



VCE Studio Arts: ART INDUSTRY CONTEXTS

Making Her Mark: Selected Works from the Collection

Curated by Victoria Lynn
TarraWarra Museum of Art
29 February–19 March, 2020

TarraWarra Museum of Art: Gallery Model

Key knowledge: *The methods and intentions of public art galleries and museums, commercial and private galleries, university art galleries, artist run spaces, alternative art spaces, outdoor spaces and online galleries in exhibiting artworks*

- The TarraWarra Museum of Art's gallery model is a public art museum. Key **characteristics** of public art museums are that they **collect, preserve, research and exhibit works of art**. Public art museums are **established in the public interest** as permanent, not-for-profit organisations that contribute **long-term value to communities**.
- The TarraWarra Museum of Art is the first privately funded, significant public visual arts museum to be set up under the Australian Government's philanthropic measures announced in March 1999.
- The Museum is a not-for-profit institution with a charter to display **Australian art** from the **second half of the twentieth century to the present day**. This means that the Museum collects and exhibits **Australian modern** and **contemporary artworks**.
- The TarraWarra Museum of Art was founded by Eva Besen AO and Marc Besen AC, who began collecting artworks in the 1950s and had a vision to form a new museum in the Yarra Valley with its own collection of Australian art from their private collection. Eva and Marc Besen wished to share their passion for Australian art with the public.
- The Museum was first established as a company limited by guarantee in the year 2000.
- Three exhibitions were staged in a site in Melbourne's CBD in 2002. That same year, construction commenced on the building at Tarrawarra.
- The Museum is named after the area in which it is located—Tarrawarra. The word '**tarrawarra**' is a **Woiwurrung** word, the language of the **Wurundjeri** people of the Kulin Nation, that translates approximately as '**slow moving water**'.

- TarraWarra Museum of Art's building is **purpose built**. It was designed for art exhibitions and contains **one large (Main)** and **two smaller galleries** (North and South). The interior spaces of the three galleries are often reconfigured for exhibitions using temporary moveable walls (which can be moved into wall storage units when not in use). The 'Vista Walk', an arching passageway, flanks the three galleries and is punctuated with West-facing floor to ceiling glazed windows. The 'Vista Walk' can also be used as an exhibition space.
- The Museum was officially opened in 2003 by the Victorian Premier, The Honourable Steve Bracks.
- In 2004, Allan Powell—the architect who designed the Museum—was awarded the winner of the Victorian Premier's Design Award. Powell designed an elegant, gently arching, rammed earth and glass building which echoes the contours and colours of the landscape it is situated in.
- TarraWarra Museum of Art usually has **four exhibition seasons** each year. Exhibitions include: the *TarraWarra Biennial* or the *TarraWarra International* (these exhibitions alternate every two years), Museum collection exhibitions, touring exhibitions and thematic curated exhibitions which often include Australian modern and contemporary artworks exhibited alongside one another (e.g. *Joy Hester and Patricia Piccinini: Through Love ...*). Each season is accompanied by **Public and Education Programs**.
- The Museum is in part **funded** by the TarraWarra Museum of Art Foundation (a charitable foundation set up by Eva and Marc Besen, the Museum's founders). The Foundation contributes 65% of the funding needed to run the Museum. The other 35% comes from government funding in the form of grants (Australian Council, Creative Victoria, Yarra Ranges Council), support from philanthropic trusts and foundations, sponsorship in-kind (e.g. Yarra Valley Dairy donates cheese for events and openings), revenue from admission fees and the Museum shop.
- The Museum has a **small core staff** comprising: Director; General Manager; Registrar; Exhibition Manager; 2 x Curators; External Relations Manager; Marketing and Events Manager; 2 x Visitor Services Coordinators; Education Coordinator; Office Administrator and 20+ volunteers. We also work with an external Publicist and a graphic design company.
- For **installation** and **de-installation** of exhibitions, a core team of specialists is employed. We work with a fine art handling and installation company called Exhibit One. We also contract external builders, painters, electricians, lighting and audio-visual specialists as required.

