

Melville Contemporary

A stylized graphic of the year 2023. The digits are rendered in a bold, rounded, sans-serif font. The '2' and '3' are black with a white outline, while the '0' is solid black. The '2' and '3' have a white outline that is slightly offset from the black shape, creating a shadow or double-exposed effect. The entire graphic is set against a light blue background.

Akira Akira, Dan Bourke, Jess Day
Natsumi de Dianous, Tom Müller, Mei Saraswati

Goolugatup acknowledges the Bibbulmun people as the Traditional Owners of the land on which we stand and pay respect to the Whadjuk people, and Elders past and present.

Welcome!



Melville Contemporary is an art prize for experimental art. It awards commissions to six Western Australian artists to produce exploratory new work for group exhibition at Goolugatup Heathcote. A biennale program, it is produced by City of Melville and Goolugatup Heathcote, and was first held in 2021.

24 September –
22 October 2023

58 Duncraig Road
Applecross WA 6153

Daily 10am–4pm
(08) 9364 5666

goolugatup.com

Akira Akira

Akira Akira (born Kobe, Japan) is an artist who makes things and cooks everyday while listening to audiobooks. Since 2016, he has been singularly working with monochromatic needlepoint tapestries in New Plymouth, Aotearoa New Zealand, Shepparton and Boorloo Perth where he currently lives. His stewed daikon recipe can be found in the publication *Artists' Cookbook under Lockdown* (2021) published by Mori Art Museum/Sayusha.

For *Melville Contemporary*, Akira presents two works. *874* is a suite of monochromatic needlepoint tapestries that form part of an ongoing series of work titled *New Perseverance* (2016-). In the current iteration, each piece is made within the same physical parameters — 87 by 164 stitches — using a single shade of tapestry wool (colour reference number 874 by Appletons). The gaps that appear throughout are random and accidental. Every day as the artist fills in the rows of canvas, a single strand of wool occasionally becomes frayed or tangled and needs to be cut. These gaps are then counted and recorded in a spreadsheet, resulting in a slow gathering of data that could be used as input parameters for future production.

Akira's second work, *Perpetual Expansion*, has been in-progress since 2007, and involves a growing collection of perfect spheres made through the daily application of roll-on deodorant. The process is sculptural, intimate, and necessary. Each sphere has its own unique sense of time. The deodorants that contained these spheres were acquired in Australia, Japan, the UK, the US, Spain, Portugal, France, Finland, Italy, Germany, and Aotearoa New Zealand at different times, yet there is no record of their precise provenance.

Dan Bourke

Dan Bourke is an artist based in Boorloo Perth, WA. Working between studio, curatorial, and publishing practices, he appropriates and subverts existing models to critically explore themes such as the production, presentation, and reception of culture; economies within the contemporary art world; forms of representation; and systems of taste and value. Dan currently runs *Benchpress* (2010-), a small Risograph-based printing press, and *Adult Contemporary* (2014-), an occasional artist-run initiative and bookshop. He was previously involved in the formation of other ARIs: *Poetry Club* (2010), *Galleria* (2011-12), and *Pet Projects* (2016-17). He graduated with a BA (Art) (Honours) from Curtin University in 2009 and has since exhibited in solo and group exhibitions, curated and organised projects, and undertaken residencies. His most recent projects have appeared at *sweet pea* (WA), *Cool Change* (WA), *Fremantle Arts Centre* (WA), *Yiri Arts* (Taiwan), *Pet Projects* (WA), and *Campbelltown Arts Centre* (NSW).

For *Melville Contemporary*, Dan has produced *Impoverished Aesthetics*, an installation featuring three inkjet-printed video stills from the TV series *Sex and the City* (1998-2004), a painted wall treatment colour-matched to the interior of Carrie Bradshaw's apartment, and a small publication containing an essay of the same name. Referencing a break-up message left on a post-it note for Carrie in So6E07 — *I'm sorry, I can't, don't hate me* — the work considers the production and reception of contemporary art in recent times under increasingly impoverished conditions (for example, where it is "made poor" or "deprived of strength or vitality" through various circumstances).

