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# STAY SAFE

A visual exploration of social discourse through the eyes of artists identifying as female or non binary.

October 10th - 28th  
57 Moreland Rd, Coburg

Opening night October 12th 6 - 9pm



# Exhibition Catalogue

## Exhibiting Artists

Chelsea Arnott  
Katie Banakh  
Meghan Rose Black (Griffiths)  
Angela Cornish  
erincox  
George Ironside  
Lisa Jacomos  
Melanie Lazarow  
Maddy Lyons  
Ruby  
Amanda Santuccion

Jessica Schwientek  
Fox Smoulder  
Sian Song  
Erin Templeton  
Toots McGee  
Katie Theodorus  
Sarah Walker

# ESSAY

'Stay Safe'. It's what we tell each other every time we enter into the world. That all the trauma experienced is a consequence of the inability to *stay safe*. We are made to feel that we constantly need to edit and protect ourselves from objectification the male narrative has assigned us with. Questioning would our clothing, body, actions, words, etc. have kept us safe? That our safety is our responsibility alone and predatory culpability is nonexistent.

The exhibition aims to provide validity to the experiences that are typically washed out by the noise of privilege or personally minimised by the voice of shame. The works explore these ideas through cathartic artistic expression and strive to create an essential dialogue about social discourse.

By Stephanie Garner

## A WORD FROM THE CURATOR

*It has taken 10 years to not just understand but truly believe that my rapes were not my fault. Society tells us that we shouldn't have been drunk, we shouldn't have been alone and we shouldn't have caught that cab without informing a close friend of the licence details.*

Because it was never the drivers fault that they ignored your direction and pulled into a dark alley (that ironically was right next to the *safety* of your house), it was your fault for hailing one in the first place.

Working on this show and creating these pieces have given me the time to linger over the things that have happened to me and finally understand fully that they were not my fault. To this day I have not told many of my friends and certainly nobody in my family. It's something you don't talk about. You should just deal with the consequences of not having *situational awareness*.

At the time of one of my rapes, in fact immediately after returning home, I tried to tell an ex partner of mine whom I still had a friendly relationship with. She thought I was crazy ex girlfriending her and making up a story to get her attention. I didn't tell anyone else after that, I instead ran away to the other side of Australia where I could forget it had ever happened.

I dread the thought that one of my family member reads this piece of writing and I have to actually talk to them about my past. But at the same time I need to have this conversation; not for me, I've dealt with all I need to deal with, but for my nieces. For these young girls that have to grow up in a world that is not willingly changing its value of women.

'Stay Safe' is not an exhibition following a trend, it is a show that I as an artist, facilitator and curator had to create. We aren't going to change the world with one art show but if we don't start somewhere another generation of human beings may be destined to have history repeat itself.

Jessica Schwientek

# WINDOW GALLERY INSTALLATION

A series of works created by Ruby and Katie Banakh.

The artists upcycled feminine items and imagery found in opportunity shops and altered them to somewhat describe the experience of identifying as female and non binary out in the world.

Works are available to purchase by paying what you think.

*Speak to the gallery manager to make an offer.*





erincox

erincox is a drawer but also dabbles in printmaking. She has exhibited a number of times in the past two decades. Erincox is currently a stay at home Mum who also runs a small fashion related business but also a practising artist. She has focussed her practice on life drawing, drawing musicians and portraiture. At the moment she is creating a body of work exploring femininity and associated archetypes and symbology which encompasses many feminism ideals.

@thechickwhodraws\_

*Keys of Resistance*, 2018, Screenprint on paper, 55 x 66cm, **\$130** framed

Unframed prints available to purchase. L - 35.5 x 50cm - **\$80** (edition of 9)

S - 26 x 35cm - **\$60** (edition of 6)



## SIAN SONG

Sharpen your claws

Gnash your teeth

Howl Loudly at the night

Women are taught to defend ourselves, run, speak up, scream, carry makeshift weapons when walking alone at night... or better still avoid any “unsafe” situations altogether. We change our clothing, demeanor and route just to feel “safe.” With the onus continually being put on women to alter every facet of their identity and lifestyles to ensure personal safety and avoid being a victim of prey, living by a mantra of “become a wolf or be taken by one.”