TarraWarra Museum of Art: Gallery Characteristics

Key knowledge: *The characteristics of different types of gallery spaces visited in the current year of study*

- The Museum has a stated **vision** to actively engage with **art, place and ideas, where unexpected links between contemporary art and modernism are presented within global, national and Indigenous contexts**.
- Although the Museum's collection was initially formed from gifts of Eva and Marc Besen, the collection continues to grow through the acquisition of works by leading Australian contemporary artists and key Australian modern works of art.
- Aside from collecting Australian modern and contemporary artworks, one of TarraWarra Museum of Art's key priorities is to curate exhibitions of new and pre-existing artworks by international, Australian and First Nations artists.

- A **curator** is usually someone who is responsible for a collection in a museum, gallery or institution.
- The word 'curate' comes from Latin and means '**to care for**'. A curator is a person whose job it is **to care for artworks**. Roles of curators in different museums and galleries vary greatly.
- Curators at TarraWarra Museum of Art research and write about artists and artworks held in the Museum's collection, put together exhibitions of artworks from the collection or loaned from other public and private collections, and also invite contemporary artists to make new artworks for exhibition at the Museum. This process is called '**commissioning**'.
- The commissioning process involves an artist being **invited and paid to create new work** for an exhibition. A TarraWarra Museum of Art curator will research the kind of art the artist makes and the kinds of ideas that they are interested in. If the curator sees an opportunity for a new artwork that aligns with that artist's practice to be made, they can then invite the artist to create new work for an exhibition. Artists maintain ownership of artworks that are commissioned at the end of the Museum exhibition—they can be sold or re-exhibited in another gallery.
- Commissioning involves discussions about **practicalities**: how long the artist has to make the artwork, how much money is in the budget, and the idea for the exhibition.
- TarraWarra Museum of Art's exhibition program is determined by the Director and curators. The Museum does not accept exhibition proposals from artists and practitioners.
- The role of a Museum curator is as **facilitator** and **mediator**—working directly with artists to help realise artwork, to be the link between the artist and the Museum, and also to mediate the relationship between all artworks in the collection or in exhibitions and the public (by helping to communicate ideas in artworks to the public—in writing, interviews or public talks).

Preventive Conservation

- **Light:** Strong light or exposure over a long period can break down materials used in artworks and cause fading. Some of the Museum's galleries do have windows that open to the outside but these windows can be covered over to provide darker conditions and block sun light. Depending on the kind of artwork, different types of lights are used to provide ideal conditions. Some artworks, particularly works on paper, photographs and textiles from the Museum collection require low levels of light. This may affect the overall design of the exhibition; these works may need to be placed in particular galleries to ensure that light levels can remain low. However, contemporary artists often request that their works are presented in brightly lit environments.

Generally artworks are protected against three types of light: Lux (Visible Light), Ultra Violet and Heat (Infra Red).

Daylight = 10,000 Lux.

Fragile works (works on paper, photographs, textiles) = 50 Lux.

Oil paintings = 200-300 Lux.

Wood = 400 Lux.

- **Temperature and Humidity:** The Museum has a sophisticated climate control system to provide stable temperature and relative humidity (RH) in the galleries. The temperature must stay at 20 degrees (+ or - 2 degrees). The relative humidity is measured by hygrometers located in the galleries and must be maintained at 45/50%. Keeping a constant temperature and humidity level helps prevent work from being damaged by insects and mould (they flourish in hot, moist environments), buckling, shrinking, cracking or expanding.

- **Security:** Accidents and vandalism pose a threat to artworks. Touching objects and transferring dirt and acid from hands onto fragile surfaces can cause chemical damage. Cotton or Nitrile gloves must always be worn when handling artworks. Security measures taken to protect artworks depend on the level of visitation during an exhibition season. Signage is used throughout the gallery to remind visitors to not touch the artworks. Visitor Services staff, volunteer guides, curators and educators also verbally remind visitors of the Museum rules. Sometimes bollards, low plinths, or covered vitrines may be used to put some distance between vulnerable artworks and the public. There are recording security cameras located throughout the Museum so Visitor Services staff and volunteers can monitor visitors in the galleries. During busy periods/exhibitions gallery attendants (or invigilators) are employed to help look after artworks.

