

ACKROYD & HARVEY

Founded in 1990

Heather Ackroyd, English, b. 1959

Dan Harvey, English, b. 1959

Beuys' Acorns, 2007

Archival ink-jet print

Collection of the artists

www.ackroydandharvey.com

www.culturedeclares.org

Since 1990, Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey have collaborated to explore relations between art, ecology, activism, and place. Ackroyd & Harvey's 2007 piece *Beuys' Acorns is inspired by 7,000 Oaks – City Forestation Instead of City Administration* by the artist Joseph Beuys, a founder of the Fluxus art movement. In the original artwork, the citizens of Kassel, Germany worked with Beuys to plant a forest of oaks, each marked with a basalt rock that was taken from the lawn of the Museum Fridericianum. Each time a new tree was planted, the pile of rocks would grow smaller and the city greener. The urban renewal project took five years to complete and remains a potent symbol of art as a catalyst for environmental and social change. Beuys demonstrated that art can inspire positive environmental action through collaboration with individuals and communities.

Inspired by this project and environmental activism, Ackroyd & Harvey gathered and germinated acorns from Beuys's enduring social sculpture. They now have one hundred and fifty thriving saplings. The photograph of a germinating seed is an invitation to engage with their own ongoing project a catalyst for dialogue and action around environmental issues.

To participate, join the *Culture Declares Emergency movement*, co-founded by the artists at www.culturedeclares.org. There, you can declare your commitment to take action on our ecological and climate crisis, download a usable kitemark, and join a community of fellow declarers.

"We must continue along the road of interrelating socio-ecologically all the forces present in our society until we perform an action which extends to the fields of culture, economy and democratic rights."

Joseph Beuys, 1982

LHOLA AMIRA

South African, b. 1984

IRMANDADE: The Shape of Water in Pindorama, 2018

Video HD, single channel sound

16:13 min.

Courtesy of SMAC Gallery, copyright Lhola Amira

Lhola Amira is an appearance (or ancestral spiritual being) that manifests through curator Khanyisilie Mbongwa's body. THEY are connected with the tradition of South African Nguni spiritualism, which reveres ancestors and expresses the duality of human beings through a physical body that hosts a spiritual counterpart. Nguni diviner-healers diagnose illnesses and provide healing remedies. Amira also performs rituals for special water sites in order to maintain the vitality of divine beings—such as mermaids and snakes—who are said to dwell underwater, where they maintain life-giving forces such as fertility and rain. As this being, Lhola Amira inhabits a plural existence to create constellations of art using photography, video, performance, and sculpture, and to shift between divergent times, places, and histories.

In *IRMANDADE: The Shape of Water in Pindorama*, Lhola Amira retraces the Transatlantic slave trade to Bahia, Brazil on a journey that crosses multiple continents and takes place by sea and land. THEY appear in the film as a strategy of emancipation and a source of healing for sites of trauma, drawing upon sacred ancestral forces to locate the wounds of enslavement that appear as scars upon the earth.

ARAHMAIANI

Indonesian, b. 1961

Memory of Nature, 2013

Natural material (wood, soil, seeds)

Collection of the artist

Flag Project, 2006–ongoing

Fabric

Collection of the artist

Memory of Nature is made with earth, wood, seeds, and water, made to reference the Hindu–Buddhist cosmology of the Borobudur Mandala, or the concentric pattern that symbolizes the universe and its inhabitants. An architectural manifestation of the mandala, built in approximately 800 A.D., can be found in the UNESCO–listed temple site of Borobudur located in the Central Java province of Indonesia, which is also where Arahmaiani lives.

Memory of Nature explores the link between nature and religion as expressed in Buddhism, where the interconnectedness between humans and nature highlights our mutual dependency for existence. Seeds have been planted in this garden bed to mirror the mandala design. Visitors and gallery volunteers are asked to water and nurture the seeds as they grow into green shoots, which bring the mandala to life.

