

Notions of Care

Education Kit



Notions of Care is a
Bus Projects exhibition
touring with NETS
Victoria. Curated by
Kathryne Genevieve
Honey and Nina Mulhall.

Bus
Projects

NETS
VICTORIA.

Acknowledgement of Country

BUS Projects, NETS Victoria, and the artists and curators in *Notions of Care* respectfully acknowledge and celebrate the continuing culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders across Australia.

Cover image:

Kate Tucker

Care Banner 2, 2021

140 x 115cm

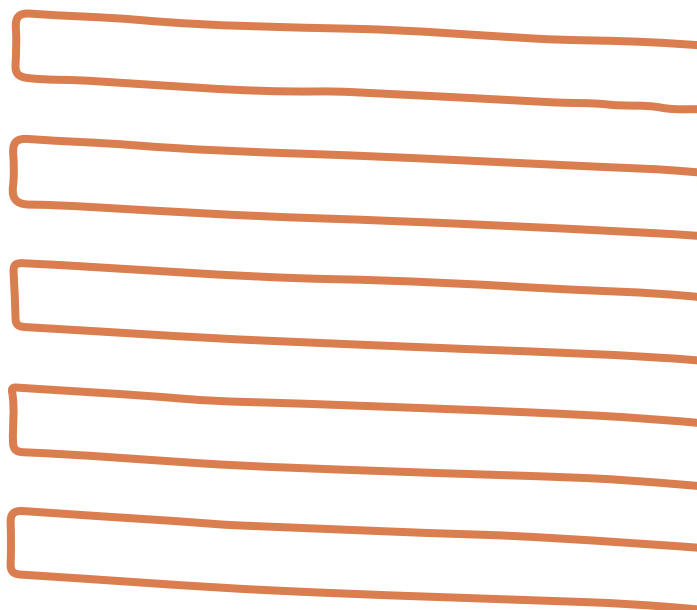
Calico, digitally printed cotton, bumph, Acrylic, thread, linen, encaustic, oil, acrylic mediums, board, earthenware, underglaze, bronze rod

Courtesy of the artist and Daine Singer

Photograph: Christo Crocker

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About this Resource

This education resource has been developed to support educators and students before, during and after visiting the exhibition *Notions of Care*. It is designed to be used in conjunction with the exhibition catalogue and didactic wall labels.

The resource can be used to enhance a self-guided visit or support a group visit hosted by the gallery.

The resource includes:

- Suggestions for planning your visit
- Relevant curriculum links
- Introduction to the exhibition
- Interview with the curators
- List of exhibiting artists
- Introduction to exhibiting artists' practice and exhibited artworks
- Links to further information about each of the artists
- Starting points for discussion and learning activities
- Glossary

Suggestions for planning your visit to *Notions of Care*:

Before visiting the exhibition, it is recommended that you contact the venue to find out about:

- Gallery opening times
- Transport and parking options
- Cloakroom facilities
- Any admission fees
- Scheduling a gallery tour during your excursion and gallery staff availabilities
- Upcoming dates for events associated with the exhibition
- Current COVID-Safe information for visitors

Before your excursion you may wish to do the following:

- Introduce the exhibition using this resource as a guide
- Discuss expectations for behaviour in an art gallery

Curriculum links

The exhibition *Notions of Care* is relevant to Visual Arts curriculum at all levels of the Australian Curriculum.

Engagement with the artworks on display also provides students with opportunities to develop these general capabilities:

- Critical and creative thinking
- Ethical understanding
- Intercultural understanding
- Personal and social capabilities

The artwork by Katie West is relevant to the cross-curriculum priority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

The artworks by Katie West, Polly Stanton and Snapcat are relevant to the cross-curriculum priority of Sustainability.

This learning resource is broadly aimed at students from levels 4 through 10, however the material could be modified by teachers to suit students at other levels. The starting points for discussion and learning activities within this resource provide opportunities for students to learn as both audience and artist. There are suggestions for discussing artworks in the galleries and making artworks in response to the exhibition.

Visual Arts

Explore and Express ideas

Students view *Notions of Care* and make artworks in response to their experiences in the gallery. They observe a variety of multidisciplinary artworks and consider the ideas, themes and sources of inspiration drawn upon by the exhibiting artists. They experiment with a range of techniques, processes, materials, and technologies to express ideas in their own artworks.

Visual Arts Practices Whilst visiting the thematic group exhibition *Notions of Care*, students will encounter a range of contemporary art practices by various artists. They will develop an understanding of how the exhibiting artists conceptualise their work and use a variety of materials to create artworks.

Present and Perform After viewing *Notions of Care*, students will discuss how various artworks have been installed and presented in the galleries. They consider the intentions of the artists and curators, and how these relate to their experience as an audience.

Respond and Interpret Students reflect upon and speculate about the meaning of the artworks displayed in *Notions of Care*. Following the visit, they research how particular historical or contemporary cultural contexts have inspired the artists in relation to themes of expressing care for self, artists, audiences, community, and environment.

Introduction to the Exhibition

Notions of Care is a thematic group exhibition bringing together artists' projects from across Australia to explore the intersection between art and ideas related to care. The exhibition invites audiences to consider how contemporary artists cultivate practices that nurture audiences, look after the environment, support themselves and attend to those around them.

Notions of Care highlights the vital role contemporary artists play within a broader community of carers, including health and social justice workers, environmentalists, activists, and academics. The project is underpinned by the pivotal work of pioneering African American civil rights activist and feminist Audre Lorde, who famously said:

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare”.

Lorde understood care as an action that can be both personal and political. To be a powerful changemaker, capable of making a difference, she instinctively knew she needed to take care of herself. Through self-care Lorde was able to sustain the energy required to dedicate herself towards a wider platform of addressing political injustices and caring for community.