*Sian Song is an illustrator and Fine Artist working in Melbourne, Victoria. She has exhibited all over Melbourne including at Off the Kerb, Fitzroy Library, The Stockroom and NOIR Darkroom.*

@siansongart



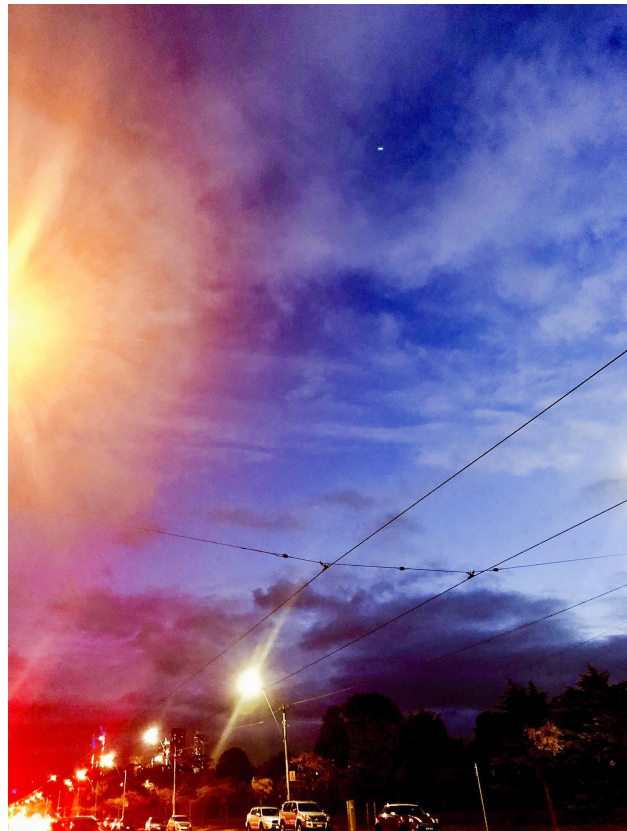
Stay Soft, 2018, Felt sculpture, 55 x 22cm **\$210**

## MELANIE LAZAROW

Lazarow uses mainly accessible tools to photograph the night, and what the night means to her, as a woman walking alone, given the instruction to stay inside and fear the night. Her nights are sensuous and beautiful, even if the shadows hold danger.

*Melanie Lazarow recently completed a master degree at the VCA in contemporary art. She has been using iPads and iPhones in tangles of wires to explore both showing moving images of sections of protests for the implied tools of communication and their possible misunderstanding*

@melanie\_lazarow



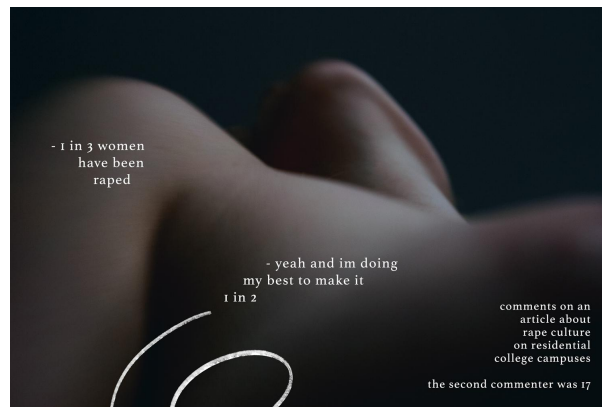
*Cloud Over Us, 2018, Streetlight, 2018, Gathering Clouds, 2018*  
Inkjet prints on cotton rag, 38 x 43cm - **\$400** each

# SARAH WALKER

'Angry Reacts Only' is an embodiment of virtual trauma, investigating the way that rage in online spaces impacts the body in the real world. The body becomes a site of psychic impact, where language and judgment inform the narratives that are tied to our physical selves.

