



UNSW School of Art & Design Term 3 2026 HDR Conference

Tuesday 20 October – Friday 23 October

PROGRAM



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of Country, the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples, on whose unceded land our campus is located. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise their enduring connection to land, waters, and culture.

The HDR Conference showcases the work of candidates enrolled in Higher Degree Research (HDR) programs at UNSW School of Art & Design. Our HDR cohort invites you to engage with their creative and impactful projects, representing all forms of research across the School. Presented at the Paddington campus from 20 – 23 October 2026, the three-day conference is complemented by a program of ancillary events.

Art & Design HDR Team:

Dr David Eastwood (Director HDR)
A/Prof Emma Robertson (HDR Coordinator)
Daisy Lawrance Johnson (Graduate Research Officer)

Conference Program Convenor:

Dr David Eastwood

Conference Organising Committee:

Xiaochu (Daisy) Dai (PhD candidate)
Keroshin Govender (MFA candidate)
Fiona Macpherson (MFA candidate)
Tom Willma (PhD candidate)
Henry Wolff (MFA candidate)

Cover image credit:

Abby Murray, *Florals and Failures* (Iteration 9), 2025-2026.

Oil, acrylic, watercolour, ink and oil stick on re-constituted canvas and found textiles, polyester bows, found silk, disregarded house dresses, found and handwoven rope, brick, thread, hand-built wooden armature from waste wood, June's belt, and steel clamps. 160 × 175 × 60 cm. Installation view, Black Box, UNSW School of Art & Design, Paddington. Photo courtesy the artist.

Online resources:

- [Session Sign-Up Form](#) – request calendar invitations for each event.
- [Term 3 2026 HDR Conference web page](#)



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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

DAY 1: Tuesday 20 October 2026

Register to attend events and receive calendar invitations via the [Session Sign-Up form](#)

Panel 1: QUEERNESS & PERFORMANCE (Tuesday 9:30-11:00am) Face-to-face only: AG01 (Ground floor, Block A) Chair: Diana Baker Smith Panel Member: Scott East	Panel 2: PAINTING, EXPERIENCE, IDENTITY (Tuesday 9:30-11:00am) Face-to-face only: A101 (Level 1, Block A) Chair: Rochelle Haley Panel Member: Andrew Yip
Chenxi Zhang – PhD <i>Queering the Dragon Lady: Meaning-Making of the Encounter.</i> (Supervisors: Rebecca Green, Shuxia Chen, Kerryn Drysdale)	Jacque Meng – MFA <i>Smiling through a hundred teeth.</i> (Supervisors: Felicity Fenner, Ramesh Nithiyendran)
June Acido Miskell – PhD <i>Archipelagic Imaginaries: Contemporary Filipino/x Australian Art.</i> (Supervisors: Astrid Lorange, Andrew Brooks, Shuxia Chen)	Giles Alexander – PhD <i>From devotional aesthetics to musical memory: Reimagining late medieval devotional paintings to investigate and illuminate contemporary forms of secular spiritual connection as experienced through music.</i> (Supervisors: Emma Robertson, Oliver Bown)
Henry Wolff – MFA <i>Cutting both ways.</i> (Supervisors: Ed Scheer, Prue Gibson, Grant Stevens)	Fiona Macpherson – MFA <i>A Latent Trace: Post-photographic Painting, Trauma and Haunting in Post-digital Culture.</i> (Supervisors: Tim Gregory, Clare Milledge)
Confidential reviews (11:00am-12:30pm) Hybrid mode: Room D104 & via MS Teams	Confidential reviews (11:00am-12:30pm) Hybrid mode: Room D109 & via MS Teams
LUNCH 12:30-1:30pm	
Panel 3: POWER, CRITIQUE, AESTHETICS (Tuesday 1:30-3:00pm) Face-to-face only: AG01 (Ground floor, Block A) Chair: Jennifer Biddle Panel Member: Jaye Early	Panel 4: EXPERIENTIAL SPACES (Tuesday 1:30-3:00pm) Face-to-face only: A101 (Level 1, Block A) Chair: Grant Stevens Panel Member: Clare Milledge
Shani Black – MPhil <i>Memes as Print: Critical image-macro memes as a form of agitprop print.</i> (Supervisors: Rebecca Green, Scott East)	Wei Wang – PhD <i>Towards a Spatial Psychoanalysis: Finding the Entrance in the Unconscious Place.</i> (Supervisors: Michael Garbutt, Jill Bennett)
Alex Moulis – PhD <i>The beach as desert: the affective entanglement of patriarchal white sovereignty, the visual archive and land between settler-colonial projects.</i> (Supervisors: Astrid Lorange, Nicholas Apoifis)	Mel Deerson – PhD <i>garden dreams of a garden dreams of a garden dreams of a garden dreams of a</i> (Supervisors: Diana Baker Smith, Fernando do Campo)
Gabriel Curtin – PhD <i>Greenwell's Chip: commodity form and Marxist literature.</i> (Supervisors: Astrid Lorange, Tim Gregory)	Xiaochu (Daisy) Dai – PhD <i>Between Land and Sea: Experiencing the Neo-Sublime through Sydney Mangroves in an Immersive VR Installation.</i> (Supervisors: Rebecca Green, Andrew Yip)
Confidential reviews (3:00-4:30pm) Hybrid mode: Room D104 & via MS Teams	Confidential reviews (3:00-4:30pm) Hybrid mode: Room D109 & via MS Teams

DAY 2: Wednesday 21 October 2026

Register to attend events and receive calendar invitations via the [Session Sign-Up form](#)

Panel 5: CULTURE, REPRESENTATION & THE SINOSPHERE (Wednesday 9:30-11:00am) Face-to-face only: AG01 (Ground floor, Block A) Chair: Livia Rezende Panel Member: Michael Garbutt	Panel 6: SITE-RESPONSIVE PRACTICES (Wednesday 9:30-11:00am) Face-to-face only: A101 (Level 1, Block A) Chair: Tim Gregory Panel Member: Moon Lacroix
Lin Zhou – PhD <i>Re-thinking Contemporary Chinese Peasant Painting in Transcultural Contexts: A Discourse Analytical Approach.</i> (Supervisors: Ian McArthur, Paul Gladston)	Emma Pinsent – PhD <i>Porous material afterlives of an intertidal zone.</i> (Supervisors: David Eastwood, Bianca Hester)
Jiawen Li – PhD <i>An Analytical Framework for Examining Contemporary Chinese Art in Australian Public Art Institutions.</i> (Supervisors: Shuxia Chen, Lizzie Muller, Olivier Krischer)	Lara Merrett – MFA <i>How can a collaborative and situated expanded painting practice with pest-kin generate better-balanced ecological futures?</i> (Supervisors: Izabela Pluta, Adriana Verges, Fernando do Campo)
Candice Ng – PhD <i>Critical and Experimental Design Education in Singapore's Neoliberal Developmental State.</i> (Supervisors: Katherine Moline, Scott Brown)	Maya Martin-Westheimer – PhD <i>Curating as a Practice of Place: Toward a Site-Responsive Curatorial Practice</i> (Supervisors: Prue Gibson, Scott East, Consuelo Cavaniglia)
Confidential reviews (11:00am-12:00pm) Hybrid mode: Room D104 & via MS Teams	Confidential reviews: 11:00am-12:00pm in D109/ 3:30-4:00pm in F402 & via MS Teams
12:00-2:00pm ADA Town Hall (staff meeting) EG02, Ground Floor, E Block, UNSW Art & Design	
LUNCH 12:00-2:00pm	
Panel 7: RESOURCEFUL MAKING (Wednesday 2:00-3:30pm) Face-to-face only: AG01 (Ground floor, Block A) Chair: Katherine Moline Panel Member: Trent Jansen	Panel 8: ARCHIVES, CULTURES, IDENTITIES (Wednesday 2:00-3:30pm) Face-to-face only: A101 (Level 1, Block A) Chair: Emma Robertson Panel Member: Peter Sharp
Lu Forsberg – PhD <i>Power Play: Alternative Electricity Systems in Contemporary Media Art.</i> (Supervisors: Caleb Kelly, Bianca Hester)	Linda Marie Bretherton – PhD <i>Activating the archival collection: How contemporary artists and curators are driving museum practice change.</i> (Supervisors: Edward Scheer, Felicity Fenner)
Benjamin Chevalier – MFA <i>Playing with the Machine: Reverse Engineering Craft Knowledge Through Manual Knitting</i> (Supervisors: Bic Tieu, Alana Clifton-Cunningham, Alison Gwilt)	Keroshin Govender – MFA <i>Dis-orientation: Deconstructing presentation of "Indian" culture in contemporary Australia.</i> (Supervisors: Felicity Fenner, Ramesh Nithiyendran)
Leah Giblin – MFA <i>Design for Enduring Use: Translating Attributes of a Long-Loved Garment into a Design Method.</i> (Supervisors: Matthew Harkness, Alison Gwilt, Alana Clifton-Cunningham)	Abby Murray – MFA <i>A site of negotiation: Feverish visualisations of archival re-encounters.</i> (Supervisors: Fernando do Campo, Izabela Pluta)
Confidential reviews (3:30-5:00pm) Hybrid mode: Room D104 & via MS Teams	Confidential reviews (3:30-5:00pm) Hybrid mode: Room D109 & via MS Teams

