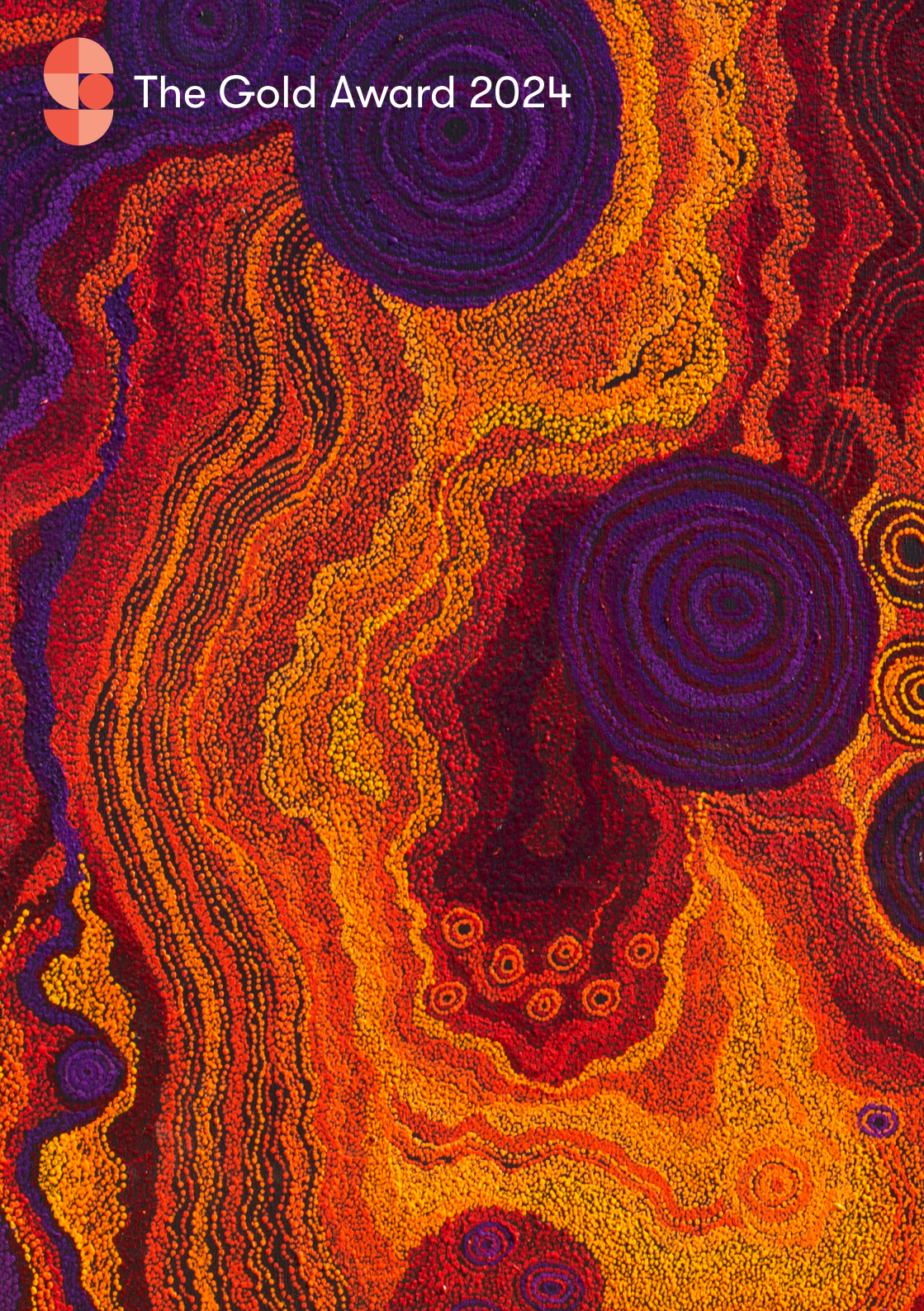
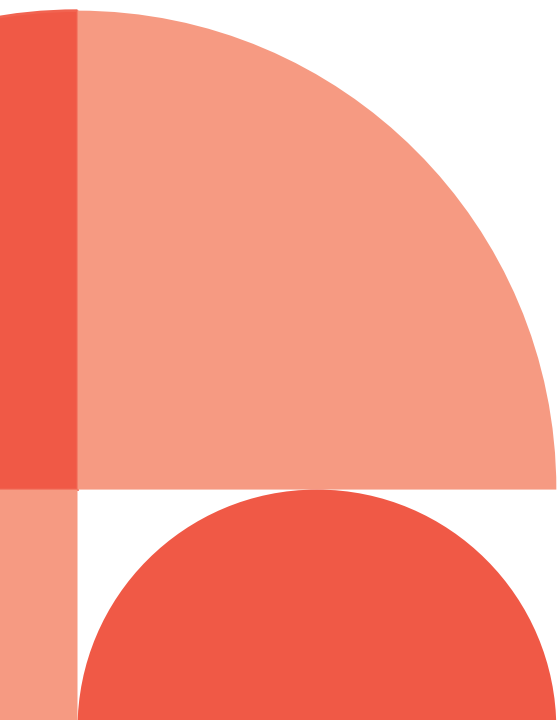