*Sarah Walker is a Melbourne-based artist. Her work explores thresholds of existence, rationality and reality, and the complex potential of text through photography, video and installation.*

@sarahtakesphotos  
sarahwalkerfineart.com  
sarahwalkerphotos.com



leaving a carpark late at night  
the machine at the exit gate spits out my credit card  
there is a line of cars behind me  
the stress makes my jaw ache.  
i press the intercom  
a man's voice on the other end  
asks if i've inserted it correctly  
i snap  
'i'm not a fucking idiot.'  
my boyfriend inhales sharply in the passenger seat.

later, i ask him about my bad habits  
'you have this thing', he says  
'where you can't cope with men  
suggesting that you might be wrong.'

*Angry Reacts Only*, 2018, Inkjet prints on cotton rag,  
21 x 29.7cm, **\$30** each or **\$150** full set

Multiple editions available

## LISA JACOMOS

*Love at Home* is a video piece exploring the impact that media has on our feelings of safety.

I was always raised watching the news; my mother never seemed to care about the impact that the stories would have on me. The video is constructed from TV news reports that I remember going up watching in my home.

The aim of the work is to create two responses within the viewer. One: the impact of the feeling of safety when raised watching these stories, and two: bringing to light the stories themselves, that these things are actually happening.

*Lisa creates work in any medium that interests her; whatever I think will best present the idea. Her work is always personal and, aims to be confronting. It brings to light aspects of herself that she had so long sought to hide.*

@lisajacomos



*Love at Home*, 2018, Installation piece and video 47 mins 4 seconds, **POA**



## MEGHAN ROSE BLACK (GRIFFITHS)

These works were painted during my court case after being raped and attacked by two men whilst walking home one night. Focusing on themes of innocence lost and how this affected my perception of the world. My work expresses my feelings of struggle and loss of control, showing the inner turmoil in the aftermath of trauma. My sense of self stripped away, left in a vulnerable state. My perpetrators were convicted and sentenced to four years jail - the effects of their actions on me however, will last my life.



*States of Fear*, 2012, Oil on board, 30" x 8.75", **\$500**

*States of Mind*, 2012, Oil on board, 30" x 9.25", **\$500**



*Untitled 1-4*, 2012, Gouache on cotton rag, stitched on cotton fabric,  
48 x 45cm, **\$120** each **\$400** full set

*Who am I Now?*, 2012, Oil on board, 93 x 117cm, **\$3,200**



## JESSICA SCHWIENTEK

This piece is the uncertainty of being alone. It is fear and disgust. It is always being watched. It is the media telling us how to be a woman. It is the media telling us to stay safe. This piece is the noise of living in silence.

*Jessica Schwientek is a fine art photographer practicing in Coburg, Melbourne. Her focus is on analogue and chemistry based photography. Photography is a loose term for Jessica's practice with an emphasis on the alternative and the experimental. Her work is intrinsic; looking in at the world, herself, society, anything. She is an outsider on the inside drawn to the safety of the fringes. She is an educator, facilitator and gallery owner intent on supporting the works and careers of her peers.*

@jessika\_k\_and\_ruby



*Almost Home Safe HBU?, 2018, Silver gelatin photograph, 26 x 22" \$420 Unique state*

# ANGELA CORNISH

*...and she always knows her place* is based on the concept that women sharing personal stories, allows multiple definitions of 'woman' to coexist. By denying archetypes and allowing more representations of women we move toward a more inclusive society.

The current cultural zeitgeist is dominated by narratives created for and from a patriarchal system of values. This project attempts to create an alternate dialogue featuring woman protagonists. The stories selected for Stay Safe reflect on personal safety and agency.

*Angela Cornish is a Melbourne based photographer. She is interested in using contemporary documentary and photojournalism to investigate themes of place, identity and feminism.*

www.angelacornish.com  
@angela.cornish.photo

*...and she always knows her place*, 2017, inkjet print on Platine Fiber Rag, paste ups  
S - 15 x 21cm - **\$70** framed - **\$60** Unframed  
L - 30 x 40cm - **\$70** Unframed



"Really I can't even walk home alone at night, you know? And even getting into a taxi, the anxiety that I feel is just too much for me to bare. I've had things happen to me in the past where, yeah I think that's why I'm so anxious to get in the car with dudes. Which is super sad, like I hate that. Like we live in Melbourne, in Australia. In the most liveable city in the world. Yet, it's like walk home at night, get in a cab. Both dangerous options in my eyes."



