




**(re)arrangements**

Grace Cossington Smith Gallery and Abbotsleigh are delighted to present  
the exhibition *(re)arrangements*

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Cover: Heidi Melamed, *GeoMystical Space*, 2019, Perspex, spray paint, glitter, plywood,  
40 x 40 x 5 cm Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert



# **(re)arrangements**

**Coordinated by Stuart Smith**

**26 June to 31 July 2021**

**Louise Allerton**

**Laura Badertscher**

**Sarah Edmondson**

**Ian Greig**

**Blake Griffiths**

**Kirtika Kain**

**Heidi Melamed**

**Rebecca Shanahan**

**Stuart Smith**

**Tom Yousif**



# (re)arrangements

Do you remember Magic Eye puzzles? An abstract composition comprising image fragments which, if looked at in a particular way, could conjure a recognisable shape that would materialise and appear to advance in space. Once it had been seen, it couldn't be ignored: a new logic forged out of an existing one.

The investigations undertaken by the artists in *(re)arrangements* also result in new logics, new orders. These artists rearrange form or ideas, seeking new intent by repurposing an existing one. A car part found by the roadside turned 3D glyph; a repainted detail from an early 20th century naturalist magazine; an abstracted fragment of a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device: *(re)arrangements* explores how strategies of redeployment and recontextualisation can generate new ways of seeing and understanding.

The 10 artists brought together by Stuart Smith for this exhibition ask a series of questions in the course of their processes and practices. What happens when we reassess the significance of an overlooked approach? What happens when we treat a medium 'wrongly' or expand its remit? What happens when we view subject matter through a different lens? What happens when we question the grand or prevailing narratives of art and history? What new meanings or understandings float to the surface when artists release the shackles from around medium or object? How do the resulting components shuffle, detach from each other and latch onto each other in new combinations? Ultimately, this is how cultural change occurs. When prevailing modes of understanding or existing are broken apart or resituated, the status quo ceases to be so. It is unsettling, in every sense of the word.

*(re)arrangements* brings together artists with transformative approaches to a diverse range of media and subject matter. Louise Allerton's contemporary version of 19th century stereoscopic photographs turn images of found items into visually unstable representations, exploring the slippery codification of the object. For Ian Greig, a detail from a photograph becomes slippery too when the artist attempts to commit it to memory then paint it, the resulting abstract works connecting the process of painting and the shifting signifiers of the digital image. In Stuart Smith's works, fragments of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices are re-presented as abstract structures which prompt audiences to question and decode prevailing narratives.

For Sarah Edmondson, textiles serve as a place to explore the aesthetics of the glitch, with digital fragmentation meeting the orderly, labour intensive framework

of needlepoint. Blake Griffiths also investigates the nexus of textiles and technology through portraiture constructed of sliced and re-woven photographs. This nexus is also a fruitful point for Rebecca Shanahan, whose work brings women's invisible labour to the forefront by projecting video of the artist working at a loom onto the finished textile itself. Applying a contemporary lens to fragments of naturist magazines from the 1920s and '30s, Laura Badertscher's paintings reveal a complex feminist take.

The art of Mesopotamia is the subject of Tom Yousif's expanded paintings which explore the possibilities of analogue and digital processes, while Heidi Melamed's approach to expanded painting sees the artist take the parabola as a starting point to explore ways of painting with light. Also exploring the expansive possibilities of her chosen medium, Kirtika Kain prints with unlikely materials through recycled silkscreens to imagine a contemporary expression of repressed Dalit culture. Through the fragmenting and transforming of existing artworks, objects and found images, the works in *(re)arrangements* enable new ideas and forms to take shape.

At the time of writing this text, Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is closed indefinitely. The physical distancing measures taking place across the world in order to curb the spread of the coronavirus have meant that many galleries, GCS Gallery being amongst them, have shut their doors and delayed exhibitions. *(re)arrangements*, like most shows slated for early and mid-2020, has been postponed. It's been four weeks since I left my house to see an exhibition. When will you see *(re)arrangements*, and read this text?

