



Water Falls and Other Features, 2015. Image: Zoe Scoglio and Chris Heywood.

in extremis
1 — 10 Nov 2017
Arts House

Arts House acknowledges that we meet, gather and work on what always was and always will be the territory of the Kulin nation, in particular the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung peoples. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nations people globally.



Image: Courtesy of the artist

4	Introduction
6	in extremis — Essay by Sarah Miller
12	Untitled — wāni
14	Human Sundial Project 3 — Zoe Scoglio
18	Migration Patterns: Saltwater — Leah Barclay
22	Prose — wāni
24	Latitudes — Daniel Browning
28	Repatriate — Latai Taumoepeau
32	The High Ground — Madeleine Flynn, Jen Hector, Tim Humphrey
36	Antipodean Epic — Jill Orr
40	Extremely Risky Business — Essay by Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey
44	Thank you's and Acknowledgements

“This isn’t
about climate
change
anymore,
this is climate
trauma.”

— *Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Climate Activist*

Introduction

Climatic extremes are the new meteorological normal for our planet. This screen and audio-based exhibition offers human, interspecies, plant and geological perspectives, and visceral experiences of the fragility and resilience of ecologies.

in extremis is lightning storms, dry winds, urban heat haze and contorted railway lines; parched riverbeds and flooded cities; panting, sweating, fainting and hallucinating.

This is the space of risk, this is the collapse of systems and the insidious creep of salt and rising sea levels. As Inuit activist Sheila Watt-Cloutier says “This isn’t about climate change anymore, this is climate trauma” and so intimately connected to the ongoing effects of colonisation.

But, this is also about the human story, about revival, joy, cultural and ecological imagination – the space for potential amongst the mess.

Thank you to all the artists for your rigour, your contributions and your integrity. We are honoured to work with you.

— *Josh Wright, Acting Artistic Director Arts House*

I heard the dingoes cry
in the scrub on the Thirty-mile Dry.
I saw the wedgetail take his fill
perching on the seething skull.
I saw the eel wither where he curled
in the last blood-drop of a spent world

“Drought Year” by Judith Wright, 1953

in extremis
Essay by Sarah Miller

1. Simon Albert, et al., "Sea-level Rise has Claimed Five Whole Islands in the Pacific: First Scientific Evidence", *The Conversation*, accessed 3 October 2017, <https://theconversation.com/sea-level-rise-has-claimed-five-whole-islands-in-the-pacific-first-scientific-evidence-58511>.

The first day of Spring and my garden is feeling the heat. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) releases its seasonal update confirming Australia has seen the hottest, and one of the driest winters on record, with temperatures reaching almost 2 degrees Celsius above average. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) update also reveals that more than 190 records were broken for the lowest amount of rainfall in June, while 72 highest daily maximum temperature records were smashed during July across the nation, 35 in New South Wales alone. I hear from a friend, that kookaburras in the southern alps are disappearing; the snakes and lizards that provide essential sustenance are dying, shrivelling up from lack of water.

By early October, I'm on the east coast of the Philippines. Here, in November 2013, Cyclone Haiyan smashed into Eastern Samar Island, causing a storm surge—a wall of water—7.62 metres high in some areas, affecting more than 14 million people across 46 provinces. Five million people saw their homes severely damaged or destroyed. On July 22 this year, there were eight separate tropical cyclones active at one time over the north Pacific Ocean for the first time since 1974. By mid-October, California is ablaze. The magnitude of widespread death and destruction—people, animals, property—sees newspapers describing it as 'Armageddon'. The winds driving the firestorm are described as unprecedented. This is our present moment.

Cyclones, earthquakes, floods, wildfires and tsunamis are the extreme events that make headlines, in response to which, world leaders get to strut and fret on a global stage that pays lip service but takes little meaningful action to prevent or slow the calamitous effects of climate change. Emergency relief and international aid agencies seek to respond to a multiplicity of catastrophic weather events, but while governments and the business sector may support their efforts in the wake of an immediate crisis, there is little political will and less policy nationally or internationally to make changes to our way of life, understood as a matter of individual responsibility. The reluctance of the rich and powerful to acknowledge that we are living with the consequences of global capitalism and the extraction economy, let alone heed the warnings of scientists, environmentalists, farmers and vulnerable communities living with the devastating impacts of the current geological age, the Anthropocene, is breath-taking and may become literally so. Asylum seekers move across the surface of the planet, fleeing homes rendered uninhabitable due to conflict, famine, flood, disaster; very often ending up confined in refugee camps or off-shore detention centres for the crime of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Meanwhile, in the distant Solomon Islands, scientific evidence has shown what was already known to be true anecdotally, that at least five islands have been lost to sea level rise and coastal erosion and a further six islands are severely eroded.¹

Despite, however, the oftentimes overwhelming nature of the accelerating impacts of climate change, people, communities, scientists and artists are finding ways to respond, often working together. The artists in *in extremis* are no exception, creating works that draw on a multiplicity of experiences and interactions with other entities and communities to produce installations and screen-based works that articulate interconnectedness and a deep temporal understanding. They allow us, the audience to experience biological, geological and even cosmological time with a sense of wonder and even hope.

Artists Leah Barclay, Daniel Browning, Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey, Jill Orr, Zoe Scoglio, Latai Tamoepeau, and wāni, are not only focused on anthropogenic climate change - these artists recognise that the despoiling of the planet has not been equally created but overwhelmingly by resource-hungry, predominately white, western and male colonisers. Implicit therefore, in many of the works, is the understanding that we do

not own the terrestrial, aquatic or atmospheric environments that have been so egregiously corrupted, but are instead intrinsically interconnected in a multiplicity of complex, often unfathomable ways. This perspective, popularised in recent years by London-born, ‘dark ecologist’, Timothy Morton,² is perhaps the most recent discovery in the west, of what First Nations people have known for millennia: homo-sapiens neither own nor are ‘masters’ of the planet; we are just one of its “expressions”.³

Confined within a glass tank, Sydney-based artist, Latai Tamoepeau, enacts the dances of her Tongan heritage as water gradually fills the tank. Moving expressively, and despite the tragi-comedy of the yellow floaties worn to keep her head above water, *Repatriate* is a ritual for our times, demanding our considered attention. As the water continues to rise in the tank, the work moves through several emotional registers: welcome, loss, grief, and yearning.

