



5 March - 8 May 2011



**Conversations with the collection**  
**NEWCASTLE REGION ART GALLERY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The following works of art from this year's ARTEXPRESS HSC Visual Art Exhibition have been compared to a selection from the Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection, which includes more than 5,000 works.

These comparisons provide a conversation for exploring this year's ARTEXPRESS, as well as the Gallery's collection, comparing, contrasting and critically discussing works across a variety of media, subject matter and techniques.

Explicit linkages to the Senior Secondary Curriculum are supported throughout this resource with the inclusion of Frames, Conceptual Framework and Practise questions.

Further opportunities for teachers and students to explore this year's ARTEXPRESS have been provided with a short film of seven local students discussing their HSC Visual Arts experiences. Outstanding examples of ARTEXPRESS artists' Visual Arts Process Diaries (VAPD's) are also on display.

The film and VAPD's can be viewed on the exhibition floor in the Gallery's smART space or are available from the Gallery's website: [www.nag.org.au](http://www.nag.org.au)

**ARTEXPRESS is presented by the Department of Education and Training NSW and the Board of Studies NSW.**

Cover Image:

**Jessica Jane Bolton**  
Hunter Valley Grammar  
*Tunnel Vision* (2010)

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## Conversations with the Collection



**Natalie Ullmann**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*The natural beauty of the world's environment is distorted by the unconscious, destructive actions of mankind. Underneath the crystal clear creeks, tranquil rivers and vast oceans, lies the ugly and shameful truth of our environment, caused by the selfish behaviours of human beings which is nothing to be proud of. If the environment is not well looked after, the representations of beauty in this world would be left to the artificial manipulations of men as the natural world is destroyed.*



**Philip Wolfhagen**

### **Collection Statement:**

Philip Wolfhagen's painting is inspired by the elemental power and presence of land, sky and sea. *Surface tension no. 3* 1998 explores the potency of ocean and has a particular resonance for many Australian's whose sense of place is orientated toward the coast. Born in Tasmania and descended from a long line of northern Tasmanian settlers, the sea for Wolfhagen is a particularly significant symbol. To create the depth and movement of the ocean Wolfhagen uses oil and beeswax together. In his own words, *I love the power of the illusory mark and its emotive energy and I feel confident about my ability to harness that energy.*

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

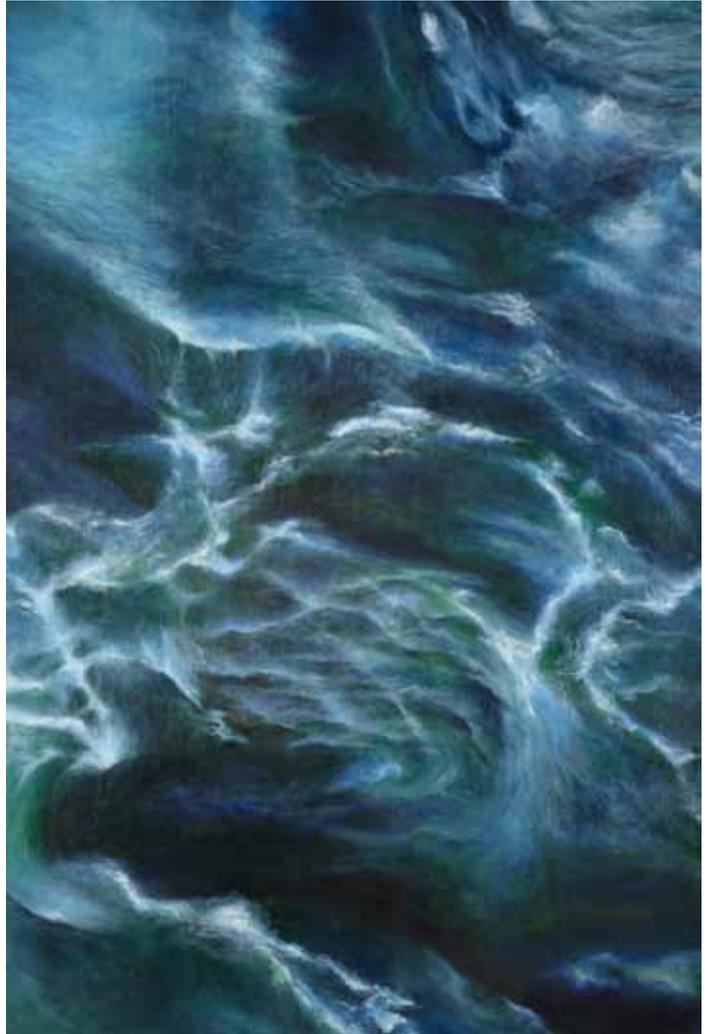
Using the structural frame discuss how painters Natalie Ullman and Philip Wolfhagen have developed the tonal qualities in their works to convey a sense of depth and movement. Look closely at the brush strokes and textual qualities of each work. Describe what techniques each artist uses to create a feeling of motion and movement in their works.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Analyse how both Ullman and Wolfhagen have used the ocean and water as a symbol for the power and fragility of nature in their works *Sea of Shame* and *Surface tension no. 3*.