Notions of Care includes a number of works created to nurture art audiences and put them at ease, encouraging them to slow down and practice self-care in the galleries. Katie West's installation of large-scale floor cushions filled with eucalyptus leaves brings the natural environment directly into the space. A welcoming offering of tea invites visitors to take a moment to relax as they view the artwork and connect with multiple senses (smell, touch, and taste) along the way.

The exhibition celebrates collectivity and the generosity of Australia's visual arts community. Artistic duo Snapcat (Renae Coles and Anna Dunnill) have collaboratively produced an exquisite series of bespoke pockets to hold precious items belonging to each of their artist-peers. Entitled *Pockets to hold the things we've been holding*, each work will be gifted at the end of the exhibition tour.

Art practices that highlight the act of making as much as the finished artwork are also recognised within the exhibition. In Kate Tucker's hybrid painted/sculptural works the studio process remains evident through the inclusion of individually made ceramic bases to support her paintings. The bases are reminiscent of easels and place artistic production and exhibition on equal terms as part of the same project. Arini Byng's live performance work reminds audiences of the immediacy of creation, as two dancers bodies take turns transforming into physical scaffolds, lifting one another into forms that defy gravity.

Sustainability and caring for the environment are emphasised throughout *Notions of Care*. First Nations artist Katie West intentionally chooses to work with ephemeral plant dyeing techniques rather than industrially produced dyes, as a means to infuse work with Country and renew audiences' connection with the natural world. *The Spectral Field* by filmmaker Polly Stanton attends to the ancient terrain of the Mallee wilderness landscape, evoking the rhythms of deep time.

Notions of Care creates a calm, nurturing space in the galleries where audiences can experience the personal, material, and ethical approaches of artists who've embraced caring, creative practices. It invites us all to reflect on care for self, others, and the environment.

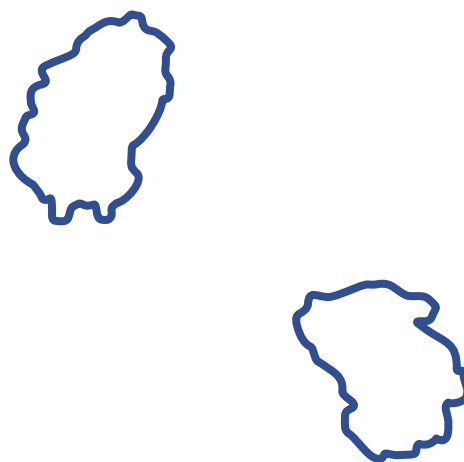
Themes

The exhibition *Notions of Care* addresses care from a range of perspectives including:

- Care for environment and Country
- Care for belongings and artworks
- Care for artists and audience
- Care for self and community
- Care and its relationship to feelings of comfort and calm
- Expressing care during periods of physical distancing related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Care for the art making process as well as the outcome
- Care as a personal and a political action

Exhibiting Artists

- Kate Tucker
- Katie West
- Polly Stanton
- Arini Byng
- Snapcat



Following page:

Kate Tucker

Care Banner 1, 2021

140 x 128cm

Calico, digitally printed cotton, bumph, Acrylic, thread, linen, encaustic, acrylic mediums, board, earthenware, underglaze, bronze rod

Courtesy of the Artist and Daine Singer

Photograph: Christo Crocker



Interview with the Curators

This conversation between Kathryn Genevieve Honey (KGH) and Nina Mulhall (NM) (Co-curators) with Melissa Bedford (Educator) took place in September 2021.

What are the main themes and curatorial intentions for *Notions of Care* and could you describe the process of conceptualising the project?

KG – The concept for this show came from the idea of making an exhibition that felt a little bit like a day spa. We wanted to create a space that made you feel calm and relaxed the minute you walked in the door. This was our starting point. From there we started thinking about artworks we had seen that would create this feeling, starting with our senses, smell, sound, feel and of course sight.

NM – Our intention as curators was to create a space for audiences to take a deep breath and be embraced by art. Following that, we wanted the exhibition to not only feel like an act of care but to highlight the importance of care in the exhibition. The main themes of the exhibition centre around these ideas:

- Care for each other
- Care for the environment
- Care that artists give to their artworks
- The care that the artworks give back to artists and audiences
- Care as support

The concept for this show came from the urge to make an exhibition that would be a welcoming space for an audience to rest, breathe and take time with the art, leaving the outside world behind.

Could you describe the process of working together along the way as co-curators? How did you take care of yourselves and each other throughout the process?

NM – The conceptual starting points for the exhibition are reflected in the way that we work together as curators. We work closely together and are supportive of each other's and the artists' needs. When deadlines need to be met, we stay in communication with how each other is going, and ensure open collaboration between us, so all decisions are made together.

Taking care of each other is incredibly important and we made sure that this led to every decision that we made when making this exhibition. Offering time, space and energy to each other and all of the artists when they needed it.

How did you select the artists? Was the exhibition always intended to platform artists who identify as female, or did that decision take place along the way? Why?

NM – Once we had the concept it was quite easy to choose artists to invite, the selection of the artists happened fairly instinctively, through conversations that we had with each other, and responding to the artworks of artists that we would like to invite and pairing them with other artists' work to see how they felt positioned with each other. It was not necessarily a conscious decision to only invite female identifying artists, but on reflection it is natural that it happened this way. Care is associated with the feminine, with the maternal, and it is women that are making art in this space.