DAY 3: Thursday 22 October 2026

Register to attend events and receive calendar invitations via the [Session Sign-Up form](#)

Panel 9: DIASPORA & ARCHIVES (Thursday 9:30-11:00am) Face-to-face only: AG01 (Ground floor, Block A) Chair: Zoe Veness Panel Member: Consuelo Cavaniglia	Panel 10: TECHNOLOGY, AGENCY, PLAY (Thursday 9:30-11:00am) Face-to-face only: A101 (Level 1, Block A) Chair: Caleb Kelly Panel Member: Jill Bennett
Suzanne Claridge – PhD <i>At the edges of the portal: archival incantations and re-envisioning minor history.</i> (Supervisors: Astrid Lorange, Andrew Brooks, Livia Rezende)	Tom Willma – PhD <i>Examining Values: Generative AI and the Music Sector.</i> (Supervisors: Oliver Bown, Anna Munster)
Marcia Swaby – PhD <i>Reperforming Guanin: Crafting a practice of embodied and materially driven jewellery-making in dialogue with indigenous Caribbean craft legacies.</i> (Supervisors: Bianca Hester, Fernando do Campo)	Shaozhi Pi – PhD <i>Governing AI-Generated Game Music in Real Time: A Composer-Centred Music Manager.</i> (Supervisors: Oliver Bown, Adam Hulbert, Michael Bain)
Shireen Taweel – PhD <i>Unearthing Repertoire, Heritage Practice and Memory in a body of Postcolonial Speculative Fiction.</i> (Supervisors: Diana Baker Smith, Fernando do Campo)	Zhongyu Jia – PhD <i>Design Toolkits: Bridging the Communication Gap Between Video Game Players and Non-Players in Family Settings.</i> (Supervisors: Deborah Tillman, Katherine Moline)
Confidential reviews (11:00am-12:30pm) Hybrid mode: Room D104 & via MS Teams	Confidential reviews (11:00am-12:30pm) Hybrid mode: Room D109 & via MS Teams
12:30-2:00pm LUNCH	
2:00-2:30pm Exhibition Floor Talk REMY FAINT: A Site of Unfolding Join artist and MFA candidate Remy Faint for a floor talk about his current exhibition. Meet in UNSW Galleries, upstairs foyer. Request a calendar invitation via the Session Sign-Up Form.	
3:00-4:00pm HDR Exhibition Launch and Guided Tour Level 4 Block F, Sherman Postgraduate Studios Launch of the inaugural exhibition in the newly renovated installation space F408, with HDR candidates to lead a guided tour featuring spotlight talks. Request a calendar invitation via the Session Sign-Up Form.	
4:00-6:00pm CLOSING CELEBRATION Level 4 Block F, Sherman Postgraduate Studios UNSW Paddington campus (enter via lift at Oxford St end of Block F). RSVP required by 4pm Monday 19 October for catering purposes via the Session Sign-Up Form.	

DAY 4: Friday 23 October 2026

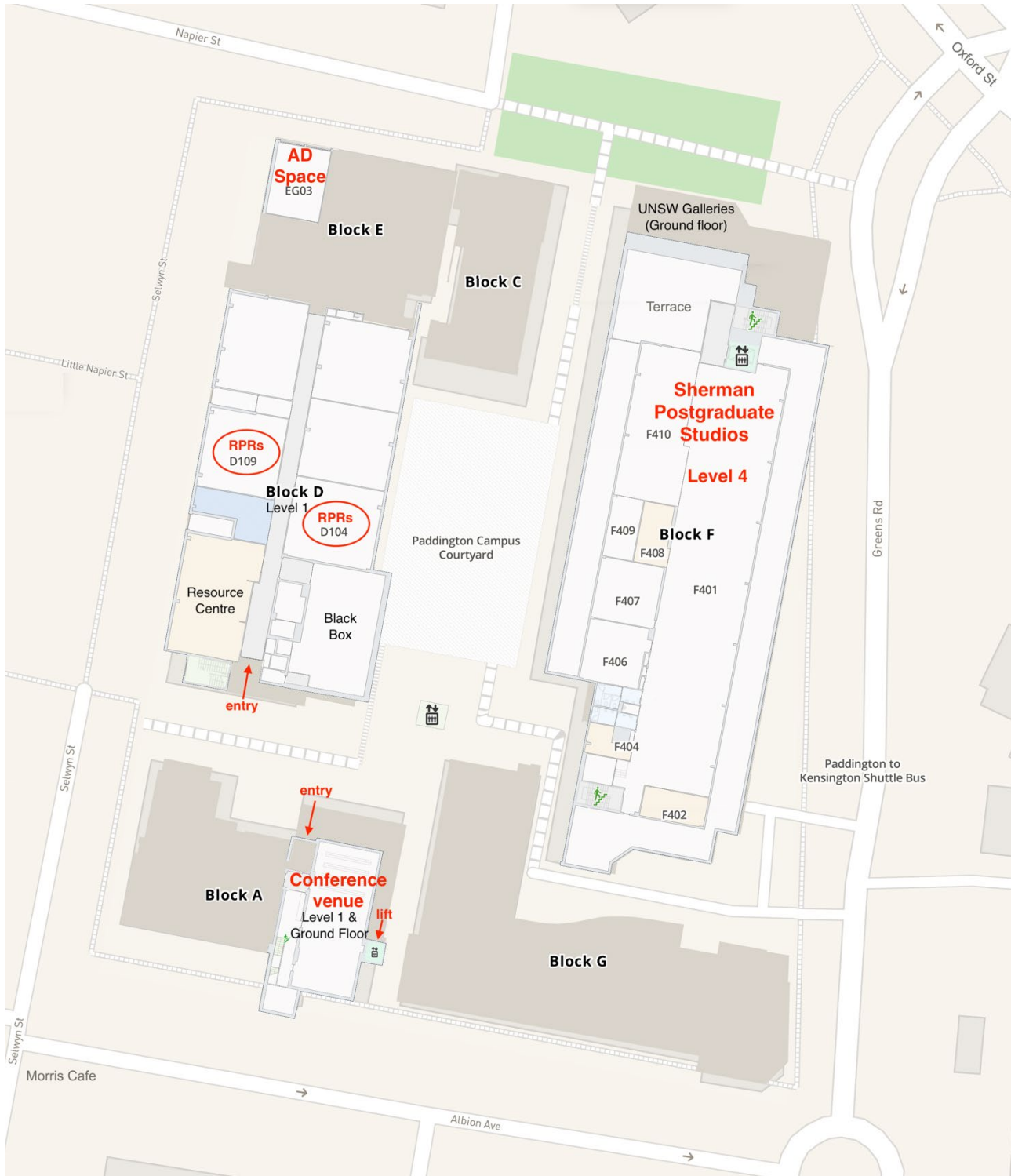
3:00-5:00pm RESEARCH STUDIO CRITS Level 4 Block F, Sherman Postgraduate Studios Student-led studio critique session. Presenters: • Giles Alexander (UNSW PhD) • Climbing Pixels (SCA PhD) • Henry Wolff (UNSW MFA) • Liam Sinha (UNSW Honours)
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Lara Merrett, *total recalling*, 2026. *Centrostephanus rodgersii* (long-spined urchin) pigment and slate black mud naturally dyed thread, 38 × 33 cm (framed). Photo by Simon Hewson.

