



Education Kit

BRAVING TIME: CONTEMPORARY ART IN QUEER AUSTRALIA

CURATED BY
RICHARD PERRAM OAM



NATIONAL
ART
SCHOOL



Contents

Overview	2
Introduction to Queer Contemporary	2
Braving Time: Contemporary Art in Queer Australia	3
Our Queer Ancestors / Queer Worthies: Fergus Greer + Leigh Bowery	4
Our Queer Ancestors / Queer Worthies: Vivienne Binns	5
Death and History: Christine Dean	6
Death and History: William Yang	7
Feminist Expression: Deborah Kelly	8
Feminist Expression: Kate Just	9
Family and Community: Amos Gebbhardt	10
Family and Community: Mo'Ju	11
Maleness and Power: Tony Albert	12
Maleness and Power: Dr Christian Thompson AO	13
Humour, Gender and Sexuality: Nell	14
Humour, Gender and Sexuality: Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran	15
Glossary	16
LGBTQIA+ Resources	17

Overview

Introduction to Queer Contemporary 2023

National Art School presents Queer Contemporary, the visual arts program for Sydney WorldPride 2023 and the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. Queer Contemporary includes the exhibitions *Braving Time: Contemporary Art in Queer Australia*, *Fulgora*, *Adore You* by Luke Thurgate, a suite of public activities, community partnerships with Bobby Goldsmith Foundation and Qtopia, and various site activations.

Director and CEO Steven Alderton says: “Building on the success of previous years participating in Mardi Gras, Queer Contemporary 2023 at NAS will be our most ambitious offering to date. The vibrant and varied program champions the diversity of our communities and celebrates LGBTQIA+ strength and resilience.”



Braving Time: Contemporary Art in Queer Australia

Curated by Richard Perram OAM

Braving time is a queer exhibition that celebrates the work of artists who identify as part of the Australian LGBTQIA+ community. This significant exhibition has been curated by Richard Perram OAM for the National Art School in celebration of Sydney WorldPride in 2023. The artists represented in the exhibition celebrate the diverse voices of LGBTQIA+ people in contemporary Australian society, reflecting the breath of genders and sexualities within the community, including artists who identify as lesbian, gay, transgender, inter-sex, asexual and non-binary.

The artists present artworks that explore queerness in ways that are direct and indirect through historical and contemporary artworks that are critical, experimental and political, connecting to our contemporary culture. Together these works instigate conversations about queer experience; what it is and what it means to be queer in Australia today.

The Australian LGBTQIA+ community naturally reflects the cultural diversity of Australian contemporary society and this is mirrored in the artists selected. Central to the exhibition are works by Australian Indigenous artists Karla Dickens and Tony Albert. Artists from diverse cultural heritages include William Yang and Renjie Teoh, Claudia Nicholson, Salote Tawale, Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran sitting alongside artists of Anglo-European heritage.

Together the artists in *Braving Time* acknowledge the many struggles, the deep sadnesses as well as the triumphs of Australia's LGBTQIA+ communities over time. The exhibition highlights that queerness is intersectional and it creates parallel conversations about the new histories that are emerging and leading debate, whilst capturing the optimism of change, of acceptance and the pure joy that will be felt during the Sydney WorldPride celebrations.

Artists

Tony Albert, Brook Andrew, The Arthitects (Gary Carsley & Renjie Teoh), Liam Benson, Vivienne Binns, Leigh Bowery (Fergus Greer), Michelle Collocott, Peter Cooley, Christine Dean, Karla Dickens, Todd Fuller, Amos Gebhardt, Tina Havelock Stevens, Brenton Heath-Kerr, Amy Hill, Kate Just, Deborah Kelly, Mo'Ju, Clinton Naina, Nell, Claudia Nicholson, Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran, Emily Parsons-Lord, Matthew van Roden, Tim Silver, Troye Sivan, Ali Tahayori, Salote Tawale, Athena Thebus, Dr Christian Thompson AO, William Yang

Key Themes

The key themes and connections that flow and overlap through this exhibition are rich and complex and represent issues that have been and remain central to LGBTQIA+ lived experiences including:

Our Queer Ancestors / Queer Worthies

Death and History

Feminist Expression

Family and Community

Maleness and Power

Humour, Gender & Sexuality



Our Queer Ancestors / Queer Worthies

Fergus Greer, *Leigh Bowery, Session IV, Look 23*

1991, Digital adhesive paste up



“No amount of film could fully capture the many facets of Leigh’s art”.

