

# Our Shadows



Curated by Lisa Jacomos,  
Amelia Seward and Maria  
Thanaraj

Noir Darkroom, Coburg  
3rd - 7th October

**Exhibiting artists:**

Kelly Gray

Keira Hudson

Bambi Johnson

Stephanie Kam

Mahla Karimian

Olivia Mròz

Ryan Quinlan

Matt Salvo

Jessica Schwientek

Amy Turrini

## **Our Shadows**

“When you light a candle, you also cast a shadow”

- Ursula K. Le Guin

*Our Shadows* seeks to explore the darker side of humanity. These ‘shadows’ permeate our lived experiences and contribute to worldwide instability, conflict and suffering. . Conscious or subconscious prejudices are paradoxically an ever continuous source and response to this trauma, acting as both a causative agent or an after effect. Though disasters, pain and suffering are an ever present part of the human condition, there remains an inherent shock felt when atrocities or pain are realised. Is this ignorance? Maybe forgetfulness? Or a repression of the negative in favour of positive stories? Whatever our collective response to trauma and tragedy, a dark side of humanity is an ever constant fact of life that must be recognised.

*Our Shadows* will display artworks that reflect on and disrupt notions of violence, hatred, destruction, pain or suffering - forcing viewers to acknowledge and confront challenging topics.

# Shadows

- Lisa Jacomos

learn it, when you are ready to learn it. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] until you  
know what good and evil will follow on that act. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] power [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] can shake the balance of the world.  
It is dangerous, that power. [REDACTED] It must fol-  
low knowledge, and serve need. To light a candle is to cast  
a shadow. . . ."

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] Enjoy illusions, [REDACTED] and let the rocks be  
rocks. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he would always talk [REDACTED] about bal-  
ance, and danger, and the dark. But surely [REDACTED] one who  
had gone past these childish tricks [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] was powerful enough to do what  
he pleased, and balance the world as seemed best to him. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

In the corridor he [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] began to be praised [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] in a way that seemed more friendly, but was more  
scoffing. [REDACTED] he said now,  
[REDACTED]

Seeking as always to put himself on equal footing [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
"I'm sick of juggling," [REDACTED] "sick of these illusion-tricks,  
fit only to amuse idle lords in their castles [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] The rest is mere fool-  
ery."

"Even foolery is dangerous," [REDACTED] "in the hands of a  
fool."

## **Shadow Light**

- Maria Thanaraj

Shadows are us,  
Our mirrored selves, in our happiest days  
And our mirrored selves, in our darkest days  
Shadows act like façades,  
Masking our dark thoughts and hiding our fears,  
Making us ordinary and full of cheers,  
Shadows in light, are our alternate selves  
Like melancholic thoughts  
Our shadows are,  
Taking our demons and turning them real  
Taking our dreams and tossing them away  
We then fight to get stronger, better, smarter  
Shadows are then light, when we become our alternate  
selves

## **Necessary Opposites**

- Amelia Saward

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'Trauma' is a late 17th century word, stemming from Greek, that means a 'wound', "a deeply distressing or disturbing experience; emotional shock following a stressful event or a physical injury, which may lead to long-term neurosis; physical injury". Though most of us experience some kind of trauma at some point in our lives - a kind of wound that even once it's faded has altered us forever - we usually also experience times of healing. Whether as momentary relief during the experience of trauma itself or once the storm has cleared, so to speak. Periods of joy and happiness are also a part of our lives. This is a dichotomy that is fated upon us, not a choice anyone can make.

Trauma is the darkness in our lives, the shadow that hides behind us. Healing and happiness is the light of our lives, the brightness that is needed to scare the shadows away and stop them from taking hold. The opposition of dark and light is a centuries old concept that cannot be escaped. However it can teach. It can teach us what is important. It can show us to

accept the dark but search for the light. It can show us that as much as pain and trauma are a necessary and an inescapable part of being alive, so are joy and rejuvenation. So long as we have darkness, we also have light and therefore, we have something to build on.

