

RE//ASSEMBLING

International Women's Day Celebrations 2015

HR Gallop Gallery
Charles Sturt University
Wagga Wagga
6 - 25 March 2015

Introduction

From Sarah McEwan/ /Curator

The Cad Factory

When I was 13, I had one of my first very clear epiphanies. I had gotten home from school, and was sitting in my recently set up, make shift studio; the first of many. I'd sectioned off the end of the hallway outside my bedroom and laid out very neatly all my art materials and art books. I felt so happy.

I was reading a catalogue of an exhibition I had just been to and was looking over every work with intensity. Obviously, there were not many female artists included, only a few out of dozens, and as I turned the page to study the work

of the first female artist, I stopped and thought to myself, 'This work is no good. It must be because she is a woman. Women artists are not as good a men.'

As soon as I had that thought I stopped. I felt shocked. So I started to question myself deeper. Where did that thought come from? Why did I think that? And of course what does it mean for me? Does it mean I'll never be as good as a man? Or a good artist? That I'll never succeed? Once I turned to the personal, I was completely freaked out about my future. After a long internal conversation,

I vowed to never ever, ever think that thought again. It was the beginning of consciously understanding gender and the way it impacts on real lives.

More than 20 years on, I still monitor myself strictly and continually ask myself, am I doing something because I am performing a female role and this is expected of me? As a young girl and now a woman, I never grow tired of trying to understand the world through a feminist lens.

This exhibition represents female artists in the Riverina who have created work with the intention of searching, finding, examining or critiquing place within the self, regional locations or patriarchal histories. The exhibition provides a snapshot of the practices and conceptual concerns of female artists residing within the Riverina.

The diversity of the artists is almost as vast as their ages; ranging from artists who have just finished high school to a number of women over 60, and artists with decades of experience.

Current conversations in feminism highlight the importance of intergenerational gatherings of women. The points of difference from generation to generation are to be listened to and discussed so we can understand together the complexity of women having equal participation in all aspects of life.

I'm thrilled that on the 40th anniversary of International Women's Day, The Cad Factory and Charles Sturt University are presenting such a strong group of women who are working hard to have their voices heard.

Introduction

From Julie Montgarrett/ /Curator
Charles Sturt University

I, myself, have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is. I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiates me from a door mat or a prostitute.

Rebecca West

Looking back over 40 years of International Women's day celebrations, it is heartening to see how much has changed – and equally frustrating to recognise how much is still to be debated and resolved. While the F-word is part of common parlance, it retains a problematic and often ambiguous meaning

for women of all ages, who use it with both derision or with pride. Perhaps, despite the passing of 40 years, and the on-going development of rigorous critical feminist theory and debate, the one (and perhaps only remaining) common thread is that for all women, the Women's Liberation maxim of the 1960's and 70's remains true – “the personal is political”. Yet, without doubt the politically vital, lived experiences of most women remain unknown, for many, many reasons despite the changes hard won by generations of feminists – first, second or third wave activists.

This exhibition, then as a milestone for the 40 year IWD anniversary, provides an all too rare opportunity to present the works of some of our regions' best women artist's. Not all but many. While a lack of exhibition opportunities remains a key hurdle faced by non-metropolitan artists regardless of gender, creative arts practice is particularly problematic for women. The role of 'artist' demands a resilient, self-confident determination and women's self-assurance is often muddled by a lifetime of gendered conditioning that conjures self-doubt at every turn. We are frequently our own worst enemies carting self-doubt around as surely as we lug our handbags, too often apologising along the way.

These artists, however are not apologising. They have taken up the challenge of devising a range of visual languages adequate to their personal lived experience and appropriate to the materials and issues of the wider field of contemporary creative practice despite the odds against them. They have found confidence in the 'substance' of their thoughts, opinions and skills, in

the languages of making that prevent many of their sisters from ever adopting that perpetually confronting identity of 'artist'. Countless cupboards, suitcases under-beds and the back of wardrobes hold countless creative works made by many women who value the process of making 'something' they too often don't dare call 'art'. Made in what space and time they can afford once their other roles are completed in the daily rounds of 'otherness'. Thinking perhaps as Mumma did in Ruth Park's 'Poor Man's Orange', ruefully observing a beautiful hand-made shawl, 'that this at least this will last.'