Fergus Greer

The relationship between photographer Fergus Greer (b. 1958) and renowned Australian performance artist Leigh Bowery (b. 1961-1994) signified an enduring collaboration that blurs the lines between auteur and artist. Over six years until the luminary’s tragic death in 1994, Greer photographed Bowery in what have become some of the most richly classic and culturally important portraits of the artist.

Leigh Bowery was the ultimate performance artist, fashion designer, nightclub sensation, art object, aspiring pop-star and above all an icon whose influence traversed music, art, film and fashion worlds. The Australian performance artist was born in Sunshine, Victoria, and rose to fame in London’s underground club scene in the 1980s. His iconically outrageous, gender-bending costumes spoofed perceptions of the body, sexual and social identity - and remain an enduring inspiration to many artists and fashion designers today.

Leigh Bowery, Session IV forms part of a significant body of work that is considered by many as the manifestation of Greer’s enduring relationship with a unique artist. His powerful work gives rich access to the colourful, ever-changing and unpredictable man, and have captured for posterity the inspiration behind Bowery’s improvisation and the chameleon-like nature of his personality.

Questions

Discussion

1. Discuss the importance of Greer’s portrait photography in recording Bowery’s art practice. What insight do these photographs give into the artistic vision of Bowery?
2. Bowery used costuming to explore ideas of identity. Explore the elements of costuming captured in *Leigh Bowery, Session IV, Look 23*. What do you think Bowery was communicating through his visual language of fashion in this piece?

Activity

3. Using collage, explore your own fashion forward ideas of identity.



Our Queer Ancestors / Queer Worthies

Vivienne Binns, *Repro vag dens 3*

1976, vitreous enamel on steel, 40.6 x 30.5 cm



Vivienne Binns (b. 1940) is a pioneer of feminist, collaborative and community-based practice in Australia. Her practice has led in this subject matter since the late 1960s, an era that reevaluated womanhood and sexuality. To this day, Binns continues to push the boundaries of her radical and expansive practice. Binns is driven by a fundamental desire to understand the world around her, and defy institutional orthodoxies.

One of Binns' most well-known bodies of work is her *Vag Dens* series, which debuted in her legendary 1967 exhibition in Sydney. The exhibition introduced 'central core imagery' into the visual lexicon. Binns' works critically affirm the power of women's sexuality whilst also being provoking through repeated images of the vagina dentata - "vaginas with teeth". References to vagina dentata appear in myths and folk stories of many cultures from around the world, and often served as a representation of male anxieties of castration by the vagina.

The concept of the Vagina Dentata was co-opted by second-wave feminists as a reclamation of female power, and a symbolic castration of the patriarchy. Taking place in the 1960s and 1970s, Second Wave Feminism focused on issues of equality and discrimination. It also championed a woman's nature, her body and personal experience. In the 60s and 70s, Binns was closely associated with the alternative pop art scene in Sydney that celebrated sexual liberation, Eastern spirituality and psychedelic culture.

Repro vag dens 3 is an excellent example from the *Vag Dens* series; signifying the power of the female body. The riot of colour and mocking sexuality in these works asserts a bold and confident rebuttal to the male gaze and entitlement.

Since Binns made her debut as a revolutionary artist, the dialogue of feminism has shifted. It now recognises that not all women have vaginas, and not all people with vaginas are women. However, Binns' innovations in the fields of feminism, collaboration and community based practice, helped pave the way for contemporary exploration of the feminine in art.

Questions

Discussion

1. Discuss the pioneering nature of Binns' *Vag Dens* series. How did her work pave the way for contemporary artists that explore feminist concepts through visual art?
2. Define central core imagery and analyse its role as an artistic tool to support social change.

