

GLASS, OCHRE, IRON AND MUD

EDUCATION RESOURCE
LEVELS 7 – 10



DEAKIN UNIVERSITY
Art Gallery

Deakin University CRICOS Provider Code: 00113B



50
YEARS

GLASS, OCHRE, IRON AND MUD

Anindita Banerjee, Deanne Gilson, Aaron Hoffman and Todd Johnson

Glass, ochre, iron and mud represents the tenth collaborative exhibition between the Deakin University Art Gallery and the School of Communication and Creative Arts. This showcase features four accomplished alumni from the Higher Degree by Research program including: Anindita Banerjee, Deanne Gilson, Aaron Hoffman, and Todd Johnson. The four distinguished artists have been invited to present current projects, reflecting the diverse perspectives emerging from Deakin's creative research community. While their approaches and inquiries have developed independently over the last four years, the exhibition reveals the artists' shared exploration of the complexities of contemporary identity, material knowledges and understandings of place.

James Lynch
Curator, Art Collection and Galleries
Deakin University

Glossary/ Terminology/ Descriptions:

Higher Degree by Research

A Higher Degree by Research (HDR) is an advanced tertiary degree that primarily focuses on research rather than coursework. It involves a significant contribution to knowledge in a specific field of study and is typically pursued after completing an undergraduate or master's degree.

Alumni

Alumni refers to the graduates or former students of a particular school, college, or university.

Bogong Moth

The Bogong Moth (*Agrotis infusa*) is a species of nocturnal moth found in Australia, known for its remarkable migratory behaviour. These moths are notable for their large size and distinctive appearance, with a wingspan of up to 4 cm and greyish-brown wings adorned with darker markings.

Materiality (in art and design)

The significance of materials and the way they are used in artistic works (including texture and weight) and how their use influences the way the audience views the work.

Manifest (as a verb)

To bring an idea into reality.

Impermanence

Impermanence refers to the state or quality of being temporary or not lasting forever. It signifies change, transience, or the inevitability of things coming to an end.

Todd Johnson
3 days, 7 hours 2024 (detail)
archival inkjet print, framed
image © copyright and courtesy of the artist

GLASS, OCHRE, IRON AND MUD

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Exploring the Exhibition

Take some time to wander through the exhibition and consider the following ideas:

The curator James Lynch has selected four Deakin alumni artists for this exhibition.

Looking at the exhibition and the artworks – are there any connections, similarities, comparisons and/ or differences you can see?

As the title of the exhibition suggests, the artworks depict, refer to and include a variety of elements and materials - glass, ochre, iron and mud. Can you match the materials with the work it might be referring to?

Can you describe how these elements appear and are used in the artwork?

What artistic mediums are used in this exhibition? And why have certain artists chosen to use these mediums?

Choose a group of works by one of the artists. Imagine that work is its own distinct exhibition. Create an exhibition title and sentence to describe that group of works.

Write down the first ten descriptive words that come to you as you view this group of works:

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WORKS IN FOCUS



Deanne Gilson

The Last Bogong Moth Feast 2023

22 gold carat leaf, acrylic and yellow ochre sourced from Wadawurrung Dja on canvas

150 x 130cm

© courtesy of the artist

As you view the work - think about the following statement by the artist Deanne Gilson:

Aboriginal Dreaming and Spirituality precede Western religion, time, art genres and everything that is living is based on the stories of spirit and Dreaming. For me it over rides western ways of things. The notion that all things are connected transcends many religions through reincarnation and the that we are connected to the land, plants, animals and layers of Country, that is why we must take care of them as if they are all family, like the Bogong Moth.

Reflecting on Gilson's words, how do you see yourself connected to your environment and other living things? How do you understand that Dreaming and Spirituality guides and connects First Peoples?

'My painting, The Last Bogong Moth Feast depicts men, women and children catching moths and cooking them on a fire, in front of a cave. I am telling this story because the Bogong Moth is now on the endangered species list and I want the future generations of children to know about them. They were a main food source for my ancestors and we used to feast on them. We need to take better care of our environment. the land and all that lives and grows on this Country before it's all gone.'

Deanne Gilson

Dr Deanne Gilson is a proud Wadawurrung woman and an artist living and creating from her ancestral home in Ballarat, Victoria. Gilson first studied a Bachelor of Fine Art with Honours from Federation University in 2015. After further studies in education, Gilson completed a Master of Fine Art by Research, directly followed by a PhD from Deakin University in 2021.

Gilson's extensive artistic career encompasses ceramics, textiles, fibre arts and public installations, with her recent works focusing on painting. Through her creative practice, Gilson examines how colonialism has disrupted familial and ancestral connections to Country. For Gilson contemporary art is a platform that can incorporate Traditional Knowledge to create spaces for acceptance and healing while reasserting Wadawurrung cultural identity.

