

Merri-bek Summer Show: Love in Crisis

Rear Gallery

1.

Ingmar Apinis

Nostalgic for Cluelessness, 2025

Plaster, mesh, epoxy resin and digital print on hydro film

56 x 46 cm

\$590

Nostalgic for Cluelessness comes from an ongoing series called Fauxfacts, which uses a queer lens to speculate on the artefacts contemporary society might leave behind for the humanities of a dystopian future. As AI reshapes how we live and climate change threatens the servers that store our memories, these works ask how we might hold onto connection and unite in a world so often divided.

Inspired by Greco-Roman art and mythology, where stories of transformation and fluid identities expressed a more open understanding of desire and gender, these Fauxfacts reclaim narratives that later Western societies sought to suppress.

By alluding to decayed and ruined Greco-Roman artefacts (frescos, ancient tablets, and amphoras) the work speaks to the erasure of queer histories through time, while also reclaiming and reconstructing these stories for a more united present and the future.

2.

Nina Killham

Love is a Beach, 2025

Giclée print on hemp paper

42 x 30 cm

\$350

I'll always remember the time my husband brought me to my first Australian beach. It was the most beautiful place — white sands, turquoise water, an electric blue sky. The transformation in my husband was beautiful too. A normally serious professor became a surfing teenager dashing towards the waves. He'd grown up on the soft sand, the shock of the cold water, the endless gaze across the horizon. The love of the beach had been nurtured deep inside him.

As climate changes these beaches — causing erosion, aggressive algae blooms and storms — this love is under threat. The classic Australian love is in crisis. Let's work together to save its beauty and survival.

3.

Aldona Kmiec

Mirage, 2025

Collage; acrylic paint and C-Type Kodak Professional Endura print on canvas

33 x 33 cm

\$590

Mirage reflects on memory, migration, and the fragile landscapes we move through during migration and in search of meaning. The collage revisits a photograph taken while travelling through the Moroccan desert. Seen through the blurred window of an old dusty bus, the view becomes a metaphor for how we recall and reframe our lives: fragmented and elusive yet deeply powerful. In the context of *Love in Crisis*, *Mirage* speaks to how love needs to sustain us across distance and change, but also how it must extend beyond the personal — towards culture, community, and the environment we inhabit. The desert, with its stark reminder of scarcity and survival, echoes the ecological crises we face globally. To love in troubled times means to have courage to stand up against the oppression, to resist indifference, and to act to protect the future of people and planet.

4.

Luigi Marzola

Now and Then, 2025

Installation; dress mannequin, paintings, rock salt

Dimensions variable

NFS

The media shapes how we see the world and experience love. Constant exposure to conflict and crisis blurs the boundaries between public and personal pain, influencing our relationships and the ways we care for one another. This sculpture symbolises that tension — the line, represented by salt, that we cross between compassion and chaos — reflecting how love can be both strained and renewed under societal pressure.

5.

Lesley & Patrick Francis

Love & Liberation, 2025

Single channel video

Duration: 1:19 mins

NFS

This video visualises *Love in Crisis* as both a reckoning and a rebirth — *Love and Liberation* through climate activism. Amid a fractured landscape — burning forests, rising seas, and choking skies — love appears not as softness, but as resistance. Youth stand at the heart of the piece, their eyes tear-streaked but steady, raising banners and planting seeds in scorched earth. Around them, the old world crumbles: symbols of greed and denial fall away as green tendrils rise defiantly through ash. Hands reach across divides to nurture life, embodying a fierce, collective compassion that refuses to fade. Every line, colour, and gesture in the piece asserts that love, even under siege, grows bold — daring to dream, to disobey, and to defend a liveable future. This is not passive affection, but urgent, activist care — a love that acts, organises, and survives.

6.

Matt Bottos

Pinocchio by the grave of the Azure Fairy, 2025

Mixed media

22 x 16 x 19 cm

POA

Love in Crisis marks the moment love ceases to be effortless.

