



OUT  
IS  
OUT

# OUT IS OUT

06 FEB - 08 MAR 2020

*Elders, elders and young queer mob in dialogue about freedom, self and expression.*

OUT IS OUT examines the generation gap in queer politics, exhibiting work by people who paved the way for LGBTIQ self-expression and freedom and a new generation of activists; young queer mob who challenge gender identifying language and norms.

Featuring artists Alison Bennett, Susan Maco Forrester, David Sequeira, Peter Waples-Crowe and invited guests Jemi Gale, Anj Odessa, Lee Stain and Nick Mullaly.

Visit Wyndham Art Gallery to participate in a dialogue between generations as the younger teach the older and the older share their wisdom borne of struggle.

*Presented as part of Midsumma Festival.*

*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 (Right): Alison Bennett - *Inverso* (detail)

Image (Cover): Anj Odessa - *IN/OUT I*





# OUT IS OUT

## Curator's Note by Caroline Esbenschade

OUT IS OUT brings together work by LGBTIQ+ identifying artists to share their experience of the generation gap within the queer community.

From the 20th to the 21st Century there has been a massive shift in the experiences of the lesbian, gay, transgender, intersexed and queer communities. Previously, being 'out' and public about your sexuality and self-identity could affect your employment, lead to you being ostracised, to criminal convictions and frequently led to violence against your person.

**David Sequeira's** assemblages of discarded plastic picnicware in candy coloured hues allude to the 1960s in all its Bakelite, 'nuclear family' heteronormative narrative glory. The works also resemble

Image: Susan Maco Forrester - Queen Araweelo rises

targets, which if you were 'out' you most certainly had a target on your back.

Homophobia unfortunately still exists, but as governments, public institutions and the general public have become more welcoming, the issues facing the queer community have shifted.

**Jemi Gale** uses her whimsical paintings to pay homage to two prominent trans artists of different times. One work features AIDS activist and transgender artist Chloe Dzubilo who was a prominent member of the queer, trans and art community of New York City in the 90s. Gale's other piece, *Kim Petras as a pocket monster*, features high profile trans musician Kim Petras. This pop sensation has been very open about her gender re-assignment experience and underscores that her parent's support was a key factor. The allusion to Pokémon, or pocket monsters, is a fun way to date the work.

Intended or not, painter **Nick Mullaly's** similar nod to pop-culture is appreciable as a homage to queer culture. Between the Kodachrome-like saturation and composition, *Waiting* could easily be a frame

lifted from 'Midnight Cowboy'. *The Favoured Haunt* is similar in palette and subject matter, shedding light on how acceptance has changed associations and behaviours to places that were once used for illicit trysts.

Just like any culture, queer culture has evolved and continues to. Words take on new meaning, are used in different contexts and some terms fall out of favour. One investigated by **Lee Stain** is 'butch', an identification of masculine attributes. Their painting *Don't hate me 'cause I'm fabulous* prominently features a sea dragon, which unlike other animals, it's the male who bears the offspring, inverting the gender roles. Another part of Stain's creative practice is tattooing, historically and culturally recognised for being a presentation of identity through body modification.

Physical alterations to the self, in this case gender reassignment; is the subject of **Alison Bennett's** work *Inverto*. Presented here in both print format and digital video, the pieces show transition through hormone therapy and surgery following a pregnancy over a duration of two years. The two versions are displayed jointly to emphasise the difference

between the external and internal experience. To the world it appears to be a smooth step-by-step progression, but for those experiencing it, it's a non-linear metamorphosis that pushes and pulls emotionally and physically.

**Anj Odessa's** stoneware vases and prints similarly explore transition. Both mediums, ceramics and digital, have recognised processes that rarely go without a hitch. Those hiccups are the uneven forms found in the works and are elaborated in other parts of Odessa's practice where they explore the inadequacies of healthcare services.

A lot of emphasis has been put into nuance. Now that a certain level of acceptance has been gained from the mainstream, artists can use their art to unpack and explore what it is to be femme, butch, transgender, Aboriginal, non-Australian; really any facet of their identity they wish to explore - in conjunction or independently of their queer experience.