"Sometimes people think that the only way women can make a change is to give birth to a male that will make a change. It's like, 'no. If you want equal opportunity, let me slay. Let me do it, because I can.' I can be the person that talks about race issues, I can be the person who talks about making a change in this world for women, for black people, for men."



"He tried to kiss me on the cheek but turned his head and kissed me on the lips at the last second... I'm pretty sure he did it on purpose."

## AMANDA SANTUCCIONE & JESSICA SCHWIENTEK

Stay safe. Words spoken out of love, out of care and out of fear.

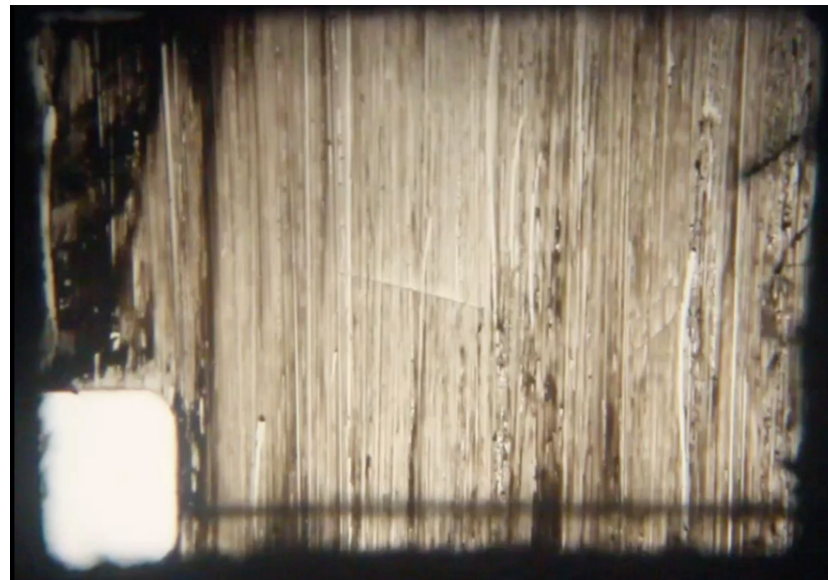
They are shifting blame before any action has taken place. The weight of the situation rests on our shoulders. It should not rest on our shoulders.

The sexually violent end to her life was not because she did not stay safe it was because his urges overrode her rights.

Silence is about shifting the weight. Silence is the struggle of trying to be heard in a parliament of men. Silence is about the confidence in a woman's ability to navigate this world without having to stay safe because she should just be.

Silence is about speaking up and screaming out. Silence is about the fight. We fight because we must. Until we no longer need to, there will not be silence.

@jessika\_k\_and\_ruby  
@amandasant\_artist



*Silence*, 2018, Digital video from 8mm film, 2 mins 35 seconds and audio piece on cassette tape 2 mins 9 seconds **NFS**



## RUBY

"Just close your eyes and think of England", was a phrase one of my highschool teachers taught me. I should have told her to back off and reassess her curriculum because the 2018 AIHW statistics show 1 in 6 women have experienced violence or sexual violence from a current or previous partner. And that's only those who came forward.

*Ruby is an artist and educator currently living in the Bonsoy Belt of Melbourne. She draws lines that resemble tattoo motifs then translates those lines into lino prints or embroidery, because they are stabby and inky like tattoos. She tries not to take herself too seriously and doesn't like to use the word liminal to describe her practice.*

@jessika\_k\_and\_ruby



*Just because I let you enter the garden doesn't mean you pick the fruit,*  
2018, embroidered cushion, 45 X 45 cm **POA**

## MADDY LYONS

*Self Love* is a 1980s inspired dress tied in with pink playful gingham, multi coloured shark poplin, knitted stretch sleeves and shoulder pads for power. A convenient front patch pocket to store goodies and a lighter lollie pouch avoiding that confusing scrummaging in your bag every time you look for your essentials.