The works presented in RE// ASSEMBLING reveal much about the strength of arts practice and substance of experiences of regional women artists. Here is a glimpse of a many worlds and a wealth of meaning that draws upon both a collective feminine cultural inheritance and opens up to the diverse opportunities underpinning contemporary arts practice. These artist's should also have us wonder and seek out what other art works and stories remain hidden away in those other countless private cupboards.

Adele Packer

1992

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Adele Packer's art practice encompasses mediums as diverse as design, photography, collage, textiles, needlework and most things in between. She makes things because she wants to; for her friends and for herself.



These digital collages were an attempt at creating identities and belonging for these women, whose pictures I found lost in history.



List of Works

Reflections

2013

Digital collage using found images

Angela Coombs Matthews

1975

Lives in Temora

Angela Coombs Matthews is a painter, printmaker and photographer who draws her inspiration from the surrounding landscape; it's colours, textures, shapes and moods creating expressive and imaginative visual imagery. Over the past 17 years of Angela's art practice, her work has evolved from bold abstracts to semi abstract landscapes and subtle linear pieces.

Angela currently teaches art and photography to children and adults through her own workshops and casual employment.

Angela has an exhibition in April 2015 at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, which will include photography, photogravures and etchings, and in August 2015 she will spend a month at Hill End making drawings, collagraphs and photogravures as part of the Hill End Artist in Residence program.



Angela's individual language of marks, gestures and shapes in this series is the product of her largely subconscious absorbing of landscape moderated by her senses and feelings about the natural world and the creative process itself.



List of Works

A succession of Informalities
2014
Monoprint

Casey Ankers

1973

Lives in Uranquinty

With a background in metalwork, community broadcasting and community cultural development, Casey now spends time designing gardens, raising her children, talking to her chickens, thinking about art and doing way too much housework.



These works explore the inherent tensions between the role of the Artist and the role of the Mother.

'This is what happens when I think about Art too much' created using dust and debris collected from my floors.

'Fuck Art Let's Wash Dishes' originally exhibited as part of the Tea Towel exhibition at the Serpentine Gallery, Lismore in 2010.



List of Works

*This is what happens when I think
about Art too much*

2008

Mixed media

Fuck Art Let's Wash Dishes

2010

Mixed media

Corrie Furner

1970

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Corrie Furner is a contemporary artist with a Bachelor of Fine Art from the Queensland College of Art. Her work emerges using the mediums installation, audio, photography, and projection. Recent work has been driven by an interest into light, artificial and natural, and phenomena, tangible and intangible.



'Above Water', attempts to turn the interior world on its head positioning the domestic in a setting open to the natural elements. Appealing to her own personal narrative Furner explores the masculine and feminine, using light and water and in the process reframing existing preconceptions. The feminine takes on an unconventional course, one of discovery, freedom and strength.



List of Works

Above Water

2013

Found Objects, Still Image, Projection

Emma Piltz

1981

Lives in Narrandera

Emma Piltz is an emerging artist who is interested in the collection of objects to suggest a greater and deeper meaning of the intangible. Her work involves installations created from these collections often ephemeral in nature, making the work temporal and subject to change and decay over time.



These works explores being a woman in a small community, preconceived ideas about relationships, fertility, motherhood, lifestyle and personal issues that are commented on before thinking.





List of Works

Barren
2014

Stick twine handmade paper

Mother Earth
2015

Handmade paper twine stone

Tie the knot
2014/15

Old books twine wood acrylic

Empty Sac

2015

Natural dyed textile found objects

It's no fairy tale

2015

Natural dyed textile vintage
magazines handmade paper

Unity

2015

Natural dyed textile, found objects
twine

Gail Manderson

1952

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Aunty Gail Manderson is a Wiradjuri Elder who has been a practicing artist her whole life. She teaches Wiradjuri cultural arts and weaving in local schools as well as being an Aboriginal support person with the Wagga Wagga Police.

