

Narelle Autio
Deidre Brollo
Maria Fernanda Cardoso
Julia Ciccarone
Shaun Gladwell
Helga Groves
Jess MacNeil
Todd McMillan
Harry Nankin
Bill Viola
Wukun Wanambi

curated by Meryl Ryan

Where there is water...
there is Lake Macquarie
City Art Gallery.

As we are nestled on the foreshore of this country's largest coastal saltwater lake, overlooking an active marina, it is impossible not to consider water an ongoing theme in our programming. The changing weather reflected in the lake's surface each day, visitors' delight in the splendour of the site, the yachts sailing by, and the deep sense of its Aboriginal significance, always remind us of where we are.

This exhibition not only embraces notions of our location but, through Meryl Ryan's thoughtful text and selection of a works by contemporary artists, takes the theme further as a metaphor or narrative to describe aspects of survival, human emotion, and the state of the environment.

Congratulations to all those involved, in particular Ryan and the artists for such mesmerising work. Our sincere thanks also to the gallerists for their invaluable support, and the private collectors for generously making their artworks available to the exhibition.

I am sure you will all enjoy the exhibition, as much as, if not more than, you enjoy the site.

Debbie Abraham
Gallery Director
Lake Macquarie City Art Gallery

3.30am Friday 17 January 1986
Indian Ocean near Chagos
Archipelago

We have been at sea almost a week now - with only the vast waterscape in sight and us bobbing along like flotsam. Disappearing could be so easy. Nobody would notice. Up until yesterday, the trip has been a dream run: 15-20 knot winds, broad reach all the way with clear skies and hardly a change of sail.

But mean-spirited dark clouds rolled in with the morning and it's been raining and squalling up until now; the elements playing with us rather than taking us forward. It's cool and wet and the current has positioned Sirius a lot further north than expected, and off our course for Peros Banhos...

The pre-dawn watch on ocean voyages always delivered in one way or another. On deck that night, it brought the soundlessness of post-storm recovery and glittering, slippery surfaces. On others, it might bring the pale remote lights of shipping lane traffic or unexpected nocturnal travelling companions. Whales often joined me, flanking the hull with little more to herald their arrival than the sound of their extraordinary breathing; a rhythmical whoosh-and-shower chorus of natural fountains in the open sea.

As they coast alongside, invisible against the night, their scale and proximity eventually becomes more of a comfort than a concern. A yacht is a vulnerable interloper here. The company of these gargantuan escorts feels like support and protection against the lurking malevolent leviathans of the deep that the imagination can so readily conjure.

Large bodies of water, as we've all come to learn, are storehouses of myth, symbol and metaphor; home to enchantments both sinister and transcendental, or a mixture of both. At the legendary Siren call, for instance, enraptured mariners have surrendered to the fatal embrace of Neptune's realm. And many other creatures looking for sport - Charybdis, Hydra, the mighty Kraken - have made messy end of countless hapless adventurers.

The fickle ocean surface, with its restless nature, can distract us mere mortals from deeper dangers and revelations. From confined vessels we regard the sea with respect, hoping for its tolerance, and our safe passage. Always the same yet always changing, it has no memory of us ever having been there. It can swallow us in a shape-shifting translucent envelope and bear no trace of our ingress.

Once below the surface everything changes. The mesmeric sounds, ambiguous imagery and edgeless space shape an otherworldly region, a primordial place beyond memory but not unlike our original gestational home. It's a completely immersive, all-sensory and transformative engagement. Every inch of your skin is being touched. You can hear your heart beat and your breath feels solid. And you can scale a rocky cliff without fear of falling. In this dream-like place, in-the-moment reverie comes with strict rules to survive by. It's a world Bill Viola once described as the space between heaven and earth, where you might expect to find angels.