Campus Map

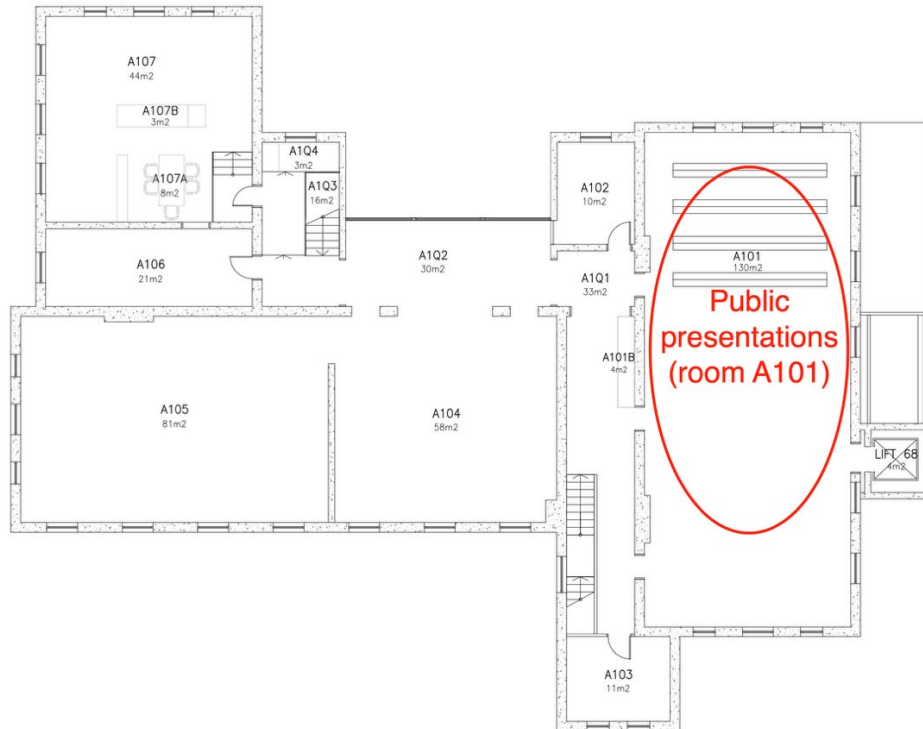
UNSW Art & Design, Paddington



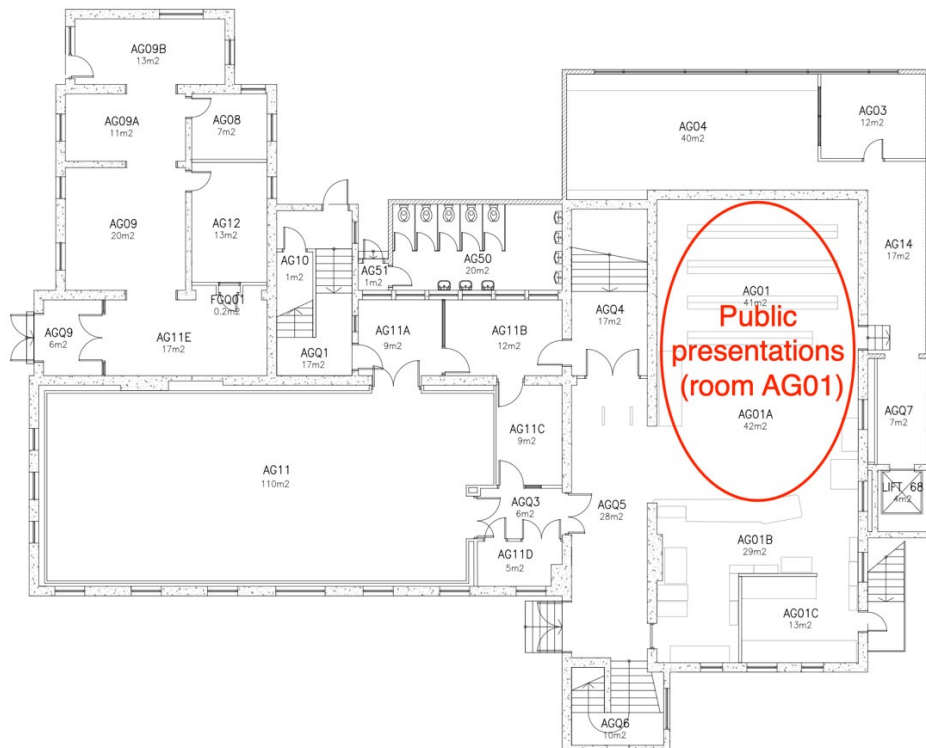
Floor Plan

Conference venue: Block A

First floor, Block A



Ground floor, Block A



ANCILLARY EVENTS



Keroshin Govender, *After Tretchikoff*, 2026. Oil on linen, 71 × 90 cm.
Photo courtesy the artist.

Exhibition Floor Talk

2:00-2:30pm Thursday 22 October 2026

Remy Faint, UNSW Galleries

Request a calendar invitation for this event via the
[Session Sign-Up Form](#)

Artist and MFA candidate [Remy Faint](#) discusses his current exhibition, *A Site of Unfolding*. Meet in UNSW Galleries, upstairs foyer.

Remy Faint is an Australian artist whose practice moves across painting, sculpture, and installation. Through layered material processes, he traces how personal histories intersect with broader narratives of inheritance and cultural memory. *A Site of Unfolding* presents his most ambitious body of work to date, developed through an ongoing dialogue with family histories and archival encounters.

Remy Faint: [A Site of Unfolding](#)

Dates: 3 September – 22 November 2026

Gallery hours: Wed to Fri 10:00am–5:00pm; Sat to Sun 12:00–5:00pm

Venue: UNSW Galleries, Cnr Oxford St & Greens Rd Paddington



Remy Faint, *What Remains of a Form* 2026 and *[Mei Ying's] Lotus shoes* late 19th–early 20th century. Installation view, 'Remy Faint: A Site of Unfolding', UNSW Galleries, 2026.

Photograph: Jacquie Manning.

HDR Exhibition: Launch & Guided Tour

3:00-4:00pm Thursday 22 October 2026
Sherman Postgraduate Studios
Level 4 Block F, UNSW Paddington campus

Request a calendar invitation for this event via the
[Session Sign-Up Form](#)

An exhibition of recent creative practice by HDR candidates will inaugurate the newly renovated installation space in satellite room F408, followed by a student-led guided tour of the installation, featuring spotlight talks by participating artists.

Exhibition participants: Giles Alexander, Keroshin Govender, Fiona Macpherson, Alex Moulis, Abby Murray and Henry Wolff.



Giles Alexander

The Ballad of Joni and Bob: Patron Saints of Reciprocal Tariffs (After Simone Martini), 2026.
Graphite, coloured handmade gesso and gold leaf on papier mache on birch panel, 55 × 37 cm each.

