



Gary Anderson Gabriella Hirst Cameron Robbins

curated by Dr David Sequeira



6-22 July 2018

Domain House Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Melbourne Gardens

Welcome

Professor Jon Cattapan Director, Victorian College of the Arts Faculty of Fine Arts and Music University of Melbourne

Professor Daniel Hoyer (PhD, DSc, FBPhS) Chair and Head, Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics Deputy Head, School of Biomedical Sciences, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, University of Melbourne STORM was born from a conversation between artists and scientists who were deeply moved by the major asthma storm event in Melbourne in November 2016 which resulted in 9 fatalities and approximately 8500 people seeking emergency hospital treatment. This subsequent exhibition and symposium is part of a University of Melbourne initiative to creatively consider the issues and challenges presented by this phenomenon and to generate broader public engagement into the collaborative research outcomes of scientists and artists. We believe an interdisciplinary approach opens up new ways of seeing and experiencing the world around us. More specifically, this collaboration generates profound connections between the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music and the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences. The project follows a global trend amongst cultural, scientific and educational institutions to bring together and indeed harness the potential synergies of both fields.

STORM has been generously supported by the University of Melbourne via a Melbourne Engagement Grant, whose aim is to foster significant contributions to the cultural life of Melbourne and beyond. This funding allows our two faculties to address the pressing challenges of our times in unique and innovative ways. In addition, external support, by way of an independent educational grant from GSK (GlaxoSmithKline) Australia Pty Ltd, as well as support of the Frank Green company – an Australian company committed to sustainability – signifies the importance of this project beyond the University of Melbourne. STORM also signals the launch of a partnership between the University and the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, who are delighted to host the inaugural 2018 STORM exhibition at Domain House, Melbourne Gardens.

We are indebted to the artists Gabriella Hirst, Gary Anderson and Cameron Robbins and curator David Sequeira, for poetically articulating their relationship with the meteorological properties of the storm and its symbolic potential. We thank our highly esteemed symposium speakers for their generosity in sharing their research and expertise so willingly. We acknowledge the dedication of the staff of our respective faculties in shifting this project from concept to reality.

Lastly but most importantly, we look forward to the fruits of this collaboration. This exhibition and symposium do not represent the conclusion of something. Rather, this project marks the genesis of an exciting and meaningful research partnership between the sciences and the creative arts at the University of Melbourne.



Dr David Sequeira Director, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, University of Melbourne The work of Gabriella Hirst, Cameron Robbins and Gary Anderson in STORM have not been shown together before and given the differing realms of thought in which they dwell, it is not likely that they will be assembled again. The works have been brought together to explore, tease out and discuss the consideration of the storm not only as a meteorological atmospheric condition but significantly as a studio and art medium. Rather than resisting its forces, each artist has created their own discourse around the storm's physical presence and its symbolic potential.

In addition to his work as a visual artist, Gary Anderson is a highly respected researcher who discovers new medicines to improve lung health. This is not to suggest a polarity between art and science but rather to point towards their interdependence in Anderson's investigative pursuits. His video work Aphasia 2018 results from layering imagery gleaned from disparate sources. The main element is a series of silhouettes of dancers performing in a snow storm. This figurative component is combined with video of pre-digital age brain recordings related to body movement sampled from the internet. A landscape is inferred rather than depicted and the continuous jittery tracings of ink on the graph paper that represent movement within the brain converge and form a horizon. The overlay of these two types of imagery suggest a certain kind of coexistence in which everything is happening all at once - now. In Aphasia it seems that the brain's micro gestures have as much weight as the artistic macro gestures of dance in the process of communication - more importantly, both of these non-verbal movements form a critical context for one another.