Although resembling European painting genres such as still life, Gilson defines her images as reclamations of Aboriginal practices through their symbolic, material and spiritual connection to Country and as a continuation of Women's business¹.

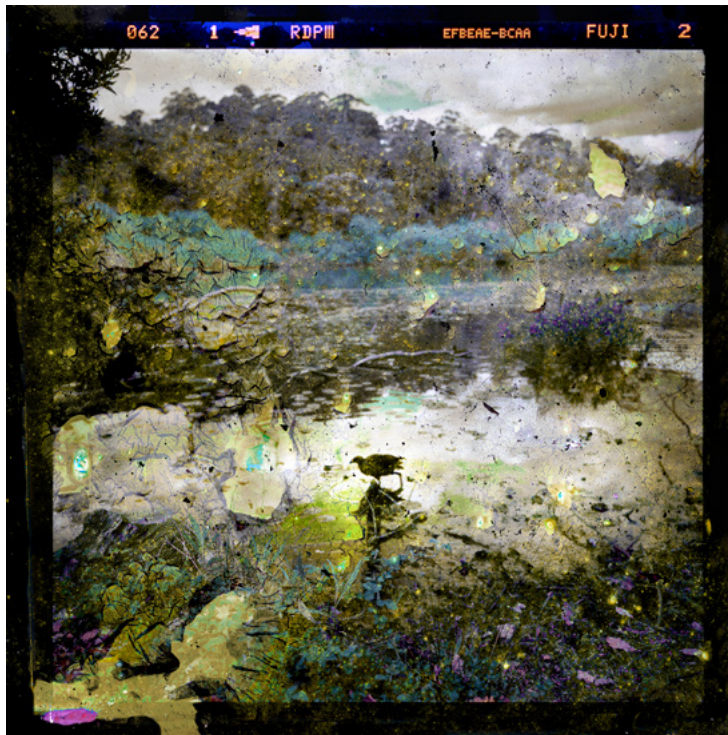
Describe what you see in Deanne Gilson's painting *The Last Bogong Moth Feast*.

Describe how each element you identified appears in the *The Last Bogong Moth Feast* artwork and contributes to the story of how First Peoples utilised the moth.

Describe how you think art can change the way we feel about the environment.

1. Estelle Barrett, Resisting Beauty in The Work of Deanne Gilson, catalogue essay, Daine Singer Gallery, Melbourne and online, 2023 <https://www.dainesinger.com/deanne-gilson-estelle-barrett-essay> [Accessed 19.03.25]

WORKS IN FOCUS



Todd Johnson

1 week, 2 days, 12 hours (Walker Swap) 2025

archival inkjet print, framed

85cm x 85cm

© courtesy of the artist

This sequence of photographs explores the slow violence of environmental decay by allowing the landscape to imprint itself onto film, both visually and physically. Each photograph undergoes a transformative process: buried, submersion in lake water, or fused with site-specific detritus and pollution, mirroring the degradation of the environments themselves. Existing in a state of both erasure and emergence, the images speak to cycles of destruction, memory, and time's 'relentless melt'. By surrendering control to the elements, the work invites reflection on impermanence and the ways in which place shapes perception, material, and history. Ultimately, this sequence of photographs examines the fragile relationship between analogue technology and the natural world, revealing their shared vulnerabilities in an era of environmental instability.

Todd Johnson

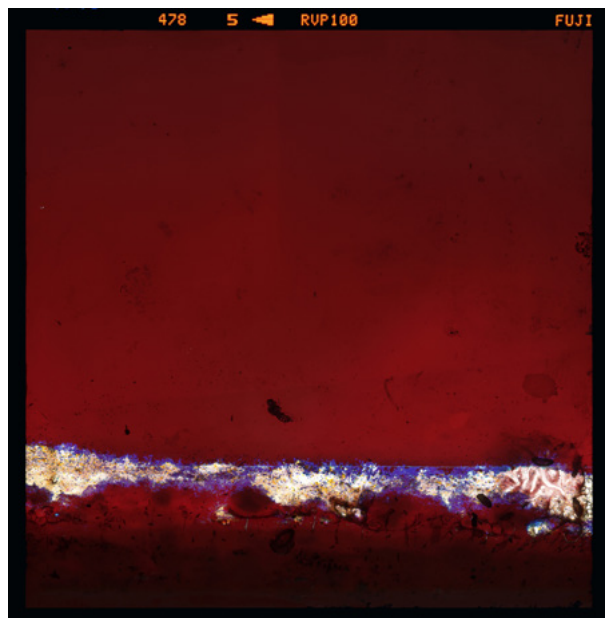
Dr Todd Johnson is an artist and lecturer who investigates the materiality of photographic images and their relationships with place. His photographs result from a physical exchange between the camera, transparency film and elements of the environment. After completing an undergraduate degree in photography Johnson completed his PhD studies at Deakin University in 2022.