The Gold Award 2024





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Wendy Sharpe

b. 1960 Sydney, NSW
lives Sydney, NSW and
Paris, France

Self Portrait as Circus Banner in Purple Skirt 2022

acrylic and oil on linen, 183 x 147 cm

Winner of The Gold Award 2022. Gift of the Moya Gold Trust through Rockhampton
Museum of Art Gift Fund 2022

Image courtesy of the artist and Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane. Photo: John Fotiadis.

Introduction

Welcome to the sixth biennial Gold Award, The Gold Award 2024.

The Gold Award, which was first presented in 2012, is one of Rockhampton Museum of Art's most eagerly awaited events, and forms a key part of our collecting strategy. Many of our most prized works have come through The Gold Award, and they form one of the key parts of our beautiful RMOA Collection. The Gold Award is named for a generous bequest of the late Moya Gold, which has allowed us to acquire so many incredible winning entries. On top of this, our own RMOA Philanthropy drives the biennial Gold Campaign, with which we can make further acquisitions from the show, building the RMOA Collection into one of the most envied in Australia.

To the Gold Patrons who have made this possible, thank you for your generous contribution toward the cultural treasures of your city and your region. In 2022, our Gold Patrons of The Gold Award 2022 directly funded the purchase of artworks by the incredible talents that are Euan MacLeod, Gordon Hookey, Ian Smith and Ms N Marawili. The winner of The Gold Award 2022, Wendy Sharpe, will soon be executing her exhibition here in RMOA's Atrium Gallery, a large-scale mural that will be on display for an extended period. Be sure to pop in and see it evolve and progress.