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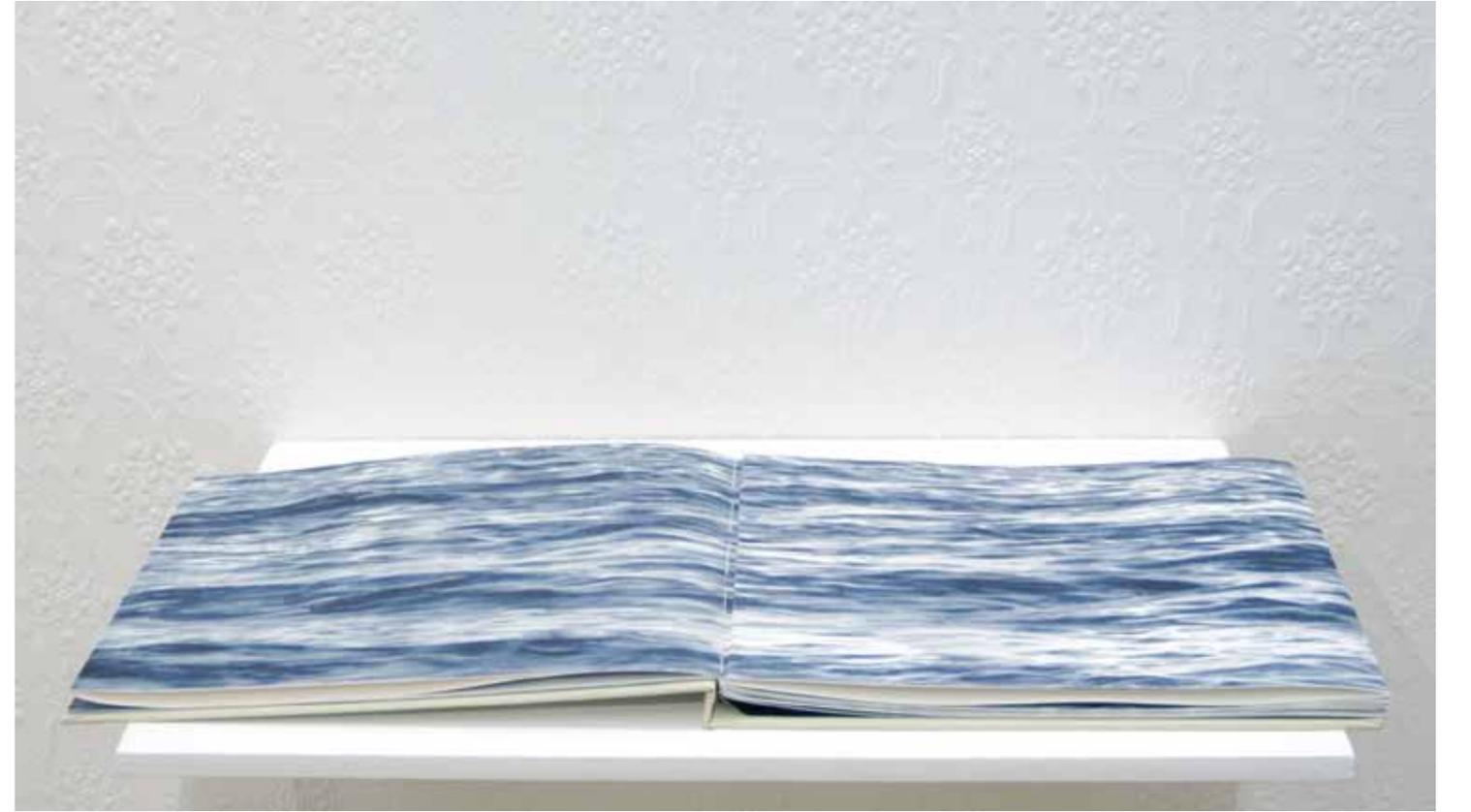






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3.30am Tuesday 8 September 1987
Indian Ocean, off the Comoros

Spectacular approach to Grande Comore last night with the deepening claret-red glow to starboard and the moon rising low and full in the cloudless dim blue to port - the ragged terrain of the island in distant view, ethereal with the changing lights.

It's six days since we left the Seychelles and I've taken over watch (after a two-hour kip) while we hove to outside Moroni Harbour ...the sea is empty-of-life quiet, the boat rocking generously from side to side, creaking like a ghost ship. With the aid of the brilliant moon and a small kerosene lantern, I write to ward off sleep...

After a prolonged period of time on unstable ground, first sight of land is always complicated. Along with the much anticipated promise of unrationed fresh water, legroom and new cultural experiences, comes a real sense of loss. Of course, there are the obvious adjustments to broader societal interaction - the mechanics of public mooring, negotiations for temporary visas and the sometime-politics of gaining access to facilities. But surrendering the uniquely humbling, uncluttered, survival-driven freedom of life at sea is a real personal wrench.