Aunty Gail began weaving in 2010, when the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery had an outreach program that helped revive traditional weaving practices within the Wagga community for local Aboriginal Elders and young women. Since then, Gail has exhibited in five major exhibitions at the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery. Her works are included in the collections of the Australian Museum, Sydney and Bunjilaka, Museum of Victoria as well as weavings in private collections in Australia, New York and Seattle, USA.

Aunty Gail is currently studying a Graduate Certificate in Wiradjuri Language, Culture and Heritage and continues to share her knowledge with community.



'Giralang Bundinya', Wiradjuri for falling star, are represented in these pieces. In Wiradjuri culture we return to the stars when we pass and I wanted to represent and honour those that have passed within this installation.



List of Works

Dilly Bag
2015
Hemp, seagrass and emu feathers

Giralang Bundinya
2015
Rope, raffia, wooden beads, echidna quills, emu feathers and turkey feathers

Scoop
2015
Hemp and seagrass

Hayley Wheaton

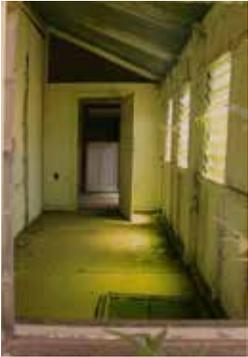
1986

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Hayley Wheaton's art practice encompasses drawing, photography and printmaking with a focus on the environment that we live in. Environments shape who we are and can create intense emotions and thoughts that ultimately lead to what we become. Environment is not only our physical surroundings; it includes the people and society that surround and teach us and also includes our inner environment, the psychological, emotional and subconscious. Hayley is intrigued by how our environments interact, blend and infuse with each other. Creating art is continual exploration of these interactions.



This series explores spaces of my own and my family's past. When photographing these spaces I walked through doors and witnessed the past. Objects, smells, colours, light coming together reshaping memories long forgotten. What used to be spaces lived in now are shells, ruins, ready to pass. Once they served as spaces of practicality, now they just can be.



List of Works

Doors to Now
2015
Photographs

Jacko Meyers

1982

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Jacko is multi-disciplinary artist who is interested in painting, drawing, textiles, paper craft and performing. Jacko has played leading roles in the All Ability Theatre Company productions. She has featured in the film 'Love Ability' created by Zeb Shulz, Real Art Works and in the SBS 2 story 'Living With Down Syndrome.' In 2013 Jacko was an ambassador for Don't Dis My Ability.



This work was made as part of the 8 Artists project in 2013. Jacqui collaborated with her sister Julia Roche and they made over 50 works that hung in a huge wall installation at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery. In this small selection of work, two pieces were created with Jacqui and Julia painting together.



List of Works

*Selected works from Patterns for
Sister*
2013
Mixed media on tiles and paper

Jo Roberts

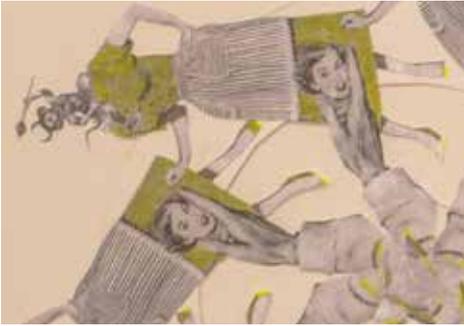
1973

Lives in Leeton

Jo Roberts makes collage and installations inspired by Dada, surrealism, situationism, riot grrl, kitsch, the sublime and the absurd.



'squid / day to night' and 'in the palm of his hand' were created for the Art Misadventure #3 exhibition at the Roxy Gallery in Leeton in 2013. I was given some buttons from the 1940's as a prompt, and began to explore the restrictions my post-war grandmother and aunties had faced as women.



List of Works

squid / day to night
2013
Collage/pencil

in the palm of his hand
2013
Collage/pencil

Jordy Bos

1995

Lives in Coolamon

Jordy lives on a farm outside of Coolamon which helps to keep up her love of sculpting. She mainly works with materials like paper, because of its versatility.



These four origami works all explore the structural components of repetition, and play with the capabilities and limits of paper.





List of Works

Mesh
2014
Paper

Norwegian Wood
2014
Paper

Spot
2014
Paper

Read
2014
Paper

Julie Briggs

1954

Lives in Narrandera

Julie Briggs is a project manager, marketing writer, and arts supporter. She writes poetry and vignettes in a hurry. She has a writing desk in a sunny spot she'd like to write from some day.