Melbourne-based wāni on the other hand, employs everyday technologies: his iPhone and camera, to respond through sight, sound and movement, to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of refugees and the stories that are told about them. As the Arts House, Listening Program Artist-in-Residence, wāni’s evolving project seeks to decentre whiteness, and undo the erasure of colour, telling stories of dispossession that seek to decolonise climate action.

Daniel Browning’s (Bundjalung and Kullilli) decolonising preoccupation with ‘sacred geography’ takes us to three UNESCO world heritage sites which we experience as a three-part song cycle called *Latitudes*. Each is a mix of field-recording (Browning) and composition (Suzanne Crome) and each is accompanied by a documentary. What connects the three sites is the practice of culture and mark-making over millennia. What differentiates them is the quality of sound in each place: emptiness, a trick of the wind, the sound of water, bamboo flutes, pine cones dropping, footsteps on gravel or soft clay, and the way each demands a different mode of attentiveness, of being present. Time—“extended duration”—as Performance Studies scholar, Adrian Heathfield points out, “nearly always involves the collapse of objective measure”...and “will often be accompanied by the spatial senses of expansion, suspension, or collapse, or by reverential, chaotic, or cosmic phenomena, as notions of temporal distinction are undone.”⁴

Part one of *Latitudes*, ‘The Crucible’, takes us to Lake Mungo in the far south-west of New South Wales. Lake Mungo is a sacred site, a vast and ancient dry lake bed where the marks of human passage—footprints from more than forty thousand years ago—are not only visible but legible to Pintupi trackers today. Its deceptive emptiness demands attentiveness: a single tree amplifies meaning, a rainbow can feel like a sound, while the wind rising through the trees, quietly announces the spirit of Mungo Woman who abides there still. In part two, ‘The Bridge’, Browning walks the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route on the Kii Peninsula in southern Honshu, Japan. In this place walking is a spiritual practice, a meditation in looking down, where the people are as warm and open as the conditions are gruelling and the trees magnificent. The sound quality is denser here, in this place of deep human purpose and reverence for nature. The third part of the song-cycle, ‘The Labyrinth’, draws on field recordings from Valcamonica, a glacial rock art gallery in the province of Brescia, Italy. Unlike Australia or Japan, this site has been continuously populated, yet remains somehow disconnected from its ancient past. Inscribed with between 140,000 and 300,000 rock carvings dating back to at least the eighth century BCE, Browning imagines the sound of carving sandstone and the acoustics of this ancient stone cathedral to be as important as the petroglyphs themselves.

2. See Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).
3. Physicist Adam Frank quoting American science fiction author, Kim Stanley Robinson describing humans as “an expression of the planet” in “Climate Change and the Astrobiology of the Anthropocene”, weblog post 1 October 2016, *cosmos & culture*, accessed 3 October 2017, <http://www.npr.org/sections/13.7/2016/10/01/495437158/climate-change-and-the-astrobiology-of-the-anthropocene./sections/13.7/2016/10/01/495437158/climate-change-and-the-astrobiology-of-the-anthropocene>.
4. Adrian Heathfield, “Durational Aesthetics” in Beatrice von Bismark [and four others] (eds.) *Timing: on the Temporal Dimension of Exhibiting* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), 142.

The magnitude of widespread death and destruction—people, animals, property—sees newspapers describing it as ‘Armageddon’. The winds driving the firestorm are described as unprecedented. This is our present moment.

Rising waters. The world's oceans extend over three-quarters of the surface of the globe, and the great whales travel those oceans, traversing vast distances according to the season; responsive not only to dramatically changing ocean temperatures which affect how, when and where they mate, but also to the increasingly noisy aquatic environment.⁵ Brisbane-based Leah Barclay, who seeks to bring the infrasonic and ultrasonic song of humpback whales into our auditory range, has been recording the changing song of humpbacks in the Great Sandy Strait which separates Fraser Island from Queensland's coastline. She employs hydrophone (underwater) recordings, not only to understand the future of rivers, oceans, and marine life, but the effects of global warming on "sonic migration patterns and shifting ecologies from the smallest micro crustaceans to the largest marine mammals on the planet."⁶ Barclay has created an immersive, 3-D sonic environment through which audiences can experience not only the haunting song of the humpback whale, but the sensation of whales and dolphins swimming around us.

From the depths of the ocean to the air around us to the earth beneath our feet, "human civilization" is, as physicist Adam Frank describes, "currently harvesting around 100 billion megawatt hours of energy each year and...dumping 36 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the planetary system, which is why the atmosphere is holding more heat and the oceans are acidifying."⁷ Perhaps even more daunting is the thought that 75 per cent of the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere right now will still be there in half a millennium, impacting on people and species we can't even begin to imagine. This reality lends an acute tension to *The High Ground*, the work created by collaborating artist-duo, Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphries. With their collaborators, they have constructed an experiential space for existential risk-taking created through sonic metaphors (bangs, crashes, shrieks and whimpers) and rising temperatures. Ascending the clock tower stairs, visitors must negotiate an increasingly precarious and fragile environment in order for one person to reach the top.

Yet planet earth continues to spin, endlessly it seems, in a universe full of countless planets, stars, galaxies, dark matter. Zoe Scoglio deliberates on the innate connection of our being to the earth's system, and beyond that the universe in her project, *Human Sundial Project 3*. In this work she invites audience members to consider the visual metaphor of a rotating rock as it tumbles through space so that we might think ourselves into the experience of traveling through time and space. As the image fades to black, the sonic score—utilising percussive and vocal loops, harmonics and subliminal binaural beats—evokes a sense of deep geological time as a way of helping people to think through our all-of-life-threatening crisis. The work seeks to place us in a geological context rather than, as Scoglio describes, "the self-referential, urban lifestyles that most of us inhabit."⁸ Again, as Heathfield writes, "Time arises in duration in its indivisibility and its incapacity to become an object of thought, analysis or representation"⁹, but it may be that the experience of deep geological time can be evoked through the embodied experience of installations which invite us to meditate on, and open our ears to, the sounds of the cosmos.

