

Title: The Mother as a Creator

Curated by Elaine Kim

“Where and who would we be without our mothers?”

The artist develops and continues their work to bring their work to life. The life of an artist may not be different from the life of a mother who gives birth and raises a child. But creating someone's life is much more difficult than creating a single work of art. Therefore, all births in this world should be blessed, and the mother's role in contributing to the birth must be respected. Although the mother is mainly portrayed as raising her child with love and devotion, there are many different facets of motherhood that many people are reluctant to talk about. For example, there are dedicated but selfish mothers, unfortunate mothers, and immature mothers.

In this exhibition, each artist, expressed how their perception and experience of ‘mother’ is differently perceived in their art world and how their ‘mother’ is related to their work process and artistic outcome.

The relationship between mother and child is entangled with earnest and instinctive affection, but sometimes the relationship is mixed with love and hate. So, being a mother may be love itself, but it is also a different variation of emotions, and sometimes disappointment and pain. This exhibition is self-confessions of artists about their own mothers. Artists restored memories of their past, memories with their mothers, or horrific memories in their work. So creating works for these artists to restore what they have learned from their mothers is appropriate. Whether Hateful emotions or Loving affections, Our mothers are creators. Because of them, artists were born, and our works were able to exist in the world.

Through this exhibition, we hope that the role of art will become an important role for artists and audiences to face the background of the past and history. Furthermore, I hope it will be a place where various audiences and generations living with different experiences and memories can sympathize and share their stories.

[Inspiration for this exhibition]

1. Pablo Picasso, who allegedly received exceptional care from his mother and later possessed extraordinary confidence, expressed the relationship to his mother confidently yet comfortably in his paintings. “My mother said to me, If you are a soldier, you will become a general. If you are a monk, you will become the Pope.’ Instead, I was a painter and became Picasso.” – Pablo Picasso

One can wonder, had Picasso's mother rebuked and criticized him instead of encouraging him, would Picasso be known as the artist he is known as today?

2. Henry Moore, an artist who creates voluminous bronze sculptures, said, "I admired the world of sculptural beauty while massaging my mother, who suffered from sciatica as a child."

3. I inspired by Yayoi Kusama. She the specialty of Japanese artist, Yayoi Kusama's artistic flair that made her a world-famous artist had a mental illness from an early age. Through this suffering, influenced her work and creating her own style. Her mother, who did not understand her mental illness, punished her daughter. Yayoi Kusai's mental illness, which

even her mother did not understand, became even more severe. As her obsessive-compulsive disorder reached its peak, white dots began to appear in her eyes, like round polka dots, from her Yayoi Kusai. These phenomena, seen as a result of her mental illness, have made Kusama Yayoi a trademark in her art world. Her representative work is her pumpkin, which is said to have always been piled up in her warehouse, where she hid after being punished by her mother when she was young and running away.



Yayoi Kusama, Pumpkin 1994

Its influence enabled her to express the amber in this artistic way in her work. This painting is a portrait of her mother, painted by Yayoi Kusama when she was ten years old, showing the world Kusama saw at the time. She later said she painted it in hopes that she could be a bubble because she hated her mother so much, she said.



Yayoi Kusama's portrait of her mother, made when Kusama was ten, 1939

[Public Program Proposal]

1. A workshop held by an artist whose practice uses the 'Women's craft' skills learned from her mother. – Online classes or small group workshops in person according to Covid-19 rules.

– For example, the artist Monika Cvitanovic Zaper learned sewing and embroidery growing up beside her mother and grandmothers in her homeland Croatia. Her female ancestors, who have considered their textile practices a skillset important in everyday life, have influenced Zaper's creative process and her interest in materiality of textiles. Now in Australia, her emerging practice explores this relationship through the use of needlework in a rebelliously 'sloppy manner' in order to dialogue with the women's textile-based knowledge and its patriarchal context.