KG – Both Nina and I had seen the work of Katie West, who brings in the strong scent of eucalypt in her floor pillow works, and the idea of being offered a cup of tea upon entering the gallery felt like the ultimate act of caring, so we asked her if we could show an iteration of her tea ceremony that was initially shown at TarraWarra Museum of Art.

Sound was next. The audio from Polly Stanton's field recordings from inland Victoria we thought would pair really well with Katie's works. The subtle sounds of nature, wind through grasses and the buzzing of bugs, was the next element of calm introduced to the space. So much so that while planning the exhibition we often had Polly's video playing in the background, like some relaxing white noise.

Once we had these two first artists confirmed it was very easy to select the rest.

When you invited each of the exhibiting artists to participate in *Notions of Care* did you have existing artworks of theirs in mind, or was there an opportunity to work with them to commission new works especially for the exhibition?

NM – We had a good understanding of each of the artists' practices, and invited them based on past bodies of work that we had experienced but we did not expect that they would include any particular artwork.

In developing this exhibition, we worked in an artist-led way as much as possible. Allowing the artists to feel the current state of their practice out and how it would fit within the curatorial framework we gave them.

Kate Tucker made a new body of work for the exhibition, working in both sculpture – a form which we were familiar with, and also bringing in the new fabric works.

Polly Stanton supplied us with two films that she had already created.

We commissioned Snapcat to create a new body of work in response to the curatorial framework. They worked in a very collaborative way. They invited each of the artists in the exhibition to give them a small item that is precious to them, and they made a pocket for each item to be held by. This was an offering from Snapcat to the other artists. At the end of this exhibition touring, each of the artists will be gifted the pocket that was made for their object.

Katie West created two new pillow works for the exhibition which are closely related to other material works that we had seen of Katie's. The tea ceremony is a new version of an existing work that she had presented before.

We commissioned Arini Byng to make a new performance work for the exhibition. She chose the performers that were included in her work. Her work was made in response to the curatorial framework and the Covid lockdowns in 2020.

What kind of support and care was offered to the artists during the development of the exhibition?

KG – We were both in close communication with all of the artists throughout the development and implementation of the exhibition. Often it is easier for an artist to text or call, rather than send an email. So depending on what worked best for each artist, and what each artist needed from us, we made ourselves available. For example, Kate Tucker was very open to feedback. So we had quite a bit of back and forth with her, talking about colours and what previous examples of her work we felt drawn too. She then made an entirely new suite of ceramic works for the show. Polly Stanton on the other hand exhibited works she had already shown, so assisting her was more in the installation. Sourcing equipment at each location speakers, projectors of high enough quality.

The artists in turn also provided us with support and care. During the first installation Kate and Polly both flew into Hobart to assist with installation. Not only of their own works. They also helped to stuff Katie's pillows and assist with the setup of lighting. Again in the Bus show we had the artists in the gallery with us. They were all very involved in the installation. It has been a privilege to work with them so closely on this project!

Were there any challenges for audience participation in the galleries that you needed to be attuned about as you developed the exhibition? How did you take care of the audience experience in the galleries?

KG - There were no challenges per se, but we did have the audience in mind every step of the way. We wanted them to step into the gallery and immediately be enveloped in a calm environment. So we thought through how to balance all of the elements of the exhibition, we asked ourselves questions like: is the scent too strong or too subtle? Is the audio loud enough but not overwhelming? The carpet was also an important addition to the show, making the space quiet, and soft, and the orange colour brought in a warmth and earthiness to the gallery space.

We did alter minor elements once the show had opened. We played around with the placement of the catalogue, to ensure it was easily accessible. There were a few considerations for the tea ceremony, including how to serve the tea.

NM – In our work as curators we are always considering audiences with different access requirements, for example we ensure we hang works at an appropriate height and leave enough space between artworks for a wheelchair user to have access to the entire exhibition.

Discuss the atmosphere that audiences will encounter in the galleries when they visit *Notions of Care*? What are some of the ways that this has been achieved through the exhibition design?

NM – We have created a welcoming and caring environment that allows audiences to forget the outside world, relax and experience the artworks. We have used sight, sound and smell to create this environment for the audience.

The exhibition features artworks of similar colour palettes, which creates a sense of calm. We have also included carpet into the exhibition design which creates a soft home-like experience.

The gallery space gets filled with the smell of eucalyptus leaves from Katie West's pillow work. This is an inviting, calming smell which reminds audiences of being in nature, which is heightened by the sounds of nature coming from Polly Stanton's video works. The audience is welcome to sit on Katie's work, which crinkles and crunches under you, letting off an even stronger eucalyptus aroma.

The use of Polly Stanton's video work in the exhibition adds a warm glow to the exhibition. The colours on the screen reflect through the room.

KG – There is also the performance work produced by Arini Byng which the audiences will hopefully be able to watch live as well. (If they miss the performance a recording is available on Bus Projects' website.) The performance work, 'I felt it when you fell', looks at systems and physical manifestations of care. This work was created in the aftermath of the first Melbourne lockdown, in a period marked by isolation, loneliness and the loss of physical touch and connection. The movement of

the two dancers, Lilian Steiner and Rebecca Jensen, they intertwine, caress one another and move in unison; their bodies acting as support braces through movements that are physically challenging or gravity-defying. This movement is accompanied by a discordant soundtrack by Rohan Rebeiro, produced through focussed contact with percussion instruments that fluctuates between appearing both careless and tender. This sound element is responsive to the actions of the other performers and highlights the complexity of giving and receiving care.

A number of the artworks on display express care for the natural environment and explore the use of sustainable materials and processes with a minimal environmental footprint. (Snapcat, Katie West and Polly Stanton). Does the exhibition seek to challenge any outmoded ideas, political views or attitudes?

