



We acknowledge the land on which this exhibition is presented as the traditional lands of the Kurna people, and pay our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging.

This exhibition has been supported by the Government of South Australia through Arts South Australia.

Images

1. (Front Cover) Lucy Turnbull, *Moving Puddles* (detail), 2020, oil on canvas, 74x78cm.
2. Zoe Kirkwood, *Light Studies (pivot) 1-5*, 2020, Stainless steel, mild steel, oak, MDF, acrylic paint, enamel paint, light fittings, dimensions variable.
3. Talia Wignall, *Reflection and Recollection*, 2020, watercolour and gouache on paper, 30x40cm.
4. Nicole Clift, *fold piece* (wip), 2020, upholstery velvet, murray river pink salt flakes, PVA glue, pins, dimensions variable.
5. Nancy Downes, *Tunnel Vision* (detail wip), 2020, linen, gouache, watercolour, oak, thread, fixings. Dimensions: approximately 4x1.8x1.5m.
6. Zoe Freney, *Intimate Structures: smalls*, 2020, painter's linen, silk satin, cotton, wire and trims, coat hangers, dimensions variable.

Photography by Sam Roberts

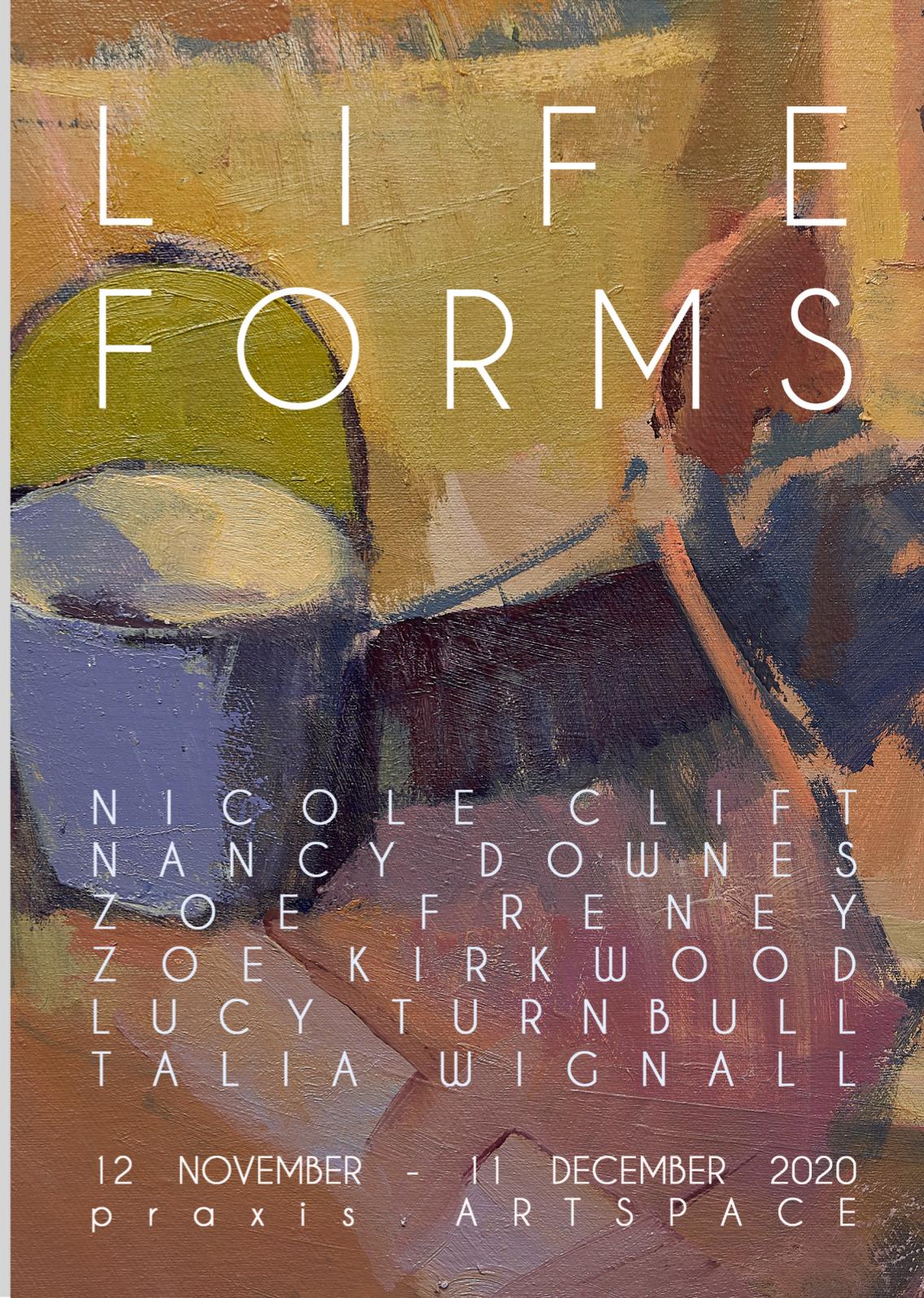


praxis ARTSPACE
68-72 Gibson Street,
Bowden, SA, 5007
t | 08 7231 1974
w | praxisartspace.com