Pink is the colour most often associated with charm, politeness, sensitivity, tenderness, sweetness, childhood, femininity and romance.

*My art practice is my trimesters project based on decade dress themes. I wanted to focus my mood on the importance of feminine energy, self expression and 1980s fashion inspiration. Over a 3 month period studying Fashion Design at Kangan Tafe I have learnt to construct original pattern pieces, grade, design and focus a lot of time and energy into what I believe is my voice and many other females. This dress has been created to illustrate the power and feeling of clothing.*



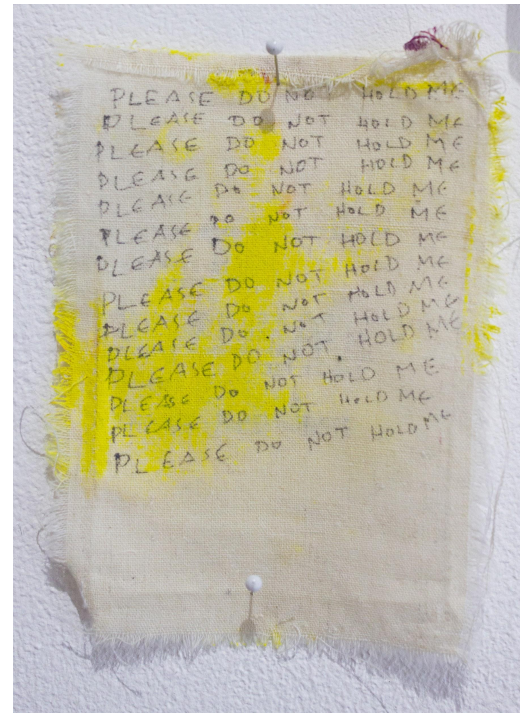
*Self Love*, Fabric Dress, 442cm x 84cm. **POA**

## CHELSEA ARNOTT

'Demand Comfortable Surroundings' is a body of work made when I was 19, freshly moved out of home and into a new city. It speaks of the vulnerability within my experiences of fresh independence and especially that of making my queerness visible for the first time in a country town. What scares me the most about this work is how true these statements still ring years later at 22 and how still I want nothing more than safe spaces and a place that feels like home.

*Chelsea is a fine artist and sad idiot living in Thornbury, Melbourne. She recently exhibited her inaugural solo exhibition 'Ya Coulda Been the Love of me Life' at NOIR Darkroom in Coburg.*

@chelsearnott



*Demand Comfortable Surroundings, 2015, Acrylic on fabric, NFS*



# FOX SMOULDER

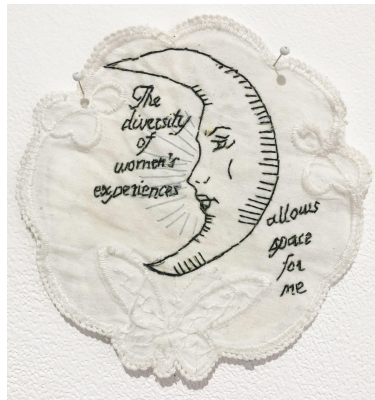
A small series of works exploring violence and harassment that has happened in the public sphere, looking at the ways in which a persistent culture of misogyny is enacted in daily life. This will contain testimony, portrait and some small sculptures and drawings of spaces where this occurred.

Fox Smoulder is a relational artist primarily concerned with building safer spaces, shrines to survival and intimate experiences of community love through collage, installation and events.

