipse - when a planet moves in the shadow of another one.



Michael Gromm

Everybody's Sun, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas

115 x 90 cm

\$4,000

Another day, another dollar, another sunset.

The sun powers us, provides us with light, our nutrients, our environment, our home. We are intrinsically tied to the environment that we continue to push out, to abstract, to destroy and synthesise in every possible way to meet our growing need for resources.

With simpler times behind us, at the end of the day, we still belong to the sun.



Ruth Groves

Questions, 2024

Oil on canvas

151 x 102 cm

\$2,000

As children there appears to be certainty and continuity to our world; but 'belonging' is so multilayered that as adults it is difficult to grasp as we continue to evaluate this throughout our life span.

What we are left with is a series of disconnected, fleeting images and memories.

Recently, I had several conversations with a close friend, and we were both surprised about significant things that happened in our lives that we were only fleetingly aware of.

Who we are, how we fit into other people's lives, to our communities and social structures is a very complex affair, until we start listening to the stories that connect us.

This painting is called Questions

Where do I belong

Who comforts me

Where do I roam

What is my culture

Who gives me permission

Who can take this away

When will I know what I don't know

Where has my future gone

What do I treasure



Peter Hannaford

Fortunate are those who excel at positive human connection, 2024

Oil paint, casting resin, card and timber

44 x 28 cm

NFS

Traumatic lived experiences since early childhood caused stunted social and intellectual development, and an abhorrence of violence of any kind. Longing to be an equal in worthy community groups included voluntary work and activism in solidarity with other oppressed people, but a sense of belonging and acceptance remained elusive. Disillusioned disengagement ensued. No longer identify as a straight male but don't fit anywhere else on the spectrum either. Self-harm increased to emergency resuscitation level.



Jack Hannigan

Stille, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

71 x 91 cm

\$1,250

I want to convey the subject's irritation and frustration on a cellular base level that is connected to the struggle when sometimes needing to be still for the preservation of core self and energy.

Realising the need to subdue the innate desire to sow seeds and to tempt wild havoc, mischief and indulgence. To do this is an attempt to contain our animal sense of longing for excitement and distractions.

The constant wrestle between Being and Longing.

I visualised the subject as raw, animal, gentle and hungry but stubbornly resolved despite themselves.



Ashika Harper

Home, 2024

Print on Perspex and wood

60 x 44 x 5 cm

\$500

Home is a piece that reflects on my family home in Wandella NSW, which was lost in the 2020 bushfires. This work imagines new ways of experiencing memories past. Through the digital manipulation of photography of my family home, this work aims to re-visualise this past structure as a present-day object. As the house that once stood held those memories, this artwork seeks to capture the home's essence. This place has since been destroyed; how can the photograph speak the truth of this significant change? How does one feel belonging to a structure that no longer stands?



JC Harris

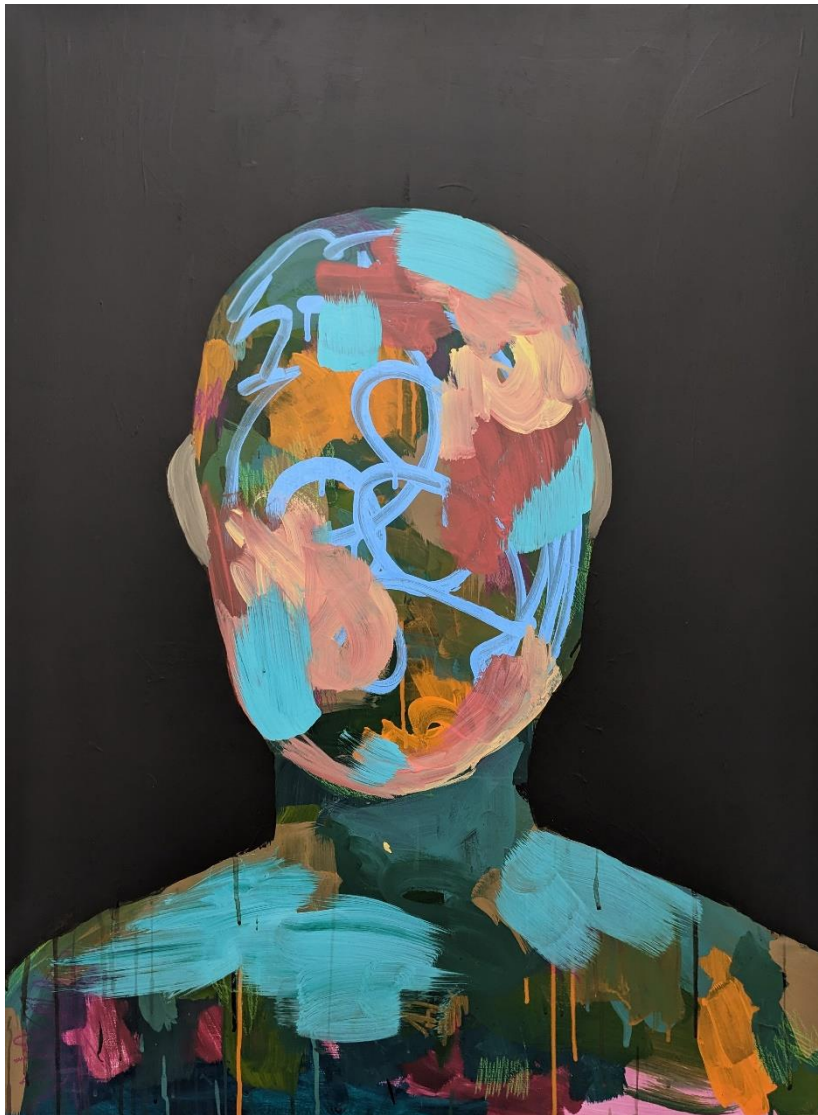
Mestiso, 2024

Acrylic on birch panel

101 x 76 cm

\$1,200

The title, Mestiso, is a Filipino word (also commonly known as tisoy) that describes someone who is of mixed Filipino and foreign ancestry. My experience of being a tisoy often leads me to an identity crisis of my cultural heritage. Often times I feel othered for being mixed or 'not enough' of a particular culture. This work is a self-portrait that represents my exploration in trying to define the place that I belong culturally and socially.



Jarmila Hava
Armchair, 2024
Lithographic print
51 x 41 cm
\$450

A favourite armchair is an important piece of furniture for many of us. For me, it is a place to dream of faraway lands and new exciting adventures.



Joshua Hede

Belonging Matters (Diptych), 2024

Felt tip marker on archival paper

44 x 63 cm

\$400

Belonging Matters is a diptych I have made for The Merri-bek Summer Show. Art is a part of my daily life. I have made and enjoyed art for as long as I can remember. I work from my home studio and also have a studio at Coburg Studios. Making and sharing my art gives me a sense of belonging and helps me to connect with the wider community. Art and belonging both matter.



Caitlin Hesse

Still searching, 2024

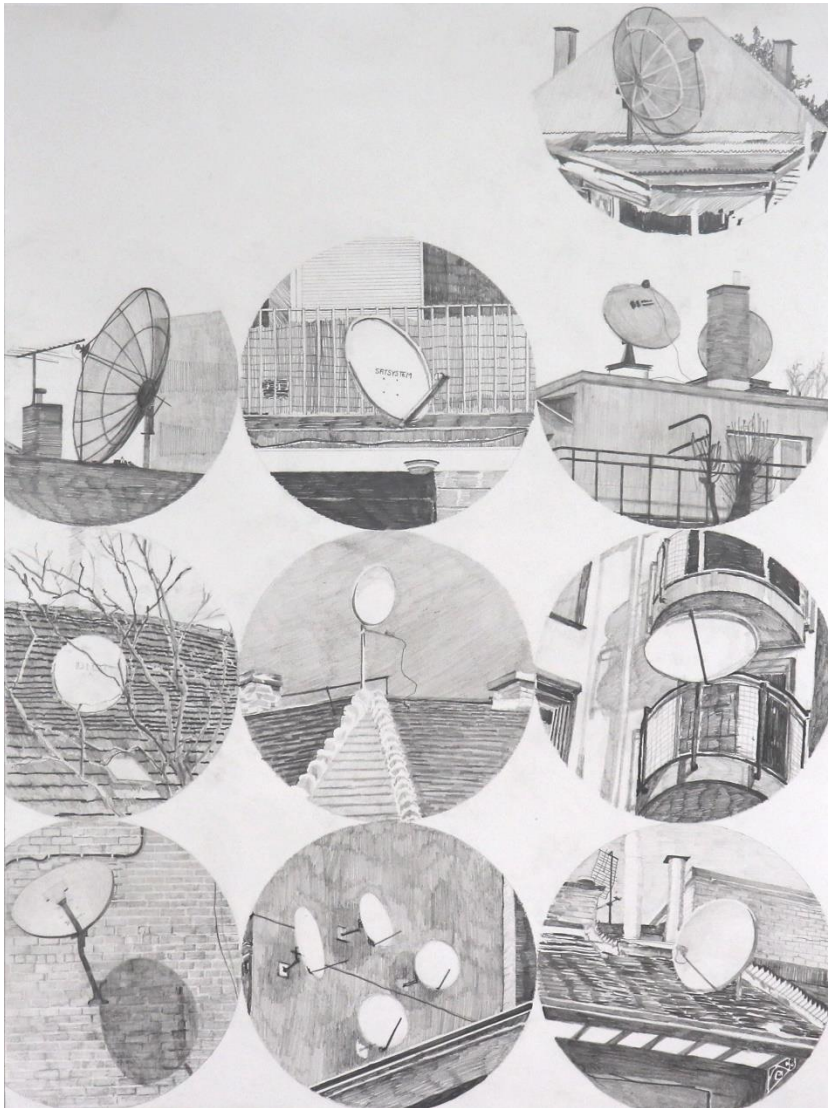
Graphite on paper

75 x 55 cm

POA

This artwork was made from images of satellite dishes I have been collecting over some years.

I like the stances they can have, looking out and searching, longing for connections, not unlike us.



Jon Hewitt

08:03, 200324, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

76 x 102 cm

\$990

This artwork was made from images of satellite dishes I have been collecting over some years.

I like the stances they can have, looking out and searching, longing for connections, not unlike us.



Setareh Hosseini
Emigrabilia, 2024
Photograph
70 x 50 cm
\$2,500



Objects are mementos that form part of people's memories and nostalgia. Each object holds a story, capturing a specific moment in time that can evoke a range of feelings.

When people move away from the things they cherish and relocate to another country, they inevitably leave behind parts of their lives, often striving to bring along what they hold dear. However, migrating often means leaving many beloved possessions behind. In response, individuals carry their memories with them. Memories are not solely dependent on physical objects; they can also exist as keepsakes in our minds and hearts, or as photographs, enabling us to carry them wherever we may journey.