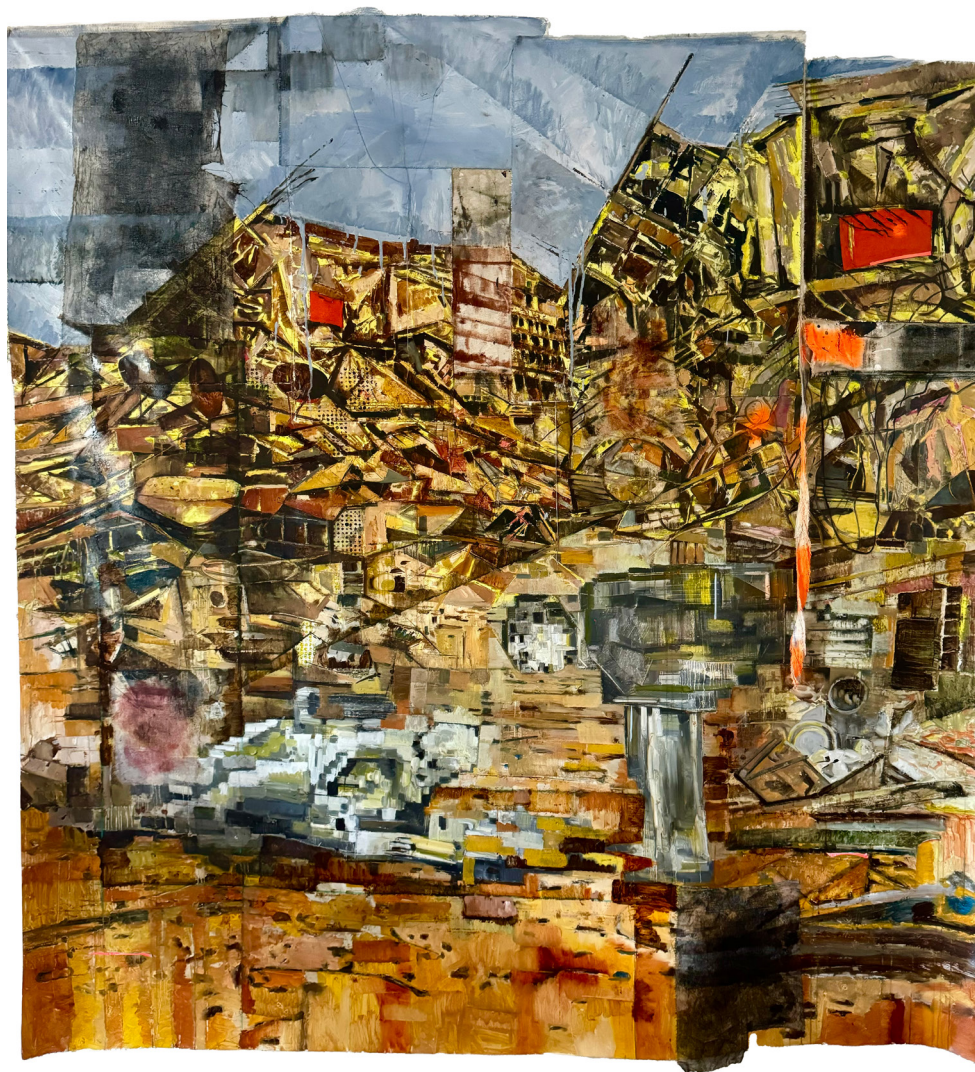
The Gold Award 2024 promises some stunning work. As I write this, I am yet to see any of them in the flesh, but the images I have seen are very exciting indeed. Once more we bring together eight of the very best artists working today, eight diverse and wonderful practices, eight unique visions of the world. We are pleased to present works by Patricia HOFFIE, John Honeywill, Jumaadi, Tjungkara Ken, Rosella Namok, Ryan Presley, Gareth Sansom, and Louise Tuckwell.

And finally, welcome to artist Godwin Bradbeer, our judge for The Gold Award 2024. Godwin's stunning practice has been celebrated nationally and internationally, and I am certain that he will bring a different perspective to the judging process. I do not envy you of this difficult decision!

Best of luck to all.

Jonathan McBurnie

Director, Rockhampton Museum of Art



Patricia Hoffie

***The Strip (Bird-Man and Pinioned Dove-Woman)* 2024**

oil on canvas, 208 x 206 cm

b. 1953 Scotland
lives Brisbane, QLD

Image courtesy of the artist

Patricia HOFFIE

Patricia HOFFIE's recent paintings have been dazzlingly graphic, compositionally intense work that imbricate the personal, the political and the spiritual. Weaving together influences as diverse (and specific) as Australia's continuing and inhumane treatment of refugees, Sidney Nolan's costume designs for a Stravinsky ballet, Henry Darger's *Vivian Girls* saga and the imminent collapse of the natural world, HOFFIE's referents all connect back to the complicated story of contemporary Australia. HOFFIE's Australia is not necessarily the one we see and smell and touch when we walk down a suburban street or country road, but a kind of dreamscape wherein the past can interact with the present and future, outside of established byways, maps and avenues. In other words, Google maps will not help you here, in a space that is both allegorical and folkloric. Even HOFFIE's approach to the classic landscape painting is seasoned with the telltale signs of media translation and filtration; marks can suggest the pixelation of the lo-fi camera phone, or the layered mediation of Photoshop (as seen in her painting *The Strip (Bird-Man and Pinioned Down-Woman)*). Not-quite discernible shapes and figures suggest, rather than describe; and yet the landscape retains its ancient majesty, content in the knowledge that its future, unlike the humanoids scurrying across its surfaces, is secure.

