

Wyndham Art Gallery

sā'krīd

September 7 - November 6 2016

An exhibition that explores the sacred in both a spiritual and everyday sense.

Artists from all corners of the globe will play with our expectations of what is sacred.

For some people the sacred is connected to their beliefs and for some it is a moment of peace in an unexpected place.

Indigenous people from across the world have a special relationship to the earth which many call sacred.

In other cultures an everyday act of beautifying the ordinary is sacred.

This exhibition will unpick your preconceptions and open up new ways of seeing what is sacred.

SAKRID is a word that conjures up many meanings. It can be used in a secular, spiritual or religious way. This exhibition asks us to question what IS sacred.

Anindita Banerjee references the traditions of her Indian cultural heritage in her work Kalika where she films herself conducting a ritual from her memory, enacting it on a person who can only sit and accept the attention, while quite unaware of the deeper religious significance. It is out of context, out of place and created for the purposes of making art - not connecting with the religious purpose that the ritual is designed for. This could be seen as sacrilegious in some contexts, however Anindita cleverly recasts the religious context as art, while at the same time creating a sense of the sacred in her sitter by the very act of participating.



Anindita Banerjee - Kalika

She has also created a rice flour floor work that is traditionally done on the ground in India to celebrate special occasions such as weddings. Anindita was always asked to do these designs for her own family weddings and found herself on the ground creating these cultural artworks while the rest of the women were at the beauty parlor getting ready for the wedding. These mandala type works are also done in India on household door steps, created very early in the morning by the women of the house, before the rest of the household wakes. They are then stepped on throughout the day as people come and go through the doorway. A sacred act made profane by the footsteps of people entering and leaving the house.

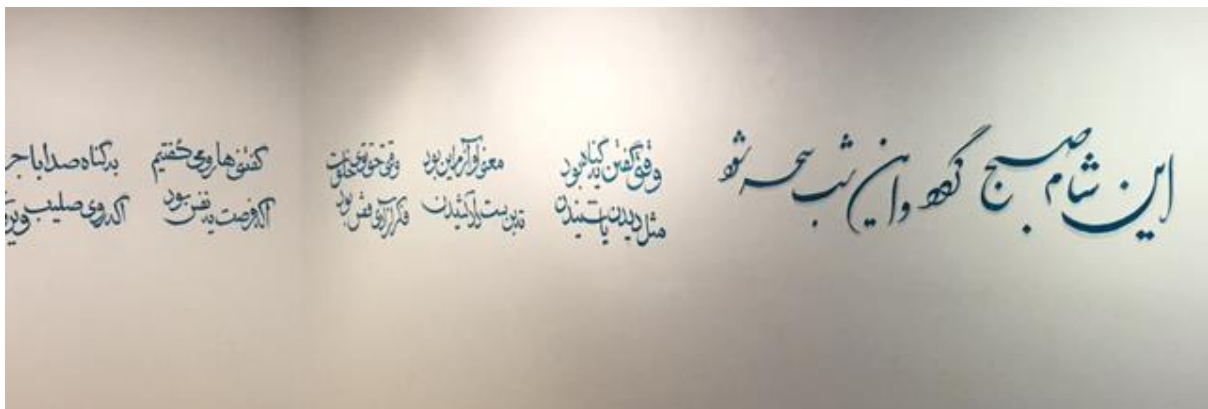


Anindita Banerjee - Kalika

In a different cultural context Behnam Khamisi has written on the wall in his familiar Persian script. To someone who doesn't read Persian script the words look like a beautiful mural, however they also communicate the powerful words of Iranian poets Khajavi Kermani and Ardalan Sarfaraz. Behnam has been writing the poem by Kermani, which is about freedom, in a kind of meditation, every day for thirty years.

این شام سج کوه و این شب حشر شو

Behnam Khamisi – Hope



Behnam Khamisi - Freedom

Brian Martin's work could be seen as a traditional landscape painting writ large however there are many layers to this work. Firstly on closer inspection you can see that the large image of a bush scene is drawn on many sheets of A4 sized paper. The

artist has compiled the work after drawing it in pieces, creating a whole out of many parts. Secondly the work is not just a landscape. Brian Martin is a Muruwari, Bundjalung and Kamilaroi man, who sees the landscape through this lens. The European view usually depicts the landscape as though outside it, however Aboriginal artists are often known for representing a very different perspective of the land, one in which they are a part of it rather than being outside or 'on' the land. Brian's drawing places a European view in an Indigenous context and makes us re-think how we view the landscape.



