



The Gertrude Editions

A Geelong Gallery exhibition
15 October 2022 to 13 March 2023



Ricky Swallow
Forgotten foundation 2002
pigmented urethane resin; edition 27/55
Geelong Gallery
Gift of Bob and Gail Bett through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020
© the artist
Photographer: Andrew Curtis



David Noonan
Untitled (detail) 2005
etching, photo-etching, spit bite and aquatint;
edition 14/45
Geelong Gallery
Gift of Bob and Gail Bett through the Australian
Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020
© the artist

Geelong Gallery's Spring/Summer program presents a range of expansive and thought provoking exhibitions.

The Gertrude Editions exhibition opening on Saturday 15 October, surveys the limited edition works of art released annually by Gertrude Contemporary since 2002. The Gertrude Editions promote the connection between current studio artists and previous generations of leading Australian artists who have held studios and/or exhibitions at Gertrude Contemporary since it was established in Fitzroy in 1983. The studio complex and gallery space is now located in Preston and is widely acknowledged as the primary incubator for visual artistic talent in Australia.

In 2020, Geelong Gallery received a gift of 15 works from the Gertrude Editions suite from local collectors Robert and Gail Bett.

Senior Curator Lisa Sullivan comments 'This significant gift represents the Bett's strong commitment to philanthropy and brings into the Geelong Gallery collection the work of some of the most highly regarded contemporary Australian artists working locally and abroad today, as well as strengthening our holdings of those artists already represented. The collective nature of this donation is its strength, as it provides a unique and valuable overview of Australian contemporary art.'

The Bett's legacy of collecting continues with the generous donation of funds to acquire the 2020 and 2021 Gertrude Editions. And for the current exhibition, Gertrude Contemporary and a private collector have generously lent three works that enable the Gallery to represent each of the twenty commissioned artists.

Geelong Gallery is delighted to present this small survey exhibition alongside our upcoming major exhibition *Mandy Martin—Persistent Vision*, opening on Saturday 5 November.

— Media release ends —

Gertrude Editions artists overview

The first Gertrude Edition was completed in 2002 by **Ricky Swallow**, a studio artist from 1998–99. His sculptural work is characterised by an uncanny verisimilitude and exacting detail, which prompts the viewer to consider the beauty, history, memory, and emotion inherent in everyday objects.

Kate Beynon's 2003 edition comprises two portraits of Li Ji—the modern reincarnation of an ancient Chinese heroine—depicted in traditional Chinese costume and a contrasting contemporary outfit. The dual depiction of Li Ji represents Beynon's experiences of navigating different cultures in her hometown of Melbourne, as an artist of mixed heritage.

Emily Floyd draws on the family tradition of toymaking in *Important emerging artist* (2004): her father and grandmother worked as toy makers and taught her the fundamentals of construction and design. The work's title emerges from a random pile of letters: the term, a descriptor applied to an artist identified as one to watch.

David Noonan's works contain collaged images from magazines and publications on theatre, stage design and dance. His complex layering of histories and genres is evident in *Untitled* (2005), which comprises of a variety of processes and techniques to create a textural and suspenseful mis en scène.



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Robert Owen
Florentia 2006
painted steel; edition of 45, unique state
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© the artist
Photographer: Andrew Curtis

Robert Owen's *Florentia* (2006) takes the form of a series of open cubes that have been broken down and reconfigured into five different arrangements. The work plays upon the idea of 'flowering' and continues Owen's poetic and associative investigations into colour, form, and space.

Geelong-born **Nicholas Mangan's *Monument for small change* (2007)** is cast from an assemblage of banksia pods, beeswax, and coins. Inhabiting an uneasy space between growth and decay, totem and tourist kitsch, the work explores the environmental effects of culture on nature and the questionable progress of capitalism.



Jon Campbell
Yeah/Gertrude 2013
colour screenprinted calico collage on plywood; edition 33/50, unique state
Geelong Gallery
Gift of Bob and Gail Bett through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020
© the artist

Eyes are a common motif throughout **Benjamin Armstrong's** oeuvre, with *Pink and Black* (2009) resembling a distended human eye that has been separated out into its components: the black pupil, pink blood vessels and clear cornea.

References to the body are also found throughout **John Meade's** oeuvre: made through inference rather than replication of bodily forms or appendages. In *Screw Babs* (2010), Meade suspends soft blue polyethylene bristles within the interior curve of a gypsum cement 'arm'.