#### **Practice:**

Ullman has been influenced by artist Martine Emdur research this artist and discuss the similarities and differences in their practices.



**Natalie Ullmann**  
Ravenswood School  
*Sea of Shame* (detail) (2010)  
Painting

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**Philip Wolfhagen** *Surface tension no. 3* 1998  
oil and beeswax on canvas, 213.5 x 136.2 cm  
Purchased 1998  
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**Sigrid Wharton**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*My body of work expresses my deep interest in the theories of Carl Jung regarding the unconscious mind and the archetypes that go with this. I have always been fascinated by romanticism and the idea of opposites as shown in my work, where there is a play on opposites relating to gender, love and despair, laughter and sadness. I have drawn together the threads of my passion for classical and contemporary music, painting, film and opera to tell a story of an individual who experiences a surreal series of events that show the extreme effects of deep emotion.*



**Richard Browne**

### **Collection Statement:**

Born in Dublin in 1771, Richard Browne was sentenced to transportation in 1810, arriving in Sydney in 1811. From there he was transported to Newcastle for committing a second offence and remained there until 1817. In this watercolour Browne has given a face to the first people of the Hunter River region and provided valuable insights into our local history.

In his portrait of Coola-benn, Browne has used a profile bust portrait format to commemorate the Ash Island leader. This cameo style of portraiture, which was popular from the Classical period onwards, was frequently used in the depiction of powerful individuals.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

Discuss how Sigrid Wharton and Richard Browne make reference to the cultural traditions of European portraiture, outline and compare each portrait to one another.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Speculate on what the artists are attempting to convey to their audience about their subjects. Consider the audiences for whom these works were produced? How would the formal quality of the paintings influence an audience's interpretation of the subjects?

#### **Practice:**

Discuss Wharton's appropriation of traditional painting technique. Speculate on the circumstances under which Browne created his work. Would he have met with the subject and made the work at that time? Compare this to Wharton's practise.



**Sigrid Wharton**

Asquith Girls High School

*The Alternative: The Requiem of a Classical Cure* (detail)

(2010)

Painting

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**Richard Browne** *Coola-benn, Native Chief of Ashe Island Hunters River, New South Wales 1820*  
watercolour and bodycolour on paper, 31.0 x 22.0 cm  
Purchased 2010  
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection

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**Alicia Floyer**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*My oil paintings are a series of seascapes depicting the iconic and unique imagery of the “Bogey Hole” in Newcastle. I wanted people to be able to visualise the beautiful coastline we have to offer in Newcastle. I wanted to capture the beauty and uniqueness of the “Bogey Hole”. I was inspired by the bold and changing colours of this well know local landscape. I was aiming to create an artwork that was so realistic yet so surreal.*



**Allan Chawner**

### **Collection Statement:**

Allan Chawner spent years photographing the beaches of Newcastle before the June 2007 storms presented him with the ultimate photographic opportunity. The grounding of the bulk carrier, the Pasha Bulker, on Nobbys Beach created an unprecedented public spectacle and tens of thousands of onlookers visited and photographed the ruin. In *Pasha wave* 2007 Chawner chooses to focus closely on the ocean and the grounded hull of the ship. This image is printed on a massive scale when exhibited and as such underscores the conflict or duel between nature and industry.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

Alicia Floyer and Allan Chawner have used the Newcastle coastline as a subject to evoke emotion. Compare and contrast the two works, including approach, medium and a discussion of your emotional response to each work.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Works of art have been used throughout history to mark a sense of time and place. Discuss the idea that an image can become iconic for a community or group with particular reference to Floyer’s and Chawner’s works. Describe how these images uniquely represent Newcastle.