Closing Celebration

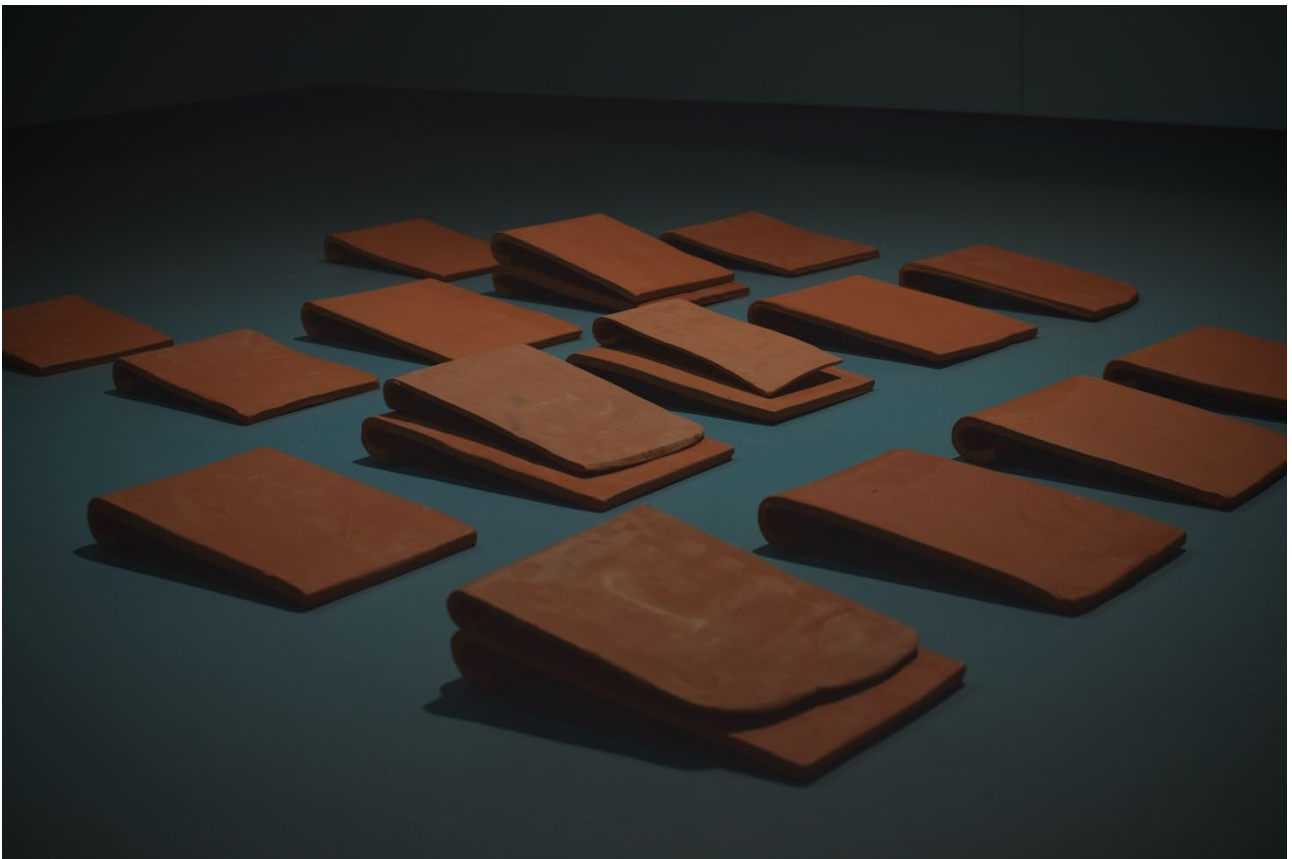
4:00-6:00pm Thursday 22 October 2026

Sherman Postgraduate Studios

Level 4 Block F, UNSW Paddington campus

Celebrate the close of the conference at a social gathering with light refreshments.

RSVP required by 4:00pm Monday 19 October for catering purposes via the [Session Sign-Up Form](#).



Keroshin Govender, *Script*, 2026, Hand Formed Terracotta Slabs, 130 × 140 cm.
Photo courtesy the artist.

Research Studio Crits

3:00-5:00pm Friday 23 October 2026

Sherman Postgraduate Studios

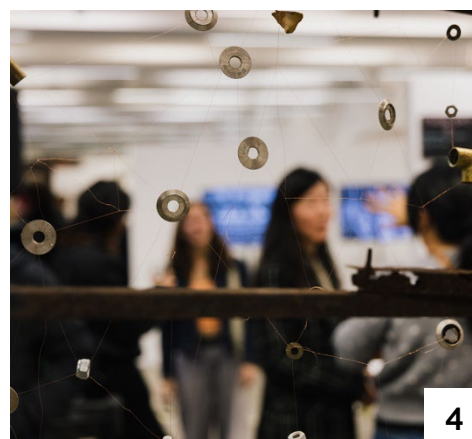
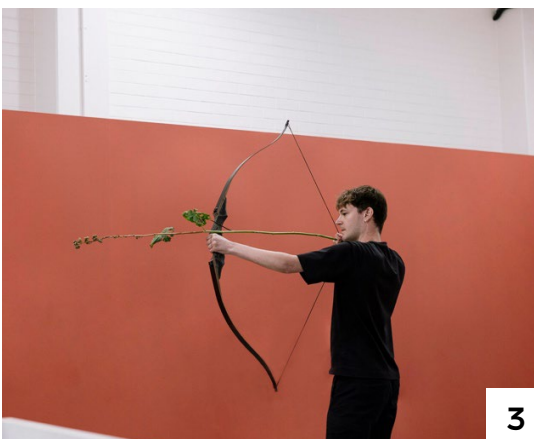
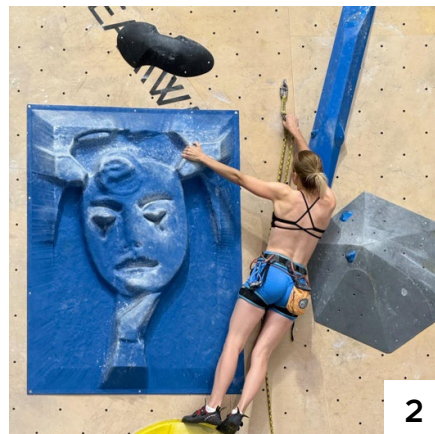
Level 4 Block F, UNSW Paddington campus

Research Studio Crits share the work of Honours, MFA, DFA/PhD and Alumni from UNSW Art & Design, the National Art School, and Sydney College of the Arts. The crits are run by students for students in the spirit of building cross-institutional connections with artist-researchers across Sydney. They offer an environment of intensive and supportive peer critique towards developing the research projects of participants.

Four research candidates will share their work in this session:

1. Giles Alexander (UNSW PhD) @gilesalexander
2. Climbing Pixels (SCA PhD) @climbing_pixels
3. Henry Wolff (UNSW MFA) @henry__wolff
4. Liam Sinha (UNSW Honours)

Each crit begins with a five-minute cold read, followed by 10 minutes of engaging peer discussion per presenter. All welcome.





Fiona Macpherson, *Leak*, 2026.
Toner and gel medium on glass, found frame, 55.5 × 47 cm.
Photo courtesy the artist.

ABSTRACTS



Henry Wolff, *Soft Warrior (hollyhock)*, 2026.

Live performance with timber archery bow and hollyhocks. Presented at Adelaide Contemporary Experimental (ACE) Gallery as part of 'Anarchive - Intestine'. Photograph by Thomas McCammon.

Panel 1: QUEERNESS & PERFORMANCE

9:30-11:00am Tuesday 20 October 2026

Chenxi Zhang – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Queering the Dragon Lady in Hollywood: Meaning-Making of the Encounter

Chinese women in Hollywood films have been repeatedly portrayed as the Lotus Blossom or Dragon Lady for over a century. Hollywood, as an American-based international institution, circulates these stereotypes across national and cultural borders, including between China and Australia. While extensive scholarship has examined representations themselves, less attention has been given to the audience's perceptions, especially of Chinese queer women.

This practice-led research is provoked by my encounter with the Dragon Lady. Constructed through intersecting Orientalist and male gazes, this cinematic image becomes a site where Chinese queer women's positionality may complicate the racialised, gendered and heteronormative structure. Under the lens of feminine and queer gaze, this research explores what becomes possible when the Dragon Lady is re-read through Chinese queer women's spectatorship.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) will be applied to explore participants' lived experiences of encountering this image. Through film elicitation during semi-structured interviews, questions will center on Chinese queer women's emotions and feelings towards the Dragon Lady. Just as spectatorship is not a separate 'thing' from its wider social and cultural context, IPA will further examine how participants interpret and make meaning of their expressions to further understand how their spectatorship has been shaped.

Keywords: practice-led research; interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA); Chinese queer spectatorship

June Acido Miskell – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Archipelagic Imaginaries: Contemporary Filipino/x Australian Art

Over the last decade, contemporary Filipino/x Australian artists have increasingly negotiated the aesthetics and politics of diaspora, indigeneity, gender, and sexuality in relation to island/nation territories—in this case, both the Philippines and Australia. This art history-based research project examines a group of queer and trans artistic practices that use performance and moving-image to negotiate these spatiotemporal and sociopolitical complexities: Bhenji Ra, Justin Talplacido Shoulder, and Club Ate. With the aim of rethinking diaspora beyond the normativity of nationally defined geographies and orientations, I invoke the 'archipelago' as a geographic form, spatial

heuristic, and dispersive method of analysis. Guided by this line of enquiry, I posit that 'archipelagic imaginaries' cultivated by Filipino/x Australian artists proffer alternative ways of imagining translocal and transoceanic relations, at once the product of and in excess of these island/nation territories. In this presentation, I will read a short excerpt from Chapter Three focusing on ANITO (2024) by Justin Talplacido Shoulder, a theatre-scale performance that animates an encounter with speculative and spirited worlds across three distinct acts. Unfurling from an inflatable soft-sculptural installation that resembles the aerial roots of a strangler fig tree, the performers transform into several ambiguous creatures (hybrids between human, animal, and plant) throughout the duration of the near hour-long performance. What do we make of Shoulder's shape-shifting creatures and the worlds they inhabit? How can we think of Shoulder's "root assemblage" as an archipelagic form?

