





ZAHALKAWORLD

an artist's archive

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE

ZAHALKAWORLD

an artist's archive

Museum of
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FOREWORD

Anne Zahalka has an acute sensitivity to the way the most valorised art images define our world views by exclusion. For four decades she has shifted the iconic or familiar art image out of its comfort zone without a hint of sermonising. Our perceptions are similarly re-arranged by the experience of viewing her beguiling works, many of which involve staged tableaux and collage reconstructions inspired by familiar, beloved or unquestioned images. Many works draw on the exquisite naturalistic detail and symbolic content of seventeenth-century Dutch oil painting by artists such as Jan Vermeer.

The title *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive* might suggest an exhibition full of ephemera, sketches, studies and tools of the trade illuminating how the iconic imagery of a famed artist has evolved. This monograph, documenting the prodigious, ever-evolving and sustained career of Anne Zahalka since the mid 1980s, does include a substantial core of such supportive archival process material. The key term 'archive' however, is meant—figuratively, as well as literally—to be understood in its broadest sense as the legacy of our collective art and national past.

Perhaps her heritage as an Australian-born artist bearing an exotic Slavic surname, as much as the feminist deconstruction of the male dominated heroic histories which happened in the 1980s, gave Zahalka an aptitude to quietly reconfigure the hallowed ground of late nineteenth-century Australian impressionist painters like Tom Roberts and Frederick McCubbin credited with defining the nation.

In one of her earliest bodies of collage, the work 'On the Wallaby Track – a long way from home' (1983), Zahalka substitutes a rather older European migrant woman in black for the original painting's itinerant Anglo-Saxon mother and Australian-born babe. The new maternal figure yanks the nineteenth-century immigrants into the twentieth-century post-war migration. Zahalka's recasting of McCubbin's triptych of the founding families is a powerful reminder of successive generations of migrants to Australia.

In other 1980s collages (one might call these visual sampling) heroicised gum trees confront realities of high-rise cities; the solitary man in a famed German romantic painting is relocated to an equally dramatic Australian Blue Mountains landscape, shifting how we might see that landscape poetically. A stockrider in an image after Tom Robert's famous 1891 painting *A break away!* appears to have a female plait.

In these first-generation realignments Zahalka also introduces painters, film makers and photographers, reminding the viewer of the artifice of the familiar art image. The now is brought into conjunction with the romanticised past. Her 2013 series *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific* jumps another few decades to dissect the way in which beach, surfer and sunbather images since the 1930s have largely written out any but the Anglo-Saxon models. Max Dupain's *Sunbaker* of 1937 had a particular renaissance in the 1980s and Zahalka replaces the muscular dark-tanned

male with a red-headed pale young man. As the selection of ephemeral publications show, Zahalka's inclusive redefined beach figures have been very popular with magazine and book covers.

Inevitably the finesse, subtlety and scope of the realignments Zahalka presents in her successive bodies of work increase, as do their poetic qualities. Her 1990s series extracting gestures and details from old master paintings are enigmatic markers for the coming digital era of altered and augmented art-making.

Her beautifully executed *Wild Life* colour diorama, works of natural history scenes of the early 2000s, are heart breaking in their ecological message. The stuffed mute creatures implore our action—most pointedly, the bushfire endangered koala in 'Koala, Yarra River at Woori Yallock, Victoria' (2019). Process prints for the series are a demonstration of the magic that goes into the transformed final image and print.

Of all the works in the current exhibition and publication, *Hotel Suite* (2008) brings a new poetic darker tone. Made long before the Covid-19 epidemic, these images seem to evoke a world where we are locked in Plato's cave seeing the world only by reflection darkly. Like the older 1990s *Open House* artist portraits, full of the detail of old master paintings, these works are more than portraits. Also of quiet solemnity are the works inspired by Zahalka's renegotiation of her own family history in *The Fate of Things: memory objects* (2018).

Well known for her large scale, often lightbox-lit, colour works of crowds and anonymous groups, Zahalka began her *Leisureland* series (1999), a departure from the close personal focus of her earlier works, on the eve of the millennium. Specific to Australian culture, the myriad of subjects and events depicted will become, in due course, a historical cavalcade of Australian society, like the civic murals of past ages. These works are apocryphal global visions documenting the last decade of the era before ecological imperatives coloured everything we view. Like the *Lost Landscapes* series of the 2020s which were shown paired with original natural history dioramas at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery at Royal Park in Tasmania, they leave us in no doubt about the difference between past, present and future.

ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive is a unique exhibition experience providing revelations through a socially concerned artist's remarkable oeuvre that has proposed, over decades, so many new conversations and realignments of view as to what makes Australia. Zahalka's work has been contemporaneous with my own curatorial career and its evolution has been a constant source of delight and impetus to reflect on what images mean.

Gael Newton AM

Gael Newton is an art historian, curatorial consultant and researcher specialising in photography. She was formerly the Senior Curator of Australian and International Photography at the National Gallery of Australia.

ZAHALKAWORLD: AN ARTIST'S ARCHIVE



Self-portrait by Anne Zahalka, Künstlerhaus
Bethanien, Berlin, 1986.

INTRODUCTION

Anne Zahalka is one of Australia's most highly regarded photo-media artists who has exhibited extensively in Australia and overseas for over forty years. Her work has often explored cultural and environmental points of tension, interrogating them with humour and a critical perspective. Her practice has centred around deconstructing familiar scenes and re-presenting them to allow for alternative narratives that reflect on, amongst other things, cultural diversity within Australian society and the ecological impact of the global climate crisis.

This publication marks the major survey exhibition *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive*, to be held at the Museum of Australian Photography (MAPh) in June 2023. The exhibition brings together key bodies of work that span Zahalka's practice presented alongside collected treasures from her archive that inform and inspire her. Encompassing material that is personal and professional, intellectual and physical, these archival components have been incorporated into a re-creation of her house-studio within the gallery space. Imaginative, immersive and playful, the exhibition invites audiences into the artist's working life and her creative process to explore the illusionary worlds for which she is renowned.

As well as tracing the impact and legacy of some of Zahalka's most iconic images, the publication includes documentation of material from her extensive archive. Academic and curator Gael Newton introduces Zahalka's work. An interview with Anne Howell delves into aspects of the artist's life which have influenced her practice, including the discovery of her Jewish heritage. MAPH curators Angela Connor and Stella Loftus Hills consider the *Open House* and *Leisureland* series, and I have written about landscape and the importance of artist-in-residencies. The publication also includes short texts by Donna West Brett, Marie Hartley, Vanessa Berry, Jasmine Proust and David Ellison which focus on particular works from a personal perspective.

It has been a great honour and privilege to work with Anne Zahalka to create an exhibition of such scope and scale. We are especially grateful for the support of the Gordon Darling Foundation which has enabled the exhibition to be accompanied by this major publication.

Anouska Phizacklea
Director, Museum of Australian Photography

MEMORY



THE FATE OF THINGS

2019

DATE: 2019



Detail of room sheet for exhibition, *The Fate of Things*, Behal Fejér Institute, Prague.

MEMORY OBJECTS AND ART (WITH SYLVIA GRIFFIN), SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM 2 November 2018 – 28 February 2019
THE BEHAL FEJÉR INSTITUTE, PRAGUE 1 - 7 October 2019
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023

TITLE: The Fate of Things



Hairlooms, 2017

MEMORY

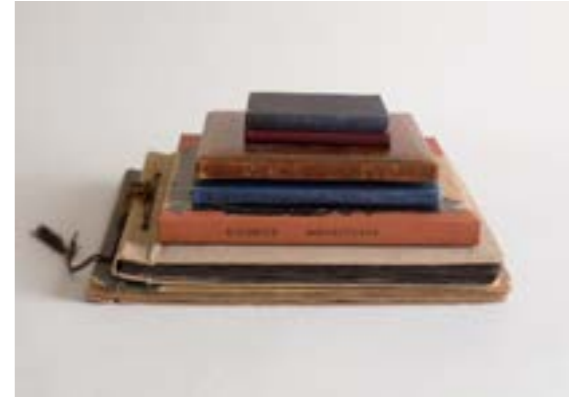
GESTURE

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In exile, 2018

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A thousand kisses across the sea, 2019, installation view, Sydney Jewish Museum,
 Rewriting, 2018, installation view, Sydney Jewish Museum

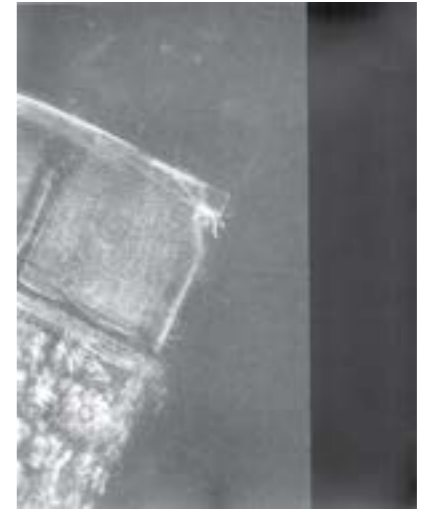


Above: The Fate of Things, installation view, Bechal Fejér Institute, Prague, 2019
 Next page: Film still, Rewriting, 2018



I follow you #3, 2019

Photograph by Josef Braun (great grandfather of the artist). Courtesy the Ethnographical Insitute of the Moravian Museum of Brno, Czechia



Details from *Ghostly things*, 2018

TRAVELS IN ZAHALKAWORLD: A CONVERSATION WITH THE ARTIST

Anne Zahalka has consistently challenged representations of identity including traditional ideas of Australianness. Over four decades of prolific artistic output, she has explored these ideas in both cultural and personal ways. Increasingly, in recent years, her work has focused on what it has meant for her—and other descendants of Holocaust survivors—to be Australian–Jewish.

Before Anne was born, her parents and their daughter Jeanie¹ left their home in the Czech Republic on the ocean liner *Surriento* bound for Australia. Anne's Viennese Jewish mother Hedy² had recently lost her mother Margarete in Auschwitz. Fleeing the communist regime, the Zahalkas disembarked in Sydney as 'Displaced Persons' in 1950, arriving in a country whose psyche reflected its still existing White Australia Policy.³ Soon the Zahalkas created a supportive community of Czech and other migrants. Hedy was glad she made the decision to emigrate to Australia and remained grateful they had come to a country of peace and clear blue skies.

The Zahalkas settled firstly in Bondi and Kings Cross and then in Neutral Bay on Sydney's North Shore. Anne, who was born in 1957, became attuned to the cultural shifts of the 60s and 70s as she was growing up. Ideas of Australianness were perpetrated in the mainstream media through 'ocker' characters uttering phrases like 'you beaut' and 'g'day mate' without irony. Anne recalls the blokey Australianness of media personalities like Paul Hogan (aka Crocodile Dundee). The 1976 ad jingle 'football, meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars' encapsulated suburban Australia at a time when Zahalka was gathering her artistic artillery to challenge prevailing ideas of Australian society as parochial, white and male. She confronted some of Australia's most popular image-makers of the past, such as Frederick McCubbin and Charles Meere, for their inability to depict Australia as socially inclusive, well before such ideas were widely-held.

Meanwhile, a sense of cultural revolution was in the air. As a young teenager Anne experienced the vibrancy ushered in by the Whitlam government in 1969, with its free education policy and funding for the arts. Germaine Greer's first book, *The Female Eunuch* (1970) became a bestseller and its influence emboldened her. However, Anne's own sense of identity was not clear-cut; her mother Hedy hid her Jewish heritage from her children. In fact, Anne knew very little about her Jewishness until she was in her 20s.

I became aware of Anne Zahalka while at the same High School. As schoolgirls we didn't know that we had much in common. However, later we would meet up as young women moving in Sydney's art circles in the 1980s, and finally realise we both had Jewish post-holocaust refugee mothers and *goy* (non-Jewish) fathers. In the following conversation with Anne, I have teased out some stories behind her life and works in relation to her abiding interest in her Australian and Jewish identities.

Anne Howell

Anne Howell is the author of the memoir *All that I Forgot* (2022). She was previously a journalist for the *Sydney Morning Herald* and has a PhD in Creative Writing.

AH: How has having a Catholic Czech father and a Jewish Viennese mother who immigrated to Australia in 1950 shaped you as an artist?

AZ: It has allowed me to identify with others who also come from migrant backgrounds and has given me an understanding of the cultural differences that both distinguish and define us. Recognising that many of us don't fit into the mainstream 'Aussie' stereotype made me more conscious of this affinity. And having parents who had fled from their countries through persecution to find new homes, enabled me to appreciate how important it is to feel safe. Witnessing the difficulties and the extraordinary loss and sacrifices they had made to seek refuge and to build new lives, shaped the way I see my place here and the kind of work I make.

AH: What did your parents do for a living once in Australia?

AZ: They weren't able to get qualifications before they escaped—my mother was only 17 when she left Vienna and 18 when she fled to England. My father was older, he had matriculated and grown up in a small village on a hops farm. He became a self-taught panel beater.

My father's first job in Australia was with the Dairy Farmers company, cleaning out the milk trucks at the end of a run. He would scrape the fat that had collected inside the drum, put it into greaseproof paper and bring it home as butter. My parents had very little money in those days, and butter was a luxury. My mother's first job was at David Jones in the shoe department, a classic 'ladies in black' story.⁴



Hedy Zahalka (front row) at David Jones Christmas Party, circa 1954

AH: Do you have any other artists or photographers in your family?

AZ: My aunt Lore—Lisbeth Waller (née Back) was a photographer.⁵ She trained before the family fled Vienna and then worked in England and Germany after the war, and later in the US where she migrated.

Lore's grandfather Josef Braun was an accomplished photographer too. My grandfather, Emmerich Back on my mother's side was an art aficionado. He would take his daughters

to museums every weekend. He played violin very well and my grandmother played piano. They would stage chamber concerts in their home and were part of pre-war Viennese aristocratic cultural life.

AH: When your parents arrived in Australia in the '50s there was pressure for immigrants to assimilate into the Australian way of life. Were your parents keen on 'fitting in'?

AZ: My parents were friends with other Czech migrants. They were connected through culture, language and being new arrivals. Having fled communism, they were united in their exile and were more concerned with surviving than fitting in to an Australian way of life. They had each other and they played tennis!

They became more integrated with Australian friends through their work, but they were very European at heart. They adopted some of the Australian social codes—for example, my father drank beer after work and at barbecues with the Aussie in-laws. Culturally their Europeanness was expressed through their cuisine and through language, though they spoke English to my sister and me. My mother had a penchant for Persian carpets and saved all her spare money to buy them as they reminded her of Vienna. My father maintained regular communication with his family in the Czech Republic but sadly never saw them again.

AH: Did your parents support you in your decision to become an artist?

AZ: I intended to be a PE teacher initially as I was good at sport. My father wanted me to become a secretary, but when I realised I wanted to be an artist, my mother supported me. I had read Hans Richter's book about the Dadaists in high school⁶ and it represented an artistic, political and social world that seemed so exciting. It was a new form of activism that broke cultural boundaries.

AH: Challenging ideas about Australianness has been a motivating force behind many of your works. What particular work springs to mind to exemplify this?



The Immigrants (1983) from *The Landscape Re-presented*, (1983/1992)

AZ: *The Immigrants* (1983)⁷ is based on the Frederick McCubbin painting *The Pioneer* (1904). I reworked this iconic painting from the Heidelberg School. After returning home from my first overseas trip following art school, I was aware of a rise in Australian nationalism, a precursor to the Bicentennial. Images of early settlers and pioneers were everywhere, perpetuated through advertising, mainstream media and blockbuster exhibitions. John Heartfield, one of the Dadaists I had studied in art school, worked with photomontage to challenge dominant political and cultural systems and I felt inspired to contrast and juxtapose immigrant stories against mainstream Australian mythologies.

The work tells the story of my family's arrival: the business my father set up—a panel beating shop in the Cross, with me in the pram representing the next generation. The third panel shows Sydney in the background and the family grave with my mother standing alone beside it. It was the year my father passed away (1983), so it gave the image more poignancy. These photos of my family sit within this constructed pioneering scene to retell the Australian story in such a way that migrants were included, and women were active participants.

AH: Photoshop was not available then. What techniques did you use to combine the images?

AZ: My lecturer at the time, John Williams, introduced me to the practice of photomontage and its deconstruction of propaganda and media imagery. From there, I started to superimpose popular magazine and postcard photographs with canonical Australian paintings to re-present and challenge the dominant narratives of the time. This was done by hand-colouring and cutting out black and white photographs to create a physical collage. I then used large format film to photograph and print onto photographic paper. It was a totally analogue process!⁸

AH: Again, looking at Australianness, the work *You are on Bondi Bidjigal land* (2020) portrays you as a photographer on a cliff-top in Bondi. Why?

AZ: The work was made for an exhibition called *You Are Here*⁹ [page 182], where participating artists explored ideas of home and identity informed by cultural, personal and historical narratives. I wanted to deal with landscapes that I had a strong connection with, and Bondi is one of them. It was the place where my family first settled. It is also the first place I lived after returning from Berlin (1987) where I would create my series *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific* (1989)¹⁰. I had explored local geographical sites and photographed places up on the north headland back then. There was an area cordoned off that had incredible Aboriginal carvings and was quite neglected. I had known

about these carvings and was really struck by the beauty of the place, but also its sadness. There were bushfires when I returned to this location. You can see them in the work, with their enveloping pink smoke in the background. I have superimposed myself against the bushfires. The work speaks about how we have not looked after the land and raises questions about my place here; how can I belong? In this work I am standing on the very edge, between places, looking out to where my parents came from, while reconciling with my place here. I am searching for a sense of belonging.

AH: In the exhibition *Displaced Persons* (2003) with artist Sue Saxon, you worked on the history of your parents migrating to Australia. Could you talk about that process?

AZ: *Displaced Persons* represents my parents' story of exile, displacement, migration and finding refuge in Australia. Sue Saxon and I created this work in response to the Tampa affair.¹¹ Using 20 handkerchiefs, we chart the journeys of our families' flights from Europe to Australia through the layering of photographs and personal documents from our family archives. We transferred images of travel and immigration documents, anti-Semitic and Communist propaganda and nostalgic photos of Hungary (Sue) and Czechoslovakia (me) onto the handkerchiefs and embroidered words on them.

AH: How do you feel about that work now?

AZ: It was an important work to make because it addresses issues that are still relevant at this time. I think the treatment of refugees is appalling. We are incarcerating them on islands to make them invisible; to make them disappear. This isn't humane treatment.

AH: In your *Welcome to Sydney* series [commissioned by Sydney Airports Corporation] among the images of immigrants from a variety of cultures, you have a photograph of a traditional Jewish family on Bondi Beach. What's the story here?



Rabbi Mendel Kastel his wife, Tzippy, their son Shui, and daughters, Rivky, (left) Dassi and Tovi (far right) (2001)

AZ: I wanted to portray the Rabbi and his family at Bondi because it's a place that represents quintessential Sydney and Australia. Bondi is also the home for Sydney's largest Jewish community. I liked the formal way the family are

dressed in contrast to the surfer behind. They look so incongruous there. In this series *Welcome to Sydney*¹² each family holds an object carried from their homeland that has personal meaning. The Rabbi holds a samovar or urn which was acquired on a trip to Russia. It has come to represent his Russian heritage, and the memory of tea being served to him as he was being taught Judaism.

AH: You identify as Jewish Australian. Did your family engage in rituals at home or go to synagogue?

AZ: Not at all. Actually, I was christened Catholic like my father. When I was young, my mother was not open about being Jewish; it wasn't discussed. She told me she was glad I was blonde, as she felt my colouring might protect me from any possible persecution. Though she was living safely in Australia, that sense of threat remained. My mother couldn't look at imagery of the concentration camps as it caused her so much distress. She was still mourning the death of her mother, who had been murdered¹⁵ in Auschwitz and she grieved for the rest of her life. So her Jewishness was a source of great pain, as it was for so many survivors.

AH: You created a collaborative exhibition called *The Fate of Things: Memory, Objects and Art* (2018) working with Jewish artist Sylvia Griffin, at the Sydney Jewish Museum in 2019. Later you would have a solo show called *The Fate of Things* (2019) in Prague. All this occurred after your mother's passing. Many of the objects were associated with your mother, and the ways you have used them were emblematic. Tell me about the process of gathering them.

AZ: After my mother's death, I had the solemn duty of sorting through her belongings—documents, letters, photographs, albums, recipe books and precious things she had kept her whole life. Working with these precious heirlooms helped me to connect with them. The process of photographing them made them more emblematic of their embedded stories. I also worked directly with the physical material, such as in the work *Hairlooms* [page 9] where I used my childhood hair that my mother had kept. These locks of hair were placed into a display case hanging in their natural form. They looked a little like musical notes, letters or emblems. Hair of course has darker associations with the Holocaust.¹⁴



Anne Zahalka *If these objects could speak* (2017) from *The Fate of Things: Memory Objects Art*, collaborative exhibition with Sylvia Griffin (2018).

AH: How would you describe your process to create the work *The Fate of Things: Memory Objects and Art* exhibited at the Sydney Jewish Museum (2018)?

AZ: It offered a deeper connection with these heirlooms and the hands that had held them. I found it a particularly meditative process to make rubbings called *frottage* of the embroideries and textile material. It left these intricate textures and patterns on the tissue. I placed the frottage onto photographic paper and exposed them to light so that when it was developed, they left a sort of ghostly trace of the material.



If these objects could speak (2017) (7 of 12)

AH: What was it like sifting through your mother's possessions after her death?

AZ: It filled me with great sadness but there was solace in being able to work with the things she had kept so safely. I had no idea that they were there. One of the objects I found was an old bread box with a fold-down lid. She'd bought it in an op-shop, and it had been sitting on the top of a chest of drawers in her bedroom. When I opened it I discovered a collection of letters; some were from my father, but the majority were from her mother written to her during the war. She'd never spoken of these. I recognised my grandmother's writing from the recipe book she had given to my mother as they parted. These letters of love and longing written by her mother reveal the despair she felt after their separation.

My mother had escaped on a Kindertransport¹⁵ at seventeen and never saw her mother

again. The letters stopped at the end of 1941 when she was deported to the Łódz Ghetto.

AH: One of the photographs in *The Fate of Things* resonates with mystery. What is the story behind the image of the woman walking up steps in a fur coat with her back to us?



I Follow You (2018) from original negative taken by Lore Lisbeth Waller (née Back).