Out there, water is in charge. In here, on land, water is in service. It's a commodity we knowingly abuse. Despite the industrialised world's most ambitious and destructive interventions, however, water's contradictory character makes it difficult to tame. Salt or fresh, it is both surface and depth, formless and strong, healer and killer. It can be contained yet, deprived of movement, it becomes toxic. The great eloquence of this duality has understandably supplied poetry, philosophy and psychoanalysis with a wide vocabulary of imagery and water-related analogies to describe aspects of the human condition.

On a documentary not long ago I heard Australian marine scientist Ove Hoegh-Gulderg call the ocean 'the heart and lungs of the earth'. For our oceans' sake, I'd like to think most people agree with him. One legacy of my early nautical journeys is a persistent longing to revisit the sensation of coalescing with the larger more mystical shape of things. And I can only come close to this near wild water; in the heavy rain, on the beach, and by the larger rivers.

Given the opportunity, I head to the ocean's edge to find pause between the islands of professional and personal life and obligation; possessively connected to the water, yet resisting the undertow's call to greater intimacy. The beach is a liminal zone, mediating between the possible and the impossible, between surefootedness and the vast unknown. The changing pace and colours, the syncopated rhythms of fizz, hiss and crash, make it as much a site of sonic and visual exhilaration as of solace. For me, when I'm near water, I am home.



Meryl Ryan
Curator

Artists and works

Narelle Autio

Born 1969 Adelaide, SA
Lives in Adelaide, SA

In 2001 and again in 2005, Narelle Autio was selected by *Australian Art Collector Magazine* as one of the 50 most collectable Australian artists. Her extraordinary work has won her several national and international accolades, including World Press Awards, an American Picture of the Year Award and a Walkley Award. In 2002 she became the first Australian to win the prestigious Leica Oskar Barnack Award for the series *Coastal Dwellers* and a large selection of the work was showcased in various gallery and festival contexts worldwide. Autio has produced several bodies of work around the subject of the water and confesses a great love of the sea as a subject.

From *The Place in Between* 2007
Siren I-VI
pigment prints
editions of 10
each 84 x 65cm

courtesy the artist
and Stills Gallery, Sydney

Deidre Brollo

Born 1974 Newcastle, NSW
Lives in Newcastle, NSW

Deidre Brollo's practice is focused primarily on artists' books and installation. Her work is a consideration of memory as it relates to place and materiality, exploring the ways in which memory clings to some places and abandons others, and investigating the role of memory in the viewing of art. She holds a BAVA from University of Newcastle, NSW; a PhD from Sydney College of the Arts; and was visiting artist at the National Art School in 2007. Brollo's work has been selected for solo and group exhibitions in Australia, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, France and South Korea; and most recently, acquired in the 2011 Manly Library Artist's Book Award.

The watch room 2011
archival pigment prints, photopolymer intaglio, embossing, thread, wax, glass, wood, felt, duratrans, found objects
room installation 300 x 300 x 220cm

courtesy the artist

Maria Fernanda Cardoso

Born 1963 Bogota, Columbia
Arrived in Australia, 1998
Lives in Sydney, NSW

Maria Fernanda Cardoso shot to fame in 1995, with the premiere of *Cardoso Flea Circus* at the San Francisco Exploratorium. In 2003, at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, she mounted the extensive solo show *Zoomorphia*, and in 2004 she represented Colombia at the Venice Biennale. Her work has been exhibited in over 25 countries, in institutions as prestigious as the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris and MoMA, New York; and collected by many significant others including the Tate Gallery, London; Museum of Modern Art, Bogota; and the NGA, Canberra. Cardoso uses unusual media to engender nature/culture narratives. Water is a recurring reference in several bodies of work, including *Rain Walls* (2006-08), *Woven Water* (1994), and the *Water* series (1985), which she regards as seminal to her oeuvre.

Rain Wall III (rectangle) 2008
nylon rods on wall
306 x 540 x 60cm

Woven water (fragment 1) 1994
preserved starfish and aluminium wire
dimensions variable

Woven water (fragment 2) 1994
preserved starfish and aluminium wire
dimensions variable

courtesy the artist
and Arc One Gallery, Melbourne

Julia Ciccarone

Born 1967 Melbourne, Vic
Lives in Melbourne, Vic

Julia Ciccarone's accomplished paintings explore narratives and themes that are deeply considered. Not long after graduating from VCA in 1988, she lived in Italy for 12 months as the recipient of the Verdaccio Studio residency. Since 1998, she has lectured at the Western Institute of Technology and Monash University, Melbourne. Her work has been selected for exhibitions at public institutions such as Heide Museum of Modern Art and National Maritime Museum. Ciccarone also co-wrote and produced the short film, *67*, directed by Kasimir Burgess, which was selected for the 2007 Melbourne International Film Festival.