Activity

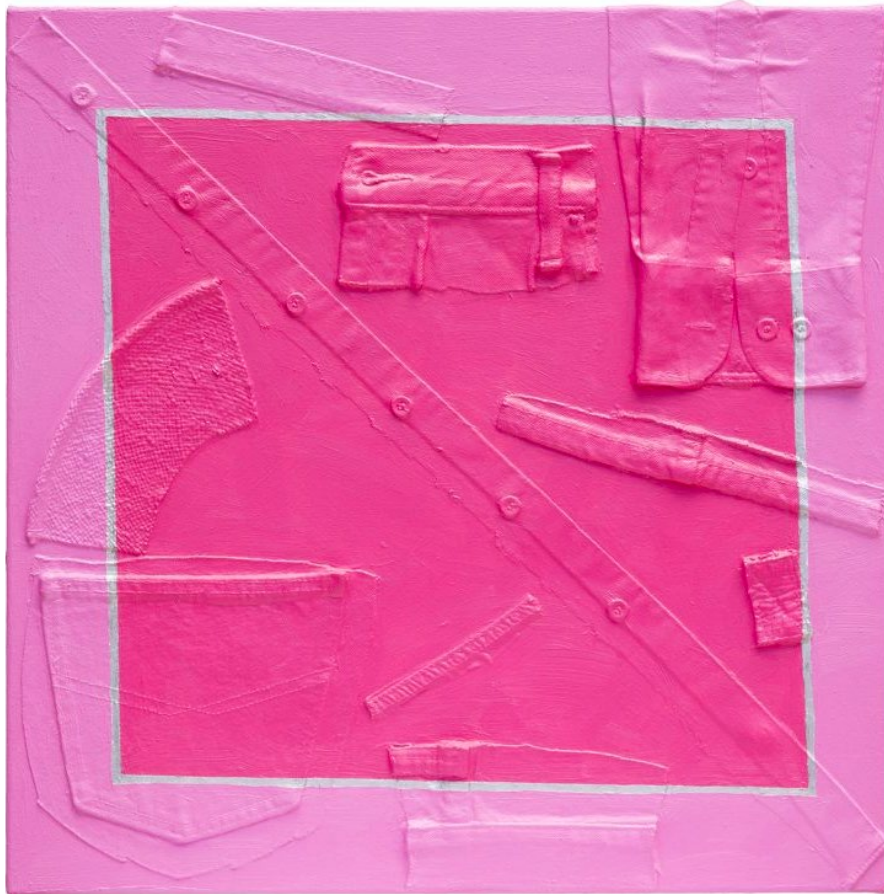
3. Be inspired by Binns and make your own chatterbox with teeth. Create your own bright coloured pop patterns to make your creation unique.



Death and History

Christine Dean, *Pink Square (gender euphoria #1 - #10)*

2015, oil on clothing and canvas, 50 x 50 cms



Christine Dean (b. 1963) is an Australian artist and academic whose decades-long practice interrogates socialised gender codes and binaries within her compositions that use the language of neo abstraction and formalism.

Dean's *Gender Euphoria* series (2015) is a continuation of the artist's use of domestic textiles within the context of abstraction. During the 1990s Dean created monochromes using chenille bedspreads which share with this series the thick application of oil paint used to emphasise textural properties. In *Gender Euphoria*, Dean re-enacts the process of her gender transition through remnants of male clothing. She calls on the iconography of Kasimir Malevich's squares (or trapezoids) to emphasise the dynamism of these works:

"I have included cut, ripped and torn fragments of my male clothing (much of which were my father's hand me downs that my mother gave me over the years, as I didn't like buying men's clothing and because they are recycled many of the fragments are old, worn and very 'Povera')."

Historically, the monochrome is loaded with gender-based assumptions. Surveying the breadth of monochromatic paintings within western art history canon from artists including Malevich, Rothko, and Yves Klein (again, all of whom are men) - there is a dearth of the colour pink. The colour pink is typically identified as feminine, while the monochrome style of painting is part of a masculinised history of modernism. This series of pink monochromes draws the viewer's attention to gender coded colour and the (false) equivalence of formalism with masculine personality traits such as order and rationality.

Questions

Discussion

1. Compare and contrast Dean's *Pink Square (gender euphoria #1 - #10)* with Malevich's *Black Square*. What stands out in a Postmodern context?
2. How does the use of found objects support the concepts communicated in *Pink Square (gender euphoria #1 - #10)*?