HOFFIE's entries in The Gold Award 2024 are massive in scale, threatening to engulf the viewer within their expanses, one of them (*The Strip*) seemingly unable to be contained within one piece of canvas, expanded out with multiple additions. *Ongoing Entanglements #3: Kooramindanjie and 'The Rite of Spring' in Covent Garden in 1962* finds the artist beginning work directly from the very cliff face that had inspired Sidney Nolan's designs so many years ago, connecting with the mythmaking of which Nolan had been such an exemplar. Not coincidentally, this site is Carnarvon Gorge, a culturally significant area for the Gangulu people, and a must-see natural treasure of the Central Queensland region. *Deluge* is perhaps the most straightforward narrative at play, a commentary on the flooding that recently devastated Lismore and other areas proximate to the Tweed River, and the complicated relationship of the artist to approaching matters of land with representations in art, media and the postcolonial context.

Jonathan McBurnie



John Honeywill

b. 1952 Brisbane, QLD
lives Brisbane, QLD

***Magnolias Turning* 2023**
oil on linen, 122 x 92 cm

Image courtesy of the artist, Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane and Michael Reid
Galleries, Sydney

John HONEYWILL

With an artistic practice now reaching back decades, John Honeywill must surely be one of Australia's most consistent and disciplined artists, creating an oeuvre as stunning as it is understated. Usually executed in oil on linen, Honeywill has come to favour a simplicity of composition, usually only one or two objects on a reflective surface, against a spare background. These austere compositions allow for incredible, almost photographic detail, but not at the expense of painterliness, and by extension, a painterly approach to light. With an emphasis on domestic items—chairs, jugs, eggs, fruit, flowers, tins—Honeywill's work suggests an enclosed world of small but meaningful comforts, a celebration of moments often overlooked. This is only emphasised by the artist's sustained dedication to observation. The way the water in a glass jug has been slightly yellowed by the flowers placed in it; the different levels of blue and yellow in porcelain; the way cuttings lean lightly against each other; the spots and imperfections on a plum.

While Honeywill's still life work could be seen to be in dialogue with the visual and thematic complexities at play in Dutch still life— it is a tough association for any still life practitioner to avoid— I would argue that Honeywill's pared back approach to composition is as much akin to Euan Uglow as Clara Peeters in their disciplined dedication to observation of form and light. Rather than, as in the Dutch idiom, reflecting a rapidly

changing marketplace, the artist's meditations instead focus on the quietest and stillest moments, a self-enclosed moment for cogitation and philosophy, or simply tuning out the vulgar stimulus of an irritating, incessant, hyperactive world.

Honeywill's works in The Gold Award 2024 all occupy this space; *Cupola*, an upturned jelly, astonishes with its sheen, and the almost-indescribable 'lip' of the jelly against the surface of the table, spreading outwards before it can support its own form, ascending into a pleasing, wobbly hemisphere. We can almost smell *Minjerribah Passionfruit*, described with such delicate paintwork. Likewise, *Magnolias Turning* and *Pieces of Sunlight* both pay careful attention to incremental shifts of light, and its play across surfaces. Little details, carefully observed, like *Roses Turning*'s leaves and petals slowly curling, or *Magnolias*'s magnified stem, submerged in and refracted by clear water, or the dulled, matte sheen of light pushing across glossy leaves, give Honeywill's work a hushed poetry.

Jonathan McBurnie



Jumaadi

b. 1973 Sidoarjo, East Java, Indonesia
Sydney, NSW & Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Bedol Deso (The Migration of Love and Rice) (work in progress) 2024

synthetic polymer paint on cotton cloth primed with rice paste, 180 x 150 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and Jan Manton Gallery, Brisbane

JUMAADI

Jumaadi, who goes by one name, is a painter, poet and performer. As a performer, it is perhaps no surprise that Jumaadi's large-scale paintings on unstretched canvas channel the spirit of *wayang kulit*, Javanese shadow-puppet theatre, in their use of singular, in-profile figures on a flattened plane. Reduced to this 2D surface, his works can look deceptively simple; but the stories the works are telling are rich in humanity and flow freely between moments in history.

The works communicate folktales, fantastical journeys, and of particular importance to The Gold Award 2024 artworks, Jumaadi's works are often stories of migration. '[T]hese three paintings can be seen together or as separate individual works,' according to the artist. 'Each complements but each are independent.'¹ In *Bedol Desa (The Migration of Love and Rice)*, figures travel in all directions across the canvas. The work takes its title from the Indonesian government policy of 1976-81 that forced the mass migration of 12,500 families from the village of Wonogiri.² Some figures are burdened with oversize items; one is burdened with carrying an uprooted tree, while another strains under the weight of a person lying atop a bed frame.³ Several figures lift up a house.