**Peter Waples-Crowe** is a prime example, for him it's his intersectional identity as being queer and Aboriginal. Waples-Crowe uses his art to explore his

Image: Anj Odessa - *Constraint III*





experience of straddling two identities that don't merge easily. His work on display, *Queer as Country*, is a mixed media work of bold colours and loose brushwork that emanates an inherent strength that would be necessary for navigating the divide between the queer and Aboriginal communities.

Identity and otherness are a focus of **Susan Maco Forrester's** practice too. In her work she explores her identity as a Lesbian Somali Scottish Australian artist and delves into the cult of multiculturalism and diversity. Featured in this show is a paper collage that was projected, then photographed and turned into a print. Part of a site-specific work that confronted her own identification and invited others to do the same. She emphasises acknowledging the past and recognising omissions glossed over by multiculturalism as it's presented politically.

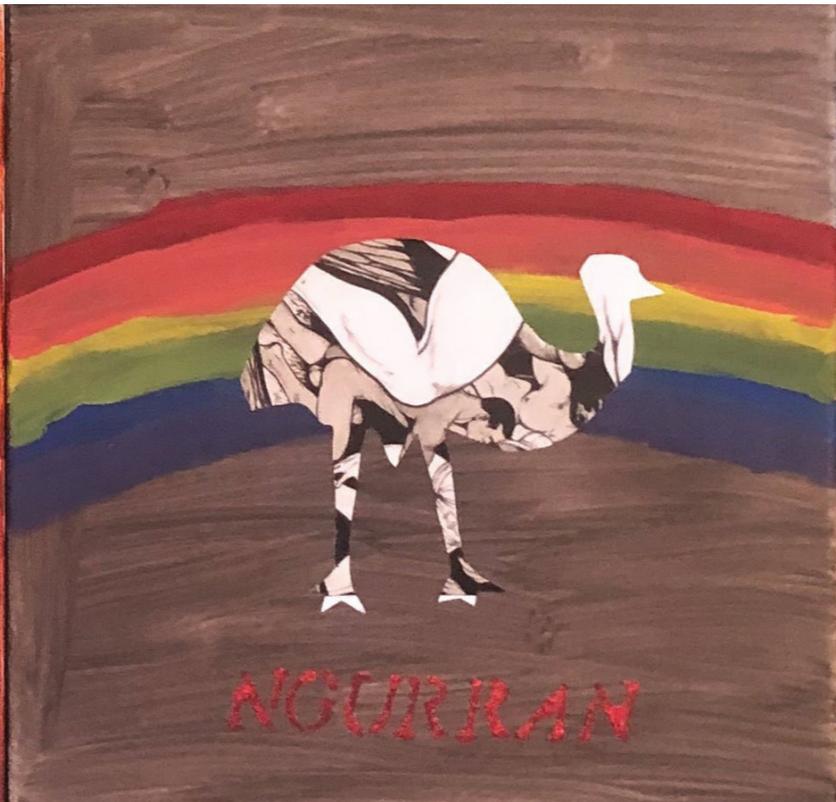
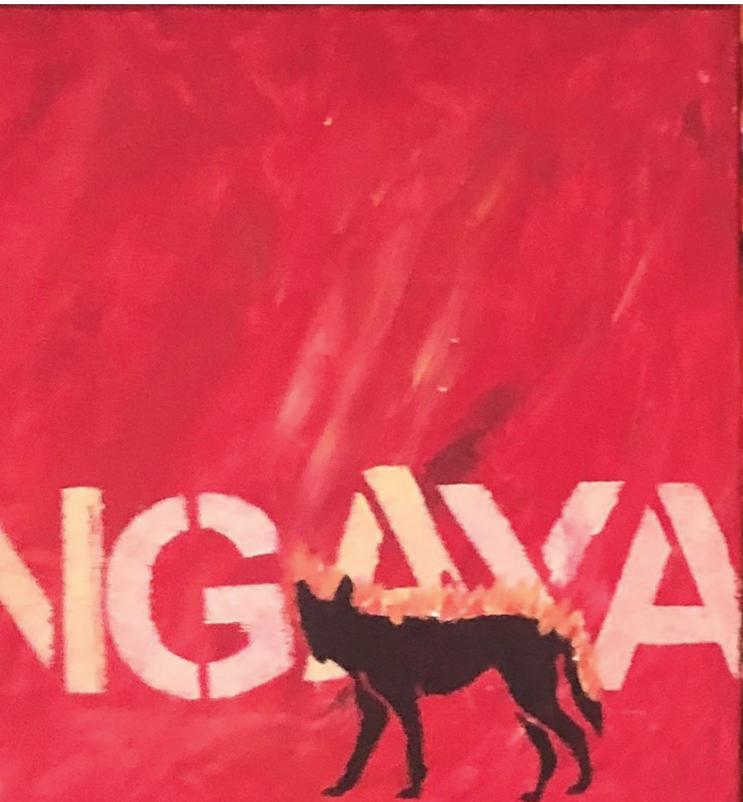
The generation gap exists, but what comes to the fore in all the works featured in OUT IS OUT is a lesson for all individuals, no matter how they identify: "This above all: to thine own self be true."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>William Shakespeare, 'Hamlet', The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, created by Jeremy Hilton, l. 3. 72-82. <<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/hamlet.1.3.html>> [22 JAN 2020]

