

TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*

27 March – 11 July 2021

Curated by Nina Miall

EDUCATION KIT

Acknowledgement

This exhibition is presented on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation. TarraWarra Museum of Art acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the original custodians of the lands and waters on which the Museum stands and we extend our respect to their community, their Ancestors and their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Exhibition Introduction

Featuring twenty-five artists from across the country, the TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters* responds to two related cues: the idea of slowness, and the gentle, measured flow of the nearby Birrarung (Yarra River). The exhibition's title comes from the translation of the Woiwurrung word 'tarrawarra', after which the Museum, and its surrounding area of Wurundjeri Country in the Yarra Valley are named. Aligned with the unhurried arc of the river, *Slow Moving Waters* explores processes of deceleration, delay and the decompression of time, proposing a stay to the ever more rapid flows of people, commerce and information that characterise the dynamic of globalisation. Against today's cult of speed, the artworks in the Biennial mark a different sort of time—one which connects with the vastness and intricacy of geological and cosmological cycles, seasonal rhythms, interconnected ecologies, and ancient knowledge systems.

The exhibition develops from the idea that between the acceleration of our current age and the impossibility of stopping altogether is a temporal space of possibility and resistance: slowing down. Through works which unfold conceptually, spatially, materially and temporally over the course of the exhibition, it seeks to heighten our awareness of the overlooked subtleties of the present.

Considering the broader arc of history against the pull of the accelerated now, the TarraWarra Biennial 2021 advances expansive relations to time that are grounded in both place and community, attentive to an idea of the present as a site of multiple durations, pasts and possible futures. At a time of untold disruption to the tempos and structures of contemporary life, *Slow Moving Waters* imagines alternative conceptions of time and how they might offer different ways

of being in the world. Oriented around disturbances to the prevailing current, it harnesses the potential of slowness as both a passive and an active means for claiming different forms of agency, recognising that, from within the eddies of the river, new networks of solidarity, support and resistance can take hold.

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Exhibiting artists: Robert Andrew, Jeremy Bakker, Lucy Bleach, Lauren Brincat, Louisa Bufardeci, Sundari Carmody, Christian Capurro, Jacobus Capone, Daniel Crooks, Megan Cope, George Egerton-Warburton, Nicole Foreshew and P. Thomas Boorljoonngali, Caitlin Franzmann, James Geurts, Michaela Gleave, Nongirrŋa Marawili, Brian Martin, Raquel Ormella, Mandy Quadrio, Yasmin Smith, Grant Stevens, Oliver Wagner, Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin and Jonathan Jones.

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Photo: Andrew Curtis

How to use this kit

This Education Kit has been developed to support learning alongside the exhibition *Slow Moving Waters* at TarraWarra Museum of Art. Teachers can select and adapt the questions and support materials provided within the resource for learning experiences in the gallery or classroom.

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TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*, installation view, TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis

TARRAMARRA
MUSEUM
OF ART
BIENNIAL 2021

SLOW MOVING WATERS

CURATED BY NINA MIALL

EXHIBITING ARTISTS + ROBERT ANDREW + JEREMY BAKER + LUCY BLEACH + LAUREN BRINCAT + EDVISA BUTHISED + SUNSAR CARROOY + CHRISTIAN CAPURRO
+ JACOBUS CAPONE + DANIEL CROOKS + MEGAN COPE + GEORGE EDERTON HABBURTON + NICOLE FORBESHEW AND P. THOMAS BOORLJONGGALI + CATLIN FRANZMANN
+ JAMES GERRYS + WOMALELA GLEAVE + KONGORRINA MARRALI + BRIAN MARTIN + RAQUEL ORNELLA + MANDY QUARRO + TASHA SMITH + GRANT STEVENS
+ OLIVER WACHS + AUNTY JOY MURPHY WARDIN AND JONATHAN JONES



Jeremy Bakker

Born 1979, Canberra.

Lives and works in Melbourne.