As Oscar Wilde wrote in his 1892 play *Lady Windermere's Fan* "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars". Though many of us are probably not like charming, depraved Lord Darlington searching for the affection of the married Lady Windermere, most of us are likely searching for some kind of success or happiness that we believe is out of our grasp or that we are not worthy of.

However, is it not better to search for this light than let ourselves wallow in the darkness? Sure, we might get hurt - but whether we do or not, we also have the chance to experience something positive. If we focus too much on the gutter and not the stars above, we are relegating ourselves to eternal darkness, as dramatic as that may sound. I don't know about you...but I'd rather take the chance on the stars.

## Kelly Gray



*Through my eyes*, 2018

Acrylic paint on canvas

74.9cm x 74.9 cm



This piece is a continuous line painting. I made a application implement from a paint bottle and a purpose-made nozzle which allowed me to apply the paint in one continuing line that does not stop until the image is complete.

This is my area of speciality - Continuous line Painting and drawing. I first experimented with this style of art in 1990 with fellow artist and mentor Brett Whiteley. We both experimented and discussed this style of drawing and painting as being a possible performance art genre. I believe that Brett did a self-portrait and experimented with other drawings as a result. I've had a strange affection for this style ever since first exploring it, and have enjoyed revisiting this style over the years and applying it in many different forms. Now I use acrylic paint through a squeezezy bottle and a specially made nozzle I have made. Which creates a needle like end that I can control the flow of paint with, resulting in one continuous, non-stop line of paint that creates the entire Image here before you. In this set there are three paintings and drawings.

- Kelly Gray

# Keira Hudson



*The Suffocation Series*, 2018

Tintype and Ambrotype (Wet Plate Collodion)

Image Size: 10 x 12.5cm

Frame Size: 35 x 35cm

Anxiety can have a debilitating effect on the body. Throats tighten, stomachs churn, and brains fog. The Suffocation Series is a response to the physical and emotional responses to anxiety encountered by the artist daily. Hudson uses wet plate photography and her body to explore themes of confinement, restriction, and mortality. She is particularly drawn to tactile processes that translate emotions into physical marks. In this series, imperfections such as dust, scratches, and subbing residue blemish the skin of the body, reminding the viewer of the artist's presence.

Keira Hudson is a Melbourne-based artist whose practice explores her own corporeality through whimsical and sinister fine art nude compositions. She studied printmaking and photography at RMIT University, and has recently begun incorporating paint, wax, and traditional darkroom processes into her practice. She has been exhibiting for 10 years, and her works are included in national and international collections.