Photographs freeze moments in time, preserving them for years to come. They have the power to transport us back to the exact moment they were taken, allowing us to relive special occasions. Beyond capturing visual aspects, photographs also encapsulate emotions. The personal connection between objects and the photographs we take of them is profound; they can evoke nostalgia, happiness, sadness, or a blend of emotions.

Objects, photos, and their memories are intertwined profoundly. The tangible reminders from seeing photos of things we love, help us connect with our past, share our stories, and preserve our memories for the future, wherever we are in the world.

Guy Hughes

Get the party started, 2024

Paint and wood

90 x 40 cm

\$1,500

Although we no longer use this type of peg, there are generations of people who can relate to or remember hanging clothes on a line. Whether it be a chore or a pain, even today the peg is a useful member of all of us.



Amaya Iturri

I was you, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

76 x 76 cm

\$3,100

"Women over 50 in Australia face homelessness for various reasons, including limited financial security, illness, relationship breakdowns, age discrimination in the workforce, and a lack of affordable housing. When homelessness occurs, the inner sense of belonging is profoundly affected. Moving between temporary shelters, public spaces, cars, or alternative sleeping arrangements often leads to feelings of disconnection and longing for the community once called home. This physical and emotional displacement heightens the longing for a secure and familiar place, illustrating how homelessness alters the connection to the world." (Mercy Foundation)

This work was produced by the anger and deep sadness I experienced when I found someone from our school environment was evicted from their house, because despite of having a job, could not afford rent.



Tegan Iversen

living in resi with you, 2024

Digital drawing, giclée print

29.7 x 42 cm

NFS

Back in high-school I had a crush on someone. We hadn't even had a conversation together, but he had longish hair, great taste in music, and wore a blazer to school even though everyone else wore hoodies and jumpers and that was enough for me to think he was real "hot stuff".

This artwork is inspired by him, my now fiancé Alexander. It's wild to think that from afar I fancied someone, and it wasn't until a few years later, when we actually had a conversation that I realised he was even better than I had imagined. It's about the excitement of finding someone you love so immensely, and the utter joy of having them love you back. It's about the longing to be with them all the time and being able to build a life together, in our case our little unit in resi filled with all our things.



Charlotte Ivey

Icon, 2024

Oil, acrylic and graphite on wooden panel

60 x 50 cm

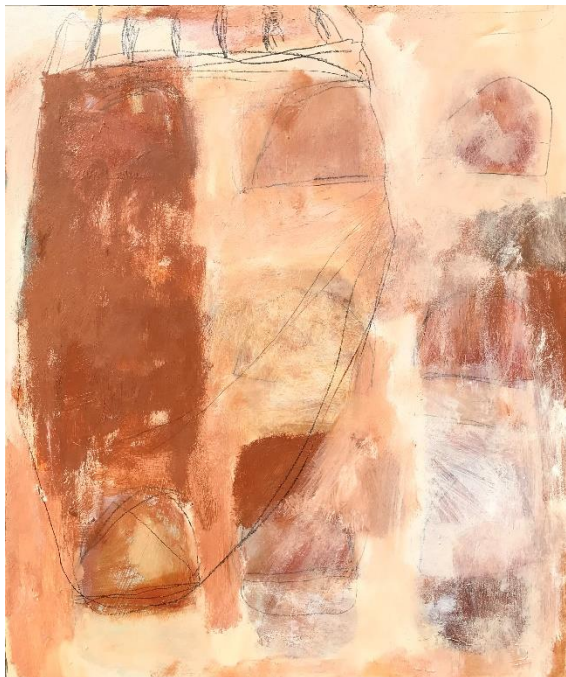
\$950

In June, I visited Lascaux Cave - a Palaeolithic cave in France, adorned with prehistoric paintings from approximately 17,000 years ago. About 6,000 representations of animals and mysterious iconography line the ceiling and walls, so dense they overlap.

The cave was found in 1940 by four boys investigating a foxhole. It opened to the public eight years later. The resulting influx of tourists brought 'sicknesses' - microbes that upset the cave ecosystem and damaged the artwork.

And so, I found myself in a copy of the cave, 200 metres away. Walking through, the ancient meanings are lost to us, and the images themselves are replicas. I remained painfully aware that no Magdalenian ancestor ever actually touched these walls and was left longing for connection that will never come.

In abstraction, the viewer searches for an exacting message, but finds themselves quarantined from meaning. The message is necessarily lost in translation.



Victoria Jacgung

Room with a view, 2024

Lino print

22 x 22 cm

POA

Moving to Merri-Bek in late 2020, I became more acquainted with the area by going on walks throughout COVID-19 restrictions. I would often set the goal of taking photos as I walked, either on a film camera or just on my phone. Looking back at these, I was drawn to the flowers growing in gardens, and the architecture of the Edwardian and bungalow style houses.

After living in the area for close to four years, I reflected on my own sense of belonging in the community during a time of isolation. I wanted to pay homage to the houses of my neighbourhood with the lino, layered over photos all taken within Merri-Bek.



Stephanie Karavasilis

Dislocation, 2024

Mixed media

70 x 150 x 70 cm

\$1,250

In *Dislocation*, I explore the feelings of longing and displacement I sometimes feel as a Second-Generation Australian. Existing between two worlds, I am both privileged and saddened by the knowledge that I can never belong to either completely. This is symbolised by the equally robust but aromatically different leaves of the Laurel Bay and Eucalyptus trees, which are native to Greece and Australia respectively, but have been introduced across the globe for their adaptability. I do not speak the language of my Greek ancestors, yet I have studied the art of my heritage and embrace its customs in times of celebration. Similarly, I have lived in Naarm my entire life and feel deeply connected to it, however, I know that I cannot ever fully understand my homeland.



Manon Kendall

The Butterfly's Dilemma, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

61 x 45 cm

NFS

This self-portrait reflects my personal journey since moving to Australia two years ago. The experience has been transformative and full of growth, symbolised by the butterfly. Yet, amid this flourishing, I often feel isolated, as if I exist between two worlds. My heart remains in France, while my body resides in Australia, creating a sense of duality. There are moments when I feel I belong in both places, and others where I feel I belong nowhere at all.



Nina Killham

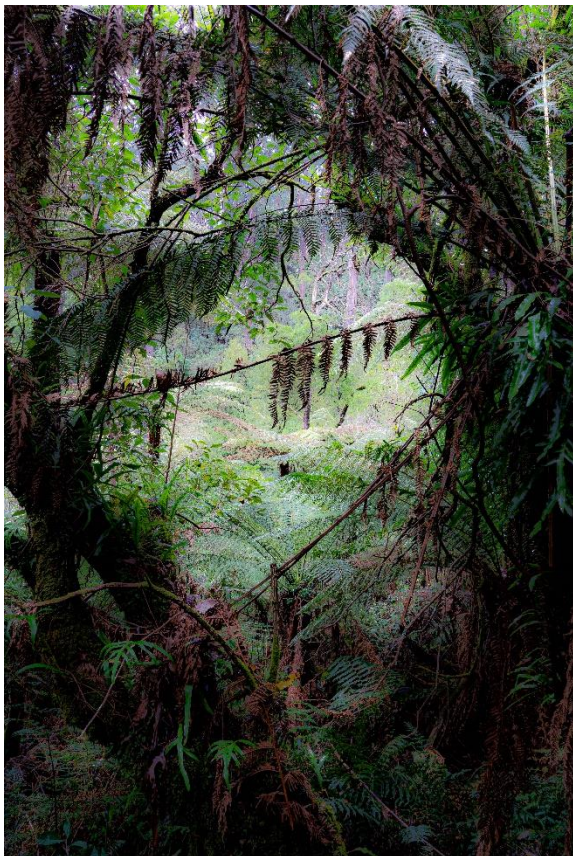
The Circle of Belonging, 2024

Giclée print on hemp paper

42 x 30 cm

\$330

We moved frequently with father's job when I was growing up and I lived in many places in the world. This has left me with a poor sense of belonging. Except for when I am in the forest – particularly the forests of Victoria with their deep mysteries and their exquisite tree ferns who always seem to welcome me. Here I am no longer the other, the new girl, the stranger. I am Nina – one of them – if a slightly weaker and noisier version. These forests part their limbs and welcome me into their circle, and I am finally home.



Pamela Kleemann-Passi and Jill Johanson

WTF? (What's The Fibre?) Jacket, 2024

Recycled textiles, human hair, bridal tulle, cotton thread and zipper

82 x 74 x 30 cm

NFS

Hair – we love it and hate it! It's an endless process of growth and removal that elicits such complex, polarising responses. Hair evokes both longing - beauty, desire, sexuality, power; and belonging - identity, community, society and status. The WTF? Jacket is a big, bold, beautiful statement to inspire conversations about how human hair waste can be diverted from landfill and reprocessed into sustainable and durable products across many industries. It's an abundant regenerative biomaterial comprising 95% keratin and 20+ amino acids, with high tensile strength, elasticity and thermal insulation properties. Many traditional cultures have combined human hair with other animal and plant fibres in textile production and for making ropes. In the 21st century, and given the climate crisis, surely human hair belongs in an innovative rethinking of contemporary textile production ... from wasteful to wonderful!



Strokes in Blue

Shelter in another body, 2024

Oil on paper

49 x 36 cm

NFS

With *Shelter in another body*, the artist rejects her physical body and the limited sense of belonging she feels because of it. She invites you to transcend your human form and view each other beyond appearances and instead as fabricated architecture holding, harbouring, sheltering many stories, experiences, lives and realities of foreign and familiar places and faces.



Madelin Latomanski

Leave Links (It Could Have Been Many Things, But It's This Instead), 2024

Mixed media collage on board with wire

72 x 31 cm

\$650

Leave Links explores the theme of (Be)Longing by examining the tension between our desire to belong to nature and the complexities of that relationship. Using found materials and local flora, the artwork expresses a yearning for connection with the natural world, while also acknowledging its darker, more dangerous aspects—represented by snakes, sharks, and other predators. This mirrors the human experience of belonging, where the desire for unity can often be met with conflict and uncertainty.

The wire chains linking the collages symbolise the interconnectedness of local and global ecosystems, suggesting that our sense of belonging extends beyond a single place. The contrasting imagery of beauty and peril highlights that longing for harmony with nature is never simple. Nature is both nurturing and threatening, much like our own relationships with community and identity. The work becomes a metaphor for how belonging is shaped by longing, struggle, and balance.