AZ: That photo taken by my aunt Lore hangs above my desk. My mother was living in Prague in a rented apartment and the coat had been left behind by the previous owner. In one of the pockets she found a photograph of Hitler. She felt that as the coat-owner was a Nazi sympathiser, she was entitled to keep it! I've seen her in that coat in a number of pictures my aunt took. In her memoir Lore wrote that she was devastated that her sister was going to Australia. To me the image represents my mother's turning away from Europe and its traumatic past. She strides towards a new horizon, to her new future.¹⁶



Hedy and Zdena (Jeanie) Zahalka at Mark Foys, circa 1952, photo taken by a commercial street photographer, Sydney

AH: You have done several portraits of your mother. Why did you create *The Card Player* (1988)? [page 75]

AZ: I made this portrait on my return from Berlin for the exhibition *Resemblance II*¹⁷, having already produced the series *Resemblance* in Germany. I wanted to stage it in an Australian context and within the home, rather than a studio. It draws on the conventions of European painting to understand its influences and meaning. She is portrayed playing cards surrounded by objects. The gold letter-holder sitting on the table with

the Hebrew word *shalom* alludes to her Jewish background. The Persian carpet on the table is a link to her family home in Vienna and the painting on the wall references the Australian landscape. It was a way of locating her in this European-looking interior. The two black books in the foreground are a self-referential inclusion linking to earlier work of mine.



May their memory be a blessing, 2022, *Hidden Sculptures*, Rookwood Cemetery

AH: Tell me about your memorial piece in the 2022 exhibition, *Hidden Sculpture*, at Rookwood cemetery.

AZ: *Hidden* provided an opportunity to create a memorial work in Sydney's largest cemetery, Rookwood for this annual sculpture event. This artwork was conceived with my cousin Dorit Braun, an artist living in London who had found me while researching her ancestral tree. She learnt that some 135 people were murdered in our extended family. We wanted to name our family who perished in the Holocaust and invited other Australian second generation survivors to contribute the names of their family members for this piece. I met with these Jewish friends and colleagues on several occasions sharing stories and bringing objects, photographs and documents that connected us with our relatives, and this history.

There was a gathering held at the graveside and small stones were placed next to the names of murdered family members, a Jewish custom to remember the dead. It allowed us to connect with each other and share what is often unspoken in families of Holocaust survivors.

AH: Finally, can you talk about your exhibition *ZAHALKAWORLD* at the Museum of Australian Photography, and how it evolved?

AZ: Before I was approached to do the show at MAPH, I had made a conscious decision to step back from making new work. I felt quite unsettled emerging from the pandemic and uncertain how I wanted to continue with my practice. I needed time to reflect on what I'd made and to sort through the archival materials that had accumulated around all the bodies of work. I wanted to see what was worth

developing, salvaging, restoring, remaking, or discarding.

Out of this, I began to look at all the material that informed and shaped my art-making. I wanted to take the audience on a thematic journey through the different periods and genres of my practice—so they could see how I work. A journey that included things like deconstructing familiar landscapes and reimagining natural history habitats; showing the way I stage portraits and documentary photographic tableaux in my studios and in situ; revisiting some of my photographic sites like theme parks, sporting arenas, gaming venues, hotels and wax museums; looking at the reproductions of artworks I'd referenced. But most importantly, bringing the artefacts and heirlooms of my cultural heritage into context with my better known work to show the materials that lie behind its making.

AH: How did you resolve to bring all these strands together for the show?

AZ: I decided to recreate my house-studio-space as a 1:1 photographic *trompe l'oeil* model in the middle of the museum. It would be part photographic illusion, but with physical walls and real furniture, archival material and objects. It would replicate the place I work in an emblematic and engaging way. All the contents on display within this space—objects, project folders, postcards, works-in-progress, photographic lights, still-lives, suitcases, cameras—would be available to look at, touch and even (in some cases) take away.¹⁸ The house-studio-archive, set between interconnecting galleries, will draw visitors into 'Zahalka's world' to witness the minutiae (and mess) of life within it.

END NOTES:

- 1 She was christened Zdena but changed her name to Jeanie as it was difficult to pronounce and was made fun of.
- 2 Her full name was Hedwig, but she didn't like it, so was called Hedy by family and friends.
- 3 At that time foreigners were called 'wogs' and considered outsiders. Over subsequent years Australian governments gradually dismantled the policy with the final vestiges being removed in 1973 by the new Labor government. The origins of the 'White Australia' policy can be traced to the 1850s. See 'Fact Sheet 8: Abolition of the "White Australia" policy', *Europa*, November 2010, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/danz/dv/0220_13_1/0220_13_1_en.pdf.
- 4 *Ladies in Black* (2018), directed by Bruce Beresford, is a film about the lives of a group of department store employees in 1959 inspired by the novel by Madeleine St. John *The Women in Black* (1993). The fictional department store was based on David Jones.
- 5 In America she was generally called Lisbeth, but the family called her Lore.
- 6 Hans Richter, *DADA: art and anti-art*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York, 1964.
- 7 First exhibited in *New Light*, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney, 7–24 December 1983.
- 8 Examples of the original collages will be on display in the exhibition.
- 9 Commissioned for Town Hall Gallery, Hawthorn as part of PHOTO2020, the exhibition explored the complex relationship that both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians have with the Australian landscape—defined by a deep sense of cultural belonging coupled with a history of conflict and displacement.
- 10 The series was created during a Bondi Pavilion residency (1988–89) supported by the Australia Council.
- 11 See 'What was 'The Tampa Affair' and why does it matter', *Amnesty International*, 26 August 2021, [https://www.amnesty.org.au/what-was-the-tampa-affair-and-why-does-it-matter/?on=trd&mc=click&pli=23501504&PluID=0&ord=\[timestamp\]&gclid=Cj0KQK1A9YugBhCZARIsAACXxeJ2NanpNAeKkAocX3qk38AHYh8_-f1zZnF_AgVZtiBpW10CA25o9IaAn01EALw_wcB](https://www.amnesty.org.au/what-was-the-tampa-affair-and-why-does-it-matter/?on=trd&mc=click&pli=23501504&PluID=0&ord=[timestamp]&gclid=Cj0KQK1A9YugBhCZARIsAACXxeJ2NanpNAeKkAocX3qk38AHYh8_-f1zZnF_AgVZtiBpW10CA25o9IaAn01EALw_wcB).

- 12 The series, commissioned by Sydney Airport, was exhibited in Sydney International Airport Terminal, Northern Arrivals Exit / Arrivals in 2002–04.
- 13 The word 'murdered' is the official term used for victims of the Holocaust by Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, Israel.
- 14 The hair of Jewish victims was shaved to humiliate and dehumanise them. It was also collected to make blankets and shawls.
- 15 The Kindertransport (Children's Transport) was a humanitarian rescue programme which ran between 1938 and 1939 saving approximately 10,000 children, the majority of whom were Jewish.
- 16 See prose piece written by Marie Hartley republished in this catalogue. (p.31)
- 17 *Resemblance II*, 1988 was first exhibited at Gertrude Street Gallery, 1987 and toured to Chameleon Gallery, Hobart in 1988. A number of works were included in *Hall of Mirror: Anne Zahalka portraits 1987 – 2007* at the Centre for Contemporary Photography which toured nationally in 2007.
- 18 Art journals, magazines, postcards and old catalogues will be available for the taking to art students.

DISPLACED PERSONS

with Sue Saxon
2003

DATE: 2003



Wallet with family documents from the archive of the artist's mother.

ISLE OF REFUGE, IVAN DOUGHERTY GALLERY, COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, UNSW 12 June – 19 July 2003
UR IN EU, SIR HERMANN BLACK GALLERY & SCULPTURE TERRACE, UNSW 21 April – 22 May 2004
16TH TAMWORTH FIBRE TEXTILE BIENNIAL: A MATTER OF TIME, TAMWORTH CITY GALLERY, NSW November 2004 – 30 January 2005 and regional tour
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM, SYDNEY 5 July – 5 November 2006
EVOLVING IDENTITIES, JEWISH MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA, MELBOURNE (selected works) 2021 – 2023
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023



identity / displaced , 2003



Left to right, top to bottom:
 refuge / refugee, enemy / alien, home / homeless, vermin / jew, szasz / saxon, tokaj / bondi,
 strange / stranger, identity / displaced, countryside / genocide, place / displace, arrive / survive, berth / land, 2003



Left to right, top to bottom:
 possess / dispossessed, hate / hope, homeland / homesick, vaclav / paul,
 occupied / outcast, antipodes / exile, foreign / foreigner, native / citizen, 2003

Hedy Leaving

I see the bulk and the blackness of the camera, the accurate eye of the lens which captures the ephemeral image in a cage without bars—the keeping place for our imaginations.

I see the beauty of the fur draped figure, bearing on her back the purloined garment, of how each individual animal skin, stitched together, forms a sad flag, at once telling of defeat and reluctant triumph. There is cruelty and beauty, joined by a thread.

The woman walks, the coat worn like a heavy, defiant banner. I can see the sole of her shoe, imagine the toes flexing and the heel setting firmly with each step. There is a foot in shadow, a foot in sunlight; it is the left leg, the one bearing more of the past, which is bone-white with remembrance.

As she sets forth, the young woman's shadow stretches in front of her; she seems to follow it. As she walks sturdily towards her destination, it seems as if she takes the past with her, as she must, as she should. She follows her shadow.

The coat is a cloak, for it is clear that it is worn as a cape, and her arms are free. It wraps her slender frame protectively, but I can feel the weight which she walks with.

The blurred shape above the hedge is an outrider, an accompanying angel. Look away and look back at it and it is an animal with empty jaws.

It is another shadow.

Marie Hartley
2022

Marie Hartley is a retired literature teacher and friend of the artist. She lives in Cambridge, England.



I follow you (from original negative taken by Lore Lisbeth Waller, née Back), 2018

GESTURE



DETAILS

1991



Anthony Leeman's *Still Life*, 1655 from Svetlana Alpers' book *The Art of Describing – Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century*, 1983.

CLAYBROOK GALLERY, AUCKLAND 2 July – 20 July 1991
CITY GALLERY, MELBOURNE 6 – 29 February 1992
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023



Detail (from 'The Card Players'), 1991



Detail (from 'The Reader'),
 Detail (from the 'Marriage of Convenience'),
 Detail (from 'The German Woman'), 1991

Detail (from 'The Cleaner'),
 Detail (from 'The Dutch Painter'),
 Detail (from 'The Cook'), 1991

GESTURE

1993

DATE: 1993



Detail from Agnolo Bronzino's *Portrait of Laura Battiferra*, c. 1555–60. Fingers mark a place in an open book of Petrarch's sonnets to Laura.

CITY GALLERY, MELBOURNE 3 – 28 February 1993
ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY, SYDNEY 19 October – 12 November 1994
EMBRACE, TRINITY GRAMMAR SCHOOL, SYDNEY (selected works) 3 – 24 May 1995
ARTISTS IN THE HOUSE1, ELIZABETH BAY HOUSE 21 November – 21 December 1997
WHAT JOHN BERGER SAW, CANBERRA SCHOOL OF ART GALLERY, ACT (selected works) 10 September – 7 November 1999
WHAT JOHN BERGER SAW, INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART, BRISBANE (selected works) 22 March – 5 May 2000
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023

TITLE: Gesture



The Collector, 1997

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



Gesture IV (from Jusepe de Ribera, A Philosopher, 1637),
The Doctor,
The Gentleman, 1993

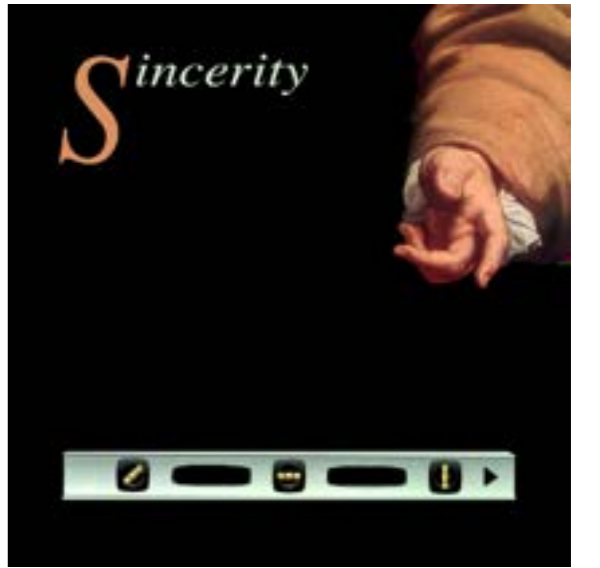


The Mathamatician,
The Geographer,
The Scholar, 1993





The Merchant's Agenda, 1993



Allure, Assert
Confident, Feminine, 1993

Honest, Restrained
Rhetoric, Sincerity, 1993



REALA 1 FUJI REALA REALA 2 REALA 857

REALA 3 FUJI REALA REALA 4 FUJI REALA

REALA 5 FUJI REALA REALA 6 FUJI REALA



REALA 857 REALA 7 FUJI REALA

REALA 8 FUJI REALA REALA 9 FUJI REALA

REALA 10 REALA 11 FUJI REALA



REALA 857

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PEOPLE

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

The major survey exhibition *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive* traces the threads that run through Anne Zahalka's practice and includes more than 290 artworks and artefacts displayed across three gallery spaces at the Museum of Australian Photography (MAPh). The exhibition presents significant bodies of work alongside archival materials drawn from Zahalka's own collection to reveal the interconnectedness and complexity of her practice. The centrepiece of the exhibition is a recreation of the artist's own studio, allowing audiences to access an environment they would rarely enter. This immersive space provides a deeper understanding of the conceptual and practical aspects of an artist's methods which are often hidden and unseen by the public.

Like many artists, Zahalka speaks of the significance of residencies for developing her practice, emphasising the importance of uninterrupted time to reflect, research and create a body of work without the pressures of everyday life. The impact of these residencies is articulated through the progression of a career that spans four decades.

KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN, BERLIN:
RESEMBLANCE (1987)

Zahalka's first residency at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Germany (1986–87) yielded a groundbreaking body of work titled *Resemblance* (1987) in which she re-examined the tropes of Italian Renaissance and Baroque Dutch and German painting within a contemporary context. These works masterfully interweave biographical details of the sitters to reveal personal narratives that explore broader socio-cultural histories and contexts. Having visited Berlin on her first trip overseas, Zahalka felt connected to the place. During the year-long residency, she unearthed more about her own European antecedents and considered the impact of migration on Australia's cultural, political and economic history.

Zahalka fondly remembers this residency which was so influential on her practice. She was 29 at the time and recalls her first night in Berlin. Snow was falling and her large studio in a Gothic building overlooked a park lit by golden floodlights. From her window she could see remnants of a bombed church at one end of the park, and at the other end a church that remained intact. Her simple room contained only a single bed, plan drawers, a cup, bowl, and set of cutlery. Zahalka set out to explore the city and became immersed in museums. There she came face-to-face with artworks she had studied in her high-school books. These encounters led her to consider the global impact of European history and its influence, and she began to draw on century-old conventions of Western art to consider their iconography and value systems.

The residency in Berlin marked a turning point in Zahalka's practice. Up until this time she had integrated found imagery into her work. The *Resemblance* series,

by contrast, drew on the conventions of European paintings from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This series of portraits dissected codified language through the use of objects and the gestures of sitters, revealing a contemporary moment through a historical past. The Cibachrome portraits were constructed using visual cues to associate the lives of contemporary sitters with the rich qualities of Baroque oil painting. *The Cleaner (Marianne Redpath/performance artist)* (1987) ^[page 51], is a portrait of a New Zealand artist who was working as a cleaner in Berlin and draws attention to her work, life and antecedents. A kiwi fruit carefully placed on the table is a nod to her nationality. Her posture echoes that of the sitter in the image in the background—a reproduction of a painting by the sixteenth-century Flemish painter Hans Holbein the Younger. The peeled lemon symbolises deceptive appearances; as Zahalka says 'a lemon is beautiful to look at but sour to taste'.¹ The checkered floor is also an illusion, constructed from sheets of MDF board that had prints on one side. On the other side Zahalka painted a gridded pattern of tiles with black lacquer and applied a marble adhesive. The end of the false floor is visible in the photograph to remind us that the scene is constructed; the one-point perspective of illusionary space terminates in the middle of the wooden floor. In these images, the drape is pulled back to allow the viewer to see into the interiors. This motif also reveals that we are viewing a set, a staged scene where each element combines to tell a story. These illusionary aspects of worlds within worlds create new realities and hybrid spaces. They reveal that portraiture itself is a conceit.

Although staged, there is a naturalism to the portraits. Zahalka has never been comfortable directing sitters. She offers minimal instructions and asks them to play a role or echo a pose from a reference image. In *The Cook (Michael Schmidt/architect)* (1987) ^[page 55], for example, the subject is a young man who studied as an architect but worked as a cook in Berlin. She asked him to pose as a chef—a role he knew well and was passionate about. Zahalka may ask a sitter to tilt their head down, look at the camera or turn away from the light, but she does not instruct them how to look. This results in a naturalism in pose, facial expression and the way they inhabit a space. Her collaborative process extends to the selection of objects included in the portrait. In *The German Woman (Ulrich Grossathe/artist)* (1987) ^[page 53], the sitter wanted to assert her Germanness within the Dutch interior by holding her passport and wearing a Lutheran hat. The contemporary passport is a device which disrupts the nostalgia of looking into the past.

At times Zahalka inserts her own image into her work. In *Marriage of Convenience (Graham Budgett and Jane Mulfinger/artists)* (1987)² ^[page 52] she is reflected in the mirrored dome alongside the fill-light she used to expose how the image is made. The portrait draws on the enigmatic fifteenth-century painting by Jan van Eyck (c. 1390–1441), *The Arnolfini Portrait* (1434) where the painter depicts himself reflected in the mirror behind the couple, presumably acting as a witness to

their marriage oath. In Zahalka's portrait, she blends the historical with the contemporary, similarly applying a complex layering of imagery to suggest meaning. The sitters are artists who were living in Berlin at the time; their passports are placed in the foreground indicating that he is British and she is American. The word *Vernunftfehe* seen above the mirror translates in German to 'marriage of convenience', highlighting the circumstances that enabled the young woman to work in Germany. Like Jan van Eyck, Zahalka stands as witness to this constructed scene.

Resemblance was the first body of work in which Zahalka used portraiture and the dialogue between painting and photography struck a chord with audiences and institutions alike. The series was first shown at the Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney in 1987 before touring nationally and internationally, and many of these works have become iconic within the history of Australian photography. *The Cook* was included in *Australian Photography: The 1980s* curated by Helen Ennis and was selected as the promotional image for the exhibition³ ^[page 199]. *The Cook* and *The Cleaner* were the first of Zahalka's works to enter the national collection of the National Gallery of Australia. Zahalka's works began to permeate the national consciousness, speaking to our sense of self and our shared cultural values and identity.

Zahalka continuously revisits, recontextualises and builds on the imagery and subjects in her works. After returning to Australia, Zahalka embarked on her next series *Resemblance II*, which took her staged portraits into Australian interiors where she recorded herself and her social milieu. The sitter in *The Forger (Stephen Marcus)* (1987) ^[page 75] is depicted copying a religious painting. He was a neighbour and student of Zahalka's who would later become the sitter in *The Sunbather #2* (1989) ^[page 61] from the series *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific*. These echoes and reverberations from past works continue to reappear within her visual vocabulary. In *The Card Player* (1998) ^[page 75] Zahalka's mother sits in a modest European-style interior. She is surrounded by objects of significance: a catalogue documenting her daughter's series *The Landscape Re-presented* is on the table; a Persian carpet from her personal collection is on display; a single word 'shalom' on the letter-holder alludes to her Jewishness. Signature devices are employed throughout Zahalka's work: doors and windows frame scenes and paintings act as windows into other worlds, times and places. The subtle gestures of the sitters and the objects and interiors that surround them help locate a time, place and context.

Zahalka continued to explore the importance of gestures and objects through a number of smaller series. *Details* (1991) is a body of work made during a period when digital manipulation was emerging as a new technology for artists and Zahalka exploited its potential by cloning and erasing elements. For her, this technique addressed the limitations inherent in photomontage and collage—in particular, the inability to remove part of an image without leaving a mark or to clone parts of the image seamlessly. She was particularly

inspired by Walter Benjamin's 1935 essay, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'⁵ as articulated in her artist statement for the series:

*The mass production and dissemination of artwork reproductions throughout the world has been largely responsible for producing and maintaining the 'aura' of the original and the concept of its authenticity. Rather than a freeing of 'its parasitical dependence on ritual' as Walter Benjamin pronounced, the reproduction of artworks has become subservient to the original, responsible for its mass consumption and commodification.*⁴

This hypothesis led her to play with the qualities of the original. She scanned and rescaled details from an image using a catalogue that had a dot screen, then removed aspects of the composition in order to speak to the original image. Details drawn from the *Resemblance* series were isolated in this way and produced as Ilfochrome prints with a very glossy and seductive surface. The works acquired strange textures and qualities that highlighted how images replicate and transform with every iteration and reproduction.

The Gentleman ^[page 40] and *The Geographer* ^[page 41] (both 1994) were drawn from seventeenth-century paintings and are part of a series of works which examine the lexicon of gestures and objects to reveal a unique and complex visual language. First shown in the exhibition *Gesture* at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in 1994, these portraits erased the identity of the sitters, leaving their hands and arms. Influenced by Giotto's frescos in the Assisi Chapel where narratives are articulated through objects and the gestures of the figures, Zahalka began to explore what happens when objects and gestures are separated from the sitter and how this influences our understanding of the subject.

The later series titled *What John Berger Saw* (1999) continued to examine gestures and objects. Drawing from Berger's seminal text, *Ways of Seeing* (1972)⁵ the series comprised 20 blocks that were mounted with images of gestures reproduced from pictures in art history books. Zahalka did not manipulate these images as she wanted to focus on the raw materials. She created fragments of the reference image to interrogate whether a gesture would still retain its initial reading if separated from its original context. Arranged in a grid formation, the blocks focused on elements, gestures and objects to build a 'way of seeing' the layers of meaning held within the traditions of European painting.

Continued on p. 056

RESEMBLANCE

1987



Detail from Johannes Vermeer, *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window* (1657–58).

KUNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN, BERLIN 13 – 29 March 1987
AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY, SYDNEY 25 November – 20 December 1987
CAMERAWORK GALLERY, LONDON 10th May – 11 June 1988
THE INSTITUTE OF MODERN ART, BRISBANE 10 August – 3 September 1988
GERTRUDE STREET GALLERY, MELBOURNE 2 – 26 November 1988
CHAMELEON GALLERY, HOBART 7 January – 4 February 1989
CLAYBROOK GALLERY, AUCKLAND 2 – 20 July 1991
DUBAI PHOTO EXHIBITION (selected works) 16 – 19 March 2016
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE (selected works) 10 June – 10 September 2023



The Cleaner (Maryanne Redpath/performance artist), 1987



Marriage of Convenience (Graham Budgett and Jane Mulfinger/artists), 1987



The Card Players (Mimmo Catania and Ruprecht Dreher/painters),
The Chess Players (Jeff Gibson/artist and Martin Haywood/performance artist),
The Dutch Painter (Guus Koenraads, painter), The German Woman (Ulriche Grossarth/artist), 1987



The Musician (Jon Rose/composer, musician), The Reader (Silke Leverkusne/painter),
The Veterinary (Thomas Ravenbourg/vet), The Writer (Dr Michael Haerdter/director, Künstlerhaus Bethanien), 1987



The Cook (Michael Schmidt/architect), 1987

Artist in Residence (continued)

BONDI PAVILION, SYDNEY:
BONDI: PLAYGROUND OF THE PACIFIC (1989)

Zahalka employed a similar interrogation through her next major series, *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific*, made for her residency at the Bondi Pavilion, which questioned representations of national identity within Australia's art canon.