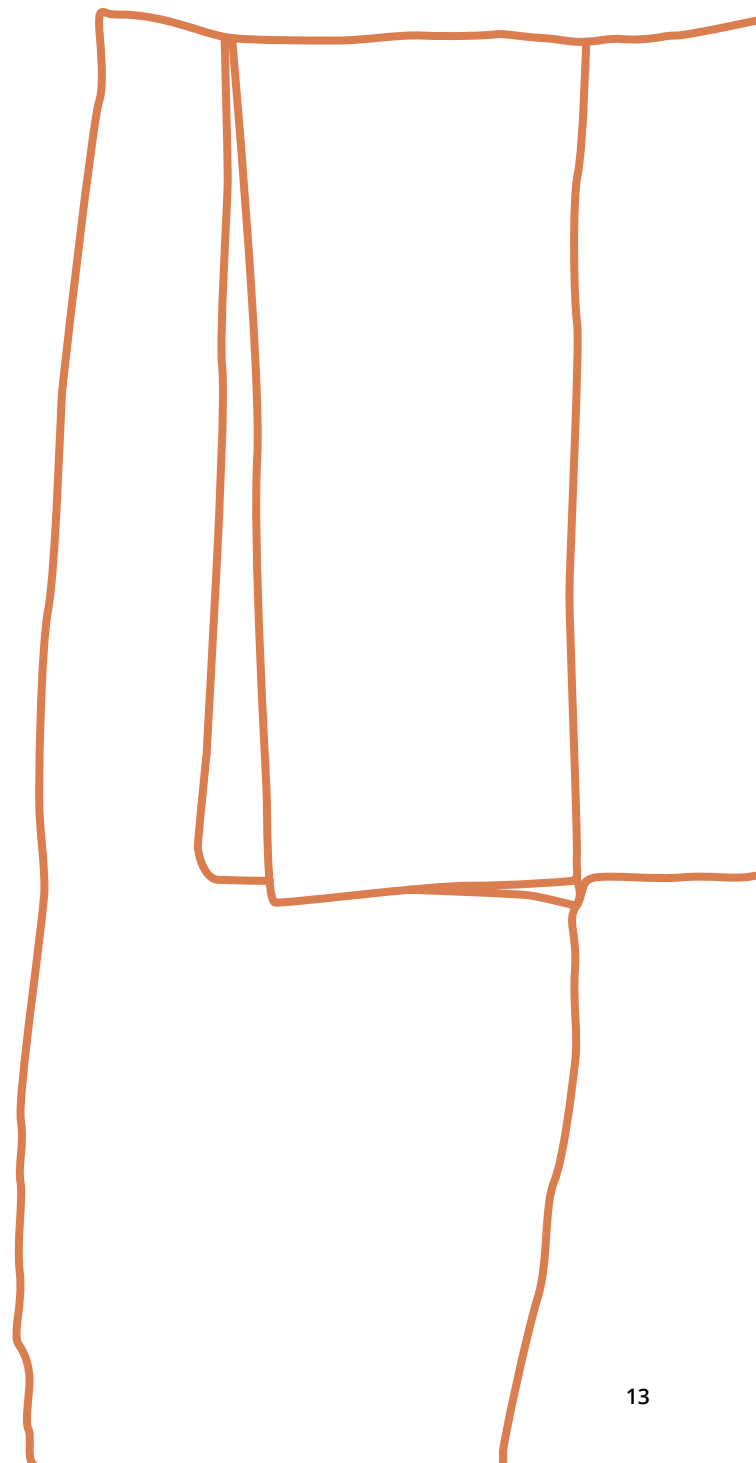
NM – You can see the use of natural materials in the works of Katie West and Snapcat. As well as in the close and considerate recording of the natural environment in Polly Stanton's film works.

Katie West uses native flowers and leaves in the creation of her pillow works, both as a natural dye for the fabric cover and as a form of stuffing inserted into the pillows themselves. The process of using eucalyptus to dye the fabric creates hues of green, grey, brown and purple that you can see on the material. You can also see the imprint of eucalyptus leaves on the material which were formed during the dyeing process. Her pillows are then filled with eucalyptus leaves and other native flora collected from around the local area of the exhibition. Katie's tea ceremony also uses the Australian Native Lemon myrtle to flavour the tea. Her work celebrates the plants native to Australia in all their forms.

Polly Stanton's video works celebrate the care of nature and trace the delicate and hidden ecosystems that are vital to each location's survival. Her work critiques colonial practices, and looks at capitalism and human consumption.

KG – There is a mixture of fact and fiction in Polly's work 'Indefinite Terrains'. You can listen closely to the narrator tell their story of the forest. By creating an intimate space between the audience and the film, the artist is forcing you to stay close to the film and watch up close. So that you observe the minute details captured in the film. A wet spider web heavy with water droplets. A breathing puddle of black liquid on the forest floor. This forest has been decimated by deforestation and yet it is still alive. This artwork poses a silent question if the viewer is willing to listen.

Snapcat have combined the use of foraged material with fabrics in their creation of their pockets. One of the pockets has included the use of dried dandelions which were foraged by the artists, dried, and woven together. Another is made from hand dyed fabric swatches which are sewn together. This particular pocket was created to hold a small painting of Katie West's and was made in response to a conversation that Anna and Katie had had about their shared interest in natural dyeing processes. Each colour in this pocket is made through a different dyeing process. Anna lives on a large suburban property full of edible plants which she experiments with to create these colours. Including chestnut, avocados, onions and eucalypts. She also shared her beautiful home-grown chestnuts with all the artists too!