#### **Practice:**

*Pasha Wave* 2007, when exhibited, is printed large scale. Why do you think Chawner chose this format? Discuss the different effect of the image if it was printed and displayed on a small scale. Assess the use of cropping in each image. Use the internet to research other images of the Pasha Bulker and experiment with cropping the image to create a dynamic composition.



**Alicia Floyer**  
Jesmond Campus  
*Facets of the Bogey Hole* (detail) (2010)  
Painting

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**Allan Chawner** *Pasha wave* 2007  
digital photograph, 400.0 x 600.0 cm  
Purchased 2008  
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**Anna Nowland**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*This artwork is an exploration of the diversity of the alpine heathland landscape, located in the Kosciusko National Park region. It examines this natural grassland area for its untouched character that yields unexpected colours, patterns and forms, creating natural lines and paths in the landscape. This outlook is affected by seasons and weather conditions that generate a complete alteration in the landscape through colour, light and dark, and structure. To present this I used acrylic and oil paints, carving, and pigmented paraffin wax, to create the traces and tracks that inform this unique environment.*



**Grace  
Cossington Smith**

### **Collection Statement:**

Grace Cossington Smith lived all her life in the same house in Sydney and the house, its interiors and environs, are an abiding subject across her long career as an artist. Her interior paintings from the 1950s are often heralded as her greatest triumph. This small snow stricken landscape was painted in Europe, during a visit in 1949-1950, before she commenced the domestic interiors. The reduced complimentary palette and mosaic style brush strokes pre-empt the later, luminous interiors. The painting carries a working sketch of a still life on the reverse of the board, testimony to the artist's ongoing experimentation during her travels.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

Discuss how Anna Nowland and Grace Cossington Smith have used brushstrokes to evoke a sense of the harsh landscapes they have represented.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Both works of art are strongly rooted in the environment. How have both Nowland and Cossington Smith created and captured this strong emotional sense of each place? Discuss artists' attraction to the natural landscape, research and give an example of another artist that paints this subject matter in your response.

#### **Practice:**

Identify the art movement that influenced Cossington Smith then, fifty years later, Nowland. Experiment using various paintbrushes and techniques of application to depict your local environment using this movement's principles and style.



**Anna Nowland**  
Ravenswood School  
*Traces and Tracks* (2010)  
Painting

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**Grace Cossington Smith** *Snow in May* 1950  
oil on board, 17.5 x 28.6 cm  
Gift of the Newcastle Gallery Society 2010  
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection

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**Oliviere Jane Trubie**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*Recent travels to Melbourne bought to light for me a new, darkened perspective of the back streets of Fitzroy. I want to delve into the strong, moody atmosphere of the landscape which is often associated with the underground graffiti and art culture. With my art making process I experimented with acrylics mediums. Manipulating various techniques, approaches and elements of chiaroscuro to ultimately establish this unique composition. The entire creative experience is something I will continue to value.*

### **Collection Statement:**

The tension between the seen and unseen, the knowable and unknown, is a dynamic present in the work of Melbourne based artist Louise Hearman. In *Untitled #680* 1998 darkness surrounds - an unidentified object shoots forth from behind the trees lighting the tumultuous beach below, while the moon hangs low in the sky. *Untitled #680* is unnamed, like all of Hearman's paintings. It is identifiable only by its opus number. This intentional resistance to explaining the work via its title is a further nod to the mysteries contained within the darkness of the paintings, which remain present but unreadable.



**Louise Hearman**

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

Discuss the power of a limited colour palette to convey mood in both Olivier Jane Trubie's and Louise Hearman's paintings.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Both Trubie and Hearman create a sense of disquiet in their works capturing an unknown darkness hinting at hidden possibilities. Discuss how both painters manipulate their audience through the structure of composition and omission in these works.

#### **Practice:**

Hearman deliberately leaves her works untitled, simply numbering each work. Why do you think she does this? How does it affect the reading of the work? Research other artists that have been inspired to paint a 'Nocturne'. How have these artists captured their night subjects? Do the titles of these works inform your interpretation of them?