Bondi: Playground of the Pacific was produced during a period when 'multiculturalism' was a buzzword in Australia. In the wake of the Bicentennial, an event that had celebrated colonisation, Zahalka was invited by the Bondi Pavilion to submit a proposal for a six-month residency. She had recently moved to Bondi, having returned from her residency in Berlin. Zahalka knew the Bondi Pavilion from *Four Photographers*, a self-curated exhibition with artists Ingeborg Tyssen, Martyn Jolly and Ken Heyes, held there in 1981, soon after she graduated from Sydney College of the Arts. In fact, Max Dupain, one of Australia's leading photographers whose famous image *Sunbaker* (1937) was to influence the Bondi series, reviewed *Four Photographers*, writing 'Anne Zahalka is the romantic of the four photographers. She has let her imagination lose by bringing together different ages of cities and places in photo montage. The status quo of photography is stretched into the realm of fantasy.'⁶

The Bondi residency led Zahalka to consider how beach culture had informed Australia's identity, and in particular, to look at the way Bondi itself had become mythologised as representative of the nation. She began to deconstruct narratives around the 'blonde Aussie', reinserting new figures into the cultural fabric — people less Anglo-centric and those who had previously been absent from popular imagery. The series explored the complexity of Australia's national identity by representing the changing face of the nation.

Martyn Jolly in his essay 'Flocking Australians' (1989)⁷ wrote about Zahalka's redress of nationhood:

Take Bondi for instance. How can you photograph somewhere which is not so much a place, as a site for the contestation of nationhoods? Bondi is invested with so many different meanings by so many different people that ... to document it—to collect its 'characters and sights' and celebrate its 'freedom' and 'diversity'—is to do what Bondi already demands, expects and requires: it is to confirm it as the effect of prior representations, and therefore further aggrandise its mythological status.

Zahalka created a parody of the beach by staging her photographic tableaux against a painted backdrop of the beachscape. She sought to redefine 'us' by employing tropes of beach culture. She imported sand from the shoreline into the beachside studio and sitters were recruited from amongst her friends and family, as well as people who frequented Bondi including Japanese surfers [page 65], life savers from the Bondi Surf Life Saving Club [page 65] and a group of cardplayers from migrant backgrounds [page 64].

The *Bondi* series also made reference to art historical images. Charles Meere's painting *Australian Beach Pattern* (1940) became the inspiration for *The Bathers* (1989). Zahalka asked her sitters to echo the poses of Meere's beachgoers holding different objects—a basketball instead of a beach ball, a rubber Lilo instead of a surfboard, plastic buckets and spades. Similarly, Max Dupain's *Sunbaker* (c. 1937) became the basis for *The Sunbather #2*' (1989) [page 61].⁸ The bronzed male body was translated into a pale red-headed figure whose flesh almost blends into the sand. Dupain's original image of Harold Salvage, a builder from the United Kingdom, was snapped as he ran out of the water and flopped down on the sand. This impromptu moment led to the creation of one of the most celebrated and recognisable Australian photographs that perpetuated the myth of the 'bronzed Aussie'. It led Zahalka to question how a visitor could become representative of Australian beach culture and to draw attention to the significance of images in defining what being 'Australian' meant.

Zahalka's re-examination of Australia's shared cultural identity spoke to audiences and academics alike and works from the *Bondi* series have been regularly reproduced in magazines and books ever since. *The Bathers* featured on the front cover of *The Penguin Book of Australian Verse* (originally published in 1972 and reprinted in 1989 [page 70]). These now iconic images continue to challenge the status quo and prompt renewed thinking. What Zahalka would not anticipate was the way the proliferation of her work beyond the context of gallery walls would change its meaning and reception, especially as so many new renditions have recontextualised and repurposed these images. An unsettling image of a refugee lying flat on a beach, *National Icon* (2014) by Sha Sarwari, for example, spoke to the treatment of refugees in Australia, referencing both Zahalka's and Dupain's works. This complex interplay highlights how national identity is constructed through the proliferation of increasingly recognisable images.

Thirty years later Zahalka revisited her iconic work, *The Bathers* for Edmond Capon's TV series 'The Art of Australia' as part of the exhibition *Playground of the Pacific* at Manly Art Gallery and Museum in 2015. In this new work she reflected on the changed demographic of Bondi by inserting diverse ethnicities and cultural groups into this increasingly contested environment. Central to the *The New Bathers* (2013) is a woman in a burkini seated on a deckchair reading a copy of *The Monthly* magazine (December 2011) that has a reproduction of the original *The Bathers* from 1989 on its cover. The composition, based on neoclassical works by Freida Roberts Shore and Charles Meere, is populated with an array of people including migrants, blended families and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

SOFITEL, MELBOURNE:
HOTEL SUITE (2008)

In 2008, Zahalka was invited by Global Art Projects to undertake an artist-in-residency at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins. What interested her most within the hotel were the lives of back-of-house staff and the spaces out of the public gaze. What trace would guests leave behind within this transitory environment? What did their rooms look like after they checked out? Were there signs of what had taken place behind closed doors?

She interviewed staff to gain insight into their experiences of working within these environments. She observed the comings and goings of the guests and the social codes they operated within. She began to consider the hotel as a place of escape, a threshold state, a neutral territory. The hotel creates an illusion of home populated with recognisable domestic objects. *Hotel Suite* (2008) juxtaposed internal hotel spaces with spectacular views of the Melbourne cityscape.

Zahalka considered the filmic tropes of Hitchcock such as the film noir of *Rear Window* (1954), Coen brothers films located in hotels such as *Barton Fink* (1991), and the works of American painter Edward Hopper (1882–1967). She explored the emotional landscape of the hotel room—the loneliness, isolation, alienation and separation guests might feel. In *Room 3621, Hotel Suite* (2008) [page 115] a housekeeper enacts a moment in which she picks up a book strewn on a bedside table. Within this threshold space the hotel maid sees into the world of the guest through the book left behind, *Les Misérables* (1862) by Victor Hugo, which examines the social structures and labour practices that differentiated the rich from the poor in the nineteenth century. Such objects provide us with narratives beyond the surface of the image. In *Room 3721 (with artwork by Lyndell Brown & Charles Green)* (2008) [page 109] a businessman reads *The Economist*. The artwork behind him depicts an astronaut adrift, providing a clue to the sitter's mindset.

Later, Zahalka returned to the Sofitel to complete her first moving image work. She directed a team to produce a two-part 14-minute video *The Strangers Eye* (2008) that examined the impact of surveillance on public spaces. She employed the visual language of CCTV surveillance within the private realm of the hotel room to document the comings and goings of guest and worker. This voyeuristic view of apparently private moments makes the viewer feel uncomfortable, a feeling that is re-enforced and reiterated through the peephole in the hotel door. A sense of alienation is heightened by the ambient sounds within the hotel. When viewed together with the video work, the *Hotel Suite* series looks like an unnerving set of film stills from CCTV footage.

THE BEHAL FEJÉR INSTITUTE, PRAGUE:
THE FATE OF THINGS (2019)

The Fate of Things was the result of a month-long residency at The Behal Fejér Institute in Prague, a historic private villa belonging to a Jewish family

who had converted it into a cultural institute comprising guest quarters and offices. Zahalka installed works made prior to and during her time there amidst these salon rooms. This highly personal work delved into her Czechoslovakian and Jewish heritage in a location close to where her grandmother was deported from during World War II. *A thousand kisses across the sea* (2018) comprises a carpet, letters and a chair in the centre of a room [page 14]. Zahalka had come across the letters when sorting through her mother's belongings shortly after her death. They were written by her grandmother to her mother after they were separated and talk of the shared love, loss and loneliness they both felt, never knowing if they would be reunited. Carpeted across the floor beneath the solitary chair, the letters signal absence, emptiness and the silence that followed their separation. Never before had Zahalka brought to bear so poignantly the impact of migration and the personal loss her family had experienced during the Second World War.

Zahalka is renowned for challenging the status quo by re-presenting moments that are politically and personally charged. The exhibition *ZAHALKAWORLD* seeks to bring all the strands of the artist's practice together alongside the archival fonds that have informed their making. Recreating the artist's archive as both a physical and illusionary space reflects her practice. It is also an experiential and educational room which enables visitors to wander through and view the project folders, preparatory sketches and mock-ups created for the exhibition.

The installation maps the links that bind the series and subjects within Zahalka's practice, while contextualising her work within a broader art historical and social context. The recreation of her studio in the exhibition brings together these links in a contemplative space that is part memoir, part archival exchange. It is as if the artist has become a resident within the gallery itself.

ZAHALKAWORLD provides rare insights into an artist's working life and the creation of some of Australia's most iconic artworks.

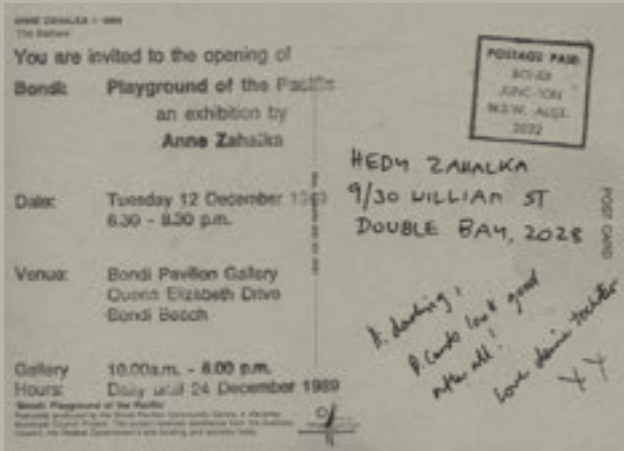
Anouska Phizacklea

END NOTES:

- 1 Anne Zahalka, conversation with the author, 2023.
- 2 *Australian Photography: The 1980's*, exhibition catalogue, National Gallery of Australia, 1988.
- 3 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Trans. JA Underwood, Penguin Books, 2008.
- 4 Anne Zahalka *Notes on Details*, 1992, <https://zahalkaworld.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Notes-on-Details-1992.docx-1.pdf>.
- 5 John Berger, *Ways Of Seeing*. The British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, 1972.
- 6 Max Dupain, 'Four Photographers, Bondi Pavilion Gallery', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1981.
- 7 Martyn Jolly, 'Flocking Australians', *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific*, Bondi Pavilion Gallery, 1989.
- 8 Harry Heseltine, *The Penguin Book of Australian Verse*, Penguin Books Australia, Ringwood, 1972.

BONDI: PLAYGROUND OF THE PACIFIC 1989

DATE: 1989



Postcard with stamped details of exhibition opening addressed to Hedy Zahalka with inscription by the artist.

BONDI PAVILION GALLERY, SYDNEY 12 – 25 December 1989
CAMPBELLTOWN AND ORANGE REGIONAL ART GALLERIES, NSW May 1989
THE BEACH, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART AT HEIDE (selected works) 6 December 1994 – 24 February 1995
SYDNEY PHOTOGRAPHED, MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY (selected works) 21 December 1994 – 13 February 1995
ON THE BEACH, MORNINGTON PENINSULA REGIONAL GALLERY, VICTORIA 11 December 2015 – 28 February 2016
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE (selected works) 10 June – 10 September 2023

TITLE: Bondi: Playground of the Pacific

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

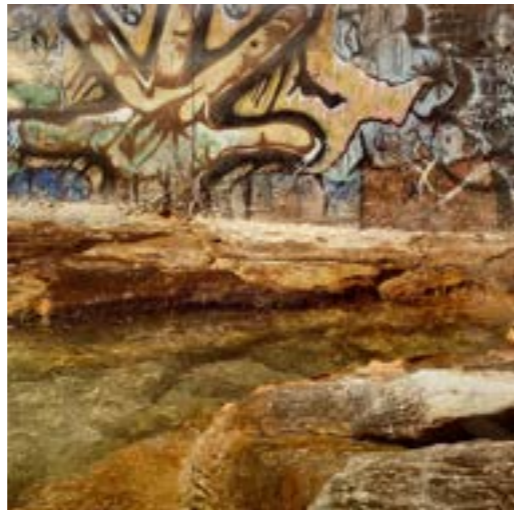
PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



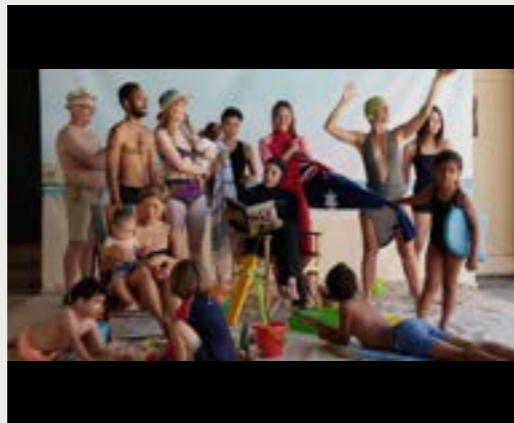
The Bathers, 1989



Detail (boat), Detail (debris),
Detail (fish), Detail (grafitti), 1989



The Sunbather #2, 1989



Stills from video about the making of The New Bathers filmed by Tawfik Elgazzar, 2013



The New Bathers, 2013



The Beach Inspectors, The Boys,
The Card Players, The Council Workers,
The Eisbergs, The Family, 1989

The Surfers, The Grommets,
The Gang, The Lifesavers,
The Migrant Women, The Skateboarders, 1989

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

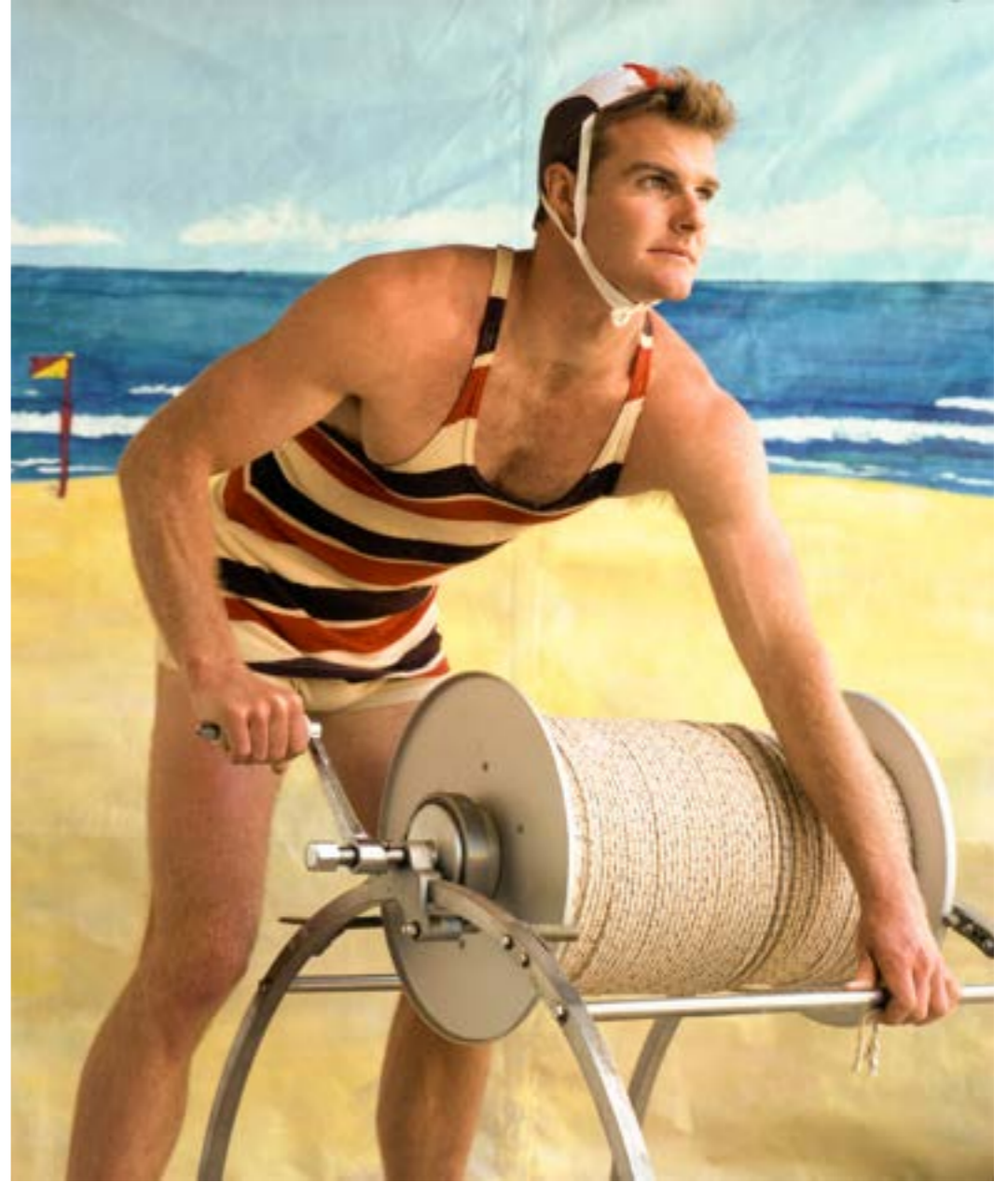
PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



The Girl, 1989



The Lifesaver, 1989

Becoming the Sunbather
(Extract from a letter to Anne Zahalka)

So this is what happened on the day I went swimming at Bronte ... I found myself alone on the beach finishing Rebecca Solnit's *The Faraway Nearby*. It was late afternoon; I was close to the waves thinking of Solnit's experience of her mother disappearing into dementia. Having seen the recent portrait of your dear friend Emily with her Alzheimer's, your original 'Sunbather' [*Sunbather #1*, 1989] (or Proust on the beach as I think of it) and all these fleeting threads ... I feel a bit weird saying this, but it all wrapped around my experience of reading *The Luminous Solution* that you'd given me, and I can't reflect on it without sharing this. I had this quite delightful but totally uncanny embodiment of the 'Sunbather' – not your friend, but the artwork in its entirety – its magic (whatever that is?) and all that I had taken from returning to it over the years and loving it. It wasn't a moment, it was a consciousness that I could slip in and out of for about an hour as I read, in a public place, but in a sensual world all of my own. Upon waking, I dissolved into a kind of dream space, this sort of hallucinatory state, one I was not really in control of, and which enabled me to be enveloped by your 'Sunbather'. I became her for the briefest of most divine moments in all its remarkable and strange liminality. The boundaries between art, selfhood and representation, all unravelling.

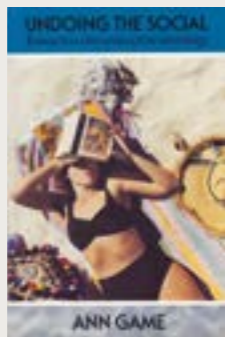
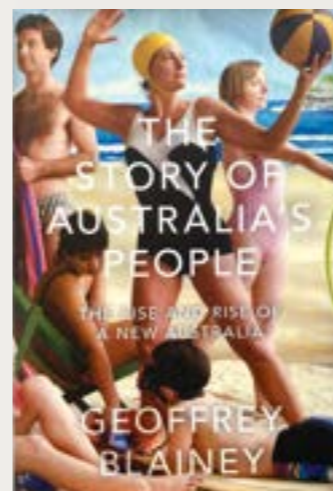
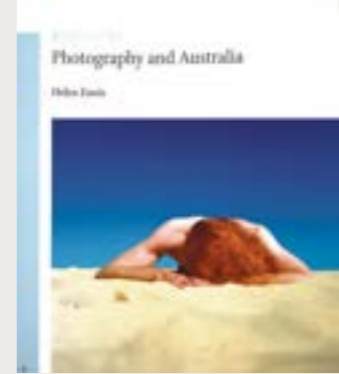
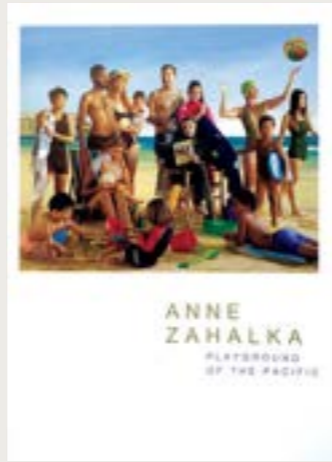
When I told close friends who knew the artwork about this experience, they proclaimed, 'but that's you, J!'. They had always thought that the 'Sunbather' was me (weird). What seemed so amazing to people that know me well, was how obvious my desire was to be the 'Sunbather' and whatever this artwork represents more broadly. This luscious embodiment, this perfect moment for a woman; this freedom to be aesthetic, to be beautiful. And then there was the sensory overlay! Salt on skin, a bed of sand, lapping waves and the knowledge of rock pools with all their small sebaceous life nearby, sun so bright and searing as to heal any bodily ailment. I was possibly only hiding inside an artwork to receive an altered state of being in my own life. Whatever it is, it is delicious and it's this tangible experience of what it means to have this alchemical response to an artwork, to be the viewer completing it. The work has all these strange subconscious kinds of suggestions regarding the nature of being itself, I think, and yet it is also just a lovely day on the beach!

Jasmine Proust
18 February 2022

Jasmine Proust is a midwife and mother of four.
She curated the exhibition *Birth.Art* (2011) with
Tilly Morris at ACU Gallery, Fitzroy.



The Sunbather #1, 1989



Collection of publications and polaroids related to *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific* (1989) and *Playground of the Pacific* (2015)

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE

RESEMBLANCE II

1988

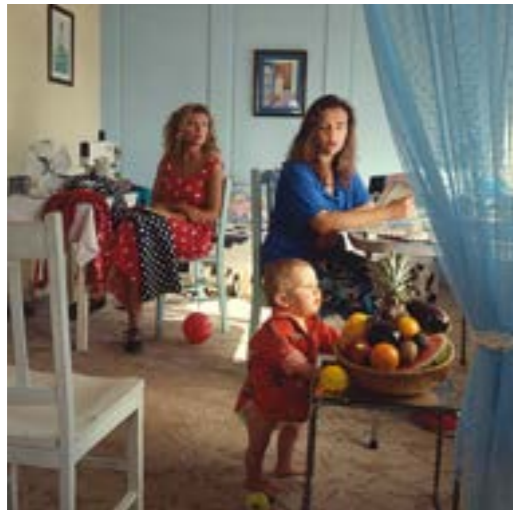


Anne Zahalka looking through a viewfinder for the ABC TV documentary *Face to Face* (1988), written and produced by Stephen Burstow.

