
to come together as water

22 July – 6 December 2025

University of Queensland Art Museum (UQ Art Museum)

Artists: Solomon Booth, Nici Cumpston, Megan Cope, Napuwarri Marawili, Heather Koowootha, Jimmy John Thaiday and Keiran James, Jilamara Arts (Martina Baxter, Neil Black, Pamela Brooks, Walter Brooks, Brenda Bush, Doriana Bush, Michelle Bush, Timothy Cook, Colin Heenan-Puruntatameri, Nancy Kerinauia, Raelene Kerinauia Lampuwatu, Raylene Miller White, Edwina Moreen, Mary Elizabeth Moreen, Bernadette Mungatopi, Gerry Mungatopi, Jimmy Mungatopi, Janice Murray Pungautiji, Tina Patlas, Geraldine Pilakui, Aileen Puruntatameri, Barbara Puruntatameri, Colleen Freddy Puruntatameri, Marie Claire Puruntatameri, Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri, Rachel Puruntatameri, Irene Tipiloura, Pius Tipungwuti, Pedro Wonaeamirri, Michelle Woody Minnapinni), Numbulwar Numburindi Arts (Rose Wilfred, Joy Wilfred, Megan Wilfred, Virginia Wilfred, Jangu Nundhiribala, May Wilfred, Jocelyn Wilfred, Nicola Wilfred) Brian Robinson and Lucy Simpson.

Curator: Freja Carmichael

Curatorial synopsis: *to come together as water* unites cultural and creative practices as an expansive reimagining of water protection. Across deep subterranean basins, inland rivers, tidal flats, coastlines and seas, the exhibition reflects on our shared responsibilities to saltwater and freshwater Country. Anchored by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and lived experience, artists translate how we care for place and sustain community, knowledge, and life worlds.

Through resistance, regeneration, collaboration and observation, featured practices emphasise the indelible interconnectedness of waterways, which connect to an extended network of kinship: human and more-than-human, plants, animals, tides and wind. In these connections, artworks reveal the relationships and lessons of responsibility developed over time, generations and seasons, that continue as culture. Rising to the surface, are the extreme conditions faced by saltwater and freshwater communities, each with specificity and insights into past and present methods of water stewardship in the decline of balanced ecosystems, drought, pollution and increasing sea levels.

to come together as water gathers us all in a shared responsibility of place, and foregrounds responsive and timely practices alongside new movements of collective action that are shaping futures suggestive and resilient against immense change.

This exhibition is presented as part of the long-term research initiative *Blue Assembly*, which calls attention to the ways in which oceanic spaces are inextricable to the survival of all species.

Images and captions for media

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Megan Cope, *Kinyingarra Poles*, 2024, timber, kinyingarra (oyster) shells, stainless steel wire, steel base. Installation view: Sharjah Biennial 16, Buhais Geological Park, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Image courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Meanjin/Brisbane. Photo: Ali Alfadly



Megan Cope, *Kinyingarra Poles*, 2024, timber, kinyingarra (oyster) shells, stainless steel wire, steel base. Installation view: Sharjah Biennial 16, Buhais Geological Park, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. Image courtesy the artist and Milani Gallery, Meanjin/Brisbane. Photo: Motaz Mawid.



L-R: Colin Heenan-Puruntatameri, Raelene Kerinauia, Patrick Freddy Puruntatameri, Janice Murray and Pedro Wonaeamirri, YOYI at The National 4: Australian Art Now, MCA Australia, 2023. Image courtesy of the artists, Jilmara Arts and MCA Australia. Photo: Ken Leanfore



Jimmy Mungatopi dancing Yirikipayi (Crocodile) at Purrapinarli Wulirankuwu. Film Still. Image courtesy of the artists and Jilmara Arts.



Nici Cumpston, *Oh my Murray Darling*, 2019, archival pigment print on Hahnemühle paper. Image courtesy of the artist and Michael Reid Galleries.



Brian Robinson, *Zugubal: The winds and the tides set the pace*, 2022, vinylcut print on paper.
Image courtesy of the artist and Onespace. Photo: Michael Marzik

Artist and curator Biographies

SOLOMON BOOTH

Aboriginal and Zenadh Kes (Torres Strait Island) peoples. Born 1981. Lives and works in Kubin Village, Moa Island, Zenadh Kes (Torres Strait). Solomon Booth is an artist with Moa Arts – Ngalmun Lagau Minaral Art Center. Recent exhibitions include *Malu Bardthar Dapar: Sea Land Sky*, NorthSite Contemporary Arts, Cairns (2023); *Tarnanthi 2022*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (2022); Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (DAAF), Darwin Convention Centre, Darwin (2022); Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF), Cairns Convention Centre, Cairns (2022); Cairns Indigenous Art Fair (CIAF), Online exhibition (2021); *Tarnanthi 2021*, Online exhibition (2021); and Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair (DAAF), Online exhibition (2021). His work is held in collections including National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge University, United Kingdom; Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Museum and Art Gallery Northern Territory, Darwin.