– I want to offer a workshop on exploration of the relationship between childhood experiences and the process of art making. The audience can learn the new skills and explore their own relationship to childhood memories while creating their own small-scale works guided by the artist.

2. Discussion of works with curators and artists.

We are planning an "Artist&Curator discussion time" to talk about the artists' connection to their mothers.

[Curator Bio]

Elaine Hye Ryung Kim is a Sydney-based Curator and Artist of Korean background. She currently studying Masters of Curating and Cultural Leadership at UNSW where she got a Bachelor of Fine Arts Honours degree. She curated "The Third Space" and "Ceramics and Emotions" in 2021 at Kudos Gallery in Sydney. Elaine is Finalist in Gosford Art Prize this year, Penrith Show 2017(Second Prize), Jenny Birt Award 2020(Highly Commended), Shelly Simpson Prize 2021(Finalist). She has exhibited her artwork in Hazlehurst Gallery, AD Space, UNSW Gallery, Gaffa Gallery, Kerrie Lowe Gallery in Sydney. She sees the world through two cultures of Korea and Australia, giving her perhaps a broader scope with how she perceives the particularly visual world. Her practice is led by a series of experiments that aim to destroy traditional art structures of time and space. Elaine explores the notion that all cultures are hybrid, and there is no longer a pure obedient culture that preserves and thrives on its own. She seeks to express the moment when the boundary between obedience and hybridity breaks down, through a process of translation of her cultures.

All the artists are confirmed to join “The Mother as a Creator” exhibition.

For "The Mother as a Creator" exhibition curated by Elaine Kim, I wish to propose a new work exploring further the relationship between mother and daughter, specifically looking at shared experiences, and the private vs public dynamic.

– Artist, Anastasia Vorgias

*I will collect more conceptual artists after receiving confirmation from the gallery.

Monika Cvitanovic Zaper

Monika Cvitanovic Zaper is a Croatian Australian artist exploring the intersection of expanded painting and traditions of women's craft. Informed by Feminist Ethics of Care, she is interested in rereading women's histories while working through personal, intergenerational memories. She explicitly works with reclaimed fabrics, due to interest in their prior histories and because of her concern for the ecological implications of art making. By referencing the textile practices of her female forebears, she is exploring the self-care potential of women's craft and ultimately challenging the gendered hierarchy of art materials. Monika has exhibited her work in RAS Young Artist Prize, Lethbridge 20000 Art Award, Reimagine, Jenny Birt Award, AD Space, Emergent 2021 and is the winner of the 2020 Tim Olsen Drawing Prize.



Mother-Daughter

The work makes use of a recycled pillowcase and explores my creative connection to my mother, in terms of the tension between perfectionism and experimentation. The processes are reflective of my childhood spent by my mother who worked as a seamstress and has influenced my deep interest in textiles. The gridded painting on the inverted pillowcase references patchwork my mother used to make and the cross stitching is intentionally done in a sloppy way, as opposed to her perfectionism. Engaging with personal textiles, I aim to critique the patriarchal domestic context in which women were taught to do embroidery as well as to honour the resilience and resourcefulness of my female ancestors.

Hansul Park

Hansul Park is a Korean-Australian artist, based in Sydney, Australia. Hansul has completed Bachelor of Visual Arts at Sydney College of the Arts in 2020 and currently undertaking Honours as a continuation. She was a semi-finalist in Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize in 2015, received a Favuette Loureiro Memorial Artists Exchange Scholarship in 2019. In 2020, Hansul was included in the SCA Degree Show and will be featured in the Airspace at the end of 2021.



Process picture of dandelion sculpture

“Dandelion is an annoying weed. It is always unwelcome and unwanted, so people try to pull it out of their garden beds. But it never disappears, it always grows back. My marginalised position as an Asian, middle-age migrant and woman sometimes makes me wonder if I really am a useful person in the society, thinking I may be one of the dandelions who needs to be pulled off from this vast land.” – Artist’s Mother

Dandelion, the plant of common and ordinary, nothing something special or distinctive, often comes with ever-burning question of how to get rid of. Nevertheless, it is known in Korea as an ethnic flower, symbolising their spirituality. With a history of overcoming number of historical adversities, Koreans have identified themselves with dandelion and found a sense of hope from its resilience and strength.