Penelope Le Petit

Wattle, 2024

Lithograph

58 x 58 cm

\$200

Longing

As Melbourne Winter drags, I find solace in the wattle trees that line the Merri Creek. Their golden blossoms, like small bursts of sunlight, signal the end of the cold and the promise of Spring. Each bloom becomes a metaphor for hope, reminders that even in the bleakest times, beauty exists, and change is inevitable.



Qinling (Coni) Zhang

Reshaping, 2024

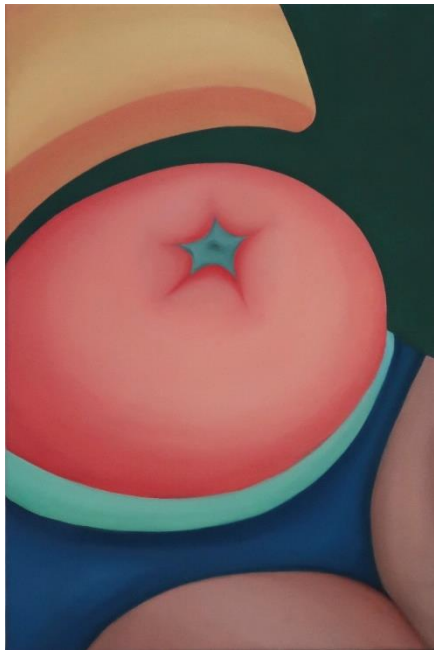
Oil on canvas

60 x 40 cm

\$680

This artwork delves into the complex relationship between a woman's sense of belonging and the physical changes her body undergoes, particularly through pregnancy and aging. The female abdomen — a visible and symbolic marker of transformation — becomes the focal point of this exploration. As women move through different stages of life, their connection to their bodies shifts and their sense of belonging is continually reshaped. The belly, while physically altered, represents something deeper: a connection between the woman and her inner self, society, family, and the natural world.

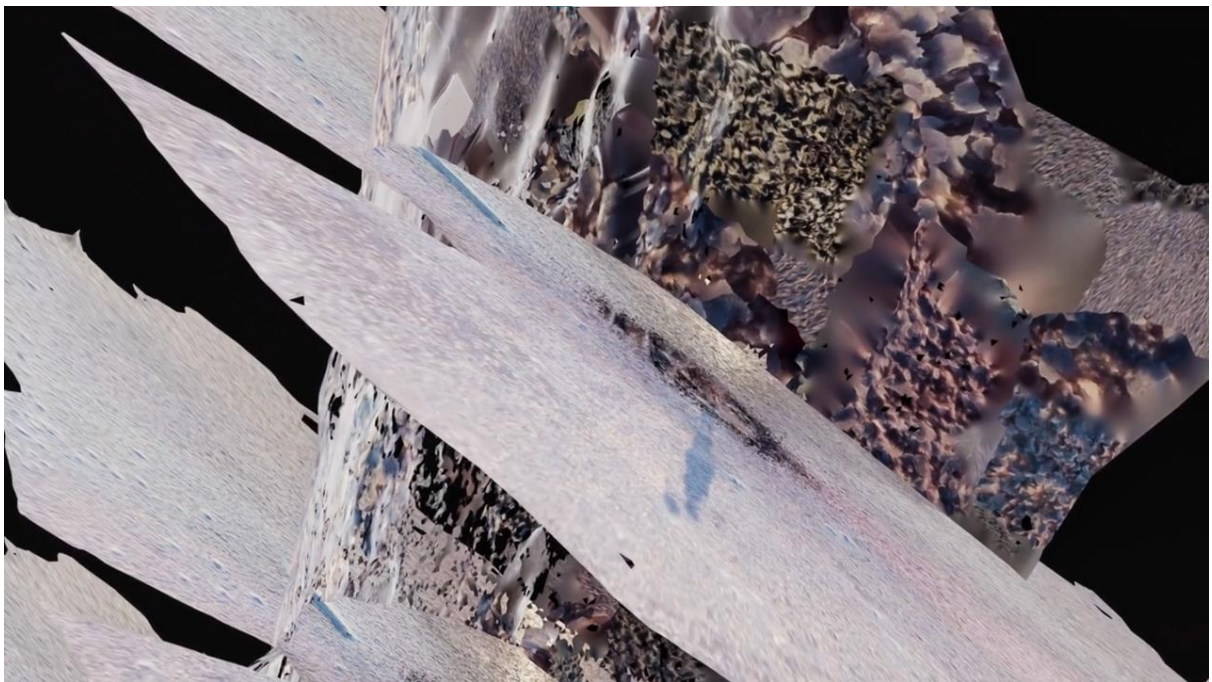
This piece examines how these physical changes challenge societal perceptions of beauty, while also emphasizing the woman's evolving self-identity. Through this journey, women learn to embrace their bodies, shifting the focus from outward appearance to inner strength. The abdomen, in this context, becomes more than a biological structure—it serves as a visual narrative of personal identity, experience, and the longing for connection and belonging.



Linda Loh

Tenuous Ground, 2024
Single channel 4K Video
Duration 1:04 minutes
POA

Fragments of the past,
once belonged, once real,
tenuous ground remains.
Orbiting beyond the real,
longed for space.
Beyond.



Yoshihito Machida

Birds of a Feather-Indian Myna, 2024

Glazed earthenware clay on hardwood

65 x 25 x 25 cm

\$600

The Indian Myna bird (*Acridotheres tristis*) was first introduced to Australia in the 1800's to control insects in market gardens.

They are popular birds in their source countries as crop pest control agents and as symbols of undying love associated with their habit of pairing for life.

Machida interprets this sense of belonging through the eyes of the birds and the saying, "birds of a feather, stick together." His work speaks of resilience, flexibility and the struggle to survive and adapt in new places.



Lucy Maddox

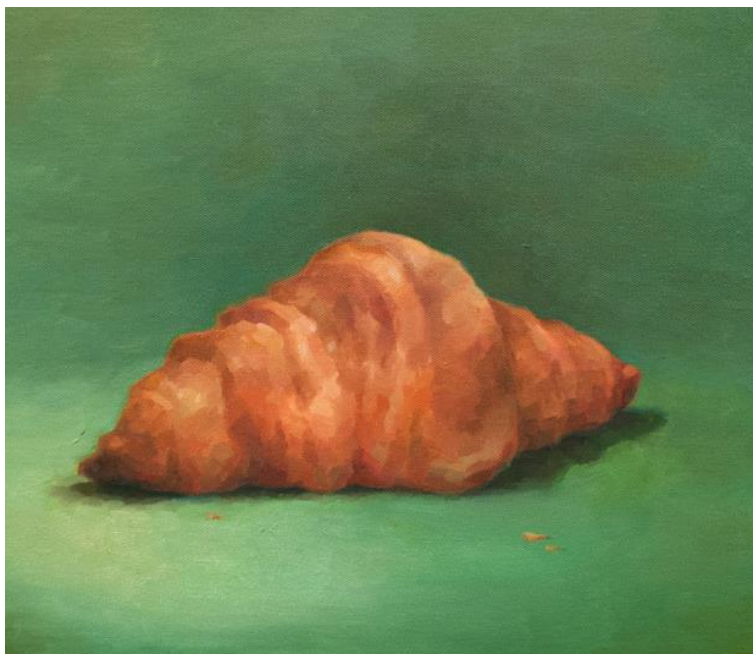
Madeleine de Proust, 2024

Oil on canvas board

38 x 34 cm

\$490

There's a bakery in a small town in France called 'Boulangerie des Vallées', or Bakery of the Valleys. For just one or two euros, you could walk away with a baguette tradition, a croissant aux amandes or a pain aux raisin ... if you got there before they sold out. I spent late spring and early summer of 2024 walking through the French hills and valleys to my studio each day, grabbing a baked treat along the way to fuel my painting. The slow pace of life was itself a treat, too. Watching the sun rise over the apple orchards in the mornings, picking fresh blackberries, and spending long days painting and drawing was an unending joy. In French, a Madeleine de Proust is a term for a physical sensation that brings back nostalgic memories - for me, the sight and smell of golden pastries leaves me longing for the sun-soaked green hills of France and languid hours where I have the privilege to focus on my artistic practice.



Priscilla Manthey

Belonging?, 2024

Water based screen print on paper

67 x 80 cm

\$500

Every time we open our devices, our attention is solicited to join up to a service or product, pressing us to evaluate if any of the words in these beckoning boxes are relevant to our needs.

The requirements for my art practice are often based on scavenging for the serendipitous, sometimes literally what's on the ground, and are the ingredients for my collaged layered style. This calls for a rigorous editing process to bring these arbitrary and disconnected images into an unpredicted harmony. The carefully choreographed new formations may trigger novel and unexpected associations in the mind of the viewer and achieve in visual terms a new sense of 'belonging'. I believe this process may be seen as analogous to the realities to our daily lives.



Sheena Mathieson

The stuff of dreams, 2024

Conte pastel and wax on wood

64 x 59 cm

\$650

In these turbulent times of division and polarisation, it is so important to recognise that we as human beings all have some very basic wants and needs that line up with each other; we long to be accepted, to be seen, to belong. All the while navigating the space that we occupy.

Even those who belong in one sense or another, to one group or another, may still feel a keen sense of longing. One does not preclude the other. It is human nature to seek identity as an individual while searching or longing to be connected and accepted.



David McCall
Untitled, 2024
Acrylic on card
45 x 55 cm
\$100

Humans have a longing and need to be connected to one another, but it isn't always possible.

In this work, the couple are trying to verbally connect but unfortunately there is a barrier preventing them from connecting and ultimately belonging.

The reasons for the disconnect are many and varied, from incompatibility to mixed messages.



Janine McGinness

Intertwined (nest), 2024

Found materials

9 x 15 x 15 cm

\$500

The sense of home, or belonging, can be complicated when ancestors arrived from various parts of the world to settle on land that was already occupied by an indigenous population.

Through weaving found materials from Djaara Country and Woiwurrung Country, some solace was found. Found materials include plastics and foreign matter, intertwined with natural materials, endemic to the area; it seems to embody my own mixed heritage.

In this woven nest, the created debris of our lives, including everlasting plastics, string and wire, represent colonisation, whereas endemic materials, including grass, twigs, leaves, etc, acknowledge the true custodians of this land. My connection to the land is strong, but any sense of belonging is tempered by the knowledge that I'm living on stolen land and the longing to know more about the family tree that sent roots into this borrowed soil.



Aylsa McHugh

Cianalas, 2024

Dye sublimation print on aluminium

12 x 10 cm

\$200

This piece, *Cianalas*, is the result of my ongoing research into my Scottish heritage.

Cianalas (key-an-a-lus) – is a Scottish Gaelic word which is difficult to translate into English but can be best described as a deep-seated sense of belonging and longing to and for the land of your ancestors. As with most Scottish Gaelic words, the depth and beauty of this expression is sadly lost in translation.

