

Wyndham Art Gallery

# WADDA LOADA

an inspiring perspective on a place  
of waste by  
Karen Casey and Steven Rhall

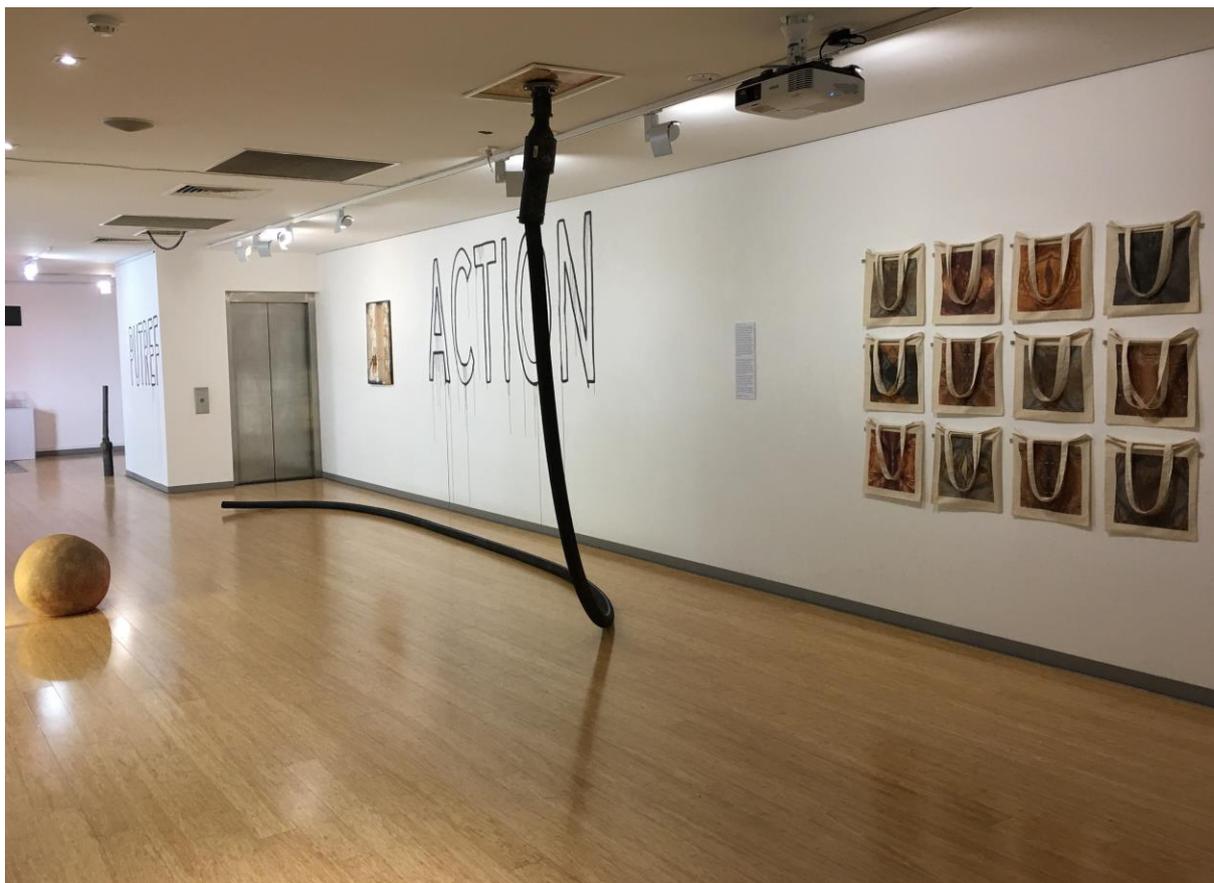


9 November to 24 December 2017

WADDA LOADA is the outcome of a residency at the Wyndham Refuse Disposal Facility, more commonly known as the tip. Karen Casey and Steven Rhall have been looking at rubbish, thinking about rubbish, smelling rubbish, dreaming of rubbish for four months.