In a universal sense, the pandemic has caused a huge rupture to the way society functions. Consequently, the visual arts have also faced a rupture. How is art made, experienced and shared when individuals are physically isolated from one other? Art's role in reflecting the human condition has not changed, but the nature of the human condition itself fundamentally has, at least for now. Like in a Magic Eye puzzle, a new form advances towards us unexpectedly, and we can't un-see it. It is unsettling, in every sense of the word. Presciently, Smith has brought together a group of artists whose practices involve breaking apart and remaking, generating new objects and ideas from the rearranging of existing ones. At this point in time, as existing modes are repurposed in the pursuit of new ways to connect and share, *(re)arrangements* exists (conceptually, and hopefully by the time you read this, in reality) as a reminder of limitless possibility.

Chloé Wolifson 2020

*Arts writer, researcher and curator*

# Louise Allerton

Louise Allerton's practice concerns the changeable identity of 'the object' according to its context. Objects take on new meanings, power and resonance as their context shifts. Unearthing value in the unvalued, Allerton photographs found fragments of automobile parts. These objects become the subject of anaglyphs, a contemporary version of the 19th century stereoscopic photograph which created the illusion of depth in a two-dimensional image. Viewed through 3D glasses, the resulting anaglyph images hover before the viewer's eyes, occupying an uncertain in-between space which proposes a new reality and a new significance. Allerton's chosen palette of soft pastels contrasts with the grittiness of surface texture evoked by her photographic technique. Baby pinks and mauves are speckled with scratches, bumps and lines, over abstract shapes which suggest microscopic samples of ancient flint stones, scarified skin, or vast topographies. Allerton harnesses photography as a representational tool, however rather than representing the object as we 'see' it, these works present the slippage that objects experience as signifiers throughout their lifetimes.

Exhibiting regularly since the early 2000s, Allerton's recent exhibitions including EMANATE, New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale; Future Abstract, VIVID Festival, Artspace, Chatswood, NSW (both 2019); and Louise Allerton – New Works, Vancouver Arts Centre, Albany, WA (2015). She has been a finalist in numerous prizes including the Olive Cotton Award, Tweed River Gallery, NSW (2015, 2006, 2005), and the National Portrait Prize, National Portrait Gallery, ACT (2013). Her work is held in public and private collections in Australia, the UK and Europe.

*Underwritten I*, 2021  
digital anaglyph  
printed on Hahnemühle photo rag  
46 x 48 cm



# Laura Badertscher

The protagonists in Laura Badertscher's paintings are treated with care. Divorced from their original contexts, in German magazines stemming from the naturist movement of the 1920s and '30s, their tenderly painted facial expressions become the focus, with their faraway, seductive gazes evoking a sense of melancholy. Badertscher holds to the intimate scale of a magazine when selecting the size of her canvas, however the images are cropped in such a way as to situate the models within abstract settings of coloured shapes, with the odd snippet of text recalling the magazine's title. Nods to the era are there, with a haircut, accessory or fabric print suggesting the time between the wars when women were throwing off social and sartorial shackles and exploring a degree of freedom. Viewed through a lens of 21st century feminism, however, the role of these 'sexual education' magazines is ambivalent, both a celebration of emergent feminism and a loophole for legitimate erotic imagery.

Laura Badertscher is a Swiss-Australian artist currently based in Zurich. Exhibiting since the early 2010s in both Australia and Europe, Badertscher's recent solo exhibitions include *From Switzerland With Love* (Einzelausstellung), Robin Gibson Gallery, Sydney (2019), with group shows including *Fresh From Zurich*, Kulturhaus Helferei, Zürich, Switzerland (2020); *Badekult*, Historisches Museum Baden, Baden, Switzerland (2019); and *1919*, Galerie pompom, Sydney (2019). In 2019 she was a finalist in the *Naked & Nude Art Prize* Exhibition, Manning Regional Gallery, Taree, NSW. Badertscher completed her Master of Fine Arts at the National Art School, Sydney in 2018.