This inherent sense of longing and belonging is a theme that runs throughout Scottish literature and folklore. The Scottish poet, Robert Burns, succinctly describes an aspect of this feeling in these two lines from his 1789 poem, 'My Heart's in the Highlands'.

“My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,

My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.”

Cianalas is a concept and feeling understood universally by all diaspora.



Anthony McInnery

Solastalgic Belonging, 2024

Flag, pocket map and printed poster

Dimensions variable

Four postcards and pocket map, \$50 for the set

Installation NFS

AYER HOY (Yesterday Today) is printed as a flag and placed on the gallery floor, to be walked upon, in order to take a copy of the flag poster- folded map, and to belong in this territorial oblivion.

AYER HOY re-presents the artist's last urban intervention in Ground Zero, Santiago de Chile, 6 January 2024. Ground Zero is an area, centred on Plaza Baquedano, created by the unprecedented protest violence and destruction of the Chilean urban insurrection 2019-22. This "historic moment" began in Santiago with the attack on 20 Metro stations in 6 hours, 18 October 2019. It unofficially ended on December 2022 with Presidential pardons for 12 people serving sentences of between 5 and 15 years for crimes committed after 18 October, including arson of built heritage and frustrated homicide of Police by immolation. Plaza Baquedano had been reduced to zero and then renamed Dignity Square by Presidential omission.



Lorraine Meinke

Sally, 2024

Buff raku trachyte clay and mid-fire glazes

26 x 18 x 33 cm

\$1,500

Sally is part of a series of quirky ceramic fish sculptures that aim to draw attention to the serious ecological issues currently facing the ocean and its inhabitants. She belongs to the Anglerfish or Antennariidae family. She is not in her rightful place. Situated on a plinth, within a gallery setting, she is out of context. She does not belong. She is cold, static, frozen in space and time. She longs to be home, gliding through the warm tropical waters of Australia, amongst family, where she belongs.



Lucas Mihailidis

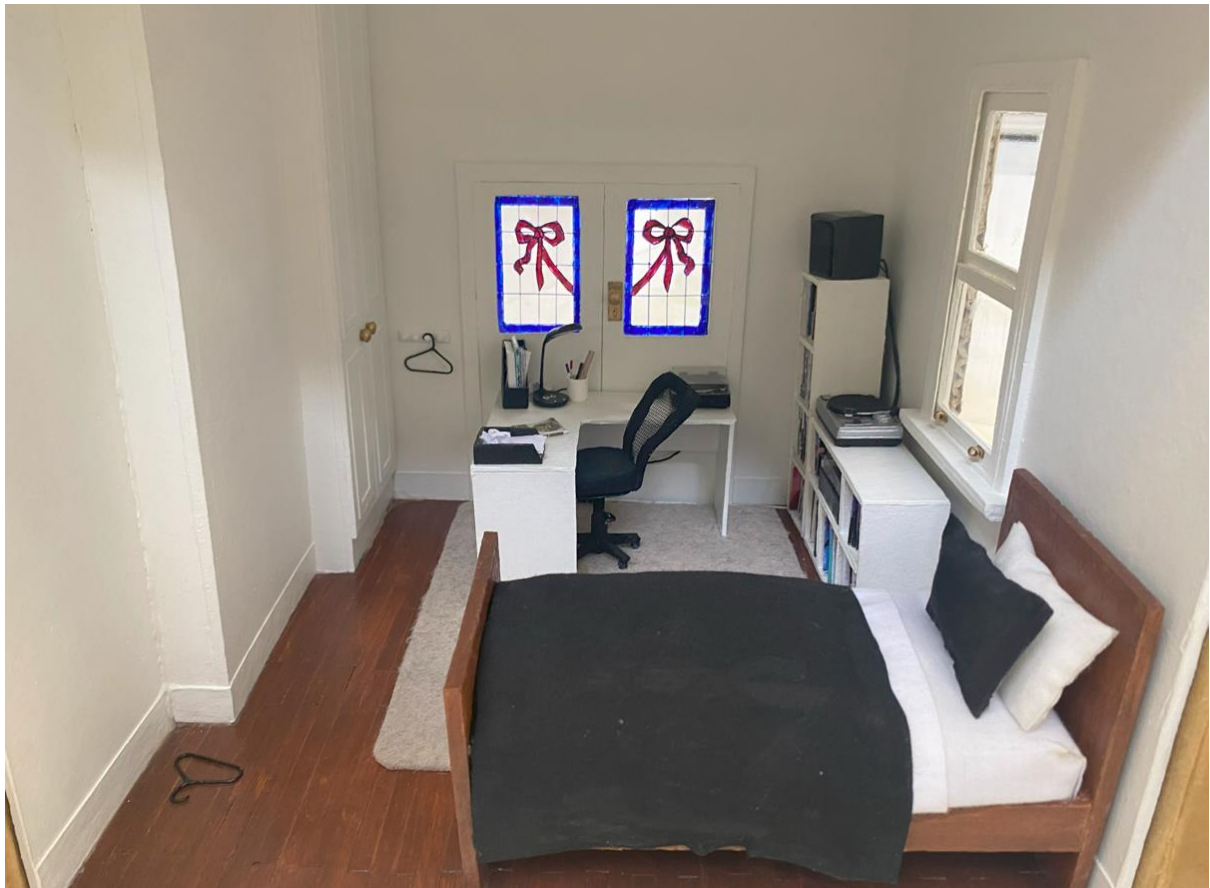
Serenity, 2024

Mixed-media sculpture

29 x 27 x 27.5 cm

NFS

Serenity captures the peace and comfort I experienced in my teen bedroom, a sanctuary where I could fully be myself and find solace amidst the chaos of school and growing up. This intimate space was a canvas for my personal expression, reflecting my evolving identity and inner world. Sculpting it in miniature reflects my deep connection to this space, where I felt a true sense of belonging and personal identity. This box explores the tension between past and present, revealing my quiet longing to reconnect with the serenity and security that defined my adolescent sanctuary.



Robert Mihajlovski and Radoš Stevanović

Icon of Be(longing), 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas

100 x 100 cm

\$4,800

This artwork is about love and nostalgia for belonging to the world of love between all creatures. On the left is a family love and home, something which is precious in these days. After a long discussion we have created this artwork. It is a nostalgia for the true love, which is always missing, and to longing for it.



Angelina Mirabito

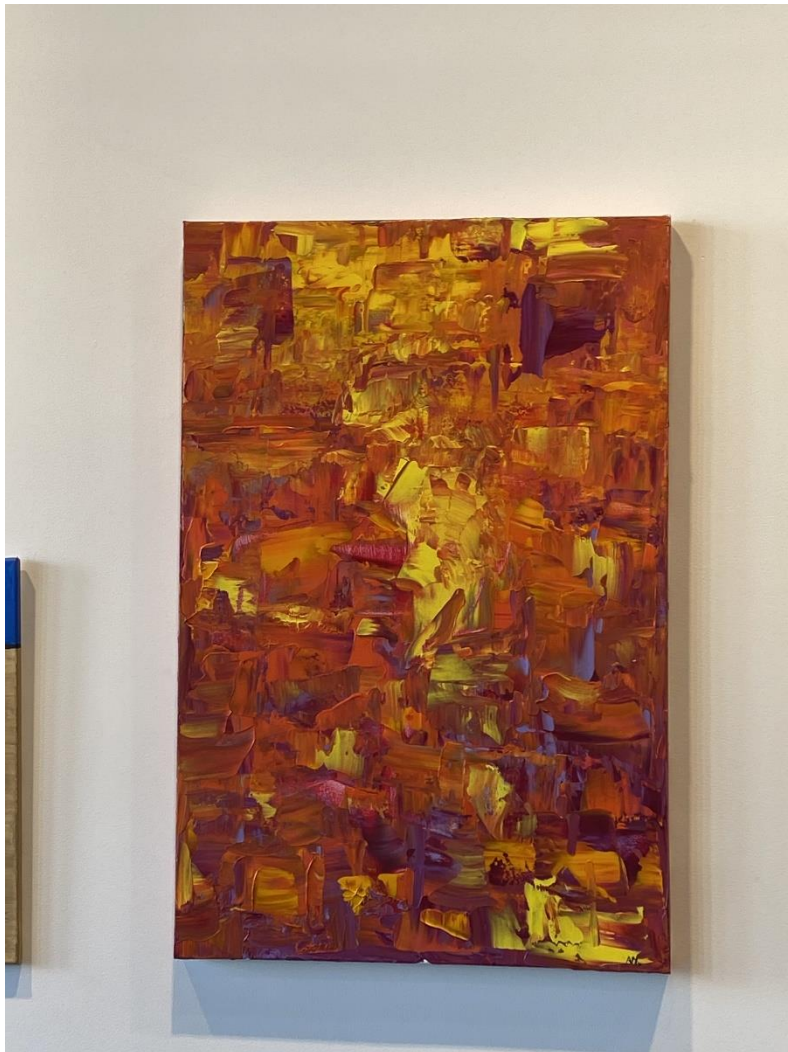
Trust Yourself, 2024

Acrylic on canvas

62cm x 93 cm

\$600

When you trust yourself, you naturally create the space to belong—to feel that you are enough and that you deserve to be where you are, surrounded by people who accept and support you. These two concepts often reinforce each other, helping to build confidence and a deeper sense of fulfilment.



Nazanin Moghaddam

New, 2024

Single channel video

Duration: 1:09 minutes

NFS

Just showed up in a “new” place, who am I and why am I here?

Did I plan this, or was it an accident? Is it just me, or is it too loud in here?

To assimilate, to become one. To be confused and lose your tongue.

To be happy you are not there, to be sad you are here.

Which way is up, and what is right from wrong? How can I put the memories behind?

....

Born from an accident and random things coming together, here you see my homage to “Longing Belonging”, an installation by Iranian-born artist Hossein Valamanesh.

The image of a burnt Persian rug in the Australian outback was my first introduction to the new land that I was migrating to. It was both shocking and hopeful. Painful and calming.

Do you see the fire dancing? Would you put it out or dance with it?



Siobhán Motherway

Reactive Ground, 2024

Ceramic, glazed stoneware, brick, tile and raw clay

Dimensions variable

NFS

Reactive Ground explores Brunswick's history as a site of clay work, and how this shapes our community and identity today. The forms evoke domesticity, the medium reflects the ground beneath our feet and the fabric of our houses, and the texts speak to the tensions and dependencies between the commercial potteries of Brunswick and the rapidly growing community around them. Test tiles illustrate not only the artist's process but her own journey of belonging and becoming a "local".