Jess Day

Jess Day is an artist and writer based in Boorloo Perth. Jess recently completed her PhD in fine arts at Curtin University, and continues to explore her interests in personal agency, highly individuated preparatory practices, or 'prepping', and survival concepts. Jess has exhibited locally and interstate, and written for various publications, including *Nava* (AUS), *Art Monthly* (AUS), *Snake Hair Press* (USA), and *Semaphore* (AUS).

For *Melville Contemporary*, Jess has produced *Portable Portals*, an artwork drawing on the 2004 children's television series *Parallax*, in which a young boy discovers multiple parallel universes. The show was filmed in Perth and the Southwest region – where Jess grew up – and allowed a rethinking of how one may perceive or engage with local bushland.

Jess's multi-piece work reimagines 'the parallax' by using labour intensive hand colouring and stitching to create segments of multicoloured wall works which may be redeployed in various locations. Each 'portal' links to another, and attached to each is a small glass and silver pendant, or viewfinder, for locating other potential ways to reimagine how we perceive our own agency in the local environment. *Portable Portals* invites a temporary suspension of belief in aid of a renewed sense of personal agency and interconnectedness.

Natsumi de Dianous

Working across a range of mediums spanning painting, drawing, ceramics, metalwork and textile processes, Natsumi's work embeds layered patterns and shapes to create spaces for imaginative, open ended and often subjective narrative. She is deeply fascinated by the potential for objects to be imbued with their own living essences and the techniques – particularly ones involving an investment of time, repetition and care – that can bring about this circumstance. Natsumi has a desire to capture a slippery fluid space, a liminality where forms and ideas have the potential to appear, through the process of discovery and accumulation by building up layers of paint and adornment to reveal and conceal forms.

For *Melville Contemporary*, Natsumi presents *Pattern of air*, a body of work where layered forms are embedded with patterns and shapes to create spaces for open ended and often subjective narratives. The title draws from the short story *Exhalation* by Ted Chiang, where memory and consciousness are described as being embedded within the ever-shifting flow of air; the in-between spaces. Through a world building combination of illustrative and painterly surfaces – built up through a process of discovery and accumulation – these forms act as windows to capture a slippery fluid space, a liminality where forms and ideas have the potential to appear.

Tom Müller

Tom Müller is an established multi-disciplinary artist with an active international practice spanning the realms of site-responsive, temporal and permanent projects. His work has been included in major exhibitions and Institutions including *The National at Carriageworks*, the *Museum of Contemporary Art*, the *Adelaide Biennial*, *Biennale de la Chaix-de-Fonds*, and the *Northern Alps Triennale* in Japan. He has been the recipient of multiple Australia Council grants, the inaugural winner of the *Qantas Contemporary Art prize*, and a mid-career fellowship from the Department of Culture and the Arts. In 2009 Tom won the Basel international residency program through the *Christoph Merian Stiftung*. He was mentored by the Russian-American conceptual artist Ilya Kabakov in New York, and studied Anthroposophy at Emerson College in London. He holds a BFA (first class honours) in Sculpture from Curtin University of Technology. Tom is the co-founder and current Artistic Director of the *Fremantle Biennale*.

For *Melville Contemporary*, Tom presents two artworks. *Evanescent* is an ephemeral ode to a site which used to function as a water tower. *Evanescent* is a sound and temporal installation work manifesting several times a day as a thick mist evaporating through the windows of the Heathcote clock tower. *Evanescent* is reminiscent of the water volumes that used to inhabit the cistern of the clock tower (designed in 1928 by architect J. Tait) and infuses the landmark with a renewed purpose for the duration of the exhibition.

