

Rose Nolan: *Breathing Helps*

Curated by Dr Victoria Lynn

9 August – 9 November 2025
TarraWarra Museum of Art, Wurundjeri Country



TarraWarra Museum of Art today announced the major solo exhibition *Breathing Helps* by acclaimed Australian artist **Rose Nolan**. The exhibition will be the first time Nolan's large-scale, sculptural forms have been shown together, highlighting the recurring spatial and performative threads in Nolan's practice. Presented from **9 August to 9 November, 2025**, the exhibition will showcase these significant works alongside a new series of performances by Australian artist **Shelley Lasica**.

Curated by the Director of TarraWarra Museum of Art, **Dr Victoria Lynn**, the exhibition positions specific works from across Nolan's career, together with a series of new site-specific commissions. Framed by the unique sight lines of TarraWarra Museum of Art's expansive spaces, the exhibition offers a fresh encounter with Nolan's significant body of work. Drawing on modernist legacies and the disciplines of architecture and design, Nolan's works are characterised by a radically reduced colour palette of red and white, and a commitment to utilitarian materials and methods.

Curator and Director of TarraWarra Museum of Art, Dr Victoria Lynn says: *"For the exhibition Breathing Helps, Rose Nolan invites us into a deeply contemplative and sensory space, one that encourages presence and connection. Over many years, I've observed the deft way in which her spatial practice has evolved from her desire to extend the possibilities for painting — allowing it to unfold across time and space and to actively engage the viewer in motion."*

"It is a privilege to present a major exhibition of Nolan's work at TarraWarra Museum of Art, where visitors are invited not just to view art, but to inhabit it, to breathe with it, and create their own journey."

Highlights include the pre-eminent work, *To Keep Going Breathing Helps (circle work)*, 2016-17, which comprises thousands of red and white hessian circles stitched together to form a monumental grid. Suspended in a spiral formation from the ceiling, the nearly five-metre-high installation engages the viewer as they enter and experience the work from multiple viewpoints. Nolan has embedded the text of the work's title into the structure, the phrase only fully revealing itself through the process of moving around and through its open volume. This dynamic interplay between text, space, and audience is explored in the exhibition through key works drawn from major public collections, as well as new commissions that will debut at TarraWarra.

The ambitious scale of Nolan's work also magnifies her focus on material, process and seriality. Constructed from everyday materials such as painted cardboard and hessian, and through the accumulation of repeated shapes, the artist's bold forms reflect the physical labour of their making. Throughout her career, Nolan has documented her studio processes with black-and-white photographic self-portraits sardonically responding to historical studio imagery of famous male artists such as Jackson Pollock. In new works commissioned for the exhibition, Nolan continues her *Immodest Gesture* series to create large silkscreen prints that splice her own image with those of Pollock in the studio, challenging conventional representations of the female artist.

Artist Rose Nolan says: *"I'm thrilled to be working with curator Victoria Lynn on this major presentation of my work at TarraWarra Museum of Art, and to be working with Shelley for the first time. Resisting the didactic chronology of a survey exhibition, this is an exciting opportunity to bring fresh focus to a recurrent thread in my practice — the notion of an elusive presence, characterised by the performativity of the artist in the studio as well as the viewer within the museum. The exhibition's title, Breathing Helps, speaks to the role of breath in labour and life — it's obviously something that helps with everything."*

Embracing an interdisciplinary approach to exhibition-making, Nolan has invited artist Shelley Lasica to create a series of performances that will take place alongside the exhibition. Titled *COLLOQUY*, the new work is devised in conversation with the exhibition and as a creative exchange unlocking new opportunities for both artists.

Artist Shelley Lasica says: *"It is exciting to be working with Rose for the first time, our careers having been in parallel with each other since the late 80s. Rather than activate or respond to the exhibition, my new work COLLOQUY telescopes in and out of the gallery spaces, offering choreographic thinking as a process to navigate through the exhibition, and the accompanying physical map offers a set of possibilities to imagine a performance without having to be present for one."*

Breathing Helps will be accompanied by a major catalogue co-published by TarraWarra Museum of Art and **Perimeter Books**, including newly commissioned essays by **Dr Victoria Lynn, Sue Cramer, Amelia Winata** and a conversation between **Rose Nolan** and artist **Augusta Vinall Richardson**. The *COLLOQUY* map, which is part of the work, is included in the catalogue with an essay by **Lisa Radford**. The exhibition will also be supported by a range of public talks and education programs exploring themes such as feminist art practice, the power of text, choreography, and the museum.

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IMAGES available [HERE](#)

IMAGE CAPTIONS (L-R): Rose Nolan, *To Keep Going Breathing Helps (circle work)*, 2016-2017. Acrylic paint, hessian, embroidery thread, steel, Velcro, 420 cm x 600 cm. Installation view Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. Image Felicity Jenkins

Rose Nolan, *Big Words (Not Mine) — Transcend the poverty of partial vision (floor version)*, 2021. 100% New Zealand wool rug, mirrored aluminium panels, wooden stools, 1200 x 500 cm. Installation view Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. Courtesy of the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery. Image Christian Capurro.