FREJA CARMICHAEL

Quandamooka people. Freja Carmichael is Curator, the University of Queensland (UQ) Art Museum and a PhD candidate in Art History with UQ. Over the past decade Freja has worked alongside First Peoples stories, artists and communities on exhibitions, programming, collection research, writing and documentation in curatorial roles with art centres, regional galleries, cultural gatherings, contemporary art spaces and national and international art institutions. Freja was an Australian delegate for the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, Hawai'i (2024) and co-curator of *the National 4: Australian Art Now*, Carriageworks (2023). Other curatorial projects include national touring exhibition *long water: fibre stories* (2020-22), Institute of Modern Art, *Weaving the Way* (2019), The UQ Art Museum and co-curator of *The Commute*, 2018, Institute of Modern Art. Freja regularly contributes writing for exhibition catalogues and publication, and is a member of the Kluge Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection Advisory Council of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia USA

NICI CUMPSTON

Barkandji people and Afghan, English and Irish, Born 1963, Tarntanya (Adelaide). Lives and works in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. Nici Cumpston is represented by Michael Reid, Sydney + Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include *Here/EverPresent*, Broken Hill City Art Gallery & Michael Reid Gallery, Berlin –online (2022); *Calling In*, Michael Reid Gallery, Berlin (2018); *having-been-there*, Gallerysmith, Melbourne (2011); and *Attesting*, Gallerysmith, Melbourne (2009). Recent group exhibitions include *52 Artists 52 Actions*, Artspace Sydney and touring nationally (2022-2024); *DEKADE: 10 years of Michael Reid Berlin*, Michael Reid Gallery Berlin (2012-2022); *Naadohbii: To Draw Water*, Winnipeg Art Gallery, Manitoba, Canada (2021); *William and Winifred Bowness Photography Prize*, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne (2020, 2021); and *Rite of Passage*, Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Brisbane (2020). Her work is held in collections including National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Parliament House Collection Canberra; Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne; Artbank Collection, Sydney; Macquarie Group Collection, Sydney; The University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane; Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA; and Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia USA.

MEGAN COPE

Quandamooka people. Born 1982, Meanjin (Brisbane). Lives and works in Meanjin (Brisbane) and Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). Megan Cope is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane. Recent solo exhibitions include *Water is life*, Bayside Gallery, Brighton, Victoria (2024); *Mirigan/Star in the Sky and the South East Wind*, Milani Gallery, Brisbane (2024); and *Unbroken Connections*, Redland Art Gallery, Redlands (2022); *Fractures & Frequencies*, UNSW

Galleries, University of NSW, Sydney (2021). Recent group exhibitions include *Soils*, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands (2024); *Transformative Currents: Art and Action in the Pacific Ocean*, Oceanside Museum of Art, California, United States of America (2024); *We Are Electric*, The University of Queensland (UQ) Art Museum, Brisbane (2023); *proppaNOW: There Goes the Neighbourhood!*, Vera List Center, New York City, United States of America (2023); Busan Biennale: *We, On The Rising Wave*, Busan, South Korea (2022); and *Reclaim the Earth*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France (2022). Her work is held in collections including Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; National Gallery Australia, Canberra; Australian War Memorial, Canberra; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; and Musées de la Civilisation, Canada.

HEATHER KOOWOOTH

Wik-Mungkan/Kugu and Yidinji/Djabugay/Gunggandji peoples. Born 1966, Yarrabah, Queensland. Lives and works Gimuy (Cairns), Queensland. Recent solo exhibitions include *The Bush people's walking path ways of Country site's and story place*, NorthSite at Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, Cairns Convention Centre (2023); *Heather Wunjarra Koowootha: Botanicals*, Cairns Art Gallery (2023); and *Heather Wunjarra Koowootha – Collection in Focus*, Cairns Art Gallery (2022). Recent group exhibitions include *The National 4: Australian Art Now*, Carriageworks (2023); *Embodied Knowledge*, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (2022); and *RITUAL: the past in the present*, Cairns Art Gallery (2021). Her work is held in collections including the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Cairns Art Gallery, Cairns; and Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

NAPUWARRI MARAWILI

Maḡarrpa clan. Born 1967, Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. Lives and works Yilpara and Yirrkala, Northeast Arnhem Land, Northern Territory. Napuwarri Marawili is an artist with Buku-Larrngay Mulka Art Centre, Yirrkala. Solo exhibitions include *Napuwarri*, Suzanne O'Connell Gallery, Brisbane (2008). Recent group exhibitions include *41st Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards*, Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Northern Territory (2023); *Yutaguma- Make it New*, Annandale Galleries, Sydney (2022); *Gurtha- Songs of the First Fire*, Aboriginal & Pacific Art, Sydney (2022); *Tamanthi 2019*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide (2019); *Minytji- Essence of the Land*, Aboriginal Signature Estrangin Gallery, Bruxelles, Belgium (2018); *Mulka*, ARTKELCH Collectors Lounge, kptec, Schorndorf, Germany (2017); and *Buku-Larrnggay*, Art Karlsruhe, Germany (2017). His work is held in collections including National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; Kerry Stokes Collection, Perth; Holmes a Court Collection, Perth; Artbank, Sydney NSW; Wesfarmers Collection, Perth; and Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia USA.