*Eheglück & Liebesleben 2*, 2019  
oil on linen  
40 x 32 cm





# Sarah Edmondson

Sarah Edmondson uses a random number generator to produce glitchy compositions that take text beyond legible meaning into an abstract zone. These compositions form the basis for needlepoint tapestries which bring together accident and laborious intent. In Edmondson's works a number of worlds collide: the 'soft' technology of weaving and the software of the computer age, the unexpected 'failed' outcome of random chance and the deliberate product of a systemic framework, the abstracted aesthetics of the glitch and the unavoidable recognition of text. Words are stretched in a manner which recalls the reCAPTCHA puzzle which appears when a website asks whether you are, in fact, a robot. Squares are left blank, expanding the notion of the pixel from individual stitch to compositional segment. A futuristic feel pulses from fluorescent and iridescent threads and faux fur. The glitch has been rearranged into fresh logic.

Exhibiting regularly since the early 2010s, recent solo exhibitions include *What are the Chances?*, Firstdraft, Sydney (2019); *According to Chance*, Galerie pompom, Sydney (2018); and *Reminiscentia*, Watt Space Gallery, Newcastle (2013). Edmondson's work has been included in group shows including *Reimagining the Canon*, University of Newcastle Gallery, Newcastle; and *Closed on Mondays*, Cement Fondu, Sydney (both 2019). In 2018 Edmondson was awarded the Small Works Art Prize, Brunswick Street Gallery, Melbourne, and in 2017 she received a judge's commendation as a finalist in *Still: National Still Life Award*, Coffs Harbour Regional Gallery. Edmondson is Sydney-based and holds a Master of Fine Art from the National Art School, Sydney (2018).

*Sorry for the Disruption*, 2020  
wool, nylon, reflective fabric and faux fur on canvas  
105 x 102 cm



# Ian Greig

After nearly 200 years, the relationship between painting and photography continues to be explored. While initially Greig's painting practice was a more direct response to the literalness of the photograph, with his recent turn to abstraction his work still has a photographic origin, even if it's only a fleeting glimpse of some random image that sparks a desire to further aestheticise it through a material process. The impetus may come from an image glimpsed in a book, on a phone, or maybe a digitalised detail of an earlier painting. The source image is then committed to the vagaries of memory and put through a painting process that allows him to aesthetically intervene with the apparent stability of the original and reveal hidden truths that collectively speak of the indeterminacy and mutability of all images. In terms of colour, tone and texture his paintings attempt a formal reconfiguration of the photographic surface, where the processes and visual language of paint replicate the slippery surfaces of shifting signifiers that constitute our understanding of the digital image today.

Ian Greig is a Sydney based painter. He has been exhibiting nationally since 1999. His early work was inspired by the reflective surface of water, the result of spending many summers along the Kangaroo River in NSW and photographing its varied aspects of light, movement and colour. Researching the analogous relationships between the surfaces of water, painting and photography, Greig studied visual art at the South Australian School of Art and went on to complete a PhD in aesthetic philosophy. His PhD thesis, on the connection between the sublime and quantum mechanics, opened his painting to influences of a more cosmological nature, whereupon his images became more abstract and ambiguous in meaning, giving freer rein to the imaginative, the ethereal and the ephemeral. Greig's work is in many collections and has been awarded many prizes. Since 2005 Greig has been teaching at the National Art School, where he is currently the Postgraduate Coordinator. Greig is represented by Arthouse Gallery, Sydney.

*In an unguarded moment*, 2019  
oil on canvas  
166 x 112 cm



# Blake Griffiths

The Jacquard loom, with its punch cards guiding threads to follow infinite numbers of complex patterns, was a key step in the development of computer hardware. Subsequently, the textile industry itself has become computerised, leading to a near-unimaginable degree of contemporary textile manufacturing. Blake Griffiths literally weaves technology's history back into itself in his portraits which are constructed of digitally printed fabrics that have been sliced and re-woven. Playing with the traditional roles of weft and warp, Griffiths produces images which distort the images of his subjects, arriving at a merged figure who is not one thing, but a confluence of identities. While the figures depicted are still recognisable as such, they blur at the edges, hovering hologram-like within the interlocked threads. The notion of a singular point of origin is reconfigured in Griffiths' work, which questions the certainty that is sought through creation stories, embracing the tension between scientific and spiritual.