Hansul’s current practice is motivated by her mother’s identification with dandelion, which has become a symbolic metaphor of the artist, her family and experience of migration. Using the two juxtaposing meanings of dandelion, Hansul has manifested migrants’ ambivalence living in a displaced environment. On one hand, dandelion is a symbol of challenges and struggles of assimilation, yet is a hope and belief for successful settlement. Through the Dandelion, Hansul has sought to cast out her mother’s feelings of un-belonging and uncertainty, but conveying words of consolation; “It is okay. You are doing great. We will get along.”

Elizabeth Lewis

Elizabeth Lewis is an artist based in Sydney, Australia. She is a recent graduate of Fine Arts with Honours from UNSW Art + Design. She works in expanded ceramics; made up predominantly of ceramics and painting that meet through collage and sculpture. Textural anomalies form the basis of her work across these mediums. She is particularly interested in how composting past work and collage can inform other practices materially, explored through unlikely meetings of design in her ceramic vessels. These come to form sugary works that aim to evoke curiosity in tactility and the happiness expressive imperfection.

Elizabeth was a finalist in both the Lloyd Rees Memorial Youth Art Award and Tim Olsen Drawing Prize in 2020, has featured in group exhibitions at Gaffa Gallery and Kerrie Lowe, and took part in The Other Art Fair in 2021. Later this year she will be part of the 1000 Vases Milan exhibition.



Sample artwork

My artistic experience with my mother is her keeping and displaying at home any work I made through primary and high school and driving me to after school art classes with my friends. To keep me making things outside of school she would encourage me to draw cards for birthdays, and a Christmas card each year for her to print copies of and send to family and friends. This encouragement made me associate art as something that existed as something to be shared not only in exhibition but during practice.

Ally Grujoski

Ally Grujoski is a multidisciplinary Artist and Designer working on Bidjigal and Gadigal people of the Eora nation. Specialising in fine art painting and handmade ceramic work. Her works build on the understanding of the critical foundation that traditional art mediums and practices hold. Ally's creative practice initiated with a background in painting traditional tattoo art, it has since been transferred into ceramic works. Her style has evolved under the influence of her Portugese and Macedonian heritage and art nouveau painters and illustrators that has since been continued in her paintings.



‘Mother of Spathiphyllum’

A unique mother-daughter relationship where different world perspectives are present can establish complex challenges. The birth of life from the female form serves as a foundation for love and admiration even when adversities are present.

Finding common grounds is imperative as a means to coexist and learn.

For the artist, common ground is plants and the relationship between caring and receiving. The love for plants came throughout family generations and serves as a deep bond in the bloodline. A particular plant species, Spathiphyllum has been grown from her late grandmother to her mother. The Spathiphyllum is the common ground in which connection and compassion is made to allow for understanding and growth.

Aria Joshes

Aria Joshes is an activist multidisciplinary Sculpture and Performance Artist who typically works with a range of unusual mediums. Her work mostly deals with Family Violence, Internalised Capitalism, Environmentalism, and Psychogeography. Her work both deals with oppression and agency as she expresses a narrative not commonly explored in art. Aria particularly likes to open up dialogues not often explored and well known in mainstream society. As domestic violence is fairly well known, the concept of family violence is not often explored in terms of psychological abuse. A general reading of her work is that she enacts the 7 stages of grief she experiences as she processes her healing from Family Violence. Aria's aesthetic often borders on the lines between absurdity and abject as she makes bold statements in her work in order to inspire a call to action. She also makes statement's that question gender identity and whether these social constructs are empowering or oppressive in reference to feminist discourses.



