

Akira Akira

551.001 2022

551.002 2022

551.003 2022

551.004 2022

551.005 2022

from the series **NEW PERSERVERANCE**

2016–ongoing

Appleton tapestry wool on perforated plastic, Tasmanian oak frame, soundscape

Courtesy of the artist, Perth

In 2016, Akira Akira made a series of minimal needlepoint tapestries, marking a conscious decision to begin working after a prolonged creative hiatus. The series started with the gift of small remnants of tapestry canvas and wool from a fellow artist. Akira simplified the act of making by accepting the limitations of these found materials, which determined format, scale, and colour. Each work employed a structure of 87 by 164 stitches and one colour (Appleton code 875). This slow and restrained approach to form and process allowed Akira to explore subtle variations in tone and texture throughout the making process.

This new body of work completed during periods of isolation follows a similar scale and format to earlier works while allowing for a deliberate return to decision making. Perforated acrylic replaces the tapestry canvas, the structure is altered to 94 by 124 stitches, and the colour of wool is intentionally selected. The act of making remains a disciplined studio ritual where part of each day is devoted to filling in rows with single strands of wool. Occasionally the strands become frayed or tangled and need to be cut, leaving accidental gaps in the panels. Akira records these gaps on a spreadsheet, with the data transformed into a soundscape – an abstract and spontaneous process of data sonification – expanding the work's reception to include looking and listening.

Sarah Contos

Two Minutes and Six Seconds of Bubblegum 2022

Hand cast aluminium, stainless hardware, wool

Courtesy of the artist; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; and Station Gallery, Melbourne

Sarah Contos' multidisciplinary practice draws attention to the emotional and theatrical relationships between imagery, form, and materiality. Contos is interested in layering and manipulating sourced objects, personal artefacts, and vestiges of popular culture to play with duality and the ontological nature of 'things'.

Two Minutes and Six Seconds of Bubblegum sees Contos experiment with casting woven forms in aluminium. The work's title is taken from the duration of a Ramones song, using the rhythm of 'bubblegum pop' music as a compositional device. Assembled in an informal grid, the modular, metallic forms, hanging chains, and safety pins are juxtaposed against plush woollen pompoms and tassels reminiscent of childhood crafts, while also referring to punctuations or drumbeats. Contos subverts conceptions of weaving or knitting as a 'soft' practice by casting in aluminium while also incorporating her signature DIY aesthetic. Fascinated with the tensions created by contradiction, Contos explores the pairing of hard and soft and the space in between as materials move through different states of transition, speed, and tempo.

Sarah Contos

Voltron II (Studs) 2019

Repurposed leather jackets, hardware, thread

Courtesy of the artist; Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney; and Station Gallery, Melbourne

Sarah Contos interrogates phenomenological approaches to popular culture and the histories and agencies that materials embody. Her work provokes unexpected relationships between subject, object, and materiality, drawing on an interplay between individual and collective memory.

Voltron II (Studs) comprises found leather jackets collected by the artist from Parisian thrift shops. The scents and residue of previous owners linger within the work, a collection of personal histories and use from bodies now absent. The black leather jacket has a multiplicity of associations, from connections to underground music scenes and the spirit of rebellion to sexual subcultures. By sewing together the individual jackets in a spider-like composition, the work transforms wearability into a collective study, emphasising the combined power of things, while also nodding to the felt works of American conceptual artist Robert Morris.

Lucia Dohrmann

Quatrefoil 1 – Weft 2022

Quatrefoil 2 – Weft 2022

Acrylic on canvas, aluminium bars, unravelled, knotted

Courtesy of the artist, Adelaide

Lucia Dohrmann explores new possibilities for painting and textiles by emphasising their materiality and process of production. Dohrmann disrupts the usual correlation of canvas as a surface upon which to paint and repositions it as a deconstructed series of woven threads. Through a repetitive, handmade process to unravel painted canvases, she removes the ‘weft’ leaving behind the ‘warp’ of the canvas, creating a tactile surface that marks the passing of laboured time and where unmaking becomes making.

In these new works, Dohrmann references her Italian heritage using a palette containing the colours of Roman buildings and stone roads. The paintings incorporate a quatrefoil design, a symmetrical decorative pattern formed by four overlapping circles often seen in Medieval architecture and heraldry. Once unravelled, the grid of six vibrantly painted colour planes is transformed into a series of muted thread curtains, leaving behind a ghostly memory of the painted image held within the warp of the canvas.

Mikala Dwyer

The Nurses 2020

Fabric, plastic, acrylic paint

Warning 2020

Fabric, plastic, acrylic paint

Courtesy of the artist and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney

Mikala Dwyer explores connections between sculpture and performance, installation and theatre, and public and private space. Underpinning these concerns is a strong focus on the permeable and changeable nature of objects and our relationship with them. Dwyer often re-introduces elements of previous work in different contexts, animating matter and objects to create new meaning.