200 GERTRUDE STREET, MELBOURNE 2 – 26 November 1988
CHAMELEON GALLERY, HOBART 7 January – 4 February 1989
HALL OF MIRRORS: ANNE ZAHALKA PORTRAITS 1987 – 2007, CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE (selected works) 23 March – 12 May 2007
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023



The Writer Emily Gibson, 1989



The Painter Margaret Gibson, The Reader Ian Collie,
The Sisters Anne and Emily Gibson, The Artist self portrait, 1989



The Botanist Joanne Walsh, The Card Player Hedy Zahalka,
The Cellist Lucy Gibson, The Forger Stephen Marcus, 1989

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE

How Jewish is your home?

In 1997 Anne Zahalka photographed my family in the lounge room of our Newtown terrace. The resulting image appeared in the exhibition *Haimish* (1998) at the Jewish Museum of Australia, where it was one of a series of portraits of Jews at home, or more broadly, depictions of Jewish domesticity. They are richly detailed interiors, formal and informal at once but they differ markedly in their degree of Jewishness. Which is to say that some of them bring the signs and tokens of Jewish identity to an appreciable surface, while others, like the one of my home – do not.

The problem of visualising secular Jews hovers over the photograph of my home as a kind of provocation, inviting a forensic search for something declarative. Jewish homes can certainly brim with such avowals: the mezuzah on the door frame, the heavy brass menorah on the mantelpiece, a fridge magnet from Tel Aviv. In the absence, then, of anything tell-tale, where else can we look for the Jewishness of this home? In the family itself? My son is perched a little too precariously on the table's edge. That kid-stuff spoiling the room's clean lines: the slouching Bananas in Pyjamas bag and the ride-on fire truck responsible for the badly scuffed skirting boards. By convention, Jews are sometimes said to overindulge their children, but also, perversely, to manipulate them by guilt – a durable joke encountered variously in sitcoms and psychoanalysis. But Zahalka's image resists such pitched family drama. We look to the camera, not to each other.

There are books in our room, of course, and Jews are known as 'people of the book'. Although it narrowly references the Hebrew Bible, this phrase also gathers up a claimed culture of bookishness. One of the titles that I know sat on our shelves was George Eliot's surprisingly sympathetic account of Jewish life, *Daniel Deronda* (1876). The novel inspired the Jewish social scientist Joseph Jacobs to ask Francis Galton, Darwin's cousin and the founder of eugenics, to undertake a photographic study of impoverished Jewish school children, in order to understand them better. Galton's method involved briefly exposing multiple portraits on the same negative, building up a composite picture of a general type. The resulting images inaugurate photography's deeply burdened project to know the parts of the Jewish face held in common.

That history necessarily haunts Zahalka's poised image of our home. She sets an investigation of Jewishness in motion, but critically, she arrests it in the very inscrutability of people and things that can't – or won't – furnish the evidence the eye may crave.

David Ellison
2023

David Ellison is Senior Lecturer of Literary Studies and Cultural History at Griffith University. He wrote the essay for the *Leisureland* catalogue in 2000 and delivered a Menzies lecture on this work in London in 2006.



Home 2, David Ellison, Isabel Karpin Ellison and Zachery Karpinellison, 1998

OPEN HOUSE

Anne Zahalka's *Open House* (1995) documents the vernacular interiors of her friends' houses and depicts a particular social milieu acting out quotidian tasks. The nine works in the series were first exhibited in 1996 at Anna Schwartz Gallery where they were presented as large lightboxes illuminated on the white walls.¹ The witty title of the series *Open House* makes reference to houses being 'open for inspection' during property sales. In the same spirit, Zahalka is inviting the viewer to examine the interiors and the relationships portrayed. In the exhibition statement, she wrote that these works 'draw on the language of documentary photography, genre painting, television sitcoms and parody these genres in an ironic and critical manner'.²

Open House centres around kitchens and living rooms. Subtle gestures, postures and facial expressions allow the viewer to construct narratives that Zahalka has directed and chosen to frame. From a surface reading, the viewer is unaware that the protagonists in each of the frames are actually close friends of Zahalka's performing the banalities of everyday life for her camera: watching television, reading the newspaper, sitting on the couch knitting. These were real scenes that surrounded Zahalka and her friends during this period.

When asked about the 'realness' of the images, Zahalka says that she didn't give much direction to the subjects; her images recorded a ready-made world based on encounters and observations from actual scenes. Her photographic process was slow and laborious, as well as 'physically and emotionally demanding'.³ Unable to afford an assistant and working alone, she would carry her equipment — a Mamiya RB camera pack with Polaroid back, 120 film, a large kit of strobe lights with stands and a tripod — to her friends' houses, spending the next few hours setting up and taking the photos. Zahalka looks back at *Open House* fondly as a time in her 30s before she and her friends 'settled down'.⁴ She talks about the moments they shared and the excitement of looking through the proof sheets together.⁵

Zahalka's artistic practice has been defined by skilful construction of images that offer alternative ways of seeing. For the last 40 years she has held a mirror to our visual history, producing photographs that are redolent and complex. She often plays with the relationship between documentary and staged photography and employs visual tropes to amplify the 'realness' of the images: the even light, the long depth of field to present as much detail as possible, the gaze of the characters who never directly address the camera to imply a fly-on-the wall approach, and the title of each work as a day and time. These are all strategies applied to remake scenes and to comment on the veracity of photography and its ability to lie or tell the truth.

Zahalka cites the 11-minute short film *Passionless Moments* (1983) by New Zealand director Jane Campion as an influence when making this series.⁶ Consisting of 10 short vignettes, Campion's film engages a documentary style to examine moments within the everyday. Like Zahalka, Campion was inspired by

real events, saying that the film 'explores those private, quirky (and yet somehow universal) thoughts and experiences, and documents a much-neglected aspect of the human condition, known to psychologists as passionless moments'.⁷ Campion and Zahalka began their professional careers around the same time and in 1983 Zahalka had just made and exhibited *The Landscape Re-presented* at the Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney. The following year, she worked as photographer on Campion's *A Girl's Own Story*.

In 1986 Zahalka moved to Berlin for an artist residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien (1986–87), which culminated in the series *Resemblance* (1987), a precursor to the *Open House* series. In particular Zahalka drew visual references from *Resemblance II* (1989)⁸ by including *The Dutch Painter (Guus Koenraads, painter)* (1986) on the wall of the image *Wednesday 8.40pm* (1995) [page 88], bringing into focus the link between the two series. During her time in Berlin Zahalka began to study the gestures, facial expressions and body language of seventeenth-century European painting and apply them to portrait photography. A key reference was American art historian Svetlana Alper's seminal text, 'The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century'.⁹ This essay became the preamble for the *Resemblance* series and provided a way for Zahalka to construct and layer her photographic still-lives and tableaux.

After her return to Australia, Zahalka wrote a research paper *Resemblance and Displacement: The mixing of conventions*, for her post graduate diploma at Sydney College of the Arts in 1989.¹⁰ In the thesis she explored the aesthetic conventions of Dutch seventeenth-century painting, in particular the portraits of Johannes Vermeer, Jan Steen and Gabriël Metsu and the still-lives of Willem Kalf and Araham van Beyeren. She drew references from these 'genre' paintings and the art-historical codes employed — such as how sitters are placed to signify their status through gesture, posture and the objects they surround themselves with. She wrote, 'Though the camera cannot change the visual recording of a person's face, there are a number of ways in which manipulation does occur through lighting, framing, pose, and positioning, all of which influence the way in which the sitter's identity can be understood'.¹¹

Zahalka's photographs are often interwoven with visual links to previous works. She inserts fragments and relies on the active participation of the viewer to decode her images. The checkered floor in *The Cleaner (Marianne Redpath/performance artist)* (1987) is referenced in the black and white linoleum tiles in *Saturday, 5.18pm* (1995) and again through a checkerboard placed on the coffee table in *Wednesday, 8.40pm* (1995) [page 88]. The insertion of these props is deliberate and informed by Zahalka's interest in mnemonic devices as reminders of historical Dutch and European motifs. Again, she is referencing Alper's analysis of how works expose micro-details to the viewer that reveal things about a subject.

The work, *Saturday, 2.48pm* (1995) [page 81] portrays flatmates, Wendy and Lloyd in their kitchen in Bondi. Lloyd sits at the table reading *The Sydney Morning*

Herald, while Wendy is standing, caught in her own internal thoughts. Zahalka has captured them together, but alone, detached from each other. On the back benchtop is a vase of tulips — a reference to Dutch still-lives, a trope used in other works including *Sunday, 11.08am* (1995) [page 89] which has a fake modernist sculptural tulip atop a glass coffee table. On the wall is a calendar with architectural images by Austrian artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser, marking the date the portrait was made. Postcards adorn the fridge door and act as a precursor to Zahalka's series *Leisureland* which explores how postcard imagery commodifies ideas about place. Outside the window, a pitched ceramic tiled roof indicates the claustrophobia of neighbouring houses in this suburban setting. Together, these visual clues denote the subjects' interests and their relationship to the things in the environment they inhabit.

Zahalka also recasts familiar faces and friends across series. In the work *Monday, 11.48pm* (1995) [page 88], she casts her friend Emily Gibson as the protagonist. For Zahalka, Gibson has always been her go-to model and muse. She featured in multiple series including *The tourist as theorist: theory takes a holiday* (1984), *The Writer* (1987), *The Sisters (Emily and Anne Gibson)* (1987) and *The Sunbather #1* (1989). In *The Writer* Gibson sits at a desk with an image of *The Sisters (Emily and Anne Gibson)* in the background. Almost ten years later, Gibson sits at another desk in a new environment, still dressed in the same clothes and in a similar pose, but this time she is with someone who the viewer assumes is her partner. Time acts as a connecting passage across different series, as we witness the aging and evolution of characters.

Windows, doorways and drapes feature across Zahalka's *Resemblance* and *Open House* as metaphorical openings for the viewer. As if exposing a private moment, curtains are pulled back and characters are framed by doors, such as in the work *Monday, 11.48pm* (1995) [page 89]. These architectural details often symbolise a voyeuristic view into the work: in *Saturday, 5.18pm* (1995) [page 85], for example, the open door directs the viewer into the room and the interior thoughts of the couple. This simple device leads us into the lives of others. The window has been used in art for centuries, either as a light source or as a framing device. Zahalka is acutely aware of these codes and uses them to carefully frame her subjects. Her works are also full of props such as bowls of fruit and fresh cut flowers. Purposefully arranged as a nod to seventeenth-century Dutch painting, fruit become symbols of transience and the impermanence of time. When asked about them, Zahalka replied that lemons are 'beautiful to look at, but sour to taste. The photographs look like paintings and play the game of deceptive appearances'.¹²

Presented alongside Zahalka's *Open House* works at Anna Schwartz Gallery in 1996 were nine discrete works all called *Untitled* featuring details taken from the portraits and digitally montaged into an elliptical shape on face-mounted blocks. These are some of Zahalka's earliest digital works.¹³ From a print, she scanned an element, removed information, then added colour to the background. The prints display objects

such as teapots, fruit bowls and vases which have been selected, removed from their original context and framed, so that we recognise their role within the portraits. They become symbolically charged, directing our gaze to key elements in the scene.

The presentation mode of the lightbox is a deliberate nod to Canadian artist Jeff Wall (1946–), known for his large format conceptual photographic tableaux. Zahalka adopted the lightbox as a way of illuminating these domestic settings, making the works more intense with richly saturated colours. She says, 'I wanted to use this commercial advertising product that promotes ideals of beauty, power and glamour to represent normal people going about their daily lives in a real way'.¹⁴ Zahalka first employed lightboxes in her series *Fortresses and Frontiers* (1993) shown at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in the same year. These seven urban landscapes were early examples in which Zahalka focused her lens on the cityscape from an exterior point of view.

The construction of identity has been one of Zahalka's preoccupations for the last 40 years. In particular, she is interested in how contemporary portraiture can be seen through an art historical lens and what that teaches us. Looking back on this series, Zahalka is nostalgic about the people portrayed — where the subjects are now and which of the relationships have sustained. These frames act as a time capsule in Zahalka's life, held together by strong emotions and acts of friendship — familiar acts of 'nothingness' acting as vessels of memory. Like the vases and fruit bowls in her works, they remind us of photography's connection to the transience of life.

Angela Connor
Senior Curator, Museum of Australian Photography

END NOTES:

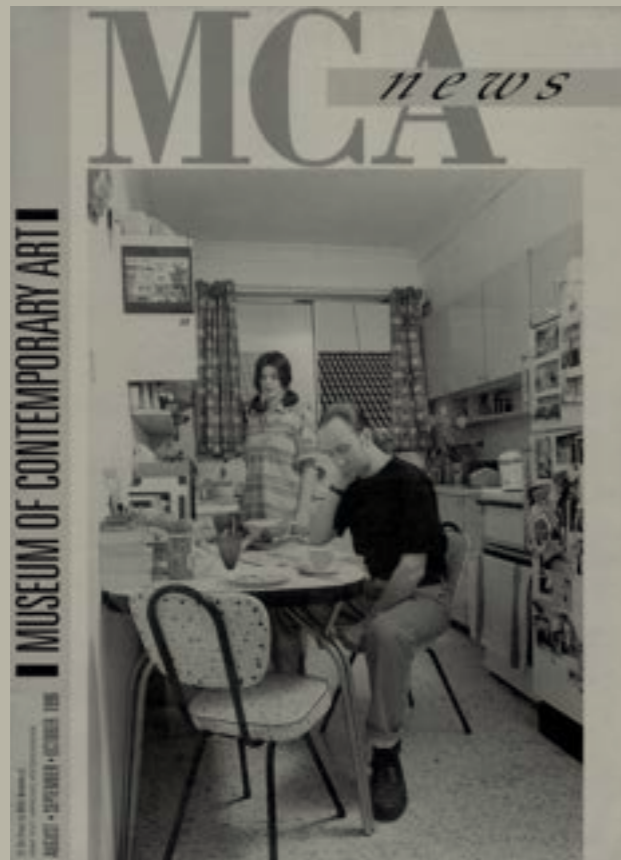
- Zahalka later added two more to the series, which were produced as chromogenic prints and shown in *Group Show* at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery in 2000.
- Anne Zahalka, catalogue statement, *Open House*, Anna Schwartz Gallery, September 1996.
- Maggie Finch, 'A montage of memory: a conversation with Anne Zahalka', in Myfanwy Doughty et al. (eds), *A Memory for Tomorrow*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, forthcoming, n.p.
- Anne Zahalka in conversation with the author, 17 January 2023.
- Maggie Finch, 'A montage of memory', n.p.
- Anne Zahalka in conversation with the author, 17 January 2023.
- <https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/passionless-moments-1983>. Retrieved 15 February 2023.
- Series created on her return to Australia for an exhibition at Gertrude Street Gallery, Melbourne in 1989.
- Svetlana Alper, 'The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol 153, No 1301, Aug 2011, pp. 532–36.
- Anne Zahalka, *Resemblance and Displacement: The mixing of conventions*, Post Graduate Research Paper, Photography Department, Sydney College of the Arts, 1991.
- Anne Zahalka, *Resemblance and Displacement*, p. 8.
- Anne Zahalka in conversation with the author, 18 February 2023.
- Anne Zahalka's first digital series, 'Details' was made in 1991 and acquired by Monash Gallery of Art in 1992.
- Maggie Finch, 'A montage of memory', n.p.

OPEN HOUSE

1996

DATE: 1996

TITLE: Open House



Cover of newsletter from the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney featuring the exhibition *Photography is Dead! Long live Photography!* (1997).

OBJECT OF EXISTENCE, AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, MELBOURNE (selected works) 8 – 22 December 1995
PROSPECT: PHOTOGRAPHY IN CONTEMPORARY ART, FRANKFURT KUNSTVEREIN, FRANKFURT 9 March – 12 May 1996
PHOTOGRAPHY IS DEAD! LONG LIVE PHOTOGRAPHY!, MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, SYDNEY (selected works) 23 July – 9 November 1996
ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY 4 – 30 September 1996
FOTOGALERIE IN DER ALTEN FEUERWACHE, MANNHEIM, GERMANY 3 – 21 December 1997
DISTANZ UND DOMIZIL, KUNSTHAUS, DRESDEN 24 April – 15 June 1997
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023



Saturday, 2.48 pm, 1995

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



Untitled (Thursday, 8.33pm, 1995), 1995



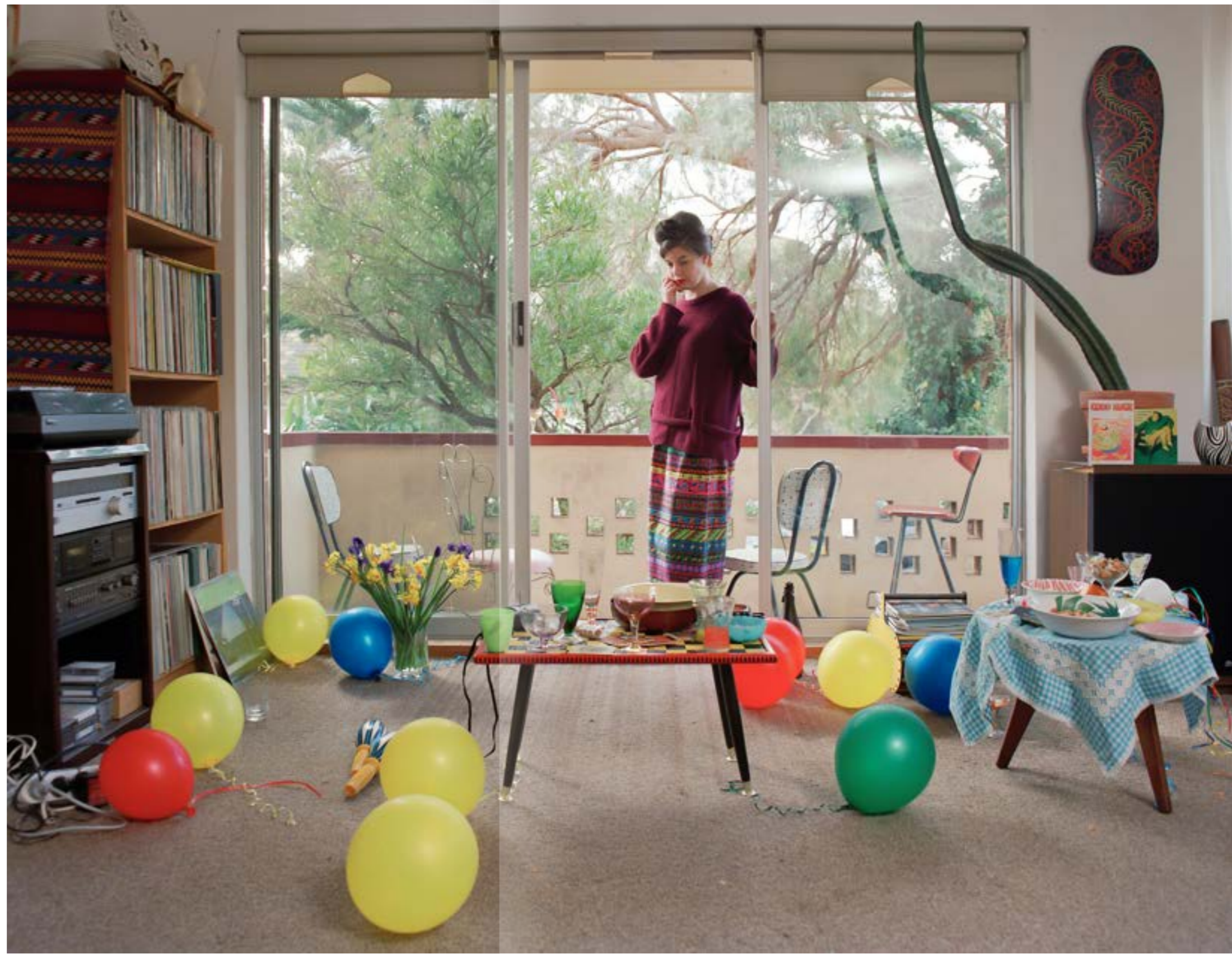
Thursday, 8.33pm, 1995



Untitled (Saturday, 5.18pm 1995), 1995



Above: Saturday, 5.18pm, 1995
Next page: Sunday, 2.09pm, 1995





Wednesday, 8.40pm, 1995
 Monday, 11.48pm, 1995
 Tuesday, 9.10pm, 1995



Wednesday, 10.23pm, 1995,
 Sunday, 11.08am, 1995,
 Monday, 8.08am, 1997

PLACE



LEISURELAND

Anne Zahalka is widely known for her use of photography as a means of social documentation and commentary. She often draws on visual cultural references to explore themes of representation, cultural identity, tourism and spectacle, as well as our relationship to the natural world. An influx of themed entertainment spaces in Sydney in the late 1990s led Zahalka to begin documenting commodified sites of sport and leisure. Photographing the places people go to in their spare time, and in particular the way people behave in those spaces, she created her series *Leisureland* (1998–2001). Zahalka worked on location for this series, as she had for *Fortresses and Frontiers* (1993), adopting a documentary mode of picture-making. She began the series in Sydney, focusing on a range of attractions, such as theme parks, casinos, cinemas, gaming rooms, museums, aquariums and sporting centres. She later received an Australia Council Fellowship, which enabled her to continue the series into regional New South Wales and the Gold Coast where she photographed locally specific events and attractions for what became *Leisureland Regional* (2000–03). Together, the metropolitan and regional works make up Zahalka’s *Leisureland* series which comprises over ninety large-scaled richly coloured chromogenic prints and is now considered one of her most significant bodies of work.

Zahalka took inspiration for *Leisureland* from a catalogue of postcard photography by the English photographer John Hinde (1916–1997) who made idealised images of people enjoying thematised holiday destinations in the United Kingdom in the 1950s and 1960s.¹ Using special printing techniques and lighting effects, Hinde made dark, dingy spaces look bright and cheerful.² Zahalka was struck by the way he manipulated ‘colours, exposures and scenes to create dazzling hyper-real images’.³ She drew on this aesthetic for *Leisureland*, using rich colours to expose the artificiality inherent in these places and the kind of picture-perfect imagery traditionally associated with the representation of leisure and tourist sites more broadly. In *Cole Classic* (1998) [page 95] for instance, Zahalka turns a picture of an annual event at Bondi Beach into a hyper-real vision of colour, light, form and spectacle.