The Narrative (Video Performance) – Sample work

In this proposed work Aria Joshes borrows the narrative of the movie Carrie but creates a twist in which she vows not to recreate the violence and pain she experienced with her mum by ending her relationship with her mother through estrangement. She breaks the wheel of toxic motherhood so she can create a positive legacy when she becomes a mother by walking away and starting the healing process. Anger doesn't have to end in violence when it's justified anger. Sometimes anger is what teaches you that you are worth so much more than what the people who created you, are willing to give. Sometimes justified anger is what makes you realise your own self worth.

Emma Rani Hodges

Emma Rani Hodges' work explores their mixed Thai, Chinese and Australian heritage through a post-colonial and feminist framework. Fluctuating between image, text and object, Hodges's work resists easy categorisation. Hodges draws from the aspects of their cultural history that got left behind in the process of migration. The works are primarily constructed from fabric offcuts given to Hodges by their grandmother who was a dressmaker in Thailand. Each painting uses a fragment of poetic text that describes their and their mother's longing and desire to rebuild connections to lost culture, language, and places.



TW: trauma/mental health:

With Mum in our small living room, on our ripped up tan couch with the blue blanket I still own, in our first home together in Charnwood.

My brain always comes back to a place of remembering or trying to stitch together memories.

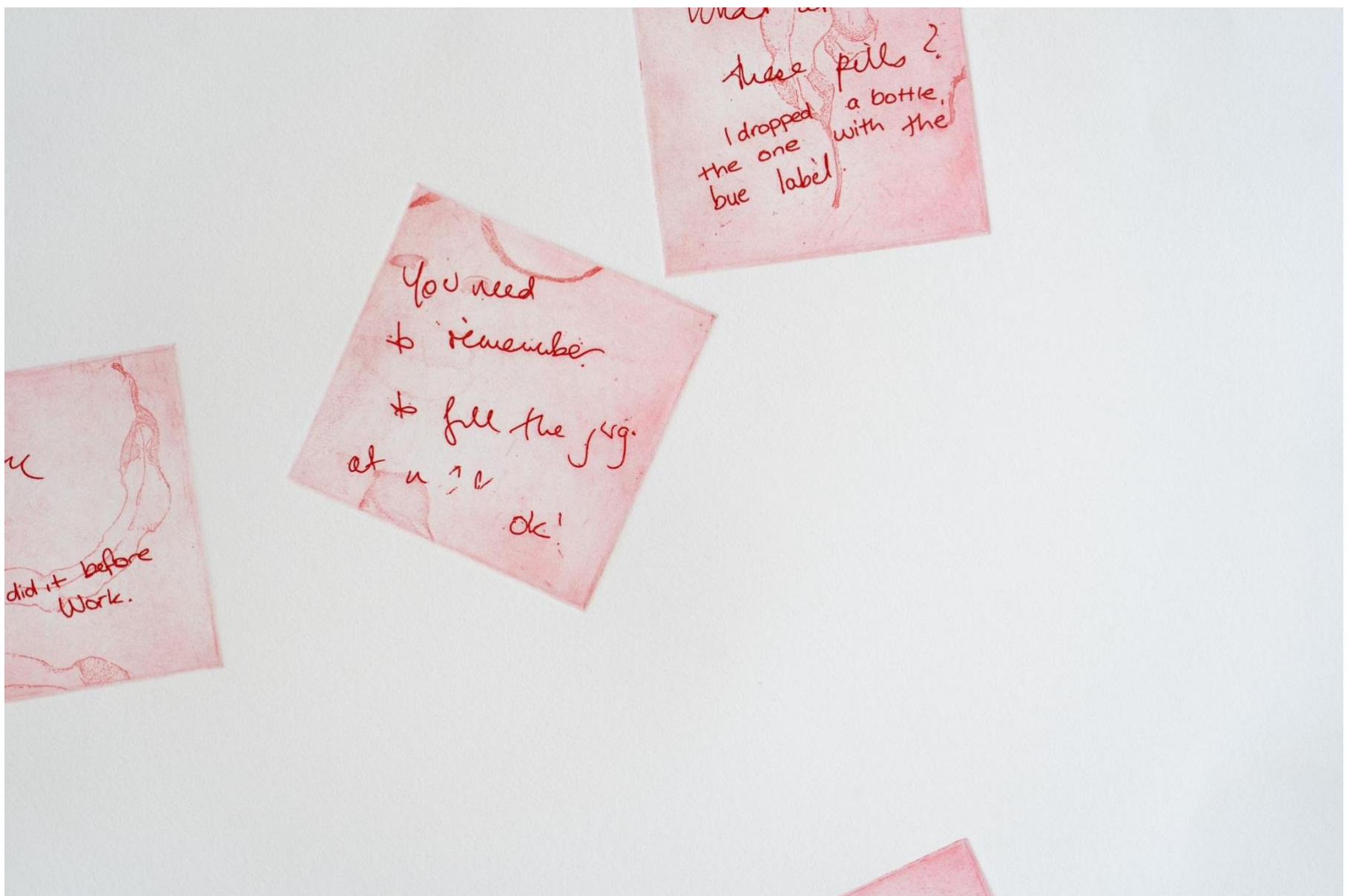
I've spent so much of my life inheriting my mum's bad mental health and trauma. I don't resent her for this for a second (though I understand that not everyone feels that towards their parents and nor should they). We've grown together but she's still very often in a bad place, one that's terrifying. I struggle with this, I fear for her often and I have so much fear because of her. It takes a toll on my personal relationships and so often interferes with my ability to look after myself. I've spent years beating myself up about it instead of learning how to self soothe.