Exhibiting artists and works

Snapcat

Snapcat is a collaboration between artists Renae Coles and Anna Dunnill. Originally from Perth and working together since 2014 the artists make socially engaged and performative artworks exploring themes of feminism, protest, and bravery.

In the exhibition *Notions of Care*, Snapcat present a series of works entitled *Pockets to hold the things we've been holding*. For this project they invited each of the exhibiting artists to lend a personal belonging. Renae and Anna then collaboratively created a pocket to contain and care for the belonging while on display in the galleries. Each pocket will be gifted to the artists when their item is returned to them at the end of the project.

The artists were inspired by an episode of the podcast *'Articles of Interest'* about the history of pockets. They were fascinated to discover that in 17th and 18th century European women wore pockets tied around their waists and hidden under their skirts and petticoats. These historical pockets were not built into the skirt itself, but rather there was a slit made in the overgarments through which the wearer would access the pocket. These historical pockets were very beautifully made and embroidered with the finest fabrics available, even though they were not designed to be seen by anyone but the wearer and those that might dress or undress them.

This project took place when the Renae and Anna were living in different cities during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The artists took turns making each pocket, posting the works in progress back and forth to one another throughout, leading to a cumulative making over time.

Each wearable artwork in *Pockets to hold what we've been holding* is unique in its design and materiality and has been made in response to the particular object it contains. There is a pocket woven with dandelion fibres (chosen because they symbolise health and wealth) holding a vial of gold, and a long-crocheted tube containing a single Tahitian pearl. Evocative and beautifully crafted, the series connects the participating

artists in a quiet, poetic way. In the exhibition catalogue the Snapcat have published photos of each item being held as well as a statement from each artist about why consider them precious.



Snapcat

Pockets to hold things we've been holding (Katie), 2021

Painting of a Tawny Frogmouth on canvas, silk, linen, cotton, hemp, natural dyes (eucalyptus, chestnut, avocado, dandelion, fungi, iron)

Courtesy of the Artists

Photograph: Christo Crocker

Polly Stanton

Polly Stanton is a Melbourne-based artist and filmmaker who is interested in the way art can reflect embodied experiences of being in particular places. Her work investigates the relationships between environment, human activity, and land use.

In the video work *The Spectral Field* audiences are invited to encounter a place unfolding and revealing itself both visually and through sound. To create the work Polly Stanton visited the landscape of the Mallee in northwest Victoria and filmed on location at the ancient pink salt lakes on Maligundidj Country, known as the Murray Sunset National Park. *The Spectral Field* encompasses drone footage of the lake from above as well as views captured during a walk along its perimeter. By pairing these approaches to filming, Stanton explores two modes of looking at the landscape – from the air at a far distance, and in great detail through close-up shots taken near to the ground. For the viewer these two ways of seeing become intertwined as the artist edits between them, and the landscape becomes abstracted, taking on a poetic quality.

Stanton created a soundtrack made from field-recordings of the natural ambient sounds collected on location during the production of the artwork. She is interested in the notion of combining deep listening and close observation as a gentle way to share the embodied experience of being in the landscape. The work attends to both micro and macro sense of time and place – at times there is a sense of being fully immersed and at others the experience is more detached as the viewer looks on from afar.

Stanton also includes footage of the rusted remnants of a bygone salt mine on the edge of the lake- a memory of a settler history that highlights the passing of time and the unyielding forces of nature in this ancient terrain that defies industry. Here the artist reveals landscape in all its complexity, entangled with contested histories and multiple ways of knowing.



Polly Stanton
The Spectral Field (still), 2017
Digital Video 4K, stereo sound
Duration: 25m 45s
Courtesy of the Artist

Katie West

Katie West is a First Nations Yindjibarndi artist who works with textiles, including materials collected on meditative walks in her local surroundings to create installations that open a conversation between the natural world and the gallery.

The idea of dying fabrics with natural pigments comes from Katie West's intention to infuse materials with Country in some way and draws inspiration from a book called 'Eco-Colour' by India Flint which explores the history of people dying textiles.

For the exhibition *Notions of Care*, Katie created the work entitled *Gathering* which takes the form of two large floor pillows created from naturally dyed fabrics and stuffed with eucalyptus and banksia leaves. The pillows offer audiences a comfortable place to sit, inviting them to rest and chat in the gallery. The installation is accompanied by a tea ceremony in the gallery, encouraging visitors to pay closer attention to their sensory experience through smell, taste, touch, and ritual.

Gathering is concerned with viewer interaction and engagement. Katie cares about audiences feeling comfortable in the gallery. She has reflected that this desire to put visitors at ease comes from some of her own feelings of not being welcome in art galleries and museums earlier in her life and career. So much art is about expression, yet the rules of art institutions can sometimes curtail how we respond to the work on display. Katie now realises she has

“a powerful role to play as an artist in occupying the gallery space and changing our relationship with it.”



Katie West
warna, 2018
calico dyed with eucalyptus and puff ball
Photograph: Ruben Bull-Milne

Arini Byng

Arini Byng is a Naarm/Melbourne-based artist who creates site-specific live performances and video works that explore the intricacies of gesture and action. She is interested in exploring body-based movement to represent ideas and emotions.

For *Notions of Care*, Arini Byng choreographed a live performance work entitled *I felt it when you fell* that was premiered to an audience of invited guests on the opening night of the exhibition at Bus Projects.

To produce the work Byng collaborated with a musician and two dancers. The performance explored physical manifestations of care and intimacy in human relationships as the dancers created and held forms together, informed by a score written by Byng. The first performance of this work was especially poignant as it took place after an extended lockdown period due to the COVID-19 pandemic, marked by isolation, loneliness, and the loss of physical touch.