As women we live with the duality of culture that both honours and threatens, retreats from and embraces the freedoms that many of us as wide-eyed children are able to imagine are ours. Even as we count colours in the rainbow, others in the world count threads with their fingers, days by water carried, nights by forgetting.

and the story of shoes

The (blood)

Red Shoes.

List of Works

Ballet can be written down
(*Princess Ballet Book No 2, p3*)
2013
Poetry Projection

But when I was seven
2013
Poetry Projection

She is forced to dance
2013
Poetry Projection

Julie Montgarrett

1955

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Julie Montgarrett is a textile artist and lecturer in Creative Arts and Design at Charles Sturt University. She has exhibited in solo and group exhibitions throughout Australia and internationally since 1977. She is particularly interested in the ways that textile and drawing, both ancient art forms endure as vital contemporary languages for individuals and communities in every culture and society.



This work refers to the lives of three women - Dalrymple Briggs, her mother, Woretemoeteyenner, and Bridget Edwards Mountgarret who lived in the cross-fire of the escalating war zone of the first 25 years of the British invasion of Van Diemen's Land as the entire island was engulfed in violence.

I aim to explore the gaps in understanding that generated fraught often brutal relationships between Palawa peoples and the invading British settlers determined to re-make themselves at any cost. Gaps that continue to haunt our shared cultural domains despite the passing of two centuries.

By including a likely object of their labour (the butter churn), commonplace materials of the era and the absence of a conventional narrative sequence and implied 'meaning', I hope to suggest something of the fragile, tenuous lives historically erased.



List of Works

soldiers, sailors, beggar girls, thieves
2015
Found object, various textiles and
papers

Kath Withers

1949

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Kath Withers known to many as Aunty Kath is a Wiradjuri Elder. An accomplished artist, Kath often creates through painting, printmaking and weaving to tell the stories of her life and dreaming. She has shown work in numerous exhibitions and her 'sista baskets' are on permanent display in the Victoria Museum. Kath has work in the Australian Museum and various collections nationally and internationally.

Kath is passionate about sharing her culture and helping her community. She is currently in her fourth year of teaching art to inmates and their children in the Colourful Dreaming Program at Junee Correctional Centre.

Kath is currently studying Art and Design at Deakin University in Melbourne.



Sista baskets are special objects to me. Most people think they are empty objects but they are full of knowledge. Most of my weaving is done with other people around and the conversations are woven into the baskets. I weave from the heart and my spirit ancestors guide me. These baskets are similar to the ones that I have on permanent display at the First Peoples: Bunjilaka exhibition at the Museum Victoria.



List of Works

Sista Baskets
2015
raffia and paper core

Lorraine Tye

1950

Lives in Uranquinty

Lorraine Tye is a Wiradjuri artist using basketry techniques and other fibre practices. Lorraine has exhibited widely in the Riverina region and beyond. She has artwork in Wagga Wagga City Councils' collection and currently has artwork on display in the Sauntering Emu at the Museum of the Riverina, Botanic Gardens Site. Lorraine was one of four artists involved in a major public art work in 2013 at the Wagga Wagga airport celebrating the Wiradjuri Nation.



I use bush dyed raffia in my work to suggest a place and time within Wiradjuri Country. As an object the mat is a domestic item, but by using bush dyed and commercially coloured raffia I am weaving a little bit of my history into an item my family will walk on.

The sting ray hat started as a domestic mat but evolved into the creature it is today. I wear it to empower as it is a challenge to have on. Its tail commands respect from those walking behind.



List of Works

Mats

2011

Coiled bush dyed and commercially dyed raffia, rope

Sting Ray Hat

2012

Coiled, bush dyed raffia, seagrass

Melanie Evans

1973

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Melanie Evans was born in Darwin with family from the Jingalee people. Melanie has been a practicing artist for 18 years and works across a number of mediums including painting, drawing, mixed media, weaving, textiles and bush dying.

