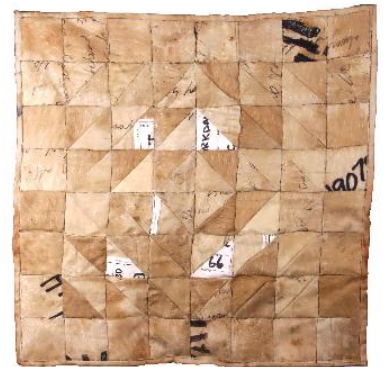


Exploring traditions connected to sheep and wool production in Australia, *Sheep Show*, on display at Mundaring Arts Centre 25 July – 13 September, celebrates, abstracts, and unpacks this significant industry via its material and cultural expressions.

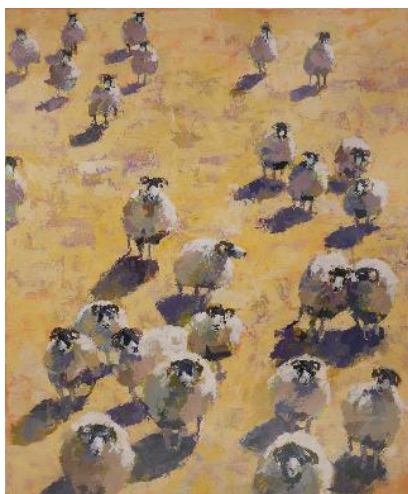
Sheep Show responds to the location of Mundaring Arts Centre on the dividing range between Perth's urban, industrial landscape, and the agricultural regions that stretch east from the Swan Coastal Plain. Semi-trailer trucks rumble past just five meters from the gallery with bales of wool stacked three high and fifteen long, filled to the brim with wheat, barley and other grains, or packed with sheep and cattle. Featuring the work of Emma Buswell, Eric C, Doreen Harris, Den Scheer, Alastair Taylor and Katrina Virgona, the artworks in this show have come into creation at many points along this trade route, from the agricultural regions of Laverton and Northam, and the craft hub of Darlington in the hills, to the Perth suburbs that spread along highways and the dockside city of Fremantle.

Den Scheer and Eric C undertook a residency together last year at Mundaring Arts Centre's Inc.'s second venue, Midland Junction Arts Centre, in which they explored their familial connections to traditional craft and agricultural labour such as patchwork, tanning and farming. Displayed as part of *Sheep Show*, Eric C's patchwork quilt made from used wool bales, reflects the way family narratives and histories are constructed by each new generation. Scheer's sculptural collage of pieced together sheep hides, illustrates the cyclic nature of farming seasons, and the tragic effect of bushfire on stock animals.

Delicate objects felted from wool by Katrina Virgona contemplate this transfer of knowledge, skill and history, through maternal lineages. Individual pieces are wrapped, coiled, bound and stitched together to form a long necklace, called a lariat that stretches outwards, each piece signifying various female members of Virgona's extended family.



Eric C, *Wool Bale Patchwork*, 2019, found wool bale material quilted, 100 x 100 cm. Photograph by Gary Parris.



Alastair Taylor, *Eight percent*, 2020, acrylic on canvas, 76 x 91 cm

Doreen Harris's boldly coloured painting of shearing at Edjudina Station, where she lived and worked with her husband, reflects on life in station country. Highlighting how Aboriginal people contributed significantly as a labour force in agricultural industries across the country, which brought prosperity and wealth for Australia supposedly 'on the sheep's back'.

Emma Buswell - whose jumpers are currently on display at the Art Gallery of Western Australia - recounts, through the medium of a colourful, knitted woollen cloak, the tale of Shrek, a Merino sheep and New Zealand national icon who spent six years hiding in caves and avoiding muster. When eventually shorn on live national TV, Shrek's fleece weighed a record-breaking 27kg.

This light-hearted glimpse into the industry is also present in Alastair Taylor's light-filled, expressive paintings and sculptures assembled from found objects, with one painting affectionately paying homage to the eight percent of the sheep population believed to be queer.

Agricultural Shows have long been the venue for celebrating the agricultural industry, but also the many auxiliary efforts that work to make the whole. Alongside the prizewinning ram, the newest header or biggest pumpkin is yarn spinning, wood chopping, and the best cake competition. It is this variety of expressions and community that *Sheep Show* seeks to showcase.

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Mundaring Arts Centre | Tuesday – Friday 10am-5pm, Saturday & Sunday 11am-3pm
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