

## RMOA Collection Study Room Artist-in-Residence

### *On Reflection*

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July 2022

*This project was made possible by the Australian Government's Regional Arts Fund, an Australian Government program designed to benefit regional and remote arts practitioners, arts workers, audiences, and communities. The fund is provided through Regional Arts Australia and is administered in Queensland by Flying Arts Alliance.*

I arrived at Rockhampton Museum of Art on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and walked into the collection study room where multiple artworks were on display. A Japanese Kimono lay in the glass lidded cabinet, Deborah Paauwe's photographs were framed on the wall, two paintings by Lawrence Daws hung side by side on one wall, and opposite, a drawing by Brett Whiteley. There was an abundance of work in this room, selected from the RMOA collection, and I was there to respond through my own practice to these works of art as Artist in Resident for the next four weeks.

My explorations began by responding to the artwork: Brett Whiteley, *Katharine Hobbs*, 1976, pencil, charcoal and ink on wove paper. I was intrigued by the abundance of line used in the Whiteley work. Thick and thin lines create bold gestures over the page to describe a portrait. Two faces can be seen in this work. One facing towards the viewer and another face looking to the side. Each of these heads overlap creating movement between describing which direction the head is turning and facing.

I began responding to this work by creating individual blind contour drawings on large sheets of tissue paper and layering these drawings on top of each other. I chose to begin with contour drawings as this technique takes the pressure off trying to replicate something perfectly as you do not look at the page while you draw. Tissue paper is delicate

and thin, and by layering the drawings on top of each other many lines were seen coming through from this layering effect of the drawings.

I went on to create more resolved works on paper that were based on the blind contour drawings and the layering effect seen in the initial response works. These drawings combined elements of the blind contour drawing technique and more detailed aspects. I completed my response to Whiteley's work with a short video that collaged video footage of my eyes and mouth moving onto a portrait drawing.

Lawrence Daws, *Coast II*, 1972, oil on board, shows a painting of a distant night landscape. The sky is dark and in this sky sits one large eye staring out at the viewer. I was initially drawn to this work as it reminded me of looking out of an aeroplane window and seeing the landscape below you, with distorted parts of your reflection mirrored in the windowpane. I began to think about how we interact and connect with landscapes. Where we can experience them looking out to a far distance or experience them very close when we stand with our feet on the ground and look at what is around us; the path below you, the tree beside you.

I created giant binoculars that were 120 cm long. I attached large eyes on the front of the binoculars as I thought about the large eye in Daws' work staring at the viewer in a landscape. These binoculars took on a comical fashion with their excessive size and big eyes attached on the end. They were photographed on the Fitzroy bridge, looking out over Tunuba, the river, as cars sped past on the roadway. They took the influence of Daws' work out into the public arena where the landscape, and looking at the landscape, was experienced through a performative nature of giant eye binoculars surveying the area.

The interest in the eye continued to be predominant in the work I made. I bought helium balloons and painted eyes on each side of them. In the room these balloons gently turned around in space, hovering there while attached to string. I experimented with how much weight one helium balloon could carry and went on to pursue ways these helium

eye balloons could create a drawing. It took four helium balloons to hold up one fine liner pen. I painted twelve helium balloons with eyes on each side and separated these into three groups of four eye balloons. Paper was laid out on Level 1 of RMOA and the three groups of balloons, each with a fine liner pen attached, were placed on the paper. These balloons gently moved in the space and moved the pens across the paper to create a large drawing. The eyes curiously turned in space and appeared to be looking around and watching the area as marks were made on paper. The protruding eye in Daws' work, situated above a landscape, was now reimagined on floating balloons, peering around the gallery space.

I have really enjoyed the opportunity to respond to Brett Whiteley, *Katharine Hobbs, 1976* and Lawrence Daws, *Coast II, 1972* in the RMOA Collection through drawing and performance art. It has been particularly joyous creating a sense of fun and play through my responses to these works using video and helium balloons.