In the centre, a lone person carries dozens of others inside a basket strapped to their back. *Lautan (The Sea)* features a small vessel at sea, piled with far too many passengers. The boat leans precariously to the right, with its passengers about to lose balance and fall in the water. *A Pair of Dreams* is described by the artist as 'a pair (a man and woman), sleeping next to each other, side by side. Although they share a mosquito net woven with images of their memories and dreams, they don't seem to touch each other. Instead, each of them is looking up.'⁴

Jumaadi's migration story is one that allows him to live in two worlds—both Australia and Indonesia—which is reflected in his visual practice. For the last decade, his time in Indonesia has also included the eastern Balinese village of Kamasan, whose history intertwines with the former kingdom of Majapahit—home to Jumaadi's ancestors. Kamasan's celebrated painting tradition, which includes a particularly smooth primed surface, have in turn informed the artist's practice. Through his timeless storytelling and exploration of ancestry, Jumaadi communicates across cultures.

Emily Wakeling

1 Email communication with the artist, March 2024.

2 See R. Gondowarsito, 'Transmigrasi Bedol Desa: Inter-Island Village Resettlement from Wonogiri to Bengkulu,' *Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies*, issue 26 (1), pp. 48-68.

3 Says Jumaadi of *Bedol Desa*, 'sometimes villages took their gamelan orchestras or shadow puppet theatres with them when they migrated' (from email communication with the artist March 2024).

4 Email communication with the artist, March 2024.



Tjungkara Ken
Pitjantjatjara

b. 1969 Amata, SA
lives Amata, SA

Seven Sisters (477-23) 2023
acrylic on linen, 197 x 198 cm

Image courtesy of the artist, Tjala Arts and Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane

Tjungkara KEN

Tjungkara Ken is an artist of the Anangu, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara lands of Central Australia. Ken dedicated herself especially to painting from 2008 onwards, including important collaborations with her sisters. Whether working collaboratively or as a solo artist, Ken depicts Country and its Tjukurpa (Dreaming) in her paintings with distinctive style. Mountain ranges, rocks, holes, and other elements of land are rendered in detail in her works as part of her storytelling. She communicates knowledge of both her mother's Wingellina and father's Amata Countries onto vibrant painted canvases.

Ken is well known for her sophisticated use of colour and striking works depicting the Seven Sisters story. Her family are custodians of significant sites where the story takes place, with each painting making reference to the landscape and its story. The Seven Sisters is a Tjukurpa story about the constellations of Pleiades (the sisters) and Orion, (Nyiru or Nyirunya, described as a predatorial man). The story is transcribed below:

Nyiru is forever chasing the sisters known as the Kunkarunkara women as it is said he wants to marry the eldest sister. The seven sisters travel again and again from the sky to the earth to escape Nyiru's unwanted attentions. They turn into their human form to escape from the persistent Nyiru, but he always finds them and