Exhibition Case Study: Making Her Mark: Selected Works from the Collection

Key knowledge: *The curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and displaying artworks in current exhibitions*

- The exhibition is titled ***Making Her Mark: Selected Works from the Collection***.
- The exhibition offers a new appraisal of the work of leading women artists held in the collection of TarraWarra Museum of Art. It is a group exhibition of pre-existing modern and contemporary artworks held in the Museum's collection (no new commissions).
- The exhibition has been **curated by Victoria Lynn**, the Museum's Director.
- *Making Her Mark* was developed over a 9 month period.
- The curator decided on the artworks to exhibit. The Museum's Registrar and Exhibition Manager located the selected artworks in the collection store and worked to ensure all works were condition reported ahead of the installation period.
- Lynn has said that this exhibition asks us to recognise and embrace the many changes and transformations related to how we understand the idea of gender.
- *Making Her Mark* is a thematic exhibition. This means that the curator has selected works with the curatorial intention that they reflect on three themes, in this case, memory, landscape and abstraction. These themes arose from carefully researching the works of women artists in the collection. The exhibition also includes a modest selection of work by male artists that amplify the images, ideas and styles of work by the women artists in the exhibition.

Artwork/Artist Case Study: Rosalie Gascoigne and Charles Blackman

Curatorial Intentions: Artwork Placement

- Lynn has said that she intended for works in the exhibition to appear 'in the form of unexpected pairings, the exhibition highlights ways in which women artists have pioneered certain ways of seeing the world'.
- Many works in the exhibition have been presented in close proximity to one another, either literally installed side-by-side, or intentionally installed so that direct links can be made between works concerning subject matter, style, technique, form, and material. This has allowed for new comparisons to be made across decades of practice of artists in the collection. Instead of focusing on a discussion

about precedent and influence, the exhibition presents nuanced conversations about image, composition and mark-making where women take centre stage.

- Lynn was influenced by some of the thinking of Rosi Braidotti, a contemporary philosopher and feminist theorist, while developing her curatorial rationale. Braidotti asks how we might “undo the gravitational pull toward dualistic thinking, so as to redistribute the power relations rhizomatically, asymmetrically and unpredictably”.
- The exhibition puts forward the idea that all art happens in conversation, and does not follow the tradition of exhibition making which might perpetuate the binary relationship of female and male.
- On the long, uninterrupted, right hand (eastern) side wall of the South Gallery appears a suite of constructed artworks by Rosalie Gascoigne. The works are arranged in a ‘salon hang,’ spanning the full length of the wall. All of the works were made between 1983 and 1998, and are assembled from materials that the artist found and salvaged from the landscape; old road signs, sections of old patterned linoleum, painted and printed wood from old crates etc.
- At the very northern end of this wall appears a single, modestly scaled, painting by Charles Blackman titled *Hoardings* (1954). Blackman’s work depicts a young girl walking past an urban wall emblazoned with signs for branded products.
- Lynn’s choice to situate Gascoigne and Blackman’s works on a single wall, where the viewer first encounters the constructed works, before a painting that was made much earlier, addresses her curatorial intentions to disrupt the linear reading of artistic precedent and influence.
- As Lynn has said, ‘(w)e all live in a time, this time—not our father’s time—that celebrates the complexities and paradoxes of gender. The fluid and entangled world in which we live is reflected in how art develops and manifests: not along lines of binary difference, but in a fluid state of inter-relationship’. We can literally move back and forth between the works of Gascoigne and Blackman and create links for ourselves between the subject matter and the methods of visual communication that both artists have used. Collectively, the installation of the works allow us to enter the Australian landscape, populated with signs and signifiers of human inhabitation.