Melanie is passionate about Aboriginal culture and education; currently teaching Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts at TAFE. Melanie has been the Indigenous Emerging Curator at Wagga Wagga Art Gallery where she curated three major exhibitions that showcased the revival of traditional weaving practices with Wiradjuri, Aboriginal and non aboriginal woman in Wagga Wagga. She has also coordinated cultural exchanges between other Indigenous women weavers from Victoria and Gapuwiyak, Arnhem Land, NT.

Melanie is actively engaged within her community to share the beauty of Aboriginal culture.



Both pieces are a series that explores women's role as the holders of knowledge. Weaving practices and their revival within this region are exciting. Both these pieces honour the old women who created baskets for survival and everyday use and how this was held together through knowledge of Country, family and lore.



List of Works

Silk Story #1: Women Hold the Knowledge
2012
silk



Silk Story #2: Women Hold the Knowledge
2013-14
silk

Melinda Schiller

1971

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Melinda is a local Aboriginal artist who grew up in Wiradjuri Country on a farm 20km from Temora and relocated to Wagga Wagga in 1993. Melinda is a self-taught artist who began painting in January 2012. Melinda's paintings are vibrant and lyrical. Her works are an individual response to how she is feeling and how her spirit flows at the time she is painting. Melinda's paintings are done so that others may feel peace, healing and enjoyment when looking at them.

Melinda has participated in exhibitions in NSW and Victoria. Most recently she was the winner of the Indigenous Art Award 2013 at Spirit of the Land Lockhart Festival and received a Highly Commended in 2014. Melinda was awarded third place in the 2014 National Close the Gap Day Murrumbidgee Medicare Local Aboriginal Art Competition.

Melinda is currently completing her Graduate Certificate in Wiradjuri Language, Culture and Heritage at Charles Sturt University.



I have created a set of three canvases' that represent my relationship with a girlfriend I have known since kindergarten. One circle represents her family and the other circle represents mine. The black line surrounding us represents the community going about their lives.



List of Works

Girlfriend

2013

Acrylic paint on canvas

Natalie Louise Power

1974

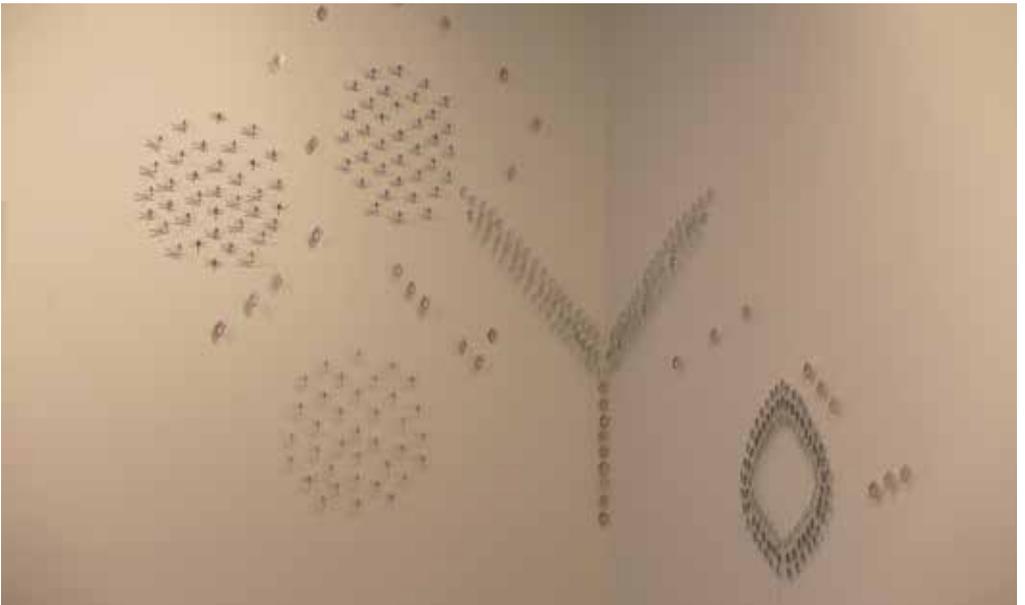
Lives in Wagga Wagga

Natalie is a contemporary, conceptual visual and performing artist and educator. She has lived and worked all over Australia and overseas, but continues to always find her way back to the Riverina area where she grew up and studied. Natalie graduated from CSU with a Bachelor of Visual Arts in 1998 and a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education in 2006. In 2009 she opened her own business "Eilatan Enterprises" Empower Emerge Emancipate, that combined her passion of the Arts and Education.