Activity

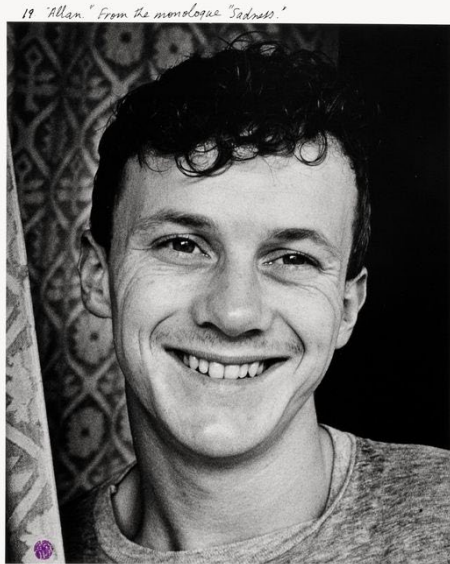
3. Create an artwork that includes found objects based on a formative memory or experience in your life. Consider how the found objects you choose support your own artistic concept.



Death and History

William Yang, *Allan*

1998-1990, set of 19 gelatin silver prints, edition of 6, 51 x 41 cm from the “Sadness” monologue



19 "Allan" From the monologue "Sadness."

Ann St, Surrey Hills. 1980.

William Yang.

About two weeks before he died I read his diaries (Jeffrey had asked me if I would like to talk at the funeral.) AIDS was a tragedy that was for sure, but as well he had an addictive personality and his every day life was full of desperation. I had not realized the extent of this and it came as a shock. Yet there moments of clarity when his fresh zest for life shone through. I would say at the end he was accepting and courageous.

At the service I read selected extracts from the diaries and I said I believed in the afterlife and I wished his soul well on his new journey.

4/6

William Yang (b. 1943) is a Queensland-born, Sydney-based photographer who is renowned for his exploration of cultural and sexual identity, and in particular, his social documentation of queer culture that spans over four decades. Starting out as a playwright, his expansive photographic-based practice is integrated with writing, performance and film.

A third generation Chinese-Australian born in North Queensland, Yang's family disavowed their Chinese heritage, preferring their children to assimilate. He explains that “being Chinese was like a terrible curse” and he has described his experiences of having to “come out” twice: first as a gay man, and second in search of his Chinese identity in his 30s.

The series *Allan* was first presented within Yang's monologue “Sadness”. This series tells the story of a young man battling AIDS in 19 disarmingly direct portraits. The solemn nature of Allan's story stands in marked contrast to the social page snapshots that earned Yang a living.

In the first image, Allan is already in hospital, after having contracted the virus. Having seen him fresh-faced and smiling in an earlier photo, it's gruelling to watch as he is prematurely aged by the illness, getting thinner and sicker. In the penultimate photo he is a corpse; in the last he is healthy and smiling again, as his friends would want to remember him.

Questions

Discussion

1. Yang's work *Allan* examines the AIDS epidemic that began in the 1980s and continues today. Discuss the importance of art as a tool for social commentary.
2. Analyse the role of text in Yang's photo series *Allan*.

Activity

3. Create your own journal about a significant event in your life. How did this event help shape you into who you are today? What images would you use to accompany your journal to support your narrative?



Feminist Expression

Deborah Kelly, *Creation*

2021, single-channel video, colour, sound
6:50 minutes

Animator: Melody Pei Li

Original Score: Stereogamous

Text/Vocal: SJ Norman

Vocal Composition: Lupa J

Courtesy of the artist



Deborah Kelly (b. 1962) is one of Australia's most political artists. For over three decades, her multimedia practice has utilised popular culture tropes to make incisive and challenging commentaries about the world around us.

Frequently using craft materials and techniques - including her highly recognisable use of collage - Kelly explores ideas concerning gender, sexuality, feminism and LGBTQIA+ politics, responding to histories of representation. Her newest works experiment with models of sustained creative collaboration between strangers.

For Creation contemplates the glittering webs enveloping matter and sentience. Combining ardent queerness, elegy, and homage, *For Creation* is a collaborative animated paper collage constructed from the ruins of obsolete books. Collagists studied SJ Norman's glorious *Liturgy of the Saprophyte*, the new sacred literature at the heart of CREATION, and their resulting artworks form figure and field. Queer dancefloor legends Stereogamous composed the anthemic soundtrack, featuring the voices of SJ Norman and emerging popstar Lupa J.

Questions

Discussion

1. Examine the animation of Kelly's collages. How does the introduction of movement influence the collage compositions?
2. Discuss the collaboration behind *For Creation*. How does the contribution from multiple artists and creatives strengthen this artwork?