Land-clearing and deforestation have been devastating for both terrestrial and marine environments, and the cause of mass extinctions globally. In already devastated Queensland, "land clearing soared to a staggering 400,000 or so hectares in 2015–16, a near 30% increase on the previous year."¹⁰ The impact of land-clearing and mining are made tangible in Jill Orr's *Antipodean Epic* which depicts the emergence of fabulous hybrid creatures who may be a premonition of the future or perhaps a remnant of our prehistoric past. Shot in the irrigation area around Mildura in North Western Victoria, these works move from the green and flourishing paradise inside the irrigation zone, to the arid salt plains immediately adjacent.

5. See Francesco Filicetto and Giuseppa Buscaino, "The Role of Sound in the Aquatic Environment" in Almo Farino and Stuart H. Gage (eds.), *Ecoacoustics: The Ecological Role of Sounds* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2017).
6. Leah Barclay, pers. comm., 19 September 2017.
7. Adam Frank, "Is Climate Change Inevitable?", *New York Times*, 17 January 2015, accessed 3 October 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/18/opinion/sunday/is-a-climate-disaster-inevitable.html?_r=0.
8. Zoe Scoglio, pers. comm., 17 September 2017.
9. *Ibid.*, 142.
10. Euan Ritchie, et al., "Australia's Species Need an Independent Champion", *The Conversation*, accessed 13 October 2017, <https://theconversation.com/australias-species-need-an-independent-champion-83580>.

11. Alex Blasdel, "A Reckoning for our Species: the Philosopher Prophet of the Anthropocene", *The Guardian*, 15 June 2017, accessed 3 October 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jun/15/timothy-morton-anthropocene-philosopher>.

Dust haze creates dramatic light effects in the wheat fields of Mildura where a strange bird-like figure arises from the land. A fantastical strawman staggers through the devastated and smouldering landscape of the gypsum mines. In these visually spectacular works, featuring totemic creatures in a ritualised drama, Jill Orr is focused on a big question, manifested through tiny seeds, those containers of life essential to feeding the planet. Whether in its pure and untampered (heritage) state or in its genetically modified form, seed is, as Orr herself points out, contested ground.

The title of this exhibition, *in extremis*, while speaking to our current circumstance, belies the hopeful yet modest claims made by each of the participating artists who seek to create intimate spaces for reflection, to nudge us into discomfort, to create textured sonic experiences and moving (in both the emotional and physical senses) images. Whatever their individual approaches, these artists, all of whom are informed by their collaborations with scientists, and diverse communities of interest, collectively ask us to move beyond our sense of despair, or limitation, to take the time to watch, listen, feel, think and respond; to imagine other ways of being, new practices for living in this time-place, and to extend our concern to all species, the planet and the universe. This means, as writer Alex Blasdel describes, "changing our relationship with the other entities in the universe—whether animal, vegetable or mineral—from one of exploitation through science to one of solidarity in ignorance."¹¹ In that coming together lies not only our best hope for the future, but also the opportunity to regain our senses and our sensitivity to wonder and belonging in the world.

— Sarah Miller, October 2017

Sarah Miller is Professor of Performance, and Head: School of the Arts, English and Media, University of Wollongong. Thank you to artist and scholar, Dr Barbara Campbell.



Image by Mette Kortelain

Untitled wāni

2017
Video and
audio

Artistic Credits

Translation:

Hamile Ibrahim

Sound Collaborator:

Marco Cher-Gibard

*wāni is Artist-in-Residence
for Arts Houses's The Listening
Program, as part of Refuge.*

Artist Statement

Coloniality's imposition of westernised systemic structures through globalisation has literally brought our climate to its current condition, where the most vulnerable and marginalised are often the most devastated by climate change. This new audio/visual work-in-development has explored displacement, erasure, antiblackness and stories of dispossession that decentre whiteness, where our resilience and fight for survival in this climate that stands to see our destruction, is a light to all those still struggling and fighting for self determination.