I guess what I want to say is please be kind to yourselves. Everyone deserves a chance to heal. My mums one of my favourite subjects because I adore her so much, she's such a complex person with a complex history. I spent so long being unbearably angry at her and I want to reconcile those feelings with the love I have for her now.

Anastasia Vorgias

Dyslexic Artist Anastasia Vorgias is known for her practice in autopathography surrounding her experience with Dyslexia. Having worked on multiple exhibitions from a curatorial and liaising position, Anastasia is an experienced nagger of artists and organiser. With shows such as The Anti-Annual 2020, NOX 2019, and DISCHARGE 2018, Anastasia Vorgias is also a well-equipped performer and exhibitor. Currently heading an art collective called The Bloody Bean, Anastasia remains fully immersed in the art scene post-graduation in 2020. Anastasia Vorgias is a printmaker, performance artist and painter, with much of her art being a recreation of her dyslexic experience. Common themes of red reference her struggles in the schooling system and her comical and positive acceptance of her dyslexia in later years. Currently studying a Masters of Teaching (Secondary) at UNSW, Vorgias wishes to continue with her own art practise, while using her experiences to benefit the new generations of art students with her conceptual performance background.

“Definitely Dyslexic” Artist Anastasia Vorgias is known for a text-based practice in autopathography surrounding her experiences growing up with dyslexia. Her work uses a mistake making process to “create the visible out of the otherwise invisible”, providing her audience with an insight into her everyday. An embrace of this mistake making process through Vorgias’ works is connected with a common theme of red, a tribute to her graded high school papers drowning in a sea of red corrections, symbolising her errors and mistakes. With an interest in sharing the lived experience, Vorgias’ art challenges the audience to analyse their own perspective on private vs public information and the ownership of shared experiences.



I Don't Think In English, I Think In Dyslexic 2020 – Sample artwork

Using inspiration from the family dynamic, Vorgias’ work I Don't Think In English, I Think In Dyslexic 2020 focused on miscommunication and mistranslation expressed “through an intergenerational archive of text and memory; a familial list-making strategy used to cope with information processing” (Vorgias, 2020). A collection of everyday ephemeral lists, once removed from context recreating a breakdown in the knowledge exchange Anastasia experiences through her dyslexic lens.