Highly influenced by minimalism, Anderson's process is one of paring back to the essential aspects of each element in his work. 'The bleakness of the snow storm low light and the dark thermal gear gave a very reduced black form on a white source.'¹ The black forms of the dancers and the stark whiteness of the snow provide an opportunity to consider the notion of contrast and the points at which details are revealed or hidden. The idea of contrast is echoed in the title *Aphasia*, which refers to a human inability to produce or comprehend spoken language. The condition highlights the clear distinction between the subtlety of non-verbal communication and the conventional structured nature of speaking.

Gabriella Hirst's compelling *Force Majeure* 2015 is part of a performance piece that took place towards the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. The site for this project is the island of Rügen, in northern Germany, a location favoured by German Romantic painters





including Caspar David Friedrich.² Fascinated by the impossibility of these artists' attempts to capture the forces of nature on a tiny canvas, Hirst set herself the task 'to paint a storm whilst in the midst of one, and to film these efforts; a two-fold attempt at romantic representation.'³ The resulting work takes the form of a single channel digital video and a series of watercolour paintings.

The video depicts Hirst in the midst of a storm, determined to apply paint to paper. The easel collapses and tumbles, the paper flaps about, the rain dilutes the watercolour whilst the artist tries in vain to remain composed and dedicated to the task at hand. Struggling to keep balance, she is relentless in her pursuit. Clearly futile, Hirst's exercises articulate a human creative endeavour within the destructive grandeur of nature. Her watercolours (framed and hung alongside the video) convey an experience of Rügen that differs from that of Friedrich. The mystical splendour, awe and inspiration associated with the German Romantic landscape tradition is undermined by Hirst's 'real time' depiction of one of its hallowed sites. Theatricality, humour and earnestness are important ingredients through which the symbolism associated with the sublime, the transcendental and the contemplative is guestioned, analysed and reconstructed. Force Majeure highlights the gap between art and nature and contextualises the emotionally charged metaphoric quality of landscape painting within the demanding and overwhelming conditions of reality.

Revolving around one of his self-devised 'machines', Cameron Robbins' Anemograph 2015 combines landscape, light and wind in a sculptural project that has drawing and photography based outcomes. The origin of the word 'anemograph' can be traced to Greek and English roots—anemos (Greek) meaning wind and graph (English) meaning chart. In this sense, an anemograph is a diagrammatic representation of the speed and duration of wind. Robbin's photography gives visual form to an invisible force. More than merely documenting, measuring or analysing any aspect of the weather these images potently remind the viewer of the presence of something previously hidden or partially disclosed from view.

The sculptural component of *Anemograph* consists of a framework of cones and a small incandescent bulb mounted on a tripod. The force of the wind captured in the cones causes the framework to spin and the light from the bulb to move. This movement of light is recorded by long exposure photography resulting is a suite of moody landscapes interrupted by a fiery calligraphic scribble. The stillness of the scene, usually just after sunset, somewhat at odds with the frenetic yet rhythmic



gestural traces of light—the chaotic tangle of glowing orange lines suspended in the brooding evening sky.

'With one eye on the heavens and the other on engineered constructions, [Robbins] deftly weaves a web of the elemental and the instrumental.'⁴ Whilst as the title *Anemograph* suggests, elemental forces are at the core of Robbins' work, his work is much more connected with the profoundly complex and poetic intersections between art and science. More specifically they reveal the transitional spaces between seemingly oppositional ideas around the natural and the man made, the unbridled and the constrained, the external and the internal.

Anderson, Hirst and Robbins have thrown themselves into the storm, allowing the wind, rain and snow to impact their action and determine their creative output. Although the artists constructed their own terms for their encounter with the storm, they also surrendered to its forces. Exploring the phenomenon of the storm as an intrinsic aspect of the world in which we live and indeed the world in which their art practice exists, the works reveal each artists' process of extending their studio into the landscape and providing the power of nature with a voice within their work.



