

FOREWORD

Esteemed and emerging local artists come together to celebrate the history of Western Australian sporting culture in *Relay*. This is an exhibition which seeks to highlight the capacity for art objects to carry a message; in this case, the messages are of community spirit, tradition and inclusion. The idea for the exhibition was itself inspired by an object: the Queen's Baton. Ahead of every Commonwealth Games, the Queen places a message within a Baton that has been custom-made to reflect the spirit of the Games host nation. This message remains enclosed in the Baton as it traverses the width and breadth of the Commonwealth Nations. When it reaches its final destination – this year, the Gold Coast – the message is removed and formally read aloud to the International audience.

In some ways, this journey might be like that of an artwork. Artists imbue their works with meaning. When the work is moved from the artist's studio into the gallery setting, or elsewhere for public display, the message of the work may be revealed, interpreted, and re-contextualised. This is one of the great joys of art; every artwork has a meaning. And though a work may be experienced in the same conditions, the impact of that experience will differ for everyone who sees it. So with the Queen's Baton Relay travelling through the City of Swan this month, this exhibition presents an opportunity to not only celebrate our local sporting culture, but also to highlight the unique role of artists in our community: the message-bearers.

One of the other key parts of the exhibition is diversity. There are 53 Commonwealth Nations spanning the globe, and we are united by both our cultural diversity and our shared histories as British colonies. *Relay* celebrates this notion, with 13 artists from vastly diverse backgrounds and at different stages of their careers, presenting artworks in assorted media and styles. Each artist has made the theme their own; the result is an exhibition of distinctive artworks unified by the same ideas.

Richard Woldendorp exhibits two early black and white photographs alongside a 2006 image of the Manly Regatta, seen from above in the aerial perspective Woldendorp is best known for. This image captures the buzz of a community gathering in activity; the small scale of the figures a cue that the individuals form a small part of a much greater whole. French Australian artist Marie Haass also works from an aerial viewpoint, depicting the Baton Relay route in painterly abstraction; "Map is an oil painting made up of street names interwoven to create a pattern, with red dots referring to Google Earth locations," she says.

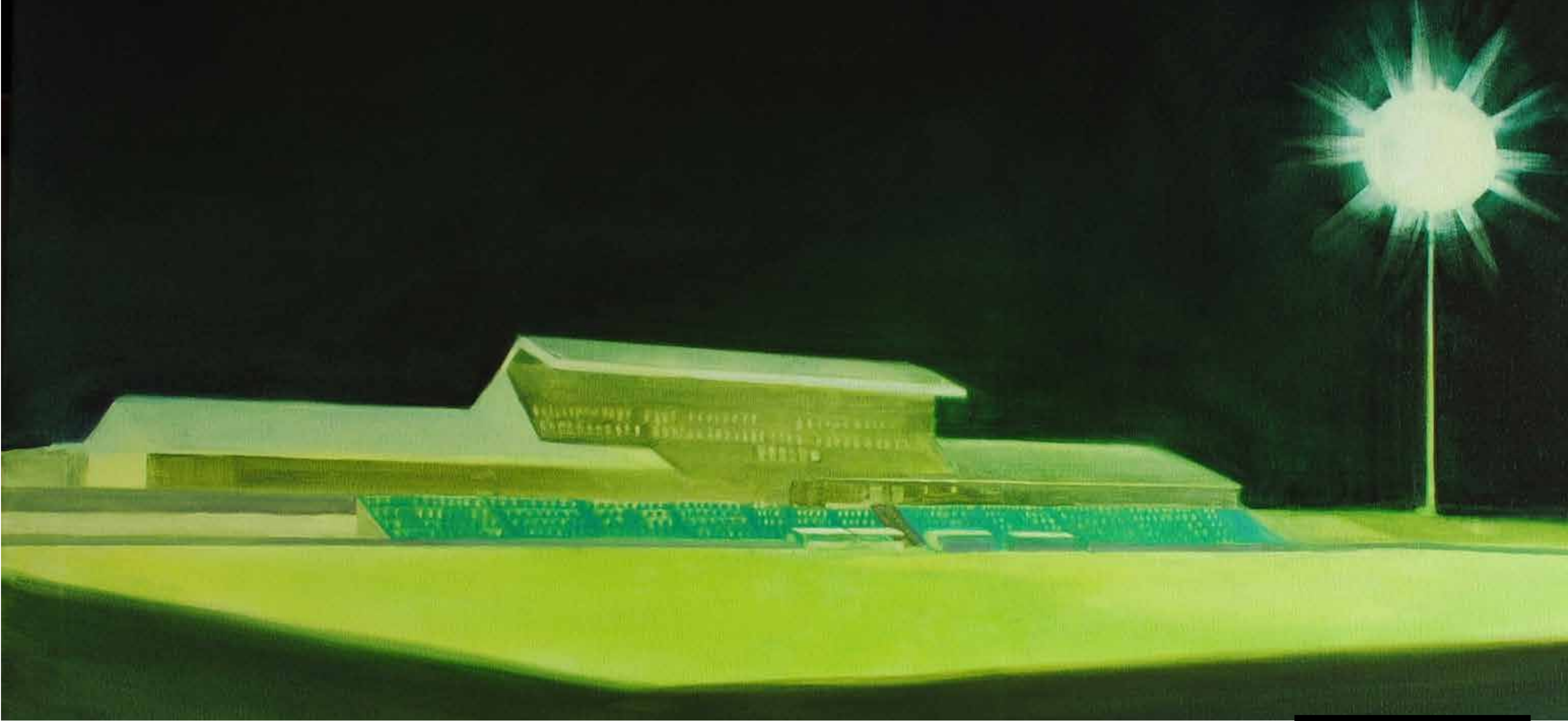
Locality is also considered by emerging artist Fiona Harman. By painting sporting grounds in-between use or frozen in action, Harman steepes her emotive scenes with a sense of anticipation and disillusionment, exploring feelings of possibility in relation to the landscape. We also see the anxiety of expectations and the unknown represented in Ron Gomboc's abstract sculptural works. Gomboc explores the journey to excel and succeed beyond expectations through an elegant mastery of his chosen material, aluminium.