For *Leisureland* Zahalka combined analogue and digital processes, using a Mamiya 67 camera to shoot colour negative 120 mm film. Opting for high film speeds to accommodate the often low-light environments, Zahalka was able to maximise her depth of field while using faster shutter speeds to reduce motion blur. She would then scan her negatives before making occasional corrections to colour density if required.⁴ Occasionally Zahalka would also splice two different negatives together in the one image. This was required in images, such as *Imax Cinema* (1999) [page 99] where the screen needed a 20-second exposure, but the audience needed a two-minute exposure. In *Jacaranda Ball, Grafton* (2000) [page 103] Zahalka made a more aesthetically-inspired digital intervention, flipping and doubling her negative to create a circular and formally complete composition while

heightening the spectacle of the event and immersing viewers in a sea of white and purple. While her minor interventions in these works serve particular aesthetic and conceptual functions, Zahalka’s documentary intentions remain key to the making of this series.

Zahalka printed her final images onto mural-size photographic paper, creating large, immersive photographs in a scale traditionally associated with other art forms, such as painting and advertising. This format was partly inspired by the German photographer Andreas Gursky (1955–) who is known for his large-scale colour photographs of the contemporary world. Like Gursky, Zahalka often worked with a raised and distanced viewpoint to make highly detailed formal images of crowds and spaces with deep fields of focus so that no part of the picture plane is favoured over another. This approach is particularly evident in some of Zahalka’s interiors, such as *Star City Casino (after Breughel)* (1998), which looks down on a hive of gambling activity. Creating a homage to the Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painter, Pieter Breughel (c. 1525–1569), Zahalka draws parallels in this work between contemporary life in the casino and Breughel’s scenes of folly, licentiousness and greed painted from elevated perspectives.⁵ In *Derrida Lecture* (1999) [page 96] Zahalka again looked down on her scene, giving everything equal clarity and sharpness. Formally striking and aesthetically symmetrical, this panoramic image has been composed from the centre of the room, high up behind the last row of seats. Highlighting the sheer spectacle of this event, the central point of concentration here is a projected image of Derrida onto a screen, which looms somewhat humorously over his tiny seated figure, on stage with then Sydney University academic Terry Smith.⁶

While Zahalka cites the influence of Gursky’s cool, distanced documentary style in the making of her *Leisureland* series, her approach to the documentary tradition is warmer and more affectionate than that of the German photographer.⁷ Humour, irony and strangeness are wound up in Zahalka’s images of Australians at leisure, and this comes particularly to the fore in *Open Air Cinema* (1999) [page 104], which shows an audience staring at a blank cinema screen. Glowing white in front of spectacular views of Sydney Harbour at night, this screen awaits the emergence of a spectacle of distraction. In another uncanny encounter between a screen and rows of spectators, the eyes of Big Brother loom ominously over an expectant audience in *Big Brother – Eviction Night Audience, Dreamworld* (2001). Zahalka is not only interested in the spectacle of these events, but also in the way audiences engage with them; in this work she turns her camera onto the faces of the spectators, highlighting their expressions as they await the news of the pending eviction. Zahalka also made a number of portraits for this series, which studied the faces and gestures of people in these places more closely. In a surreal family portrait, a group stands awkwardly beside a wax simulation of Arnold Schwarzenegger in *Madam Tausaud’s Wax Museum* (1998) [page 98]; *Zoo* (1998) shows the humorous juxtaposition of a man and the primates he watches; while *Masquerade Ball, Armidale Autumn Festival* (2001) [page 103] affectionately portrays an elderly couple posing proudly in their finery at an event for their local community.

Many of Zahalka’s chosen entertainment spaces marketed themselves as ‘worlds’ and spouted slogans, such as ‘Step into a world that’s totally wild’ (Sydney Wildlife World), ‘Get out of everyday land’ (Wonderland, Sydney) and ‘As close as you can get to the real thing’ (Madam Tausaud’s)⁸. Functioning as vehicles for escapism, these spaces were often created as simulated environments for mediated experiences. Nature and the real world are replicated to varying degrees in these places, creating an experience of being elsewhere.⁹ In *Imax Cinema* (1999), technology transports an audience to a far-off land via a giant screen, and in *Oceanworld* (1999) [page 98] visitors are immersed in an underwater environment without needing to get wet. The subjects of *Aquaerobics, Temple of Body and Soul* (1999) float under a painted sky that is always blue; the bathers in *Aquatic Centre, Sydney Olympic Park* (1998) are surrounded by palm trees, immersed in the illusion of a tropical paradise; and in *Rock climbing Gym* (1998) the experience of an alpine adventure is simulated indoors in a set-up Zahalka describes as being ‘somewhere between the Flintstones and Micky Mouse’.¹⁰

Artificial representations of nature are also found in Zahalka’s images of Sydney’s newly built Star City Casino. As well as being interested in this building as a site of leisure and gambling activity, Zahalka was fascinated by its design, which emulated parts of the natural world. The interior spaces were themed around the Australian landscape, simulating the desert, the tropics and the ocean through the insertion of fake boulders, glittering palm trees, suspended glass bubbles, colour schemes and lighting effects.¹¹ These strange natural simulations are as much a focus of works like *Star City Casino (after Breughel)* (1998) and *Star City Casino (Oasis)* (1998) [page 102] as the activities taking place within them. For Zahalka, these artificial experiences of nature in internal environments were like dioramas; she notes ‘they have this artificial, almost backdrop quality about them’.¹² To a large degree, her subsequent and continuing work with dioramas was sparked by this aspect of the *Leisureland* series.

In *Scenic Skyway* (1999) [page 103] leisure and nature come together in a different way. Nature here becomes pure spectacle, experienced artificially through a suspended cable car, which intervenes in the natural environment to enable immersive experiences in an otherwise inaccessible landscape. This image documents the original cable car that had been operating in the Blue Mountains since Zahalka’s childhood but which has since been replaced.¹³ For Zahalka, this is a nostalgic site, a place she often visited as a child, and a place she has returned to for subsequent work.¹⁴ Much of the warmth in *Leisureland* comes from Zahalka’s own familiarity with and affection for sites such as this one. Zahalka’s feelings of nostalgia towards the Sydney Royal Easter Show emerge in a number of her works. She cites a particular connection to the subject of *Agricultural Display* (1998), which shows one of the annually changing themed displays that ‘respond to current calamities or celebrate a good year’s produce’.¹⁵ Zahalka has fond childhood memories of these displays and, at the time of making *Leisureland*, she was visiting these locations with her young daughter who helped her see them through the eyes of a child again.¹⁶

In this extensive and engaging series of formally striking immersive photographs, Zahalka creates a land of leisure in which everyday pastimes, beyond the traditional walk in the park, are documented. The breadth of subject matter shown in *Leisureland* ensures there will be points of connection for most viewers, even as they look at the images over two decades later. For some, feelings of nostalgia or familiarity will be triggered by regionally specific events, like *Parade, Armidale Autumn Festival, Miss Motor Extravaganza Entrants* (2001) [page 102]; for others it might be recollections of the Sydney Olympics, sparked by *Live site, Sydney Olympics* (2000). Or perhaps it will be the image of the fake volcano in *Sea World, Bermuda Triangle* (2001) that triggers childhood memories and a hint of sadness at the realisation that this ride no longer exists.

Maintaining their relevance today, the works in *Leisureland* provide us with a valuable documentary record of the places and spaces depicted. Widely accessible through its diverse and familiar subjects, the series might also serve to alter the way we wander through these leisure environments, providing us with the resources to become active thinkers rather than passive spectators. On a recent trip to the zoo in Melbourne, for instance, I found myself more aware of the strange artificiality of the whole experience, especially when my four-year-old son asked if we would get wet while walking through a dark underground corridor to visit the seals. One of the important and enduring aspects of *Leisureland* is the opportunity it provides us to reflect on our engagement with these often artificial sites of leisure. As a consequence, and more significantly, it encourages us to think about and re-evaluate our relationship with the natural world.

Stella Loftus-Hills
Curator, Museum of Australian Photography

END NOTES:

- ¹ *Hindsight*, retrospective of John Hinde studio, curated by Martin Parr with David Lee and Declan McGonagle, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland, 1991.
- ² Anne Zahalka in conversation with the author, February 2023.
- ³ <https://www.vizardfoundationartcollection.com.au/the-nineties/explore/anne-zahalka/>.
- ⁴ Zahalka notes that most of her original negatives were initially printed directly as analogue prints by Sandy Barnard from Sandyprints. The technology had advanced early on in the production of the series, allowing her to scan her negatives and print them digitally onto photographic paper as chromogenic prints. This offered more control than analogue hand-printing.
- ⁵ Anne Zahalka, correspondence with the author, February 2023.
- ⁶ Blair French mentions this in his essay: ‘The photogenic image: Anne Zahalka’s *Leisureland*’ <https://www.zahalkaworld.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Blair-French-CCP-public-.pdf>.
- ⁷ This is also discussed in Daniel Palmer’s text on Zahalka in Blair French and Daniel Palmer, *Twelve Australian photo artists*, Piper Press, 2009, p.185.
- ⁸ Quotes taken from original brochures in the artist’s archive.
- ⁹ Sourced from Zahalka’s original artist statement, found in the artist’s archive, February 2023.
- ¹⁰ Zahalka in conversation with the author.
- ¹¹ Zahalka in conversation with the author.
- ¹² Zahalka in conversation with the author.
- ¹³ The cable car has recently been unveiled in its latest iteration with rainbow colours celebrating Sydney World Pride 2023. <https://australianpridenetwork.com.au/1conic-scenic-skyway-swaps-yellow-for-rainbow-to-celebrate-sydney-worldpride-2023/>.
- ¹⁴ Zahalka in conversation with the author.
- ¹⁵ Zahalka correspondence with the author.
- ¹⁶ Zahalka’s daughter makes an appearance as an underwater spectator in *Oceanworld* (1999).

LEISURELAND 1999



Collection of brochures from theme parks and events for Leisureland research and development.

ANNA SCHWARTZ GALLERY, MELBOURNE 6 – 30 October 1999
ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY, SYDNEY 3 – 20 May 2000
SPORTING LIFE, MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, SYDNEY (selected works) 16 August – 13 November 2000
PHOTOGRAPHICA AUSTRALIS, SALA DEL CANAL DE ISABEL II, MADRID (selected works) 15 February – 10 April 2002
MONASH GALLERY OF ART, MELBOURNE 6 September – 20 October 2002
NEW AUSTRALIANA, REGIONAL TOUR (selected works) 3 December 2002 – 20 April 2003
PHOTOGRAPHICA AUSTRALIS, ASIALINK TOUR (selected works) 30 July 2003 – 2004
LEISURELAND REGIONAL, GRAPTON REGIONAL GALLERY AND NATIONAL REGIONAL TOUR 24 June 2004 – 31 July 2005
MY CITY OF SYDNEY, MUSEUM OF SYDNEY 20 November 2004 – 26 November 2006
DE OVERKANT/DOWN UNDER, THE HAAG MUSEUM OF PHOTOGRAPHY 15 June – 9 September 2007
EMBASSY OF AUSTRALIA, WASHINGTON DC 28 September – 15 November 2007
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023



Aquaerobics, Temple of Body and Soul, 1999; Aquatic Centre, 1998;
Bingo, 1998; Cole Classic, 1998;
Fashions on the Field, Lockhart Picnic Races, 2001; Timezone, 1998

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



Derrida Lecture, 1999

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



Laser Zone, 1998; Madam Tausaud's Wax Museum, 1998;
Live Site, Sydney Olympics, 2000;
Oceanworld, 1999; Parade, Armidale Autumn Festival, 2000



Penrith Panthers, interactive gaming, 1998; Robosaurus, 1999;
Imax Cinema, 1999;
Sega World, 1998; Star City Casino (after Breugel), 1998



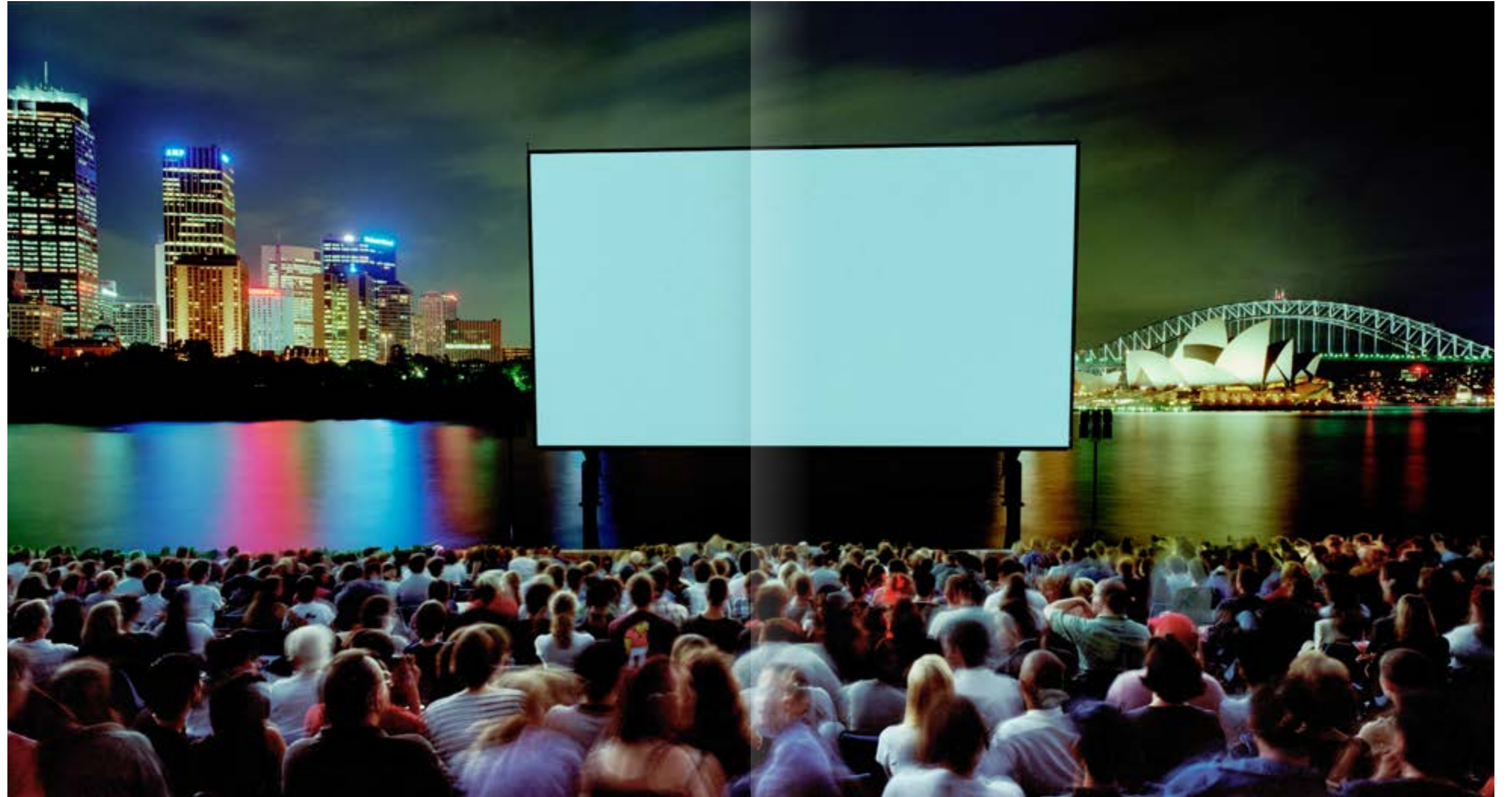
AFL, Sydney Cricket Ground, elimination final, 1999



Star City Casino (Oasis), 1998; Arts and Crafts Hall, Wagga Wagga Show, 2001; Parade, Armidale Autumn Festival, Miss Motor Extravaganza Entrants, 2001; Wood Chop Stadium, 1999; Zoo, 1998



Masquerade Ball, Armidale Autumn Festival, 2001; Model Railway, 1998; Jacaranda Ball, Grafton, 2000; Scenic Skyway, 1999; Sea World, Bermuda Triangle, 2001



Open Air Cinema, 1999

HOTEL SUITE

2008

DATE: 2008



Installation view of *Hotel Suite* in the exhibition *The Stranger's Eye*, Peloton Gallery, Chippendale, 2010.

SOFITEL MELBOURNE ON COLLINS, SOFI'S LOUNGE AND MAIN LOBBY, MELBOURNE 1 July – 2 September 2008
THE STRANGER'S EYE, PELETON GALLERY, CHIPPENDALE (selected works) 1 – 24 July 2010
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023

TITLE: Hotel Suite



Room 4729, 2008

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



Room 3721, view to Exhibition Building, 2008



Room 3721 (with artwork by Lyndell Brown & Charles Green), 2008



Room 4212, 2008



Room 4212, view to Treasury Gardens (left panel), 2008



Room 3905, view to Fitzroy Gardens, 2008



Room 3905, 2008



Room 4927, view to Southbank, 2008



Room 3621 (Dora), 2008



Room 4927, view to Melbourne Cricket Ground, 2008



Room 4117 (with artwork by John Brack), 2008



Room 4212, view to Treasury Gardens (right panel), 2008



Room 4321 (with artwork by Vanilla Netto), 2008



Room 4513 (with artwork by Pat Brassington), 2008



Fitzroy Gardens at Night, 2008

The Stranger's Eye

Anne Zahalka's exploration of the human being in lived environments is constructed rather than natural, shifting between portraits taken in the comfort of one's own habitat such as the living room, and those taken in the discomfort of 'somewhere else'. The place of the 'elsewhere', encountered by the migrant, the tourist or the traveler, is a space where one is out of one's comfort zone, intuiting different levels of an alien environment. In *Hotel Suite* Zahalka takes the liminal space of the hotel room and gives it a twist. The viewer of the photograph becomes the voyeur and the guest becomes the object of our gaze, seemingly trapped in the non-place of a hotel. Notions of alienation, transgression, desire and adventure are explored through the mediums of photography and film, focusing on several individuals in various states of psychological unravelling that the viewer experiences through the processes of surveillance. Much like Alice in Wonderland, in Zahalka's video *The Stranger's Eye*, we are taken through a peephole into the private world of several guests at the Sofitel Hotel in Melbourne, some of whom are also exploring their own inner voyeur. Time is in a void here, day turns to night and the lights of the city flicker beyond the blinds; the only evidence of life other than one's own breathing is the occasional noise of guests making their way to or from the hotel lobby. The photographs of individual guests engrossed in their own thoughts, dreams and nightmares are interspersed with photographs of the city at night and at dusk; the city lights punctuate the darkness and the major arterial roads scar the image with their jagged and shimmering haze. The general feeling is one of contrasting claustrophobia and agoraphobia: the barrier of the hotel windows offer little solace to those inside who sense the inevitability of departure—a leaving that offers only the consolation of being able to go home.

Donna West Brett
2010, updated 2023

Donna West Brett is a writer and Associate Professor and Chair of Art History at the University of Sydney. She curated the exhibition *The Stranger's Eye* at Peloton Gallery, Chippendale in 2010.



Room 5053, 2008

THE LANDSCAPE REIMAGINED

The Australian landscape has remained a major focus within Zahalka's practice. At first, she referenced early landscape painting to examine its importance in establishing notions of Australian national identity. More recently, Zahalka has turned her lens towards the landscape itself to explore the Anthropocene and the devastating impact humans are having on the environment.

Soon after concluding her Bachelor of (Visual) Arts at Sydney College of the Arts in 1979, Zahalka left Australia for the United States and Europe. This was a transformative experience for the young artist who encountered historical art she had only ever seen in books, as well as the work of emerging international practitioners. During this trip Zahalka observed the new wave of postmodern art, especially that which challenged modernist narratives through a feminist lens. In New York she was inspired by the work of Cindy Sherman whose photographic portraits employed cinematic techniques to question the construction of identity. Back-projected and singular in focus, Sherman's works rewrote accepted discourses by using well established visual language and staged settings to probe the status quo. In response to her experiences overseas, Zahalka made *The Tourist as Theorist: theory takes a holiday*, a determinative series in which she staged tableaux that drew on the 'film still' approach of Sherman's practice [below].



The Tourist as Theorist - theory takes a holiday, 1985

The distance afforded by this first trip also led Zahalka to question the increasingly nationalistic representations of Australia's cultural identity in blockbuster exhibitions such as *Golden Summers: Heidelberg and Beyond* at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1985. She became particularly concerned with 'the proliferation of exhibitions and their promotion of the Australian landscape as a source of meaning, perpetuating the mythologies of colonial settlement'.¹

In response Zahalka began to work on one of her most formative series, *The Landscape Re-presented* (1983–95). The series interrogated identity and explored notions of belonging by integrating found and familiar historical images. Zahalka brought iconic Australian paintings by colonial artists into

conversation with figures cut from contemporary magazines. For this series she adopted methods of collage and photomontage to question and rewrite the tropes used by celebrated nineteenth-century Australian Impressionists. These techniques emerged early within Zahalka's practice. During her time as a student at the Sydney College of the Arts she majored in photography and was introduced to a range of approaches to the medium. She became interested in Dada artists, particularly John Heartfield and Hannah Höch who utilised photomontage within socially and politically engaged practices that spoke powerfully to the times. For one of her first exhibitions, *Four Photographers* (1981)², Zahalka produced a series of reconstructions of Sydney in which she appropriated historical photographs by Henri Mallard and Harold Cazneaux and juxtaposed them with contemporary postcards and popular media imagery [below].



Two years later Zahalka began engaging these techniques to subvert colonial and historical metanarratives in *The Landscape Re-presented*, inserting her own personal stories, and those of people who have been omitted from cultural representation. In *The Immigrants* (1983), for example, Zahalka's family grave in Czechoslovakia is montaged into the nineteenth-century painting *The Pioneer* (1904) by Frederick McCubbin (1855–1917). By replacing the archetypal pioneering settler family with her own relations, Zahalka introduces a new narrative into the bucolic bush, representing the wave of migration in the wake of World War II and the plight of refugees as they struggled to find their place in Anglocentric Australia.

In *The Pioneer* (1992) [page 137] Zahalka erased the seated bushman from the central panel of McCubbin's triptych, leaving a sole female figure holding her child, suggesting that they have been abandoned to fend for themselves—a common situation that had rarely been represented. Editing out the heroic male figure highlights the role of pioneering women and undermines the narrative of male dominance. Zahalka wrote, 'I feel a responsibility to give voice to these groups and individuals, and to present them through these familiar and powerful images of the past'.³

Zahalka recognised that the landscape, often portrayed through a colonial European lens, had become a significant factor in the formation of Australia's sense of self. She wrote,

*This early school of painters known as the Heidelberg School sought to promote the landscape as the principal determinant of an Australian national identity. Their idealising and romanticising of the 'bush' produced a host of representations that celebrate and mythologise its characters and legends. The landscape, as depicted, with its 'heroic' pioneers, the bushmen and new settlers entrenched itself in the national discourse and now remains inextricably woven into Australian mythology.*⁴

This phenomenon is explained by academic Ken Taylor, who asserts, 'We see and make landscapes as a result of our shared system of beliefs and ideologies. In this way landscape is a cultural construct, a mirror of our memories and myths encoded with meanings which can be read and interpreted'.⁵

Through *The Landscape Re-presented* series Zahalka began to engage in the current cultural discourses about how art, film and literature had constructed and perpetuated the myth of the Australian landscape, with a particular focus on 'nostalgic depictions of a rural arcadia produced by, and for an educated urban middle class'.⁶ Zahalka observed that the dominant narrative of the heroic pioneer continued to be promulgated through exhibitions that focused on the Heidelberg school. In 1991 the National Gallery of Victoria staged an exhibition entitled *The Art of Frederick McCubbin*. Associated memorabilia with reproductions of McCubbin's works continued the commodification and promotion of this notion of 'Australianness'. They included a porcelain vase with a reproduction of McCubbin's celebrated painting *Down on his luck* (1889) [page 130]. In Zahalka's *Down on his Luck* (1982) [page 131], multiple clichés of dress, lifestyle and landscape are collaged together. Beachgoers play with a beach ball and a couple cook sausages on the BBQ behind the bushman slumped in the front of the frame. Zahalka's satire critiques the colonisation of the landscape for lifestyle and recreation, and the clearing of land for urbanisation as the encroaching city looms behind the scene, a foreboding omen of what's to come.