For The Mother as a Creator exhibition, I wish to propose a new work exploring further the relationship between mother and daughter, specifically looking at shared experiences, and the private vs public dynamic. My mother being a highly private person, and myself being an oversharer, I wish to revisit the experience of growing up with my mother, with specific reference to the journey of learning and navigating communication with dyslexia.

Harry Merriman

Harry Merriman is an emerging artist from Boorowa, NSW, who uses an extended photographic practice to create artwork in response to the natural landscape. Merriman's work focuses on how humanity has shaped the physical world around us and how this environment we have created for ourselves in turn shapes us.

Merriman has shown his work at the UTS showcase night for the top works for the year (2018), the UNSW Honours exhibition (2020) and at Contact Sheet Gallery (2020) for a group photobook exhibition. His education includes a Bachelors in Media Arts & Communication at UTS, a Diploma in Photo imagery from Billy Blue and Honours in Fine Arts at UNSW.

In 2019 Merriman received a highly commended in the Australian Photographic Awards and was named in the top 20 emerging art photographers by Capture Magazine in 2020. In 2021 he received a Top Spot grant from the Southern Tablelands Arts Council for a group exhibition and was named area champion for Young by the Travelling Film Festival.

In 2022 Merriman will undertake his Masters of Fine Arts and continue pursuing becoming a professional working artist focusing on themes prevalent to contemporary Australia.



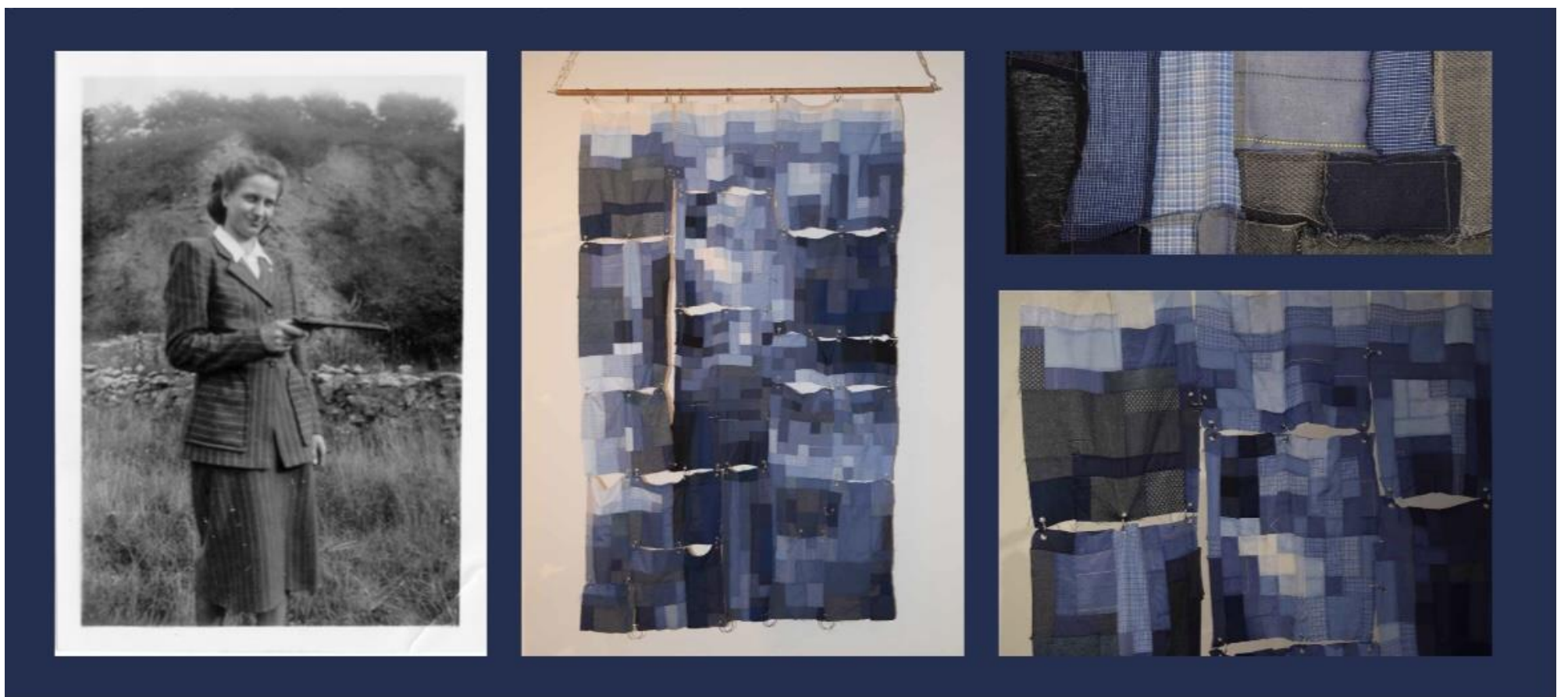
In this proposed work Harry Merriman explores the emotional connection that arises between a mother and son during the time of raising him into a young man. The word 'Mother' raises differing emotions, connotations, and memories for everyone, however, within this work Merriman focuses on a specific and intimate feeling brought on the memory of nostalgic youth and the role his mother played in that stage of his life. Not only do these memories of growing up stay with us forever but there are also remnants of feelings attached to these recollections which are just as important. Revisiting these emotions and feelings can be beneficial in reminding ourselves where we have come from and who has shaped us into the person today. For Merriman the role that his mother played in his life cannot be understated and this work seeks to uncover this time of his life.