Activity

3. Working collaboratively with another student or in a small group, develop your own collage composition that explores the theme of identity.



Feminist Expression

Kate Just, *Protest is a Fundamental Right*

2021, knitted wool with plywood stand, 65 x 65cm



Kate Just's (b. 1974) *PROTEST SIGNS* are a series of intensively produced, hand-knitted pictures of protest signs. Each picture or sign forms a knitted homage to a real image of protest the artist has collected on and offline including from social media, news media or real protests.

This suite of knitted protest signs addresses a broad range of significant social and political issues of our time including feminism, sexual harassment and assault, reproductive freedom, LGBTQIA+ pride and discrimination, racism, sexism, transphobia, and ecological crisis. Protest signs are usually ephemeral, dynamic, funny, made by everyday people with at-hand material, and discarded after use. The intimate, complex translation of these hand-made signs into knitted forms invites a close tactile engagement with their value.

This body of work about the 'signs of our times' continues Just's engagement with urgent social change movements. It heralds the potential we all have to change the world with our own two hands.

Questions

Discussion

1. Compare and contrast Just's series *PROTEST SIGNS* to the original protests signs that inspired the work. How does knitting enhance the artistic concept of the work?
2. Analyse the importance of peaceful protest and the role it plays in social change.

Activity

3. What social issue is most important to you? Design your own protest placard that visually communicates your view.



Family and Community

Amos Gebhardt, *Family Portrait*

2020, Digital adhesive paste up, 238 x 348 cm



Amos Gebhardt (b. 1976) is an artist whose works have a cinematic scale, challenging normative notions of humanness by examining intersections between culture, nature and the body to demonstrate the power of kinship and community. Gebhardt maps both human and more than human narratives using techniques of collage, dance, slow motion and time lapse. Through high-level production processes, Gebhardt brings a cinematic force to large-scale moving image installations and photography, collaborating with performers, choreographers and sound artists.

The photograph *Family Portrait*, depicts an extended interracial family with a melding of biblical reference. The lush, densely foliated Garden of Eden is a setting without shame, guilt and the knowledge of Evil. The positioning of the family simultaneously references a Nativity scene to evoke the immaculate conception of Jesus Christ. This is a scene of possibility: the possibility of a new time, beyond the binary, here redeemed and brought together through the birth of a child.

It is important to Gebhardt that the queer family featured in *Family Portrait* is a real family of eleven members, formed through a chosen commitment, held together through complex familial relations. With their stories at the heart, Gebhardt repositions the concept of “mothering” by radically transforming heteronormative gender-assigned roles. This baby is parented by two fathers, one being a trans birthing father, and is so cherished at the centre of love that the family quite literally glows, enveloping the central figures in a warm halo.

Gebhardt proposes a worldview that rejects individual advancement and fear of the other, for one that instead privileges an awareness of our collective interconnectedness. It elevates the communal joy that can come from healing and nurturing and tenderness - and calls for a radical reimagining of our world.

Questions

Discussion

1. Symbolism plays a critical role in Gebhardt's *Family Portrait*. Analyse the different layers of symbolism you can identify and how they contribute to the artist's intentions.
2. Discuss the use of photography as the chosen medium to portray *Family Portrait*. Would you think this artwork would be as successful portrayed in a different visual medium? Why/why not?

Activity

3. Create your own family portrait featuring your chosen family - this might include blood relatives, friends, pets, etc.



Family and Community

Mo’Ju, *Native Tongue*

2018, music video, 4:05 min



I don’t speak my Father’s native tongue
I was born under the Southern sun
I don’t know where I belong
I don’t know where I belong

A proud Wiradjuri, Filipino and queer artist, Mo’Ju (b. 1983) has built a prolific, genre-transcending discography over their decade-long career since the release of their debut album in 2012.

Native Tongue is the title track from Mo’Ju’s third studio album. The intimate and highly personal album traces Mo’Ju’s ancestry to gain insight into their identity. Written from the perspectives of Mo’Ju’s different family members,

Native Tongue tells the story of her grandmother who had been denied a relationship with the Wiradjuri man who was actually her father. Mo’Ju explains “Pearl, my great-grandmother, and Jackson, my great-grandfather were high school sweethearts. But she was not Indigenous so they weren’t allowed to be together. So they had a secret love affair.”