Keywords: Filipino/x diaspora; queer; performance

Henry Wolff – [UNSW online profile](#)

MFA

Cutting both ways

Through an expanded performance art practice that moves across and in-between liveness, photography and moving image, Wolff examines how cutting can simultaneously produce and trouble queer ecological relations. They approach cutting as a performative strategy that can behave conceptually, materially, spatially, temporally and visually to render the cuts that cleave identities from 'nature' visible, while seeking not to abandon the power within the unnatural as a site of queer differentiation and agency.

Situated within eco-performance, and by embracing a methodology of queering nature, 'cutting both ways' combines Karen Barad's 'agential realism' with Judith Butler's 'performativity'. In doing so, rather than seeking to validate queerness as natural, Wolff's practice-led research proposes reclaiming the capacity to cut towards both the natural and unnatural, simultaneously. Historically, appeals to 'nature' have operated like a blade, cutting between natural and unnatural, human and more-than-human, normal and deviant – enabling violences against identities that do not meet certain normative and moral standards.

This research asks whether reclaiming the capacity to cut and inhabiting the instability these cuts create can produce different ecological and social relations: ones that remain responsive to uncertainty, open to diversity, and reclaim the unnatural as a site of queer agency and possibility.

Keywords: performance art; queer; ecology

Panel 2: PAINTING, EXPERIENCE, IDENTITY

9:30-11:00am Tuesday 20 October 2026

Jacquie Meng

MFA

Smiling through a hundred teeth

Smiling through a hundred teeth is a practice-based research project investigating embodiment and the bodily performance of identity through contemporary figurative painting, 3D printing, installation, and performance.

The project explores excess, labour, and performativity, through theoretical concerns that critique traditional interpretations of the self and human body. Sianne Ngai's aesthetic category of zaniness theoretically underpins this idea of excess and performance in how it translates to capitalistic structures of thinking and of labour. My interpretation of embodiment is framed through personal and familial connections to Daoist philosophies, particularly fluid, speculative notions of identity, sexuality, and personification, read alongside theorists such as Ngai and Yuk Hui, whose theories that critique the capitalist body and cosmotechnics respectively share a commitment to non-dualism and a rejection of binary thinking.

Materially, this research is concerned with the labour of performing identity, alongside fabrication and (re)production within 3D printing and new media technologies. It sits in adjacency to contemporary practitioners such as ASMA and Wangechi Mutu, whose painterly and sculptural figurative works critically explore identity, belonging, and beauty.

This research asks: through playing with material processes, figurative form, and personal memory, what possibilities emerge for revealing ideas of identity and being that are simultaneously philosophical, embodied, and material?

Keywords: contemporary figurative painting; digital technologies; mixed media sculpture

Giles Alexander – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

From devotional aesthetics to musical memory: Reimagining late medieval devotional paintings to investigate and illuminate contemporary forms of secular spiritual connection as experienced through music

My practice-led research in contemporary painting reimagines the devotional aesthetics of trecento Sienese painting to explore contemporary modes of spiritual communion through music. The project investigates how the visual language, material processes and symbolic strategies of

fourteenth-century Sieneese gold-ground painting can be reimagined and extended to create contemporary devotional artworks responsive to the affective and mnemonic dimensions of musical experience today.

Drawing on formative encounters with late medieval masterpieces and recent research into Music Evoked Autobiographical Memories (MEAMs) within cognitive psychology, the project proposes a speculative, material reimagining of devotional painting practice within a secular contemporary context. MEAMs provide a framework for investigating how music can spontaneously evoke emotionally charged autobiographical experience, collapsing past and present and activating identity and mnemonic affect.

In this presentation, I will focus on the development of MEAMs journaling as a practice-led research methodology and introduce the Coding and Material Translation Matrix as a practical research tool. Developed to translate otherwise ephemeral and subjective mnemonic experience into identifiable aesthetic, formal and material values, The Coding Matrix provides a systematic pathway through which musical memory can direct the conception and material processes of contemporary devotional artworks.

Keywords: contemporary painting; music evoked autobiographical memories; trecento Sieneese devotional aesthetics

Fiona Macpherson – [UNSW online profile](#)

MFA

A Latent Trace: Post-photographic Painting, Trauma and Haunting in Post-digital Culture

This project grapples with the paradox of traumatic representation in post-digital culture through an expanded, post-photographic painting practice. Building on Georges Didi-Huberman's idea that photographs can harbour a "murky, irrational underside", my research is concerned with the trace of trauma that is covert, inexplicit on the surface, and ultimately inaccessible to the machine gaze. This research project asks how an expanded painting practice can reveal this underside through evoking the embodied experiences of haunting and haptic visuality. Rendering internet-mediated image collages through layered, textural approaches to painting and gel transfer, my paintings explore the role of distortion and ambiguity in the haunting encounter. My practice incorporates discarded, found objects—predominantly domestic picture frames, mirrors and textiles— as supports for my transfer-paintings and as assemblages. As hauntings are alluded to or evoked through my use of these damaged and decaying objects, I ask how these objects might function allegorically, examining the poetics of the "poor object" repurposed in my work. Grounded in Julia Kristeva's concept of abjection, I consider how this process of material resurrection mirrors the haunting experience of traumatic memory, dissolving the boundary between past and present; between surface and underside.

Keywords: expanded painting; post-digital culture; trauma-informed practice

Panel 3: POWER, CRITIQUE, AESTHETICS

1:30-3:00pm Tuesday 20 October 2026

Shani Black – [UNSW online profile](#)

MPhil

Memes as Print: Critical image-macro memes as a form of agitprop print

Since its inception the internet has become increasingly prevalent, complex, and visual. An element that this shift has impacted profoundly is the way we communicate. This practice-based research explores one aspect of this: the critical image-macro meme (CIMM). Laine Nooney and Laura Portwood-Stacer specified memes as “heterogeneous and divergent bundles of communicative and aesthetic practices” (2014, 249). The ability of CIMMs to express political, societal, and personal viewpoints in a concise and legible way is analysed semiotically in relation to agitprop printmaking, which has historically been used to the same effect. The practice element of the research reproduces CIMMs via screenprinting, a printmaking method with agitprop ties, which is followed by their display and dissemination in a tradition likewise linked to the agitprop medium, handbills and wheatpasted posters. The theoretical and practical explorations make a case that CIMMs and agitprop printmaking share key features, and other characteristics relating to their practice, perception, and outcome.

Keywords: internet memes; agitprop printmaking; semiotics

Alex Moulis – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

The beach as desert: the affective entanglement of patriarchal white sovereignty, the visual archive and land between settler-colonial projects

In this presentation I will discuss my recent writing, and work on my film. In this practice-based research project I examine how embodiments of patriarchal white sovereignty on the beach entrench white possessive claims over Indigenous lands within this continent as well as extend these claims to Indigenous lands outside of it. Through a critical engagement with the visual archive I analyse how different settler-colonial projects are affectively entangled through film and photographic representations of the beach and desert.

Keywords: settler colonialism; visual archive; beach



Alex Moulis, video still. Image courtesy the artist.

Gabriel Curtin – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Greenwell's Chip: commodity form and Marxist literature

This presentation excerpts from Chapter 3 of my dissertation. It begins with an exploration of what Bruce Robbins has termed the 'sweatshop sublime'. This phrase refers to the aesthetic experience of individuals contemplating the vast network of exploitation and resources that constitute everyday commodities. I argue that this mode of contemplation is expressive of, rather than disruptive to, the logic of the commodity form. I draw on Leigh Claire Le Berge's theory of the commodity form to analyse a section of Garth Greenwell's 2024 novel *Small Rain*, arguing that the sweatshop sublime's critique of capital is restricted to the sphere of circulation. La Berge contends that an analysis of capitalism that attends only to circulation at the expense of production and its attendant logics is radically incomplete. I propose that, while Greenwell ably demonstrates how common sense is conditioned by the commodity form, what is missing is a 'sensing' of the logic that organises both the complex social whole and our aesthetic experience of it. From here, I propose a Marxist poetics as capable of facilitating this sensation of logic and offer a close reading of Rob Halpern's poetry collection *Music For Porn*, proposing that its poetics offer an alternative analytic tool for apprehending the commodity form.