In 2017, Zahalka reimagined *The Landscape Re-presented* series through *The Landscape Revisited*, a series developed for her solo exhibition at Murray Art Museum Albury. She restaged a number of well-known Heidelberg School paintings in the landscape of Beechworth, including another working of *Down on his Luck* (2017) [page 142]. In *A Summer Morning Tiff* (2017) [page 141] inspired by Tom Roberts' 1886 work of the same name, Zahalka replaced the female figure in a white dress with a woman wearing a haik—a robe worn by Muslim women of North Africa. As curator Rita Lazauskas wrote, this image 'refers to the restraining female fashion of the Islamic faith, while also drawing on the experience of the model who, working between Australia and Morocco, has direct experience of gender inequalities and her own displaced identity'.⁷

Zahalka's *Wild Life* series (first exhibited in 2006 and revisited in 2017) was a major turning point in her practice as she began to work with new technologies and shift her focus towards museum collections.

Her fascination with museum dioramas began on her first trip to New York in 1981. She recalls these dioramas as being 'windows on the world' creating an experience that was 'physical and vertiginous'.⁸

It was like being pulled through an aperture and transported through time to places and countries I'd never seen before, to pristine landscapes untouched by humans, where animals roamed unimpeded and unthreatened. A perfect, albeit artificial world meticulously constructed by artists and scientists to duplicate the wonder of 'nature'. Time has been stopped—birds soar in suspended animation, creatures are locked in to an instant and everything is frozen.

This 'fixed' illusion can be transcribed seamlessly through the camera's lens, and like Hiroshi Sugimoto before me I wanted to capture these scenes on film, condensing it onto the photographic surface. Having documented these dioramas, I carried my exposed film back to Australia where it sat in negative sleeves for twenty-five years.'

To create these works she travelled to natural history museums across the world to record dioramas in places such as New York, Mumbai and Sydney. Access to national history collections provided her with rich historical documentation of the original dioramas including negatives that she used to scan and print from, some of which were taken decades earlier.¹⁰ She seamlessly integrated found imagery with her own photographs of dioramas [page 128]. *Sea Bird Colony from Admiralty Rocks with turbulent seas at Lord Howe Island* (2019) [page 166] is a work that builds on the intent of the original diorama. She has intervened into the scene to highlight the impact of plastics on the bird population of the world heritage site on Lord Howe Island. Sixty nesting specimens are depicted on the rocky outcrop to represent the large sea bird populations that were once thriving. Zahalka wrote:

*Despite the continuing call to action by groups like No Balloon Release Australia, thousands and thousands of helium balloons are released into the atmosphere each week, from a birthday, a wake or a wedding. The balloons float up through the skies, burst into small pieces then descend into ocean tides with fatal consequences. The plastic balloon, ties and string contaminate waters where sea and bird life mistakenly take coloured particles for food.*¹¹

Shown alongside this series was a dissected taxidermied bird with the contents of its digestive tract laid bare to reveal the plastics it had consumed, causing its demise [page 201]. This object throws the subject matter of the photographs into sharp relief to provide a poignant and concrete example of the impact of plastics on bird populations.



Sea Bird Group diorama set in Admiralty Islets, Lord Howe Island, constructed in 1923 for the Australian Museum. Backdrop painted by Ethel King. Photographer: George Clutton, circa 1938. Removed from public display in 1989. Source: Australian Museum

In *Lost Landscapes* (2020) at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston, the artist had the opportunity to work with three original historic dioramas discovered in storage. These were later displayed alongside her reimagined iterations that were based directly on them. It was the first time she had worked with real dioramas, bringing them back to life within a contemporary art context. The reimagined landscapes were displayed in illuminated lightboxes which reiterated the quality of light created in the diorama and produced at a 1:1 scale with the original museum models.

Through this series Zahalka addresses the seismic changes that have occurred within the Tasmanian ecology and draws attention to the role humanity will have in its destruction or conversely, its conservation. She disturbs the order of staged and idealistic visions that have been employed in dioramas, eloquently playing with these conventions to consider the ethics of how museums construct knowledge.

Zahalka's practice continues to question our relationship with the landscape. In *You are on Bondi Biddigal land!* (2020) [page 183] for example, she focuses on the history of conflict with and displacement of First Nations people. In this work ceremonial rock carvings created by the Bondi Biddigal people are evident. The artist stands on the cliff staring out towards the place her parents migrated from. She is contemplating 'the weight of [Australia's] history and the impact non-Indigenous people have had on this land. As catastrophic fires threaten, it is a warning to take care of this country as our First Nations people have always done.' By doing so she seeks to 'acknowledge and remind us on whose sacred ground we tread'.

Over time, Zahalka's interrogation of the landscape has evolved to become a continuous engagement with nature. Her approach has shifted from viewing the landscape as representative of Australia's national identity to focusing on the devastating environmental impact humans are having on the world. By intervening and disrupting idealised depictions of the landscape, Zahalka provides us with both utopian and cataclysmic dystopian views of possible futures.

Anouska Phizacklea

END NOTES:

- 1 Anne Zahalka in conversation with the author, April 2023.
- 2 Reviewed by Max Dupain, 'Four Photographers, Bondi Pavilion', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1981.
- 3 Anne Zahalka captures our past and present', *Dumbo Feather*, 10 November 2016, <https://www.dumbofeather.com/conversations/anne-zahalka-captures-our-past-and-present/>.
- 4 Anne Zahalka, Artist statement, *Southern Crossing, Empty Land*, Camerawork Gallery, London, 1991.
- 5 Taylor, Ken (2008) 'Landscape and Memory: cultural landscapes, intangible values and some thoughts on Asia' in: *16th ICOMOS General Assembly and International Symposium: Finding the spirit of place – between the tangible and the intangible*, 2008, Quebec, Canada. Viewed 2 August 2021, <http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/139/>.
- 6 Zahalka, Artist statement, *Southern Crossing, Empty Land*, 1991.
- 7 Rita Lazauskas, *Anne Zahalka: Landscape Revisited*, Murray Art Museum Albury, 2017.
- 8 Anne Zahalka, *Wild Life in the Age of the Anthropocene*, <https://zahalkaworld.com.au/wp-content/uploads/Wild-Life-in-the-Age-of-the-Anthropocene-Catalogue-1.pdf>.
- 9 Zahalka, *Wild Life in the Age of the Anthropocene*.
- 10 Some negatives were sourced and scanned in the Australian Museum, Sydney through the assistance of Vanessa Finney, Manager of Archives, Exhibitions and Cultural Collections.
- 11 Anne Zahalka, caption for *Sea Bird Colony from Admiralty Rocks with turbulent seas at Lord Howe Island* (2019) from the museum diorama text, Newcastle Regional Gallery.
- 12 Anne Zahalka, Artist Statement, *You are on Bondi Biddigal land!* (2020), Bowness Photography Prize, 2021.

THE LANDSCAPE RE-PRESENTED

1983

DATE: 1983



Porcelain vase featuring *Down on his luck* by Frederick McCubbin (manufactured by Hall Japan, 1980s).

NEW LIGHT, AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR PHOTOGRAPHY, SYDNEY 7 December – 24 December 1983
UNION STREET GALLERY, SYDNEY 26 March – 12 April 1986
PURE INVENTION, PARCO GALLERY, TOKYO 15 – 31 May 1987
SOUTHERN CROSSINGS/EMPTY LAND, CAMERAWORK, LONDON May – August 1992
A TIME AND A PLACE: LANDSCAPES FROM THE GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY ART COLLECTION, GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY, BRISBANE 20 February – 18 April 2015
MURRAY ART MUSEUM, ALBURY (selected works) 26 May – 5 November 2017
NATIONAL ART – PART ONE, NATIONAL ART SCHOOL, DARLINGHURST 13 November 2020 – 3 January 2021
EXHUME THE GRAVE – MCCUBBIN AND CONTEMPORARY ART, GEELONG GALLERY (selected works) 14 August 2021 – 6 March 2022
BEATING AROUND THE BUSH, ART GALLERY OF BALLARAT (selected works) 5 November 2022 – 19 February 2023
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE (selected works) 10 June – 10 September 2023



Down on his Luck, 1982



Stranger in a Strange Land, 1992



Wanderer overlooking Jamieson Valley, 1985



Spring Frost, 1985



The Breakaway, 1985



The Immigrants #2, 1983



Above: The Pioneer, 1992
Next page: Summer – Another Australian Feature, 1983



THE LANDSCAPE REVISITED

2017

DATE: 2017



The 'haik' worn by women in Northern Africa, photograph by Gaëtan Gatian de Clérambault, c. 1918.

MURRAY ART MUSEUM, ALBURY 26 May – 5 November 2017
BEATING AROUND THE BUSH, ART GALLERY OF BALLARAT (selected works) 5 November 2022 – 19 February 2023
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE (selected works) 10 June – 10 September 2023

TITLE: The Landscape Revisited

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



A Summer Morning Tiff, 2017



Down on his Luck, 2017



While the Billy Boils, 2017

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

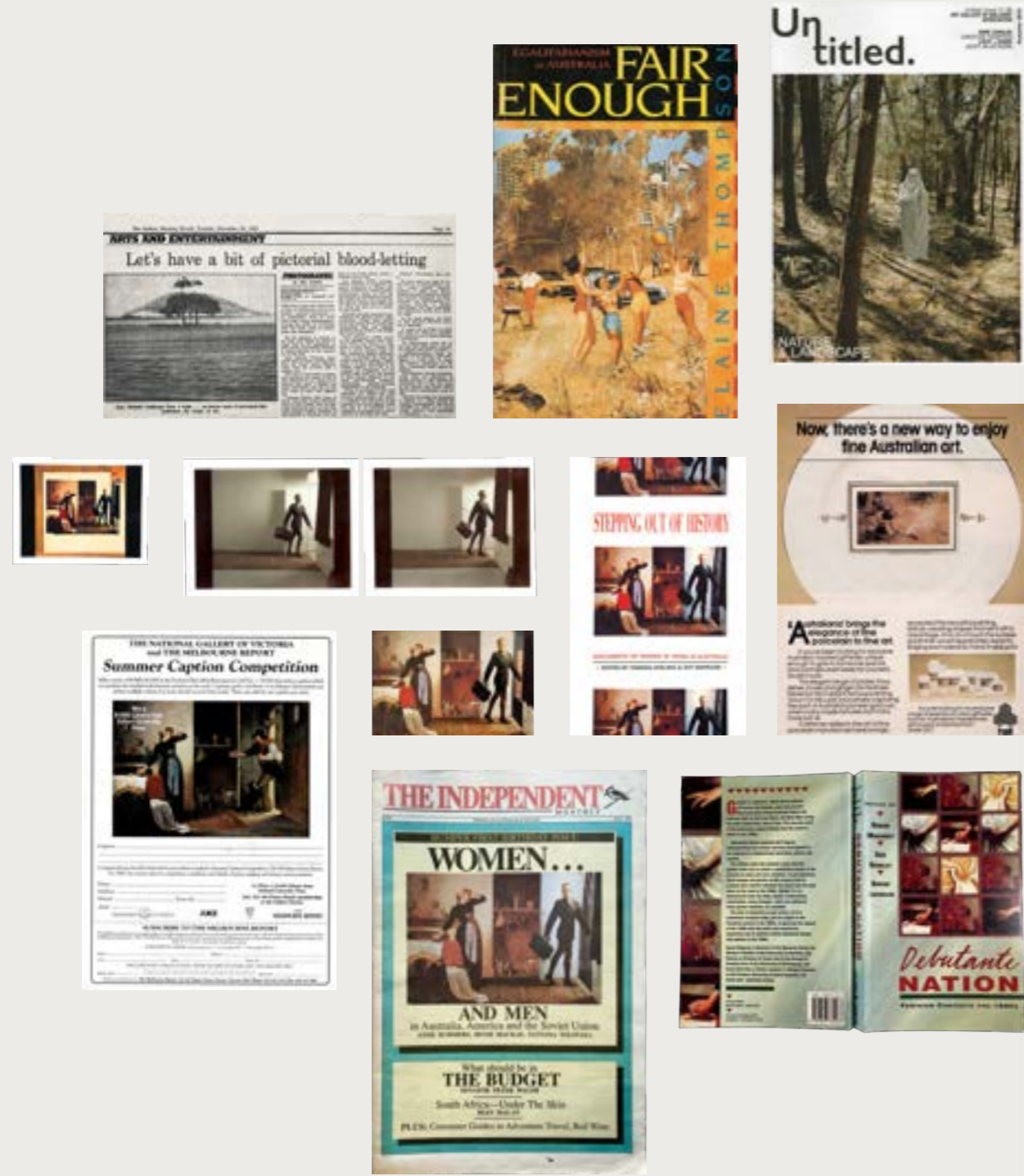
ARCHIVE



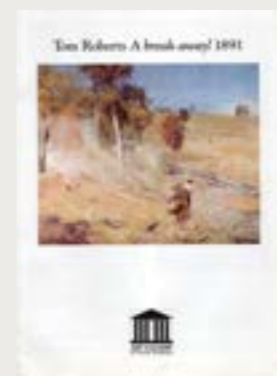
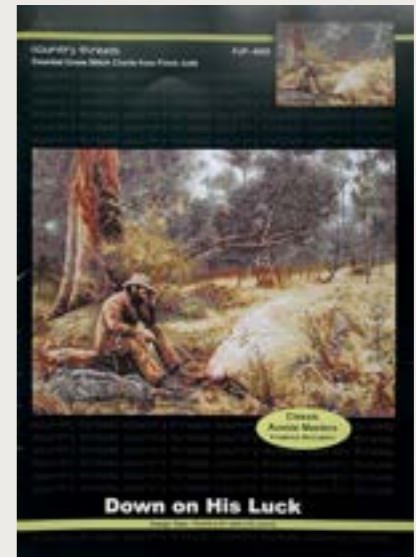
A Quiet Day at Spring Creek, 2017



Lost, 2017



Collection of publications and polaroids related to *The Landscape Re-presented* (1983) and *The Landscape Revisited* (2017)



MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



Stephen Quinn, *Windows on Nature: The Great Habitat Dioramas of the American Museum of Natural History*, 2006.

ROSLYN OXLEY9 GALLERY, SYDNEY 1 February – 24 February 2007
WONDERFUL WORLD, INAUGURAL EXHIBITION, SAMSTAG MUSEUM, ADELAIDE 12 October – 7 December 2007
ARC ONE GALLERY, MELBOURNE 10 April – 3 May 2008
TRICKING THE EYE – CONTEMPORARY TROUPE L'OEIL, GEELONG ART GALLERY (selected works) 27 November – 12 February 2017
WILD LIFE, TURNER GALLERIES, PERTH 3 March – 1 April 2017
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023



Brown bears, 2007



Lost lynx, 2007; Performing seal, 2008;
Polar bear, grizzly bear and grolar bear, 2017; Windy weather, 2007



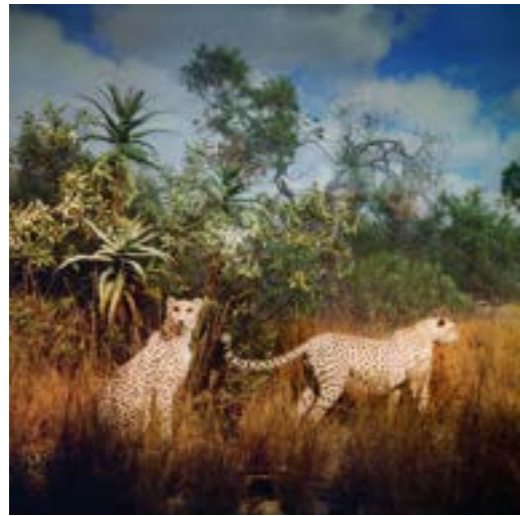
Kudu hunter, 2007; Jack rabbit, 2007;
African mammals, 2007; Game park, 2008



Rising tide, 2007



Rising tide, 2016



Alpine scene, 2007; Alpinists, 2008;
Big cats, 2007; Birds of Australia, 2007



Above: Rising tide, 2022
Next Page: American Museum of Natural History, New York 2007





Exotic birds, 2007



Exotic birds, 2017

WILD LIFE AUSTRALIA 2019

DATE: 2019

TITLE: Wild Life Australia



Research article on the Fruit Bat Group diorama in the *Australian Museum Magazine*, October–December 1924 by E Troughton.

ARC ONE GALLERY, MELBOURNE 16 April – 24 May 2019
ART OF PROTEST, NEWCASTLE ART GALLERY (selected works) 20 October – 30 January 2022
CARBON NEUTRAL, CANBERRA CONTEMPORARY ART GALLERY (selected works) 18 February – 10 April 2022
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE (selected works) 10 June – 10 September 2023



Emu, Riverina District of New South Wales, 2019

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE

The Mallee

With wings outstretched, the parrot appears to be taking flight, or settling down onto the tree. Either way, its arrested motion brings our attention to a moment in time and place, into a landscape in which the earth glows a yellow-orange, as if it radiates heat. These flat lands are of the Mallee in north-western Victoria, where the sandy ground has been stripped of trees and ground cover. Colonial practices have made it so, clearing it for grazing and cultivation.

Amid this dry landscape lorikeets are flashes of bright blue and green. Being tree-dwelling, parrot species have been more resistant to the environment's recent changes, while the loss of grasslands has threatened the survival of small birds like the emu-wren, and ground-dwelling birds like the malleefowl. In the background is another flash of colour, an orange panel van; the glow of its reflection makes it seem to trail fire in its wake. The car's speed and heat is symbolic of the destruction of the land and its habitats. Unlike the slow, 'cool-burn' fires of Aboriginal practices, which keep country clear and healthy, this is a force of devastation. The car moves through, its colour melding with the glow of the exposed soil.

This is Latje Latje country, and the scarred tree on which the parrots perch carries a sign of Aboriginal care for country. The oval-shaped scar is a healed patch where bark was once removed for the making of a vessel or a shield. The bark was cut with attention to the continued health of the tree, ensuring its survival and continued growth. The forces of nurture continue alongside the recent forces of destruction.

Vanessa Berry
2020

Vanessa Berry is a writer, artist and Lecturer
in Creative Writing at the University of Sydney.



The Mallee, near Benetook in Sunraysia Region of Victoria, 2019



Gnarnayarrahe Waitairie from Roebourne, Western Australia in the region of New South Wales, 2019



Above: Koala, Yarra River at Woori Yallock, Victoria, 2019
Next page: Sea Bird Colony, Admiralty Rocks with turbulent seas, Lord Howe Island, 2019





Sea Bird Colony, Admiralty Rocks with calm seas, Lord Howe Island, 2019



Lyrebird, Garigal National Park (NSW), 2019
 Four stages of production: silver gelatin print, sepia-toned print, hand-coloured print, digital composite.
 Courtesy of Australian Museum, Sydney



Bats, Nepean River (NSW), 2019
 Four stages of production: silver gelatin print, sepia-toned print, hand-coloured print, digital composite.
 Courtesy of Australian Museum, Sydney

LOST LANDSCAPES

2020



Dioramas in the natural sciences workshop, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston.

QUEEN VICTORIA MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY, ROYAL PARK, LAUNCESTON 5 December 2020 – 18 July 2021
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023



Lost Landscape, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery (installation view), 2020



Photograph of original diorama of Fingal Valley with taxidermied birds designed, prepared and painted by Terry Cashion, 1968–78, 2020



As the crow flies, 2020

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



Photograph of original diorama of Tamar Island with taxidermied birds designed, prepared and painted by Terry Cashion, 1968–78, 2020



Birds of a feather flock together, 2020



A colony of boffins, 2020

YOU ARE HERE

2020

DATE: 2020



Conrad Martens, *Jamieson Valley, looking towards Kings Tableland*, c. 1849.



BOROONDARA, TOWN HALL GALLERY, HAWTHORN 1 March – 10 May 2020
MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE 10 June – 10 September 2023

TITLE: You are Here



Above: You are on Gundungurra land!, 2020
Next page: You are on Bondi Bidjigal land!, 2020

MEMORY

GESTURE

PEOPLE

PLACE

NATURE

ARCHIVE



ARCHIVE



The name ZAHALKA

ZAHALKA is a Czech word. My father said it meant 'lazy' but a Czech artist friend told me it means 'to be idle' which is quite different. He wrote this in a footnote to an article featured in *Portfolio*¹, a journal on contemporary photography in Britain. My photo of a man² walking into the city at sunset wearing a suit and carrying a suitcase was on the cover. It was printed up as a large mural size vinyl banner and had been exhibited in Hyde Park, Sydney for *Art and About* in 2002. I got to keep it after the exhibition and cut it into two blinds which now hang in my studio, illuminated by the windows they dress.

Anne was a popular name in the 50s, probably because the Queen named her daughter Anne³. My mother told me that she had thought of naming me Karen or Sarah. I would have preferred Sarah. I found a page torn from the *Woman's Day* amongst my mother's papers after she died with a list of popular names for girls⁴. Anne was among them.

My middle name Monica is more in keeping with my surname as it sounds European. I never got to ask my mother if I was named after her much younger half-sister, Monica. She is still living in Vienna and I wrote to her recently and asked her. She wrote back, 'Sorry, but I don't know if your "Monica" is after Me'.

When I introduce myself, I have to be careful to pause between 'Anne' and 'Zahalka' as people often think my name is Anza Halka. Some of my friends affectionately call me Anza. Other nicknames are Zac/Zak, Anne Zac, Anne the Man, Zaholk and just plain Zahalka.

I like the name Zahalka and have passed it on to my daughter, Alice. She plans to pass it on to her children. My father would be pleased, especially as he had no sons.