On Time 2017

clock, broken glass, granite rock

60 x 60 x 30 cm

Courtesy of the artist

Jeremy Bakker is a Melbourne-based artist who works across the mediums of drawing, sculpture, photography, video and installation. He distils complex ideas relating to time, being, impermanence and meaning into pared-back arrangements of commonplace materials and forms.

On Time, 2017, consists of a large granite rock sitting atop an analogue clock. The rock has pierced through the glass clock face, stopping the perpetual forward motion of the clocks hour, minute and second hands. A feeble slightly metallic sound is emitted from the assemblage as the second hand pulses against the unmoving rock. This artwork interrogates the human construct that Bakker calls 'clocktime' by literally providing a pause to clocktime's domination over our lives. The presentation of this artwork right at the entrance to the exhibition is intentional. *On Time* becomes an obstacle to be negotiated by visitors as they enter the Museum's south gallery—the viewer must slow down and wind their way around the assemblage in order to continue on into the exhibition. Curator, Nina Miall, explains that *On Time*: "... introduces the first of several physical and conceptual impediments in the space, obstacles to a hastening through the exhibition."



Jeremy Bakker, *On Time* 2017 (detail),
installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*,
TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think the artist has given his artwork the title *On Time*?
- Jeremy Bakker is asking us to consider a different kind of time with his artwork. Instead of always watching the clock and racing to get things done, he's asking us to think about what it would be like if we pause for a moment and consider different kinds of 'non-ticking time'. What are some other ways that time can be measured in?
- Consider the period of time in which this exhibition is taking place, during the COVID-19 global pandemic. What do you think this particular artwork might be telling us about the time we are living in?

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TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis



Oliver Wagner

Born 1969, Zurich, Switzerland.

Lives and works in Sydney.

Trace of Time 2021

house paint dust on linen

198 x 305 cm

Courtesy of the artist and
Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

Oliver Wagner's practice explores the potential, motive and approach of a post painterly language. This has led him to develop a methodology where house paint is rendered into dust before being scattered into compositions on linen, or ephemeral installations in exhibition spaces.

For *Trace of Time*, 2021, Wagner draws on postwar traditions of colourfield abstraction and process art to explore an expanded form of painting. The work consists of smooth, powdery washes of pink and teal on two abutting stretched linen supports. Concealing time and labour intensive processes, *Trace of Time* deals with ideas to do with impermanence and chance interaction. To produce the work, Wagner first applies coats of coloured acrylic house paint to the walls of his studio and then industriously sands the paint back to create a residual 'house paint dust' that he then separates by colour. This dust is transported to the Museum in plastic bags and the artist works onsite to scatter the dust onto the stretched supports that are lying flat on the floor. Choosing to scatter the dust from different heights and angles creates unusual gradations of colour. The dust remains unfixed, no glue or adhesive is used in the process of making the work. Applying the coloured dust to the linen in this way results in an unstable surface which is intended to shift and degrade over the course of the exhibition. Small piles of coloured dust accumulate on the white painted kickboards beneath the paintings and interactions of curious visitors are recorded as traces on the surface of the work. The artist is receptive to these kinds of interactions with the work and sees these unplanned traces as evidence of the way that all things change over time.

Discussion Questions

- How does Oliver Wagner use paint in ways that are different to other artists that you have learned about?
- What words would you use to describe the surface of *Trace of Time*?
- *Trace of Time* is envisioned to change over time. How might the artist record the changes that happen to the work over time? Do you think recording what happens to the work is an important part of the artmaking process, or not? Give reasons for your answer.



Oliver Wagner, *Trace of Time* 2021 (detail), installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: Slow Moving Waters, TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis

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Oliver Wagner, *Trace of Time* 2021, installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: Slow Moving Waters, TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis



Informational text panel on the wall.

Yasmin Smith

Born 1984, Sydney.

Lives and works in Sydney.