They have had access to Wyndham's own refuse disposal facility (RDF) and have been informed by the site, the sounds, the workings of the place and the people who work there. Making art in a vacuum is possible but often the richest kind of artwork comes from embedding yourself in a particular context. That could be a place, a theme, an idea or even a rubbish tip.

Karen Casey and Steven Rhall have made art that transforms this site into something unique and inspiring, and that seeks to question our own actions and impact in the production of waste.



Usually the influences of a residency shows up in an artist's work over a longer period of time. In this case the artists have produced work directly from the residency which is actually 'work in progress'.

The first take you could say from the experience of this unusual opportunity to have access to a working industrial site.

Karen Casey has a website in construction titled [WADDALOADA.COM](http://WADDALOADA.COM) which she plans to use as a site for other artists to explore making artwork from recycled and waste products. Some artists are already confronting the fact that they are part of the problem of over consumption and environmental degradation, however this might be a new approach directly influenced by looking our rubbish 'in the face' literally.



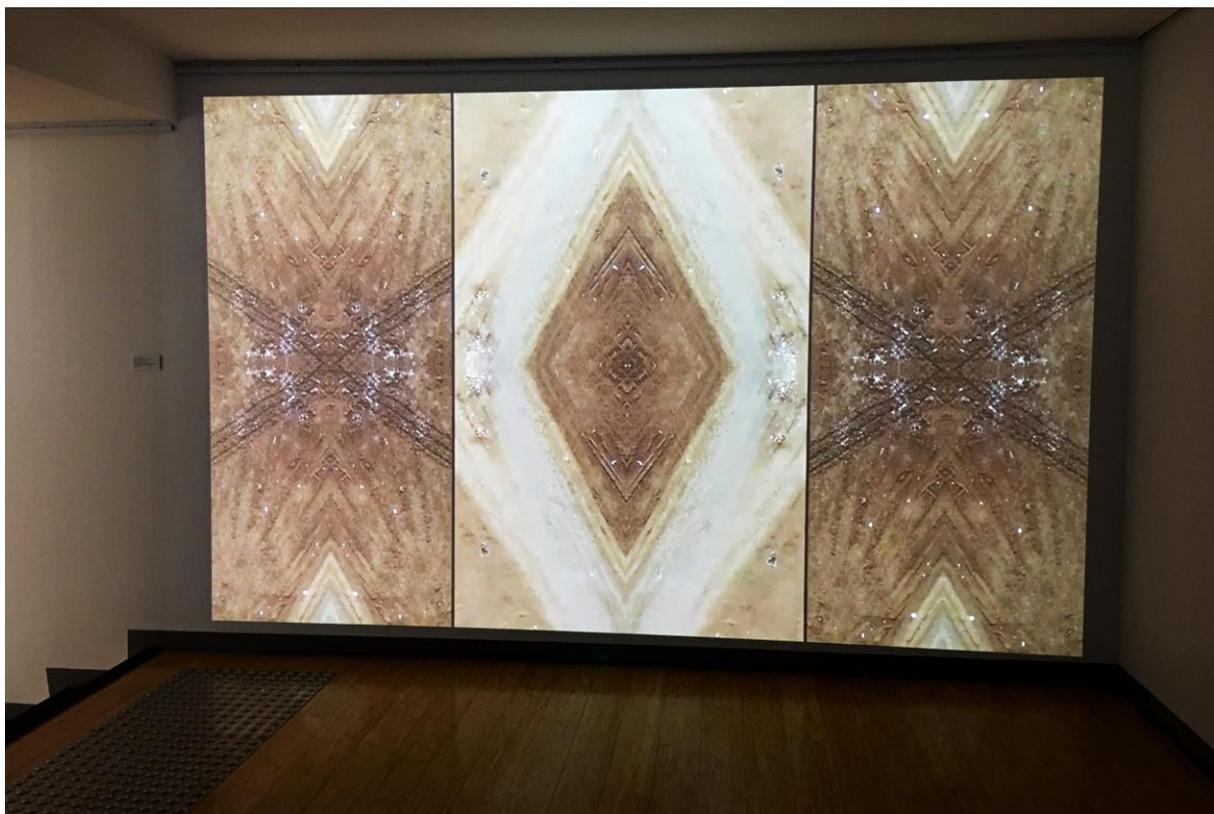
Wadaloda Dreaming – Video still by Karen Casey

