



THE UNIVERSITY OF
**WESTERN
AUSTRALIA**

Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery



Education Kit

The Long Kiss Goodbye | 8 February — 9 May 2020

Education Kit

EXHIBITION TITLE: The Long Kiss Goodbye

PARTNERS: Perth Festival

ARTISTS: Sarah Contos, Penny Coss, Iain Dean, Michele Elliot, Brent Harris, Clare Peake

The Curator's Exhibition Concept:

The 2020 Perth Festival has a focus on home and place, in particular on Western Australian artists and stories. The group exhibition *The Long Kiss Goodbye* was built around the work of several artists with connections to Western Australia, and broadly considers the role of influence and exchange in artistic practice. A key artwork, from which the exhibition will take its title, is the work by Sarah Contos, *Sarah Contos Presents: The Long Kiss Goodbye*, on loan from the Art Gallery of South Australia.

A large-scale textile work, it was the winner of the inaugural Ramsey Prize in 2017 and has not been exhibited outside of South Australia following that acquisitive prize. The exhibition also includes a selection of new and existing works from four other Australian artists who are, like Contos, connected in different ways to WA.

Each artist has a personal vocabulary that anchors their work to an artistic canon, while also seeking influences from other disciplines, referencing or pursuing collaborations with other artists, or shifting focus in relation to the places they come to inhabit.

The exhibition is primarily driven by relationships of form - between sculpture and painting, for example, or the repetition of motifs in different media, across different objects, with a priority on materiality, texture and visual pleasure. Built into these works is a system of relationships that expands the experience of the object to include questions of context and 'situation', and through that network alludes to a broader definition of Western Australian creative practice that looks outward as well as inward.

Sarah Contos, for example, draws from her training in set and costume design at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, rather than from a canon of sculpture, together with installation and art historical references she assimilated through undergraduate art school.

Brent Harris is a Victorian painter whose career has been strongly supported by Western Australian collectors and institutions. As a result of this Western Australian presence, his work has been a key influence on contemporary Western Australian painter Iain Dean - a former winner of the Black Swan Prize for portraiture with his painting of fellow artist Pilar Mata Dupont.

Iain Dean has pursued a personal and professional relationship with Harris and in 2019 the artists produced a body of work in collaboration as part of a mentorship supported by the Australia Council for the Arts. The exhibition showcases their collaborative work as well as works by each individual.

Penny Coss's painting practice is expanding to incorporate sculptural elements, responding to a variety of real, imagined and remembered landscapes. Coss's practice presents an illustration of the influence that artist residencies can have on an artist, whereby an experience of temporary dislocation from home, together with travel and the immersion in a new place can fundamentally shift creative direction. Through the production of a body of new works the artist has been processing the experience of a residency she had in Iceland.

Michele Elliot is a visual artist, educator and occasional writer whose practice spans sculpture, installation, textiles and drawing. Encompassing material explorations in relation to human connectivity, mapping and memory, her artworks have been included in a number of national and international exhibitions. Her survey exhibition, *some kind of longing: textile works 1995-2018*, was held in 2018 at the Tamworth Regional Gallery.

She has been artist in residence at Tender Funerals in Port Kembla since 2017, where she has been assisting bereaved families to find creative expression and ritual for their person. She also facilitates a fortnightly sewing circle as part of Tender's after care support work.

Clare Peake is now based in Alice Springs, via Broome and Perth. Through her practice, she has been grappling with the experience of, for the first time in her life, being entirely land-locked. There are formal echoes reflected in

the work - for example, the abstraction of the figure, a tension between synthetic colour and organic form, and both 'failure' and 'fragment', which compose a greater whole. In addition, references to a personal and idiosyncratic spirituality; alongside motifs that recall nebula, fireworks and other 'cosmic' forms that are neither wholly micro nor macro have been introduced - these will unite her works in the exhibition as a whole.

The 'kiss goodbye' in the exhibition title refers, therefore, not just to Contos's work, but to shifting relationships of proximity, distance, attraction, repulsion, possession and longing.

The exhibition is curated by Gemma Weston and supported by the LWAG exhibitions team.