The large vessels include clay from sites near former potteries and quote historic newspapers. The miniatures are made solely from local clay. Raw clay and found remnants provide a literal and figurative ground for the assemblage.

This work explores a nostalgia for the domestic and industrial histories of Brunswick that have now largely passed but leave their echoes in housing developments, scattered green spaces and a strong local community of ceramicists.



Barbara Murphy

Ochre Creek, 2024

Oil on composite cardboard

27 x 40 cm

POA

This work relates to the theme (Be)Longing in that it depicts the landscape at Fowlers Gap, NSW, where I recently spent a week on an intensive practical painting seminar at the University of New South Wales Arid Zone Research Station. I had not been in this landscape for some time. I was overcome by the harshness, yet sheer beauty of the topography. The silence and beauty evoked an emotional connection to this country. Being a city dweller and returning to country affirms a sense of longing and a need to continue painting in remote Australian spaces.



Betty Musgrove

h0ld m3, 2024

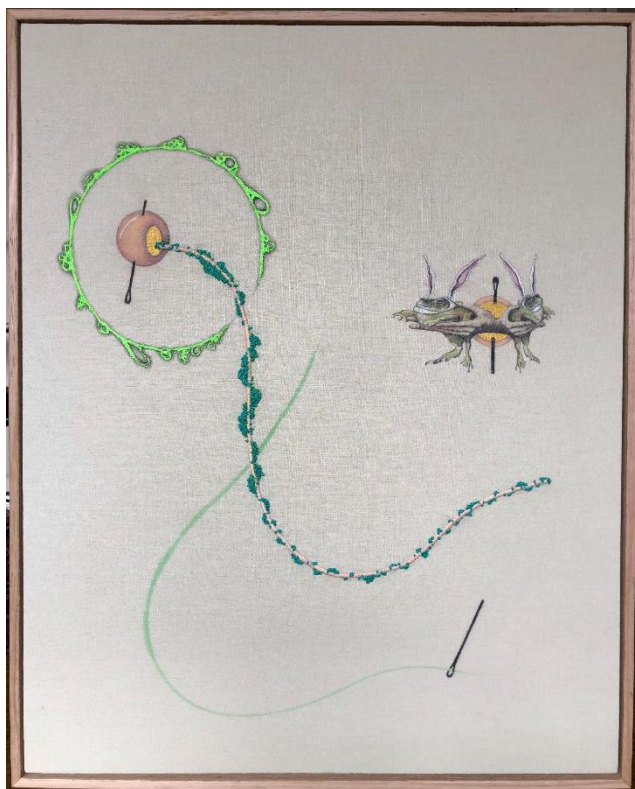
Hand and machine embroidery, graphite, coloured pencil, ink, solvent transfer and paint

53 x 42.5 cm

POA

Since the age of seven, I have embraced textiles and drawing as artistic mediums of self-expression. Both these mediums were imparted to me through a creative bond with my mother in the domestic space. These skills connect me to myself and my matriarchal lineage.

Often relegated to the realm of "craft", textile techniques are often overlooked. My practice explores the expansive nature of this medium, using personal symbology to express a longing for connection and a deeper understanding of myself, while honouring my foundational matriarchal practice.



Kamilla Musland

A Familiar Place (Triptych), 2024

Photographic image transfers on fabric

58.5 x 139.5 cm

\$1,350 per print

A softness to my home country, where people don't talk about feelings and don't cry in public. Where you eat bread three times a day, and coffee is always served black. A place where the most talked about topic is the weather. Where there's a polarity between the people who left their town's borders and those who did not. A place where you don't greet people you know on the streets, but when you see strangers in the forest, you say hi as if you were old friends. A place where kids play outside, no matter rain or snow. Where the dark months leave you loving the light so very much. Because having one makes the other even precious.

The summer you so deeply wanted that flew by too fast—the grass between your toes, the sun on your skin, the cold water on your face as you pierce the water's edge. The sound of seagulls, of children laughing. Seeing a clear blue sky in the night. The feeling of summer. The dreams of lighter days.

The small place that left a big space in my heart.

A familiar place. Home.



Angela Ndalianis

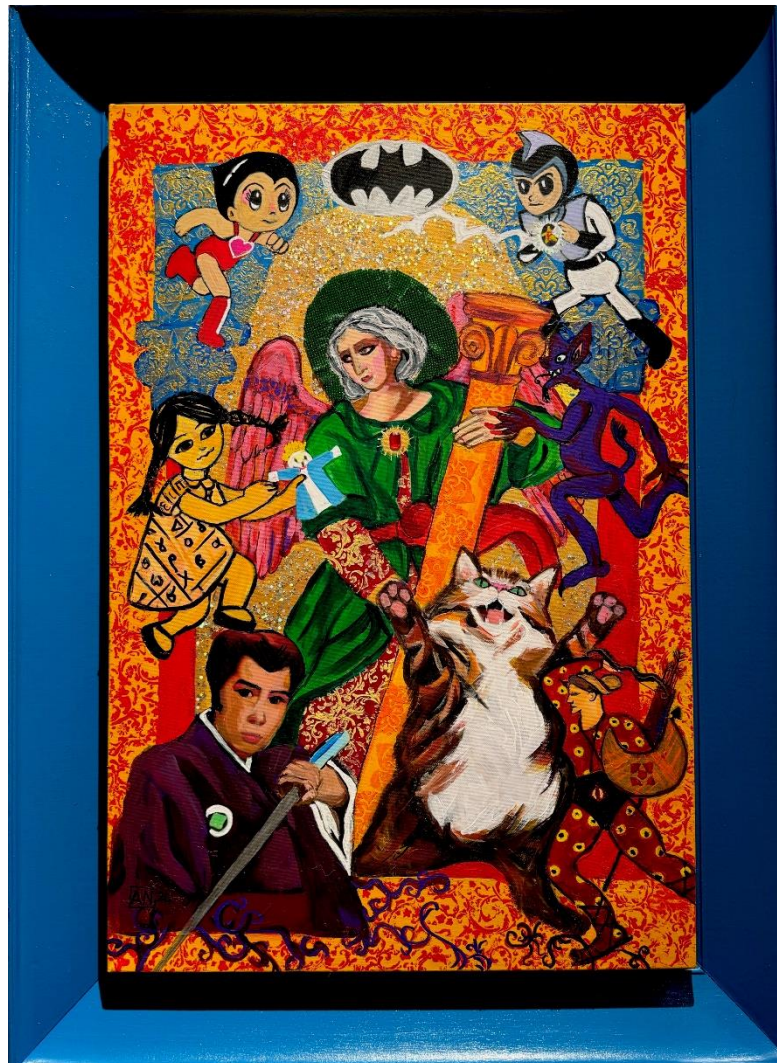
TOTEMIC POWER, 2024

Acrylic and collage on canvas

92 x 67 x 10 cm

\$920

TOTEMIC POWER depicts the Archangel Gabriel who I'm named after. He is now me as I develop my identity as a young girl growing up a Greek Australian. My sense of belonging oscillated between being Greek and being Australian. My true sense of feeling like I belonged was when I was with my cats and when I entered the worlds of my pop culture and mythic friends — Shinto the Samurai, Prince Planet, Batman, The Amazons, and many others. Today, I often return to those times, longing for the sense of belonging and sheer joy they brought me.



Rachel O'Connor

Blanket Jacket for a Million Dollar Home, 2024

Found and gifted recycled fabrics

150 x 75 cm

POA

The Australian housing crisis has profoundly impacted a sense of belonging to place and stability for many individuals. In my conceptual, wearable art piece, I explore these issues through embellishing a handmade vintage blanket jacket with an intricate fabric collage using found and recycled fabrics, and digital fabric prints. The collage portrays urban growth, diverse housing structures, and incorporates visual interpretation of the multifaceted dialogue surrounding housing affordability and the fundamental right to seek shelter. Utilising blanket material in the construction also speaks to needs of care, family, and protection. The work raises questions on who truly has access to secure housing, and the societal structures that dictate these pathways.



Valentina Palonen

End times time-lapse, 2024

Raw pigments and acrylic on canvas

122 x 122 cm

\$3,500

In a time of almost unbearable daily realities and personal stresses, there can be a sense overwhelming yearning and nostalgia for a time of simplicity, for an existence free of modern complications and pressures.

This painting envisages a somewhat bucolic ideal which probably never existed, as suggested by the fictional flora and fauna, yet taps into a deep longing for a place where harmony with the natural world has been maintained - a world in which a sense of belonging and connection with all prevails.

Made using fluid washes and dry brushed forms, I play with blurry imagery to suggest of a state of flux. I incorporate the natural elements by painting on the studio roof and welcome the textural inclusions of wind and rain, and the unique residue they leave. Forms linger between abstraction and figuration, emerging and disintegrating, yet are forever fixed on the surface of the canvas.



Nalika Peiris

Small connections, 2024

Pencil on paper (printed)

7 x 8 cm (per drawing)

NFS

This collection of drawings are memories, feelings and processing of thoughts that captures my relation to place and people. It is drawn from a body of work that has been created over 7 years and continues to be added to daily. The images draw on the moments with family, rituals and places that have brought joy and comfort.

The display of 12 images out of 2,000 relates to a sense be(longing) that is craved as a result of migration, being put in new situations and environments.

The images include items that evoke nostalgia, acts of kindness by friends, gatherings to rekindle connection and spaces that provide comfort.

The past often conjures up memories of longing for what was, but also provides clarity on things that are important to oneself in belonging to a place or group.