(Untitled) 2008
oil on board
13 x 22.8cm

This mortal coil 2007
oil on linen
152 x 198cm

courtesy the artist
and Niagara Galleries, Melbourne

The expedition 2007
oil on linen
91 x 198cm
private collection, Melbourne

Untitled 4 2007
oil on board
13 x 27cm
private collection, Melbourne

Untitled 8 2007
oil on board
20 x 30cm
private collection, Melbourne

Untitled 17 2007
oil on board
20 x 30cm
private collection, Melbourne

untitled 18 2007
oil on board
13 x 27cm
private collection, Melbourne

Untitled 19 2007
oil on board
13 x 23cm
private collection, Melbourne

Shaun Gladwell

Born 1972 Sydney, NSW
Lives in London, UK

Shaun Gladwell critically and poetically links personal experience with contemporary culture and historical references through performance, video, painting, photography and sculpture. His works engage these concerns through forms of urban expression such as skateboarding, hip-hop, BMX bike riding, and extreme sports (including inverted surfing at Bondi). He completed Associate Research at Goldsmiths College, London, in 2001 and has since undertaken international residencies and commissions in Europe, North and South America, and the Asia Pacific Region. Since 2005, Gladwell's work has been selected for significant international exhibitions including Biennales in Sydney, Taipei, Venice, Sao Paulo and Busan. In 2009 he represented Australia at the Venice Biennale and travelled to Afghanistan as the official Australian War Artist.

Pacific Undertow Sequence (Bondi) 2010
single-channel High Definition digital video, 16:9
colour, stereo sound
duration 11 minutes 21 seconds
videography: Josh Raymond

Guide to Recent Architecture: Fountains 2007
digital video, 4:3, stereo sound
duration 6 minutes
videography: Gotaro Uematsu, Michael Schiavello
sound: Kazumichi Grime

courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery Melbourne and Sydney

Helga Groves

Born 1961 Ayr, Queensland
Lives in Melbourne, Vic

Helga Groves partners the haptic and visual in provocative works that address natural disasters, environmental change and our commodity culture. Since graduating from Sydney College of the Arts in 1988, she has completed her Master of Visual Arts (2000) and shown extensively throughout Australia, and internationally. In 1999, her work was selected for the *Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. More recently, she was the recipient of a 2010 Australia Council for the Arts, Helsinki Studio; 2008 Arts Victoria International Touring grant, as well as 2002 Moira Dyring Studio, Cité International des Arts, Paris, and 1997 Moet & Chandon Australian Arts Fellowship, France.

Heavy rain #2 2009
hand-knitted fishing line and lead sinkers
270 x 600cm (approx), 89 strands

courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane, and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne

Jess MacNeil

Born 1977 Nova Scotia, Canada
Lives between London, UK,
and Sydney, Australia

Jess MacNeil works at the points of intersection between painting, installation, video and photography, often taking as her subject matter the dynamics of the human/environment relationship. Water figures in several of her bodies of work. MacNeil has exhibited widely, both in Australia and internationally. Her work was selected for *Primavera 2008* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, and in 2009 was presented at the Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography and the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego. MacNeil was awarded the Anne & Gordon Samstag Scholarship, the Fauvette Louriero Memorial Artists Travel Scholarship, and an Australia Council Grant in 2006, and completed a Graduate Affiliate Program at the Slade School, London in 2008. In 2009 she won the Primavera Veolia Acquisitive Award.

The Wall 2009
High Definition digital video
edition of 8, duration 7 minutes

The Swimmers 2009
High Definition digital video
unlimited edition, duration 4 minutes
commissioned by Kaldor Public Art Projects
for *MOVE: Video Art in School*

courtesy the artist
and Gallery Barry Keldoulis, Sydney

Todd McMillan

Born 1979 Sydney, NSW
Lives in Sydney, NSW

Todd McMillan is a new media artist with a particular interest in German Romanticism. His work often features himself as protagonist in melancholic narratives that evoke a sense of longing, and sometimes futility. He was recipient of the 2006 Helen Lempriere Travelling Scholarship, and his solo exhibitions have been a regular feature on the former Grantpirrie Gallery program in the past six years. In that same period, McMillan's work has been curated into high profile exhibitions at major public institutions such as Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Queensland Art Gallery, GOMA and the University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane; and travelled to exhibitions in UK, USA, Sweden and Austria.