The Curator's proposal for the exhibition is directed towards the objectives of:

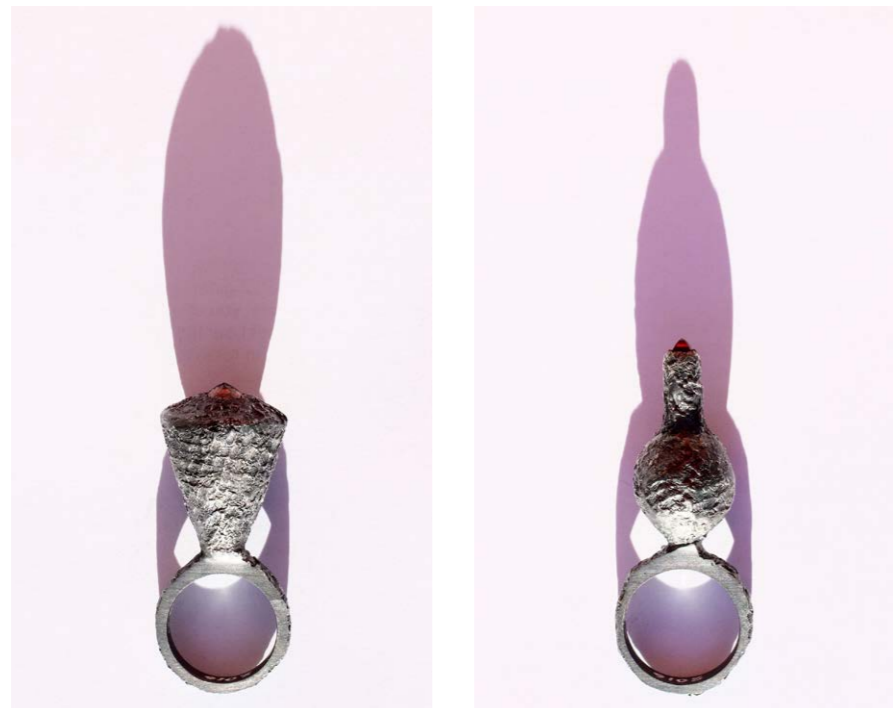
- The re-introduction of Western Australian art into the Festival program
- Promotion of experimental work in traditional media and within a Festival context
- Support, development and presentation of ambitious work by WA artists
- Development of a broader consciousness of WA's position in a national arts conversation and an expanded definition of Western Australian art
- Development of LWAG lender relationships with public galleries and private collectors
- Introduction of WA & LWAG audiences to new artists
- Presentation of significant work by emerging and established industry leaders



Sarah Contos, *Sarah Contos Presents: The Long Kiss Goodbye*, 2016, screen-print on linen, canvas and lamé, digital printed fabrics and various found fabrics, PVC, poly-fil, glass, ceramic and plastic beads, thread, artists' gloves, 330 x 610 x 25cm, Gift of the James & Diana Ramsey Foundation for the Ramsay Art Prize 2017, Art Gallery of South Australia. Photograph courtesy the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney.



Penny Coss, *Stains of the Heavens*, canvas and wood, 200 x 200 cm, courtesy the artist.



Clare Peake, *Things are never ending: 7 rings for 7 days* (detail), 2018, oxidised Sterling silver, past visual diary ashes, hessonite garnet, 7 parts, dimensions variable, (fabrication and design assistance: Max Butcher & Rose Megirian, Many Peaks Assembly). State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia, Purchased through the Art Gallery of Western Australia Foundation: Tomorrow Fund, 2019.



Brent Harris, *The Other Side*, 2016, oil on linen, 244 x 175cm. Courtesy a Private Collection, © Courtesy the artist.



Iain Dean, *I Am A Joke But At Least I'm Not You*, 2017, oil on canvas, 170 x 120cm, courtesy the artist.

Education Kit: Materiality, Purpose and Practice

Social, Cultural and Historical Context

The manipulation of media and materials assists artists to communicate their ideas to their audiences. Both Clare Peake and Michele Elliot are Australian multidisciplinary artists whose work practice spans a variety of media and they selectively choose the materials that assist them to transmit meaning.