Maria Petrova

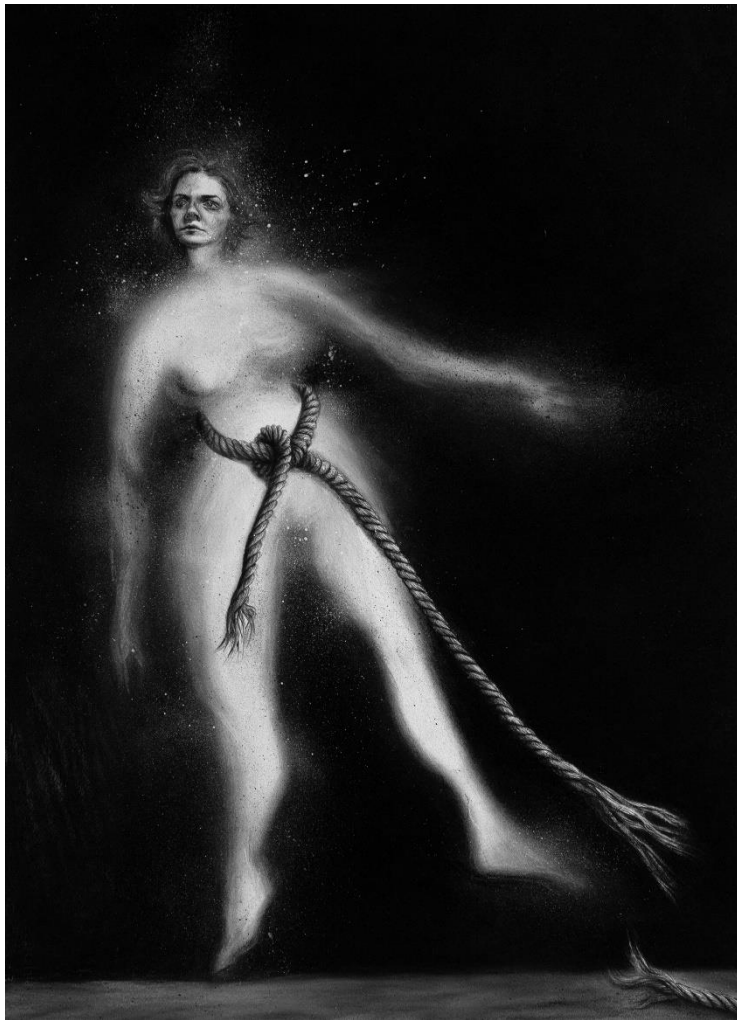
Untethered, 2024

Mixed media on paper

77 x 58 cm

\$2,000

This drawing focuses on themes of metamorphosis through loss. A self-portrait showing myself dissolving into ethereal mist represents the feeling of being untethered from a place of safety and belonging, a loss of connection and stability. The severed rope symbolizes both a forced severance of ties and a release from prior limitation, as I face the uncertainty of an unanchored future.



Deepika Rao

Silent Yearning, 2024

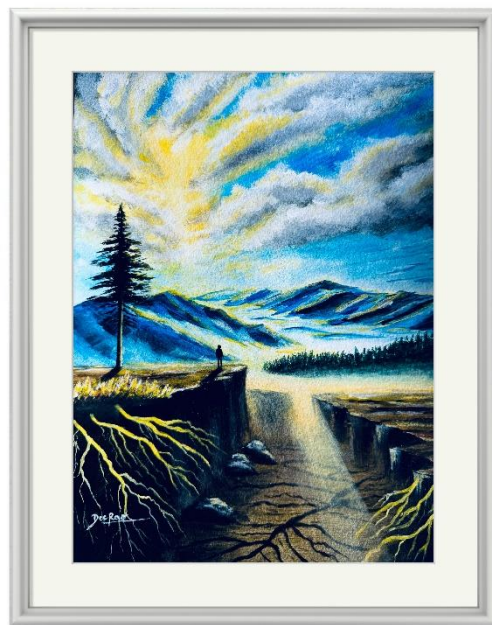
Acrylic on textured gesso treated paper

28.5 x 21 cm

\$450

Silent Yearning portrays a landscape that captures both the desire for connection and the search for belonging. A lone figure stands on a cliff, gazing at an expansive, misty horizon. The distant, fading mountains evoke a sense of longing for something unattainable. Golden light breaks through heavy clouds, symbolizing hope amidst separation and uncertainty.

The fractured ground beneath the figure reflects the challenges of finding belonging, while the plants represent roots, community and the tie that binds us. The figure's stance conveys a longing for something beyond the horizon, embodying the universal desire for connection, purpose, and a sense of home. Through a palette of warm golds and cool blues, the artwork contrasts the warmth of home with the cold, vast unknown. The scene reflects the duality of longing and belonging, represented by the horizon's distance and the figure's solitary presence.



Steven Rendall

What do mirrors want?, 2024

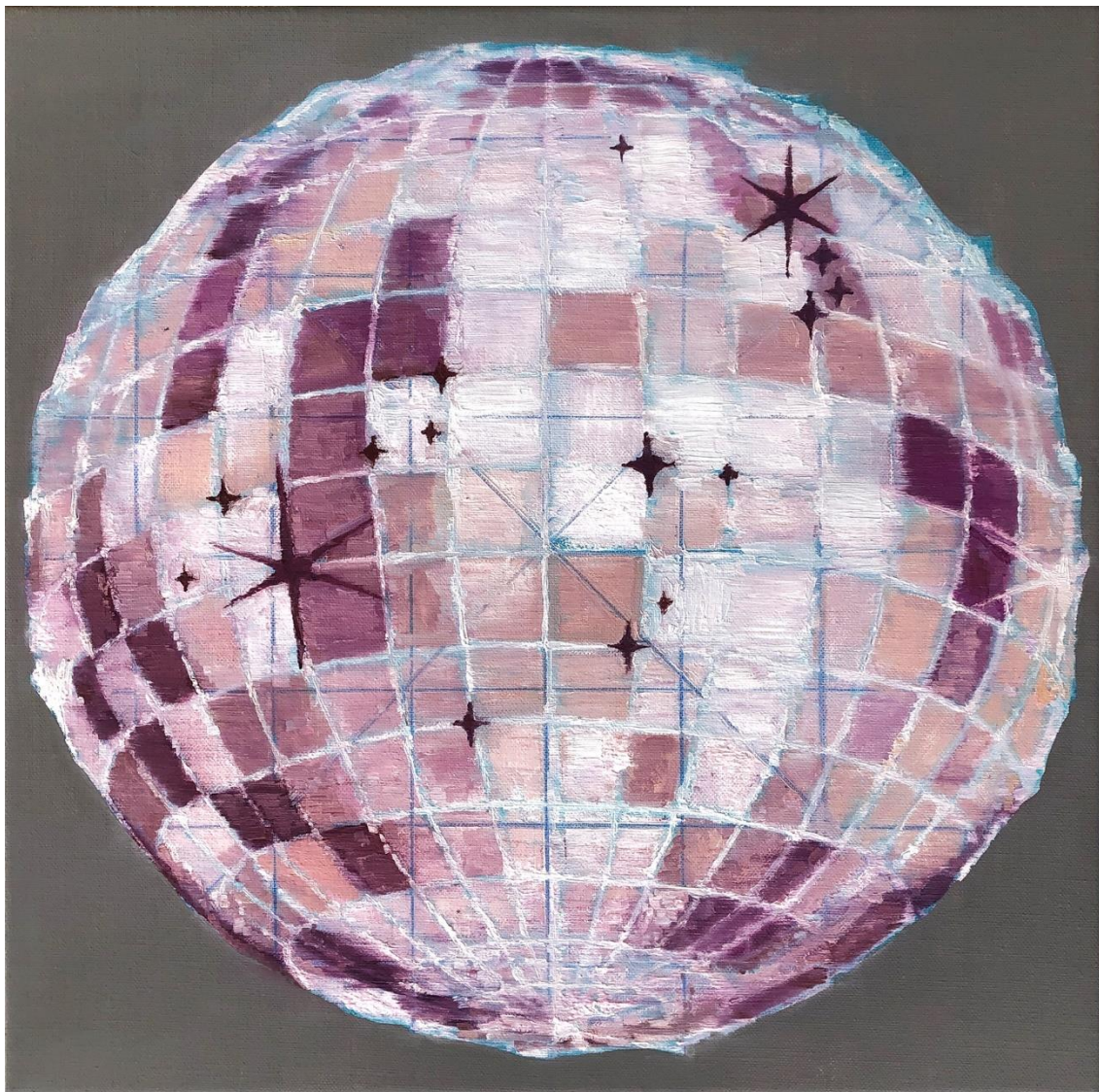
Oil on linen

56 x 56 cm

NFS

What do mirrors want? Do they yearn to become mirror balls? They could rotate and reflect fragments of light from all around.

According to a Vice article (4/6/2015), mirror balls have their genesis in an 1897 party for union workers in the electrical industry in America. What do mirror balls want? They might want to be called by their previous names... glitter ball, disco ball or even, nostalgically, the 1917 patent version, Myriad Reflector.



Jo Rock

Underdiagnosed, 2024

Eco-print, eucalyptus leaves and bark, curry leaf, berries, pomegranate, avocado inks and pencil on watercolour paper

66 x 28 cm

\$250

In a colonial-capitalist culture, belonging is mistaken with our capacity to be productive, contribute and fit into a colonial concept of beauty.

Underdiagnosed is an exploration of microscopic-medical images of lipoedema and the experience of being diagnosed later in life. It is eco printed on paper in relation to the vastness of Wurundjeri Country.

Lipoedema means an accumulation of fat and loose connective tissues under the skin, so it impacts body shape, size and many other facets of life.

If we listen ... belonging is beyond how we look or what we can do.



Ash Russell
Bounds, 2024
Cloth tape
150 x 150 cm
POA

This artwork explores concepts of place and identity by examining the demarcation of space and our connection to one another. It articulates the tension between inclusion and exclusion while provoking viewer participation to navigate the work and consider where they stand.



Claire Sadler-Jones

Shallow Creek (Avenel, VIC), 2024

Acrylic on linen

92 x 102 cm

\$1,250

The painting is reminiscent of swimming in the local creek beds as a child. I came out of the shallow water with a leech attached to my leg. My older brother calmly applied dry sand and rubbed the scary beast off. He remained my hero. Any time I have revisited this place I feel a strong sense of family connection and belonging.



Lily Santamaria

Self Portrait as an Allegory of Indecision, 2024

Acrylic paint and collage on mixed fabric

75 x 80 cm

POA

Longing to be an artist, wanting to belong to a community of creative people, who share ideas and at the same time feeling anxious, inadequate and almost repelled by ideas of self-promotion, of claiming my artwork has value or if I even want my painting to be for anyone other than myself is conflict I am yet to resolve. The idea of exposing my work to the world of social media is excruciating, yet no one would deny that it is a requisite part of being an artist today. How can I participate in the art community without social media, when creating, for me, requires solitude? How will I ever improve without the criticism of peers? The very act of submitting this painting for public display will require me to interact with the art community, something I have yearned for, and feared, for a long time.



Andrea Schinca

Staff Toilet, 2024

Cardboard installation

180 x 70 x 120 cm

\$50

I created *Staff Toilet* as a response to the question "How does it feel to immigrate?". Once a person leaves their country and moves to another, it's hard to adjust and belong in a new place. At the same time, I was thinking about the challenges that I faced over the years, and I realized that my major challenge was the kind of jobs that I had and the way I was treated in some of them.

On the posters I hung in the toilet, I wrote different phrases of things that I was told at work and added some stories told from my friends.

Now it your turn to tell your story, don't be shy, you can write on the walls too.