The movement of two dancers is both tender and practical – they intertwine, caress one another, and move in unison; their bodies taking turns to act as support braces through a sequence of physically challenging and gravity defying movements. The movements are accompanied by a discordant percussion soundtrack by Rohan Rebeiro that fluctuates between moments of carelessness and tenderness. This sound element is responsive to the actions of the dancers and highlights the complex dynamic between giving and receiving care.

A live performance will take place during each iteration of the *Notions of Care* touring exhibition.



Arini Byng

Still from '*I thought you might have needed the space*', 2020

Photograph: Arini Byng

Kate Tucker

Kate Tucker is a Melbourne-based multidisciplinary artist who works across painting, collage, digital imaging, and ceramics. On display in *Notions of Care* is a body of hybrid works combining sculpture and painting. Each painting in the series is held up by a functional hand-sculpted ceramic base, suggesting a complex interplay of materials and processes.

Tucker's seemingly abstract paintings are built up and collaged together in layers combining irregularly shaped fragments of cut up paintings and digital prints on fabric. There is a visual play between the surface texture of the pieces of cut-up paintings and printed textiles within each composition. To prepare the digital prints for the project, Tucker created watercolour still-life's of her domestic environment, which she then photographed and had digitally printed on linen before cutting and layering smaller elements into the paintings. This elaborate production process draws upon the idea of building up layers when constructing an image in Photoshop but subverts it with a very human touch.

Tucker's works can be viewed as a visual metaphor for what it means to provide support and what it means to be supported as an artist in today's society. There is a dynamic relationship between artists' practice in the studio and the gallery support structures that present work to audiences.



Kate Tucker

Care Banner 2, 2021

140 x 115cm

Calico, digitally printed cotton, bumph, Acrylic, thread, linen, encaustic, oil, acrylic mediums, board, earthenware, underglaze, bronze rod

Courtesy of the Artist and Daine Singer

Photograph: Christo Crocker

Learning activities

Reflecting on *Notions of Care*

- Reflect on how you give and receive care in everyday life? Spend a week paying attention to all the gestures of care at school, at home and in your local environment. Document these in a 'care journal' and take turns sharing some of your experiences with a friend from your class.
- Do you think care needs to be reciprocated? Discuss

- In the exhibition catalogue there is a famous quote from twentieth century civil rights activist and feminist Audre Lorde:

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare”

How is care political? How might this quote continue to resonate in our contemporary world?

Explore and express ideas

Experiment with a range of techniques, processes, materials, and technologies to express ideas and make artworks inspired by your visit to *Notions of Care*.

Experiment with natural dyes to create your own textile installation

Yindjibarndi artist Katie West explores different ways of infusing a sense of place into her work through creating impressions on fabric using natural pigments from plants.

Experiment with solar dyeing techniques using found and recycled materials inspired by the artist.

Safety first

This particular dying process involves placing plant matter and material in a glass jar filled with water in direct sunlight for a long period of time.

Materials

Glass jar
Fabric made of natural fibres
Leaves, flowers and/or bark
Water



Katie West
warna, 2018
calico dyed with eucalyptus and puff ball
Photograph: Ruben Bull-Milne

Process

- 1 Preferably find old fabric; you could use a pillowcase or an old shirt that you can recycle for this project, or if that is not possible buy some calico, linen, or silk to dye. (Make sure whatever you use is made from natural fibres – avoid nylon and polyester)
- 2 Go for a walk to a local park and take some time to slow down and notice all the birds, animals and plants that live there. What does it feel like to be there? Reflect on how you might you be able to tend to or care for this environment in the future?
- 3 While you are walking collect an armful of leaves, flowers, and bark that have fallen on the ground. Different materials will produce different colours. (Katie West has observed that Eucalyptus leaves can make gold or grey, Eucalyptus bark can produce orange and wattle can create purple)
- 4 Once you're home fill a large glass jar or large glass container with selected fabrics and plants. Think about how the fabric is folded and where it is touching the plants as this will create different patterns.
- 5 Cover the fabric and plants in the glass jar with water, this can be hot or cold.
- 6 If you have the lid for the jar, seal the jar with it. Or you can seal the glass container with candle wax (careful as melted wax is very hot).
- 7 Once you have completed the above steps place the jar in a spot where there is direct sunlight.
- 8 Katie west recommends leaving your jars for at least 3 weeks, the longer the jar is left the more apparent the dye will be in the fabric. Make sure not move the jar it needs to be still.
- 9 Once the jar has been left for the dying process to take effect, take the fabric out and dry it out in the sun.

You might like to explore different ways of presenting, displaying, and documenting the dyed material created by all the students in your class in a space at your school or in the park where you began the process.

Why do you think it is important to Katie West to use natural, found, and recycled materials in the creation of her artwork? Why is this process more sustainable for the environment than other forms of textile dyeing? Discuss.



Explore close-up photography and field recordings to create a projection artwork

Filmmaker Polly Stanton explores various ways to evoke the experience of being in the landscape visually and through sound. Inspired by the use of close-up photography and field-recordings in Stanton's video work *The Spectral Field*, produce your own video artwork that takes viewers to a place that is important to you.

Pre-production

Research and select a landscape that you find visually interesting, have a personal relationship with, and are able to visit for this project.

Production

Visit your chosen location and bring along some photographic and sound recording equipment. (The equipment could be a smartphone or more specialised photographic, video and audio recording equipment depending on what you have access to.)

Look carefully at the colours, textures, plants and animals in the landscape and document these details close-up using video and/or still photography.

Make field-recordings of the ambient sound that you hear in the environment such as wind rustling in trees, insects, or birds.

Post-production

Download your recordings and use video editing technology such as Adobe Premier or free online tools to edit the photographs/video and sounds together to create an artwork that evokes the landscape you are representing.