While using the specific framework of their paternal lineage, Mo’Ju’s lyrics cleverly speak to the enduring legacy of colonisation. The song is a lament of being caught between cultural worlds and not quite feeling at home anywhere, as well as about the loss of language as an ongoing impact of colonisation. *Native Tongue* speaks to the loss of Indigenous languages, and the continuing grief that follows.

Directed by Claudia Sangiorgi Dalimore, the video clip features members of Djuki Mala, an Indigenous dance group from Elcho Island, dressed in red jumpsuits and dancing in choreographed formation with Mo’Ju, in a striking emu feather coat, as they move collectively over a grassy plain.

Questions

Discussion

1. Music videos present the performing artist’s concepts and intentions in a visual medium. How does this visual representation influence your interpretation of the song? Discuss.
2. In *Native Tongue*, Mo’Ju uses personal experience as an analogy to address the issues with colonisation. Examine the symbolism present in the video clip and lyrics relating to colonisation.

Activity

3. Write a poem focussing on a social issue you’re passionate about. Consider how your choice of words, rhythm, and tone will influence how your ideas are interpreted.



Maleness and Power

Tony Albert, *Brothers (The Invisible Prodigal Son)*

2020 glass, lead, photographic decal, steel 180 x 60cm, edition of 2 plus 1 artist's proof



Tony Albert's (b.1981) is a politically-minded artist provoked by stereotypical representations of Aboriginal people and the colonial history that attempts to define him, and what Aboriginality is, in the present. Appropriating textual references from sources as diverse as popular music, film, fiction, and art history, Albert plays with the tension arising from the visibility, and in-turn, the invisibility of Aboriginal People across the news media, literature, and the visual world. Central to this way of working is Albert's expansive collection of Aboriginalia; a term the artist coined to describe kitschy objects and images that feature naive and harmful portrayals of Aboriginality.

Brothers (The Invisible Prodigal Son) features a series of three young men, each with a target on their chest. This decorative embodiment of racialised targeting and police brutality has been an ongoing motif for the artist for nearly a decade. Albert was inspired by the community's response to the police shooting of two Aboriginal teenagers as they went on a joy ride in Kings Cross in 2012. At the protest, he witnessed several male Aboriginal teenagers remove their shirts to reveal red targets painted on their chests. This series takes the imagery of these targeted men and transforms them into commanding representations usually reserved for those in positions of privilege or power.

Questions

Discussion

1. Analyse the conceptual role of glass in *Brothers (The Invisible Prodigal Son)*. How does the materiality of glass relate to the subject? How does emulating the traditional composition of stained glass influence the subject Albert explores in *Brothers (The Invisible Prodigal Son)*?
2. Memorials take many different shapes and forms from murals to statues. Discuss who we build memorials to and how does it influence the way we remember those who are memorialised?

Activity

3. Draw three things that represent power and privilege in your life.



Maleness and Power

Dr Christian Thompson AO, *Ellipse*

2014, c-type print, 100 x 100 cm framed



“While I’m interested in portraiture – I don’t consider my work as portraiture because that suggests that I’m trying to portray myself, my own visage, my own image. I employ images, icons, materials, metaphors to capture an idea and moment in time. There are many different things at play; taking a picture of myself is really the last thing that’s on my mind.”

Christian Thompson in conversation with Hetti Perkins,

Christian Thompson’s (b. 1978) multidisciplinary practice explores notions of cultural hybridity, along with identity and history, creating works that transcend cultural boundaries. His self-reflexive and self-referential bodies of work, often with the artist using his body as an armature for his characters, costumes and various props, are intuitive and imaginative in how they relate Aboriginal and Australian/European history,

Ellipse (2014) is from the series “Polari” that explores concepts of metamorphosis, aspiration, transformation, artifice, mimicry and fantasy. The word “polari” itself refers to a centuries-old slang dialect, originally used as a kind of secret language in England by people within the fringes of society, including many queer people.

Within the work *Ellipse*, Thompson creates his own coded visual language with a dynamic mix of traditionally femininely-coded costume elements, including long blonde hair, makeup, and floral adornments. By introducing us to their fantastical alter ego, Thompson investigates the role played by embellishment and disguise in the creation of personal and sexual identities, and carves a space that allows us to sit with this intentional ambiguity.