Samantha Sederof

Where To From Here?, 2024

Photograph

84.1 x 59.4 cm

\$850

Influenced by Casper David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above The Sea*, *Where To From Here?* is a reflection on belonging or rather, what impact the absence of belonging has on identity. Like Friedrich's well-known image, the figure stands with their back to you, facing the ocean, the viewer is sharing the scene, yet the protagonist is unknown. Our central figure however is standing on a boat at low tide, covered in fabric, an eye staring back at us, genderless. Rather than dominating this landscape, the figure indicates vulnerability, transience and movement. Displaced geographically and socially how do we experience belonging when contending with these larger universal forces? This image reflects our shared experience of isolation and ecological change, it asks where to from here?



Elif Sezen

Paradise, 2024

Single channel video

Duration: 40 seconds

POA

Through this digital poem, I aimed to poeticise the notion of (be)longing by revisiting the long-forgotten history of refugees who were sent by Australia to Manus Island, Papua New Guinea from 2001 to 2008, and from 2012 to 2017. Prolonged detention due to brutal and illegal offshore processing caused severe pain and damage, ruining the physical and mental health of the asylum seekers. This was very symbolic and representative of many other refugees experiencing dehumanisation, racism and neglect of their basic human needs. I therefore consider Manus Island tragedies/controversies an unfinished conceptual project, a lens to look through to review many other issues worldwide surrounding the themes of displacement and belonging. I believe that poetry is a powerful vehicle to unfold past histories, reconceptualise them and bring forth what needs attention for collective redemption and multifaceted integration. I am proposing my poem, *Paradise*, to add just another healing dimension to the suppressed and neglected history of refugees who yearned for a home and a long-deserved sense of belonging.



PARADISE

Josh Simpson

Beyond the Studio, 2024

Oil and acrylic on canvas

150 x 70 x 70 cm

POA

Beyond the Studio is a sculptural installation made from small paintings created between 2013 and 2024. These old works are resurrected, stitched together like Frankenstein's monster, and draped like a ghost, forming a new piece. Suspended from the ceiling, it hovers as an absurd yet menacing force, representing the graveyard of past works in my studio. The ghost, a recurring motif, reflects my past, place, and personal challenges, blending humour and clumsiness. Through repurposing these paintings, the work explores identity, belonging, and the fragmented experiences that shape us, questioning where we all belong as we form our present selves.



Stephanie Siu

Mirror, 2024

Oil on canvas

50 x 50 cm

\$320

My work is often inspired in themes of memory, nostalgia, and grief, but also reflects a search for belonging—both within myself and in the broader world. Through the lens of my own personal experiences, I explore the complex and shifting nature of identity and how our sense of belonging is shaped by memories and emotional ties, both to places and to people. *Mirror* is a self-portrait depicting the palm of my hand as a mirror. I look into the palm of my hand to capture a static moment of an identity that is constantly changing.



Natalie Smith

My Protective Boots, 2024

Acrylic and oil pastel

61 x 76 cm

\$1,600



If the pursuit of an authentic life is the essence of belonging, it prompts reflection on our true selves and our relationships with others. In this artistic exploration of (Be)Longing, the artist delves into the complexities of authenticity and connection.

The painting depicts a woman, naked at home, embodying a moment of vulnerability reserved for solitude, a stark contrast to the facade often displayed in the external world, whilst yearning for genuine connections and belonging. This duality is emphasised by the protective boots, acting as a shield against the inauthenticity prevalent in society that she's also a culprit of.

It encapsulates the ongoing struggle faced by the artist in balancing her raw truth with societal norms. Through this introspective journey, she grapples with the challenges of living authentically within a world that often imposes conformity.

Navigating our individual paths of belonging through authenticity is a journey interwoven with the influence of others. The essence of genuine connections lies in the exchange of love, companionship, and empathy, as well as the unspoken bonds formed through shared moments of laughter, music, and vulnerability.

Lewis Spiteri

Urban Night Longing, 2024

Digital print

30 x 42 cm

POA

Nightfall magnifies the desire to belong in many ways, Relationships, homeownership and employment.

In this artwork nightfall represents the darkness of possible depression when we haven't one or all of the above.

When we look at light filled home windows, we see the incentive to desire; the warmth of relationships, shelter from dark and elements.



Noah Spivak

NOW//HERE, 2024

Hand silvered glass, enamel pigment and chemically treated brass

125 x 55 cm

\$3,500

NOW//HERE reflects and disillusions the physical space surrounding its admirer by taking on available light and spreading it across its uneven surface. As space becomes fragmented, so does our sense of belonging within it.

Spivak is a queer artist who migrated to Australia in search of new artistic communities. Although based in Melbourne for nearly a decade, his concept of 'home' and where he finds solace remains broken, and sometimes even foreign.

It is through several bouts with self/confidence that the artist has been able to come to terms with his place...in his skin, amongst his peers, in this country and the one he's migrated from. It has taken much time for Spivak to finally arrive at the conclusion of acceptance ... but acceptance of what: his nomadic sense of place or that he may never find a 'home'?



Karen Standke

Lost limb #5, 2024

Oil on linen

61 x 51 cm

\$2,400

Lost limb #5 is a part of an ongoing series depicting the trees I encounter on my daily walks around Brunswick and surrounding suburbs.

Initially developed as the Tree spirits series back in 2004, it's a continuing journey to capture my surroundings and find beauty in the little details I look for and find.

As a migrant, I contemplate the question of belonging in my work continuously.

Lost limb #5 is therefore also a metaphor for life as I find myself in middle age, contemplating life experiences. The lost limb, a symbol for grief and loss of friends and loved ones, loss of innocence, loss of youth, but also, most importantly, resilience, as life goes on, scars remain but the tree survives nevertheless.

Out of this grows wisdom and strength.



Ange Stock

Don't throw that out, 2024

Mixed media, found objects, vintage textiles, gold leaf, face masks and organic dyes

140 x 40 x 21 cm

NFS

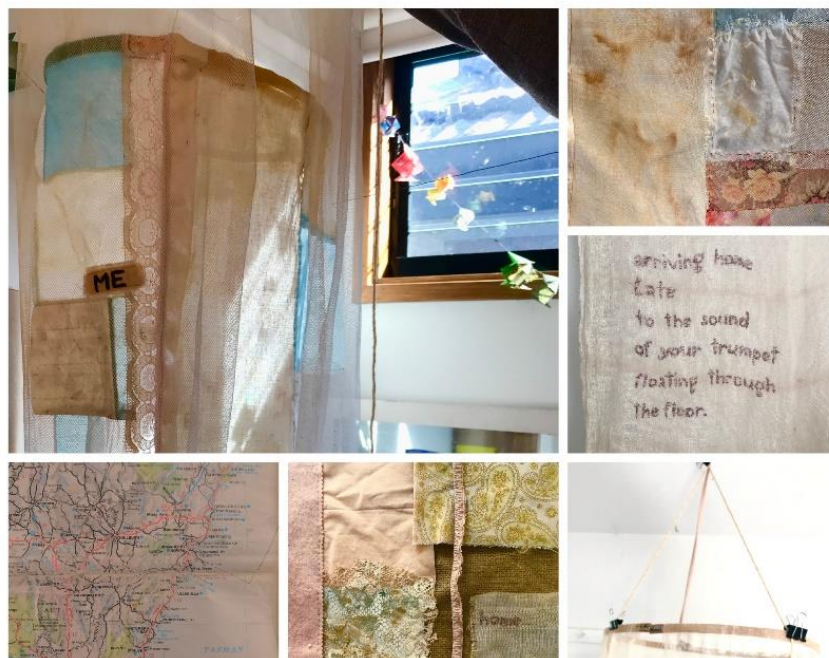
My large, tight family was my first 'community'. The shared memories and the feelings behind the family stories are the foundation, the ground on which a lot of 'me' stands.

Recent death and illness have disturbed that solidity - somehow shaken that platform. The inter-connections - the shape and pull of that mesh - is morphing and changing.

I am reflecting on my place within the family and find myself clinging tightly to what makes us, 'us'.

My dad worked in textiles and was a man who liked to re-make things. He found satisfaction in protracting the use of things others would discard. This mobile may be a gift for him or maybe it is for all the younger humans who were our family in the 1970's.

The work is patch-worked from cherished leftovers of textiles and paraphernalia. For me, it symbolises the layers of care and love, the memories that nourish us and the pull of the family home and its people.



Linda Studena

Irrational Shadows, 2024

Charcoal, pastel and paint pen on board

50.8 x 38.1 cm

\$350

In my studio practice, I am exploring processes of drawing to consider how mark making, tracing and stencilling can unsettle ideas of identity or belonging. Signs and symbols representing identity can be officially codified, signifiers often pointing to landmarks, native flora and/or fauna or mythology. I'm interested in expanding ideas of identity through the production of symbols/motifs and patterns derived from place, memory and cultural iconography. *Irrational Shadows* is a drawing of a scan of my jasmine plant in my Brunswick backyard, where I no longer live. Through drawing, marks and erasures, a dense yet open speculative space is revealed; a longing for the wave-scent of jasmine imagining. This unofficial belonging is permanent transience, a place between belonging and not - a diasporic intimacy.



Frances Tapueluelu

About Lily, 2024

Plastic, ribbon, glue, feathers, polystyrene, sequins, cardboard, paper, metal, beads, wire, cellotape, acrylic paint, wood and glitter

65 x 70 cm

\$2,000

This headdress is dedicated to my beloved and most treasured friend Lily Aitui Laita. Lily passed away a year ago and at her funeral I said, "I don't know how to be without you." Since then, I have this undeniable grief, sadness, loss, and a longing, so much longing to see her, hear her, laugh with her and just to be near to her.

Lily was one of Aotearoa leading Female Painters and was an Art Educator for 30 years. In her work she often referenced 'Tia Seu Lupe' or 'the earthen mounds to catch pigeons'.

In this dedication to Lily, I have made 'Ongo Manupuna', 'two birds' I know that our Lupe and Manupuna (Birds) would have given Lily a safe journey home.

Ofa Lahi Atu Lily Always4eva



NFS

Despite the vagaries of life as a female these old breasts of mine are still fighting for our lives as females in sexist misogynistic patriarchal cultures that deem all females are second-class citizens and therefore not worthy of 'equal pay' and can therefore be beaten, raped, killed and otherwise ignored with impunity. These old breasts are still belonging and longing to change the world.



Lahni Thavarajah

I am one of two, 2024

Embroidery thread on photo paper

30 x 45 cm

NFS

This piece, *I am one of two*, uses photos from family archives and embroidered text describing my own complex feelings with the theme of (BE)Longing.

As an individual of mixed Sri Lankan Tamil and White Australian heritage, my identity has always come with the challenge of understanding how I belong within the two different communities that make up my family.

Growing up, I always had the desire to fit neatly into one of the two cultures. It is only in adulthood that I have learned to love the two sides that make up me.