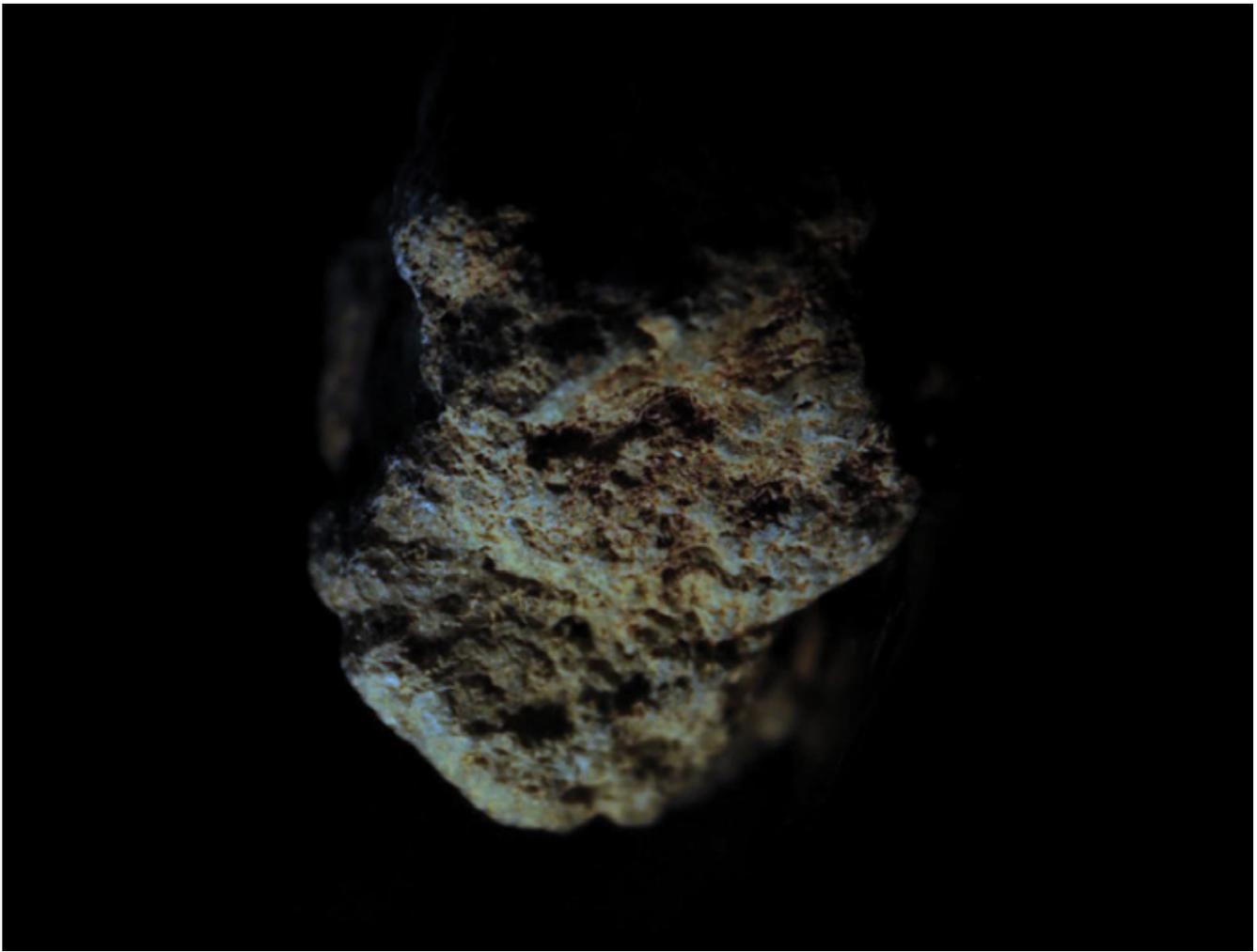


Image: Human Sundial; Zoe Scoglio 2012

Human Sundial Project 3 Zoe Scoglio

2012 – 2017
10mins
An audio visual
installation

Artistic Credits

Lead Artist:

Zoe Scoglio

Sound Collaborator:

Marco Cher-Gibard

Artist Statement

Human Sundial Project 3 is an invitation to travel through time and space whilst being still.

Adapted and reworked specifically for *in extremis*, it is part of an ongoing exploration that considers our human experience within the context of geological deep time and deep space. Creating images both within the screen and the audience's mind's eye, this project draws attention to the vast revolutionary movements and related rhythms of our planet.

Human Sundial Project 3 is interested in making the planetary personal and reminding us of the earth system that we are collectively part of. In response to this Epoch of the Anthropocene, where humans are changing the planet on a geological timeframe, I'm interested in exploring what practices might provide us a deeper awareness of our embodied existence and better equip us to address the global environmental destruction we are living through.

Biographies

Zoe Scoglio

Lead Artist

Zoe Scoglio works across performance, video, sound and installation to create interdisciplinary, site-responsive and participatory projects.

In response to this era of the Anthropocene, Zoe's practice focuses on the way our lives and physical form are intrinsically connected with the geological world. Her projects draw upon her training in media arts, voice and body-centric practice, often combining animate and inanimate bodies in a relational choreography.

Working across diverse sites and contexts, projects include Green Room Award Winning *MASS* at Calder Park Raceway (Field Theory, Site is Set 2015) and *Shifting Ground* (Arts House 2012, Glasgow 2014 and Operadagen Rotterdam 2016).

Some recent collaborative and solo projects have been commissioned through Western Treatment Plant (2017), MCA's C3West w/PYT (2016), The Unconformity Festival (2016), Liquid Architecture (2015) and Festival of Live Art (2015). She also works as a video designer and videographer for dance, music, theatre and opera.

Marco Cher-Gibard

Sound Collaborator

Marco Cher-Gibard is an artist working with sound. His practice foregrounds live process and often employs DIY approaches and custom software as part of sound making process. He is a constant collaborator in performance contexts and an occasional performer.

Marco has performed and toured nationally and internationally as a musician, including China, France, Japan, South Korea and more. His work as a sound designer and composer won a Greenroom award in 2015 and has been nominated a number of times. Recent endeavors include work for Back to Back Theatre, Chunky Move, Ridiculusmus, Samara Hersch and Lara Thoms, Zoe Scoglio, Shian Law, Rebecca Jensen, Malthouse Theatre and performances for Bendigo International Festival of Exploratory Music.

Marco also currently teaches Studio Production for the School of Art at RMIT University, Melbourne.



Water Falls and Other Features, 2015. Image: Zoe Scoglio and Chris Heywood.



Leah Barclay Hydrophone Recording; Image: Robert Munden

Migration Patterns: Saltwater Leah Barclay

2017
Multi-channel
sound
installation

Artistic Credits

Sound Artist:
Leah Barclay

Artist Statement

The ocean is a complex acoustic environment, where marine life is reliant on sound to communicate and survive. Sound is felt, reflected and absorbed in aquatic ecosystems. It propagates underwater at different speeds and is affected by temperature, pressure and salinity. The impacts of climate change are often very visible in terrestrial environments, yet dramatic changes in marine ecosystems are going unnoticed simply due to visibility. Increased anthropogenic noise and rising temperatures continue to cause unfathomable ecological disruptions that are dramatically transforming the acoustic ecologies of our oceans.

Migration Patterns:

Saltwater is an immersive sound installation exploring the fragility and complexity of marine life that live in a world of sound and vibration. Drawing on a large database of hydrophone (underwater) recordings from the coastline of Queensland, this work traces sonic migration patterns and shifting ecologies from the smallest micro crustaceans to the largest marine mammals on the planet. The recordings focus around the Great Sandy Biosphere Reserve and K'Gari (Fraser

Island), a major transitory point for humpback whales on their southern migration. The whale song continues to adapt and evolve in response to changing environments and the recordings are contributing to ongoing scientific research on the value of aquatic acoustic ecology in climate action.

This installation immerses listeners in the depths of marine ecosystems and transposes infrasonic and ultrasonic recordings into perceptible ranges for humans. The soundscapes are layered and sculpted into a dense and unpredictable sonic environment that navigates the ocean through auditory data and embodied listening.

Biographies

Leah Barclay

Sound Artist

Leah Barclay is an Australian sound artist, composer and researcher working at the intersection of art, science and technology. She specialises in electroacoustic music, acoustic ecology and emerging fields of biology exploring environmental patterns and changes through sound. Her work has been commissioned, performed and exhibited to wide acclaim internationally by organisations including Smithsonian Museum, UNESCO, Ear to the Earth, Al Gore's Climate Reality and the IUCN.