Questions

Discussion

1. Discuss the use of feminine allegory in Thompson’s work *Ellipse*.
2. Examine the composition of *Ellipse*. How does the framing of this composition and the use of negative space draw focus to the figure?

Activity

3. Develop and photograph your own alter ego. What visual symbolism will you explore? How will the way you pose influence the interpretation of your alter ego?



Humour, Gender and Sexuality

Nell, *Born and Unborn*

2019, Hand blown glass and fibreglass stool, 68 x 28.5 x 28.5cm



Nell is an artist who works across painting, sculpture, video and performance. With a signature style that includes a playful fusion of religious iconography, rock 'n' roll aesthetics and Buddhist philosophy, her work explores the binaries of human existence – birth and death, sorrow and happiness, light and dark. Motifs such as the egg shape – a symbol of rebirth, regeneration and change – repeatedly appear in her work, as do simplified, universally understood images of ghosts, smiley faces, tear drops and lightning bolts, often rendered in a reduced palette.

Born and Unborn whimsical appearance draws focus to themes at the core of Nell's practice - the binaries of life. The toadstool is associated with the concept of rebirth. As with most fungi, toadstools thrive in the midst of death and decomposition. This symbolism is paired with Nell's signature ghostly forms depicted here as an egg. This duality between the beginning and the end emphasises the cyclical nature of life that is a core idea of Buddhist philosophy.

Questions

Discussion

1. How does viewing Nell's sculptures as a collection impact the audience's interpretation of the works instead of viewing them as singular objects?
2. Symbolism is at the core of Nell's artistic practice. Discuss how the materials used in *Born and Unborn* impact the artist's intentions.

Activity

3. Create your own artwork that addresses the cyclical theme of rebirth.



Humour, Gender and Sexuality

Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran, *Bronze Figure*

2016, bronze, 100 x 80 x 50 cm



Sri Lankan-born, Sydney-based artist Ramesh Mario Nithiyendran (b. 1988) creates rough-edged, vibrant, new-age idols that are simultaneously enticing and disquieting. He experiments with form and scale in the context of figurative sculpture to explore politics of sex, the monument, gender and organised religion. He capitalises upon the symbolism of clay as a corporeal matter. Formally trained in painting and drawing, his practice has a sculptural emphasis which champions the physicality of art making. These works are often stacked to form totems or perched atop customised plinths.

While working from an atheist perspective, Nithiyendran draws upon his Hindu and Christian heritage as reference points as well as a large range of sources including the internet, pornography, fashion and art history. Self-portraits make frequent appearances and the dual presence of male and female organs suggest gender fluid realms of new possibilities.

Bronze Figure adheres to Nithiyendran's usual naming convention that is both rudimentary and descriptive, and indicates the expansive and continuous way in which the artist works.

Bronze Figure is the first bronze created by the artist, and was a commission by the Ian Potter Museum of Art for the artist's solo exhibition "In the beginning", 2016-17. Cast from clay to retain expressive textural qualities, *Bronze Figure* recalls the pyramidal form of the Hindu god Shiva's lingam, adorned in a writhing mass of phallasses - serpents, penises and plastic bottles. While the anthropomorphised *Bronze Figure* gives audiences a goofy grin and a chance for a giggle, Nithiyendran also asks us to consider phallic qualities shared by colonial statues, monuments and monoliths that celebrate violent imperialism and toxic masculinity. Here, Nithiyendran understands the powerful tool of humour when speaking truth to power.

Questions

Discussion

1. Discuss how the use of bronze influences Nithiyendran's artistic concept in *Bronze Figure*.
2. Examine the use of humour to speak truth to power in *Bronze Figure*. What elements of the artwork underpin Nithiyendran's commentary on colonialism and toxic masculinity?

Activity

3. Create your own sculpture that explores ideas of power and parody.



Glossary

Definitions are not universal, and language is constantly shifting and evolving. Words can mean different things to different people. This non-exhaustive glossary offers terms and definitions as a starting point for thought, dialogue, discussion and understanding that is both inclusive and respectful.