This piece aims to invite the viewer to whiteness the complex emotions involved, in feeling like I belong in the two communities I'm from.



Sandra Tobias

Hold on, 2024

Gouache on rag paper

57 x 56 cm

\$600

Hold on depicts a sense of belonging required by all humans for survival. Tobias depicts figures in an urban space all trying to connect. The mother clutching at the figure below, the Peregrine falcon feeding its young, the newly arrived boat people brought to safety.

On the shelf below: a globe, tanks a Ute and a football.

In all of this 'snakes and ladders' imagery, Tobias seeks to address that of connectivity, and the quest to find a safe space to rest one's head.

To find a place to belong.



Nicola Vance

Fragments of a Mother, 2024

Digital photo collage on Museo Portfolio Rag

46 x 66 cm

NFS

The artwork is essentially a dreamscape - conjuring an ethereal portrait of my mother's early life growing up in Portland - then, a small, remote coastal town in south-western Victoria; she, an only child with an ageing mother and amputee father, a decorated WW1 veteran.

The artwork expands on themes of childhood, alienation, identity, place and belonging, filtered through the fragile, shifting prism of memory. It builds a nostalgic – in part, fictional portrait of my deceased mother's isolated childhood and deep longing, eventually, to escape her provincial family roots and establish her own creative identity in the city, faraway.



Diana Videka

Belonging in mycelium, 2024

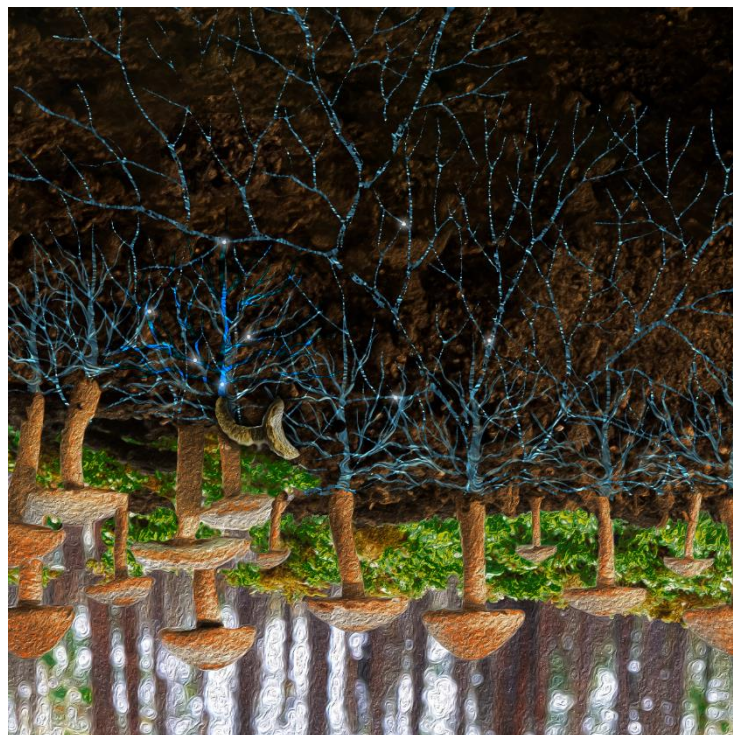
Acrylic paint on framed canvas

102 x 102 cm

\$1,500

Mycelium represents a sophisticated, subterranean network of fungal threads essential in supporting plant life. When it forms a symbiotic association with plant roots, this intricate system facilitates the exchange of vital nutrients, water, and information among various plant species. This interconnected ecosystem underscores each plant's role as a crucial element, ensuring the collective health and survival of the forest.

Envisioning a human society that mirrors the supportive dynamics of mycelium suggests a system characterised by a profound belonging to an interconnected and empathetic community. Members of this society would seemingly go about as individuals in their day-to-day lives. Still, during a crisis, responses would be both rapid and collective, ensuring no individual belonging to the network endures hardship in isolation. The equitable distribution of resources would nurture a robust and flourishing community.



Miguel Villanueva

When Everything Happens at Once, 2024

Light box, decal made from a linocut

54 x 94 x 15.1 cm

\$3,000

In an increasingly interconnected world, the concept of "be-longing" evolves, reflecting a deeper sense of identity shaped by migration and cultural exchange. Featuring a linocut print showcased in a glowing light box, symbolising the warmth of shared spaces where diverse narratives converge.

The artwork *When Everything Happens at Once* captures everyday moments - sharing coffee, bustling markets, vibrant celebrations and aboriginal presence - highlighting the beauty of daily life at the intersection of cultures. The textured linocut technique conveys the richness of individual and collective stories, emphasising that belonging transcends differences.

As visitors engage with the artwork, they are invited to reflect on their own experiences of belonging and community. This lightbox is not just a display of art; it celebrates cultural diversity and encourages empathy, reminding us that there is always room for connection and understanding in our shared humanity.



Florence Wang

Self with Still Life, 2024

Water mixable oil and watercolour on canvas

51 x 61 cm

\$1,000

This painting is a self-portrait with reflection on a series of my still life paintings that explore symbolism of “connection” and “home”. I very much enjoy painting these inanimate objects that come from my mother’s daily life because of the nostalgic connection to my mother. The teapot and pot plant in this painting are something I really favoured and have painted on multiple occasions because I feel they best represent my Chinese cultural background and at the same time the feminine energy of my mother. While the series evolve, I start to reflect on how painting this series has made me feel more connected with my culture and given me a stronger sense of belonging.



Ashton Wastney

Fig. 59, 2024

Oil on canvas

61 x 56 cm

\$1,800

Like the workings of the human mind, longing is paradoxical and comes in waves and lumps. This emotion is often displayed by our being, the way we hold ourselves and our expression. Fig. 59 displays the uncontrollable emotions when the desire of wanting to blend into a situation isn't matched.



Anna White

Love Changes Everything, 2024

Single channel video

Duration: 4:41 minutes

POA

Love Changes Everything is a film that explores the interplay between connection, belonging, and longing within a cherished landscape. Shot at my late father's home in East Longwood, this film pays homage to a place he nurtured and loved for over twenty years. For me, this landscape is inextricably linked to his memory, which has and continues to shape my identity.

In representing myself within this landscape, I seek to convey not only my affection for it but also the complexities of an uncertain future. Ultimately, *Love Changes Everything* becomes a meditation on how longing can reshape our understanding of home and identity.



Chris Winer

Carriage Thru Dawn, 2024

Oil on canvas

37 x 50 cm

\$1,200

Carriage Thru Dawn is a work about time and memory, memory runs, drips and shifts with time, what you do with it, and what it has done to you.

The focus of this work - 'lady time', "evokes feelings of desire, yearning or nostalgia," for a moment that may or may not come again according to the whims and vagrancies of time, that moment of sublime belonging.



Mark Wingrave

OrphanLand, 2024

Pen and crayon on paper

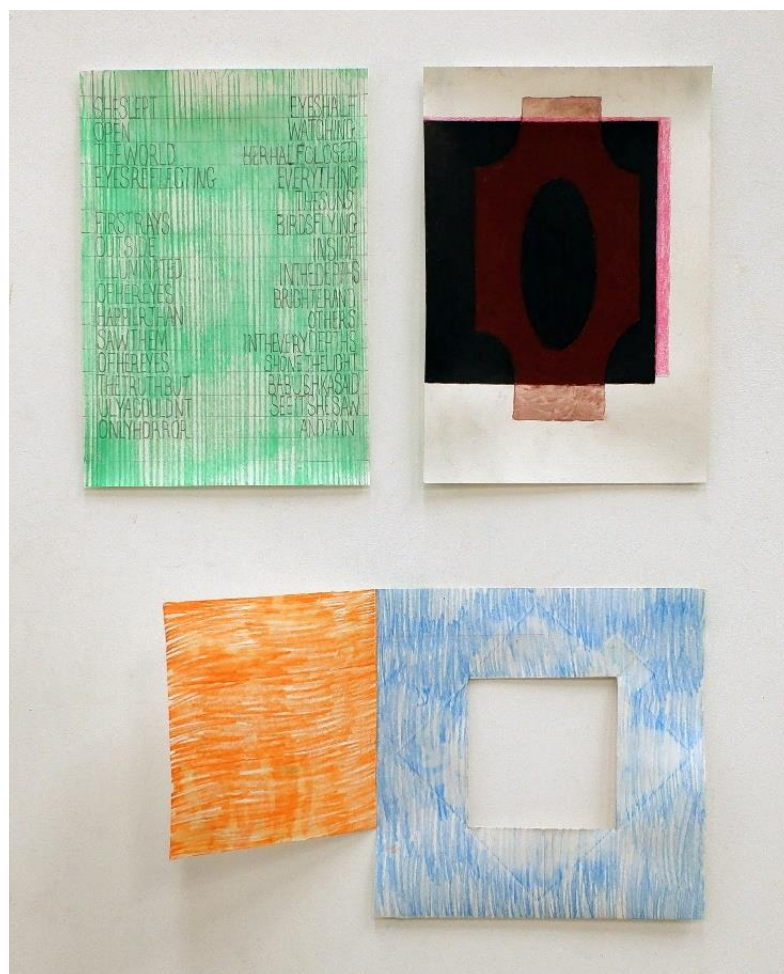
70 x 55 x 7 cm

\$450

Belonging could be said to be the end of longing. A place of connection. These drawings refer to a story that tells of a displaced child who sees the world in reverse: good in evil and evil in good. Her skewed perception is only corrected when she is reunited with her parents.

I have been translating and rereading Andrei Platonov's Ulya throughout this year and reflecting on its perspectives of seeing and mirror realities. It is said this experimental folktale resists interpretation, and in so doing suggests a number of possibilities. This three-part drawing responds to such themes, and comprises translated text fragments, a black square drawing and a drawing with its own window.

Platonov, a dissident Russian writer, wrote Ulya in the 1930s, when many children lost their parents. Perhaps Ulya the character represents them, or perhaps she represents an orphaned Motherland.



Jude Worters

when I wore the pink hood I became someone else, 2024

Gouache and pencil on paper

40 x 35 cm

NFS

This portrait relates to my current PhD research. My creative methodology is trauma-informed and focuses on psychological states, identity and self-image. I am interested in self-portraiture and with this image I wanted to capture something whimsical, relating to youth and girlhood. This specific image speaks to my younger self, in reclaiming aspects of the other worldly and introverted young girl I once was. It's also related to putting on a mask or costume as a means of protection. The pink hood is also reminiscent of Maurice Sendak's 'Wild Things' illustration, which perhaps denotes a more unruly streak beneath the demure and feminine exterior. Overall, the image speaks to be/longing in reclaiming the lost parts of self and psyche.