ABOUT ROSE NOLAN: Rose Nolan is a Naarm/Melbourne-based artist and educator whose multidisciplinary practice encompasses painting, sculpture, photography, and printmaking. Her work navigates the tension between the intimate and the monumental, drawing on architectural, interior, and graphic design codes while engaging playfully with the legacies of modernism.

Nolan's practice is distinguished by an investigation into the formal and linguistic properties of language, employing text as both a visual and spatial device to interrogate its materiality and site-specific impact. By rendering language concrete, her work destabilises conventional readings, prompting alternative forms of engagement. Nolan's approach foregrounds economy, repetition, and seriality. Her work is inherently relational, emphasising the dynamic interplay between text, space, and audience. Through these approaches, Nolan constructs work that are personal, playful, and often self-effacing inviting viewers to engage with language and space in new and unexpected ways. Each piece challenges established hierarchies of meaning and perception, fostering an active and immersive experience.

Nolan has undertaken studio residencies at the International Curatorial & Studio Program (ISCP) in Brooklyn and Greene Street studio in SoHo, NYC and the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris. Nolan has been awarded several public art commissions including *All Alongside of Each Other* (2023) for Transport NSW at Central Station, Sydney: an integrated artwork *YOU / ME / US / HERE / NOW* (2022) for the new Hallam Station commissioned by the Victorian Government; *ENOUGH-NOW / EVEN / MORE-SO* (2021) for Queen Victoria Market/Munro Community Hub in collaboration with Six Degrees Architects and commissioned by the City of Melbourne.

Nolan's works are held in significant public collections, including: National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide; Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne; Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne; Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth; Geelong Gallery, Geelong and The Chartwell Collection, Auckland.

Rose Nolan is represented by Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne.

ABOUT SHELLEY LASICA: For more than 40 years, Shelley Lasica has pushed the confines of dance, choreography and performance. Her practice is defined by an enduring interest in the context and situations of presenting choreography.

Throughout her career, she has been making solo performances that function as a mechanism and a commentary on making work. This practice provides the basis for generating ensemble works with a network of artists working in dance and other media, that question the collaborative and interdisciplinary possibilities of choreography.

She regularly collaborates with visual artists, including Tony Clark, Helen Grogan, Anne Marie May, Callum Morton, Kathy Temin and Jacqui Shelton, in order to create dialogues between different modes and means of presentation.

Lasica's choreographic works have been shown nationally and internationally within both visual art and theatre contexts, including in Melbourne: Melbourne Festival, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Chunky Move, Murray White Room, Neon Parc, Haydens, Anna Schwartz Gallery and Buxton Contemporary, in Sydney: Performance Space, Artspace, Kerry Crowley, and internationally at Siobhan Davies Studios, London and Centre National de la Danse, Paris.

Lasica has also been a mentor, teacher and advocate in choreography and dance throughout her career. *WHEN I AM NOT THERE* a survey work as a performance exhibition was commissioned by Monash University Museum of Art 2022, Art Gallery of New South Wales 2023, and *Precarious Movements: Choreography and the Museum*, a 2021-2024 research project hosted by the University of New South Wales with support through the Australian Research Council, for which Lasica was a lead research associate. The work travelled to Perth Institute of Contemporary Art in June 2024. Beginning in 2023 she has undertaken the iterative work *RENDER* between Melbourne and Berlin. In Australia, it has been shown at s-y-d-n-e-y-s-y-d-n-e-y in Sydney and in a room in the Nicholas Building in Melbourne as a solo work and at Haydens Melbourne with multiple collaborators. In September 2024 she undertook the second part of a residency at Callie's Berlin. In November 2024 and March 2025, *REPRESENT*, a performance with scenery with Tony Clark was presented again at Buxton Contemporary as part of Clark's exhibition, Tony Clark *Unsculpted*. *RENDER* will be shown at Mackintosh Lane in June 2025.

ABOUT TARRAWARRA MUSEUM OF ART:

TarraWarra Museum of Art is a leading not-for-profit public art gallery that features inventive and stimulating exhibitions and programs about twentieth- and twenty-first-century art, and holds one of the country's most significant collections of Australian art from the 1930s to the present day. The permanent collection was established through the generous donation of over 600 artworks by the late Marc Besen AC and Eva Besen AO, founding patrons. Located in the Yarra Valley, the Museum actively engages with art, place and ideas in a remarkable environment and immersive atmosphere, inspiring curiosity and providing a retreat for the imagination.

The latest addition to the Museum, the Eva and Marc Besen Centre, features visible art storage for over 300 works, a learning centre, and a performance space – all designed by Kerstin Thompson Architects.

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