

8 to 30 May 2026

MEDIA RELEASE



Image: Dawn beside the camp fire - Juno Gemes and Robert Adamson - Mount White , Winter 1987

Juno Gemes and Robert Adamson on the Hawkesbury River

Curated by Rhonda Davis, Senior Curator,
Macquarie University Art Gallery

To be opened at 2pm on Saturday 9 May by the Hon
Linda Burney with a poetry reading by Chris Haywood.

Artist Juno Gemes will be in attendance

Juno Gemes and Robert Adamson on the Hawkesbury River celebrates the powerful creative partnership of photographer Juno Gemes and poet Robert Adamson, whose intertwined practices reveal a shared artistic, intellectual, and activist life shaped by collaboration and place.

“Cross pollination between activism and advocacy lay at the heart of how Gemes and Adamson worked together during a period spanning five decades. Their kindred, collaborative spirits forged new realms of activism, shaped through a visual dialogue between the artist–photographer and the poet.”— Rhonda Davis

The exhibition brings together Gemes’ photographs and film with Adamson’s poems and drawings, alongside rare material shown publicly for the first time. Comprising photographs, collage, drawings, poems, artist’s books, posters, editioned and signed publications, and film, the exhibition offers a transformative and deeply personal narrative of love, belonging, grief, and hope, where the personal and public converge.

Gemes and Adamson lived for more than fifty years at Cheero Point on the Hawkesbury River, a place that became their shared muse and a powerful creative force shaping their activism. Each day, the river’s flowing expanse sustained their practices, its sensory rhythms permeating their work with both subtlety and clarity. Following Adamson’s death in 2022, Gemes continues to live on the river, which she regards as her spirit homeland.

A cornerstone of their collaboration was the founding of Paper Bark Press, which they steered from 1987 to 2010, publishing forty volumes of poetry and establishing international pathways for Australian literary voices. Their activism also took public form through environmental advocacy, most notably the campaign to save Peat Island, represented in the exhibition through banners and archival material.

This exhibition offers an intimate portrait of two artists working in unison—conspirators of time and place—whose shared devotion to the Hawkesbury River shaped both their art and their enduring cultural legacy.

Abbotsleigh,
Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway,
Wahroonga NSW 2076

Gallery opening times:
Tuesday to Saturday 10am to 5pm

 Grace
CossingtonSmithGallery

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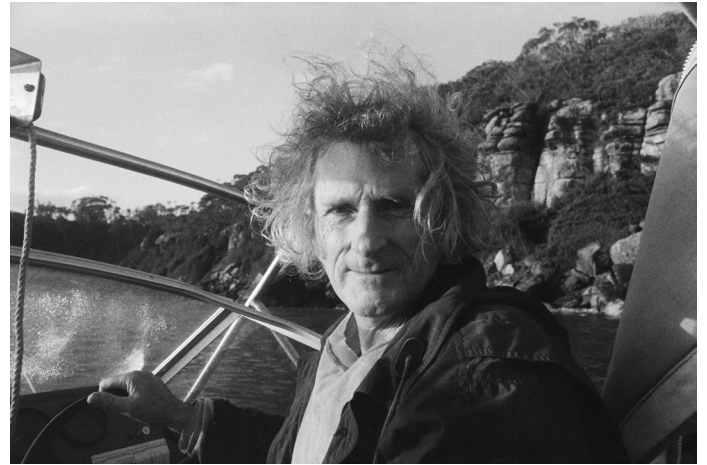
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Short Statement

Cross pollination between activism and advocacy lay at the heart of how Gemes and Adamson worked together spanning five decades. Their kindred, collaborative spirits forged new realms of activism, shaped through a visual dialogue between the artist photographer and the poet. This exhibition celebrates that union, bringing together Gemes' photographs and films intertwined with Adamson's poems and drawings.



Juno Gemes
Gary Davidson and Adam Webster - laying down oyster sticks Coba Bay Winter 1994
Juno Gemes ©



Juno Gemes
Robert Adamson in his favourite fishing spot Jerusalem Winter Bay 1995
Juno Gemes ©

Artist Biographies

Juno Gemes is a Hungarian-born Australian photographer and writer, renowned for her socially engaged and literary portraiture. Her work has been exhibited widely, including *Proof: Portraits from the Movement, 1978–2003* at the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra. Her works are held in major public collections in Australia and internationally, including the National Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, Art Gallery of NSW, and the Kluge Ruhe Collection, University of Virginia.

Robert Adamson (17 May 1943 – 16 December 2022) was one of Australia's most celebrated poets, editors, and publishers. His poetry has been widely published internationally and translated into seven languages. He received numerous literary awards, including the Kenneth Slessor Prize, Victorian Premier's Literary Award, and the F.A.W. Christopher Brennan Prize for lifetime achievement. From 1970 to 1985 he edited *New Poetry*, and in 1988, with Juno Gemes, he established Paper Bark Press. Adamson was also a generous mentor to emerging writers and served as the inaugural CAL Chair of Australian Poetry at UTS (2012–2015).

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High resolution images are available.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery is a not-for-profit gallery, run by Abbotsleigh, serving the public through free admission and a changing exhibition program.

Enter via Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway Wahroonga.

The Grace Cossington Smith Gallery respects and acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land as the First People and Custodians of this country.