Anne Zahalka

1 Pavel Büchler, 'Anne Zahalka, Theory Takes a Holiday', *Portfolio*, #31, June 2001, pp. 12-15
2 My husband wearing his Skin Deep retro wedding suit.
3 There were three other Annes in my Grade 2 class and a number of artists of my generation named Anne.
4 *Women's Day* page found amongst my mother's papers circa 1950's (p.187).



Page from *Woman's Day* (c. 1950s) found in the artist's mother's archive.



Domico Remp's painting *Cabinet of Curiosities* (1690)

MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY, MELBOURNE
10 June – 10 September 2023



View West: Untitled (traveller) from the series *Fortresses and Frontiers* (1993)
printed onto vinyl and made into a blind.

STUDIO:



View east.



View north with artwork by Lore Lisbeth Waller, *I follow you* (2018).



View south with preparatory sketches and mock-up for MAPH exhibition.



View west.

DETAIL:



Bookshelves with invitation for Joachim Froese exhibition *Archive*, Monash Gallery of Art 7 November 2008.



Print and proof boxes.



Ephemera and art materials.



Negative holders.

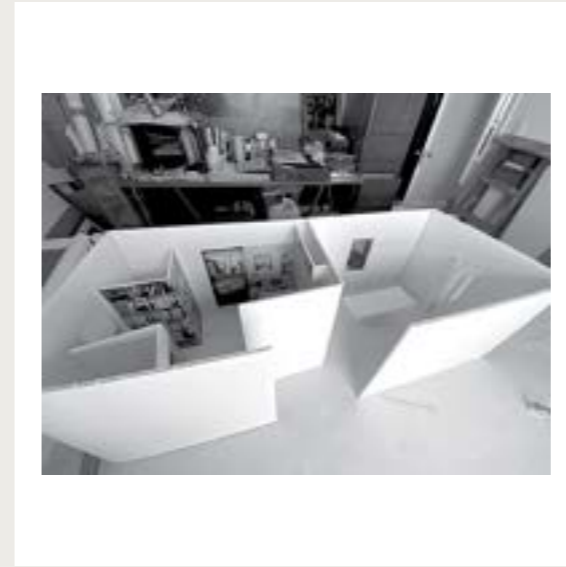
MAQUETTE:



Foam core maquette with printed photographs to scale showing the entrance into the studio.



View east.



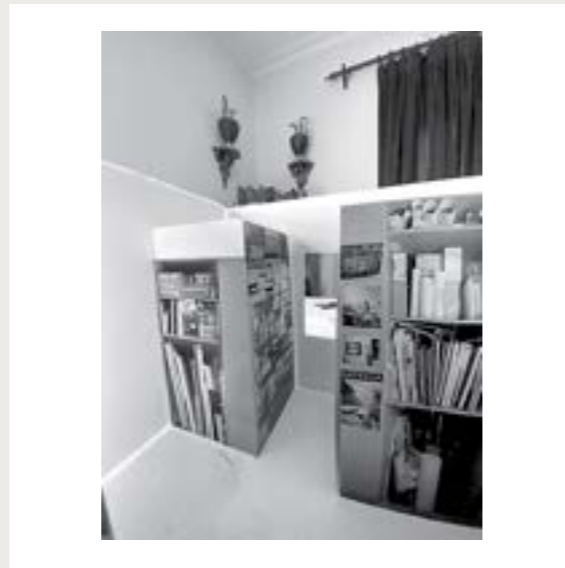
Overhead view.



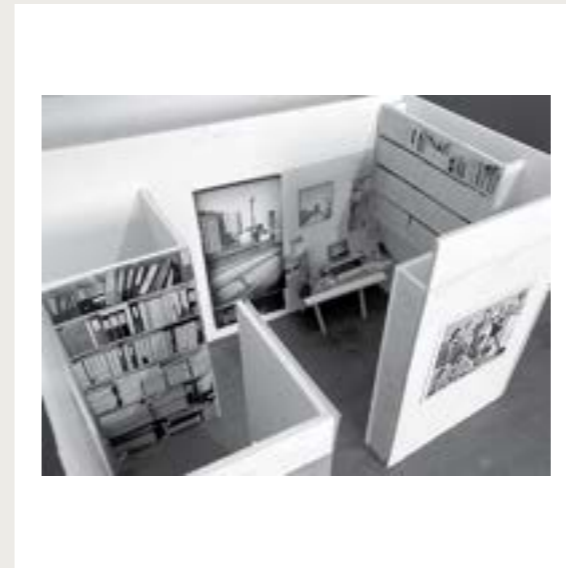
Entrance with *The Bathers* (1989).



Overhead view.



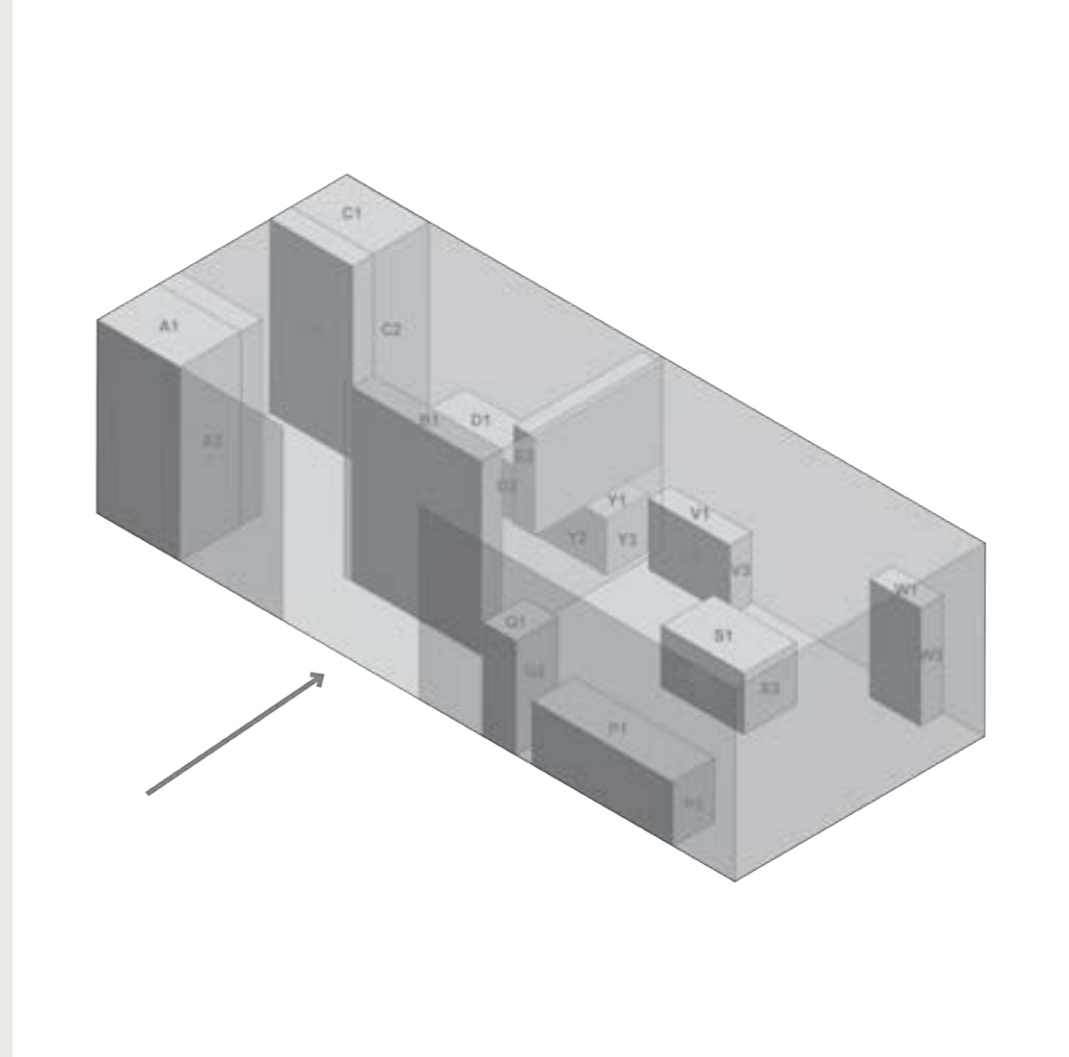
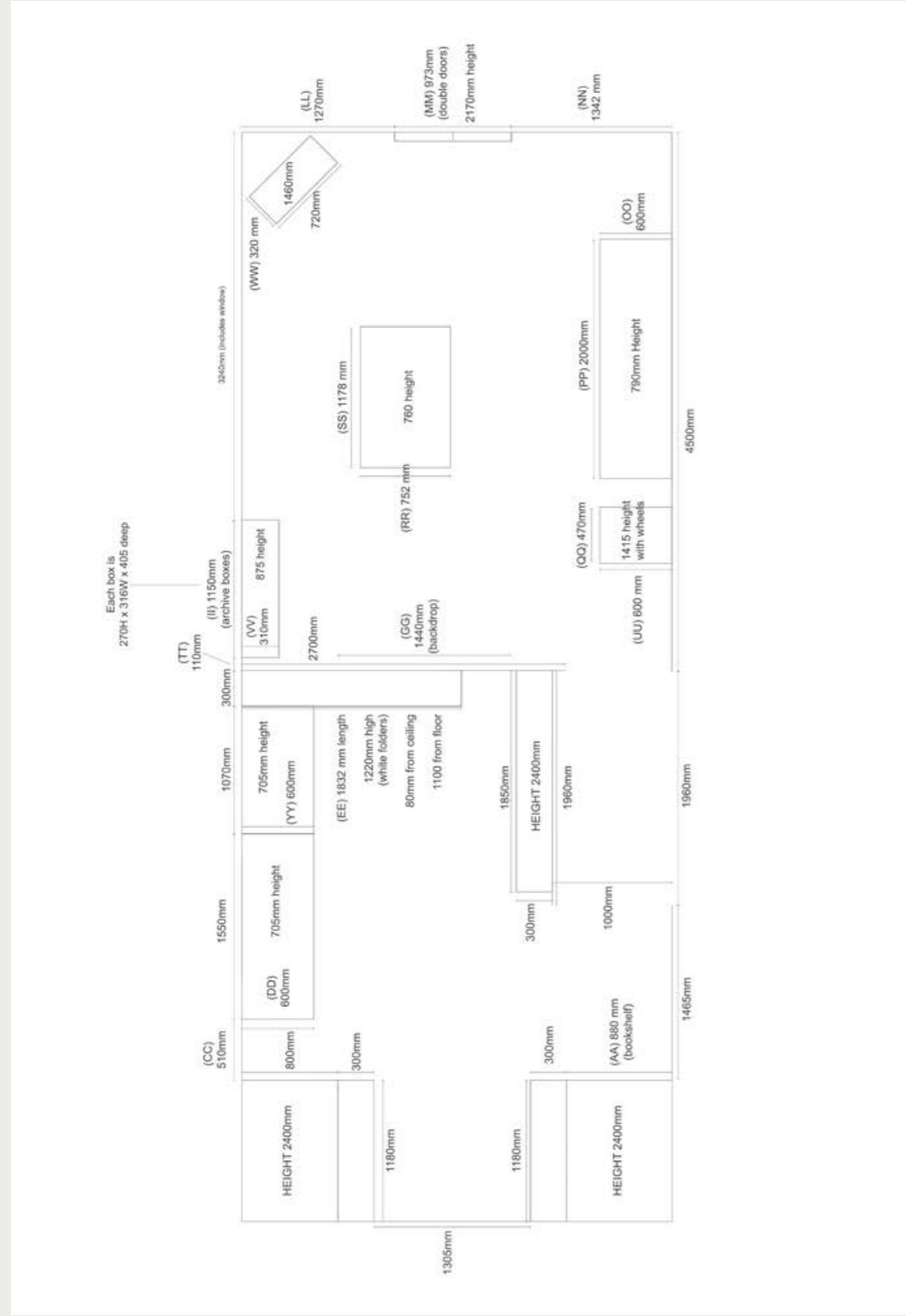
View to artwork storage shelves.



Overhead view to north.



Overhead view to southwest.



Above: Isometric 3D design used to produce the facades.
 Opposite: Floorplan with dimensions of facades used for trompe l'oeil photographic fabrication.

50 BODIES OF WORK 1980 – 2023		
1	HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTIONS	1980
2	BEAUTIFUL AUSTRALIA	1981
3	THE LANDSCAPE RE-PRESENTED	1983 – 1986
4	A STORY UNFOLDS ...	1985
5	THE TOURIST AS THEORIST: THEORY TAKES A HOLIDAY	1985
6	THE WANDERER UPON A CASTLE CAME	1986
7	RESEMBLANCE	1986
8	RESEMBLANCE II	1988
9	BONDI: PLAYGROUND OF THE PACIFIC	1989
10	ARTISTS	1990
11	DETAILS	1991
12	GESTURE	1993
13	FORTRESSES AND FRONTIERS	1993
14	OPEN HOUSE	1996
15	COLLECTORS	1996
16	WOVEN THREADS	1997
17	LEISURELAND	1999
18	WELCOME TO SYDNEY	2002
19	LEISURELAND REGIONAL	2003
20	DISPLACED PERSON (WITH SUE SAXON)	2003
21	NATURAL WONDERS	2004
22	WILDLIFE	2006/2017
23	WONDERLAND	2006
24	ANNE ZAHALKA: FOCUS ROOM	2007
25	HOTEL SUITE	2008
26	PLAYING THE GAME!	2009
27	A BAR TO CALL HOME – THE CHANGING FACE OF THE RSL	2009
28	HOMEGROUND!	2010
29	THE WAY THINGS APPEAR	2010
30	THE APPEARANCE OF THINGS	2010
31	BIRTH. ART	2011
32	OPEN HOUSE (WITH AARON ANDERSON)	2011
33	BONDI THE BEAUTIFUL	2011
34	BONDI TWITCH (WITH SUE SAXON AND JANE BECKER)	2012
35	THE ARTIST'S TABLE	2012/15
36	ANNE ZAHALKA AND HER AMAZING ARTISTS	2013
37	PARLIAMENT HOUSE AT WORK	2014
38	ANNE ZAHALKA: PLAYGROUND OF THE PACIFIC	2014
39	RETURN TO HOMEGROUND!	2015
40	THRESHOLD	2015
41	THE LANDSCAPE REVISITED	2017
42	SYDNEY STREET PHOTOGRAPHY	2018/2019
43	MEMORY OBJECTS AND ART (WITH SYLVIA GRIFFIN)	2018
44	WILDIPE IN THE AGE OF THE ANTHROPOCENE	2018
45	THE FATE OF THINGS	2019
46	YOU ARE HERE	2020
47	LOST LANDSCAPES	2020
48	SNAPPED! STREET PHOTOGRAPHY IN THE ILLAWARRA	2021
49	MAY THEIR MEMORY BE A BLESSING (WITH DORIT BRAUN)	2022
50	KUNSTKAMMER	2023

MEMORY :



Reference for Vaclav Paul Zahalka (artist's father) from his first job at Dairy Farmers, 5 December 1954, found amongst Hedy Zahalka's papers after her death in 2016.



Landing Certificate issued for family members Vaclav, Hedy and Zdena Zahalka c1950. Image of document heat-transferred onto linen handkerchief for *Displaced Persons* (2003).



Czechoslovakian passport of Hedwig (Hedy) Flora Zahalka, photographed for *If these objects could speak* (2018).



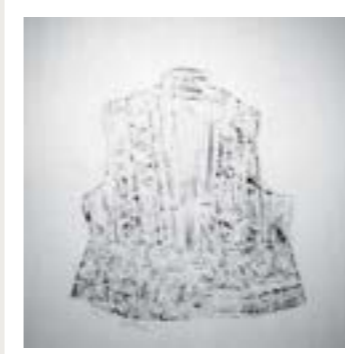
Czechoslovakian identity document of Margarete Back (née Braun) (artist's grandmother) uncovered by historian and Czech translator, David Krauss on the website *Holocaust.cz* during a trip by the artist to research family history and lay her father's ashes in the Zahalka family grave in Rochov, Czechia in July 2017.



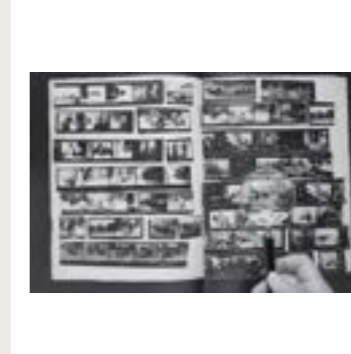
Research for artwork, *In Exile* (2017): reproduction of *Trompe l'oeil with Writing Materials* (1702) by Evert Collier in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



Postcard (c. 1938) of hotel where the artist's maternal family lived for 18 months after fleeing Vienna following the Anschluss on 13 March 1938.



Rubbing (frottage) of an embroidered vest used as contact negative on photo paper for *Ghostly Things* (2017). Original Czech folk costume from family vitrine in Vienna, salvaged and passed down to the artist by aunt Lore Lisbeth (née Back) Waller.



Assembled proof sheet of images from the book, *Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross* (published 2015) with magnifying glass used to search for the artist's grandmother who was deported to the Lodz Ghetto.



Cover of *Memory Unearthed: The Lodz Ghetto Photographs of Henryk Ross* with copy of deportation card to Lodz and artefacts from the archive arranged for preparatory photo for the SBS interactive documentary *Nobody loves you more than me – Finding Margarete*, 2018.

GESTURE :



Invitation from Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane for the exhibition *What John Berger saw* (2001) curated by Naomi Cass and Merryn Gates. The image is one of nine 'details' from the series *The Demonstrative Gesture* (2021) from August Sander's *Citizens of the Twentieth Century*, first published as *Faces of our Time* in 1929.



Review by Evelyn Juers, 'Zahalka's ghosting,' *Art Monthly*, no 77 (March 1995) of *Gesture* (1994) at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney in 1994.



Gesture publication produced with a research grant through the University of New South Wales College of Fine Arts in 1994 for exhibitions at Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney, and Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne. Collaboratively designed by the artist with Michelle Barker, with an essay by Jim Logan.



Study of *A Philosopher* (1637) by Jusepe de Ribera for *The Mathematician* (1994) as part of *Master of Fine Arts* exhibition, supervised by Debra Phillips in 1994.



Artist's book *Details* (1991) showing the process of offset reproduction photocopies from the catalogue of *Resemblance* (1987) with digital print of the final image of *Detail (from The Dutch Painter)* (1994).



Walter Benjamin's essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of the Mechanical Reproduction* (1935), part of the research for *Details* (1991).



Study for *Gesture III (from 'A Philosopher' (? Plato) by Jusepe de Ribera, 1631)* (1993).

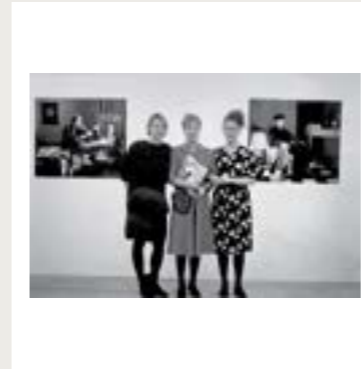


Invitation for the first exhibition of *Gesture* (1993), City Gallery (run by Anna Schwartz), Melbourne (front and back).



Late twelfth century drawing from lectionary (source unknown) used as illustration in the artist's *Master's paper, The Language of Gesture – towards a lexicon* (1994).

PEOPLE :



Photograph of Anne Zahalka with artists Silke Leverkus and Ulrike Grossarth in front of the artworks they appear in as *The Reader* (1987) and *The German Woman* (1987) at the opening of the exhibition *Resemblance* at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin in 1987.



Poster of *The Cook* (1987) reproduced for the exhibition *Photography: the 1980's*, Australian National Gallery, Canberra (1988).



Friends of the artist at the Australian National Gallery in 1989 holding up the 'pin up poster boy' of *The Cook* for the exhibition *Australian Photography: the 1980's*.



Page spread from book, *Jeff Wall* (1996) with the interior set created for his work. Jeff Wall's use of the lightbox was a significant influence on *Fortresses and Frontiers* (1993) and *Open House* (1995).



Installation Views of *Open House* at Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne in 1995. Analogue prints produced as documentation of the exhibition are stored in plastic sleeves in the *Open House* project folder.



Preparatory sketch for photoshoot of *The New Bathers* (2013) combining paintings by Freda Robertshaw and Charles Meere in photoshop.



Proof sheet of *The Sunbather #2* (1989): chromogenic print attached to archival sleeves with negatives underneath.



Manila folders with collected images for collage and reference material stored in suspension folders in an old filing cabinet



Installation view of *The Bathers* (1989) and *The Sunbather #1* (1989) alongside Charles Meere's *Australian Beach Pattern* (1940) and Freda Robertshaw's *Australian Beach Scene* (1942) at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 2015.

PLACE:



Photograph by John Hinde studio for Butlin's Holidays, used as reference image for the development of *Leisureland* (2001).



Detail of a handwritten letter to the artist from Jacques Derrida, thanking her for the photograph she gave him of his Power Lecture at the Sydney Town Hall in 1999.



Invitations to *Leisureland* (2001) and *Leisureland Regional* (2003) both at Grafton Regional Gallery.

NATURE:



Conrad Martens, *Jamieson Valley, looking towards Kings Tableland* (c.1849). A reproduction of the painting forms the background of the photomontage, *Wanderer overlooking Jamieson Valley* (1983) with the figure from Casper David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the sea of fog* (1818).



Lightweight synthetic bag hide worn for wildlife photography, courtesy of Mike Lane, a wildlife photographer. Permission was given to feature various styles of the garment, found on the web, in *Birds of a feather flock together* (2020) with the Tamar River Wetlands with Tamar Island in the background.



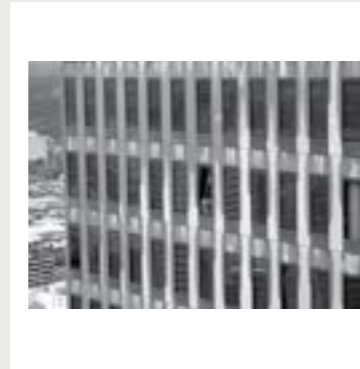
Photographic documentation used in the reimaged *Koala, Yarra River at Woorl Yallock* (2019) including original photograph from Museum Victoria documenting the 1920s diorama *Koala* designed by Charles Brazenor and painted by George Browning.



Book on John Hinde, *Hindsight*, 1993, published by the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, used as inspiration for *Leisureland* (2001).



Polaroid test for lighting for the portraits in *Hotel Suite* (2008) photographed at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins.



Preparatory location stills for the video, *The Stranger's Eye* (2010) filmed at the Sofitel Melbourne on Collins.