after the deluge 2011
overhead projector, projector plinth,
High Definition video, media player
dimensions variable

Thomas (for mb and mb) 2011
overhead projector, projector plinth,
High Definition video, media player
dimensions variable

courtesy the artist

Harry Nankin

Born 1953 Melbourne, Vic
Lives in Melbourne, Vic

The most celebrated strand of Harry Nankin's oeuvre has been his use of camera-less 'shadowgrams' to record ecological phenomena. Using processes that are part land art, part performance and part photography, he turns the landscape itself into a camera. *The Wave* is a series of artworks produced by the repeated nocturnal immersion of a photographic 'raft' in the sea at Victoria's Bushrangers Bay. The recipient of Arts Victoria and Australia Council grants, Nankin is represented in public collections including National Gallery of Victoria and State Library of Victoria. He teaches at RMIT, LaTrobe and Deakin Universities in Melbourne, and is currently undertaking a PhD at RMIT.

The Wave Cube 1997
glass, sand, marine detritus
25 x 26 x 25cm

The Second Wave/Fragment 1 1997
(created by recut in 2002)
toned gelatin silver fibre paper *plein air*
marine shadowgram edged with cloth tape
123 x 495cm

The Second Wave/Fragment 2 1997
(created by recut in 2002)
toned gelatin silver fibre paper *plein air*
marine shadowgram, 19 x 400cm

The Second Wave/Fragment 3 1997
(created by recut in 2002)
toned gelatin silver fibre paper *plein air*
marine shadowgram, 101 x 145cm

The Fifth Wave/Fragment 2 1997
(created by recut in 2002)
toned gelatin silver fibre paper *plein air*
marine shadowgram, 103 x 239cm

Selected fragments from five *The Wave* events
1996-97 (recut by the artist in 2002)
toned gelatin silver fibre paper *plein air*
marine shadowgrams, each 15 x 15cm
courtesy the artist and dianne tanzer
gallery + projects, Melbourne

Bill Viola

Born 1951 New York, USA
Lives in California, USA

Bill Viola is acknowledged as one of the world's foremost contemporary artists, a pioneer in developing the video art genre. His video installations are well known for conjuring environments designed to immerse and captivate the viewer, many featuring imagery of water. Exhibited at major public museums internationally, his works are held by many of the world's most significant public collections. Viola graduated with BFA in Experimental Studies from Syracuse University in 1973 and not long after met his life partner and professional collaborator, Kira Perov, in Melbourne. Viola represented USA at the 1995 Venice Biennale, and an extensive 25-year survey exhibition of his work toured internationally from the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1997. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honours, most recently including the prestigious Praemium Imperiale 2011. To date, he holds nine honorary doctorates including from Syracuse University (1995), California Institute of the Arts (2000), and Royal College of Art, London (2004). He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2000, and in 2006 was awarded Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters by the French Government.

The Last Angel 2002
DVD with sound on 50" screen
edition of 5
duration 9 minutes 37 seconds
private collection, Melbourne

Wukun Wanambi

Born 1962 NE Arnhem Land, NT
Dhuwa moiety, Marrakulu, Dhurili clan,
Curka'wuy homeland
Lives in Yirrkala, NT

Wukun Wanambi is the eldest son of Mithili Wanambi, clan leader and renowned painter, who passed away in 1981. Wukun only took up painting in 1997, learning the sacred designs of his father from elders who had kept the information in trust for him. His first painting was a depiction of Bamurrungu, a sacred, white-domed rock in the middle of Trial Bay. Wukun has won prizes for his bark paintings and sculptures and was the recipient of the Wandjuk Marika Memorial 3D award at the 2010 Telstra NATSIAA. He has been heavily involved in a number of major collectives projects and is a long-standing member of the Buku-Larrnggay Mulka Centre at Yirrkala in north-eastern Arnhem Land. His work can be found in numerous public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Art Gallery of NSW and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; and Musee de Lyon, France.

Bamurrungu 2010
natural ochres and pigment
on hollow stringy bark log
height 201cm

Bamurrungu 2007
natural ochres and pigment
on hollow stringy bark log
height 199cm

Bamurrungu 2006
natural ochres and pigment
on hollow stringy bark log
height 210cm

courtesy the artist
and Niagara Galleries, Melbourne