

The Plastics

Project Gallery – Queensland College of Art, 226 Grey Street,
Southbank, Brisbane.

16-27 February 2021

According to the WWF Australia “Australians use 130KG of plastic per year and only 9% of that winds up recycled.¹ We continually hear news of the damage plastic is doing to our environment, its longevity and its impact on fauna. However, it is also pertinent to remember that plastic plays a valuable role in the manufacture of medical devices and many other applications that improve the quality of our lives. The artists in this exhibition have each responded differently to plastic and in unexpected ways. These responses have resulted in a nuanced exhibition that has in mind the environment while also referencing each artist’s own relationship with plastic.

Crisia Constantine and Sophie Reid-Singer and their work *un/body me* have responded with a video work which speaks of the concept of the womb as a host. This work considers metamorphosis however, while many animals unwittingly ingest plastic sadly there is no processing of this.

@chocolate_con_pimenta and @clunkk

Deborah Eddy’s work knitted quilt titled *Change the Ending* speaks of domestic violence. It is a memorial for the sixty-one women murdered by men in 2019. By using as her material plastic Danger and flagging tapes, she is metaphorically considering the longevity of the material and the never-ending problem of domestic violence.

@deborah_eddy_art

Simone Eisler’s work *Cast-away* is a collection of creatures we all recognise from the natural world. However, they have been transformed by Eisler’s glue stick and plastic fabrications, into museum specimens of the carapaces these creatures have cast off. While these plastic residues or exoskeletons of plant and animal life are displayed museologically, that is they are pinned down, rather than horizontally the creatures seemingly skitter up the wall in an alarming manner. Thus, giving viewers pause to consider the danger of plastic in our natural environment.

@simoneeisler

¹ <https://www.wwf.org.au/get-involved/plastics#gs.t2yuib>

Orrery: unmaimed by Emmalyn Hawthorne is a 3D printed biodegradable plastic linguistic skyline. Hawthorne uses Optical Character Recognition (OCR) to transform a non-linguistic source, in this instance a skyline, into words and in this iteration the word that appeared is unmaimed. The work is a modest size, but the context is multi layered and speaks of concepts such as human's orientation in space and an acknowledgement of the history of damage to our world.

@emphaticallyem

When considering Natasha Narain's *She Stree (Woman in Hindi)* we enter a world of ritual and goddesses from a Bengali cultural context. This work pays homage to the womb of the Hindu temple and we are invited to sit and contemplate the goddesses who reside there. Narain's plastic dolls become the embodiments of both Brahmanical as well as indigenous village goddesses who are connected to the environment and the people. Playfully the work also acknowledges the longevity of plastic dolls that inevitably wind up in Opportunity shops awaiting adoption and new lives.

@narain_natasha

While Mandy Ridley's *Elsie Wright's doily for JM* references an EKKA prize winning doily made lovingly by Elsie Wright, it is transformed by the brightly coloured recycled materials, in particular vinyl and the scale Ridley has employed. Additionally, her methodology of coiling expresses labour and attention to detail and reflects Ridley's ongoing fascination for traditional crafts and her interest in the transformative possibilities of scale and materials. Materiality is important to Ridley and while she uses plastics and industrial products in her work, she recognises the part these materials play in the damage and decline of our environment.

@mandy_ridley_artist

The use of plastics in medicine is the concept and materiality of Michelle Vine's installation *Inhale (the bright side)*. As a sufferer of a chronic illness Vine is well versed in the positive part that plastic can play in people's lives. Vine has collected her own medical waste and reimagined it in this deceptively playful installation. While the bright yellow signifies danger and warning it is also a colour that engenders happiness. The use of this colour speaks to Vines acknowledgement of the generosity of her carers.

@michelle.l.vine

Curated by @chocolate_con_pimenta