JIMMY JOHN THAIDAY

Kuz and Peiudu clans. Born 1978, Thursday Island, Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait Islands). Lives and works Erub (Darnley) Island, Zenadth Kes. Jimmy John Thaiday is an artist with Erub Arts, Torres Strait. Recent group exhibitions include *Just Beneath the Surface*, Melbourne Projects Space, Artbank Melbourne (2024); *Interwoven: Stories of Country from North and South*, Benalla Art Gallery, Victoria (2023); *40th Telstra National Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art Awards*, Museums and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT), Northern Territory (2022); *2021 FNQ Contemporaries*, Cairns Art Gallery (2021); and *Below the Tide Line*, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane (2019). His work is held in collections including Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; Cairns Art Gallery, Cairns; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

KEIRAN JAMES

Lives and works in Sawtell, New South Wales. Keiran James is a multidisciplinary media professional with over twenty-five years of experience in photography, television and film. He

regularly collaborates with institutions, such as libraries and art institutions, travelling to remote local communities to bring their unique voices to the world.

JILAMARA ARTS AND CRAFTS ASSOCIATION (JILAMARA ARTS) is owned and governed by Tiwi artists from the community of Milikapiti on Melville Island. Established in 1989, Jilamara fosters and promotes Tiwi art making, cultural projects and collaborative processes. Its artists are nationally and internationally renowned for their contemporary works based on ceremonial body painting designs, clan totems and Tiwi creation stories. Their multidisciplinary practices include painting with locally sourced earth pigments on stringybark, linen and canvas, ironwood carving, weaving, printmaking, screen printed textiles, photography and film. Recent exhibitions include *YOYI (dance)*, Gropius Bau, Berlin (2022); *TIWI*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne (2021); 22nd Biennale of Sydney: *NIRIN*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney (2020); *Tarnanthi*, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, (2019); and 3rd National Indigenous Art Triennial: *Defying Empire*, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra (2017). Jilamara Arts artists' works are held in collections including the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; the Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; the British Museum, United Kingdom; the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; and Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane.

NUMBULWAR NUMBURINDI ARTS (NNA/NUMBURINDI ARTISTS) is a collective of artists from Numbulwar community whose mission is to keep culture strong. Numbulwar sits on the Rose River, near the Gulf of Carpentaria and belongs to the Nunggayinbala clan, one of the Wubuy or Nunggubuyu speaking clans from the region. Established in 2019, the art centre is owned and controlled by the community. Recent exhibitions include *Lharagula Ngididin*, Presented by Agency Projects, Collingwood Yards, Victoria (2024); *Just Beneath the Surface*, Melbourne Projects Space, Artbank Melbourne (2024); and *Fish Killers*, Numburindi Arts, Brunswick Street Gallery, Victoria (2022).

BRIAN ROBINSON

Kala Lagaw Ya and Wuthathi language. Born 1973 Waiben (Thursday Island), Zenadh Kes (Torres Strait Islands). Lives and works Gimuy (Cairns). Brian Robinson is represented by Onespace Gallery, Brisbane. Recent solo exhibitions include *Blooms, Beasts and Beyond*, Onespace (2024); *Brian Robinson: Tithuyil (Moving with the Rhythm of the Stars)*, Australian Embassy, Washington DC USA (2020); *Brian Robinson: Tithuyil (Moving with the Rhythm of the Stars)*, Kluge Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection, University of Virginia, USA (2020). Recent group exhibitions include *Shadow Spirit*, Rising Festival, Melbourne (2023); *RITUAL: the past in the present*, Cairns Art Gallery (2021) *Art Now FNQ*, Cairns Art Gallery, Cairns (2019); and *TARNANTHI | Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art*, Art Gallery of South Australia (2019). His works is held in collections including National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane; Tjibaou Cultural Centre, Noumea, New Caledonia; and Kluge-Ruhe Aboriginal Art Collection University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia USA.

LUCY SIMPSON.

Yuwaalaraay people. Born 1981. Lives and works Gadigal/Wangal Country (Sydney). Lucy Simpson is Creative Director and Principal Designer / Maker behind Gaawaa Miyay; a First Nations process-led studio-based practice inspired by Country, relationships and notions of continuity and exchange. Recent solo exhibitions and commissions include *HOLDING GROUND*, Jackson Bella Room Commission, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2023); *Baayangalibiyaay*, Canberra Glassworks, Canberra (2023). Recent group exhibitions include *Bankstown Biennale*, Bankstown Art Centre, Sydney (2024); *Handmade Universe*, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne (2022-2023); *Eucalyptusdom*, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney (2022); *long water: fibre stories*, Institute of Modern Art and national tour, Brisbane (2020-2022); *Siteworks 2022: From a deep valley*, Art Museum at Bundanon (2022); *Measured Response*, National Art School, Sydney (2018); *Four Thousand Fish*, Sydney Festival (2018); and *Primavera*, Museum of Contemporary Art (2015).