SAYAN CHANDA

Indian, b. 1989

Deity 8, 2021

Deity 10, 2021

Deity 14, 2021

Deity 15, 2021

Deity 17, 2021

Deity 20, 2021

Unpicked vintage quilt

Collection of the artist

Sayan Chanda's *Deities* is a series of folded and stitched textile works that reference the Kantha tradition of Bengal, India, where a running stitch is used to repurpose discarded textile scraps and saris into quilts. The practice both reduces waste and creates opportunities for women to work in a collective way while expressing their individuality. Shown together, they express Chanda's interest in ritual, particularly the votive offerings and talismans of Bengal. In the postcolonial context, each piece has a distinct, unique identity through form and color, but are physically and spiritually joined together to create a collective body of work.

HYLOZOIC/DESIRES (HIMALI SINGH SOIN & DAVID SOIN TAPPESE)

As Grand As What, 2021

Three-channel video of performance; color, stereo sound

16:50 min., looped

Courtesy of the artists

Bla refers to the life energy that animates the world, according to Tibetan medicine. This concept is known across many cultures—the word *bla* can be interchangeable with *prana* (Sanskrit), *qi* (Chinese), *ruh* (Arabic), or *mana* (Polynesian, Melanesian, and Maori). In this three-channel video installation, the artist Himali Singh Soin appears as a masked figure whose purpose is to reconnect *bla* to the world. The loss of *bla* is reflected in the crisis of contemporary times, which is represented as the parched earth and weary body.

The film's journey begins in the Himalayan mountains and travels to a Vesuvian volcano, where a drummer calls upon *li*, a spirit manifestation of both human and non-human consciousness. A series of remedial rituals is performed to infuse *bla* back into our bodies and recharge the *anima* (or life) of the planet.

For the artists, *As Grand as What* reimagines "the structure of the Kalachakra mandala [Sanskrit, meaning Wheel of Time], a geomantic diagram in which the drawing, body, city, earth, and universe mirror each other in a grand, cosmic architecture." In this universe, the forms of life—stone, spirit, machine, and human—are considered equal.

HIMALI SINGH SOIN

Ancestors of the Blue Moon, 2021

Offset lithography and gold foiling on indigo sandpaper

LOLOLOL

Based in Taipei, founded 2013

Future Tao: Inner Scripture, 2018–ongoing

Website, workshop and activities, digital print on canvas

Courtesy of the artist

Supported by Taishin Bank Foundation for Arts and Culture
at first stages in 2023

lololol is an artist collective formed in 2013 by Xia Lin and Sheryl Cheung as an endless extension of lol (digital slang for “laugh out loud”). Based in Taipei, Taiwan, lololol explores how emotions and body politics are informed by diverse technology cultures, taking a special interest in martial arts and Tao–informed philosophies. Lin and Cheung describe *Future Tao: Online Inner Scripture* as arising from the new needs of the contemporary world: “As computer technology is becoming increasingly pervasive in everyday life, human lifestyles are becoming increasingly cybernetic, and our sense of space, time, and existence is rapidly changing. In the face of these new living conditions, what are new mind and body practices for the purpose of self–cultivation?” Through their ever–growing website and its related app and concept book, lololol presents provocations, techniques, and practices for engaging with our current reality.

ANA MENDIETA

Born 1948, Cuba and died 1985, USA

Imágen de Yágul, 1973 / 1991

Tree of Life, 1976

Untitled: Silueta Series, Iowa, 1977

*Untitled: Silueta Series, Mexico
From Silueta Works in Mexico,
1973-1977, 1976 / 1991*

Color photographs

Courtesy of The Estate of Ana Mendieta Collection, LLC and
Galerie Lelong & Co., New York

Ana Mendieta created more than 200 works as part of the Silueta series (1973–1980). The artist etched, sculpted, and burnt a silhouette of her body into various landscapes using organic flowers, blood, feathers, leaves, mud, and wood, in compositions she called “earth–body works.” These ephemeral inscriptions were captured in photography and film before being subsumed by the changing seasons. In these photographs, Mendieta appears to be in kinship with the earth as she becomes part of—or even an extension of—nature, offering an antidote to models of domination. In a 1980 artist statement, Mendieta discussed how her work is concerned with the interconnectedness of living entities, saying, “my art is grounded on the belief in one universal energy which runs through everything, from insect to man, from man to spectre, from spectre to plant, from plant to galaxy.”

