



Vincent Namatjira, *The Indulkana Tigers*, 2014, Indulkana, Anangu Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara Lands, South Australia, synthetic polymer paint on linen, 122 x 152 cm. PRIVATE COLLECTION. © VINCENT NAMATJIRA.

Adelaide

Vincent Namatjira: Australia in colour
Art Gallery of South Australia
20 October—21 July 2024

Vincent Namatjira cemented his household name when his portrait of AFL player Adam Goodes, *Stand strong for who you are*, won the Archibald Prize in 2020. It was the first time an Aboriginal artist had won the prestigious award—and this painting, among Namatjira's wider oeuvre, is showing for his first survey, *Vincent Namatjira: Australia in colour* at the Art Gallery of South Australia (AGSA).

Bringing together paintings, works on paper and the moving image, the exhibition celebrates Namatjira as a chronicler of Australian identity: an artist who uses humour, caricature and wit to mine politics, money and power from a First Nations perspective. Often portraying himself in his work, Namatjira draws the viewer into his narratives, contemplating Australia's complex colonial past and present—most famously through his portraits of royals, presidents and prime ministers.

Nici Cumpston, curator of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art at AGSA, describes how Namatjira has reflected upon his career over the past 15 years, decisively choosing the works presented, and crafting a narrative of personal history. As she explains, Namatjira's practice "works through the premise of equalising powerful people within Australian society with Aboriginal people, by placing them within the landscape and community itself".

Born in 1983 in Alice Springs, Namatjira lives and works across Indulkana in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) Lands, South Australia. Coming from an artistic lineage—his great-grandfather is Albert Namatjira—Namatjira engages history in the present. As Cumpston explains, "Namatjira pays homage to leaders within his community, including his great-grandfather."

Alongside familial references, the artist celebrates personal and community leaders from footy heroes to musicians. An astute observer of life and popular culture, Namatjira complicates stereotypes and power, one brushstroke at a time. —ERIN MATHEWS



Agneta Ekholm, work in progress, 2023.

Melbourne

Confluence
Agneta Ekholm
Flinders Lane Gallery
26 September—14 October

Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still once said, "No painting stops with itself, is complete of itself. It is a continuation of previous paintings and is renewed in successive ones." This is the approach Agneta Ekholm takes with her work. Each new painting is a response to the last, a confluence of the past and present. "I always look at my work as a continuous flow," she says. "I see it as following on from previous works."

This process is intuitive for Ekholm, who sees where inspiration takes her in layered, abstract canvases that engage with both the formal and technical elements of painting, alongside the organic nature of making

marks on canvas. The Finland-born artist's 25-year practice is a response to the world around her. Having moved from the city to the water in Ocean Grove, Victoria, during pandemic years, Ekholm has found the new setting conducive to creating: "I have become a better artist by being closer to nature and water."

Such an influence is not necessarily explicit in the output to canvas though. Some paintings echo the vague suggestion of landscape, but much of her work is purely imaginative, something of a dreamscape. The environmental setting is mainly used to offer stillness, so Ekholm can create without distraction. "Silence takes time to learn, to understand and appreciate," she says. "And it takes time to become silent yourself."

Her large-scale abstract paintings showing at Flinders Lane Gallery are up for audience interpretation. "It always surprises me that each person sees something different in my work," Ekholm says. But for her, they are another part of the creative process: "I see my work as a research project. I have a desire to reach into the unknown with each new painting." — SALLY GEARON



Charlotte Haywood, *Through Our Hands: Atmospheric Water Collector + Filter*, 2022, (detail), ashwood, copper wire, found copper funnel, cast Northern NSW beach sand, demijohn, BBQ, copper copper flat bar, 140 x 80 x 80 cm. PHOTOGRAPH: MCCORMICK.

Cairns

Future Nostalgia

Charlotte Haywood

Northsite Contemporary Arts

2 September—14 October

In the 1960s, evolutionary biologist Lynn Margulis was rejected and ridiculed by the scientific community for her (now widely accepted) theories of symbiogenesis, which claimed there is a cooperative relationship between species. With this framework in mind, artist Charlotte Haywood asks us to re-examine our perception of the future, using "nature as teacher".

Her new exhibition at Northsite Contemporary Arts, *Future Nostalgia*, is a sensory exploration of the relationship between all living things, and she uses her interdisciplinary practice not just to mirror this concept, but to also convey the relationship between the senses. Working with biologists, musicians, dancers, chefs, and many others, while also exhibiting her own intricately woven sculptural works, the exhibition offers a conceptual symbiosis to accompany the theme.

"My practice is highly collaborative and interdisciplinary," says Haywood. "It is about needing to reframe our relationship with the living planet, and each other." She highlights the importance of trust in gathering diverse practitioners and knowledge systems for this project. "I'm bringing them together in a vulnerable space, and in an experimental space, to see

how we self-assemble. If we're given a framework, how do we respond to that?"

Perhaps, most surprisingly, for a project looking at the future of our planet and species, is the sense of optimism. Haywood says, "Underlying this project is the idea: how do we change the future, or change our idea of the future, when we live in this doom? How do we bring joy to the future of the planet?" The suggestion is to acknowledge and respect our inherent connection—we are not alone; we are part of the collective whole. "I'm looking at joy as an act of resilience." — SALLY GEARON