Here, the Azure Fairy teaches Pinocchio an important lesson: love is not something to be possessed, but a trust to be nurtured — made 'real' only when heart (intuition) and mind (intellect) work together. Pinocchio learns that becoming 'real' means understanding how one's actions affect others.

Grief is the breaking point of love—the pain of separation, a fragmentation of what once made us whole, and yet it offers the chance for growth and emotional maturity.

In an age ruled by productivity and knowing, we forget the heart's quiet intelligence. This work reminds us that wholeness arises not from knowledge alone, but from trust — the courage to believe, the strength to feel, and to love again after disillusionment.

7.

Ardhitra Hanifah

Colour of Hope, 2025

Print on canvas

70 x 50 cm

POA

This artwork is deeply inspired by the love and compassion shown by the Indonesian people during the mass demonstrations that took place in late August and early September 2025. Despite facing hardship and injustice under a corrupt government, they cared for and protected one another.

The dominant colours in this piece — resistance blue, brave pink, and hero green represent the spirit of their fight for justice.

At the centre of the painting is the pink-headed fruit dove, an endemic bird of Indonesia known for its striking pink and green plumage, which reflects the brave pink and hero green of the movement. The dove also symbolises peace, love, and hope — core values that shone through even in times of unrest.

8.

Andrea Draper

We All Scream, 2025

Cotton rag and single channel video

120 x 105 cm

Duration: 6:27 mins

\$800

Melting ice-cream is dripping over my hand and stressing me out. I love ice-cream, maybe you love ice-cream, possibly we all do, but mine is melting too fast for me to enjoy. It's a minor crisis, one that reflects the more pressing crisis of climate change and consequently the melting ice caps. I scream, you scream (I hope), we should all scream for ice caps.

Alongside this, we should all be screaming for climate change solutions. We cause rising global temperatures from greenhouse gas emissions, and scientists project that if this continues to rise without change, the Arctic could be ice free by 2040. This sincere crisis is hard to fathom and is the real reason for concern over a melting blob of ice-cream.

I optimistically hope, just like the last 14 seconds, this crisis can be reversed.

9.

Heinz Boeck

Evidential Setting, 2025

Mixed media, plastic, wood, graphite and wire

60 x 45 x 11 cm

POA

Perhaps the concept of 'Love' is burdened with more than it can carry to the point where it has become almost meaningless.

Our world has become more and more corporatised, even our personal ideas and identities are being manipulated to serve various corporate goals under the guise of democratic freedoms.

Often it comes down to a common humanity than it does to a more personal concept of love.

My wall sculpture, *Evidential Setting* tries to evoke the tension between our common human existence and a more personal experience of 'Love'.

10.

Mark McCarthy

Vanishing Point, 2025

Oil on copper plate

19 x 15 cm

\$400

Vanishing Point offers a quiet refuge, placing emphasis on feeling over form. It explores how imagination provides comfort in uncertain times, and how emotional connections endure through shifting contexts and sudden change. Choosing refuge is not a retreat, but a conscious act of reclaiming space and emotional clarity. The work reflects on the tension between presence and escape, inviting us to consider how we navigate the boundary between our inner and outer worlds. Within this space, *Vanishing Point* considers how connection and presence can remain quiet, enduring forces of resilience in the face of uncertainty.

11.

Setareh Hosseini

Achieve and Separation, 2025

Crochet and photographic prints

120 x 70 x 30 cm

NFS

Achieve and Separation explores the fragile balance between human connection and disconnection in moments of crisis. Psychological strain often destabilises the ties that bind people, creating spaces where intimacy and care can fray. Yet sometimes, love ensures these threads not only remain unbroken but radiate outward, even in the absence of the one who was their centre.

Crochet is the central language of this work, historically tied to women's practices and the maternal dimension of love. Its knots embody both resilience and vulnerability: a structure that sustains, yet is always at risk of unravelling.