Karen has produced a beautiful video work that resembles a moving complex carpet pattern through a sophisticated

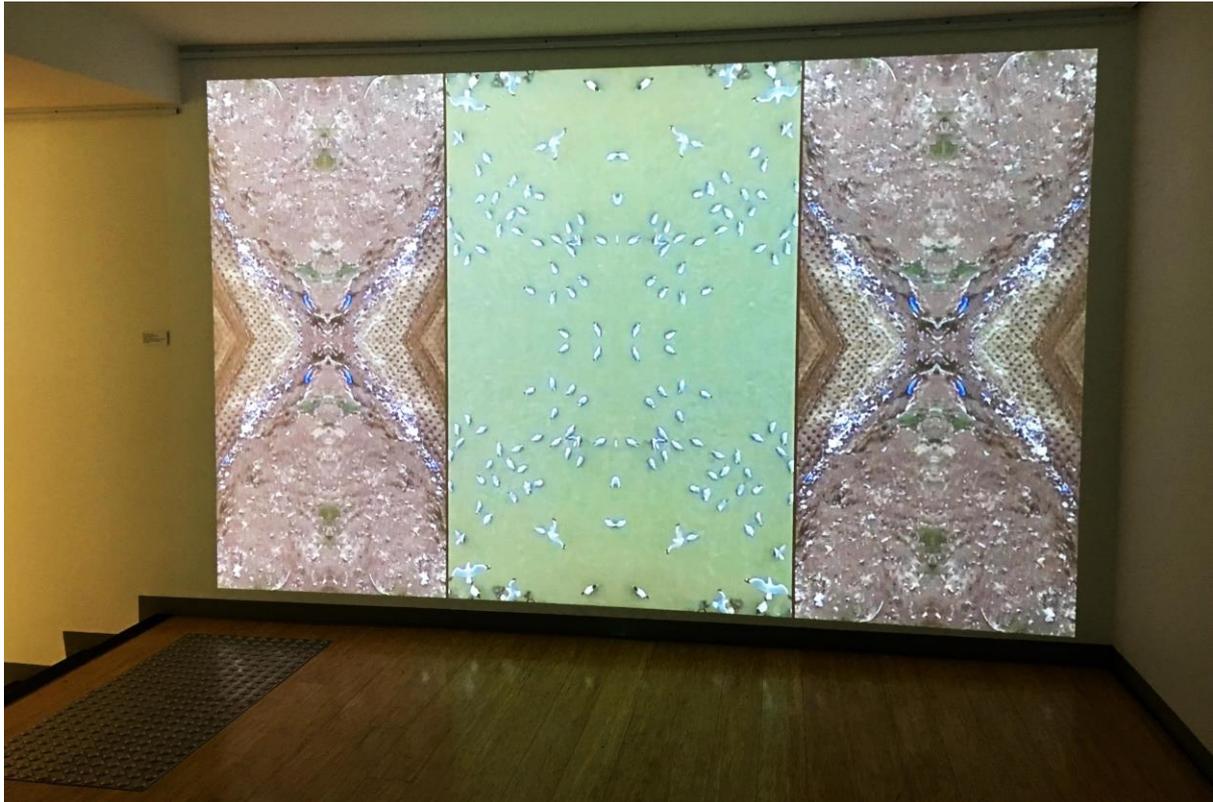
program that has been specially created with her by Harry Sokol. However the first view of this work is blurred by the screen made of plastic rubbish bags. Softening the actuality of the site we look down on a landscape mediated by shapes that are almost organic. Then we realise that in fact they are the very containers that most of the rubbish leaves our homes in to become landfill.