The Nurses is a strangely prophetic work and has appeared before. Dwyer's research into the maritime Quarantine flag – flown on ships to warn of onboard disease – was significant to the development of *The Bay of Sick*, an installation first presented at the 2020 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art that referenced the colonial introduction of disease to Aboriginal communities and the wellness industry. Two weeks after the exhibition opened, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of Australian borders, and quarantine, lockdowns, and isolation arrived to dominate our lives.

The Nurses' monochromatic, flaccid forms and bulbous acrylic bird-shaped heads hang on an acidic yellow wall. They transport us back to the fourteenth century, where Italian doctors shielded themselves from the plague with beak-like masks and remind us of protective yet fearsome magpies, who swoop down each year to defend their young. Accompanying *The Nurses* is another bird-like figure, sequinned and bright. *Warning* appears more playful, but as its title tells us, something is still not right in this nest.

Janet Fieldhouse

Armbands 2014

Keraflex porcelain

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Janet Fieldhouse

Armbands 2018

Keraflex porcelain

Private collection, Sydney

Armband with breast pendant 2018

Keraflex porcelain, earthenware

Private collection, Sydney

Memory Series 1 (Mark II) 2014

Keraflex porcelain

Courtesy of the artist and Vivien Anderson Gallery, Melbourne

Janet Fieldhouse's practice is an expression of her Torres Strait Islander heritage with a particular focus on matrilineal connections to the communities of Badu (Mulgrave), Muau (Moa), Kirri (Hammond) and Erub (Darnley) Islands. Fieldhouse combines non-traditional ceramic materials, including porcelain clays, stoneware, and earthenware, with natural fibres to reinterpret everyday baskets and ceremonial body adornment, including armbands and pendants, scarification, and tattooing.

Fieldhouse incorporates weaving practices into her ceramics with Keraflex porcelain. Keraflex is a flexible, thin tape that can be shaped and folded, transforming into translucent porcelain when fired. The material is notoriously difficult to control during firing, resulting in collapsing or folded forms. Embracing the medium's unpredictability, Fieldhouse describes the firing process as 'the dance in the kiln' that leads the work to where it wants to go.

The rigidity of these fragile forms when they emerge from the kiln contrast with the enduring supple flex of natural fibres, including pandanus, sedge grass, and palm leaf used to weave traditional body adornments.

Janet Fieldhouse

Hybrid Basket 2019

Buff Raku Trachyte, raffia, found fibre

Private collection, Sydney

Colour of Land III 2019

Buff Raku Trachyte, chocolate brown, raffia, charcoal

Private collection, Sydney

Janet Fieldhouse's recent work has been influenced by her travels, where she has learnt traditions and techniques of First Nations people from Japan, the Americas, the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, the Solomon Islands, and cultures throughout the Pacific region.

Hybrid Basket and *Colour of Land III* are hand-built forms combining the medium of clay with fibre in a perfect balance of form and narrative. One is encircled with woven raffia, the second is topped with a found woven fibre form, and both allude to ceremonial adornment and traditional basket-ware. Celebrating collective, cultural spaces, Fieldhouse has drawn upon Torres Strait Islander fibre traditions, knowledge, and techniques learnt from practitioners in Bougainville and the Solomon Islands to create a dialogue that references her ancestral past and speaks to a confluence of cultures.

Teelah George

Sky Piece, falling (Melbourne, Perth)

2020–21

Linen, thread, bronze

Courtesy of the artist; Neon Parc, Melbourne; and Gallery 9, Sydney

Teelah George utilises gesture and mark-making to index the intangibility of time, location, and memory. Her labour-intensive process involves repetitively hand-stitching layers of thread to build fields of colour. George also works in cast bronze, utilising the medium as a support structure to textiles and unpacking both materials' historical and gendered connotations.

Sky Piece, falling (Melbourne, Perth) traces George's attempts to record the omnipresent yet immeasurable sky in both cities. It features a patchwork of iridescent blues and has been partially bleached by the summer sun, emphasising the fragility of the material. The embroidered linen is anchored to the ground by a gridded bronze structure, reminiscent of a window to the sky. With each palm-sized segment taking an hour to complete, it took several months to make and is George's most significant work to date.

“I am interested in the sky being both familiar and strange to us all – it is omnipresent yet eternally immaterial and vast. My constant and persistent attempt to represent it within my material language and process constraints are somewhat Sisyphean. However, it reflects a fundamental human desire to represent, communicate, and a will to keep.”