Conservation Methods

- Due to the different periods of time in which they were made, Rosalie Gascoigne’s constructed works are considered to be contemporary artworks, while Charles Blackman’s painting *Hoardings* is considered a modern artwork. The materials that the works are made out of directly impact how they can be exhibited in the Museum’s gallery spaces.
- Many contemporary artists prefer their artworks to be exhibited in brightly lit gallery spaces. In previous exhibitions at the Museum, Gascoigne’s works have been installed along the length of the ‘Vista Walk’, which has lots of natural light. Gascoigne’s materials are not overly susceptible to damage from bright light and they already show the signs of wear and weathering from their life outside in the landscape before the artist salvaged them to turn into artwork.
- Conversely, Blackman’s work—consisting of oil and enamel on composition board— must be exhibited in lower light conditions to preserve the materials and prevent the paint from fading and cracking, and the board from warping. This artwork can never be displayed in a space with lots of natural light.
- The decision to exhibit these artworks in close proximity for *Making Her Mark* meant the choice of gallery space had to be very intentional—the South gallery has very low levels of natural light and was

the ideal gallery for Gascoigne and Blackman's artworks to co-exist within.

- Special lights with 'shutters' were used to allow for much brighter, artificial light to tightly frame Gascoigne's individual works, without affecting the lower light levels required for Blackman's artwork.

Artwork/Artist Case Study: Hilarie Mais *Cluster Ghost* (2016) and *reflection/feather* (2016)

Artwork Storage

- Both of Hilarie Mais' artworks in *Making Her Mark*, *reflection/feather* (2016) and *Cluster Ghost* (2016), are constructed from thin sections of wood arranged into grid-like structures. They look sturdy and relatively light weight, but are in fact incredibly fragile and very heavy.
- These artworks have special crates that they are placed in to keep them flat, shielding them from impacts during transportation.
- The crates double as storage. When the artworks are de-installed at the end of their exhibition they are placed straight back into the crates.
- Neither of the works can be leant against the wall—they must await their installation in their respective crates.
- The ends of the sections of wood that comprise *Cluster Ghost* protrude out into surrounding space. If the work was leant against the wall, even supported by foam chocks (which is customary practice), the ends of the wood sections could bend, crush, and chip.
- This work is also painted on both sides. The top surface is white, while the underside is painted blue, yellow, and red (these colours are reflected on the gallery wall when the work is installed, creating an ethereal glow). This work's crate has a special system of foam supports to suspend it laying flat so that none of the painted wood surfaces are adversely affected.
- *reflection/feather* appears to be leaning against the wall in the North gallery. In actuality, there are two specially made brackets that are affixed to the Museum floor with a preservation product called 'museum wax' (a special blend of microcrystalline waxes that acts like a temporary 'glue', ensuring that objects don't move once placed on floors, shelves, plinths, etc.). Museum wax has been used because the Museum floor cannot be drilled into. The effect of installing the work in this way looks casual, but is highly contrived, so as to support the work and ensure that none of the ends of the wood will bear any direct weight.

Artwork/Artist Case Study: Judy Watson *Spine* (1997)

Artwork Installation

- Judy Watson's Aboriginal matrilineal family are from Waanyi country in north-west Queensland. The artist once stated that she's interested in 'what's beneath the surface ... peeling back the layers'.
- Many of Watson's works respond to the stories hidden in specific sites, bringing visibility to Indigenous histories by tracing and revealing the psychological and emotional contours of the landscape.
- Her work *Spine* (1997) in *Making Her Mark* is a stained canvas depicting a spine-like form in ochre over tidal flows and fluid passages.