Based in Broken Hill, NSW, Griffiths graduated with honours in Design (Textile & Ceramic) and Art Education from the College of Fine Arts, University of NSW, Sydney (2016) and has studied under master weavers at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad, India. Recent exhibitions include Finding Balance, Broken Hill Regional Art Gallery; Designwork03 and The Supply Chain, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne (both 2019); The Ideal Home, Penrith Regional Gallery & Lewers Bequest, NSW (2018); The Age of Man, Milan Design Week, Italy (2017); and Cultural Textiles – An Australian Indian Dialogue, Artisans' Gallery, India (2015).

*I am what I am that is me (the mystery we are)*, 2020  
cotton, rayon  
three panels – 96.5 x 60 cm  
total work – 96.5 x 180 cm



# Kirtika Kain

Indian born Sydney-based artist Kirtika Kain examines how oppressive social hierarchies and power structures have been enforced upon and embodied by generations before her, from the perspective of an outsider. Her works draw from archives and literature in an intuitive and alchemical practice that confronts the embodied stigma of the Dalit or 'Untouchable' caste, into which she was born. She has an ongoing interest in shedding light onto unvalued histories, recasting the historical representation of her community and contributing to the dearth of their surviving art and material culture, by reappropriating materials of religious ritual and labour. The works presented in this show capture the chaos and spontaneity of her studio practice.

Kain received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2016 for which she was awarded the Bird Holcomb MFA Scholarship to complete her Master of Fine Arts at the National Art School graduating in 2018. Since being awarded the Lloyd Rees Memorial Youth Art Award and Hornsby Art Prize (Printmaking) in 2017, Kain has been a finalist in numerous art awards including Blacktown Art Prize (2017), Gippsland Print Award (2017), Swan Hill Drawing and Print Prize (2018) and Artspace Mackay Libris Award (2018). She was recently a finalist in the 2020 Create NSW Emerging Artist Fellowship at Artspace and is currently a recipient of the Parramatta Artist Studios program. Kain is represented by Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery.

*The Solar Line XXVIII*, 2020  
screen printing emulsion, gold foil, rice paper, adhesive on disused silk screen  
40 x 68 cm