Natalie currently teaches at Shepards Park Education and Training Unit.



Natalie's art making practice is always evolving and revolving old and new elements from previous works and found objects. The central images, motifs and narratives in her work circle around life/death/life cycles. Her work is processes driven constantly experimenting using paper and fabric to cut, incise, print, stitch and burn, what might seem soft and delicate can also be strong and powerful. Natalie's work is often ephemeral, emerging over periods of time and then submerging only to resurface and recreate a new cycle of emerging and submerging; Life, Death, Life.



List of Works

Tellus

Deconstructing works form 1997

Names Will Never Hurt Me & 2007

Yirayin. Reconstructing in 2014-2015

Tellus

Paper, thread, needle, pins

Sarah Mifsud

1989

Lives in Wagga Wagga

Sarah currently holds a Bachelor of Arts (Graphic Design/Photography) and Master of Arts Practice with specialisation (Photo-media) while also working as a freelance designer and photographer for over seven years with a focus on design for not-for-profit organisations as well as a practicing artist, exhibiting work in Sydney, Melbourne and Wagga.



Looking beyond the details of the image this body of work explores the representation of possible versus impossible and plausible implausible to create photographs that not only challenge the truth, beauty and typical representation of the human form.

The female body in art in has been a studied figure for centuries and during this time the understanding, representation and interpretation of the female body has changed significantly. Ongoing exposure to certain ideas can shape and distort our perceptions of reality. Today's culture acts as a constant reminder to fit into hegemonic beauty standards and influences women's understanding of their own body and their own personal worth. Many individuals who advocate and subscribe to ideals of beauty change their appearance in an attempt to transform from the actual into what is an assumed desirable state.



List of Works

Self Reflection 1
2014
Photographic Print

Self Reflection 2
2014
Photographic Print

Self Reflection 3
2014
Photographic Print

Sarah McEwan

1979

Lives in Birrego

Sarah McEwan is an artist and musician whose interest is in painting, drawing, video, installation and textiles. Sarah's ongoing fascination is with private, inner worlds and feminist discourse.

Sarah also makes work under the pseudonym Her Riot, an 'anti-band' creating gallery installations instead of performing live gigs. A set of rules have been created so that a feminist perspective is given at all times within Her Riot's imagery.

Sarah is the Creative Producer of The Cad Factory; an artist led organisation creating an international program of new, immersive and experimental work guided by authentic exchange, ethical principles, people and place.



Not in your body is an installation exploring how external perceptions of gender influence internal dialogues. How you feel is often very different to how you are seen. The threads are the physical representation of internal thoughts falling from your subconscious and manifesting in to reality. The work also takes inspiration from the poem by Julie Briggs that is in this exhibition, that is inspired by the dreams and perceptions of young girls and the Hans Christen Anderson story, *The Red Shoes*.



List of Works

Not in your body

2013

Fabric, threads, shoes, vinyl lettering,
wood

Vicky Okot & Beyola Tombek

1995 & 1995

Both live in Wagga Wagga

Vicky and Beyola are both originally from south Sudan. Beyola arrived in Australia in late 2004 and Vicky arrived early January in 2004. Both artists enjoy photography and have been participating in the dLab workshop program for three years where they have developed new skills and through this program have grown as strong individuals and in 2014 they completed their first series of artwork.



Focusing on their African culture and its examples of traditional portraiture, Vicky and Beyola set off to create a unique photographic exhibition.

Incorporating new digital media technology into the process they put their own unique interpretation on the connection between contemporary life in Australia and the cultural traditions in their community.

The understanding both Vicky and Beyola have of their heritage is clearly shown through their work. "Each country has their own design and colours", says Beyola. Painting a vivid picture of feminine strength, Vicky explains that "the head wrap makes the facial features appear striking so that anyone that wishes to look upon an African woman would look up at her face rather than down at her body".



List of Works

Traditional African portraits: Remixed
2014
Photography













A Cad Factory and Charles Sturt University Project