Notes

(1) Gary Anderson in email communication with David Sequeira 18 June 2018
(2) Including philosophy, visual arts, music and literature, German Romanticism can be considered as the major artistic movement of late 19th century Germany. Other German Romantic painters included Jacob-Philippe Häckert, Phillip Otto Runge, Adrian Ludwig Richter.
(3) Gabriella Hirst in email communication with David Sequeira 2 May 2018
(4) http://www.artistprofile.com.au/ cameronrobbins/

Symposium

STORM: Colliding Art and Biomedicine

Saturday 21 July

Federation Hall, Grant Street, Southbank

9.45- 10.00	Registration	Presentation
10.00- 10.15	Professor Jon Cattapan Director, Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne	Welcome and Introduction
10.15-11.00	Keynote: Professor Marcia Langton Associate Provost Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies Unit, Centre for Health Equity, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health University of Melbourne Indigenous weather knowledge and its significance and attributes	The storm is a weather phenomenon that is conceptualised in many ways. Among Aboriginal peoples, these are variously regarded as things in themselves as weather events, as spiritual phenomena, as spiritual responses to human and non-human activities, and as an inevitable part of our environment. How they are conceived in each society varies. The Bureau of Meteorology has worked with Indigenous peoples to assist them in documenting and publishing this knowledge of weather and climatic seasons. Talking one example on the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website, the Miriwoong Seasonal Calendar is an interactive representation of the traditional weather knowledge of the Miriwoong people. Using video, visuals and sound, the calendar was designed by the Mirima Language and Culture Centre, and the Kimberley Land Council with the intention of focusing on preservation of traditional language and culture, language links with the environment, relationships between flora, fauna and climate, and nature plants and animals as indicators of seasonal climate change. The Mirriwoong seasonal calendar shows the links between observed changes in weather patterns and the response of flora and fauna in the landscape. The calendar is being used as a management tool to monitor and evaluate the on- ground impacts of weather events and climate change.
11.00- 11.30	Nate Byrne, Meteorologist, Presenter ABC News Breakfast Turning sunlight into lightning: how storms are born, live and die	This presentation explores the formation and life cycles of thunderstorms, what causes them to be so ferocious, and why they can be so difficult to forecast accurately.
11.30- 12.00	Professor Jo Douglass Head of Department of Immunology and Allergy, Divisional Director of Neurosciences, Cancer and Infection Medicine, Royal Melbourne Hospital Honorary Clinical Professor University of Melbourne	In 2016 Melbourne experienced storm asthma, a devastating cluster of asthma deaths that arose from a periodic coincidence of winds, rain and pollen loads. Hundreds more were affected and hospitals and emergency services were overwhelmed. It seems certain that Melbourne will be threatened with recurring asthma storms in the future. but why does it happen? Who is at risk? Can we prevent asthma deaths? And how can medicine and art work together to raise public awareness?

2.00- 2.45		Lunch
12.45- 1.15	Dr Sophie Knezic Lecturer, Critical and Theoretical Studies, Victorian College of the Arts University of Melbourne Imaging Disaster: Tempests in Art from the 16th Century to the Present	The phenomena of violent weather conditions have intrigued artists over the centuries, their collective explorations forming a genre of representation classified as the imagery of disaster. In 1757 Edmund Burke neologised the term 'sublime' to denote the specific amalgam of horror and compulsion such cataclysmic natural forces inspired. Tracing a micro- history of artworks depicting tempests unearths the ways in which this imagery articulates its fascination with extreme weather and continues to enact a tumultuous conjuring that both affirms and contests the aesthetic category of the sublime.
1.15- 1.45	Dr Drew Berry Biomedical Animator Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research The molecular machines that create your flesh and blood	After 20 years producing bio-molecular visualisations with 'Hollywood-style' animation pipelines, Drew Berry and his team at wehi.tv are switching to the extraordinary power of video game technology for generating vast, detailed molecular and membrane landscapes that will reveal the insides of your living cells. Drew Berry will show his latest experiments with real-time 3D 'diorama' open-world scenes of membranes and molecular engines that underlie the conversion of the food we eat into chemical energy for our cells, for interactive storytelling and memorable education experiences.
1.45- 2.15	Dr David Chesworth Artist, composter and researcher, Associate Investigator, ARC Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage (CABAH) A shift in normal atmospheric conditions	We get caught up in some storms that leave us wet and dishevelled, or much worse. Other storms we experience mentally. Storms are beautiful from afar and terrifying from within. As an artist and composer currently working with scientists, I find myself asking: In what different ways have scientists, musicians and artists revealed and made use of this turbulent force, that sometimes surrounds us and at other times swirls within us?
2.15- 3.00	Professor Gary Anderson (Chair) Director Lung Health Research Centre University of Melbourne	Speaker Panel, Q & A
3.00- 3.15	Professor Jon Cattapan	Closing Remarks
3.15- 4.00		Refreshments served in Foyer