Alex Maciver represents restricted movement with works that consider class status. Maciver's mixed media collage works re-examine functions of the photographic image as a symbol of modern culture. UK born artist Alastair Taylor created a sculpture inspired by commemorative mugs, "like for coronations and royal occasions, since the Queen is involved," he says. The work features images of local sporting icons such as The Invincibles, an Indigenous cricket team formed in New Norcia in the late nineteenth century.

Bruce Slatter and Nicole Slatter work collaboratively to evoke visualizations of territory and competition. The artists' layered multimodal works aim to focus on the enjoyment and complexity of competition, both on and off the field. Peter Dailey explores the notion of arresting time through images from a camera, painted in gold, silver and bronze; and the introduction of an unfamiliar object into a community is seen in Judith Forrest's paintings. Working with resin, Desmond Mah painstakingly paints layers to create three-dimensional paintings. The butterflies symbolise an athlete's metamorphosis. Robert Hitchcock's works explore the physicality of the figure through the classical medium of cast sculpture. And, Nalda Searles reflects on her own family history in Western Australia, with a work that examines the physical power of her father and other workers living in the Wheatbelt in the 1920s and 30s, who used the strength of their bodies to earn a living.

These artists offer us a glimpse into the many interpretations than can be conveyed by a single, overarching message. Every work offers a personal insight into the artist's individual connection, and reminds us of the importance of sports and the arts in building a strong, inclusive community. Often felt as two fields that operate in worlds apart, both have the unique ability to unite and inspire us.

Louella Hayes
Curator



Fiona Harman, *Empty Stands* (detail), 2018, oil on canvas

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PETER DAILEY

Peter Dailey is a well-respected artist and arts educator who has been practicing in WA for over 30 years. Dailey's works are held by major public and private collections throughout the state. His work has a strong sense of narrative and contemporary mythology reminiscent of stage sets; it is simultaneously technically sophisticated and highly detailed.

1st (detail), 2018
Oil and acrylic on board
21 x 14 cm



JUDITH FORREST

Judith Forrest is an English born artist and a former Senior Lecturer at Claremont School of Art and Central Tafe in Perth, WA. Her professional practice spans more than 30 years. Forrest's paintings, sculptures and public artworks can be seen around WA. Her works create a link between the small incidents of daily life and the more profound experience of visual art.

West Hill Landing (detail), 2017
Oil on canvas
94 x 124 cm



RON GOMBOC

Ron Gomboc has been a sculptor for more than 40 years. He studied at Claremont Technical College, Perth Technical College and Midland Tech. Gomboc's achievements in the arts have been recognised through various awards, including the Swan Citizen of the Year Award, the WA Week Citizen of the Year Award, and the Centenary Medal for outstanding commitment to the community, for establishing Gomboc Gallery Sculpture Park in 1982.

At the Beginning (detail), 2018
Aluminium
197 x 74 x 48 cm



MARIE HAASS

Marie Haass is a French Australian artist. She studied in Paris and Berlin before moving to Perth in the 1980s. She completed an MA in Visual Arts at Curtin University of Technology. She has held six solo shows and participated in numerous group exhibitions. Her works have been acquired by public and private collections including Artbank, Curtin University, the Janet Holmes à Court Collection and the Shire of Mundaring Collection.

The Route (detail), 2018
Mixed media on paper
131 x 131 cm



FIONA HARMAN

Fiona Harman is an emerging artist based in Perth. She completed a BA (Hons, 1st class) in Fine Art and a creative research PhD at Curtin University. Harman has exhibited locally and nationally, including two solo exhibitions and numerous group exhibitions. Her works in *Relay* explore ideas of remembrance, imagination and possibility in relation to sport.

