



NEW



NEW

17 OCT - 17 NOV 2019

When is artwork new?

Presenting contemporary perspectives by talented emerging artists living in Wyndham who have yet to be discovered, NEW will surprise, confront and delight with new visions and ideas.

Discover what talent lies hidden in our city.

Featuring local artists Ceardai Demelza, Michelina Di Mauro, Erasmo Di Mauro, Imran Abul Kashem, Daniel Fard, Jonathan Toaishara, Ivy Mutuku, Anita Joanna Landman, Emmet Davies, Megan Bonnici, John Mathet and Xiang Li.

Wyndham City acknowledges the peoples of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which Wyndham Art Gallery stands and we pay our respects to their elders, past, present and future.

Wyndham Art Gallery
Great Art. Deep West.

Image (Cover) : Ivy Mutuku - See Me (reversed)

Image (Left) : Ceardai Demelza - Goddess Dandelion 3 (detail)



New

Curator's Note by Clive Gono

I first thought about curating art as a way to formalise my art experience. Western galleries operate with a different scenario than back home. I wanted to know what happens in a gallery; how you select work, how you hang it, how you balance the artist's perspective and the curator's perspective and what it means to curate to a theme.

As a member of Wyndham arts community, I was also interested in knowing more about the artists who live here.

Back home in Zimbabwe, the approach to art is different. How you communicate your art in a gallery is to talk about it, write about it and think about the themes. Back home, art is very direct between artist and audience. As an artist I would sell my work directly to people who would then take it home and live with it. It's not as commercial here. Here too, art is not repeated. I would make the same work over and over again. It did not matter that I had already made the work, each time

Image: Ivy Mutuku - *Hold Me*

was new. The traditions and practice I learnt as a Shona Sculptor were just as important as the sculptures I would make and sell.

Where I'm from there is no formal education in art, it is passed through a lineage from the paternal family line going back many generations.

In looking at the artist in NEW, I'm reminded of many things that connect me to back home and to my practice. Xiang Li's expansive landscapes could be places in Zimbabwe as much as anywhere else. There is space, the terrain opens up and I feel like I'm back in the mountains I've visited many times collecting rose stone. Xiang appears to use her hand and brush like a camera, capturing the natural world in a way that feels genuine and not a copy.

As a sculptor I bring the story out of the stone. In a similar way, Anita Joanna Landman's sculptures bring stories from the natural shape of the wood which she selects only adding and subtracting the slightest amount to make it art.

Image: Jonathan Toaishara - *Mother (Shani)*





This ability to leave something hanging is a skill that new artists must practice. Jonathan Toaishara's line drawings are powerful because they are in abstract, which leaves you in suspense trying to imagine what will be.

There is movement and change in being new. For Megan Bonnici a movement into photography is a change from her practice in visual arts and craft. A new approach hidden in her abstract images is a shift away from handmade objects you can touch. It makes me think of night celebrations back home in Zimbabwe.

In John Mathet's digital artworks people are shown in a place of transition. They are cartoons, but they say so much more and speak to young people directly. You wonder where the characters are going or if they've just stopped on the way to somewhere else. And you wonder what action they will need to take to change their lives or if they even need to.

Ceardai Demelza makes something new out of something found. The uniqueness is in the stories that are carried in the objects, put together to make figures and scenes. I find it unusual but can see the creativity and originality. This is also new for me.

Looking at Emmet Davies' giant eye for the first time I was struck by his genius. He brings out every detail, and there is nowhere to hide. This eye has a deeper story in it, and I wonder if he has come through a transition too. There is emotion in it and while we only see an eye, the whole being is shown.

Ivy Mutuku's photos look vintage. The use of black and white gives the image more weight, and the buildings, the expressions and the way they're dressed reminds me of the 1960s. These images are not of this time – I remember seeing photos of my parents like this from when they were first meeting and making a transition into being a couple. This is a big change that is timeless.

Image: Xiang Li - *Werribee River*

Time is something that runs through all of the works in NEW. Each artist makes a transition and shows what changes.

The stone sculptures in this exhibition are from students that I have mentored in how to work with stone. One of the hardest lessons to learn is when to let the work be. Stone can be carved and made into something new, but once it leaves the studio and goes out into the weather it keeps changing.

On being invited to exhibit their work, one of my students wanted to rework their piece so that it was new again and didn't show the effects of being out in the weather. I encouraged them to let their work be as it was, because that is the transition that the artwork needs to make. In a similar way, when artists put their work out into the world and into the gallery it will change, and they will change. Like the weather, hearing criticism of what you make, both positive and negative, changes the way you see your work. This is a good thing.

As an artist, and now as a curator I have weathered. The stone I worked with back home was more difficult to sculpt but would last without changing in any environment. Here, using Limestone it is softer and prone to change. Each has an advantage.

Through this experience of co-curating NEW I have learnt about adapting to new environments. Like Limestone I'm carving out a new shape for myself and my practice, and that shape will change as I learn more, know more and share more. If I had remained the same, like the stone from back home, while it will last in its current state there are less possible shapes to be.

Being NEW is an opportunity to make a transition. It's a change I have made, and it's the change you can see in our community of artists.