Leah composes complex sonic environments, immersive live performances and interactive installations that draw attention to changing climates and fragile ecosystems.

She is currently the director of Biosphere Soundscapes and a research fellow at the Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University.



Recording Humpback Whales; Image: Elisa Girola

“To the spirits that still rise these waters,
still nourish these lands and still walk these halls,
May your offsprings have eternal protection,
May their protection be our guide
May your guidance be our truth
And may your freedom be our peace
So that they may know peace,
So that you may know peace,
So that we may know peace.”

Hii ni kwa watunzaji wa ardhi ambayo kazi hizi zilifanyika,
tunashukuru kwa mchango wenu,
hii ni kwa mizimu yote iliotutengenezea njia mpaka tumefika hapa
tulipo leo..
tunawaenzi.

Kwa kila mzawa aliyepita ambae damu yake ilimwagwika ili siku moja
kizazi chake kije kuona maisha bora ya baadae tunasema
asante.

Kwa kila pepo iinuayo maji haya,
irutubishe ardhi yetu na izidi kutembea juu ya jukwaa hili,

Nawaombea watoto wawe na ulinzi daima na milele ulinzi wao uwe
muongozo kwetu.

Muongozo wenu uwe kweli yetu Na uhuru wenu uwe amani kwetu.

Ili wajue amani,
ili uijue amani,
ili na sisi tuijue amani..
Katika kuenzi harakati za kufanya maamuzi binafsi,
tuendelee kusimama pamoja tukiwa wamoja.

— wāni



Image: Daniel Browning

The crucible
Daniel Browning
2015
Field recordings at Lake
Mungo with original music by
Suzanne Cromb
Duration: 10:46

The bridge
Daniel Browning
2015
Field recordings on the Kumano
Kodo in Japan with original
music by Suzanne Cromb
Duration: 9:24

The labyrinth
Daniel Browning
2015
Field recordings in
Valcamonica in northern
Italy with original music
by Suzanne Cromb
Duration: 11:05

Latitudes Daniel Browning

Artistic Credits

Sound Artist:

Daniel Browning

Composer:

Suzanne Cromb

Participating Artists:

Daniel Browning, Daniel Crooks, Camilla Franzoni, Julie Gough, Jonathan Kimberley, Mishka Henner, Sasha Huber, puralia meenamatta (Jim Everett), Ricky Mitchell, Kumpei Miyata, Daryl Pappin, Koji Ryui, Yhonnie Scarce & Lyota Yagi

Sound Engineering:

Mark Don for ABC Radio National

Artist Statement

Latitudes is a sound work inspired by three UNESCO World Heritage sites: Lake Mungo in south-western New South Wales, the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route in Japan and the Valcamonica rock art valley in northern Italy. As sites of human occupation and refuge, each of the locations speak of cataclysm, alienation, adaptability and return.

At Mungo we interpret some of the oldest Ice Age human footprints etched in a claypan to suggest human continuity and survival in the harshest continent on earth, battered by glaciation and drought. The lung-bursting vertical ascents into the mountains of the Kii Peninsula in Japan remind us of the spiritual dimension of the landscape while in northern Italy we can only guess at the meaning of the world's largest collection of rock engravings.

The three sites – Mungo, the Kumano Kodo and Valcamonica - are reimagined as a crucible, a bridge and a labyrinth. In the basin of Lake Mungo, we find a crucible where environmental and human forces coalesce: a natural disaster, the drying of the Willandra Lakes system 15,000 years ago, and the flourishing of human adaptation in response. By engaging a

group of international artists in the spiritual practice of walking, the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage route forms a bridge between vast continents shaped by disparate almost incompatible knowledge systems. In Valcamonica we return to the beginning of Western iconography – and one of the first iterations of the labyrinth - but instead we find the impermanence of cultural meaning through image-making. In a circular way, we are led back to the claypan at Lake Mungo.

Biographies

Daniel Browning

Sound artist

Daniel Browning is an Aboriginal journalist and radio broadcaster. A descendant of the Bundjalung and Kullilli peoples of far northern New South Wales and south-western Queensland, Daniel presents and produces *Awaye!*, the Indigenous art and culture program on ABC RN which surveys contemporary cultural practice across the arts spectrum. A visual arts graduate, Daniel is also a widely-published arts writer.



Image: Daniel Browning



Image: Daniel Browning



Image: Daniel Browning



Image: Courtesy of the artist

Repatriate Latai Taumoepeau

2015
26:00 min.
Five channel
HD video

Artistic Credits

Co-author:

Latai Taumoepeau

Co-author:

Elias Nohra

Editor & Visual Effects:

Bec Stegh

Sound Designer:

James Brown

Artist Statement

Australia's nearest island neighbours in the Pacific Ocean are already severely impacted by extreme weather shifts, increased tropical storms, sea level rise and the contamination of the water table affecting food gardens. *Repatriate* brings this experience of climate change anxiety closer to the Australian people and all audiences.

Repatriate was made in 2015 the same year Immigration Minister Peter Dutton was caught making light of the plight of Pacific Island people with Prime Minister Tony Abbott. He was recorded saying "time doesn't mean anything when you're about to have water lapping at your door".

Disappointed and offended at Australian leadership, Latai counteracts this behaviour by layering diverse perspectives and questions. The work enables audiences to access a more holistic and engaging experience of climate change as a social justice issue that affects economic disparity, dispossession and forced emigration. *Repatriate* centres the invisible fight of the indigenous Pacific people. A complex work that sits at the nexus of dance and visual arts, *Repatriate* makes references to the utopian 'Pacific

holiday destination’ and the ethnographic gaze of the Pacific region. Centring the metaphoric dance on five small iPads that are mounted on one wall of a dark purpose built tunnel within the gallery, the audience is not only confronted by the visuals but also implicated by the artist as a by-stander within the confined space.

A collaborative work co-authored with Elias Nohra for the ‘24 Frames Per Second’ exhibition commissioned by Carriageworks in Sydney, *Repatriate* has been shown at the Limerick Festival of Light in Ireland and Ace Open Adelaide.