Image (Left): Jemi Gale - *Kim Petras as a pocket monster* (detail)

Image (Right): David Sequeira - *The Zen Picnic* (part of series)





# OUT IS OUT

Catalogue Essay by  
Maddee Clark

What are the differences between older generations and younger generations of queer and trans people? What are the historical landmarks which shape queer and trans identities? What things have changed, and what things have not? How different is this era, defined so heavily by the politics of marriage equality, from previous eras of criminalisation and medical pathologisation when it comes to queer life? Forgetting for a moment the legal and political changes and public events we commonly mark as ‘queer history’, how has queer life and queer intimacy changed over time? How do we tell those stories?

Lisa Vecoli, an archivist and curator, writes about becoming head of the Tretter Collection of LGBT materials in Turtle Island. She notes her dismay at digging into the archival materials there, recounting;

Image: Nick Mullaly - *The Favoured Haunt*  
Image (Following page): Peter Waples-Crowe - *Queer as Country*

“Our materials about lesbians were notably weaker than those for gay men; materials on people of colour, transgender experiences, and the bisexual community were even scarcer. Within each facet of the GLBT community there are also gaps in documenting the lives of people young and old”.

The inclusion of the young and old here is important. Intergenerational memory is easy to lose, and healthy, frequent, and supportive intergenerational contact is necessary for the maintenance of queer and trans community life. In communities that are economically disenfranchised, where everyone is not able to be out, and where oral communication is privileged above the written, this is harder to maintain. I reflect often on how narratives of transition have changed over time. A trans person born in 1940 would have had a much





different life to me, born in 1990. Trans people even five years younger than me seem to speak a different language.

Young queer and trans people can grow up feeling robbed of their right to a lineage, a history, a representational mirror they can look into. The younger generations of a family too often will also dismiss the older as archaic, uncool, or offensive. Miscommunications and erasures are common. Even in my community, I notice younger generations of Blak queer and trans people assume that no one else has ever done what they are doing, that no one else has ever experienced what they do, not realising that they are following in the same circular steps made by previous generations.