Keywords: poetry; marxist literature; commodity form

Panel 4: EXPERIENTIAL SPACES

1:30-3:00pm Tuesday 20 October 2026

Wei Wang – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Towards a Spatial Psychoanalysis: Finding the Entrance in the Unconscious Place

PhD candidate Wei Wang, drawing on interdisciplinary research at the intersection of architecture and psychoanalysis, has developed a method of self-reflection and analysis that uses public space as a medium to facilitate psychoanalytic self-encounter.

This method translates key elements of the analytic setting, originally situated within the consulting room, into everyday spaces, where they are activated through a series of simple spatial practices, including self-guided walking and free-associative writing. These practices invite participants to notice and reflect on their inner experience through their encounters with space. As they move through paths, boundaries, and entrances, they gradually approach unconscious experiences that have not yet been put into words.

Keywords: spatial psychoanalysis; unconscious place; psychoanalytic self-encounter

Mel Deerson – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

garden dreams of a garden dreams of a garden dreams of a garden dreams of a

In my project I create a series of videos set in gardens which serve as vehicles for exploring artistic lineage, colonisation, gender and queer sexuality. I propose that the medieval dream garden topos is the best place to locate this artistic work. I discuss three experimental videos which reference or play out in medieval dream garden topoi. These improvised but tightly edited videos include sound, music, voice and poetry, and function as dream garden spaces; sensorially heady, strange, associative, and saturated with feeling. I connect these hermetic dream-spaces out into place, politics and lineages of artmaking, including studies of the methods of two queer artists who engage with medieval art and the garden topos: Derek Jarman and Mary Lowndes.

Keywords: medieval; garden; spatiotemporalities

Xiaochu (Daisy) Dai – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Between Land and Sea: Evoking the Post-Burkean Sublime through Immersive VR in Sydney Mangroves

This practice-based research project takes the Georges River mangroves in Sydney—which embody both the aesthetic characteristics of the Australian sublime and the narrative perspectives of the ecoGothic—as a specific ecological site to explore how contemporary immersive art practice can evoke a sense of the Burkean sublime. This research aims to investigate the connections between the Burkean sublime, immersive media, and Sydney mangroves, situating them within local aesthetics and environmental humanities. In doing so, it examines how these different dimensions influence one another, and explores the opportunities and challenges through practice.

To achieve this, this project uses action research and a “thinking through making” approach as the overarching research methodologies to create an immersive interactive VR artwork. At the operational level, it adopts three approaches: site specificity centered on the Georges River mangroves, case studies of the Australian sublime, the ecoGothic and contemporary immersive art, and VR development to create an immersive interactive VR installation. By integrating aesthetic, technological and ecological elements, this project examines the significance of the Burkean sublime within immersive media and contemporary ecological contexts. It also explores the interwoven relationships between human and non-human agents, nature and culture, and materiality and spirituality.

Keywords: the Burkean sublime; Sydney mangroves; contemporary immersive art practice



Xiaochu Dai, *Bushes at Salt Pan Creek*, 2026. Digital photograph, 68.23 × 100.54 cm.
Photo courtesy the artist.

Panel 5: CULTURE, REPRESENTATION & THE SINOSPHERE

9:30-11:00am Wednesday 21 October 2026

Lin Zhou – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Re-thinking Contemporary Chinese Peasant Painting in Transcultural Contexts: A Discourse Analytical Approach

Chinese peasant painting is situated at the intersection of artistic practice, state cultural governance and economic development. This research examines how its cultural meanings and visual symbols are continually recontextualised across different discursive regimes, asking how these processes shape its relationship with China's dominant culture and political discourse.

The study combines discourse analysis with semiotic and social semiotic visual analysis to examine Chinese peasant painting across five discursive regimes: state propaganda, intangible cultural heritage, exhibition, development and the market. Drawing on examples such as Chinese Dream posters, domestic and international exhibitions, rural revitalisation initiatives and collaborations with international brands, it explores how these regimes reconfigure the meanings and values of Chinese peasant painting.

Particular attention is given to the coordination and competition among cultural governance, development and market discourses, and to how these relationships shape painters' subject positions. Through this analysis, the research approaches Chinese peasant painting as a cultural practice that is continually recontextualised through institutional recognition, discursive construction, and development and market practices, reshaping its meanings, values and identities.

Keywords: Chinese peasant painting; discursive regimes; recontextualisation

Jiawen Li – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

An Analytical Framework for Examining Contemporary Chinese Art in Australian Public Art Institutions

This presentation develops collection-exhibition-display (C-E-D) as an analytical framework for examining institutional meaning-making across three decades of curating contemporary Chinese art in Australia. The framework treats collecting, exhibition-making, and display as interconnected processes: collection selects, classifies, and retains artworks; exhibition organises selected or borrowed works into interpretive narratives; and display materialises those narratives through spatial and visual arrangements. Examining these dimensions together helps trace how artists, artworks, and cultural categories become institutionally recognisable, collectable, narratable, and

displayable. In this project, racialised meanings refer to historically and institutionally produced associations through which categories such as China, Chineseness, Asia, diaspora, and Chinese Australian identity may acquire racial significance. C-E-D enables the project to examine how such meanings are constructed, reproduced, or reconfigured through institutional selection, classification, narration, and spatial presentation. The presentation briefly demonstrates the display dimension of C-E-D through a preliminary spatial analysis of Cao Fei: My City Is Yours at the Art Gallery of New South Wales (2024-25), considering how spatial relations within the exhibition contribute to institutional meaning-making.

Keywords: collection-exhibition-display; contemporary Chinese art; institutional meaning-making

Candice Ng – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Critical and Experimental Design Education in Singapore's Neoliberal Developmental State

In Singapore, design is framed within state-led narratives as a tool for innovation, productivity, and global competitiveness, supporting national agendas like the Smart Nation initiative (Jang, 2017). While this instrumentalization drives economic development, it can sideline critical perspectives that diverge from dominant paradigms of systemic governance or consumer-driven progress. However, perspectives that foster original thinking, imaginative world-building, and the capacity to develop creative, reflexive, and speculative approaches are equally essential to Singapore's cultural vitality and long-term growth. By embracing such perspectives alongside strategic imperatives, Singapore can cultivate a design culture that not only serves economic goals but also fosters a more inclusive, and forward-looking design culture. This presentation introduces an overview of the topic, the theoretical framework, and the methodology with which I will carry out my research.

Keywords: design education; critical thinking; design experimentation

Panel 6: SITE-RESPONSIVE PRACTICES

9:30-11:00am Wednesday 21 October 2026

Emma Pinsent – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Porous material afterlives of an intertidal zone

This project examines the porous material relations between shoreline recession and the material-infrastructure of contemporary art through site-responsive practice. It takes as a starting point Belongil Beach, a receding shoreline in the Byron Bay region of New South Wales (NSW) which was previously mined for mineral sands. These sands primarily fed the production of white pigments and glazes for paints and ceramics. Within the beach, the afterlives of extraction is registered materially through erosion. Led by embodied encounters, expanded fieldwork, material production and installation, this project tests the integration of site-responsive practice with environmental responsibility within an art-institutional context.

Keywords: porosity; site-responsive practice; intertidal

Lara Merrett – [UNSW online profile](#)

MFA

How can a collaborative and situated expanded painting practice with pest-kin generate better-balanced ecological futures?

This MFA research project develops 'urchin thinking' with the long-spined sea urchin, *Centrostephanus rodgersii*, as both unconventional painting material and teacher within an expanded painting practice, asking how a collaborative and situated practice with pest-kin can generate better-balanced ecological futures.