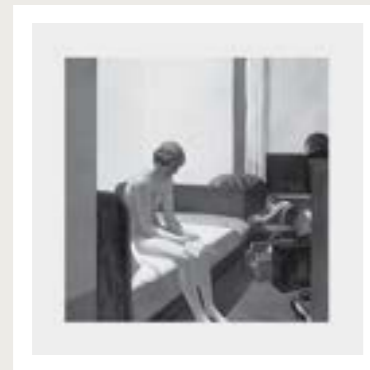
Preparatory location photograph of the Gibson Track in the Illawarra region for the making of *You are on Dharawal Country!* (2020) based on Conrad Martens' watercolour of *Mullet Creek, Illawarra* (1853).



Research material about fires in the region of Fingal Valley, Tasmania for the development of *As the crow flies* (2020). Based on the original diorama of Fingal Valley at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston containing birds prepared by taxidermist, naturalist and painter, Terry G Cashion.



Emu diorama from Museum Victoria set in the Riverina District on Wiradjuri Country in New South Wales and removed from display in 1997. The backdrop was painted by George Browning in the 1920s. Photographic documentation of the original diorama was used in *Emu, Riverina District of New South Wales* (2019).



Hotel Room (1931) by Edward Hopper (1931): reference image for storyboard of *Hotel Suite* (2010).



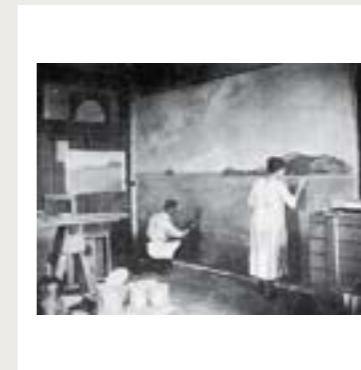
Reference images of Edward Hopper and Sophie Calle, from project folder for *Hotel Suite* (2010).



Storyboard for the video, *The Stranger's Eye* (2009) based on the photograph *Room 4729* (2008), from the series *Hotel Suite* exhibited in Sofitel on Collins lobby in 2008.



Photographic portraits of scar trees in Wotjobaluk Country by Gunditjmarra Elder, and Moonee Valley resident, Uncle Jim Berg in the exhibition *Silent Witness: A Window to the Past* at Incinerator Gallery, Melbourne in 2020.



Phyllis Clarke (with Allan McCulloch) painting the backdrop to the Botswain Bird diorama. Photograph by Anthony Musgrave in *The Naturalist: The remarkable life of Allan Riverstone McCulloch* by Brendan Atkins (2022).



Plastics collected from the stomach of a shearwater bird on Lord Howe Island. Photo courtesy of Ian Hutton, Museum Curator at Lord Howe Island.

LIST OF WORKS:

THE FATE OF THINGS				
Hairlooms	2017	glass case, locks of hair	39.3 x 39.3 x 4.0 cm	p.9
If these objects could speak	2018	pigment ink-jet prints	29.7 x 42.0 cm (each)	p.10–11
In exile	2018	pigment ink-jet print on canvas	81.0 x 50.5 cm	p.12–13
A thousand kisses across the sea, installation view Sydney Jewish Museum	2019	carpet, chair, letters	dimensions variable	p.14
Rewriting, installation view, Sydney Jewish Museum	2019	video projection, desk, linen	58.0 x 89.0 cm	p.15
The Fate of Things, installation view, Behal Fejér Institute, Prague	2018	installation, mixed media	dimensions variable	p.17
Film still, Rewriting	2018	gelatin silver print	29.7 x 42.0	p.16–17
I follow you #3	2019	video projection	dimensions variable	p.18
Details from Ghostly things, 2018	2018	gelatin silver prints	8 x 10 in	p.19
DISPLACED PERSONS				
identity / displaced	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.27
refuge / refugee	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
enemy / alien	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
home / homeless	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
vermin / jew	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
szasz / saxon	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
tokaj / bondi	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
strange / stranger	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
identity / displaced	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
countryside / genocide	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
possess / dispossessed	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.29
hate / hope	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.29
homeland / homesick	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.29
vaclav / paul	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.29
occupied / outcast	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.29
antipodes / exile	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.29
place / displace	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
arrive / survive	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
berth / land	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.28
foreign / foreigner	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.29
native / citizen	2003	textile with embroidery and image transfer	39.0 x 39.0 cm	p.29

I follow you (from original negative taken by Lore Lisbethaller, née Back)	2018	gelatin silver print	56.5 x 64.0 cm	p.31
DETAILS				
Detail (from 'The Card Players')	1991	silver dye bleach print	79.6 x 90.2 cm	p.35
Detail (from 'The Reader')	1991	silver dye bleach print	68.5 x 53.4 cm	p.36
Detail (from 'The Marriage of Convenience')	1991	silver dye bleach print	103.3 x 73.3 cm	p.36
Detail (from 'The German Woman')	1991	silver dye bleach print	53.6 x 103.4 cm	p.36
Detail (from 'The Cleaner')	1991	silver dye bleach print	78.4 x 67.7 cm	p.37
Detail (from 'The Dutch Painter')	1991	silver dye bleach print	73.2 x 59.7 cm	p.37
Detail (from 'The Cook')	1991	silver dye bleach print	78.3 x 64.0 cm	p.37
GESTURE				
The Collector	1997	silver dye bleach print	91.0 x 69.0 cm	p.39
Gesture IV (from Jusepe de Ribera, A Philosopher, 1637)	1993	silver dye bleach print	91.0 x 69.0 cm	p.40
The Doctor	1993	silver dye bleach print	91.0 x 69.0 cm	p.40
The Gentleman	1993	silver dye bleach print	91.0 x 69.0 cm	p.40
The Mathematician	1993	silver dye bleach print	91.0 x 69.0 cm	p.41
The Geographer	1993	silver dye bleach print	91.0 x 69.0 cm	p.41
The Scholar	1993	silver dye bleach print	91.0 x 69.0 cm	p.41
The Merchant's Agenda	1993	silver dye bleach print	200.0 x 64.0 cm	p.42–43
Allure	1993	dye sublimation print, face-mounted to acrylic, woodblock	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.44
Assert	1993	dye sublimation print, face-mounted to acrylic, woodblock	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.44
Confident	1993	dye sublimation print, face-mounted to acrylic, woodblock	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.44
Feminine	1993	dye sublimation print, face-mounted to acrylic, woodblock	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.44
Honest	1994	dye sublimation print, face-mounted to acrylic, woodblock	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.45
Restrained	1994	dye sublimation print, face-mounted to acrylic, woodblock	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.45
Rhetoric	1993	dye sublimation print, face-mounted to acrylic, woodblock	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.45
Sincerity	1993	dye sublimation print, face-mounted to acrylic, woodblock	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.45
RESEMBLANCE				
The Cleaner (Maryanne Redpath/performance artist)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.51
Marriage of Convenience (Graham Budgett and Jane Mulfinger/artists)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.52
The Card Players (Mimmo Catania and Ruprecht Dreher/painters)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.53
The Chess Players (Jeff Gibson/artist and Martin Haywood/performance artist)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.53
The Dutch Painter (Guus Koenraads, painter)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.53
The German Woman (Ulriche Grossarth/artist)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.53
The Musician (Jon Rose/composer, musician)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.54
The Reader (Silke Leverkuhne/painter)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.54
The Veterinary (Thomas Ravenbourg/vet)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.54
The Writer (Dr Michael Haerdter/director, Künstlerhaus Bethanien)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.54

The Cook (Michael Schmidt/architect)	1987	silver dye bleach print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.55
BONDI: PLAYGROUND OF THE PACIFIC				
The Bathers	1989	chromogenic print	95.0 x 112.0 cm	p.59
Detail (boat)	1989	chromogenic print	30.5 x 30.5 cm	p.60
Detail (debris)	1989	chromogenic print	30.5 x 30.5 cm	p.60
Detail (fish)	1989	chromogenic print	30.5 x 30.5 cm	p.60
Detail (grafitti)	1989	chromogenic print	30.5 x 30.5 cm	p.60
The Sunbather #2	1989	chromogenic print	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.61
The New Bathers	2013	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.63
The Beach Inspectors	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.64
The Boys	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.64
The Card Players	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.64
The Council Workers	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.64
The Eisbergs	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.64
The Family	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.64
The Surfers	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.65
The Grommets	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.65
The Gang	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.65
The Lifesavers	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.65
The Migrant Women	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.65
The Skateboarders	1989	chromogenic print	74.0 x 90.0 cm	p.65
The Girl	1989	chromogenic print	90.0 x 74.0 cm	p.66
The Lifesaver	1989	chromogenic print	90.0 x 74.0 cm	p.67
The Sunbather #1	1989	chromogenic print	49.0 x 49.0 cm	p.69
RESEMBLANCE II				
The Writer Emily Gibson	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.73
The Painter Margaret Gibson	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.74
The Reader Ian Collie	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.74
The Sisters Anne and Emily Gibson	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.74
The Artist (self-portrait)	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.74
The Botanist Joanne Walsh	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.75
The Card Player Hedy Zahalka	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.75
The Cellist Lucy Gibson	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.75
The Forger Stephen Marcus	1989	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 50.0 cm	p.75
HOW JEWISH IS YOUR HOME				
Home 2, David Ellison, Isabel Karpin Ellison and Zachery Karpinellison	1998	silver dye bleach print	50.0 x 58.0 cm	p.77
OPEN HOUSE				
Saturday, 2.48pm	1995	duratran, light box	176.0 x 125.0 x 25.0 cm	p.81
Untitled, (Thursday, 8.33pm 1995)	1995	dye sublimation print, wood block	36.5cm x 29.5 x 6.0 cm	p.82
Thursday, 8.33pm	1995	duratran, light box	190.0 x 125.0 x 25.0 cm	p.83
Untitled (Saturday, 5.18pm 1995)	1995	dye sublimation print	36.5 x 29.5 x 6.0 cm	p.84
Saturday, 5.18pm	1995	duratran, light box	162.0 x 125.0 x 25.0 cm	p.85
Sunday, 2.09pm	1995	duratran, light box	162.0 x 125.0 x 25.0 cm	p.86–87
Wednesday, 8.40pm	1995	duratran, light box	125.0 x 190.0 x 25.0 cm	p.88

Monday, 11.48pm	1995	duratran, light box	125.0 x 176.0 x 25.0 cm	p.88
Tuesday, 9.10pm	1995	duratran, light box	178.0 x 125.0 x 25.0 cm	p.88
Wednesday, 10.23pm	1995	duratran, light box	125.0 x 165.0 x 25.0 cm	p.89
Sunday, 11.08am	1995	duratran, light box	125.0 x 173.0 x 25.0 cm	p.89
Monday, 8.08am	1997	chromogenic print	82.0 x 96.0 cm	p.89
LEISURELAND				
Aquaerobics, Temple of Body and Soul	1999	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.95
Aquatic Centre	1998	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.95
Bingo	1998	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.95
Cole Classic	1998	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.95
Fashions on the Field, Lockhart Picnic Races	2001	chromogenic print	57.5 x 72.5 cm	p.95
Timezone	1998	chromogenic print	76.0 x 93.0 cm	p.95
Derrida Lecture	1999	chromogenic print	115.0 x 280.0 cm	p.96–97
Laser Zone	1998	chromogenic print	76.0 x 93.0 cm	p.98
Madam Taussaud's Wax Museum	1998	chromogenic print	76.0 x 93.0 cm	p.98
Live Site, Sydney Olympics	2000	chromogenic print	115.0 x 280.0 cm	p.98
Oceanworld	1999	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.98
Parade, Armidale Autumn Festival	2000	chromogenic print	57.5 x 72.5 cm	p.98
Penrith Panthers, interactive gaming	1998	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.99
Robosaurus	1999	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.99
Imax Cinema	1999	chromogenic print	115.0 x 245.5 cm	p.99
Sega World	1998	chromogenic print	76.0 x 93.0 cm	p.99
Star City Casino (after Breugel)	1998	chromogenic print	113.5 x 142.3 cm	p.99
AFL, Sydney Cricket Ground, elimination final	1999	chromogenic print	115.0 x 200.0 cm	p.100–101
Star City Casino (Oasis)	1998	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.102
Arts and Crafts Hall, Wagga Wagga Show	2001	chromogenic print	57.5 x 72.5 cm	p.102
Parade, Armidale Autumn Festival, Miss Motor Extravaganza Entrants	2001	chromogenic print	115.0 x 242.0 cm	p.102
Wood Chop Stadium	1999	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.102
Zoo	1998	chromogenic print	76.0 x 93.0 cm	p.102
Masquerade Ball, Armidale Autumn Festival	2001	chromogenic print	76.0 x 93.0 cm	p.103
Model Railway	1998	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.103
Jacaranda Ball, Grafton	2000	chromogenic print	115.0 x 242.0 cm	p.103
Scenic Skyway	1999	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.103
Sea World, Bermuda Triangle	2001	chromogenic print	115.0 x 145.0 cm	p.103
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Room 4729	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.107
Room 3721, view to Exhibition Building	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.108
Room 3721 (with artwork by Lyndell Brown & Charles Green)	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.109
Room 4212	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.110
Room 4212, view to Treasury Gardens (left panel)	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.111
Room 3905, view to Fitzroy Gardens	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.112
Room 3905	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.113
Room 4927, view to Southbank	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.114
Room 3621 (Dora)	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.115
Room 4927, view to Melbourne Cricket Ground	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.116
Room 4117 (with artwork by John Brack)	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.117
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Room 4513 (with artwork by Pat Brassington)	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.120
Fitzroy Gardens at Night	2008	chromogenic print	75.0 x 92.5 cm	p.121
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THE LANDSCAPE RE-PRESENTED				
Down on his Luck	1982	chromogenic print	24.4 x 32.1 cm	p.131
Stranger in a Strange Land	1992	pigment ink-jet print	43.0 x 46.5 cm	p.132
Wanderer overlooking Jamieson Valley	1985	off-set prints	16.0 x 23.5 cm	p.133
Spring Frost	1985	chromogenic print; brown paper; plywood; balsa wood	100.0 x 134.6 cm	p.134
The Breakaway	1985	chromogenic print, brown paper; plywood	100.0 x 122.0 cm	p.135
The Immigrants #2	1983	chromogenic prints; brown paper; plywood; balsa wood	99.0 x 35.2 x 3.3 cm; 100.2 x 53.7 x 3.3 cm; 99.9 x 34.9 x 3.3 cm	p.136
The Pioneer	1992	pigment ink-jet print; gatorboard	99.5 x 69.5 x 3.8 cm	p.137
Summer – Another Australian Feature	1983	hand-coloured gelatin silver offset print	23.6.0 x 17.3 cm	p.138–139
THE LANDSCAPE REVISITED				
A Summer Morning Tiff	2017	pigment ink-jet print	76.0 x 51.2 cm	p.141
Down on his Luck	2017	pigment ink-jet print	100.0 x 134.0 cm	p.142
While the Billy Boils	2017	pigment ink-jet print	25.5 x 46.7 cm	p.143
A Quiet Day at Spring Creek	2017	pigment ink-jet print	26.4 x 34.8 cm	p.144
Lost	2017	pigment ink-jet print	50.0 x 75.0 cm	p.145
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Brown bears	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.149
Lost lynx	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.150
Performing seal	2008	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.150
Polar bear, grizzly bear and grolar bear	2017	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.150
Windy weather	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.150
Kudu hunter	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.151
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Game park	2008	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.151
Rising tide	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.152
Rising tide	2016	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.153
Alpine scene	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.154
Alpinists	2008	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.154
Big cats	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.154
Birds of Australia	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.154
Rising tide	2022	chromogenic print, regurgitated plastics	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.155
American Museum of Natural History, New York	2007	chromogenic print	132.5 x 199.0 cm	p.156–157
Exotic birds	2007	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.158
Exotic birds	2017	chromogenic print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.159
WILD LIFE AUSTRALIA				
Emu, Riverina District of New South Wales	2019	pigment ink-jet print	80.0 x 98.0 cm	p.161
The Mallee, near Benetook in Sunraysia Region of Victoria	2019	pigment ink-jet print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.163
Gnarnayarrahe Waitairie from Roebourne, Western Australia in the region of New South Wales	2019	pigment ink-jet print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.164
Koala, Yarra River at Woori Yallock, Victoria	2019	pigment ink-jet print	80.0 x 80.0 cm	p.165

Sea Bird Colony, Admiralty Rocks with turbulent seas, Lord Howe Island	2019	pigment ink-jet print	80.0 x 126.0 cm	p.166–67
Sea Bird Colony, Admiralty Rocks with calm seas, Lord Howe Island	2019	pigment ink-jet print	80.0 x 94.0 cm	p.168–69
Lyrebird, Garigal National Park (NSW)	2019	gelatin silver print, sepia print, oil paint, pigment ink-jet print	43.5 x 35.5 cm	p.170
Bats, Nepean River (NSW)	2019	gelatin silver print, sepia print, oil paint, pigment ink-jet print	43.5 x 35.5 cm	p.171
LOST LANDSCAPES				
Lost Landscape, installation view, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery	2020	light boxes and diorama set into wall	dimensions variable	p.173
As the crow flies	2020	dye sublimation transfer on fabric, light box	145.0 x 170.0 cm	p.175
Birds of a feather flock together	2020	dye sublimation transfer on fabric	145.0 x 170.0 cm	p.177
A colony of boffins	2020	dye sublimation transfer on fabric	130.0 x 265.0 cm	p.178–79
YOU ARE HERE				
You are on Gundungurra land!	2020	solvent ink-jet print	115.0 x 161.0 cm	p.181
You are on Bondi Bidjigal land!	2020	solvent ink-jet print	115.0 x 190.0 cm	p.182–83

EXHIBITION LOAN CREDITS:

Down on his Luck 2017
from the series *The Landscape Re-presented*
pigment ink-jet print
sheet: 100.0 x 134.0cm
Art Gallery of Ballarat Collection
purchased with funds from the Joe White Bequest, 2020
2020.20

Down on his Luck 1982
from the series *The Landscape Re-presented*
chromogenic print
24.4 x 32.1 cm
Museum of Australian Photography, City of Monash Collection
acquired 1986
MAPh 1986.21

The Pioneer 1992
from the series *The Landscape Re-presented*
pigment ink-jet print; gatorboard
99.5 x 69.5 x 3.8 cm
Geelong Gallery Collection
gift of the artist, 2022
2022.5

The Immigrants #2 1983
from the series *The Landscape Re-presented*
chromogenic prints; brown paper; plywood; balsa wood
99.0 x 35.2 x 3.3 cm; 100.2 x 53.7 x 3.3 cm; 99.9 x 34.9 x 3.3 cm
Geelong Gallery Collection
John Norman Mann Bequest Fund, 2022
2022.4.1–3

A summer morning tiff 2017
from the series *The Landscape Re-presented*
pigment ink-jet print
sheet: 76.0 x 51.2cm frame: 78.5 x 54.0 x 3.8cm
Art Gallery of Ballarat Collection
purchased with funds from the Joe White Bequest, 2020
2020.17

Birds of a feather flock together 2020
from the series *Lost Landscapes*
dye sublimation transfer on fabric in light box
145.0 x 170.0 cm
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Tasmania

As the crow flies 2020
from the series *Lost Landscapes*
dye sublimation transfer on fabric in light box
145.0 x 170.0 cm
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Tasmania

A colony of boffins 2020
from the series *Lost Landscapes*
dye sublimation transfer on fabric in light box
130.0 x 265.0 cm
Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Tasmania

The Bathers 1989
from the series *Bondi: playground of the Pacific*
chromogenic print
95.0 x 112.0 cm
Museum of Australian Photography, City of Monash Collection
donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program
by the Bonness Family 2010
MAPh 2010.022

Saturday, 2.48pm 1995
from the series *Open House*
duratran, light box
176.0 x 125.0 x 25.0 cm
Monash University Collection
purchased 1996
1996.4

The Cook (Michael Schmidt/architect) 1987
from the series *Resemblance*
silver dye bleach print
80.0 x 80.0 cm
Museum of Australian Photography, City of Monash Collection
acquired with the assistance of The Robert Salzer Foundation 2019
MAPh 2019.10

The Artist (self-portrait) 1987
from the series *Resemblance*
silver dye bleach print
80.0 x 80.0 cm
Museum of Australian Photography, City of Monash Collection
donated by Anne Zahalka 2019
MAPh 2019.11

MAPh ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MAPh would like to thank Anne Zahalka for allowing us unfettered access into her studio and archive and providing such insight into her practice over forty years.

The exhibition is proudly supported by The Luminaries Circle of donors who are MAPH's closest and most valued supporters. They share our passion and commitment to photography and recognise the transformative power of the arts. Their support, as philanthropic leaders, is critical in enabling us to cultivate a community that is actively engaged with Australian photography and its stories, and to empower and celebrate its artists.

We are profoundly grateful to the Gordon Darling Foundation who have made this publication possible through their generous support. Thanks also to the institutions that have generously lent us works from their collections for the exhibition.

As always the team at MAPH have worked hard to bring this exhibition and publication to life. I would especially like to acknowledge Senior Curator, Angela Connor; Curator, Stella Loftus-Hills; Development & Sponsorship Coordinator, Lara Goode; Education & Public Engagement Coordinator, Ingrid Wood; Marketing & Communications Lead, Jaqueline Seromenho; Exhibitions & Operations Coordinator, Cait Burgoyne; Gallery Registrar, Katie Tremschnig; Visitor Services – Commercial Operations Coordinator, Marley Campagna; and Gallery Framer, Omar Qaradaghi.

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Anouska Phizacklea
Director, Museum of Australian Photography

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I would like to acknowledge the work of fine art printer, Sandra Barnard who has overseen the production of my most celebrated works, many of which are in this exhibition—they continue to resonate with audiences because of her incredible work. More recent exhibition prints from *Wild Life, Australia* (2019), *Lost Landscapes* (2020) and *You are Here* (2020), were produced by Warren Macris at High Res Digital with great technical and creative vision.

Presenting *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive* at the Museum of Australian Photography has been a great privilege. What started as a wild idea to present my archive in a shipping container outside the museum evolved into a proposal to reproduce my studio-archive as a photographic trompe l'oeil illusion as the centrepiece of the exhibition. This sculptural replica was made possible through the tenacity and belief of director Anouska Phizacklea, and the support of the amazing team of people who worked on the show. I am delighted that the digital holdings of *ZAHALKAWORLD* will find a permanent home in the Museum of Australian Photography collection as an important legacy of the exhibition.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this exhibition to a much loved friend and supporter of my work, Joanne Walsh, *The Botanist* from *Resemblance II* (1989). Jo was a passionate soil scientist and a principled advocate for social justice. She passed away peacefully this year and is profoundly missed.



Joanne Walsh
8 July 1958 – 14 March 2023

ZAHALKAWORLD: *an artist's archive*
10 June – 10 September 2023

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MAPh acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong People, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

ZAHALKAWORLD: *an artist's archive*
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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the City of Monash.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are respectfully advised that a number of people mentioned in writing or depicted in photographs in this publication have passed away.

Anne Zahalka is represented by ARC ONE (Melbourne) and Dominik Mersch Gallery (Sydney).

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