Both artists also select and adapt various media techniques so as to communicate particular messages, re-purposing materials and often exalting and/or acknowledging past owners of them with the purpose of seeking an 'essence'. Thoughtfulness and attention to process underpins both of these artists' practices.

Clare Peake's work often embodies ritual, alchemy, the tracing of thought processes, and the recording of transformation. Her work acknowledges the creative process as procedural, with evidence of both creation and destruction often being present in her practice. "Her work investigates the process of building an idea or an image of something by looking at how it becomes restructured through the process of translating it into a tangible form." (LWAG, 2012). Through her artistic practice, Peake explores the ways in which knowledge and ideas are gathered and constructed.

Peake's work can be seen as physical manifestation of the thought processes – the drawing of ideas, with each gesture a modification of a previous one (PICA, 2009).

Michele Elliot's artwork often includes sculpture and installation, embracing a wide range of materials, however, her focus is primarily on textiles, exploring how meaning can be embedded in this medium. Elliot's practice is informed by human connections and relationships and the recording of these over time.

She has described clothing as a second skin that encloses and protects the wearer. (Sagar, 2018). Her artwork includes installations of torn or re-purposed garments that are meticulously over-stitched to reference a connection to the individual who once wore it. Some of Michele's work often uses the kantha* stitch, which evokes the mindful approach to its creation. The repetitive and physical nature of this type of embroidery communicates across cultures and embellishes objects so as to imbue them with personal connections, thereby celebrating and transforming them.

Although Elliot's work with textiles accesses some traditional methods of embellishment, it is rarely employed for the creation of functional items. The actual process of production accesses generational traditions and rituals, but is transformed into artworks that evoke thoughts about humanity, connection and memory.

References

Sagar, A. 2018. *Stitching in public, stitching in private*. Retrieved from <http://tenderfunerals.org/2017/12/28/stitching-public-stitching-private/>

Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, *Here and Now*, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.lwgallery.uwa.edu.au/exhibitions/past/2012-and-prior/here-and-now/artists/clare-peake2>

Perth Institute of Art, Artist in Residence, Clare Peake, 2009. Retrieved from <http://pica.org.au/show/clare-peake-2/>



Michele Elliot, *the confidantes (robin)*, 2018, giclée print on Hahnemuhle rag, 38.5 x 41cm, courtesy the artist

Translating Themes into the Classroom

General Year 11 Visual Arts

Unit 1 – Experiences

This unit of work will be focused on addressing the syllabus requirements for Unit 1 of the General course where students are asked to base their “art making and interpretation, on their lives and personal experiences, observations of the immediate environment, events and/or special occasions.” (SCSA, 2018)

The focus on art forms, media and techniques in this unit of work provides students with opportunities to work flexibly, discover innovative solutions and develop original approaches to art making through exploration and experimentation.” (SCSA, 2018)

This unit of work encourages students to use traditional and new media areas, which involves exploring, selecting and manipulating materials, techniques and processes. Through the exploration of themes and materials, this wearable art project aims to promote an appreciation for the environment and ecological sustainability.

The following outcomes from the SCSA Year 11 General Syllabus will be addressed:

Outcome 1 – Visual arts ideas

Students are requested to use creative processes to research, develop and communicate art ideas:

- research and generate ideas
- use visual language (elements and principles of art) to express ideas
- develop and refine ideas for specific purposes, contexts and audiences

Outcome 2 – Visual arts skills, techniques and processes

Students use creative skills, techniques, processes, technologies and conventions to produce resolved artworks:

- use art elements and principles in the production of artworks
- use skills, techniques and processes to complete artworks
- select and present artworks for audiences and particular contexts.