ZARINA MUHAMMAD

Singaporean, b. 1982

Calendrical Systems for the Afterlife, 2022

Mixed media

Collection of the artist

Zarina Muhammad has an interest in ritual magic, Southeast Asian mythologies, animism and folk religion, sacred sites, and the cross/intercultural interpretations of witchcraft. She draws upon Southeast Asian animistic beliefs as they are practiced in Singapore, where objects, animals, and places in the environment are sources of worship imbued with spiritual presence. Muhammad invites speculation about how we honor the territories we inhabit (including our natural world) by creating spaces for rites where we can find refuge in moments of turbulence.

In this installation, the artist invites all to participate in *Calendrical Systems for the Afterlife* by adding their own archival fragments, talismans, materials, and other objects that we honor and hold for care and comfort. Muhammad also advocates for the restorative practices employed by Indigenous peoples of the Malay archipelago. She incorporates the use of salt, black pepper, chili, cinnamon sticks, and turmeric in her installation, as they are believed to have healing properties. She also calls upon the audience to add their own local healing materials—such as plants, tonics, prayers, or spices—to the installation.

Prompt for an Offering

Think of something that has helped you to feel safe at any point in your life—it could take the form of an object, a song, a lullaby, a piece of advice, a prayer, a mantra, an act of kindness, a recipe, a piece of clothing, a scent. Perhaps it might be bedtime stories you were told as a child or wisdom passed down through the generations which later comforted you as a grown person and helped you to feel safe.

If you feel drawn to this invitation, please return and leave a note or an object that represents this sense of shelter, safety, and sanctuary to offer within the circle of this installation.

PATRINA MUNUNGURR

Yolŋu, b. 1988

Gurrku Dhälkuma, 2017

Video

06:55 min.

Courtesy the artist; care of Buku–Larrŋgay Mulka Centre

Patrina Munungurr is a leading cinematographer at The Mulka Project, an intermedia collective based in Yirrkala, Australia. The name *Mulka* connotes a sacred but public ceremony, and means “to hold or protect.” In this film, Munungurr prepares *gapan*—a white ochre clay that has deep significance for the Yolŋu people of the northeastern Arnhem Land in Australia. Munungurr’s film is a meditation on the ritual significance of this material that strengthens the relationship between Yolŋu people and the earth.

For Yirrkala artists, working with *gapan* is symbolic of many things in the lexicon of the poetic Yolŋu universe, from the seafoam (which coated the ancestral women as they paddled to Australia to give birth to the First Nations) to the clouds that stand as memorials to the spirits of lost loved ones, who are said to rise as vapor from the ocean’s deep horizon. The wisdom of age and the skin of the land are at the heart of the differing views between our two cultures and is a schism in the understanding of land. For Yolŋu the land is alive. It has bones; the *ŋaraka*, made of ancestral foundations which cannot be shifted. The film honors the action of painting the body with *gapan* and the universe it represents.

PAULINE OLIVEROS

American, 1932–2016

Breath In/Breathe Out, 1982

Native, 1971

The River Meditation, 1976

Urban and Country Meditations, 1981

Give Sound/Receive Sound, 1981

Follow Yourself, 1979

Sonic meditations

Courtesy of The Pauline Oliveros Trust / Pop and Mom

American composer and accordionist Pauline Oliveros was an innovative leader in post-war experimental electronic music. She developed the practice of “Deep Listening,” in which text scores provide instructions to tune our awareness into the sounds around us—including those of nature, everyday life, and the inner self—as a way to foster radical attentiveness.

Oliveros’s *Sonic Meditations* was first published in 1971, a set of scores that originated in her experiments with the women-only performance space The ♀’s Ensemble. Oliveros also studied kinetic awareness techniques with dancer and bodyworker Elaine Summers, a practice in which slow, quotidian movements of sitting, standing, lying, and walking are enacted. These actions would soon become central to the artist’s developments in listening and its potential for healing.