Michelle Ussher's works evoke the pliable nature of dreams, imagination and memory, suggestive of a realm where storylines can be reassembled in an infinite number of ways. *Mirrorrim sees* (2011) is one of a series of unique works in which the artist combined 4 images in 10 permutations with 5 variations across the edition.

Richard Lewer engages us in narratives reflecting on good and evil, darkness and light, life and mortality. *King of Pentacles* (2012) is part of the Tarot Card series in which he referred to a number of historical precedents including the 15th century Visconti-Sforza deck.

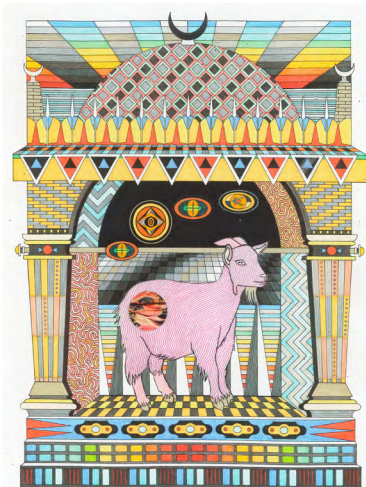
In *Yeah/Gertrude* (2013) **Jon Campbell** proposes this affirmative text as a replacement for the official Australian flag. With humour and feel-good optimism, he eschews strident nationalism in favour of an inclusive celebration of the small, the overlooked and the everyday.

Anne-Marie May transforms an acrylic sheet into a dynamic arrangement of interlocking curves through a manual process of heating and folding in *Untitled* (2014). The reflections cast by the sculpture's transparent surfaces give the impression of drawings in light and space.

Sensorium machine (2015) reveals **Jess Johnson's** interest in parallel universes inspired by science fiction narratives and their cover artwork, comic books, and videogames. Her complex composition comprises gridded floor and ceiling, tessellated patterns, a mystical dome and ambiguous symbols.

Mira Gojak's *Cutting Through* (2018) is a photograph of the desert sky that has been perforated and folded. Slicing through the image, Gojak disrupts the monochromatic ground, creating shapes and forms by folding the underside of the photographic paper through to the surface.

Renee So's practice examines the traditions of European portraiture. Her long-standing exploration and appropriation of the traditions of the Bellarmine, a domestic ceramic vessel depicting a bearded man with origins in Rhineland during the 16th and 17th century, informs her 2019 Gertrude Edition.



Jess Johnson
Sensorium machine 2015
gouache, pen, fibre-tipped markers on archival pigment print; edition 25/55, unique state
Geelong Gallery
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© the artist





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Brent Harris
Peaks 2020
hand-coloured etching; edition 21/25, unique state
Geelong Gallery
Purchased with funds generously provided by Bob and Gail Bett, 2021
© the artist

The two most recent editions by **Brent Harris** (2020) and **Elizabeth Newman** (2021) acknowledge the artists' long-standing connection to the Gertrude Studio Program dating to the mid-to-late 1980s, and are also works of their time, reflecting the complexity of the age in which they were created. In Harris's *Peaks* (2020), disparate elements suggest a head floating above snow-capped mountain peaks, whilst in its message and hasty execution, Newman's *So much darkness* (2021) speaks to the widespread upheaval wrought by the current global pandemic.

The Gertrude Editions

Exhibition partner
The William Angliss
Charitable Fund

The final three works in the exhibition on loan to Geelong Gallery complete this twenty-year survey. **David Rosetzky's** photographic collage *Lindsey* (2008) in which he combines two photos, reiterates the artist's 'interest in looking at the self and identity, and the way that's constructed'.



Mira Gojak
Cutting through #35 2018
archival pigment print on card; edition 35/50, unique state
Geelong Gallery
Gift of Bob and Gail Bett through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2020
© the artist

Paul Yore works in a variety of textile practices and with found objects to create collaged quilts, banners and immersive environments that interrogate social and political power structures, inequities, and anxieties. *Daemonophobia* (2016) is from a series of works that utilises each letter of the alphabet to present a phobia, in this case, the fear of demons

Damiano Bertoli's Performance *Revolutions (Le désir) #2* (2017) documents the artist's contemporary restaging of Picasso's 1941 play *Le Désir Attrapé par la Queue* (Desire Caught by the Tail): part of the artist's investigation into the cyclical nature of art, or as he referred to it the 'continuous moment'.

Collectively, these commissioned, collected, and exhibited works represent the longevity, quality, and currency of the artists selected to create Gertrude Editions over the program's twenty-year history.