

A blue-tinted photograph of a beach. In the foreground, dark sand is visible. In the middle ground, several large, jagged icebergs are scattered across the sand. The ocean extends to the horizon under a clear blue sky. The word "LOCAL" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image.

**LOCAL**

# LOCAL

31 AUG - 29 OCT 2018

Jonathan Mendez Baute  
Robert Young

Robert Young and Jonathan Mendez Baute are both Wyndham locals, come from different backgrounds, use different mediums, and work in very different ways but both of their practices reflect on the theme of change.

While one works in clay and the other in light, both processes produce shifting, mutating forms that become immobile objects that speak to change.

**Wyndham Art Gallery**  
Great Art. Deep West.

Image: Robert Young - Shifting Ice 5



# LOCAL

Curator's Note by  
Dr Megan Evans



Robert Young and Jonathan Mendez Baute are both self-taught artists. Learning their craft from practice and observation, they are both highly skilled in their chosen medium. Robert is a photographer who has shifted from analogue to digital photography and refined his practice by focusing on the ideas behind the content. Jonathan has taught himself to sculpt, using his meticulous eye for detail and endless patience to develop a highly realistic effect.

While artisans at heart, given their compulsion to produce a quality product, they are also conceptual artists. The ideas that lie behind their work are complex and offer the viewer much to think about.

Robert is interested in the idea of equivalence, which refers to Einstein's theory of relativity. However Robert prefers Minor Martin White's interpretation.

White was an American photographer, theoretician, critic and educator. He combined an intense interest in how people viewed and understood photographs with a personal vision that was guided by a variety of spiritual and intellectual philosophies. He took the meaning of equivalence and created his own interpretation; the

Image (Cover): Robert Young - *Shifting Ice 4*  
Image (Left): Jonathan Mendez Baute - *"El sueño de Golait"*  
(Spanish for "Golait's Dream")

relationship between what is before the camera in the act of taking a picture and the person who selects what to frame in the camera's lens.

Robert sees his photographs as a metaphor for what he is feeling when he looks out into the world from an artist's perspective.

The focus of his work in this exhibition is landscapes. Presumably influenced by White's beautiful expansive landscapes, Robert takes trips to extreme environments in search of the images he wants. The black sand beach in Jökulsárlón in Iceland captured in low light is shown here in contrast to the sun scorched sands of Coffin Bay, South Australia. The use of contrast in his work creates a powerful resonance between the two series.

One can't help but be drawn to consider the environmental effects of the changing climate. Change and time are very present as an underlying theme in his photographs.

Image (Right): Jonathan Mendez Baute - *"El Viejo de la iguana que nada"*  
(Spanish for "The swimming iguana's old man")



Robert has captured time in the images of ice and water using a slow release shutter effect. The famous Tasmanian wilderness photographer Peter Dombrovskis was the first photographer I ever saw using this technique. His love of the natural environment is reflected in Robert's sensitive photographs half a century later in images from the other side of the planet.

While very different work Jonathan Mendez Baute's sculptures have a similar resonance through the silence they inhabit. His naked figures are not the buff smooth bodies akin to Michelangelo's David. Instead they are flawed, very human, always wrinkled and worn. They sit in relationship to animals, reptiles and sea creatures, either being dominated by or dominating them.

Jonathan has learned the skill of sculpting largely by himself. The famous hyperrealist sculptor Ron Mueck had the benefit of being born into a family of doll and puppet makers as a background to his extraordinary career in super realistic sculpting. Jonathan has learnt from being remarkably observant and putting that observation to use through ideas and their execution. He doesn't use an exact reference for his models; instead he draws the creatures in many different poses, 'getting to know' the thing he is trying to create, understanding how it moves, how it sits and how it rests its head before creating it all from imagination.

There is a stillness in his sculptures that is powerful. They hold the gaze, not just because you are fascinated by the detail and the realism but because of what they contain. An older man with his hand on his back supporting himself while the other hand clasps an octopus that has its tentacles gripping his back. A large lizard sits on his head almost like a flamboyant hat. A man is struggling with another octopus showing the strain in his body. There is tension in his works.

Image (Right): Robert Young - *Shifting Sands 5*





Images: Jonathan Mendez Baute - "Sortudo" (4 views)  
(Spanish for "Lucky")



Image: Robert Young - *Shifting Ice 2*

The curious thing about Jonathan's sculptures is the expressions and poses of his characters. They defy a simple reading. Are they angry, despondent, sad, resigned, worried or merely blank? It allows the viewer to place their own experience onto the characters, engaging with his work in a way that merely descriptive works don't allow.