Professor Gary Anderson (artist) Gary Anderson, is a Melbourne-based artist and scientist. He trained in pharmacology and has extensive experience in discovering and developing new medicines now used around the world to treat serious lung diseases. He is Director of the Lung Health Research Centre at the University of Melbourne and has authored around 200 highly-cited research papers and reviews. Most recently, he has been working on genetically re-engineering proteins found in human tears to turn them into inhaled lung medicines. He is a recipient of the Research Medal of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ), and was elected a Fellow in 2014 (FThorSoc). He has served on the NHMRC Research Committee, the Board of Directors of TSANZ, and on the Council of the Australian Lung Foundation. In 2015 he was elected a Fellow of the European Respiratory Society (FERS). During his career he has maintained an active arts practice and an intense interest in the visual arts. He holds both MCA and MFA degrees from the Victorian College of the Arts. His works often deals with complexity in the guise of minimal form, ephemerality and movement.

Gabriella Hirst (artist)

Born in Sydney in 1990, Gabriella Hirst recently completed an MFA at the Slade School of Fine Art and now lives and works in London. She works primarily with video and performance: however, her practice incorporates diverse methodologies and media including painting, ceramics, text and sound. Her works are unified by an ongoing interest in different societal and personal approaches to preservation and slippage. She is interested how one might adopt a romantic approach without complete surrender, testing the boundary between sincerity and skepticism. In 2016. Gabriella was included in the NEW16 exhibition at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in Melbourne and in 2017 was included in the Bloomberg New Contemporaries exhibition in London and Newcastle. She was recipient of the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship in 2014 and the John Crampton Award in 2016, and is a shortlisted candidate for the upcoming 2018 Ivan Jurtiz Prize at Kings College, London.

Cameron Robbins (artist)

Cameron Robbins works to make tangible the underlying structures and rhythms of natural forces. He has a studio and travel-based practice, that involves making installations and exhibitions in art centres and other sites in Australia, Japan, Norway, South Korea, China, Denmark, Germany and the UK. Robbins' major project Field Lines 2016 was the first solo exhibition by an Australian artist at Museum of Old and New Art (MONA), Tasmania. Spanning across over 9 galleries within MONA and extending outdoors, Field Lines presented the breadth of Cameron's drawing practice, alongside sound and video, photography, installation and sculpture. Recent projects include Wind Section Instrumental 2018. a 50-year wind drawing project permanently installed outside and inside the MONA library. Cameron works as a jazz/experimental musician and part time lecturer. He studied Fine Art (Sculpture) at RMIT and the VCA until 1990 and has lectured in art and design RMIT since 2000. In 2015 he was awarded an Australia Council Visual Arts Fellowship.

Dr David Sequeira (curator)

Much of David Sequeira's studio practice has focused on the use of colour and geometry in the creation of contemplative experiences for viewers. Working in a range of media. David explores issues around high and low art. personal and shared histories. banality and profundity. Curatorship is an important aspect of his art practice and has held senior positions in the areas of curatorship, audience engagement, business development and cultural programming in a range of art museums and public institutions including the National Gallery of Australia, the National Portrait Gallery, the National Film and Sound Archive and Australian Parliament House Canberra. David is recipient of several important residencies and awards including the Australia Council for the Arts studio residency in Paris, the Collex Museum of Contemporary Art acquisitive prize and Artist in residence at the University of Texas, Dallas, David is currently Director of the Margaret Lawrence Gallery, VCA, University of Melbourne.