PAULINE OLIVEROS

American, 1932–2016

Deep Listening, 1989

Music album

Courtesy of the artist

Wall drawing

Courtesy of the artist

Pauline Oliveros's album *Deep Listening* was recorded in an abandoned cistern, an underground space which created a special acoustic environment of swelling reverberation. "The cistern space, in effect, is an instrument being played simultaneously by all three composers," Oliveros notes. In creating *Deep Listening*, she hoped to provide a method of personal and community growth with goals such as "expanded consciousness" and later, "humanitarian purposes; specifically healing."

Oliveros also employs graphic notation in her text-based scores to further situate the performer and/or the listener. Seen here, the circle with the dot symbolizes the relationship of attention (the dot) to awareness (the circle).

YOKO ONO

Japanese, b. 1933

Painting for the Wind, 1961/2022

Facsimile print

© Yoko Ono

Yoko Ono is a conceptual artist and was an instrumental collaborator in the Fluxus art movement, an interdisciplinary group of artists that expanded the definition of art in the 1960s and 70s. First published in both English and Japanese for the conceptual art book *Grapefruit* (1964), the "instruction piece" *Painting for the Wind* invites participants to "cut a hole in a bag filled with seeds of any kind and place the bag where there is wind." This poetic action proposes an interaction between the participant's immediate environment and the elements that surround them, requiring creative thinking from the audience when they view the text as part of this exhibition. *Painting for the Wind* presents a utopian vision of new life sprouting from the seeds with a gesture of renewal, hope, and healing that heightens sensitivity.

TABITA REZAIRE

French, b. 1989

Premium Connect, 2017

Video with LED glow

13:04 min.

Courtesy of the artist and Goodman Gallery, South Africa

Tabita Rezaire describes herself as “infinity incarnated into an agent of healing.” The French-born Guyanese/Danish artist studied economics at Paris Dauphine University and Copenhagen Business School, and is a community worker, Kemetic/Kundalini yoga teacher, spiritual seeker, doula, and aspiring farmer who is currently studying agroforestry systems. These divergent practices intersect at AMAKABA, a center in the Amazonian Rainforest that Rezaire founded to foster engagement between science, art, and spirituality. Here, an appreciation of ancestral memory and how it connects with the ecology of the forest can be explored.

Premium Connect envisions a study of information and communication technologies exploring African divination systems, the fungi underworld, ancestors’ communications and quantum physics to (re)think our information conduits. Overcoming the organism-spirit-device divide, this work explores spiritual connections as communication networks and the possibilities of decolonial technologies. *Premium Connect* investigates the cybernetic spaces where the organic, technological, and spiritual worlds connect.

ERIC-PAUL RIEGE

Diné + American, b. 1994

blanket 4 epr [2] draped upon
Shádi'ááh to keep him warm

Shádi'ááh, 2022

Mixed fibers

Private collection

Courtesy of the artist and STARS, Los Angeles

epr blanket [2], 2012–present

Fiber

Courtesy of the artist

Eric-Paul Riege makes fiber artworks that draw upon his Diné upbringing and the worldview of *hózhó*, which conveys a web of physical, mental, and spiritual life. In this work, organic materials and mass-produced, store-bought products seamlessly interact to create animated works of contemporary vitality that are a testament to the aliveness of tradition. The handmade sheep is a potent symbol for the artist, as the U.S. government's policies have long decimated the sheep population which had acted as a source of livelihood, a weaving resource, and held ceremonial significance for Diné (meaning "the people" in the Navajo language). In his work, Riege grapples with the complex interactions between personal and political discourse, while keeping his familial practices of weaving and jewelry-making strong in the emblematic textile piece.

CECILIA VICUÑA

Chilean, b. 1948

Semiya (Seed Song), 2015

Color, sound, HD video

07:43 min.

Courtesy of Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

Cecilia Vicuña's belief is that "the sacred landscape is still alive, still speaking to us if we listen."

The artist's work on behalf of seeds began in 1971, when Vicuña proposed to the former President of Chile, Salvador Allende, a national "day of the seed," envisioning "seedbeds greening squares into forests and gardens, cities and fields into eden." Allende's response was that "in the year 2000 the world might be ready for such an initiative," however it was not adopted. For the artist, seeds are "keepers of inner time" and, like truths, can "wait three thousand years" to sprout.