Image: Megan Bonnici - *All Smiles*



NEW

Curator's Note by Dr. Megan Evans

Creating art is only the first step to being an artist. The second step is showing it. Whether that be to your friends and family or to a wider audience, the challenge of exhibiting your work is the same for everyone. Being a critic or a curator is easy next to the confronting project of exposing your work for the world to see. The best art always comes from the personal and often artists don't even know the thoughts they are tapping into when they make their work. They make it and then after the fact, look back and they are revealed to themselves. This is a risky business. However, that is what distinguishes art from what you can buy at Ikea to decorate your walls. An artist puts themselves into the objects that they create. They don't do it for money or even for recognition, they do it because they have to. It's a vocation, not an occupation.

The artists in NEW are not necessarily new artists but they are new to Wyndham Art Gallery, meaning they have not necessarily been shown

Image: Imran Abul Kashem - *Burning*





in an exhibition here. They are local and this exhibition is about exposing broader audiences to new faces from our locality who are making art and grappling with all of the issues above.

Ivy Mutuku is an emerging filmmaker of talent. She has already won an award for her short film *Frizz* in the Under 25 category at VMC Film Festival. In this exhibition she has included black and white photographs called *Deep Black* of a beautiful young couple. This series has a filmic narrative, almost like stills from a moving image. The relationship between these two is captured in their gestures, their eyes and the focus, with some images having a short depth of field, creating an intimacy with the subject as they recede slightly out of focus. Ivy is an artist to watch, as are all these local new talents.

Xiang Li lives in Werribee South and has been entranced by the landscape down there. Visions of the You Yangs feature in her beautifully deft watercolour strokes. She has also captured the Werribee River and the bay at sunset. Her Chinese heritage comes to the fore in her paintings, however the colours are more in the pallet of the Australian landscapes, more muted greens and greys rather than the blues of the northern hemisphere.

Image: Michelina Di Mauro - *A Fling with Mary*

Emmet Davies was the winner of the inaugural LEAP award in this years Wyndham Art Prize. The small portrait of his father captured the attention of the judges as showing promise. He has lived up to that promise with an amazing scaled up drawing of his own eye, an interesting subject to follow on from his detailed attention to his father's portrait.

Anita Joanna Landman's small sculptures are a curious application of paint. She usually explores interesting textures on canvas, however with this new body of work she has applied the use of paint to an already existing texture, the natural surface of what appears to be timber, however they are unaccountably light weight which alerts one the curious viewer to the origin of the wood which is an off cut from a palm tree. Anita found these objects and saw the potential to capture the texture in another way. If you zoom in you can see the tiny landscapes that relate to Xiang Li's painted realms.

John Mathet is the youngest of these up and coming artists and his work often has a message. 'Live out of your Imagination Not your History' is

Image: Emmet Davies - *Smiling Eye*





the message of one of his works that has many symbols of western civilization including a massive high-rise tower and a satellite dish. Using digital technology to create his images he creates a narrative about his imagined future. This work involves a view from on high showing the bald eagle dominating the world and man turned monkey watching the clock. He has a sharp eye for the absurd and astute political commentary for one so young.

Megan Bonnici's painterly prints have come from her camera. She plays with light and colour through the lens. Her interest as an artist is colour and form and she uses a variety of mediums to explore these things however the work in this show captures movement as well. Through experimenting with her camera in low light situations she has made images that have a delightful playfulness to them.

Ceardai Demelza is an emerging artist who is also new to Wyndham. Her works involves sculpture and installation that often result in photographs which are more than documentation. She creates environments as sets for a

performance artist who brings her installation to life. For NEW she has created a scene with a goddess of consumerism and an altar that includes a leaf blower.

Clive Gono has been teaching new skills to the remaining artists in this exhibition, Michelina and Erasmus Di Mauro and Daniel Fard. Michelina has been a practicing artist for a while and Erasmus has joined her in Clive's lessons. They have all tackled carving in limestone under Clive's tutelage. Daniel has carved a lion with great personality, handling the challenging medium well. Michelina and Erasmus have both been inspired by the human form, with Erasmus moved by the female body and Michelina using abstract shapes to allude to a more universal figure.

Downstairs Imran Abul Kashem is showing a major project that documents, through his art, the changes that are happening in one specific area of our community, Werribee South. Imran is a professional photographer whose has been stepping into the fine art realm and this large body of work is his first solo exhibition. He has been



Image (Above): Anita Joanna Landman - *Strata Slice (Spillage Series)*

Image (Right): Erasmo Di Mauro - *Curves and Contours*



visiting Werribee South since 2015 taking photographs of the people and the landscape. He has brought an artist's eye to the lens of social and environmental transformation that has been taking place in this part of Wyndham.

NEW highlights the emerging talent we have in our city including emerging curator Clive Gono who has joined with me in curating this exhibition. Each artist presents a different perspective in their work and what brings them together is their location in the deep west.

Image (Left): Daniel Fard - *Sheer*
Image (Right): John Mathet - *Night View*



Go Deeper:

Conversations, workshops and activities that offer a deeper insight into the exhibition and the creative practice of exhibiting artists.

Artist In Conversation

Celebrate our growing community of local artists and hear from new faces about their artwork and practice living in Wyndham.

Join Co-Curator Clive Gono as he moderates an inspiring conversation about being a local creative with exhibiting artists Ivy Mutuku and Emmet Davies.

THU 31 OCT 2019
6:00pm - 8:00pm

Image: Imran Abul Kashem - *Broken*



#deepwest
wyndham.vic.gov.au/arts

wyndhamcity