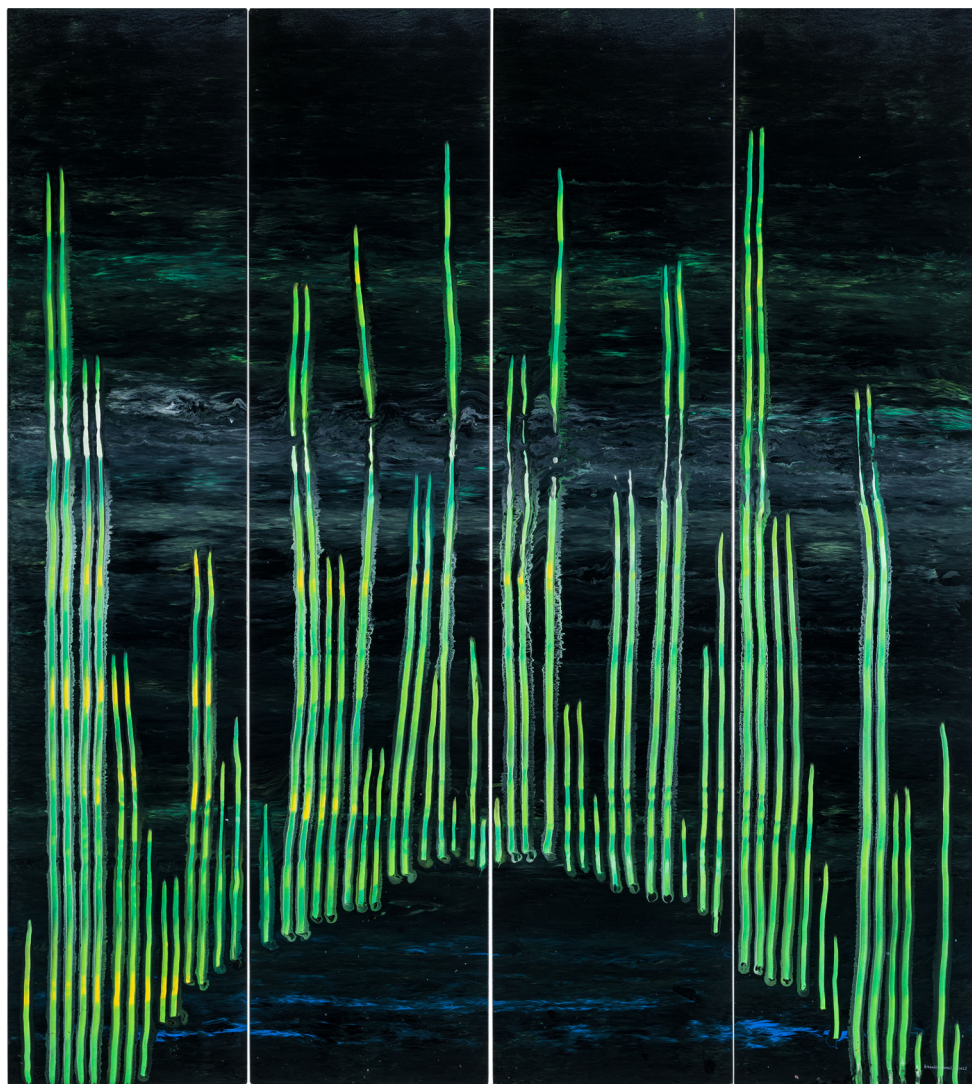
they flee back to the sky. As Nyiru is chasing the sisters he tries to catch them by using magic to turn into the most tempting kampurarpra (bush tomatoes) for the sisters to eat and the most beautiful ili (fig) tree for them to camp under. However, the sisters are too clever for Nyiru and outwit him as they are knowledgeable about his magic. They go hungry and run through the night rather than be caught by Nyiru. Every now and again one of the women fall victim to his ways. It is said that he eventually captures the youngest sister, but with the help of the oldest sister, she escapes back to her sisters who are waiting for her. Eventually the sisters fly back into the sky to escape Nyiru, reforming the constellation.¹

Rendered in vivid blues, reds, and yellows across her canvases, Tjungkara Ken keeps storylines strong for this ancient narrative.

Emily Wakeling

1

Tjala Arts, Tjukurpa Nganampa Kunpu Kanyintjaku: Stories that Keep Culture Strong, 2020, Tjala Arts, Amata and Aboriginal & Pacific Art, Sydney, unpaginated.
Accessed 18/03/2024, https://issuu.com/aboriginalpacificartgallery/docs/tjala_arts_2020_catalogue



Rosella Namok
Aangkum (Ungkum)

b. 1979 Lockhart River, QLD
lives Cairns, QLD

***Yakamu - Light on the Water* 2023**
acrylic on canvas, 225 x 200 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and FireWorks Gallery, Brisbane.

Rosella NAMOK

Aangkum (Ungkum) artist Rosella Namok is a key name in Lockhart River, the site of one of Queensland's most important contemporary art movements. In the 1990s, the community's five language and kinship groups came together to collaborate and develop a distinct arts practice; a group of artists who came to be known as the Lockhart River Art Gang. Namok and her peers' art practices sustain traditional cultural knowledge and expressions of Country through bold colours and innovative techniques that were new to the community. For over two decades, Namok has been technically and thematically developing her practice across painting, printmaking, and more recently sculpture.

Namok and her peers' abstract styles, as they developed in the 1990s, were unknown to their Elders. In a 2007 interview, Namok described their reactions: 'they [the Elders] would come along and say, "What are those two squares there for? What are those things?" [laughter].'¹ However, for Namok, her artmaking was always closely tied to traditional knowledge. Located along the exquisite beaches of Cape York Peninsula, sand painting, in which mark-making is achieved by running fingers through the fine beach sand, is a traditional visual communication technique belonging to the peoples of Lockhart River.