*Rosa*, from the series *Imagined Violence*, handkerchief, embroidery thread 18 x 10cm, **POA**

*The Plaza*, from the series *Landmarks My Mother's Sorrows*, 2018, Paper collage, 36 x 22cm, **POA**

*Nicholson*, from the series *Landmarks My Mother's Sorrows*, 2018, Paper, Acrylic paint, foam board, 17 x 13cm, **POA**



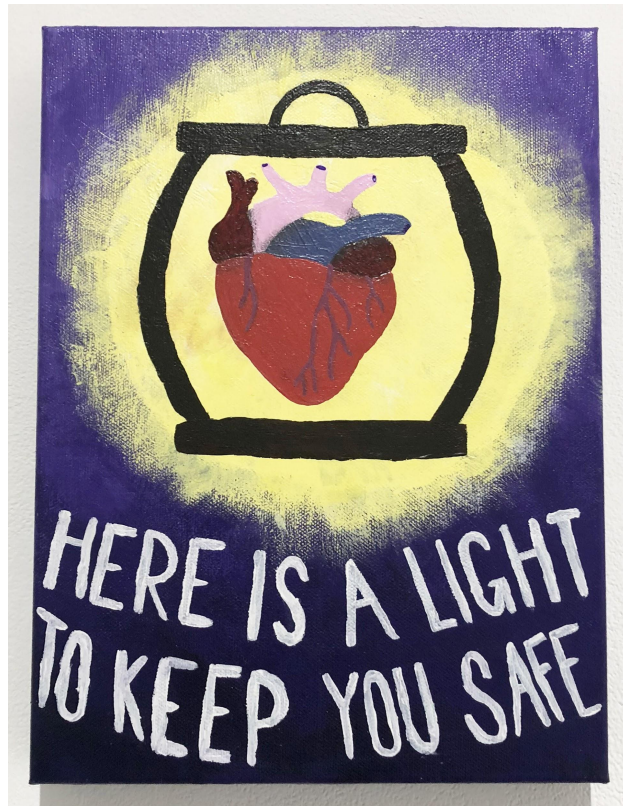


## KATIE THEODORUS

A hurricane lantern floats against a purple background representing nightfall. Inside is an anatomical heart with bright rays emanating from it. Underneath the lantern is written in white hand-painted text: "Here Is A Light To Keep You Safe". The painting conveys the care that we feel for our loved ones in the seemingly offhand phrase 'stay safe', and our desire to provide a protective light at the times when we can't be there.

*My art practice explores connections between opposites: art and craft, work and play, "real" and imaginary. I work in acrylics, soft sculpture and mixed media. My paintings emphasise colour and pattern, with a gem-like quality. I like to use materials traditionally reserved for crafts, elevating them to the status of art and imbuing them with meaning, while retaining their relatability.*

@katie\_theodorus  
katiestable.blogspot.com



*Here is a Light to Keep you Safe*, 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 23cm, **NFS**

# TOOTS MCGEE

If I was into you, trust me you'd know. I wouldn't need convincing.

*Toots McGee is a Melbourne based artist.*

@toots\_mcgee\_



# GENNIVIEVE COLLIER

The works take the innocence of childhood imagery from picturebooks and subvert them by describing a raw confession from the artists own childhood.

*Gennivieve is an artist and educator from Melbourne's western suburbs.*

@genn\_iz\_ere



*Untitled 1-2, 2018, Collage and upcycled materials, 17 x 21cm and 11 x 16cm, NFS*



## GEORGE IRONSIDE

A question Geo has asked herself whilst getting ready since she was a child. Geo grew up in a world where abuse was all too real. From her Mother's rape and abduction in 1970 to her own years of sexual abuse from 1984 - 1992, the world has always been viewed through wary and untrusting eyes.

As a child her Mother reminded her to be careful what she wore out as the media and police would happily decide whether you were "asking for it" before an investigation had taken place.

Collectively there have been 7 men reported to authorities by Geo and her Mother over the years, all of which have walked free.

*Geo is a multi-disciplinary artist that believes in community inclusion and open expression.*

*She is also the creator of Stay Safe Melbourne - Northern Suburbs page and collaborator for Reclaim The Night.*

@geomadethis



*What to Wear?*, 2018, Denim, polymer clay and upcycled, Materials, 23 x 28cm, \$60

ERIN TEMPLETON