Brian Martin - *Methexical Countryside: Kamilaroi # 6*

Young emerging artist Safwan Muyeen first exhibited at The Wyndham Art Gallery in the YOUTH exhibition when he was still at high school. He has been pursuing a career as an artist and this is his first showing in a professional gallery. When looking at his work your own reflection merges with his calligraphy. 'I am' invites the viewer to speculate about their presence in the world and consider themselves as a sacred being.



Safwan Muyeen – I am

Ricardo Pererya is interested in a global sense of the sacred, drawing on a wide variety of cultural traditions. Coming to Wyndham from Argentina he is influenced by the diverse cultures that surround him. His sculptures are in stone and timber and in some cases he combines both.



Ricardo Pereyra - *Head full of memories resting on a memory foam pillow*

Julie Tippen O'Toole draws on a Maori creation story. Her delicate line work distinguishes the separation of sky and earth, the coming into being of all things from emptiness and nothingness. 'Sacred love' tells of the grief of separation between the sky and the earth as they move apart to create the space for light.

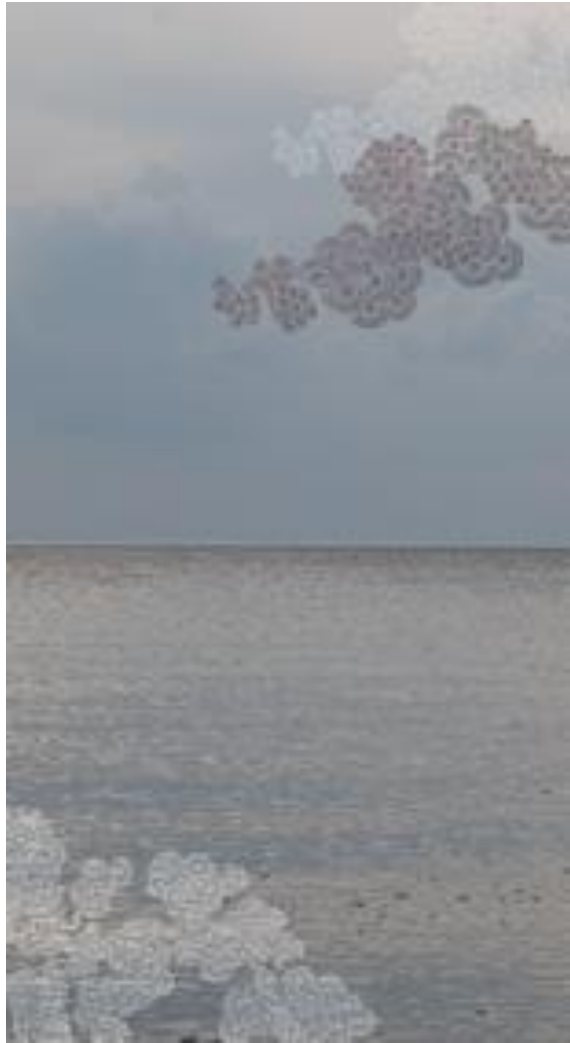


Julie Tipene-O'Toole – Sacred Love

Mami Yamanaka's work is equally sensitive and delicate in nature. The sky and the sea are represented with a stillness that emanates peace. Her imagery is paradoxical as one sees the horizon line, which gives a sense of depth, however the fragile line work that sits against the picture frame flattens our view, disrupting our traditional perception of distance.



Mami Yamanaka – Line 1



Mami Yamanaka – Line 2

Each of these artists prompt a different perspective on the sacred and together they create an elegant and peaceful space in which to view their work.

While visiting the exhibition you are invited to also participate in a growing artwork that also makes a statement. ANTAR (Australian's for Native Title and Reconciliation) is a not for profit organization that works towards justice for Aboriginal people. The TREATY SCROLL is a project in progress in which thousands of people have recorded their support for a Treaty with Aboriginal people by placing their thumb print on a twenty metre scroll. The finished work will be a personal record of individual marks of support, creating a beautiful artwork acknowledging the sacred place Aboriginal peoples have in this land as the first peoples.

Dr. Megan Evans
Visual Artist/Curator

ARTISTS STATEMENTS

ANINDITA BANERJEE

Kalika

*'She was only four, innocent, bereft of worldly desires, calm, contented and joyful. **They** decided that she fitted into the schema of the Goddess.*

She is thirty-four, spirited, mature, compassionate and a fighter. I decided that she fitted into the schema of the Goddess.'

"We often unknowingly experience the transcendental. At other times, despite being in the 'correct' ambience we fail to perceive what is popularly believed to be Sacred.

In this work, I reconstruct from my assembled memory, the sacred ritual of the 'Kumari Puja' and perform it on somebody who has no understanding of it; and at a place that has no resemblance to its ordinary existence..."