Within this field rests a deeply personal image, my mother with my daughter, alongside one of her belongings I keep with me now. In her final months, my mother gave only more love: touching, holding, breathing tenderness. Even as separation came, what remained was an enduring connection. Love persists as a fragile yet unbreakable thread.

12.

Jarmila Hava

Seedling, 2025

Mixed media

76 (diam.) cm

\$700

Love = kindness, sharing, nurturing and hope, especially in a time of uncertainty.

13.

Tiffany An

What are you seeing?, 2025

Acrylic and oil on canvas

91.5 x 61 cm

\$1,300

Tiffany An's painting portrays crisis in love through a rich interplay of tenderness and tension. The figure, holding a cake — a classic signifier of celebration, sharing, and affection — becomes a vessel for uncertainty; the cake suggests sweetness and ceremony, while the subject's serious expression and the darker tones encroaching around them hint at emotional burden. Light highlights portions of face and hands, yet deep shadows obscure others, mirroring how love in crisis reveals some truths and conceals others. The contrast between the warmth of the cake and the cooler, dimmer surroundings underscores the fragility of intimate connection when life is unsettled.

Tiffany suggests that love is not only grand emotion but also daily negotiation: of vulnerability, hope, fear. In this work, 'love in crisis' is shown not as collapse, but as persistence amidst ambiguity — holding to what matters even when light falters.

14.

Ange Foster

Suspended, 2025

Mixed media sculpture

120 x 70 x 60 cm

\$280

This work explores love in the context of coercive control, a form of family violence that strips away freedom, voice, and identity. The marionette figure, suspended by strings and without a head, represents the loss of agency experienced under such control. Without autonomy, even love itself can be manipulated and used as a tool of power.

By showing her as a puppet, the work makes visible what is often hidden. The absence of a head underscores how coercive control erases selfhood and choice. This is not just a private experience but a wider social issue, reinforced by systems that benefit from silence and submission.

Love in Crisis asks how we can stand together in divided times. Alongside the work sits a QR code linking to a petition calling for coercive control to be recognised as a crime in Victoria, turning Art into activism, into action.

15.

Thomas C Chung

Looking Back On Everything..., 2025

Knitted wool sculpture and audio recording

30 x 30 x 10 cm

NFS

Looking Back On Everything... unfolds as a two-part artwork that encapsulates a profound personal odyssey.

At its heart lies a hand-knitted sculpture which became the focal point of a performance I presented in Finland. Undertaking a journey across the country, walking 275 kilometres over the span of five days, each step reflected resilience and a deep-seated love for someone special — a connection so profound it defied words. Carrying a 20-kilogram backpack, the trek symbolised not just the physical strain but also the emotional weight of this journey.

Complementing this is an audio recording that captures the soothing sounds of the sea — an offering of tranquillity I embraced as I arrived in Helsinki, letting my weary feet finally rest.

Together, these components weave a narrative of love, alive with aspirations and dreams, yet carefully tucked away from the world's gaze. Her essence remains etched deeply in my heart, a constant presence amid life's unfolding chapters.

16.

Johanna Picton

Merri-bek Lost Property, 2025

Installation

Dimensions variable

NFS

How can we still feel love for our homes and environments in a time of climate change? My work poses the question of what it means to be part of a community and care for our landscapes.

I collected rubbish from a 1km radius around the installation site, bringing it in a suitcase and laying it out in a rainbow formation. Presented as 'Merri-bek lost property', I invited people to interact with the materials — but as they engaged, they began to realise they'd likely contributed to this very waste themselves.

This work explores my relationship to where I live — the streets, parks, and community around me. Through collecting and arranging local debris aesthetically, I examine what it really means to care for our immediate surroundings. The installation triggers conversations as people confront their role in both harming and loving the places they call home.

Can we find ways to express our fierce love for landscape even as we damage it?