- The edges of the canvas are frayed and feathered. We can easily see the material qualities of the canvas support, that it is a woven textile with a warp and weft. The artist has chosen not to stretch the canvas prior to, or after, painting it. This is an intentional decision and one that indicates a questioning of canonical Western painting methods and techniques.
- Sometimes Watson works by laying the canvas directly on the studio floor and pushing pigments into the surface using her feet, hands and large brushes. She will then pin the same canvas to the studio wall and work back into a stained ground with paint, blocking our areas and inserting imagery, text, symbols, and shapes.
- Watson uses clear push-pins or nails to secure her canvas works to gallery walls. This reflects the way that the works appear during their creation in the studio.
- *Spine* is directly tethered to the wall using two nails, the top of the canvas is perfectly straight. A level has been used to ensure that the work hangs straight, during installation.
- The nails pierce the top two corners of the work, the bottom of the canvas hangs freely. Installing the work in this way allows us to imagine that the canvas could respond to any movement that is around it; the movement of visitors or the gentle movement of air from the air-conditioning system. Despite the canvas material being quite heavy, presenting the work in this way makes it appear light and ethereal. The 'spine' motif in the work could signify something that is straight and aligned, and also something that allows for a lot of flexibility and movement.
- In 1990, Watson made a significant visit to her grandmother's country where she heard stories of survival and resilience. The 'spine' in this work suggests a relationship between the body and the land that is so important in Indigenous culture, and also the active need to be resilient in a changing societal, political and cultural landscape.

Artwork/Artist Case Study: Janet Laurence *Sacred Green* (2018) from the series *Chlorophyll Collapse*

Artwork Installation

- *Sacred Green* (2018) was acquired by the Museum in 2018 from an exhibition at Arc One Gallery, a commercial gallery in Melbourne.
- The artist was present and had helped to install the work, when it was exhibited at Arc One Gallery.
- When TarraWarra Museum of Art acquired the work, it was accompanied by a rough installation sketch, but a clearer procedural instruction guide for the installation of the work needed to be created.
- The work is a long frieze composed of a series of panels which shift between fluid oil glazes and archival prints of pristine forests. The overlapping layers of mirror, aluminium, transparent polyester sheets, and acrylic work to frame and fracture the imagery in new and uncertain ways. The sense of fragility in the work's materials produces emotional intimacy, which corresponds to the fragility of the ecosystem.
- The work looks 'easy' to install, but there is a particular order that the individual panes need to be arranged in so that the imagery can align and overlap, as intended.

- The Museum's Registrar and Exhibition Manager worked with Exhibit One fine art installers to create a thorough, illustrated, step-by-step guide for the installation of this work during the installation period of *Making Her Mark*. This guide will be able to be used for future installations of the work, both within the Museum and when the work is loaned to other institutions.

Artwork/Artist Case Study: Robert Klippel *No title (No. 1232) (1980)*

Artwork Installation and Condition Reporting

- Robert Klippel's work *No title (No.1232) (1980)*, consisting of 57 individual sculptures made from a combination of air-dried modelling clay, plastic, enamel paint, aluminium foil and metallic paint, was acquired by the Museum in 2018.
- This work was first exhibited in a large-scale solo exhibition titled *ASSEMBLED: The Art of Robert Klippel*, curated by guest curator Kirsty Grant, in late 2019 - early 2020.
- Grant decided that *No title (No. 1232)* would be situated at the southernmost end of the 'Vista Walk'. Given the newly acquired status of the work, a shelf and a protective perspex lid needed to be produced to keep the work elevated and protected. This is a conservation technique to prevent damage from visitors touching or accidentally bumping the very fragile artwork.
- The 'Vista Walk' has gently curved walls, and the shelf and perspex lid were made to account for this curve in the wall.
- This particular Klippel work was so well received in *ASSEMBLED: The Art of Robert Klippel*, that Victoria Lynn decided to continue to exhibit it in *Making Her Mark*. If Lynn had decided to move the artwork into one of the three gallery spaces for her exhibition, the shelf and perspex lid would have to have been altered to suit a flat wall. It was decided that the work would remain located in the 'Vista Walk' for the duration of *Making Her Mark*.
- The unconventional combinations of materials that Klippel used to make this artwork also pose a challenge to conserve and install. One object has aluminium foil covering the top half of a ball of air-dry clay. These two materials could easily come apart as there is no fixing material, such as glue, holding them together. The Museum's Registrar, Exhibition Manager, and fine art handlers need to be incredibly careful not to disturb the different combinations of materials when they are unpacking, condition reporting, installing and re-packing this artwork.
- Condition reporting this particular work is a challenge! With so many individual parts that need to be independently checked for signs of damage or change, the process of condition reporting the entire work took two fine art handlers and the Museum's Registrar several days to complete.
- Each component of the work is photographed and any incongruous marks on the object's surface are logged. When the work is de-installed, each component will be checked again and it's condition logged before it goes into storage.