Paul Knight

As Moons 2022

Double Suns 2022

Hand-woven cotton, multiplex and ash timber

Courtesy of the artist, Berlin and Neon Parc, Melbourne

Paul Knight uses weaving and photography to make experiential aspects of intimacy visible. Knight's photographs document the day-to-day life of relationships where presence is distinguished by fragmentation and absence. His textiles allude to intimacies where towels, tea towels, and bedsheets manifest the rituals of everyday life – washing, cooking, sleeping – the things we do together. Or alone.

Knight has woven four bedsheets in *Double Suns* and *As Moons*, working on a Louët countermarch loom with a plain-weave technique. Knight describes these fields of colour as “abstractions of the complexity of domestic space – we live with fabrics so much they become loaded to the point of abstraction – there is almost too much in them to simply remain representations of bed sheets any longer”. The works co-exist in a shared space within the gallery, suspended both parallel and perpendicular.

Double Suns and *As Moons* reflect a desire to relinquish ideas of power and led Knight to Anne Dufourmantelle's (1964–2017) writings on gentleness and risk to further explore ideas of radical intimacy and connectedness within the cosmos. He reflects upon this: “There is not just the sun; our sun is simply another star. If the scale of reference is changed, we find whole galaxies orbiting each other – it's an almost impossible thought, but very real.”

Anne-Marie May

Unforeseen Constellations 2022

Hessian backed wool carpet, wool thread

Courtesy of the artist, and Murray White Room, Melbourne

Anne-Marie May's practice explores correlations between drawing and sculpture and relationships between exterior and interior spaces. Fundamental to these concerns is an investigation of materials and processes explored through 'making and undoing' – a dynamic space where human agency, materials and methods connect to work across structural, compositional, and spatial alignments.

May approaches the process of weaving conceptually through the transformation of industrially made carpets. Ready-made materials come with defined formal characteristics, including colour, texture, and surface, and are embedded with purpose and memory from a previous life. May embraces the constraints of her carpet offcuts and transforms them through a series of physical actions, including cutting and stitching.

In *Unforeseen Constellations*, May uses a CADD (computer-aided design and drafting) program to map a set of coordinates, plotting a matrix of stitched embroidered lines and cutting voids where the lines intersect. The lines and voids conjure a cosmic mapping of space, using the drawing process to trace connections between spatial and non-spatial surfaces. The carpet is suspended vertically as a dividing wall, offering views of both the crafted tufted and hessian sides while shifting our understanding of the carpet as a horizontal floor plane. Light passes through the voids casting shadows on the floor and walls, signalling May's enduring preoccupation with activating the spaces in and around her work.

Kate Scardifield

You Don't Need Me To Tell You 2022

Sailcloths, brass, rope, hardware

Courtesy of the artist, Sydney

This project is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

Kate Scardifield

You Don't Need Me To Tell You 2022

Dual channel HD video, colour 16:9, stereo sound, 8:52 minutes

Cinematography: Josh Raymond / Sound: Laurence Pike

Stills: Robin Hearfield

Courtesy of the artist, Sydney

Kate Scardifield's research-driven practice combines material investigations with archival research. Her work is underpinned by an examination of materials through various states of transformation. *You Don't Need Me To Tell You* expands on Scardifield's ongoing project *Canis Major*, which imagines future navigation and communication systems. The project uses textile 'wind instruments' as transmission markers in the landscape. These large-scale adaptable textiles made from sailcloth and parachute silk materialise the surrounding atmospheric conditions. Activated by the body and the wind, the amorphous soft sculptures are a sequence of shapely poetic gestures that study the body, material, and landscape.

The series reveals Scardifield's enduring interest in semaphore – the use of an apparatus to create a visual signal transmitted over distance – where the bright, saturated colours of the material move in contrast to the landscape. Scardifield activates the wind instruments across two sites in this dual channel video to form a call-and-response. Juxtaposing wider frames of footage with close-ups of texture and colour, Scardifield creates moments where the undulating flow of the air-filled textile connects with the curves of the landscape. The work reveals quickly shifting weather patterns and speaks to our slow awakening to the current climate crisis.

The artist wishes to acknowledge and pay respect to the Wodi Wodi people, the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters where this work was made.

This project is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.

Jacqueline Stojanović

Concrete Fabric 2019

Wool on steel mesh

Courtesy of the artist, Melbourne

Jacqueline Stojanović is an artist and weaver engaged with an expanded textile practice that spans weaving, drawing, assemblage, and installation. Informed by travels across the Balkans, Caucasia, and the Middle East, she is interested in building upon the social and cultural histories of weaving within contemporary practice. Adopting the language of abstraction, Stojanović approaches weaving through an open use of raw materials, often utilising the grid as both a structural device and framework for the inherent geometry that exists in weaving.