**Bambi Johnson**



*Embryology*, 2017

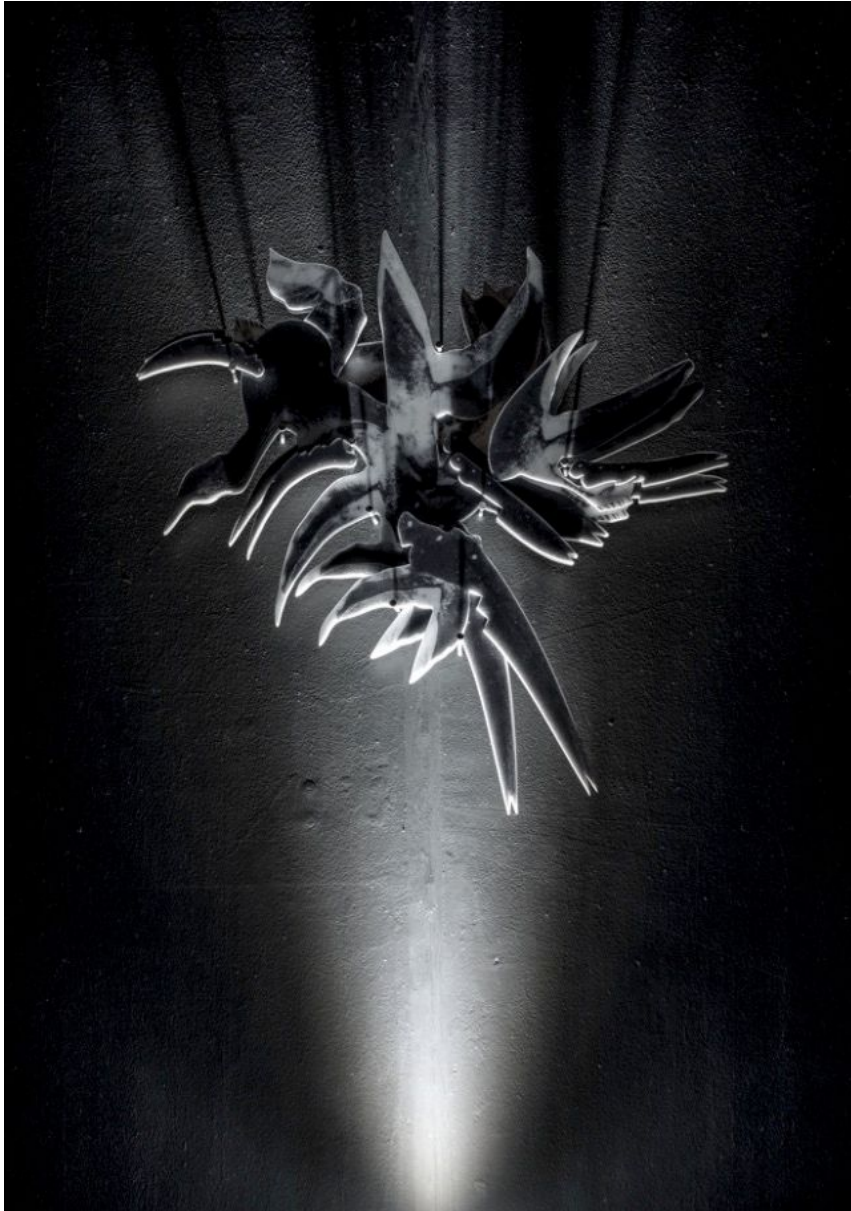
Inkjet on Cotton Rag, Edition 1 of 1

71 x 52 cm

As a multidisciplinary artist, my varied work is thematically driven by a desire to express natural compulsions of contemporary feminism. My methodology draws on the unconscious body to indemnify experience through transference. In a moment of time and place where isolation is tangible, natural light plays the role of alluring subtlety while depth of shadow acts as a suggestive disdain. The medium of photography enables me to shift the dimensions of my soft sculptural forms making their perspective singular and consumable.

- Bambi Johnson

Stephanie Kam



*Been in the kitchen making a sandwich, 2017*

Photocopy on perspex, large nails, directional light source  
70 x 60 x 9 cm

Stephanie's multi-disciplinary practice spans collage, sound, animation, installation and most recently metalsmithing while maintaining a low-tech crude methodology derived from the cheap and easy, humble processes firmly rooted in DIY culture, cult cinema and technological panic.

Her recent work is an exploration into the fear of mechanized labour and the bodily vessel, specifically the paradoxical female as the monstrous 'other' and her abject anxiety and terrible power. It is something that cannot be assimilated and causing a repetitious expulsion, extending the compositions into a spatial realm.

Since completing a Bachelor of Fine Art at RMIT University in 2015, majoring in Expanded Studio Practice, Stephanie has exhibited throughout Melbourne and interstate, most recently in "SULLUN", curated by Colin Langridge for Contemporary Art Tasmania in July 2017 and a finalist in the "Emerging Artist Award" at fortyfivedownstairs in June 2018. Stephanie is currently a studio artist at Strange Neighbour Gallery and Photographic Darkroom in Fitzroy.

# Mahla Karimian



*Deja Vu*, 2017

Etching

78 x 59 cm



Mahla is a Iranian born visual artist, community arts coordinator and workshop facilitator. She holds a degree in photography and creates work using Persian miniature on scratchboard and other methods including printmaking, sculpture, stencil and digital media.

“ My life experience has left my soul scarred and scratched, and so in the same way that life has scarred me, I scratch the surface of paper and use this process to create my artworks. This method of working is a visual reflection of how I feel, and it ultimately allows me to create something beautiful out of something painful.”