**Oliviere Jane Trubie**  
Mosman High School  
*Fitzroy* (detail) (2010)  
Painting

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**Louise Hearman** *Untitled #680* 1998  
oil on board, 53.0 x 69.0 cm  
Les Renfrew bequest 2009  
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**Chris Wilson**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*The concept behind my body of work was to express the journey experienced by surfers, I tried to display a sense of freedom and motion through my pen strokes to create depth to represent and capture my individual experience. My passion for the ocean and also the movie "Morning of the Earth" inspired me. To create my body of work I used every available moment including free periods to get guidance or other points of view, in between drawing I would go surf and evaluate my images and visualise changes needed which is heavily linked to my concept.*



**Laith McGregor**

### **Collection Statement:**

Laith McGregor uses the ubiquitous biro, or ballpoint pen, to make art. The biro is a tool that, although used daily, is rarely used as a serious drawing implement. Similarly, beards are rarely the subject of contemporary works of art. Hirsute men however, have become McGregor's signature. In *Dreamin' about a place I'll never see* 2007 McGregor combines a self portrait with a willow pattern inspired landscape. Imported from China during the last half of the eighteenth century and appropriated by English potteries, the willow pattern is an eloquent emblem of cultural translation and in this work becomes an uncanny double image as both beard and dreamland.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

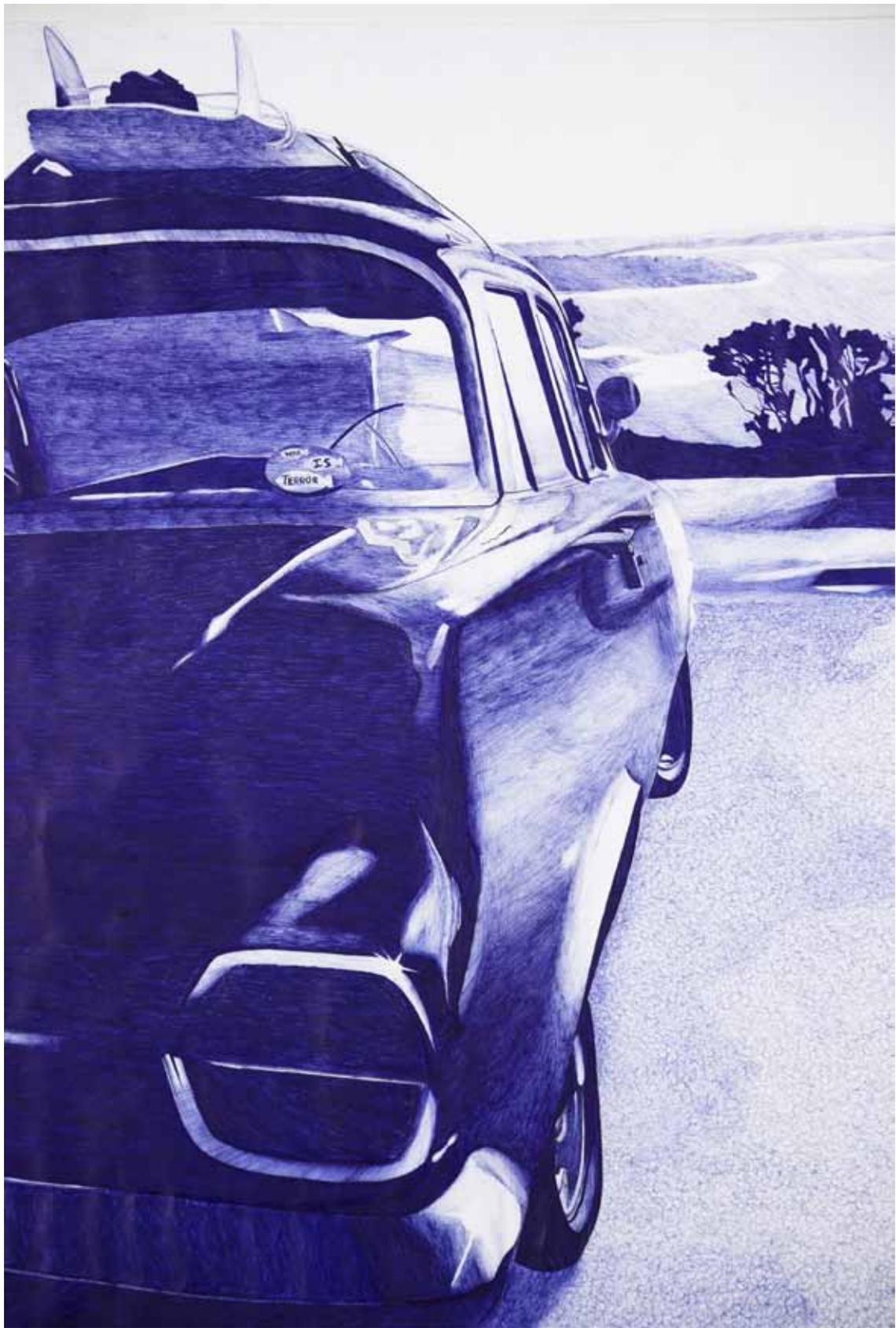
Comment on Laith McGregor's use of the willow pattern as a beard dreamland. Research the history of the pattern and speculate on McGregor's reason for choosing it for this work.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Analyse how each artist has created works that are uniquely personal through completely different representations of themselves both real and imagined.