Last year at an event at MPavilion, Angela Riley from the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives spoke about her work researching beats in Melbourne. I heard her talk about how much of her research material is gathered from police arrest reports, which are then arranged into a 'beat map'. Archivists are connected to the intimate details of reflecting on this, I realise

Image: David Sequeira - *The Zen Picnic (part of series)*

how incredibly sheltered I am. I have, of course, been harassed in public ('we all have'), but I wonder how many queer people I know here in Narrm who know what it is like to routinely conduct their sex lives in public, because their homes are unsafe or surveilled, let alone be arrested or harassed by police for it as a frequent part of the process. I wonder, though, how much this history of criminalisation lingers, how closely we still associate the threat of criminalisation and violence with queer life. Vecoli's words find resonance here. For many younger, usually white, non-disabled, economically privileged queers, violence shocks. For other queer and trans people, it is ordinary, part of the story. The seduction of marriage equality has perhaps led sections of the LGBT community to forget that the criminal justice system has not become less brutal, less violent, or less discriminatory; it's simply wearing a rainbow sticker.

The Wiradjuri artist SJ Norman has written the following on the importance of remembering where you come from as a queer and trans creative;

*If some of the younger white queer and trans artists that I know had half a clue of the rich, powerful*

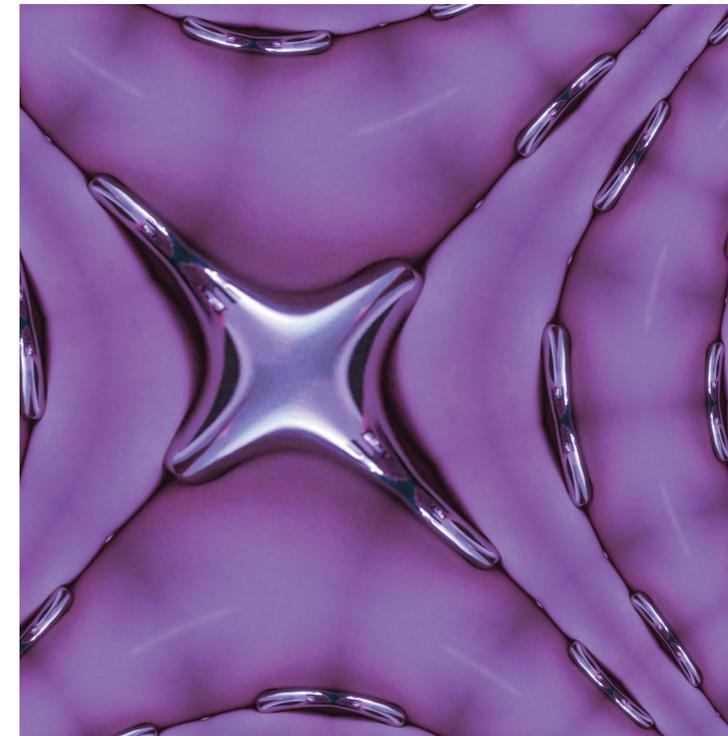


Image: Anj Odessa - *IN/OUT II*



*artistic and cultural lineages they belong to, and were prepared to embrace the Elders that are available to them in their immediate communities, maybe they would not feel as alone as a lot of them appear to...I draw my strength to go on doing what I do and being who I am in the world from those relationships, to my Elders and my ancestors, and knowing that I am accountable to them as well as to the ones coming up.*

As queer and trans people, it is vital to our survival and to the continual development of our cultures that we maintain connections to the histories we have and the older generations that live amongst us.



Image (Left) : Lee Stain - *Don't hate me 'cause I'm fabulous*

Image (Right): Jemi Gale - *Chloe Dzubilo as the where is god angel*

# Go Deeper:

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



# Artist In Conversation

## *OUT IS OUT*

*Join us in conversation about the different viewpoints of both elder and younger LGBTIQ artists with exhibiting artists Susan Maco Forrester, Lee Stain and Alison Bennett acting as moderator.*

*Lee and Susan will open-up about their creative practices and their experience of the generation gap.*

*To compliment this talk there will be a live tattooing demonstration in which Lee will tattoo Susan during the event.*

THU 13 FEB, 6:00pm - 8:00pm  
Doors open at 5:30pm for a 6:00pm start

*This free exhibition event is presented as part of Midsumma Festival.*

Image: Nick Mullaly - Waiting



 midsumma  
festival

#deepwest  
[wyndham.vic.gov.au/arts](http://wyndham.vic.gov.au/arts)

wyndhamcity