Johnson's photograph *1 week, 2 days, 12 hours (Walker Swap)*, was created in 2025 on the traditional lands of the Dja Wurrung people near Geriward in central west Victoria. Returning to the location the photograph was originally taken Johnson submerged the negative for eight and half days in the mud. This process transformed the image through natural deterioration, incorporating colour changes, chemical reactions, alterations, chemical interactions, abrasions and dirt from Country and the land itself. Johnson's approach demonstrates that photography isn't merely representational but participates in natural cycles of change. By burying or submerging his film in the same locations where the images were originally captured, he creates richly textured visual connections between place, the impermanence of imagery, and the physical interaction of materials and the environs in the real world.

Describe what you see in Todd Johnson's work *1 week, 2 days, 12 hours (Walker Swap)*.

Describe how the environment has impacted the way the work looks.

What does the overall impact of the work have on how you feel about the work, compared to if it was just a 'normal' photographic print without all the degradation?



Todd Johnson

Film transparency buried for 6 months, 3 weeks, 2 days 2017

archival inkjet print, framed

85cm x 85cm

© courtesy of the artist

Links to the Curriculum

Including but not limited to...

Visual Arts

Exploring Level 7 – 8

Investigate ways that visual conventions, visual arts processes and materials are used to communicate ideas, perspectives and meaning in artworks created across cultures, times, places and other contexts VC2AVA8E01

Level 9 – 10

Investigate the ways that artists across cultures, times, places and other contexts develop personal expression in their visual arts practice to communicate and/or challenge ideas, perspectives and meaning VC2AVA10E0

Developing Practices Level 7 – 8

Reflect on, analyse and document their own and others' visual arts practices to inform decisions they make in the exploration, development and resolution of their artworks VC2AVA8D02

Level 9 – 10

Reflect on, analyse, evaluate and document the ways they and other visual artists respond to artworks and influences to inform and refine their own visual arts practice VC2AVA10D0

Presenting Level 9 – 10

Critique and evaluate art exhibits in a range of contexts to inform the curation and exhibition of their own and/or others' artworks and/or visual arts practice VC2AVA10P01

Capabilities

Critical and Creative Thinking Questions and Possibilities Level 7 – 8

(Students learn about) strategies for generating new ideas and possibilities including identifying a pattern across multiple information sources VC2CC8Q03

Level 9 – 10

(Students learn about) strategies for generating new ideas and possibilities including identifying links and patterns across multiple information sources and perspectives VC2CC10Q03

Meta-Cognition Level 7 – 8

(Students learn about) broad strengths and limitations of thinking processes in different contexts, including problem-solving VC2CC8M02

Level 9 – 10

(Students learn about) the importance of critical analysis of thinking processes in different contexts, including for problem-solving, considering factors such as cognitive biases VC2CC10M0

Intercultural Capability

Cultural Identity and Belonging Level 7 – 8

(Students learn about) change in cultures, including their own, in a range of contexts, and how this influences identity and a sense of belonging and inclusion VC2CI8C0

Level 9 – 10

(Students learn about) how diverse cultures, including their own, influence one another in a range of contexts and how this impacts identity and a sense of belonging and inclusion VC2CI10C01

Personal and Social Capability Collaboration Level 7 – 10

(Students learn about) strategies for constructing and managing effective teams; when and how to evaluate collaboration and make recommendations for improvements VC2CP10O04