BEHNAM KHAMISI

Behnam is a creative professional with over 20 years of work experience as a Graphic Designer, Illustrator, Photographer and Animator.

BRIAN MARTIN

Brian is currently the Head of Research and Deputy Director of the Institute of Koorie Education at Deakin University Australia. This role provides outstanding academic, research and administrative leadership to the Institute, its staff and students. The primary responsibility encompasses the development and implementation of the Institute's strategies within the context of Deakin University's strategic plan. Born in Redfern Sydney, Brian is from Muruwari, Bundjalung and Kamilaroi ancestry. His academic qualifications include a Bachelor of Visual Arts with Honours from the University of Sydney, a Graduate Diploma of Vocational Education and Training from Charles Sturt University and a PhD by research from Deakin University.

As a practising artist for twenty-five years, Brian has been exhibiting his work for approximately seventeen years, both nationally and internationally. His work is in various private and public collections

including the National Gallery of Victoria. His artwork and research has focused on the traditions of western painting and drawing, however it has materialised his cultural background by its conceptual basis. His publication history has investigated the relationship of materialism in the arts to an Indigenous worldview and Aboriginal knowledge framework and epistemology. He has further reconfigured understandings of culture and visual practice from an Aboriginal perspective

SAFWAN MUYEEN

My work generally involves the mix of both calligraphy and graffiti in both English and Arabic. The work I do is based on turning words into art, making it not only something to look at but also something to read and receive a message from. I feel as though my art ties in well with SAKRID because the messages I try to send are something that reflects what I feel and what is 'sacred' to me as well as others who look at my work.

I am

The words 'I am', made out from the words strong, powerful and beautiful on a mirror, so that every time you read it, you look at yourself and tell yourself what you really are.

Beauty

The word 'Beauty', made out from the words 'you are beautiful' on a mirror. So that every time you read those words, you look directly at the person you are saying it to.

Your mind is a weapon, use it.

This quote sends the message that we cannot allow ourselves to be chained to the thoughts that are forced upon us, that our mind is what we need to use to fight for ourselves. The clear glass represents how our minds should not be clouded by anything.

My thoughts

This is a quote that only the writer can read and understand. It is written in Arabic on an English dictionary to show that although these languages are what make up the piece, it still cannot be understood by anybody else. It is simply the thoughts of a person who's identity is made up of these languages, and put forth on paper.

RICARDO PEREYRA

"What happens after death is beyond the knowledgeable.

However, if we understand the departure point – i.e. the world that surrounds us-then we may be able to understand the whole process and how it works and from that understand the final journey and perhaps the destination. I think that there are two ways to get that understanding –

science and meditation – and although they seem to be mutually exclusive is worth trying both. A third way for me has been carving pieces of noble timber and stone into shapes that are dictated and judged exclusively by my mind but inspired in what surrounds me: this world.”

JULIE TIPPEN-O'TOOLE

My work titled '**Sacred Love**' is inspired by the Māori creation story about a time of nothingness, darkness and light.

In the Māori tradition, the central act of creation is the drama of the separation of the sky and earth or Rangi the sky father and Papa the earth mother. Rangi and Papa exist in the darkness, joined together in a tight embrace and their seventy children are born between them. The children conspire to separate their parents, and this allows light to flow into the world.

I draw attention to Rangi and Papa and their forced separation. I imagine their pain and sorrow. I imagine Papa will survive if she is able to embrace Rangi one last time. I imagine her hair flying skywards in an attempt to reach Rangi, but fails.

I dream of her plaiting her hair into a single braid, then attaching the umbilical cords of her seventy children, to double the length of her hair. I dream of her hair flying skywards and Rangi catching it. I dream they are reunited for a brief time, before their sons roll Rangi onto her stomach, sealing their separation forever.

Muka fibre from the New Zealand flax plant features in my prints, they represent Papa's hair and her hair represents hope in the light of a new day.

MAMI YAMANAKA

The word 'Sacred' for me represents an internal appreciation of something precious. It is not a tangible object, but a feeling of quiet awe. It is a feeling that forces me to re-assess the priorities within my life. Often this feeling strikes me as I stare into nature, revealing patterns and connections within. These patterns often become part of my work. A bird's feather becomes a set of circles, an ocean wave becomes a series of lines. In this way I feel that my work is a representation of the things that I find Sacred.

WYNDHAM ART GALLERY EXHIBITIONS 2016:

VICKI WEST – Opening 16th Nov – 17th Nov – 8th Jan 2017



WYNDHAM ART GALLERY

177 Watton St, Werribee, Vic 3030

PH: +61 3 8734 6021

Visual Art Curators:

Maree Clarke maree.clarke@wyndham.vic.gov.au

Megan Evans megan.evans@wyndham.vic.gov.au