According to the artist, sand painting was essential to her grandmother's storytelling. Namok's signature 'finger line' drawing style creates patterned, linear arrangements by pulling her fingers through a layer of fresh paint to reveal other colours below; a method that resembles the sand drawing practiced by her Elders.

The vibrant colours, sitting just underneath the dark surface of *Old Gals Yarnin' I-III* express the tropical intensities of her Country. Also presented in The Gold Award 2024 is *Yakamu – Light on the Water*, her painterly interpretation of *yakamu*, a word that has no direct English translation but as described in Namok's artist statement means 'the dance of shadows and shimmering moonlight on the water in the evening.' The arc created in the lower part of the panels captures 'looking both back and through the bay and mangroves from the perspective of being out on the water.' The cool yellow and green highlights, perhaps evoking reflections from a nearby spotlight from a boat or jetty, enhance the nighttime atmosphere. Namok's primary shapes and colours offer highly contemporary interpretations of her knowledge of Country.

Emily Wakeling

1

Rosella Namok quote in Sally Butler, *Our Way: The Lockhart River Art Gang 2007*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, p. 20.



Ryan Presley

Marri Ngarr

b. 1987 Alice Springs, NT
lives Brisbane, QLD

***The sun never sets; so we daydream II* 2024**

oil and 23k gold leaf on polyester, 187 x 153 cm

Image courtesy of the artist

Ryan PRESLEY

Born in Mparntwe/Alice Springs, Ryan Presley is of the Marri Ngarr Peoples on his father's side and his mother is a first-generation Scandinavian immigrant. Presley's painting practice is informed by his knowledge of classical European art history, his First Nations identity, and the many ways in which the two intersect.

The three works on show in The Gold Award 2024 each have what appears to be a nighttime backdrop with bright constellations. *The sun never sets; so we daydream II* features a map of the Transit of Venus, the astrological occurrence that brought Enlightenment-era British explorers led by Lieutenant Cook and into the Pacific Ocean and ultimately to Australia. This reference to the Roman goddess of love suggests the lengths these men would go to for their desire for 'new' discoveries.

A mother, front and centre in the same painting, holds a suckling infant and a dingo pup. Here, Presley visually likens the contemporary fate of many Aboriginal children to the native animal—both of which are often described in the mainstream media as 'problems' that require more state control.¹

For thousands of years, dingoes have lived symbiotically alongside Aboriginal people: 'Dingo pups must be nurtured by humans when they're young, in order for them to become trusted companions,' the artist points out.² The analogy his

artwork makes is clear: like dingoes, Aboriginal children require early love and nurturing to grow into trusted members of community.

The constellations above the mother are, upon closer inspection, more like bullet holes puncturing through a dark blue layer of fabric (or hood). The child is held close while threats surround them. Aboriginal deaths in custody; 'hoods' and other police restraints; and ten-year-olds being held criminally responsible—these are but a few issues visually referenced by Presley in his artwork. In these paintings, the love found in First Nations communities and cultures exists despite the threat of colonial and state violence.

Emily Wakeling

1 On K'gari, dingoes are often reported upon as a threat to the island's tourists. See Lucy Loram and Grace Whiteside, 'Latest K'Gari (Fraser Island) Dingo Attacks Spark Breeding Season Warning,' ABC News, 19 February 2024, accessed 18/03/2024: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-02-19/kgari-dingo-attacks-spark-breeding-season-warning/103207840>

2 Online meeting with the artist, February 2024.



Gareth Sansom

b. 1939 Melbourne, VIC
lives Melbourne, VIC

***Abstract Painting with Mound* 2023**
oil and enamel on linen, 152.4 x 122 cm

Image courtesy of the artist

Gareth SANSOM

Gareth Sansom stands alone in Australian painting in his traversal of the figurative and the abstract, and seeming comfort within the contested image zones of our multiplicitous visual world. Working with a restless, graphic approach to image making (and image breaking) that seemingly carries over into his thought process, the artist's work seems to freeze into place like a video still of an animated menagerie, rather than the more typical 'resolution' of so many painted compositions. 'Animated' serves as an ideal descriptor for much of Sansom's oeuvre, the word itself deriving from the Latin *animare*, 'to give breath to,' and 'to endow with a particular spirit, to give courage to, or enliven.' With his ease in the expanded palette of imbricated colours and forms shimmer and vibrate next to each other, the artist's work frequently comes alive.