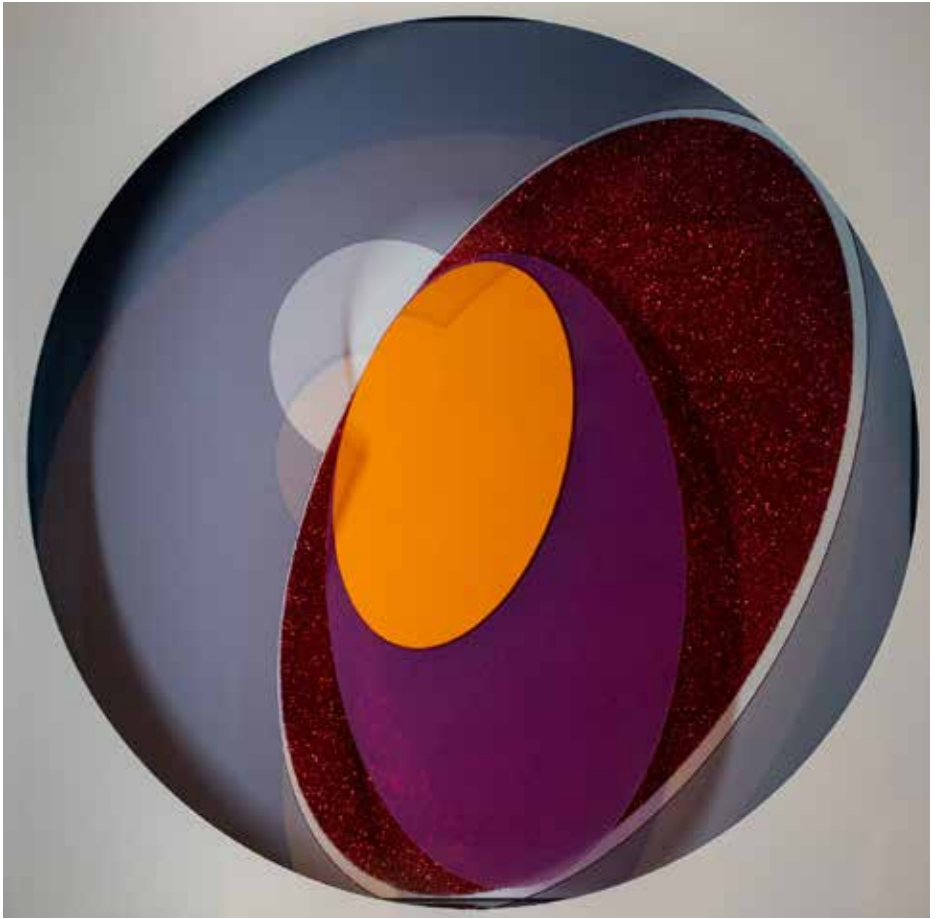


# Heidi Melamed

Light is central to Heidi Melamed's work practice. Melamed's studio practice employs a variety of materials; laser-cut plywood, Perspex, glitter and LED neon, alongside acrylic paint of varying degrees of translucency and viscosity. Melamed's works incorporate light into and onto the surface of the work and disperses it back into its surrounding environment. Colour masquerades as both opaque and translucent, shining and matte, glittering and smooth. This allows for the creation of compositions that can be read in a multitude of ways spatially. Regardless of media, these works can be thought of as expanded paintings, in which colour and light play the role of brushstroke. Light and colour belonging to a universal vocabulary of visual, physical and psychological understanding. The parabola is at the core of all this. This shape has been explored by Melamed throughout her recent practice, appearing in geometric form as well as in organic form through dripped and poured paint. Exploring the use of commercially available materials like Perspex, neon and glitter, Melamed takes these 'low art' materials and repurposes them into polished high art structures. Colour and light are permitted to interplay via these expanded paintings, and ultimately a unique viewing experience is the result.

Heidi Melamed is a South African-born, Sydney-based artist with a studio practice focused on forms of expanded painting using colour and light. Melamed's work has been curated into numerous group exhibitions including EMANATE at the New England Regional Art Museum, 1919 Salon at Galerie pompom Sydney (both 2019), Pen/Line+Paint at 220 Creative Space, Sydney (2017), and Made/Arranged at Saint Cloche, Sydney (2016). Melamed participated in The Other Art Fair, Sydney in 2016 and was Artist in Residence at Moriah College, Queens Park the same year. She has been a finalist in the Waverley Art Prize (2018, 2016, 2015), Mosman Art Prize (2015) and Blacktown City Art Prize (2012) and in 2020 held her first solo exhibition at Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney. Melamed holds a Masters in Fine Art from the National Art School, Sydney (2018) a Masters of Art (majoring in Painting) from the University of New South Wales (2013), Sydney. Melamed is represented by Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney.

*Geomystical Space*, 2019  
Perspex, spray paint, glitter, plywood,  
40 x 40 x 5 cm



# Rebecca Shanahan

Shanahan uses weaving, performance and video to centre women's labour and consider post-digital materiality. Ongoing discoveries of ancient fibre manipulation have rewritten the previously underestimated scale and value of women's contributions to early culture and technology. Textiles remain strongly associated with women; here they are a material metaphor for the invisible, unpaid labour that women continue to perform; labour that both refuses capitalism and props it up. A video documenting the artist hand-weaving cloth is projected onto the same cloth. The screen indexes the tools and process of the labour that made it: the work's creation is both subject and form. Like the labour of care, the textile hides in plain sight. 'Hand' is also the term for the drape and surface quality of fabric apprehended through the fingers. As post-digital culture increasingly transmits ideas and information visually, this kind of somatically acquired knowledge becomes rarer. In bringing together textiles and video, two mediums with very different histories, both visual and somatic perception are accommodated.