Biographies

Latai Taumoepeau

Co-author

Latai is a Punake, body-centred performance artist; her story is of her homelands, the Island Kingdom of Tonga and her birthplace; the Eora Nation – Sydney, and everything far and in-between. She mimicked, trained and un-learned dance, in multiple institutions of knowledge, starting with her village, a suburban church hall, nightclubs and a university. Latai activates indigenous philosophies and methodologies; cross-pollinating ancient practices of ceremony with her contemporary processes and

performance work to reinterpret, re-generate and extend her movement practice and its function in and from Oceania. She engages in the socio-political landscape of Australia with sensibilities in race, class and the female body politic; committed to bringing the voice of vulnerable communities impacted by climate change to the frangipani-less foreground.

Elias Nohra

Co-author

Elias is a filmmaker and digital media artist, formerly the Community Director at CuriousWorks and a contributor to its arts and community program for 9 years. Elias is an accomplished director, cinematographer and editor, as well as an innovator of interactive and participatory digital media forms. He has the ability to train filmmakers and web developers of varied skill levels and experience, and provides adaptive and appropriate training for different communities and individuals. The focus of Elias’ energies is to create an alternative voice for Australia, where marginalised communities can express themselves publicly through the powers of filmmaking and innovative digital media, providing a new, untold Australian narrative.



Image: Courtesy of the artist



Image by Pekka Mäkinen

The High Ground Madeleine Flynn, Jen Hector, Tim Humphrey

2017
Heritage
architecture,
heat, perspex,
timber, acrylic
paint, lock,
smoke, sound,
daylight, found
and applied
fittings, video.

Artistic Credits

Concept & Creation:

Madeleine Flynn, Jen Hector
and Tim Humphrey

X Risk Collaborators:

Live Umbrella Finland, John
Ash and Sophie Weeks

Construction:

Colin Orchard

Warning: The High Ground involves live camera, stairs, heat and confined space. A series of live-feed perspectives of the work will be projected in the Arts House foyer.

Artist Statement

The High Ground aims to provoke reflection on human empathy in confined spaces. Participants undertake a negotiation within a delicate and precarious situation that is increasingly claustrophobic. Only one person can make it to the top.

In many disasters, the high ground is where we seek refuge. Another kind of refuge is the ethical kind sought by those who try to occupy the moral high ground, and whose place on the spectrum of empathy may well lie in the non-empathetic extreme of charity or pity (Nowak, 2014). Both kinds of high ground are tested through dilemmas of access, environment, surveillance, and negotiation of yourself with others.

The High Ground considers the collectivities that become visible, and/or disappear in the event of disaster. From the reactive and discriminatory imprisonment of so-called looters in New Orleans following Katrina, through to the culture of welcome and assistance that was Germany's response to recent waves of refugees, many degrees of human empathy arise from any extreme situation.

The High Ground has been developed from June to

November 2017. As a further iteration of our investigation into existential risk, a series undertaken with Live Umbrella, Finland with Sophie Weeks and Dr John Ash from the Scott Polar Research Institute, United Kingdom, this work highlights the existential risk for individuals who abandon collectivities, or whose collectivity relies on the disappearance of others who don't conform to their survival categories.

Biographies

Madeleine Flynn, Jen Hector & Tim Humphrey
Concept & Creation

Madeleine Flynn, Jen Hector, and Tim Humphrey undertake a joint practice into architectures of sound and light within constrained physical locations and diverse contexts. They work across local, national and international boundaries and their 2017 awards include the GreenRoom Technical Achievement Award and the Australia Council for the Arts Experimental Award.

X Risk team

Convened by Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey the X risk team is a Live Umbrella Finland, led by artist, writer and curator Johanna Tuukkanen, with Maija Eränen and Pekka Mäkinen; John Ash, Scott Polar Research Institute UK and creative engagement researcher Sophie Weeks.



Image by Pekka Mäkinen



Image by Pekka Mäkinen



Night creature, Photographer: Christina Simons for Jill Orr

Antipodean Epic Jill Orr

2015
18mins 59 secs.
Looped every
30 minutes.
Video and stills

Artistic Credits

Creator, Performer,

Producer:

Jill Orr

Video Production:

Jason Heller

Photographer:

Christina Simons

Cinematographer:

Dave McKinnar

Costume:

Alison Kelley

Artist Statement

Humanities' survival depends on seed, the ultimate container of life but as climate and consequently environment is changing, seed has become contested ground. Political, scientific, environmental and ethical debate surround both GM seed and its reliance on the global monopoly of a few mega agri-businesses. This is starkly contrasted by localised heritage seed closely guarded for its un-tampered quality. Both forms of seed production are charged with the task of feeding populations as they grow exponentially into the future. Here lies part of our challenge.

Antipodean Epic is a performative photographic and video journey that incorporates seed both in abundance and scarcity. The work utilises costume to create characters, or creatures, as a means to ask: Are the creatures the end of their species or the beginning of another? Are they displaced or transported viral creations? Are they unwanted interlopers within the seed stock? Are they the carriers of a potential future or remnants of a distant past or both?

Biographies

Jill Orr

*Creative Director, Performer,
Producer*

Jill Orr has delighted, shocked and moved audiences through her performance installations which she has presented internationally from the late nineteen seventies to now. Jill's work centres on issues of the psycho- social and environmental where she draws on land and identities as they are shaped in, on and with the environment be it country or urban locales. She grapples with the balance and discord that exists at the heart of relations between the human spirit, art and nature.

Jill was represented in the inaugural Venice International Performance Art Week in 2012 where she presented *The Promised Land* and as one of ten international performance artists she presented at the Bipolar Performance Art Meeting in Sopot, Poland 2014. She has mesmerised audiences in the MAP Festival, Melaka, Malaysia, 2014.

Jill received an Australia Council Fellowship for the creation and production of *Antipodean Epic*, in 2015 – 2017.