Transgender/ Trans:	<p>A term covering a range of self-defined identities that transgress socially defined and expected gender norms, based on perceived sex at birth. It may mean someone who mentally and emotionally identifies as a different gender to the one they were assigned by society, often living their lives as that gender, and who may choose to undergo gender affirming surgeries.</p> <p>Or it could be a person who transcends the binary gender system altogether, so that they identify as neither 'male' nor 'female', 'man' nor 'woman'. The 'trans' in transgender comes from a Latin word meaning 'on the other side of'.</p>
Cisgender/Cis:	<p>The 'cis' in cisgender comes from a Latin word meaning 'on this side of' and is a term used for a person whose physical sex, gender identity and gender expression all align. For example, someone who has been gendered as female from birth, goes by the pronouns 'she' and 'her' and feels comfortable and aligned with that identity.</p>
Non-Binary/ Enby:	<p>An umbrella term for people whose gender identity exists between or beyond the feminine/masculine gender binary. Some non-binary people identify as trans, others do not.</p>
Queer:	<p>An umbrella term and a reclaimed pejorative word to refer to all LGBTIQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex, queer, asexual, and more) people. A politicised self-defined sexual orientation that advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as fluid and interconnected experiences. Can also be a simple label to explain a complex set of minority sexual behaviours and desires that are not heterosexual. For example, a person who is attracted to multiple genders may identify as queer.</p>
Genderqueer:	<p>A person whose gender identity is neither 'man' nor 'woman', is between or beyond genders, or is some combination of genders. Genderqueer identities are usually related to or in reaction to the social construction of gender, gender stereotypes and the gender binary system. Some genderqueer people identify as trans, while others do not.</p>
Gender Diverse:	<p>An umbrella term that includes all the different ways gender can be lived and perceived. It can include people questioning their gender, those who identify as trans or transgender, genderqueer, non-binary and many more labels.</p>

Transphobia:	<p>An umbrella term for a range of negative and violent attitudes (for example, fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, erasure or discomfort) that one may have towards members of the trans, non-binary and gender diverse community. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as anything other than cisgender. Transphobia kills trans people.</p>
'Female-identifying':	<p>This term is often used when trying to include trans women, however it is considered exclusionary as it insinuates that trans women only 'identify as women' rather than being women, reverting back to the harmful ideology that trans women are not women. Rather, trans women are women.</p>
Drag:	<p>A style of entertainment involving people dressing and acting as an exaggeration of gender stereotypes, often characterised by flamboyance and sexual innuendo. Anyone may perform drag acts, however, it is important to understand that while gender non-conformity may be a form of entertainment for some, it is a personal identity for others.</p>
Physical Sex	<p>Physical sex refers to anatomical characteristics that are often conflated with gender identity, such as genitals and chest shape. It is inappropriate to ask about the anatomical decisions a trans, non-binary or gender diverse person has made about their body.</p>
Intersex	<p>Intersex is the term used for people who are born with physical, hormonal or genetic features that don't fit medical and social norms of 'female' and 'male' bodies.</p>
Sexuality	<p>Sexuality refers to who a person is romantically and/or sexually attracted to. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, asexual and pansexual are some examples of sexualities.</p>
Gender Identity	<p>Gender Identity is a person's internal sense of self with regards to gender. Some people feel more masculine, some people feel more feminine, others have changing or less strong gendered feelings. There are many genders including women, men, trans women, trans men, bigender, agender, nonbinary, genderfluid and genderqueer people. It is important to note that some trans people may identify specifically as a trans woman or a trans man while some identify as a woman or a man.</p>
Gender Expression	<p>Gender Expression refers to choices and propensities around gendered appearance and can include clothing, hair styles, hormone therapy, surgical procedures, vocabulary and body language.</p>

The definitions above are sourced from *Clear Expectations: Guidelines for Institutions, Galleries and Curators working with Trans, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse Artists*, 2019.



LGBTQIA+ Resources

ACON

1800 063 060

A NSW based organisation specialising in HIV prevention, HIV support and LGBTIQ health. Services include state-wide counselling, care coordination, substance support, peer education and health promotion.

The Gender Centre Inc.

(02) 9569 2366

Provides information and support to trans and gender-diverse people in NSW.

Qlife

1800 184 527

Nation-wide phone counselling and web chat services for LGBTIQ+ people. From 3pm - midnight every day.

Queerspace Youth

(03) 9663 6733

A peer-led program for Queer, Trans, Intersex, Gender Diverse or questioning people aged 16-25 years old.

Twenty10

(02) 8594 9555

A Sydney based service working across New South Wales, providing a broad range of specialised services for young people aged between 12-25 years old.