Marketing and Promotion

Key knowledge: *The processes associated with the production, presentation, conservation and promotion of specific artworks in current exhibitions. The curatorial considerations, exhibition design and promotional methods involved in preparing and displaying artworks in current exhibitions.*

- TarraWarra Museum of Art's marketing plan usually includes the following strategies: Advertising – campaign based and carried out with print and electronic promotion of exhibitions. Print ads, listings in Art Guide and Art Almanac, radio commercials, direct mailing, electronic direct mail (EDM), brochures, signs, website, social media, etc.
- The Museum's Marketing and Events Manager develops and manages a marketing budget.
- **'Hero Image' and Media Release:** The 'hero image' for an exhibition is chosen two months before the exhibition is due to open. It is important as the audience's first impression of the exhibition. It is used for print advertisements in Art Guide, Art Almanac, for the Museum's print collateral, and on the Museum's website. The Marketing and Events Manager and an external Publicist produce a Media Release to send to journalists, writers, and critics of publications ahead of the exhibition opening. The Museum has no control over what is produced to publicise the exhibition; a review may be favourable or unfavourable.
- For *Making Her Mark*, an artwork titled *Masks of the Ogre Dancers* (2014–15) by Melbourne-based contemporary artist Kate Beynon was selected as the 'hero image'. It was chosen for its bright and eye-catching use of colour and shape and because the variety of different masks and faces it depicts resonates with the idea of plurality; celebrating the many and varied perspectives on art practice presented in the exhibition.
- There was **no catalogue or publication** produced for this exhibition. **Wall labels** and **didactic texts** provided additional information on each artist's work and ideas.
- Due to COVID-19, the Museum was closed to the public just two weeks after the exhibition opened to the public.
- A media production company called Maison Snap was hired to produce a 3D virtual rendition of the finished *Making Her Mark* exhibition. The **Virtual Exhibition** of *Making Her Mark: Selected Works from the Collection* is available to view via the Museum's **website** allowing audiences, far and wide, to explore the exhibition and the works on show. An **audio guide** narrated by Victoria Lynn, exhibition curator and Director of the Museum, was produced to accompany the Virtual Exhibition and is also available on SoundCloud.
- The exhibition was **professionally photographed** prior to the Museum closure. These images have been used to promote the Virtual Exhibition on the Museum's **social media** channels (Instagram – @tarrawarrama & Facebook – @TarraWarraMA)
- Because **Instagram** and **Facebook** are highly visual they are very well suited to promoting the Museum's exhibitions, which contain mostly visual artworks. All of the Museum's Public and Education Programs accompanying exhibitions are promoted via the Museum's website and social media channels. Website and social media promotion of programs is cheap, in contrast to print promotion which is very costly.

Additional Information

The **Virtual Exhibition** for *Making Her Mark: Selected Works from the Collection* is available [here](#).

Terms of Use

These education resource notes have been produced by TarraWarra Museum of Art Education to provide information and classroom support material for Art Industry Contexts related visits to the Virtual Exhibition of *Making Her Mark: Selected Works from the Collection*. The reproduction and communication of this resource is permitted for educational purposes only.

The Education Program at TarraWarra Museum of Art is generously supported by Ullmer Family Foundation, Harry the Hirer, Scanlon Foundation, Escala Partners, Credit Suisse, Erdi Foundation and Bennelong Foundation.



Ullmer Family
Foundation

Harry
the hirer®



ESCALA
PARTNERS



CREDIT SUISSE