Concrete Fabric is a large-scale architectural weaving that winds wool across steel mesh panels typically used for reinforcing concrete. The work responds to architectural principles of the Bauhaus from a weaver's perspective, citing the work of Anni Albers, Otti Berger, and Gunta Stölzl, and operates as a dividing structure within the gallery. The work merges industrial and domestic materials, with woven blocks of colour referencing the architecture of socialist apartment blocks in former Yugoslavia. Confined to the geometry of the grid, the wool remains taut, exposed, and linear. In this work, Stojanović deconstructs the apparatus of the loom and the interlacing of warp and weft, reflecting on the integral function of the grid within the process of weaving.

John Nixon Jacqueline Stojanović

Untitled 2019

Wound wool and enamel on wood, on metal grid

Private collection, Melbourne

Untitled (pair) 2019–21

Enamel paint on bottle caps, wood and canvas; handwoven jute and wool

Courtesy of the artists; Estate of John Nixon; Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne; and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney

John Nixon is a pivotal figure within the history of abstract and non-objective art. He pursued an experimental practice focused on painting while also encompassing disciplines ranging from collage, drawing, and printmaking to film, music, and dance. Nixon was also known as a generous collaborator and mentor to generations of artists, curators, and writers.

In early 2019, Nixon and Jacqueline Stojanović began a series that united aspects of their respective practices – constructed painting and weaving. The collaboration began while Stojanović was working with Nixon as a studio assistant. During this time, the pair took turns in contributing to a body of work that examined the formal and structural qualities of painting and weaving. The collaboration demonstrates a mutual interest in the use of quotidian materials and found elements with works incorporating metal grids, wool, wood, bottle caps, hessian, and handwoven jute.

John Nixon

Jacqueline Stojanović

Untitled 2020

Enamel on rulers and plywood

Untitled 2020–21

Rulers, Masonite, and enamel on plywood

Private collection, Melbourne

Untitled 2020

Enamel on rulers and plywood

Untitled 2020

Rulers and enamel on plywood

Courtesy of the artists; Estate of John Nixon; Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne; and Sarah Cottier Gallery, Sydney, except where noted

Initiated by John Nixon in early 2020 and recently completed by Jacqueline Stojanović, this series is distinctive for its use of wooden rulers as a visual and structural element. Rulers were essential to both artists in practical and conceptual ways. Nixon considered the ruler synonymous with the straight-edged character of geometric abstraction, and he sometimes attached one to his constructed paintings as a readymade motif. For Stojanović, a ruler can be handy as an improvised shed rod, a device used to assist the weaving process. Their collaborative series combines painted surfaces and wooden rulers to create tessellated designs that reference parquetry and weaving patterns. Experimental in nature, the artists' shared body of works expresses an enduring interest in abstraction across generations.

“The body of collaborative work between John and me is a physical monument to our shared time together.

Through it, I recall every conversation, adventure, meal, laugh, and lesson with him fondly. To step onto the same platform as my mentor, a shared canvas, points to his spirit of creative generosity and the expansive nature of art.

While these pieces are based on our individual styles, they make room for the sensibility of the other, resulting in a body of work that is distinctive and unique.”

Katie West

Sunrise after sunrise, sunset after sunset 2022–ongoing

Hand-dyed cotton, organza, lycra, velvet, thread, sequins

Courtesy of the artist, Perth

Katie West is a Yindjibarndi woman of the Pilbara tablelands with a strong sense of home in Noongar boodja, Western Australia. Underpinning her practice is an engagement with custodial ethics and Indigenous health and well-being perspectives. It incorporates textiles, installations, and happenings to consider how Indigenous peoples weave stories, places, histories, and futures.

Sunrise after sunrise, sunset after sunset is part of an ongoing series reflecting on basket-making practices developed by West's grandmothers for generations. Rather than weaving with plant fibres, West reinterprets the practice by using recycled and naturally dyed fabrics, stitching together representations of dilly bags in a patchworked installation of suspended banners. Sourcing readily available materials from op shops including organza, sequins, lycra, velvet, and cotton, West naturally dyes some fabrics, imbuing them with the colours and scents of the earth. The natural dye process – the rhythm of walking, gathering, bundling, boiling, and infusing materials with plant matter – has been significant throughout West's practice and reflects connections to Country.

For West, textiles and fibre practices are a way of navigating disruptions to cultural ties and provide opportunities to renew relationships with her Yindjibarndi ancestors. West approaches artmaking as a form of cultural renewal, where materials and processes hold embodied knowledge: "I'm motivated to make these pieces because it is a way to make these baskets present in my life and for my family, including the next generations of our family line. I want the children in my family to always know their ancestors made these baskets."