Exhibition

Present a screening of your finished artworks to an audience of your peers. If possible, use a school data-projector to enhance the scale of your artwork.



Polly Stanton
The Spectral Field (still), 2017
Digital Video 4K, stereo sound
Duration: 25m 45s
Courtesy of the Artist

Explore collaboration to make a collection of pockets

Snapcat invited each of the exhibiting artists in *Notions of Care* to share a small object with them for their project *Pockets to hold the things we've been holding*. They collaboratively created a container to hold each precious item using various textile processes. Collaborate with a friend to make a wearable pocket inspired by an object belonging to someone else.



Snapcat

Pockets to hold things we've been holding (Polly), 2021

Stichtite, linen, embroidery floss, silk, natural dyes
(dandelion, mulberry)

Courtesy of the artists

Process

- 1 View the body of work *Pockets to hold the things we've been holding* in the galleries, then read the corresponding essay in the exhibition catalogue. Take a look at the photographs of the objects and stories associated with each of the artists' pockets.
- 2 Choose a small object from home for this project. Write a paragraph explaining its significance. (Be mindful not to choose anything especially valuable).
- 3 Bring together all of the objects and stories/statements on a large table in the art room at school.
- 4 Work with a partner and each choose an object belonging to one of your peers.
- 5 With your partner, experiment with a range of materials such as fabrics, threads, beads, buttons and ribbons, and processes such as appliqué, weaving and embroidery to produce a pocket to hold the selected items.
- 6 When you think you are about halfway through the making process, swap the works-in-progress with your partner. Then carefully complete the pocket you have swapped.
- 7 Hang the finished pockets in the classroom/with the small object inside. Gift the pocket to the students in your class who shared the object with you.
- 8 Reflect on the creative process of making, collaborating, gifting and receiving art.

Explore painting, digital photography and collage to make an abstract composition

Artist Kate Tucker's paintings collage together layers of digitally printed fabrics as well as fragments of cut-up paintings. Experiment with the art elements colour, shape, and texture to create your own abstract composition inspired by the artist.



Snapcat

Pockets to hold things we've been holding (Polly), 2021

Stichtite, linen, embroidery floss, silk, natural dyes (dandelion, mulberry)

Courtesy of the artists

Process

- 1 Set up a still life in the classroom to use as a starting point for your artwork.
- 2 Use watercolour and/or acrylics to paint what you see at A3 scale.
- 3 When the painting is complete, digitally photograph and print some copies of your painting at a variety of scales.
- 4 Then cut up your original painting as well as the digital prints into various irregular shapes so that the figurative elements become abstracted.
- 5 On an A3 size canvas board begin layering, manipulating, and combining the cut-up shapes in different ways to produce a new composition.
- 6 Once you are pleased with the final arrangement use glue to attach to the canvas board.
- 7 Display the finished artworks together in the classroom.

Respond and interpret

In the galleries

Select an artwork from *Notions of Care* to discuss as a class, guided by the following prompts:

- What does the artwork make you think and wonder about? Develop a list of questions.
- How does the artist approach the theme of care in relation to self, audience, community, and environment? What are the ways that care has been expressed or represented in their artwork?
- How does the artwork make you feel as a viewer? What kind of mood or emotion is expressed within the work?
- Look carefully at the artwork and brainstorm a list of adjectives to describe the artwork based on what you can see.

- What are the materials and processes used by the artist/s to make the artwork? How has the artists applied them to express their ideas?
- Do you think collaboration and/or audience participation is crucial to the meaning of this artwork? Why/why not?
- Speculate on the intention of the artist and the meaning of their work. What do you think they are hoping to communicate through their art?

Back at school

What has inspired and informed this artwork? Undertake some further research about relevant sources of inspiration or influences upon the artist/s.



Notions of Care
Installation view
Bus Projects, 2021
Photograph: Christo Crocker

Visual Arts Practices

In the galleries

While visiting *Notions of Care* you will encounter a range art practices by various exhibiting artists (painting, sculpture, installation, textiles, photography, filmmaking, socially engaged, collaborative, performative etc). Choose one artist/collective from the exhibition to explore in depth once you return to school. Spend some time making a drawing or taking some documentation of the relevant artworks in the space to refer to later on.

Back at school

- Do some online research to find out more about the artist/s and the ideas behind their work.
- Examine how the artist/s use materials to create artworks.
- Produce a presentation using tools such as PowerPoint or Google Slides to share with the class, that highlights how the artwork you have seen in *Notions of Care* relates to other examples of the artists' work.
- Keep a record of your references along the way and acknowledge them in a bibliography at the end of your presentation.

Following page:

Snapcat

Pockets to hold things we've been holding (Anna), 2021

Glass medicine bottle and metal button, fabric scraps, embroidery floss, linen, crochet cotton, natural dyes (dandelion, avocado)

Courtesy of the Artists

Photograph: Christo Crocker

Present and perform

Reflecting on exhibition design and the audience experience

- What kind of atmosphere has been created in the gallery for audiences to encounter when they visit *Notions of Care*? Brainstorm a list of adjectives to describe the experience of entering the space.
- Describe the installation of the exhibition in the galleries. How do each of the artworks relate to one another visually and conceptually?
- What do curators and galleries need to consider when preparing and presenting a contemporary art exhibition?
- How does the exhibition design enhance the relationship between the art and the audience? What interactive and participatory experiences have been included in the exhibition?
- How might social distancing regulations related to the COVID-19 pandemic influence the visitor experience in the galleries, especially in relation to participatory and performance works?
- Do you think it is important for audiences to experience the exhibition *Notions of Care* directly in the galleries rather than remotely via a screen? Discuss.