Terroir 2020

stoneware slip and TarraWarra pinot noir vine-ash glaze
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and The Commercial, Sydney

Sydney-based artist Yasmin Smith travels widely to undertake research for her archaeological ceramic installations that explore the chemistry of glaze techniques to furnish material evidence of histories, ecologies, geology and culture. Smith's practice straddles art (ceramics) and more scientific fields of inquiry. The artist makes glazes from organic and inorganic materials she finds and she often combines these site-based glazes with clay bodies that she excavates from the ground of the places she visits.

Emerging from a rigorous research process the artist undertook at TarraWarra, Smith's installation *Terroir*, 2020, takes shape, colour and texture directly from TarraWarra Estate's vineyards. Arranged in a gradient that echoes and extends the raked vines visible outside in the landscape, Smith's gnarled forms of ceramic grapevine sections climb the gallery wall. The artist enlisted the knowledge of TarraWarra's viticulturists (experts engaged in the science of winemaking) in order to understand the local hydrology (the movement, distribution and management of water), geology and soil composition on site. Smith made plaster moulds of grapevine prunings and poured liquid clay—or slip—into the moulds to create high-fidelity casts, before firing these forms with a glaze developed from the ashes of the pruning's burnt remains. Installed on the wall, the cast forms take on the appearance of old bones, animal skeletons or detached limbs—associations aided by the light mushroom-brown colour and satin texture of the glaze. The exact colour and texture of the glaze is decided by the balance of macro- and micro-nutrients present in the vines naturally, or by human intervention in the process of cultivation. The unique properties of the site-derived glaze can

be likened to the viticultural concept of terroir, a French term used to describe how the character, colour, texture and flavour of different wines are determined by the environmental factors (soil composition, climate) and human activities (agricultural management) that influence the specificity of the grape yield in a given place. Smith's unique process of undertaking research and much of the artworks production on site, allows for the hidden narratives, histories, geology and culture of TarraWarra—as a place—to unravel and be revealed.



Yasmin Smith, *Terroir 2020*,
installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: Slow Moving Waters,
TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis

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TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*, installation view,
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Photo: Andrew Curtis

Discussion Questions

- What associations do you have with ceramics? Have you ever seen a ceramic installation before? If so, where?
- Why do you suppose it is important for an artist like Yasmin Smith to travel and spend time in different places in order to produce artworks? Can you think of two other artists who are similarly interested in working on site?
- How would you create an artwork that reveals something about TarraWarra as a place? What materials and processes would you use?



Megan Cope

Quandamooka, North-East region. Born 1982, Brisbane.

Lives and works between Minjerribah and Bundjalung Country.

Currents III (freshwater studies) 2021

ice, natural dyes, grapevine, jute, cotton cord, blue-green algae, plant fibre, cotton rag, ochre, ink
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Milani Gallery, Brisbane

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Megan Cope would like to thank Betty Russ, Sierra Bell, Mara Mack, Phoebe Rose, Jana Moser, Sue Davidson, Michelle Eabry, Mashara Wachjudy, Michael Donnelly, Kairon Ward, Henry Taylor, Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, Milani Gallery and Marine Biologist Roberta Johnson as original collaborator on *Currents I*.

Megan Cope is a Quandamooka (North Stradbroke Island in south east Queensland) artist. Her site-specific sculptural installations, video work and paintings investigate issues relating to identity, the environment, and mapping practices. Cope's work often resists prescribed notions of Aboriginality, and examines psychogeographies that challenge the grand narrative of 'Australia' and our sense of time and ownership in a settler colonial state. These explorations result in various material outcomes.

Currents III (freshwater studies), 2021, considers the impact of western farming practices on waterways, and the related problems of rising sea levels and ocean acidification. This large scale installation features three ice sculptures, coloured with natural plant extracts (red cabbage, butterfly pea flower, rose, and turmeric) which act as natural pH indicators, suspended from the Museum's ceiling. As the sculptures melt—a process which takes approximately 12 hours—they stain special paper the artist has made using algae (aquatic organisms that conduct photosynthesis). The changing colours of the paper indicate the rise and fall in pH levels, which correlates to the amount

of algae blooming on the surface of the moist paper. While algae are very important organisms for maintaining the health of waterways, when large quantities of nutrients are added to water systems from human activities, algal growth can spiral out of control leading to the deterioration of water quality and affecting the ability of other aquatic organisms to thrive. *Currents III (freshwater studies)* evokes the deteriorating health of waterways through a live painting process that changes the work in unpredictable ways throughout the exhibition.