Then we turn around to see a mesmerising view of the RDF from above. Trucks become shield shapes and move in and out of the view as the rubbish they dump becomes patterned on the screen.

Karen used a drone to capture the site from above which gives a reality to the amount of rubbish we create but also pays homage in a way to the organised functions that are in place to manage, sort and store it in landfill.



Wadaloada Dreaming – Video still by Karen Casey



Wadaloada Dreaming – Video still by Karen Casey

Karen has also produced a solution to the upcoming ban of plastic bags in Victoria. Buy a *Tip Tote* or a *Rubbish Shopper*. Playing with the idea that what we buy becomes rubbish and putting that in our minds as we shop could help reduce our selections. Her alternative shopping bags are produced from climate neutral organic cotton.

Sometimes the solution to waste comes in the form of an easy alternative. In this case art is providing that alternative. You can purchase an original Karen Casey for \$40 and \$45 (and see how very cheap they are when you look at her CV and realise how collectable she is).

Order yours today at [www.wadaloada.com](http://www.wadaloada.com)



Steven Rhall has taken a different approach to this residency. He had drawn his inspiration from the workings of the site. He camped on site for a twentyfour hour period in order to record those workings both audio and visual. The UHF Channel 30 is the radio which the workers on site communicate. Steven recorded their conversation and in a remediated form has it playing on an LED sign in the gallery. This reads like a kind of poetry in the context of the exhibition. Rhall has also mediated the WDF's induction video which everyone who works on the site has to see.



In a beautiful reference to *Welcome to Country*, a ritual usually performed by a Traditional Owners to welcome visitors to their lands, Steven has seen the relationship between contemporary approaches to health and safety inductions and pre-colonial traditions where people were ritually welcomed onto the country of the traditional owners as customary protocol.



Steven has also collected items from the site and bought them into the gallery. He has reworked an old Mad Max poster, scratching off some of the image leaving only two characters who could be Indigenous when seen out of the films context. Utilising the manholes/personholes in the roof of the gallery as another intervention, we are invited to look up to see Tina Turner who looks down at us next to a large hose which brings the scale of the site into the gallery.



Other objects play with our imagination leaving it up to the viewer to make the connections such as the shower chair and the old exercise ball. He has cleverly inserted some beautiful images of the site, taken on a large format film camera, onto a reclaimed fluorescent light which has to be looked at carefully in order to see the beautiful landscapes.

The choice of old style technology isn't accidental as it has us think about new led fluorescents that take up much less energy.



The wall writing putrefaction is a reference to the rotting of rubbish which Steven links to the fact that we all end up either earth bound or up in smoke. Mortality is a perspective that Steven has laid over this work, however the viewer is invited to think ahead for the benefit of future generations with a call to ACTION, cleverly separated from the word which is painted in anamorphic perspective so as to be seen as one word when you come up the stairs.



Both artists have produced new work from this opportunity which is both an inspiration for ways to look at difficult sites such as a rubbish tip, and an example of how art can show us new ways of looking at things.

Karen's shoppers and Steven's reworked objects both invite imagination and new opportunities to explore our impact on the planet. The fact that both artists happen to be Indigenous is not relevant but also provides another reading of the work. Karen's shield like images reference an age old visual tradition and Steven's reading of the landscapes carries an ancestral history. Art made from rubbish and an exhibition that draws attention to consumption is a creative way to approach what can sometimes seem to be unapproachable. The playful works in this exhibition provide that for the viewer.

Dr. Megan Evans - Visual Art Curator





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ON THIS SITE**





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