Dr Drew Berry (speaker)

Drew Berry is a biomedical animator who creates beautiful, accurate visualisations of the dramatic cellular and molecular action that is going on inside our bodies. He began his career as a cell biologist and is fluent navigating technical reports, research data and models from scientific journals. As an artist, he works as a translator, transforming abstract and complicated scientific concepts into vivid and meaningful visual journeys. Since 1995 he has been a biomedical animator at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research in Melbourne. His animations have exhibited at venues such as the Guggenheim Museum, MoMA, the Royal Institute of Great Britain and the University of Geneva. In 2010, he received a MacArthur Fellowship "Genius Grant". Drew holds a Doctorate of Technology from Linköping University Sweden, 2016. His animations have been reviewed in the New York Times, the New Yorker and American Scientist. He was awarded the Nature Niche Prize, UK 2008, an Emmy for "DNA" (Windfall Films) UK 2005, and a BAFTA for "DNA Interactive" RGB Co. UK 2004. www.wehi.edu.au/people/drew-berry

Nate Byrne (speaker)

Nate Byrne is the weather presenter on ABC News Breakfast. His studies include Biophysics at the University of Western Australia, meteorology at the Australian Bureau of Meteorology and a Master of Science Communication (Outreach) with the Australian National University and Questacon - the National Science and Technology Centre. Prior to his role at the ABC, Nate served in the Roval Australian Navy (RAN) for over 12 vears as a Maritime Warfare Officer and a Maritime Geospatial Officer - Meteorology and Oceanography, which saw him go from driving ships to forecasting for Defence personnel around the globe. A highly skilled and passionate communicator. Nate toured with the Shell Questacon Science Circus delivering science shows to outback and rural communities across Australia. Nate now uses his diverse experience and tangible excitement in the natural world to effectively engage audiences of all ages with science and the weather.

Professor Jon Cattapan (convenor) Professor Jon Cattapan. Director of the Victorian College of the Arts, Faculty of Fine Arts and Music, University of Melbourne, is one of Australia's most respected visual artists. His art practice which includes painting, drawing, printmaking and photography, deals with ways of representing urban topographies and narratives. In 2006 he was honoured with a major survey exhibition at the Ian Potter Museum of Art. In 2008 he was commissioned by the Australian War Memorial to become Australia's 63rd Official war artist and was deployed to Timor Leste, Jon's works can be found in many private and public collections including the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Gallery of Modern Art/ Queensland Art Gallery and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Sydney.

Dr David Chesworth (speaker)

David Chesworth is an artist and composer who creates installations, video artworks, music and performances in a wide range of contexts. His artworks with Sonia Leber are speculative and archaeological, responding to architectural, social, and technological settings. Their artworks have been exhibited at the Venice and Sydney Biennales and locally at ACCA and the NGV. Their soundscape Proximities, installed on the William Barak Bridge, is familiar to many MCG visitors. David and Sonia are currently Associate Investigators at The Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Biodiversity and Heritage, where, working with scientists, they have been commissioned to make a major artwork for exhibition in 2019.

Professor Jo Douglass (speaker)

Jo Douglass is a specialist physician with clinical and research interests in Asthma and Allergic disease. She is currently Head of the Department of Clinical Immunology and Allergy at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, an Honorary Clinical Professor at the University of Melbourne, and a Research Associate at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute. She trained in medicine at Monash University, gained her FRACP in 1991 and thereafter worked in the UK including doctoral studies in immunological mechanisms of allergy and eosinophil activation. She has current research interests in severe asthma, allergic disease and immune deficiencies. She is a past President of the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy and a Fellow of the Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand.