Glossary

Art collaboration: art completed by multiple artists, all contributing to the same art piece.

Care: the provision of what is necessary for the health, welfare, maintenance and protection of someone or something.

Close-up photography: a tightly cropped photograph that shows a subject in detail

Contemporary art: the art of today, produced by artists who are living and working now. Contemporary art provides an opportunity to reflect on contemporary society and the issues relevant to ourselves, and the world around us.

Country: describes the lands, waterways, and seas to which First Nations people belong. The term is complex and encompasses ideas about law, place, custom, language, spiritual belief and dreaming, cultural practice, material sustenance, family, and identity. It is capitalised to differentiate from lower case use of 'country' referring to land.

Decolonisation: refers to the restoration of cultural, psychological, and economic freedom for those who have been forced under Colonial rule. The voices of First Nations People for truth in culture, politics, law, and education are heard while official action often lags. In Australia, having endured devastation upon the arrival of the First Fleet, decolonisation enables Indigenous Australians voices to be heard and valued while restorative justice is sought.

Deep time: the time scale of geological events, which is vastly, almost unimaginably, greater than the scale of our human lives.

Ephemeral art: is art that is impermanent and only lasts for a short period of time.

Field recording: an audio recording of sounds produced outside with portable recording equipment.

First Peoples / First Nations people: an inclusive term used to refer to the original inhabitants of what is now known as Australia and the Torres Strait Islands. In Australia, First Peoples/First Nations people refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Installation art: large-scale, mixed-media artworks often made for a site-specific, temporary exhibition.

Multidisciplinary art: art that blurs the boundaries between traditional categories of painting, drawing and sculpture.

Multisensory art: art that engages more than once sense at a time.

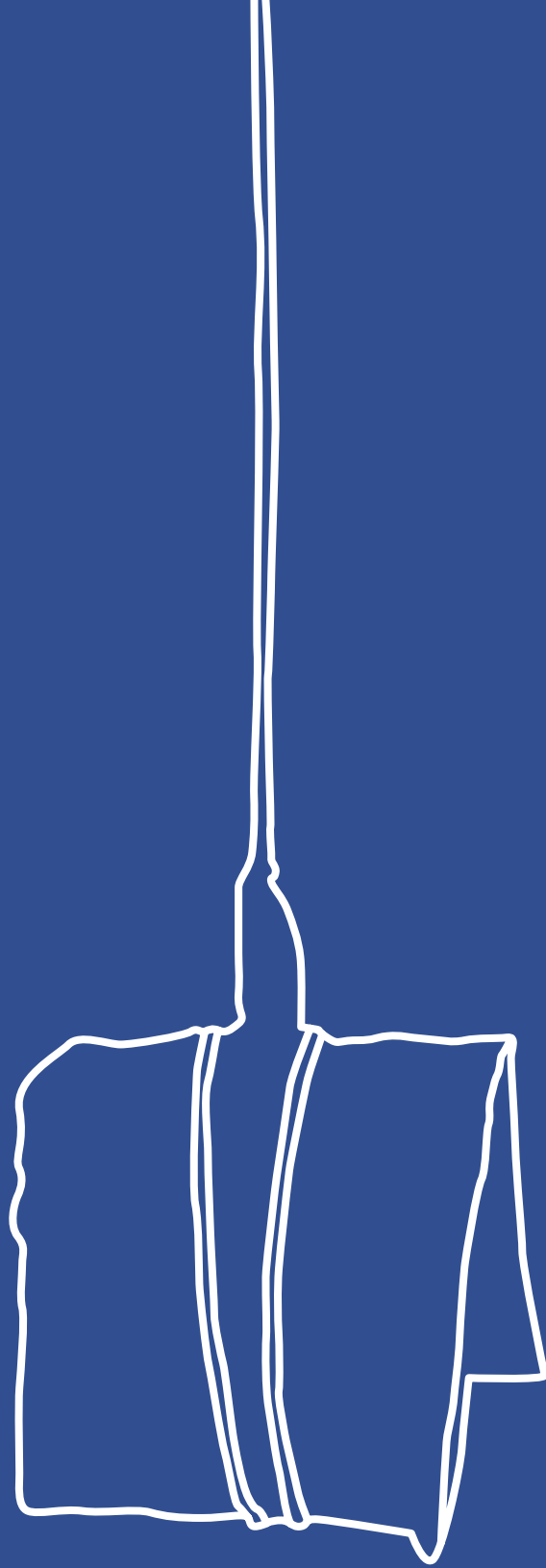
Participatory art: an approach to making art in which the audience is engaged directly in the creative process. This type of art is incomplete without the audience interaction.

Performance art: a live performance presented usually to an audience often within a gallery context. Performance art involves a performer or performers, a site and can involve an audience. It can combine music, dance, poetry, theatre, visual art, and video. The artwork resulting from a performance event might be the live event itself or its documentation in photographs, videos, or objects. Performance may be either scripted or unscripted, narrative driven, random, or carefully choreographed; spontaneous or carefully planned, and with or without audience participation.

Socially engaged art: Socially engaged art is collaborative, often participatory and involves people as the medium of the work. This social interaction involved during the process of creation is often of greater importance than the final artwork.

Tactility: capable of being felt or touched.

Yindjibarndi: Yindjibarndi people traditionally lived in the area near the town of Roebourne in the Pilbara region of Western Australia. The area is bordered by Kariyarra and Nyamal land to the north, Ngarluma to the west, Martuthunira and Kurruma land to the south and Nyiyaparli and Palyku land to the east. It is around the area of the Fortescue River of the Pilbara region in Western Australia.



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