Open WED-SAT 11-4



Government of South Australia
Arts South Australia



N I C O L E C L I F T
N A N C Y D O W N E S
Z O E F R E N E Y
Z O E K I R K W O O D
L U C Y T U R N B U L L
T A L I A W I G N A L L

12 NOVEMBER - 11 DECEMBER 2020
p r a x i s . A R T S P A C E

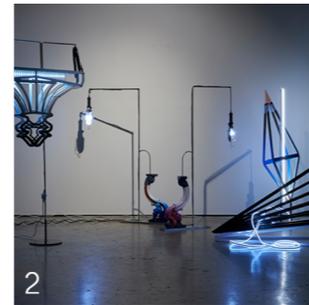
LIFE FORMS

Life forms, and reforms, scrounging nutrients and adapting to circumstance, driven by a deep-rooted impulse to survive. This propulsion populates scenes from nature documentaries, such as the time-lapse footage of spores unfurling into opportunistic fungi in David Attenborough's 2020 witness statement, *A Life on our Planet*. It turns out (spoiler alert) it is more the fast motioned pace of these filmed fungi that reflects Attenborough's realisation of what he has truly witnessed since the 1950s; the swiftly vanishing 'wild' as a result of human industriousness and want for more. With these rapid shifts, life forms of every scale are being forced to reform, at least some of their ways, to keep existing ... or not. Whether fungus, orangutan, Wollemi pine, glacier, or human, as we know it can also be the tiniest of split atoms, viral particles, invisible toxic gasses, or microplastics, that affect the interconnected all. When feminist theorist Karen Barad writes of the nuclear haunting from Hiroshima or Fukushima in her chapter titled 'No Small Matter', she reminds us 'the whole world is downwind'.¹ We all direly exist in an inescapable downwind. Yet it is important to remember, at this time especially, we are also downwind from fungi spores and the type of living creative knowledge they carry to seek new ways, new forms, and survive amidst such change.

In the increasingly blustery downwind then it feels doubly nihilistic and destructive to have the value of art routinely challenged when creativity brings hope, knowledge and a future. As a life force, creativity proposes, experiments and thinks new possibilities and alternatives for continuing; be it reforming political structures, repurposing piles and stuff, reconsidering daily interactions, readdressing reproduced systemic biases, redirecting away from tipping points, and even rehearsing life on Mars. Art, as philosopher Elizabeth Grosz poetically observes, 'is a mode of incantation for the future, song-lines for a people that do not yet exist'.² Art for a future travels across time; learning from pasts and gathering knowledge to inform the nuances of present states, while also leaving legacies, pathways and nutrients for future generations to grow. Yet artists working currently - keeping in mind artists confront the melting, burning and ill exterior world through differing circumstances - seem teeteringly positioned between a before and now of unseen bleak reckonings, all while looking into an uncertain future. What song-lines do they cast ahead? What pathways for reforming and adapting do they find?

The art of *Life Forms* coalesces around interiority; insides, interiors and internal states. These artworks tell of how there is meaning and often comfort to be found in shelters, childhood bedrooms, domestic folds, effects of light and bodily shields, in the small rhythms and marks of habitual routines and clusters of useful detritus, inside modes of togetherness, and in honestly acknowledging that the mind's interior is sometimes as riotous as minute-by-minute news.

Within the downwind of the world they have embraced fluxing artistic methods to meet arising circumstances, to make art with what is at hand, with what is familiar, and with care. And from their state of betweenness with vulnerable insides more agape than previously, they make apparent navigating a future means living with the knowledge that insides remain inextricable from outsides and caring for both is fundamental.



As well as the none-too-small feat of creating futures, art can also valuably remind us of humbler material encounters - of less - with which to rethink our own scale. Like fungi spores, we too are specks in this universe but we have never lived with as much extracted, formulated, overly mass produced and imperishable mountains of stuff. Naomi Klein, writer of the 2014 truth-telling book *This Changes Everything*, writes how the 'civilizational wake-up call' of climate change 'challenges not only capitalism, but also the building blocks of materialism'.³ It is an artist's remit to develop relationships with material forces, all while wrangling and grappling with miniscule and often invisible agents. This material labour is especially critical now as we have entered a time when structures of language are fumbling, fallible and failing. Against recurring descriptors such as 'unprecedented', the inexpressible fog of how now feels, and the engulfing information apocalypse, it is the pragmatic materiality of art, forged from tangible stuff, consideration and time, which offers substance. And not just substance but meaningful interactions with select materials and circumstances, in ways that markedly differ from contemporary consumptive habits. For these times, there is great solace to be found in art which thrives on creative reforming, like fungi, using scrounged materials, ideas and survival impulses to guide us into our shared futures.

Written by Sera Waters

1. Karen Barad, 'No Small Matter: Mushroom clouds, ecologies of nothingness, and strange topologies of spacetime-mattering', in *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*, eds Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson, Elaine Gan, Nils Bubandt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 2017. G106.

2. Elizabeth Grosz, 'Art, Sensation, A People', in *You Imagine What you Desire*, 19th Biennale of Sydney catalogue. 2014. 73.

3. Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*, UK: Penguin Books, 2014. 25.