Missed the Mark (detail), 2018
Oil on canvas
90 x 55 cm



ROBERT HITCHCOCK

Born in Perth, Robert Hitchcock is an Australian sculptor of Irish and Indigenous Australian descent. With a career spanning more than 50 years, Hitchcock's practice has covered many subjects and styles. Working predominantly with bronze, he is notable for his large and life-size sculptures which are held in many private and public art collections.

Susan Dancing (detail), 1991
Cast resin
100 x 35 x 60 cm



ALEX MACIVER

Alex Maciver is a Perth based artist, curator and writer, born in Sydney 1985. Since graduating with a BA (Hons) in Fine Art from Dundee University, UK in 2007, he has been involved with artist-run initiatives, events and festivals in Australia and overseas. In 2013, Maciver won the Fremantle Print Award and in 2014 won FilmFreo24. His works feature in collections including the City of Fremantle Art Collection.

Scheme 6 (detail), 2017
Acrylic, spray paint and oil paint on canvas
93 x 91 cm



DESMOND MAH

Born in Singapore 1974, Desmond Mah migrated to WA in the 1980s. Mah obtained a BA (Hons) from Loughborough University, UK and a Diploma in Painting from LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore. He has participated in group exhibitions nationally and will undertake a residency in Beijing in 2018. His works are held by collections including Judith Nielsen of White Rabbit Gallery, NSW and City of Vincent, WA. He is represented in NSW by Art Atrium Gallery.

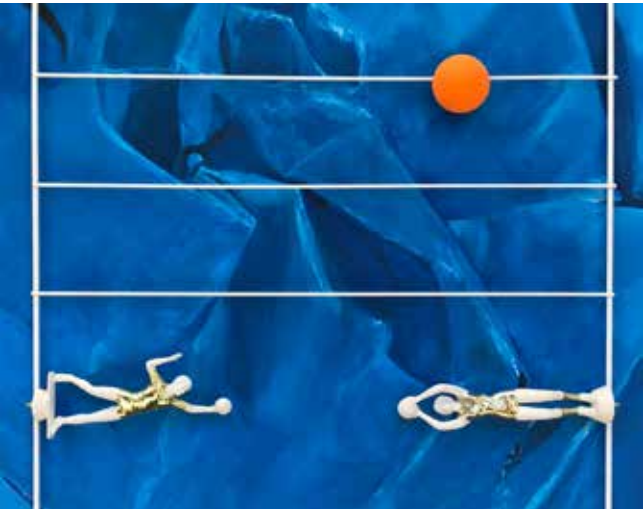
Dreams (detail), 2017
Acrylic on resin
52 x 43 x 6 cm



NALDA SEARLES

Born in Kalgoorlie 1945, Nalda Searles is a visual artist whose work in fibre textiles is nationally recognised. In 1979 Searles took a course in macramé, igniting a passion; she began to collect materials from the land – bark, sticks, stones – and taught herself to weave. In 2009, Searles won the inaugural Lifetime Achievement Award from Artsource. Her practice respectfully weaves her own stories with those of Australia's traditional owners.

The Wood Clearers Slippers, 2014
My Father's slippers with sandalwood shaving from beneath his wood lathe
Size 11 mans slippers



BRUCE SLATTER

Bruce Slatter completed his BA in Fine Art in 1992, a Graduate Diploma of Teaching in 1997, a BA (Hons) in 2000 and a MA in 2003. He has a PhD in Art from RMIT in 2015. Slatter has held six solo exhibitions and exhibited in many group shows. His work is represented in various collections including the Art Gallery of WA, Artbank, Bankwest, RMIT University Melbourne, Curtin University and the Liz and Lloyd Horn Art Collection.

Nicole Slatter (detail), 2017
Mixed media
102 x 82 x 7 cm



ALASTAIR TAYLOR

Alastair Taylor studied illustration at Bath Academy of Art, UK in 1983. He has participated in over 20 group exhibitions nationally and internationally, held several solo exhibitions and been the recipient of numerous awards including two High Commendations for his works in the City of Melville Art Awards. His works are represented in public and private collections including the City of Joondalup and the Shire of Mundaring Art Collections.

The Invincibles (detail), 2018
Acrylic on board
34 x 23 cm



RICHARD WOLDENDORP AM

Born in the Netherlands 1927, Richard Woldendorp AM emigrated to WA in 1951. He bought his first camera in 1955. In 2004 he was honoured as a State Living Treasure for his outstanding contribution to the visual arts for his talent as a photographer, and his original and awe-inspiring vision of the Australian landscape. In the Queen's Birthday Honours in June 2012 he was appointed the Order of Australia for service to the arts.

Surf Lifesaving Regatta, Manly, NSW (detail), 2006
Framed Archival Inkjet colour photograph
62 x 115 cm