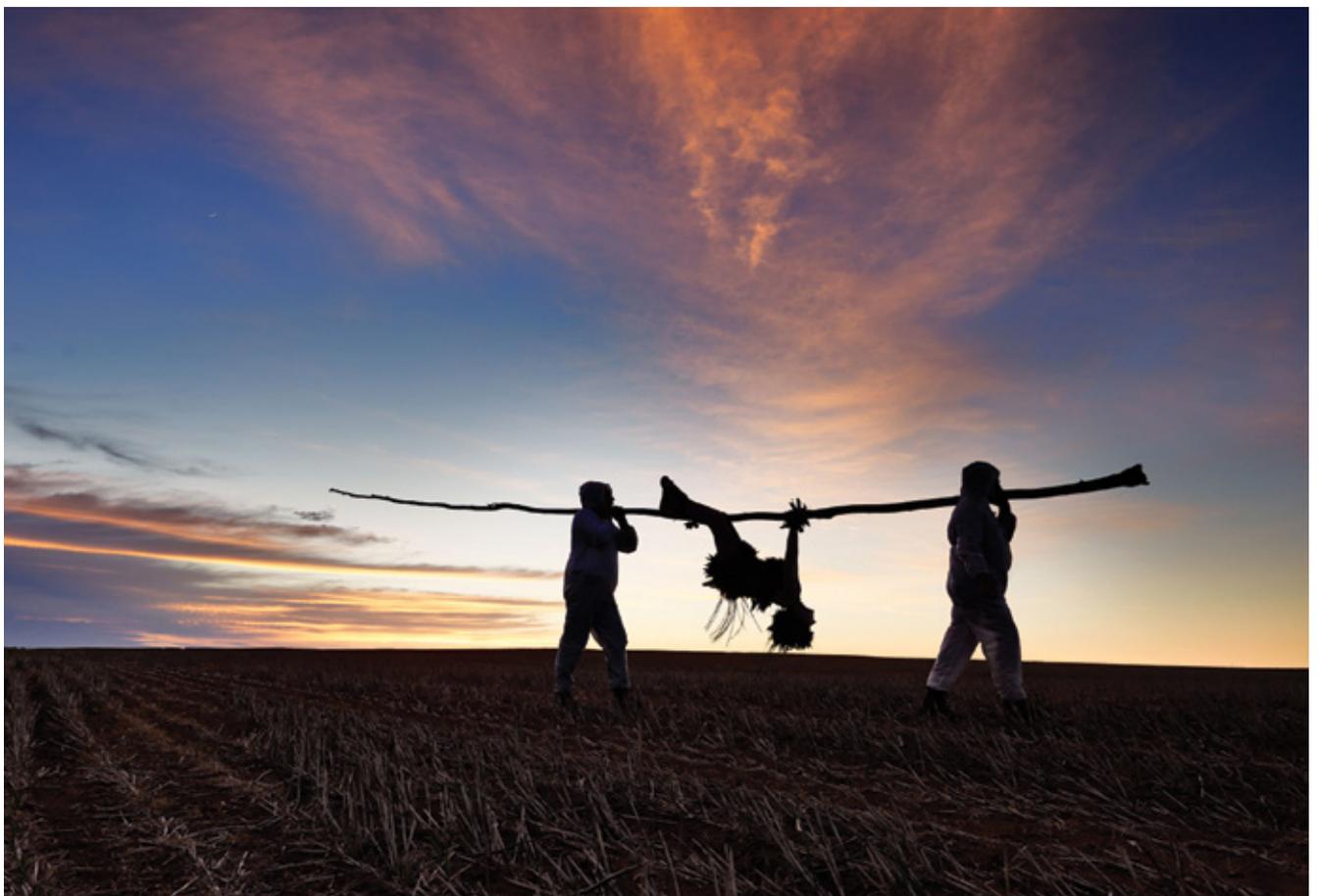
Jason Heller

Video production

Jason Heller is a highly sought after video producer, director and editor whose ability to work with artists across media is masterful. His work with Ash Keating's award winning *South East Park Proposition* in 2015 impacted the Contemporary Art scene. By contrast the video documentation of *Liquid Architecture* and the *Mildura Biennale* in 2015, amongst many other contributions, has captured ephemeral works of many artists. Jason's work with Jill Orr in 2015 and 2016 has enabled the video production of *Antipodean Epic* as another high quality production of unique poetry. His work with the Polygot Theatre Company as a school artist in residence has enabled children to develop and learn to tell their stories through video.



Interloper, Photographer: Christina Simons for Jill Orr



Hunted, Photographer: Christina Simons for Jill Orr

Extremely Risky
Business
Essay by Madeleine
Flynn & Tim Humphrey

What follows is to do with risk, both perceived and actual, with extremity, with the scenario for consideration framed by the long and intangible emergency that is climate change. Ideas around risk and around extremity proliferate in our culture. A familiar characteristic that also emerges as narratives around risk and extremity play out is the concept of courage when the end is assured. Interleaved with what follows is an idiosyncratic catalogue of risk and extremity, using an aphoristic format suggested by the 140 character limit; a linguistic frame favoured by that leading purveyor of extreme risk currently blundering at the helm of the world's superpower.

##@!The risk seems everywhere. I step into a universe of risky potential. I climb back into my cocoon without realising the risk of suffocation.

##@!The risk of nothing. While we believed, we held nagging doubts that there may be nothing to all this. Our struggle, our efforts were futile.

The idea of a frame, a fence or a wall really, to insert a recurring global physical and political signifier, really does seem to marry (to drop in another current socio-political signifier) these seemingly distinct things. The white colonisation of Australia, completed its genocidal fracturing of cultural highways with the pastoral fencing of plots of land, leaving behind in former European homelands the ancient and continuing notion of the common rights of way. The framing, the fencing, continued with the plotting of suburbs, and continues today with gated communities, and similar framings of selective and discriminatory community. Freedom of movement, and freedom (or agility) of response to such disasters as water or fire emergency is curtailed, and in any case the entire fictional framing is blown away as fire, storm and flood sweep away boundaries. In which case, "extreme" measures suddenly occur, such as outbreaks of non-selective community, or alternatively, as documented in Dave Eggers' novel *Zeitoun*, arbitrary imprisonment for alleged "looting", or "terrorist suspicion".

##@!Risk of privilege and power. Propelled by inheritance and/or luck into agency over human life including a power to end it, you are the risk.

##@!The risk of powerlessness and deprivation. Can't leave. Can't stay. Might survive. The extreme risk of you ignoring the precarity of others.