#### **Practice:**

Both Chris Wilson and Laith McGregor have chosen to use an everyday biro as their drawing implement. Do some experimental drawing using in turn a lead pencil and a biro. Discuss the different qualities of each drawing material and compare the ease or difficulty of creating different tonal effects with these media.



**Chris Wilson**  
The Entrance Campus  
*Liquid Refreshment* (detail) (2010)  
Drawing

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**Laith McGregor** *Dreamin' about a place I'll never see 2007*  
biro on paper, 76.0 x 56.0 cm  
Gift of the Gil Docking Drawing Fund 2009  
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection

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**Charlotte Minnett**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*My work explores the links between optimism and suffering and shows the audience that to construct hope is a choice one always has, regardless of their situation. Cranes, as a symbol of hope, came from the well-known story of Sadako and the 1000 paper cranes. Within this story the most inspiring quality for me was the persistence and blind optimism that Sadako maintains. The story behind the willow pattern designs on which my drawings were based, is one of love and perseverance. The umbrella is used to symbolize protection against negative situations, a barrier preventing the destruction of hope.*



**Sean Cordeiro  
Claire Healy**

### **Collection Statement:**

The material constructions, deconstructions and reconstructions of familiar objects within the gallery space by collaborators Sean Cordeiro and Claire Healy question our attachment to place and property. In *The plastic menagerie* 2006 Cordeiro and Healy have constructed a nest of museum showcases or vitrines and housed within each vitrine is an animal shaped inflatable toy, the type usually found poolside. Each vitrine is made from laminated pine, the type of material used to make inexpensive, ubiquitous furniture. Rather than the elegant handcrafted vitrines of the museum, these 'storage solutions' have a certain DIY appeal.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

Using the postmodern frame discuss the use of appropriation in Charlotte Minnett's installation and collaborative artists Sean Cordeiro's and Claire Healy's installation. While both works include humorous and surprising objects both have a serious message. Discuss humour and irony in your response.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Discuss how Minette and Corderio and Healy challenge audience perceptions of traditional art objects through their works. What challenge do they also present to Galleries and audiences when presented.

#### **Practice:**

Corderio and Healy as well as Minnet have used everyday objects to create their works of art. Discuss how the utilising of everyday commercial objects such as the pool toys and an umbrella in a work of art alters their status. Research the work of artist Duchamp. Use this research to inspire you to collect a group of 'readymades' and assemble them as an installation to convey a concept that is important to you.



**Charlotte Minnett**  
Ascham School  
*Hope 2010*  
Collection of works



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**Sean CORDEIRO and Claire HEALY** *The plastic menagerie* (2006)  
pine vitrines and inflatable animals, 300.0 x 230.0x 195.0 cm  
Purchased 2006  
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection

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**Alicia Cale**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*This piece of work is a reflection of the contemporary Australian society and its expanding multicultural aspect of life, in which I have explored the idea of urban growth and decline, portraying this through the corrosive quality of the work and also through the incorporation of different glazes. The incongruous elements are representative of the mixture in Australian society in which iconic ideas of Australian culture and Indigenous culture are strongly intertwined. This mixture is depicted with rustic features such as chains, bolts and screws with the contemporary appropriation of a vessel figure.*



