

WORLD MATERIAL

*Connie Anthes, Rebecca Gallo, Eloïse Kirk, Michelle Nikou,
Lisa Sammut, Lotte Schwerdtfeger, Yasmin Smith & Louise Weaver*

Curated by Chloé Wolfson

28 January – 25 February 2017

World Material brings together the work of Australian artists whose works explore the spaces between strength and delicacy, between the material and the conceptual, between accident and intent, between the real and the fictional, and between representation and abstraction - embodying an exploration, recontextualisation, and sometimes deliberate obfuscation of natural, found and human-made materials. The exhibition is intended as an exploration of these tensions, suggesting totem-like resonances within and between the works of these artists.

Connie Anthes is an artist based in Sydney. She makes paintings, objects, performances, interventions and installations and considers her art activities to be process-based experiments. Anthes has shown her work in Sydney, Melbourne, Newcastle, Bathurst, Hobart, Launceston and Leipzig and been the recipient of numerous grants and residencies, both in Australia and abroad. Anthes is an active member of the Sydney artist-run community, having been a past director of Firstdraft, Runway.org.au and a member of the MCA Artist Advisory Group. She recently co-founded Frontyard in Marrickville and is one half of the collaborative duo Make or Break.

Rebecca Gallo is an artist and writer. Through sculpture, installation, performance and publishing, Gallo investigates systems of value pertaining to both objects and labour. In her material practice, discarded and manufactured objects are combined into assemblages, totems and carefully catalogued collections. With a focus on utility and materiality, these works are an exploration of material culture and the ways in which everyday objects can be read and understood. Her works in *World Material* were created during a residency at Penrith Regional Gallery & The Lewers Bequest.

Eloïse Kirk's work explores the unification of collage and painting, sampling images of rock formations, waves and clouds. The work is partially concealed by dark textural plains and reflective pools of resin; a nod to the mystic act of scrying or "peeping into the future". These negative spaces offer a void for decent into the unfamiliar. The works offer aesthetic response to the juncture between beauty, desire and disaster, testing the boundaries between the romantic and the surreal. Kirk draws upon seascapes and geological forms to forge connections between discarded images, fetishising and fictionalising landscapes, proliferating a tangled narrative and the colonisation of images and objects. Based in Hobart, Kirk completed her Master of Visual Arts at the Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney in 2012.

Michelle Nikou graduated from the South Australian School of Art with a Bachelor of Design (ceramics) in 1989 and a Master of Visual Arts in 2005. Nikou has held regular solo exhibitions since the early 1990's. A survey of her work, *aeiou*, was recently held at Heide Museum of Modern Art and will soon travel around Australia until 2018. Nikou has been the recipient of numerous awards and residencies, including, most recently, the NAVA Visual Arts Fellowship (2016). Nikou's work is represented in private and public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, Art Gallery of South Australia and the University of South Australia Art Museum. Michelle Nikou is represented by Darren Knight Gallery.

Lisa Sammut is a Sydney-based emerging artist who received a BFA with Honours (Class 1) at COFA in 2012. She has since participated in numerous exhibitions nationally including solo and group shows at Firstdraft, MOP Projects, Bus Projects, Moana Project Space, Archive_, Seventh, Kudos Gallery, QUT Art Museum and Fairfield City Gallery & Museum. Lisa recently received the Jenny Birt Award (2013), Australia Council Artstart Grant (2013), Churchie Emerging Art Sam Whiteley Memorial Commendation Prize (2016) and was a finalist in the Hazelhurst Art on Paper (2015) and NAB Emerging Artist Award as part of Art Month Sydney (2014). In 2016, Lisa was awarded a Sainsbury Sculpture Grant to undertake an intensive woodcarving course at the Geisler-Moroder Schnitz und Bildhauerschule in Tirol, Austria in 2017 and is currently undertaking an MFA by Research with an Australian Postgraduate Award Scholarship from UNSW Art & Design.

Lotte Schwerdtfeger is an Australian multi-disciplinary artist, whose work seeks to create a dialogue around ritual, ecology and environment. With a focus on process, intuition and play her expanded studio practice comprises of ceramics, sculpture, painting and textiles. Using new and recycled materials combined through fine art and craft techniques, her work presents material illusions and transformations to draw on the fantastical facets of the world. Her work challenges dichotomies of real and fake, spiritual and scientific, natural and man-made, exposing the overlap between these realms and questioning the degree to which they are psychological constructs. Schwerdtfeger completed a Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting), at The Victorian College of the Arts in 2011 and exhibits in Melbourne and Sydney.

Yasmin Smith has an archaeological approach to ceramics, producing site-specific, research-based projects that often result in an installation of cast ceramic objects glazed with remnants of the original object or other locally-sourced materials. Smith completed her Master of Visual Arts (Ceramics) at Sydney College of the Arts, the University of Sydney in 2010. She was a director of the influential Sydney artist-run initiative, Locksmith Project from 2008 until 2010. Her work is in the collection of Artbank. Yasmin Smith is represented by The Commercial Gallery, Sydney.

Louise Weaver has held regular solo exhibitions since graduating from RMIT with a Masters of Art in 1996. Weaver's work is held in both local and international collections, including The British Museum, London, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra and Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand. Louise Weaver is represented by Darren Knight Gallery.

Chloé Wolifson is an independent arts writer, curator & art administrator. She has contributed to numerous publications including ArtAsiaPacific, Art & Australia, and Art Monthly. Recent curatorial projects include *tensions/translations/transitions*, for the Dominik Mersch Curator Award (2016); *Animal Mineral Physical Spiritual*, The Bearded Tit (2015); & *For Lease*, Breezeblock (2014). From 2005 to 2013 Chloé worked at Darren Knight Gallery, and from 2013 to 2015 she was a board member of Runway Australian Experimental Art.