Lachlan C. Bell

Living and working on unceded Wallumedegal land, Lachlan (he/him) integrates analogue and digital techniques primarily across textiles, photography, graphic design & film.

Incorporating his interests in family stories, archives, scientific journals, folklore and unspoken local history, Lachlan engages with his third-generation Estonian diasporic background through collaborative material investigations into memory loss, mistranslation and the importance of storytelling through the medium of art, particularly textiles as a communicative material.

Through remixing, re-contextualising, and rewriting familial and communal histories, themes around antagonistic duality, discomfort and warped chronology often challenge notions of a homogenous or defined truth. Works are often made in tandem to one other and often disparate series will draw from shared references. Works are neither static nor removed from the situational context in which they were made, and his archive of works seek to capture a certain zeitgeist placed under constant scrutiny. Lachlan is currently finishing his Bachelor of Design / Media (PR & Advertising) at UNSW and is undertaking a studio residency with Kudos Gallery.



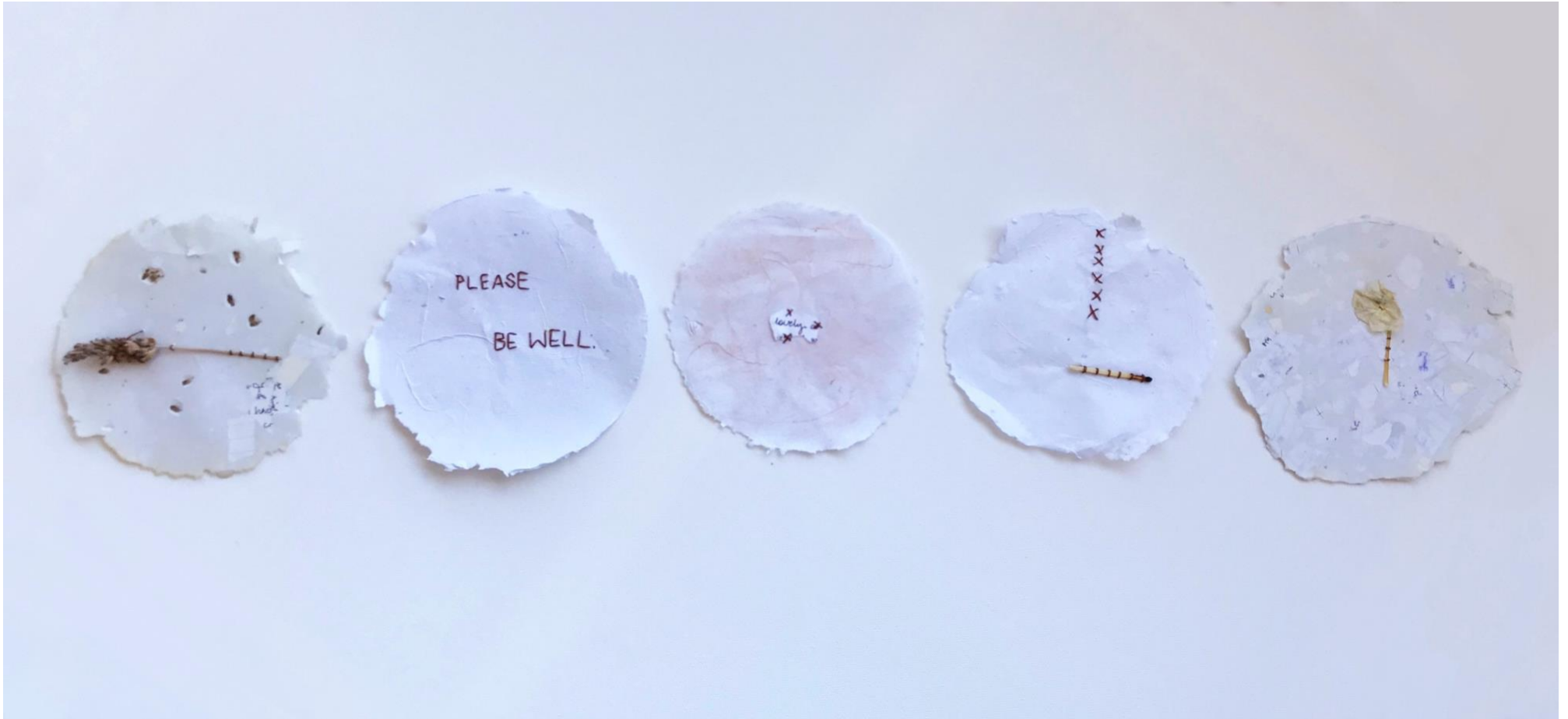
Inglismaal 1949, 140*180cm

Recycled fabric wagga rug, silver gelatin photograph, based upon an image of my Vanamamma at the gun club in England 1949, abandoned industrial banks of the Parramatta River as lonely figures traverse the frozen nightscape of concrete and steel the work is emblematic of the disjointed, fragmented and memory of the past that is only accessible through my grandmother and at risk of loss due to linguistic and cultural barriers to overcome. More recently in my life she has become the embodiment of my own imagined mythical figure, the Gunslinger, an invisible protector of the mundane and material, a being of no record.

I grew up without my dad and with my grandmother so I've always had two motherly presences in my life and they've influenced and helped me with my work to no end.

Sophie Lane

Sophie Lane is a Sydney based artist working on Gadigal and Wangal land. Through painting and drawing she employs meditative and diaristic writing practices which create a safe space for emotion. Lane's work denies the binaries and hierarchies of patriarchy which have defined 'vulnerability' as 'feminine' as 'less than', and instead nurtures the network of care towards self and others that emerges when one accepts sensitivity and introspection as deeply inherent and valuable to the human condition. By looking inwards, accepting and sharing her own vulnerability, she hopes to create a culture in which care thrives.



Inheritance

I am my mothers only daughter and I am not always sure I am the daughter she imagined, though the care we have for each other is real. Inheritance uses handmade paper made by the destruction of dozens of letters written to loved ones, then transformed into paper pulp to create new sheets of paper. These paper sheets were formed using an embroidery hoop, referencing the embroidery practice my mother and grandmother taught me, making up a significant part of my childhood and my relationships with these women. The work also features dried and pressed flowers from my mother and grandmother's gardens. Honouring this matrilineal knowledge pathway of textile and gardening practice also works to highlight and elevate the care practice which has also transferred through this pathway.