**Marea Gazzard**

### **Collection Statement:**

Form and its infinite associations fascinate ceramicist Marea Gazzard. Ancient Cycladic talismans, Aboriginal grinding stones and traditional still life painting all inspire her sculptural ceramics. Each sculpted object bears the mark of Gazzard's hand; clay is scraped, pinched, pummelled and punctured to suggest the external and elemental forces at work in the creation of land mass. Gazzard's works from the *Helmut* series straddle landscape and figuration. While the title and the head-like forms anthropomorphise these vessels the shape of each object is also reminiscent of seedpods and eucalyptus branches. Hence Gazzard draws a connection between people and a sense of place that is specifically Australian.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

Using the structural frame, discuss how Cale and Gazzard have manipulated their chosen medium to express their ideas through ceramic vessels.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Analyse how the vessels created by Alica Cale and Marea Gazzard are a reflection of the different environments and cultures from which they draw their inspiration.

#### **Practice:**

Ceramics by their very nature implicate the artist physically. Discuss how the construction of these works reflects the hand of the artist and the elemental nature of both clay and the environment. Experiment with clay and the different surface marks you can create when pinching and hand building a vessel.



**Alicia Cale**  
Pymble Ladies' College  
*Rustic Vessels* (2010)  
Ceramics

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**Marea Gazzard** *Untitled (Helmet)* 1969  
stoneware, 40.0 x 18.5 cm (diam)  
Presented by Garry Anderson through the Tax Incentives Scheme for  
the Arts 1990  
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection

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**Jessica Jane Bolton**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*“Vietnam, that’s a war not a country right?” This is a perplexity that I struggled to comprehend after reflecting upon my travels in Vietnam in 2009. The Vietnamese perspective that the 2nd Indochinese War was the ‘American War’ encouraged me to explore differing social interpretations of this event. I aim to encourage my audience to explore the true nature of Vietnam, looking beyond the stereotypical sensationalist media images in order to investigate contemporary Vietnam and realise that a country ravaged by successive wars is home to unique and ancient cultures with strong connections to the land, heritage and lifestyle.*



**Jonathan Jones**

### **Collection Statement:**

In *68 Fletcher, Bondi, 20:20, 8.6.03* 2003 Jonathan Jones uses domestic light bulbs and fittings to illuminate traditional Aboriginal concerns of country. A member of the Kamilaroi and Wiradjuri nations, Jones uses light as a metaphor for the relationship between individual and community. Though his language groups are of central New South Wales, the artist grew up in the urban environment of Sydney’s beaches. Here the Bondi headland is traced in light with each light signifying human habitation. Jones sees these luminous markers as a type of census and as a physical manifestation of the interconnectedness of all people and all communities.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

Using the cultural frame, discuss how artists Jessica Jane Bolton and Jonathan Jones have conveyed their ideas of country and connection to place.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Examine how *Tunnel Vision* 2010 and *68 Fletcher, Bondi, 20, 20, 8.6.03* 2003 represent each artist’s unique perception of their world. Make reference to each work of art and the statements about the works.

#### **Practice:**

Both artists have chosen to use light as an integral part of their work, literally illuminating their ideas. Discuss the importance of the light in these works. How would your perception of the works differ if they were not lit? Construct a simple paper light box and experiment with adding different intensity of light to the interior of the box. How does the amount of light change the interpretation of the work?



**Jessica Jane Bolton**  
Hunter Valley Grammar  
*Tunnel Vision* (detail) (2010)  
Sculpture

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**Jonathan Jones** *68 Fletcher, Bondi, 20:20, 8.6.03 2003*  
extension cords, household light bulbs, movement sensors  
230.0 x 890.0 x 17.5cm  
Gift of the Newcastle Gallery Society 2007  
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**Romina Lyn  
You Lee**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*The Great Bleached Reef emulates the skeletal forms of dead coral, that are a result of coral bleaching. Coral bleaching occurs when the coral polyp dies, draining the coral of its colour and leaving the white calcium carbonate structure exposed. My sculptures draw attention to this serious environmental concern which threatens Australia's most remarkable natural wonder, the Great Barrier Reef. I have used a range of materials to create the artwork such as bubble wrap, Styrofoam and doilies, and my intention is to delight and surprise the viewer by transforming refuse into beautiful works of art.*