My research methodologies stem from expanded painting practices, approaching the studio as laboratory fieldwork, and various forms of collaboration - working with pest-kin, marine scientists, and other artists. All these methodologies coalesce through my engagement with the urchin, whereby my expanded painting practice is entered through the studio-as-laboratory approach, where pigment extraction from pest-kin enters the studio process. This involves systematic experimentation with extraction techniques, colour and material outcomes, and developing work in collaboration across different media including glass and sound.

Expanded painting outcomes through 'urchin thinking' logic are explored alongside contemporary practices including Jessie French's biodegradable bioplastics and Tamara Henderson's alchemical dye processes, both offering models for working with living material. This thinking extends into the exhibition *Stilling*, where painting moves beyond canvas into structure, glass, and sound, developed

through collaboration with glassblowers and a sound recordist as well as natural forces such as the wind that shape the installation work.

Framed in ecofeminist and hydrofeminist methodologies, this research proposes pest-kin as a situated, collaborative model for expanded painting practice.

Keywords: ecofeminism; expanded painting; pest-kin

Maya Martin-Westheimer – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Curating as a Practice of Place: Toward a Site-Responsive Curatorial Practice

Amidst the climate crisis and a growing focus on ecological concerns within Australian art, 'Curating as a Practice of Place' (CPP) investigates how site-responsive curatorial practice creates more situated artistic engagements with place. Grounded in ecological thought and the environmental humanities, the research asks what concepts of situated knowledge and ecological entanglement might offer curatorial approaches to place.

Centred around a reforested farm in Northern NSW, CPP considers the limits of knowing place and asks how curatorial practice might encourage greater attention to its particular conditions: what has happened there, what lives there, and the entangled forms of knowledge and relationships through which it is understood.

Using the farm as a point of departure, this presentation considers relational understandings of place alongside the implications of partial knowledge and attentiveness for curatorial practice. These ideas inform practice-based methods including field research, reflective curatorial practice, engagement with local knowledge holders, a Place Index, and artist residencies. In doing so, the presentation considers how curating might create conditions for sustained encounters with place without seeking to comprehensively know or represent it, and what this might offer toward a site-responsive curatorial practice.

Keywords: ecological art; site-responsive curating; place

Panel 7: RESOURCEFUL MAKING

2:00-3:30pm Wednesday 21 October 2026

Lu Forsberg – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

DIY Electricity, Colonial-Capitalist Infrastructures, Digital and Electronic Video and Sound Installation

"This practice-based PhD examines the role of electricity in contemporary media art. In Australia, digital and electronic artworks largely depend on on-grid electricity infrastructures owned and operated by state and corporate entities. These infrastructures can appear invisible or neutral in media art. Yet they are embedded in colonial capitalism and entangled with extraction, ownership and labour.

Situated within energy humanities, my research engages theories of energy infrastructure, extraction and power alongside feminist, anti/decolonial and environmental perspectives. DIY/hacking in art provides the methodology. Through artistic practice, my research is developing small-scale energy-generating systems from found e-waste and repurposed materials. These systems power digital and electronic video and sound while being integrated aesthetically as the work itself. At a time of climate crisis, energy transition and expanding digital technologies, my research considers the urgent need for media art to rethink its material relationships to electricity.

In this presentation, I consider what happens when electricity and its infrastructures become more than a means of powering an artwork and instead become part of the artwork itself. I ask: how can a digital and electronic video and sound installation generate and use its own electricity rather than relying on existing colonial-capitalist electricity infrastructures? "

Keywords: DIY electricity; colonial-capitalist infrastructures; digital and electronic video and sound installation

Benjamin Chevalier – [UNSW online profile](#)

MFA

Playing with the Machine: Reverse Engineering Craft Knowledge Through Manual Knitting

This research investigates manual flatbed machine knitting as a site of craft knowledge and design innovation, using practice-based methods grounded in tacit knowledge, the workmanship of risk, and reflection-in-action. What began as informal, exploratory ""play"" with the machine has revealed itself as a sustained, specialised form of technical knowledge. Having established this methodological framework, the project is now advancing into its central practice-based investigation.

An attempt to scale garment production for my own label revealed that working by hand held creative value and potential, rather than being a limitation to overcome. This realisation opened a new line of enquiry into contemporary knitwear, leading to a sustained process of reverse engineering contemporary techniques through material experimentation. Drawing on historical embroidery, contemporary practitioners, and a continuous cycle of testing, failure, and refinement, this experimentation has generated an evolving vocabulary of textile techniques.

This progress review shares results to date, including photographed samples, swatch documentation, and outcomes from an industry collaboration, illustrating how experimental textiles have informed and evolved into finished garments. In doing so, it demonstrates how experimentation and craft knowledge function as a primary methodology for design research.

Keywords: machine-knitting; craft; tacit knowledge

Leah Giblin – [UNSW online profile](#)

MFA

Design for Enduring Use: Translating Attributes of a Long-Loved Garment into a Design Method

Leah Giblin's practice-based research investigates how garments can be designed to support sustained use and connection. Her work translates attributes associated with garment longevity — including durability, functionality, adaptability and emotional attachment — into a design method to inform the creation of wearable forms constructed from textile waste. This translation is theorised through Kristine Harper's (2018) concept of aesthetic sustainability and Yuriko Saito's (2017) concept of respectful design. Combining material and silhouette experimentation with critical inquiry into fashion's environmental and cultural systems, she disassembles, unravels and reconstructs pre-consumer denim destined for landfill into garments using adaptive pattern making combined with traditional techniques — natural dyeing, weaving — and technologies such as digital embroidery. Her current research develops a protective outerwear prototype to test how attributes associated with garment longevity might operate as a practical design method that prioritises interconnection, care and empathy.

Keywords: fashion; connection; upcycling

Panel 8: ARCHIVES, CULTURES, IDENTITIES

2:00-3:30pm Wednesday 21 October 2026

Linda Marie Bretherton – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Activating the archival collection: How contemporary artists and curators are driving museum practice change

My research interrogates the question: have creative interventions or activations, led by contemporary artists and curators, driven sustainable changes in museum practices? Specifically, my research concerns engagement with historical collections that reveals hidden histories and obscured narratives. 44

The legacy of colonial museology practice is rooted in an imperial museum structure of cultural dominance. I have selected several case studies for my research, of which The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK is one, and Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK is another. Both museums have invited creative interrogations into their archival collections. In 2021, the Maritime Museum's Caird Library introduced a Research Fellowship program. Nydia Swaby, a black feminist artist-researcher, writer, and curator became the inaugural Caird Research Fellow. A decade earlier, Christian Thompson, a Bidjara/Chinese-Australian contemporary artist had been invited to examine a series of photographs held in the Pitt Rivers collection. Analysis of their responses and additional case studies will determine the impact and nature of such activations on modes of interpretation and display, as well as the factors that will influence the sustainability of any changes over time.

My methodology comprises three components: fieldwork observations, site-specific interviews with institutional staff and stakeholders, and critical analysis to identify systemic changes.

Keywords: museum narratives; critical museology; creative activations

Keroshin Govender – [UNSW online profile](#)

MFA

Dis-orientation: Deconstructing presentation of "Indian" culture in contemporary Australia

How can Indian Australian artists working with their personal family archives create complex significations of their identities?

My project uses a painting and ceramics practice to explore the complexities of the South African Indian communities' experiences, and representations of themselves during the apartheid era

between 1948 and 1989. I am interested in exploring the examples of diversity and resilience of the Indian communities in this period which had openly challenged apartheid's rigid racial monocultures — a historical dogma that alarmingly resembles the many contemporary right-wing doctrines today (e.g. Hindutva nationalism).

I argue that contemporary Australian artists from this diaspora risk reinforcing a new monoculture by over-relying on historical trauma tropes when presenting cultural symbols. I believe that a tendency towards narrow, trauma-centered narratives risks omitting everyday human experiences of love, adventure, and humour present within private archives and oral histories.

My studio practice reworks vernacular family photographs created during apartheid. I use various layering methods via painting and printing to obscure and reveal lesser-known past events—such as borrowing a suit for a wedding, rescuing a dog during a flood—thus rendering familiar vernacular photography mysterious and unreadable, pointing toward a richer, more contradictory history.