We are continually presented with a framing of culture, of political life, that exercises risk as a device to somehow define a "middle space": that is, aware of risk as well as risk averse;

risk to be avoided, and/or mitigated. This fictional "safe" middle ground is continually threatened by the extremes. We should acknowledge that many, if not the majority, of people within certain (typically western), enclaves, support this idea. So some of the risks include the apparent spectre of populism, in which extreme (and allegedly simplistic) ideas from either the left or the right (the extremes) gain currency amongst certain sectors who obviously don't occupy the middle ground. Paradoxically, much populist sloganeering, particularly from the "right" seems to focus on the "defence of ways of living", in an alternative vision for preserving the alleged privilege of the "middle ground". Also with a sharpened rhetoric that defines an ever-narrower cohort of embattled "community". Defined by whiteness, or maleness in many cases. So there's our perceived risk. Which we can avoid using such measures as imprisoning refugees on remote islands. The thing is that, given that much of the framing is a somewhat comforting ideological construct, "middle ground" is always subject to risks to its existence.

##@!Personal, cultural, social risk. From the hegemonic definitions of relationship risk and risky behaviour. Many people must take that risk.

##@!The risky boredom of mild risk. The certainty and allure of extreme risk. The escapism requiring extreme measures to mitigate mild riskiness.

##@!The package holiday of sanitised risk. A package that threatens to rupture into real risk. The risk to others of your packaged risk holidays.

Do we risk being labelled extremist if we demand (in various ways) drastic measures to counter the effects of climate change (might we suggest the prosecution of those who stole environmental and irrigation flows from the Murray-Darling basin, or litigate both the Queensland and Federal cabinets for gross negligence in abandoning the Great Barrier Reef, and our future climate, in favour of an alleged tax avoiding carbon-polluter). Let's now re-frame. The white middle ground in the Land of the Free has a new normal that features massive homicide and death statistics through the unregulated supply of military hardware. Syria should slap a travel ban on the USA. Too risky. Too extremist.

##@!Against the assured end, a courage may be found, since the future does not yet exist. Here's to the risk takers. Anyway, life is precarious.

— *Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey*



Image: Bryony Jackson

About Refuge

Each year until 2020, Arts House is bringing together artists, community and emergency services providers for *Refuge* – an event that explores arts and culture’s role in developing preparedness, and building community resilience, for climate related disasters.

On Saturday 11 November, Arts House will transform the North Melbourne Town Hall – a designated City of Melbourne Emergency Relief Centre – into a relief centre to undertake

an exercise based on an extreme heat scenario.

Over 24-hours, artists, emergency services providers and the local community will come together to rehearse, start conversations and to dream up ideas to forge possible futures.

In the lead up to *Refuge*, *in extremis* offers us new perspectives and a deeper understanding of the current state of weather extremes across the globe, and the affect these have on individuals and the community.

Arts House, as a key program of the City of Melbourne, is Melbourne's contemporary centre for performance and interactive artforms. We support new and diverse ways to make and experience art which is participatory and experiential, interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary, curated through a balance of provocation, responsiveness and collaboration with artists and audiences.

Thank you's and Acknowledgements

wāni

I would like to acknowledge the lands on which I have been fortunate enough to create work in, thank both the lands and my own ancestors who have granted me safe passage and the knowledge and blessings I need to be able to do such work as well as my creator, family and friends who continue to love life into me and continually give me the strength I need to do what I do. I hope the love and rage in which this work was created manifests into even more possibilities of creation for all those who creating is the means in which they have known to exist. May our resilience and fight for survival in this climate that stands to see our destruction be a light to all those still struggling and fighting for self determination, and to all my kinfolk I pray to always honor your rage, embody your love, speak my truth so that as to never step on your pain, thank you for surviving and being some of the most resilient, mighty, beautiful and most incredible peoples this earth has ever seen, I am honored to carry your legacy, may I always carry it with dignity.

Leah Barclay

The creative development of *Migration Patterns: Saltwater* has been supported by the Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University through Leah Barclay's postdoctoral research in acoustic ecology and climate change. Additional hydrophone recordings for this project have been provided by Marine Biologist Elisa Girola at JASCO Applied Sciences.

Daniel Browning

Thank you Suzanne Cromb, the composer of my musical notes, and to the artists of the Unmapping The End of the World Project for the 2015 Mildura Palimpsest Biennale curated by Jonathan Kimberley.

Latai Taumoepeau

Fakatapu ki he ta'e hā mai
Fakatapu ki he kekeleke oku ne taūhi ki tautolu
Fakatapu ki he ulumotua ēiki,
moe kau matāpule, kainga a fōnuani, kainga
Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Tangurong, Dja Dja
Wurrung moe Wathaurung.
Ke atā ke tau fakatoulea

Thank you Carriageworrrks Sydney for commissioning this work. I acknowledge and thank The Australia Council for the Arts – Dance board for the generous financial contribution to make this work.

Madeleine Flynn, Jen Hector & Tim Humphrey

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. We are grateful for this support.

Thanks to our project partner Colleen Filippa from Fifteen Trees, who has planted 48 trees in Westgate Park Victoria, to help reduce the carbon footprint of The High Ground.

Thank you to Tara Prowse, and the production team of Tony MacDonald and Blair Hart for going above and beyond.

The artists acknowledge the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung people of the Kulin nation, the traditional owners of the land in which we make our art, and note that sovereignty has never been ceded.

Jill Orr

I wish to thank the production team –
Photographer: Christina Simons, Video Production:
Jason Heller, Cinematographer: Dave Mckinnar,
Costume: Alison Kelly

The volunteers – Rosina, Dave, Mitch and Gabby who assisted during both the photo-video shoots and live performances. They were incredible. The audiences who took the journey with me.

The work was made possible by: The Australia Council for the Fellowship, Helen Vivian, curator, Tasco Inland, Collin Hunt and the Mildura Palimpsest Biennale 10#, The 2016 Lorne Sculpture Biennale, Mike Hall, Rigoni, Fernando Ribeiro, and the Belo Horizonte Biennale.



in extremis
Wed 1 – Fri 10 Nov
10am – 6pm
FREE

Accessibility –
in extremis includes a variety of installations and experiences. Whilst every effort has been made to be accessible, some parts of the exhibition involve elements which may not be accessible. If you have any access questions, please contact us on 9322 3720. We will help to curate a journey so you can get the most out of your experience at Arts House.

Arts House
521 Queensberry Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
(03) 9322 3720

artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au
artshouse.com.au