**Fiona Hall**

### **Collection Statement:**

In Fiona Hall's *Drift net* 1998 a two-tiered glass display cabinet contains three solitary objects; on the top shelf a bough of bleached coral is intricately crafted from glass beads and mother of pearl buttons, a glass bottle is engraved with the names of seaweeds and ships' knots and on the bottom shelf, serpentine plumbing conduit, perforated beyond use, holds a compass at its end. These three objects lie stranded within the cabinet as dubious trophies of progress. *Drift net* is a contemporary critique of environmental devastation. The work continues Hall's fascination with natural history and colonisation as a gigantic trans-continental drift net that catches everything in its wake.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

The works of Romina Lyn You Lee and Fiona Hall are both sculptures. Describe the works in detail, focusing on their structural qualities and presentation.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

Investigate how both Lee and Hall have used a variety of objects to make a comment on environmental concerns and humanity's impact on the world. Analyse the use of manufactured materials to represent nature and the environment in the works of Romina Lyn You Lee and Fiona Hall. You Lee uses polystyrene and Hall uses beads to represent coral. Discuss the irony in these choices.

#### **Practice:**

Hall has a wide and varied practice utilising a plethora of mediums and techniques. Explore her practice by comparing and contrasting this work to one of her more recent works. Focus on materials and construction methods. Similarly, evaluate the construction process and material choice used by Lee to create her work *The Great Bleached Reef* 2010.



**Romina Lyn You Lee**  
Abbotsleigh Wahroonga  
*The Great Bleached Reef* (detail) (2010)  
Sculpture

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**Fiona HALL** *Drift net* (detail) 1998

pvc pipe, glass beads, mother of pearl buttons, wire,  
engraved bottle, compass, vitrine, 129.0 x 160.0 x 76.0 cm

Purchased with assistance from the Newcastle Gallery Society 2004  
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection

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**Georgia Stanton**

### **ARTEXPRESS Artist Statement:**

*My body of work is an exploration of the cycle of life. I was interested in the way the human life never ends and through death we give rise to another cycle. Through my work I also wanted to express the impact of nature providing various intersecting cycles which add to the complexity of the human life. Artists such as Bill Viola and Bill Henson inspired my work through their highly emotive artworks that emphasise the intensity of a black background illuminating and engulfing the subjects in an eerie atmosphere. My work attempts to replicate these features through my choice of digital camera equipment and Photoshop manipulation which has allowed for heightened shadows in the chiaroscuro style - a main feature of the Vanitas tradition, another major influence to my work. The title of my work is a reference to the work created by Xu bing which used the dust he collected in Chinatown (Manhattan) after 9/11*



**Robyn Stacey**

### **Collection Statement:**

Robyn Stacey's large and lustrous photographs restage the collections of former generations. Among her subjects are the gardens and collections of Alexander Macleay, appointed as colonial secretary of New South Wales in 1826. The Macleay collections of bulbous plants, which proliferated in the now lost botanic gardens at Elizabeth Bay House in Sydney, provided Stacey with the inspiration for *Bombe (cape bulbs)* 2009. The title of the work (*Bombe*) refers to the baroque styled vase, which rests on an example of Australian red cedar furniture from around 1820. Stacey revives the tradition of still life, a genre of painting that was at the height of its powers and popularity in seventeenth century Holland. The presence of fruit, flowers and often insects communicated the brevity of life and the inevitability of death in these vanitas paintings from the past – Stacey consciously reworks these traditions in her practice.

### **Curriculum Linkages**

#### **Frames:**

Using the structural frame compare and contrast Georgia Stanton's and Robyn Stacey's works. Consider the subject matter, background, vantage point, cropping and presentation of the work.

#### **Conceptual Framework:**

The representation of fruit and flowers has a strong cultural tradition in European art. Investigate the way Stanton and Stacey acknowledge this tradition by comparing and contrasting these works to a still-life painting of your choice in the vanitas tradition.

#### **Practice:**

Both artists have used photography to represent objects that have a transient existence, fruit and flowers. Discuss the idea of photography as an art form beyond documentary photography. How do the two approaches differ, what do they share?



**Georgia Stanton**

Loreto Kirribilli

*"If there is nothing from the first, where does  
the dust collect itself?" Hui-neng*

Photomedia

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**Robyn Stacey** *Bombe (cape bulbs)* 2009.  
type C print on paper, 118.2 x 148.8 cm  
Purchased in memory of Warwick Smithson from funds  
from the Smithson family 2010  
Newcastle Region Art Gallery collection

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