Tom's second work, *Tensions*, is a series of slack lines are stretched between two vertical surfaces. Connecting key nodes – the work illustrates the delicate tensions and relationships between the point of origin and destination. These complex systems are interdependent and provide a basis of understanding, an ecology of place. What defines our experience to a particular geography? How are we experiencing the location we are standing on? Providing the visitor with an open line, a tensile experience between physical objects.

Mei Saraswati

Mei Swan Lim / Mei Saraswati is a 37 year old mum who works at Joondalup library. She stays in Wanneroo and belongs to the Bahá'í community. On-and-off, she is a visual and sound artist and singer/composer. Her work stories otherworldly experiences of the everyday, looking through a spiritual lens at our environment and emotional places we inhabit. She also occupies her time creating portals into her cultural past (and future) through paper cutting, weaving, making video art, field recording, sound collaging and singing. Some of her un-achievements include being kicked out of Curtin University for poor academic standard, receiving music royalties of around \$1.34 every quarter and getting divorced before getting her driver's licence. Her main artistic achievements include making life long friends through the art and music communities, and having the opportunity to work with the likes of *Proximity Festival*, *Perth Festival*, *Yirra Yaakin*, *Agwa*, *Pica* and *Eka*.

For *Melville Contemporary*, Mei has produced *Insect Opera*, a composition of field recordings taken from around the Southwest of Western Australia that is slowed-down and pitched to a level that humans can understand and appreciate. Mei sings without words under and through the sounds of crickets, a running stream, clicking frogs and underwater macro invertebrates. The formation of the notes and vocal sounds are improvised responses to the different nature of the field recordings. For each section, there is a corresponding 'rule' for each vocal style.

In this work, Mei invites gallery attendees to also improvise in response to the audio through drawing – working aimlessly, wandering, experimenting, and finding a rhythm of lines and shapes – weaving, worming, boring and marking. *Insect Opera* pays homage to the little things that labour collectively to pollinate, decompose and aerate – invisibly and tirelessly.

List of Works:

Akira Akira, *474*, 2023, tapestry wool, perforated plastic, frame, 35 x 28cm.

Akira Akira, *Perpetual Expansion*, 2007–, 35 plastic balls, galvanised wire, environmental dimensions.

Jess Day, *Portable Portals*, 2023, cotton drop-sheet, coloured pencil, spray paint, grommets, strapping, silver, glass, buck-les, various sizes.

Natsumi de Dianous, *Ripple*, 2023, oil on paper on board, 30 x 21cm.

Natsumi de Dianous, *Brush*, 2023, oil on paper on board, 32 x 24cm.

Natsumi de Dianous, *Cocoon*, 2023, copper.

Natsumi de Dianous, *Pattern of air*, 2023, oil on paper on can-vas, multicoloured paper cut-outs from Jess, thread. 120 x 180cm.

Natsumi de Dianous, *Mirror (shadow)*, 2023, oil on paper on board, 24 x 18cm.

Natsumi de Dianous, *Mirror*, 2023, oil on paper on board, 23 x 18cm.

Mei Saraswati, *Insect Opera*, 2023, audio 19 min, eucalyptus leaves, paper, pens, wooden desk, chair.

Dan Bourke, *Impoverished Aesthetics*, 2023, installation with free/open edition printed publication, acrylic brochure hold-ers, inkjet prints on aluminium composite panels, and acrylic interior paint, dimensions variable.

Tom Müller, *Tensions*, 2023, ratchet straps, fixings.

Tom Müller, *Evanescent*, 2023, fog generators, powered speakers.



Melville
Contemporary 2023

Gallery staff: Lyndon Blue, Jana Braddock, Luisa Hansal, Brent Harrison, Valentine Klaasen, Guy Loudon, Lili Renfrey, Jess Tan, Jack Wansbrough.

The gallery would like to thank the artists, our team, and the City of Melville.

Image: Tom Müller, *Steamworks*, 2023, install view Brisbane Powerhouse

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