Working with photography, video, installation, performance and textiles, Shanahan enquires into distance and intimacy, public and private states, materiality, trace and transience. A framework of feminist and political critique informs her work's social context, acknowledging women's unpaid labour and capitalism's reach. Shanahan has held numerous exhibitions and been a finalist in many juried competitions. She received her PhD from the University of Sydney in 2019 and is a lecturer at UNSW Art and Design.

*the invisible hand (fragment)*, 2021  
silk, single channel digital video  
textile dimensions 51 x 92 cm  
video duration 07:58 min



# Stuart Smith

An exterior form, tank-like, has been fragmented, flattened and re-formed, its planes forming shadowy architectural structures. Each panel is stained in an autumnal tone, connected by a worn texture recalling the smudges and striations of photocopier toner. Like a low-resolution digital image made real, each oil-painted plane suggests a pixel which has been enlarged and reimagined as part of a new whole. Stuart Smith sources images of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from the web, paints them, and then re-uses these painted images in new two- and three-dimensional works. Smith's strategy of repurposing reflects the context of vehicle-borne IEDs, which are used in guerrilla warfare in the Middle East and emerge out of a situation of resourcefulness and responsiveness. Examining weapons of war from a new angle, Smith's abstract structures prompt audiences to question and decode prevailing political, social and historical narratives.

UK-born, Sydney-based artist Stuart Smith has been exhibiting regularly for more than 15 years. Solo exhibitions include *A Model Society*, Bird's Gallery, Melbourne (2014). Recent group shows include *Square*, MaySpace, Sydney (2019); *Still Life*, Gallery Klei, Sydney (2016); Gyeonggi ANSAN International Art Fair, South Korea (2015); *Motorclassica*, Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne (2014); and *The Lab*, Art Pharmacy, Sydney (2014). Smith has been a finalist in numerous awards including the EMSLA Art Award, Coffs Harbour Regional Art Gallery (2017, 2016, 2013, 2012) and Calleen Art Award, Cowra Regional Gallery (2018, 2017). Smith holds a Master of Fine Art from the National Art School, Sydney (2018).

*SUV*, 2020  
oil on panel  
60 x 60 cm



# Tom Yousif

The carved profile of a man with coiled beard and large hat is embedded on a tablet of reinforced concrete. This juxtaposition of ancient imagery and modern quotidian materials is an unexpected combination, generating a contemporary artefact which suggests novel historical through-lines.

Tom Yousif takes an expanded approach to the practice of painting in order to in turn expand, reposition and question the historical relevance or significance of his subject matter. Exploring the possibilities of combining analogue and digital processes, Yousif takes existing images and his own photographs of historically significant artworks as his starting point. The ruins of Mesopotamia form the basis for this body of work, a nod to Yousif's ethnicity, with the artist honing-in on cropped sections of ancient reliefs. Using digital software, images are edited and manipulated before being reproduced in traditionally significant colours on contemporary materials chosen to emulate their historical origins.

Based in South West Sydney, Yousif has been exhibiting regularly since graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Art (majoring in Painting) from the National Art School, Sydney in 2015. As well as the solo exhibition *Reconnaissance Painting*, Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney (2019), Yousif has been included in group exhibitions including the Liverpool Art Society Annual Exhibition, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre (2019); 1919, Galerie Pompom, Chippendale NSW (2019); and Breakthrough Art Festival, Ambush Gallery, Sydney (2016). Yousif also holds a Master of Fine Art from the National Art School, Sydney (2018).

*King Ashurbanipal II*, 2020  
UV print on reinforced concrete,  
41 x 30 cm







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