Discussion Questions

- **How do you imagine Megan Cope created the ice sculptures for her installation? What processes would she have undertaken?**
- **The ice sculptures take the form of different letters of the alphabet. What letters can you recognise? Why do you think the artist decided to shape the ice into these particular letters? What message might she be trying to convey through the shape of the ice?**
- **The artist refers to the work as 'live painting'. What do you think this means?**



Megan Cope, *Currents III (freshwater studies)* 2021 (detail), installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*, TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis

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Megan Cope, *Currents III (freshwater studies)* 2021, installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*, TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis



Lucy Bleach

Born 1968, Sydney.

Lives and works in Hobart.

attenuated ground (the slow seismogenic zone) 2021

double bass, toffee, seismometer, wooden table, tactical transducers, form ply, plaster, surface vibration speakers, polished concrete, powdered core sample, powdered gold leaf, Ficus coronata plant, Rhizobox, soil

dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Lucy Bleach's practice focuses on humanity's enduring relationships to unstable environments by engaging with communities that directly experience such interactions and scientists who monitor the earth's vibration. For her work in *Slow Moving Waters*, Bleach has worked closely with seismologists (scientists who study earthquakes and their results, such as tsunamis and landslides), specialist artisans and fabricators, and a composer/sound technician.

attenuated ground (the slow seismogenic zone), 2021, consists of three related sculptures that illuminate Bleach's research into the phenomena of slow earthquakes. Slow earthquakes produce delayed and near imperceptible ruptures and changes to the earth over extended periods of time—a process that the artist refers to as 'a poetry of collapse.' The centrepiece of the work is a double bass, the largest and lowest-pitched string instrument in the symphony orchestra, lying across a table that sits atop a bed of plaster on the gallery floor. The double bass on the table is encased in dark sticky toffee. During the installation of this work, Bleach built temporary 'dam walls' from plywood around the table, creating a large rectangular space to pour toffee into. She then spent many days melting down sugar in large pots and pouring the toffee around the double bass, before removing the dam walls to reveal the instrument embalmed in a solid block of toffee. Over the duration of the exhibition, the hardened toffee liquifies and runs off the table onto the plaster bed, gradually revealing the form of the instrument. Excited by tactile transducers (devices that transmit low-frequency vibrations), the exposed strings of the double bass transfer the pulse of collected recordings

of slow earthquake events. The tone of the string's vibrations change as a seismometer (an instrument that responds to ground noises and shaking such as caused by earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and explosions) picks up the movement of the toffee as it moves and flows. As the instrument 'plays' the seismic energy, it makes visible and audible the hidden subterranean processes that we don't often witness.



Lucy Bleach, *attenuated ground (the slow seismogenic zone)* 2021, installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*, TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis

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Lucy Bleach, *attenuated ground (the slow seismogenic zone)* 2021 (detail), installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*, TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis

Discussion Questions

- Consider the artist's use of toffee in this artwork. Why do you think toffee was chosen as a key material?
- Are there other materials you can think of that could have been used in place of toffee in this artwork? How would the properties of these materials convey the idea of movement and change in the earth's surface?
- What do you think will happen to *attenuated ground (the slow seismogenic zone)* at the end of the exhibition?

Support Materials

TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters* | Virtual Tour:

<https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=MJFNULB1eB3&qz=0&dh=1&help=1>

TarraWarra Biennial 2021 | Artforum Review:

<https://www.artforum.com/print/reviews/202106/tarrawarra-biennial-2021-85840>

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Lucy Bleach, *attenuated ground (the slow seismogenic zone) 2021* (detail), installation view, TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*, TarraWarra Museum of Art
Photo: Andrew Curtis

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