Rose Hiscock (exhibition welcome) Rose Hiscock is the inaugural Director of Science Gallery Melbourne, an innovative new gallery dedicated to the collision of art and science. Opening in 2018, Science Gallery Melbourne is a flagship engagement project of the University of Melbourne and part of the Global Science Gallery Network – a network of eight Science Gallery locations including Dublin, London and Bangalore.

Prior to joining Science Gallery, Hiscock was Director of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (Powerhouse Museum). Australia's contemporary museum for excellence and innovation in applied arts and sciences. Hiscock's career includes a period at the Australia Council, where she held the position of Executive Director. Arts Development. Responsible for building Australian arts nationally and internationally, she was integrally involved in the development of the new Australian Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Prior to the Australia Council Hiscock worked for Museum Victoria where she was responsible for commercial and audience growth across Museum Victoria's highly successful venues. She is a Board member of Back to Back Theatre and Chunky Move.

Dr Sophie Knezic (speaker)

Sophie Knezic is a visual artist and scholar who works between practice and theory. Her research has focused on the aesthetics and metaphysics of transparency, virtuality, immaterialism, memory, temporality and sound. Her developing research focus is on humour. Sophie's inter-disciplinary research is conducted across art history, art theory, visual culture. Continental philosophy. literary fiction, science fiction and the posthumanities. Her studio-based practice explores durational processes, the sensual attributes of matter, utopian constructs and temporality. Sophie's critical writing on contemporary art, literature and design has been published in Frieze, Broadsheet Journal, Evental Aesthetics: An Independent Journal of Philosophy. Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Culture. Art Monthly Australasia. Australian Book Review, Un Magazine, Artlink and Object

Magazine. Sophie is currently a Lecturer (Sessional) in Critical and Theoretical Studies, VCA and MCM. University of Melbourne.

Professor Marcia Langton (speaker) AM PhD Macq U, BA (Hons) ANU, FASSA, has held the Foundation Chair of Australian Indigenous Studies at The University of Melbourne since February 2000. As an anthropologist and geographer. Professor Langton has made a significant contribution to government and non-government policy as well as to Indigenous studies at three universities. In 2016 Professor Langton is honoured as a University of Melbourne Redmond Barry Distinguished Professor. As further recognition as one of Australia's most respected Indigenous Academics, in 2017 Professor Marcia Langton was appointed as the first Associate Provost at the University of Melbourne.

Sue Thornton (creative producer) Sue Thornton has worked for 20 years for a range of arts festivals and educational organisations. With a background in performing arts and stage production, Sue is drawn to projects that champion the arts, activate public spaces and connect people and communities. Highly skilled in engagement, audience development, marketing, communications and all aspects of event managements Sue has produced many significant performances, symposia, seminars, launches and conferences for the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) at the University of Melbourne. Recent major events that Sue has produced include Art 150, a vear-long celebration of 150 years of art at the VCA: Dance 40, a celebration of the 40th anniversary of Dance at the VCA and the launch of the Stables, the VCA's innovative complex of student studios, exhibition spaces and offices.

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Victorian College of the Arts staff Nicholas Pearce Ashley Perry Alex Walker Emanuel Rodriguez Andrew Mclaughlin Images Gary Anderson (pp. 14-5, 8) *Aphasia*, 2018 single-channel colour video installation Courtesy the Artist

Gabriella Hirst (p. 10-11, 17) *Force Majeure*, 2015 15-minute single-channel colour video installation with stereo sound Courtesy the Artist

Force Majeure was commissioned by the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art in 2015 for the exhibition ACCA NEW 16

Cameron Robbins (p. 1) Sunset Instrumental, 2016 (cover) Anemograph Kiewa, 2016 (p. 13) Anemograph Crux, 2016 pigment inkjet on cotton rag paper, edition 6 + 2AP Courtesy the Artist and MARS Gallery

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