"My work dwells in the not yet, the future potential of the unformed, where sound, weaving, and language interact to create new meanings," says the artist, poet, and filmmaker Cecilia Vicuña. In the video poem *Semiya (Seed Song)*, Vicuña engages in a ritual where she gathers endangered native seeds in the Chilean foothills of the Andes mountains around the Colchagua region. Her hands are closely followed by the camera as she gathers, and as she walks, Vicuña sings to the seeds, caresses, collects, and arranges them.

Indigenous pre-Columbian knowledges and cultures position human-environmental relations as ones of kinship and connection. Through her touch, Vicuña suggests our intimate entanglement with nature, a delicate, gentle way of interacting with our plant species.

KATIE WEST

Yindjibarndi & Australian, b. 1988

Clearing, 2019

Suspended fabric: silk dyed with eucalyptus and wattles collected from area around Maroondah Dam; cushions: silk dyed with eucalyptus leaves and bark; muslin dyed with puff ball fungus; calico dyed with eucalyptus leaves and bark and puff ball fungus; all filled with wool and cotton wadding; sound: composed by Simon Charles with spoken score by Katie West, texts: Kerry Arabena, Aunty Joy Murphy Wandin, Bruce Pascoe and Uncle David Wandin in partnership with Yarra Ranges Council, Dixon's Creek Primary School, Ralph Hume, Victor Steffensen, and Brett Ellis

18:24 min.

Latrobe Regional Gallery Collection

Katie West is a Yindjibarndi woman and resides in Noongar Ballardong Country in the South West of Western Australia (WA). Yindjibarndi are one of the language groups of First Nations peoples from a region in WA's north called the Pilbara. She works across new media, installation, textiles, and social practice. Her process centers around natural dyeing, which attunes her to the environment and is then reflected in the conceptual approach to her immersive installations. She walks the land and gathers plant matter and organic materials as dyes for textiles that surround her audience. West also hosts workshops and events, which she refers to as "happenings," with a collaborative nature that brings focus to place, history, and speculation on our shared futures.

In *Clearing*, West makes a space for dialogue and learning, offering an opportunity to read texts by Indigenous authors beneath a canopy of naturally dyed textiles. In some iterations, she provides tea—made from local herbs and plants—as a ritual of hospitality that requires pause and slowing down. The earthen colors of these draped silks are memories of a landscape that is further recalled by the meditative soundtrack of poetry, spoken by West, and recordings of Country. "Country" is the term often used to describe the holistic and interconnected living entities of land, sky, waters, spirituality and ancestral ties. Ethnographer Deborah Bird Rose describes "Country is a living entity with a yesterday, today and tomorrow, with a consciousness, and a will toward life. Because of this richness, Country is home, and peace; nourishment for body, mind, and spirit; heart's ease." From within, the artist creates a multi-sensory space to meditate and reflect on the question, how do we relate to the earth?

ZHENG BO

b. 1974

Ecosensibility Exercises, 2018–ongoing

Exercises

Courtesy the artist and Kiang Malingue (Hong Kong)

Drinking Sun Exercise 飲日功,
01:25 min.

Drawing Weeds Practice 繪稊修,
01:11 min.

Maypole Dance 五月柱, 01:33 min.

Sacred Grove Ritual 神森禮,
02:33 min.

Grass Wood Song 草木歌,
01:05 min.

Zheng Bo invites interspecies connection through his *Ecosensibility Exercises*. These participatory actions are designed for anyone to perform in order to develop greater sensitivity and awareness of our interconnectedness with the natural world. In particular, Zheng prompts those of us living in industrialized and urban environments to bond with nature and slow down so that we may tune into our environment by becoming aware of movements, sensations, and conditions in our natural world. This includes mindful practices—for instance, the exercise of *Drawing Weeds Practice* brings the participant’s attention to the level of the plant, a moment of contemplation that also communes with nature.

As a member of the Wanwu Practice Group of “artists–scholars learning to live on Earth and contribute to its vibrancy,” Zheng continues to seek ways of understanding the more–than–human and the infinite possibilities of our relationships with plants.