From the Victorian Curriculum F-10 Version 2.0

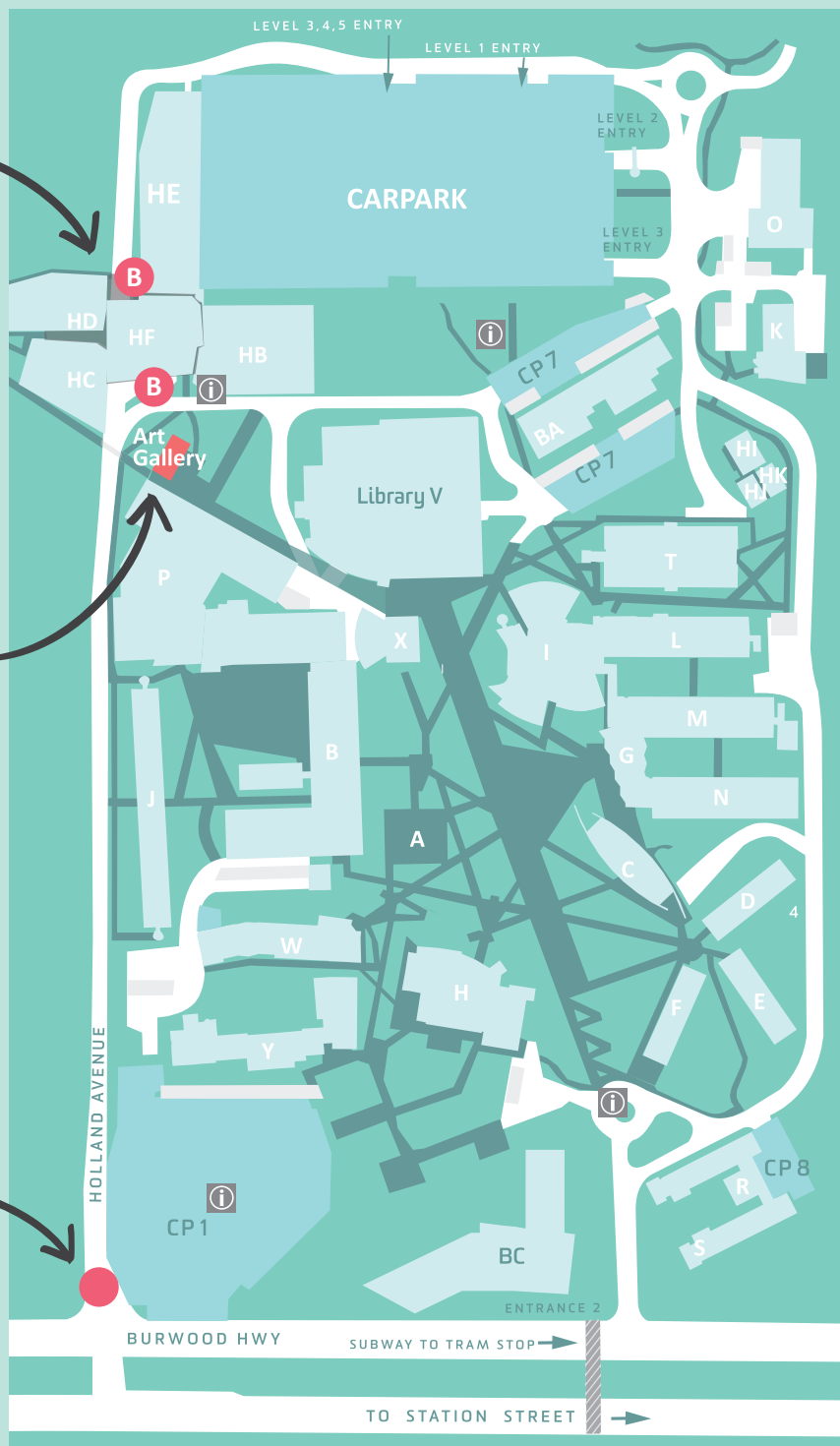
<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/foundation-10V2.0>

Bus Drop Off Point

30-minute Loading Zone here – this is the drop off point for school buses. Additional bus drop off point 10m along if Loading Zone occupied.

Deakin University Art Gallery
Building FA**Deakin University
Burwood Campus**

Enter via Gate 1 from Burwood Highway. Travel down Holland Avenue to Bus Drop Off Point, just after bridge overpass.



The Deakin University Art Collection and Galleries Unit offers school tours and hands on workshops for students from F – 10 and for VCE Art Making and Exhibiting and Art Creative Practice. To discuss our programs and how we can tailor a program to suit your school's needs, please contact our Education and Public Programs Officer, Tabitha Davies.

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W: [School programs](#) | [Deakin University Art Gallery](#)

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E: artgallery@deakin.edu.au

W: [Deakin University Art Gallery - Exhibitions and Events](#)



DEAKIN UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY

Head to our website deakin.edu.au/art-collection/ for information about current exhibitions and keep up-to-date on our activities and exhibitions here:

-  Facebook.com/ArtDeakin
-  Twitter.com/ArtDeakin
-  Instagram.com/deakinartgallery
-  izi.travel - Deakin Art Collection and sculpture walk guides

STAY IN TOUCH!

Scan the code to become a gallery subscriber and stay up-to-date with exhibitions, openings and events.



SCHOOL PROGRAMS

For information regarding our school Programs or to book a tour and/ or workshop, please scan here.



Deakin University Art Gallery Building FA, Melbourne Burwood Campus, 221 Burwood Highway, Burwood VIC 3125
Enquiries T +61 3 9244 5344 E artgallery@deakin.edu.au
Gallery Hours Monday – Friday, 10 am – 4 pm During exhibition periods. Closed public holidays. Free Entry

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which Deakin University stands and pay our respect to Elders: past, present and future.