Assessment type: Production/Making
TASK 1: PRODUCTION
<i>Wearable Art, Repurposing and Recycling Fashion.</i>
<p>Project Description</p> <p>The following program is a textiles-based activity that lends itself to multiple disciplines such as sculpture, printmaking and painting. Further links can be drawn to issues related to the environment, sustainability and artistic practices.</p> <p>The repurposing of an old shirt or jacket into an artwork will link to themes of recycling and reusing. Consideration is given to the idea that clothing reflects the wearer and their style, while embellishment can be further explored through investigating characteristics of professions and/or occupations.</p>
INQUIRY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students brainstorm and annotate characteristics of different occupations and professions such as: Nurse, Interior Designer, Author, Teacher, Gardener, Mechanic, Doctor, etc. • Choose one and then note the stereotypical characteristics of this occupation/ profession, for example a Doctor – stethoscope, white coat, head-lamp. • Students may then further explore the theme - such as the Doctor is a researcher into bacterial infections; this may lead to imagery related to micro-organisms, microscopes etc. • Using a shirt and the foundation theme, consider how to embellish or manipulate the shirt to reflect the characteristics of that profession. • Create small designs/ sketches that annotate the materials, processes and media that could be used.
VISUAL LANGUAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the materials and techniques that will be needed in order to decorate or manipulate the shirt. • Consider the elements and design principles in the designing of the shirt such as repetition, contrast, colour palette and textures to be used. • Create sketches that explore a variety of ways to communicate the characteristics of this profession/occupation.

VISUAL INFLUENCE
<p>Researching artists, artwork and cultures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research contemporary artists who use textiles, including Michele Elliot, Clare Peake and/or Sarah Contos. • Consider the ways in which these artist collect and repurpose materials. • Consider the variety of techniques that they utilise in order to embellish and manipulate the textile medium.
ART FORMS, MEDIA AND TECHNIQUES
<p>Working with a variety of media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the incorporation of a variety of techniques, such as screen-printing, painting, stitching and/or applique. • Three dimensional items can be attached to the shirt through stitching or using glue. • The shirt can be reshaped and reconstructed. <p>Materials experimentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect and explore ways of using various materials to decorate and adorn the shirt. • Record and annotate your media testing, make notes about the selection and application of materials, techniques and processes.
ART PRACTICE
<p>Begin construction of the shirt</p> <p>Create the shirt using the appropriate techniques and processes according to your materials experimentation, ideas development and research.</p>
PRESENTATION
<p>Display your artwork with your self-evaluation</p> <p>Consider how you will present your final artwork and your self-evaluation.</p> <p>What additional considerations will you need to make when presenting your work e.g. fixtures/ location/props?</p>

REFLECTION
<p>Describe the process of drawing, designing and researching ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the process of designing your work. • What research did you undertake? • How did your research influence the development of your ideas? • What aspects about the design process did you find most challenging?
<p>Complete a self-evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present your artwork for exhibition. • Write a self-evaluation that describes the process of creating your artwork. • Reflect on all the steps involved in designing, experimenting, researching and producing your sculpture.
<p>Evaluate the success of your artwork and achievement in this project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the emotion and concepts developed in your work.
<p>What emotion and concepts did you develop in your work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the personality, feelings, age, gender and attributes of your wearable art.
<p>Explain the decisions and steps involved in producing your artwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain steps and decisions you took in the process of designing and creating your work i.e. This is the procedure I went through in order to construct my wearable art. "I began by... then I... next I... and then..." • Evaluate the success of your artwork and achievement in this project.
<p>Evaluate the overall success of your artwork.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What might you have done differently? • Identify any areas for future improvement. • Have you enjoyed the challenge of working with recycled clothing?

Examples of wearable art



References

School Curriculum Standards Authority, 2018. Year 11 General Course retrieved from <https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/arts/visual-arts>

Further resources for the classroom

- <http://www.abc.net.au/btn/resources/teacher/episode/20170509-fashionwaste.pdf>
- <https://www.abc.net.au/btn/resources/teacher/episode/20131105-greenart.pdf>
- <https://wearableartmandurah.com/>
- <http://australianwearableart.com.au/>
- <https://www.worldofwearableart.com/competition/>

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Cover image: Penny Coss, *Wrapped Up in a Magellan
Cloud*, 2019, wood and acrylic on canvas, 170 x 140cm,
courtesy the artist.



CULTURAL PRECINCT

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Gallery open
Tues - Sat, 11am - 5pm
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