Taking cues as much from the iconoclasm of collage, the disruptive tendencies of painterly abstraction and the graphic lexicon of drawing, Sansom's work is at once disturbingly prescient in its contemporaneity and reverential of the artist's own art-historical touchstones, eyes on both the future and the past. Sansom's major survey for the National Gallery of Victoria in 2017, 'Transformer,' was a most appropriate title given the way his ciphers are constantly reconfiguring themselves visually, and their relentless, ever-shifting energy. Even Sansom's titles exude a wry bathos: *My issues with Discs*, *Ye Olde Style*

Abstraction and the wonderfully obtuse *Abstract Painting with Mound*, reveal a conversation between not only the artist and viewer (as one would expect), but between the artist and his work.

Designating an abstract painting as an abstract painting in its own title is done in both deference to, and playful subversion of, Sansom's own abstract influences. And yet of the three, *Abstract Painting with Mound* is the most overtly figurative, to my eyes at least, a blobby creature watching the skies for midnight constellations. Like so many of Sansom's works, this piece skates freely between abstract and figurative painting, allowing a veritable Rorschach blot-like space for exploration, interpretation and revelation. Transformer, indeed!

Jonathan McBurnie



Louise Tuckwell

b. 1963 Sydney, NSW
lives Sydney, NSW

***How to Delight in a Margin* 2023**

acrylic on panel, 80 x 80 cm

Image courtesy of the artist and Gallery 9, Sydney

Louise TUCKWELL

Combining geometric forms in both painting and sculpture, the work of Louise Tuckwell is a pleasing take on abstraction and non-representational painting. Carefully selecting colours and forms, Tuckwell's work is at once playful and restrained. Upon first glance, Tuckwell's surfaces appear as pristine, super-flat gestures toward a controlled kind of abstract sublime, but upon closer inspection we see the care and play of the human touch. This tactile comfort of hand-painted surfaces sits happily with the tiny imperfections of machined edges and planing, with multiple panels often abutted, emphasised, and contained within a frame, highlighting the sculptural elements found in even two-dimensional works, and suggesting a world of studio possibilities of assemblages, hard collaged blocks of complimentary shapes, colours, and tones.

Within the artist's specific graphic lexicon, which extends beyond painting and sculpture into tapestry, the viewer is reminded of the shapes and tones of music, with recurring colours and forms. High-key colours neighbour muted greys and pastels, and Tuckwell's work could be understood in strictly musical terms (harmony, resonance, arrangement, sharp and flat, major and minor all apply to her work), all coming together to form a composition that demands to be revisited.

Tuckwell's entries in The Gold Award 2024 (*Planetarium, A Brief History of Seeing, and How to Delight in Margin*) are elegant extensions of the artist's sustained focus, here including fine lines, not unlike musical staves, suggestive of the precision of machine blueprints or architectural drawings. This fine linework amid bold colours and geometry evoke the work of Virginia Cuppidge or Robert Jacks, both of whose approach to light and movement could be read in the context of the visual expression of music, while extending Tuckwell's own private, very specific artistic voice to the rich tradition of Australian abstraction.

Jonathan McBurnie

The Gold Award 2024

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Gold Patrons generously support Rockhampton Museum of Art and enable the RMOA Collection to continue to grow through an acquisition fund for The Gold Award. Funded solely through the generosity of individual benefactors and the spirit of philanthropy, the important contribution of Gold Patrons provides the opportunity for the museum to acquire works from The Gold Award in addition to the winning artwork, continuing to shape the RMOA Collection.

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The Gold Award 2024

Authors: Jonathan McBurnie, Emily Wakeling

Exhibition dates

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Rockhampton Museum of Art

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Cover Image: Tjungkara Ken, Pitjantjatjara (b. 1969) *Seven Sisters (477-23)* (detail) 2023, acrylic on linen, 197 x 198 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Tjala Arts and Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
Back cover: John Honeywill, (b. 1952) *Magnolias Turning* (detail) 2023, oil on linen, 122 x 92 cm. Image courtesy of the artist, Philip Bacon Galleries, Brisbane and Michael Reid Galleries, Sydney



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