Keywords: cultural representation; family archives; painting

Abby Murray – [UNSW online profile](#)

MFA

A site of negotiation; feverish visualisations of archival re-encounters

This practice-led research project is anchored in the rediscovery of the lost archives of my late maternal grandmother, Arletta Abbey, an early feminist artist, single mother and graduate fine arts student of the 1960s who prematurely died in 1967. Through my MFA research, I explore how inherited archives can reveal new ways to encounter material-driven histories through an iterative installation practice that expands on notions of painting, textiles, assemblage and performance. In this presentation, I will explore how I engage with my grandmother's archives, which include lino-prints, jewellery, photographs and documents, through a speculative letter-writing practice that opens up traces of her feminist legacy in relation to my own. These letters become the catalyst to visualising non-linear installation strategies that actualise the past and future as sites of negotiation through modes of re-enactment, spatialisations and anachronisms that are found in feminist and queer archival research. Drawing on Elizabeth Freeman's theories of temporal drag, as the way the past exerts a pull on the present, I will explore how cross-temporal dialogues can challenge contemporary understandings of time through re-constituting my grandmother's unrealised future through feverish artistic gestures that cannibalise the remnants of my own making into surfaces of new possibility(s).

Keywords: expanded painting; material histories; feminist archives

Panel 9: DIASPORA & ARCHIVES

9:30-11:00am Thursday 22 October 2026

Suzanne Claridge – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

At the edges of the portal: archival incantations and re-envisioning minor history

In my PhD project, I explore archival poetics as a method that remediates official archives to redeem reparative histories that, by re-addressing archival absences, lead to various forms of archival incantations that transmit cultural memory and function as a presencing-mechanism. My project draws upon archival materials such as colonial documents, songs, and photography, related to the history of indentureship in Fiji and counter-reads these archives by discussing artworks by diasporic artists who contend with the limits of the archive to reclaim marginalised histories.

In this presentation, I discuss how an incantatory archival poetics encompasses the visual and the act of re-envisioning as a counter-archival practice. Drawing upon my historical research in visual archives related to the history of indentureship in Fiji, I discuss how colonial photography and the role of photographic objects – such as photo albums and picture postcards – circulated a visual economy of Fiji during the indenture period in the early twentieth century. I consider the limitations, omissions, and politics of invisibility as circulated through colonial photographic objects and discuss how diasporic artists have re-envisioned marginalised narratives to reclaim and re-tell minor histories.

Keywords: counter-history; visual archives; archival incantations

Marcia Swaby – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Guanín Revisited: Haptic Making and Caribbean Material Histories

This practice-based PhD asks how contemporary jewellery might remain in dialogue with Indigenous Caribbean material histories without reproducing historical forms or claiming meanings that cannot be fully recovered. Centred on guanín, an Indigenous Caribbean alloy of gold, copper and silver valued for its sensory, social and ceremonial qualities, the research investigates haptic making as a mode of engaging with fragmented histories.

From my British-Jamaican diasporic position, I bring museum and archival research into conversation with alloying, object making and moving image. Field notes, studio journals and recordings support reflection on how material encounters inform both making and interpretation. Encounters with Taíno objects at the British Museum have foregrounded the tensions between sensory presence and incomplete documentary knowledge. In response, studio investigations have produced wearable objects and filmed experiments exploring material resistance, attachment and

bodily participation. Rather than seeking recovery or reconstruction, these practices work with uncertainty as a productive condition of research.

The emerging contribution is a situated approach to jewellery practice that uses making as a critical method for examining material knowledge, institutional authority and the responsibilities of diasporic engagement with Caribbean histories. A decolonial orientation informs this inquiry throughout.

Keywords: Guanín; haptic knowing; diaspora

Shireen Taweel – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Unearthing Repertoire, Heritage Practice and Memory in a body of Postcolonial Speculative Fiction

This presentation focuses on my research as a methodological journey which brings together the research of archives with what is referred to by theorist Diana Taylor as the repertoire. I will be drawing on Taylor's text, the archive and the repertoire: *Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (2003), as a foundation to narrate how my archival research progressed from manuscripts, texts and artifacts, to an embodying of cultural knowledge and research through repertoire. In conjunction with Taylor's writing, I turn to theorist and writer Agnieszka Podruczna's piece *Embodied Pasts: Body as Memory in Postcolonial fiction* (2019). Converging Taylor's writing of the repertoire and non-written cultural practice, and Podruczna's writing on the Female body as a tool of Postcolonial speculative fiction to transmit cultural heritage and community skills across time. I conclude that my research methodology as repertoire, the construction and use of my three navigational instruments; the southern celestial qibla, southern celestial quadrant and southern celestial astrolabe (2024) in my installation *Pilgrimage of a Hajjanaut* (2025), are an embodiment of cultural heritage and knowledges, within an innovative faith-based practice, informing a Postcolonial speculative fiction, of a Muslim woman of diaspora which challenges western hegemonic notions of space travel.

Keywords: archives; heritage practice; postcolonial speculative fiction

Panel 10: TECHNOLOGY, AGENCY, PLAY

9:30-11:00am Thursday 22 October 2026

Tom Willma – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Examining Values: Generative AI and the Music Sector

Generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) is machine learning that parses massive datasets of intellectual material in order to generate prompted outputs. The structural conditions surrounding commercial GenAI have led to significant moral objections against GenAI music and concern for GenAI's impact on the music sector. However, communities of practice have also emerged that report using GenAI to express themselves musically, often as AI personae. My thesis responds to the changing economic and social conditions suggested by GenAI by systematically addressing the research question: what values underline differences of opinion concerning GenAI's engagement with musicianship and the music sector? I tackle three major research objectives:

RO1) Map the justifications given by stakeholders for adopting or refusing GenAI.

RO2) Theorise how these justifications (RO1) animate diffuse values and critiques within the sector.

RO3) Evaluate the implications of these justifications (RO1) and values (RO2) for the music sector and its ongoing engagement with GenAI.

I achieve these objectives by employing the methodological and philosophical lineage of pragmatic sociology. I use ethnographic and interview techniques to examine the value frameworks used by music professionals and amateur AI practitioners when justifying their acceptance or refusal of GenAI; considering the implications for the music sector that result.

Keywords: generative artificial intelligence; music sector; values

Shaozhi Pi – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Governing AI-Generated Game Music in Real Time: A Composer-Centred Music Manager

Although AI music generation can produce convincing musical material, its application in video games remains challenging because soundtracks must adapt to unpredictable player actions while maintaining continuity, stylistic identity, and authorial control. This study examines how a composer-centred Music Manager can govern AI-generated game music in real time. Positioned between game-state interpretation and generative execution, the Manager combines scene and mood descriptions with composer-defined constraints, source material, and information about the current musical state. Two design aims guide the study: (i) varying music to reduce repetition while

retaining its identity; and (ii) adapting music to transitions between exploration and combat. Building on an initial deterministic prototype, the research will investigate an LLM-based Manager through iterative prototyping across controlled game-state scenarios and multiple generation backends. Technical analysis, comparative listening, and practitioner feedback will assess (i) responsiveness to gameplay; (ii) musical continuity and stylistic identity; and (iii) compliance with composer-defined constraints. Through this process, the study aims to establish a controllable and interpretable framework for composer-centred governance of generative AI in adaptive game music.

Keywords: composer-centred control; adaptive game music; AI music generation

Zhongyu Jia – [UNSW online profile](#)

PhD

Design Toolkits: Bridging the Communication Gap Between Video Game Players and Non-Players in Family Settings

Public attitudes towards video games have become more tolerant as preliminary negative stigma has declined. However, gaming-related tensions persist within families, shifting from overt moral criticism towards everyday disagreements between players and non-players. These tensions may involve limited understanding of players' experiences, uncertain concerns about addiction, gambling and aggression, or negotiations over play time. This project explores how designers can translate players' isolated experiences into forms that non-players can understand, helping families rebuild mutual understanding around playing and not playing and thereby reducing communication tensions. This research uses the digital divide as a theoretical lens to examine differences between players and non-players. It considers how differences in motivation, skills and engagement with games, alongside public debates, may shape how family members understand video games and one another. The design process adopts a practice-based approach informed by reflective practice on my past projects. The current stage focuses on developing a cultural probe toolkit to elicit and document family conversations, followed by thematic analysis on the key themes that emerge. Three perspective-based, board-game-like toolkits will be designed to support further family conversations.

Keywords: family communication; interaction design; game studies



Xiaochu Dai, *Mangroves at Salt Pan Creek*, 2026, digital photograph, 68.23 × 100.54 cm.
Photo courtesy the artist.