- Mahla Karimian

## Olivia Mròz



*Part 1, And My Body Filled With Concrete, 11:48 Series, 2015*

Olivia Mròz's practice is dynamic and multifaceted. Predominantly she is a photographer, specialising in both digital and analogue. Within her practice she paints, draws and creates text-based media. Her work is self-reflexive and examines the interconnectedness of the emotional state and trauma. Mròz continues an extended investigation into themes of anxiety, dissociation, depression, memory, identity, and her work can be seen as outward manifestations of inner subjective states.

Mròz intuitively manipulates and distorts her photographs – this reflects subconscious psychological processes. Similarly witnessed in the gestural marks of her paintings, drawings and automatic writings. Through these cathartic acts she looks to better understand herself - aiding in her journey of psychological processing as catharsis and bringing light to themes related to the experience of trauma.

# Ryan Quinlan



*Our Shadows series*, 2018

Digital photograph

A stranger huddled in the darkness under a bridge may catch your eye as out of place, but you wouldn't have noticed them walking past you on their way there. Society hides away the things it doesn't want us to notice. It chooses what is allowed to be seen in the open, and our eyes and mind do as they are told. Even when those things are right in front of us in the world most people don't see them or, if they do, avoid and ignore them. Until we choose to look into the darkness for ourselves.

- Ryan Quinlan

**Matt Salvo**



*Connect/ Disconnect*, 2009

Stop motion charcoal animation (video still)

1.43 minutes

The works of Matthew Domenic Salvo explore aspects of modern industrialization and the impacts it imposes on nature and humanity. Salvo's imagery contemplates the complexities and sometimes grotesque relationship between the industrial world and modern technologies that we humans create and destroy within our social and ecological environments. This charcoal animations explores the effects of urban soundscapes and the human psyche in the habitats that we humans have created which is now considered to be "the norm" for society.

Jessica Schwientek



*Shadows of Melancholia series, 2018*  
Analogue photography mounted on board



SHADOWS OF MELANCHOLIA. Sadness is but a shadow of reality; a fractured memory of truth. The light only gives it more density, it never truly fades from existence. All human beings experience trauma and loss, although perhaps within varying contexts and severity. Death is a reality. Death is a fact of life. These works were created by the artist in a time where death preceded life, where a life was granted a meagre hour to exist. The works are an exploration of grief and trauma following death, the struggle to escape the shadow.

- Jessica Schwientek

## Amy Turrini

- This is a play I did about my neighbours.



*91 Plenty Rd, 15 August 2018, 10:37 pm, 2018*

Installation of Performance work Performed on opening night)

**Artwork List:**

**Kelly Gray**, *Through my eyes*, 2018, Acrylic paint on canvas, 74.9cm x 74.9 cm.

**Keira Hudson**, *The Suffocation Series*, 2018, Tintype and Ambrotype (Wet Plate Collodion), Image Size: 10 x 12.5cm, Frame Size: 35 x 35cm.

**Bambi Johnson**, *Embryology*, 2017, Inkjet on Cotton Rag, Edition 1 of 1, 71 x 52 cm.

**Bambi Johnson**, *Nugget*, 2017, Inkjet on Cotton Rag, Edition 1 of 1, 72 x 52.3 cm.

**Stephanie Kam**, *Been in the kitchen making a sandwich*, 2017, Photocopy on perspex, large nails, directional light source, 70 x 60 x 9 cm.

**Mahla Karimian**, *Freedom*, 2108, Wooden frame with glass surface and paper.

**Mahla Karimian**, *Deja Vu*, 2017, Etching, 78 x 59 cm.

**Olivia Mroz**, selected images from *Part 1, And My Body Filled With Concrete, 11:48 Series*, 2015, photographic paste up installation.

**Ryan Quinlan**, *Our Shadows series*, 2018, Digital photographs.

**Matthew Salvo** (SALVO), *Connect/ Disconnect*, 2009, Stop motion charcoal animation, 1.43 minutes.

**Jessica Schwientek**, *Shadows of Melancholia series*, 2018, Analogue photography mounted on board.

**Amy Turrini**, *91 Plenty Rd, 15 August 2018, 10:37 pm*, 2018, Performance on opening night and installation of performance work.