One is reminded of Patricia Piccinini and her equally disturbing but realistic sculptures. She is keenly interested in how contemporary ideas of nature, the natural and the artificial are changing our society and these ideas play out in strangely deformed bodies and melded creatures in a similar way to Jonathan's mix of animal and human relations.

The connection between these two artists can be seen in their underlying

concern for the environment and the future of human habitation on our planet; this is clear in Jonathan's artist statement,

*"Clay is a medium which demonstrates adaptability, man's ability to change what once was; reflecting my hope for us to change our relationship with the environment for the better."*

Robert documents the changes in the environment in a similar way to the American photographer Edward Burtynsky, almost dispassionately but with a deep abiding concern.

It is thanks to art and artists such as these that we can reflect on our current situation and hopefully do as Jonathan hopes, for the sake of generations yet to come.

We are lucky to have such committed and talented artists living amongst us here in Wyndham.

Dr Megan Evans  
Visual Art Curator

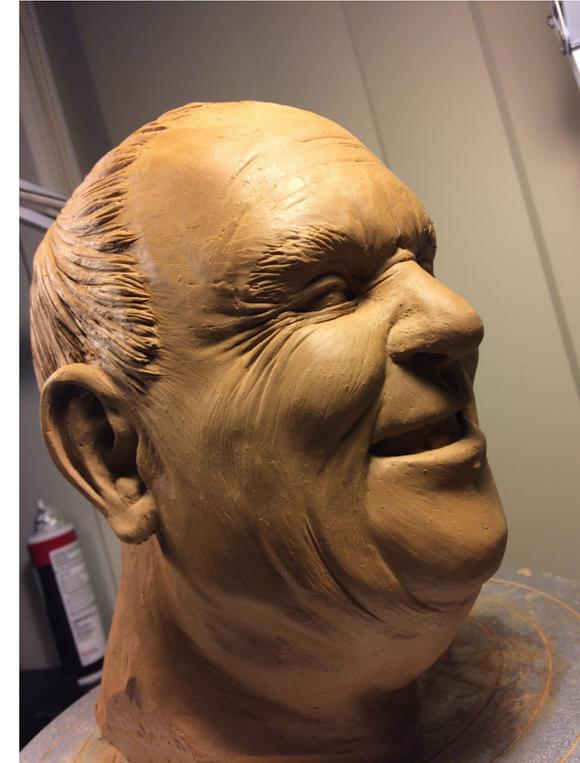


Image: Jonathan Mendez Baute - *"Don Billete"* (in progress)  
(Spanish for "Mr.Rich")

# Go Deeper:

Experience the exhibition on another level through a series of engagement activities that will take you deeper into the work and the creative practices of the exhibiting artists throughout the duration of the exhibition.

Image: Jonathan Mendez Baute -  
"El Viejo de la iguana que nada (detail)  
(Spanish for "The swimming iguana's old man")



# Artist In Conversation

## #7: LOCAL

Join us for a panel discussion with exhibiting artists Robert Young and Jonathan Mendez Baute about their practice and the works featured in the exhibition.

These two artists work in very different ways. Young, a photographer, captures the ephemeral through the lens of his camera. Mendez Baute, a sculptor, uses his hands to transform a raw block of clay into unique objects. While their approaches are different, both of their practices reflect on change in the environment, in society, and how we live. Hear from these artists about why they're drawn to these themes, and how they capture these subjects in their artwork.

THU 20 SEP  
Doors open at 5:30pm for a 6:00pm start

# Sunday Salon

Join us for a creative workshop at Wyndham Art Gallery!

Reignite your creativity, hone your skills and have some fun. Try watercolour painting and air-dry clay in a workshop led by local artists. Interpret and reimagine the exhibition into your own original artwork. Seperate activities will be available for adults and children.

Light snacks will be provided, Children are welcome and bookings are essential \$10

SUN 23 SEP  
3:00pm - 6:00pm

[wyndhamarts.eventbrite.com](http://wyndhamarts.eventbrite.com)

Image: Robert Young - Shifting Sand 4



# Art Tour

Go on a bus tour to Wyndham Art Gallery, visit a local public artwork, and then the NGV where you'll get to hear about art from artists and curators.

WED 03 OCT  
10:00am - 5:00pm

*This event is being run in conjunction with the Seniors Festival, Please book through the Cultural Centre at:*

[wyncc.com.au](http://wyncc.com.au)

# Night Waves

A night jam packed with music, performance and creativity brought to you by local young talent at Wyndham Cultural Centre.

FRI 05 OCT  
6:30pm - 9:30pm

*This event is run in partnership with Western Edge Youth Arts, to book please visit:*

[trybooking.com/XDXJ](http://trybooking.com/XDXJ)



**#deepwest**  
**wyndham.vic.gov.au/arts**

