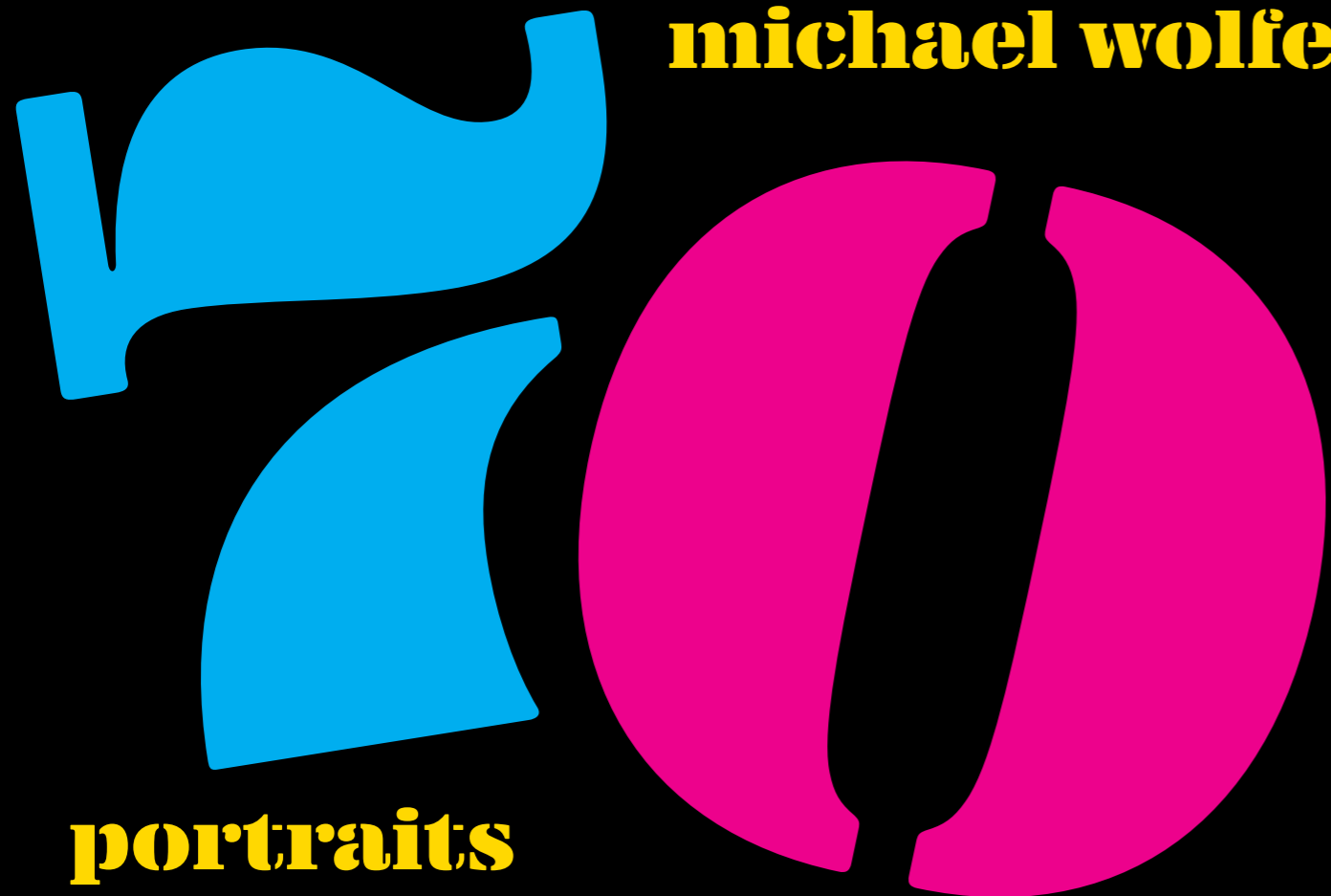


**twenty seventy**



**michael wolfe**



**portraits**

featuring original music by robert burke and clare hall  
artist interviews by suzanne donisthorpe

## twenty seventy

20

michael wolfe

In the 1970s they were in their 20s and now in the 2020s they're in their 70s and beyond.

Just what does creativity, character and commitment count for across a career lasting more than 50 years as an artist — and — what does it look like? From this idea twenty seventy came into being.

My own experience of artistic practice and aging is one of becoming more creatively free, that I'm experimenting and exploring themes and approaches with confidence, vitality and energy. Unburdened, to an extent, by fear of failure or maintaining and building a career and reputation.

Artists over seventy carry within them a lifetime of experiences, wisdom, and a depth of creative expression that only comes with age. With each stroke of the brush, each sculpted form, or each click of the shutter, they draw from a wellspring of memories, emotions, and insights accumulated over decades of artistic exploration.

For many, reaching the age of seventy signifies not an end, but a new beginning — a time when the pressures of youth and the demands of society give way to a more profound sense of self-awareness and authenticity. Freed from the constraints of external expectations, these seasoned artists delve deeper into their craft, fearlessly exploring new techniques, themes, and mediums. Many enjoy a long and fruitful indian summer.

Their work often reflects a unique perspective, shaped by a lifetime of witnessing the ebb and flow of history, the evolution of culture, and the intricacies of human relationships. Whether capturing the fleeting beauty of nature, delving into the complexities of the human condition, or challenging societal norms, their art resonates with a richness and diversity that can only come from a lifetime of living.

Moreover, mature artists serve as a testament to the enduring power of creativity and the limitless possibilities of artistic expression. Their continued dedication to their craft can inspire younger generations, reminding us that art knows no age limits and that the creative spark can burn brightly at any stage of life. In celebrating these artists, we honour not only their contributions to the world of art but also the profound impact of a life lived with passion and purpose.

20

naomi cass  
director, CAM

Here is a photographer deeply engaged with his community in myriad ways. Michael Wolfe's portrait series twenty seventy, presented as a Terrace Projection on the remarkable CAM facade, brings some of the regions established artists to broad attention. Wolfe is an activist celebrating the life of an artist and he interweaves examples of their work with stark black and white portraits. Photographic portraiture is necessarily collaborative, and not only has Wolfe worked with each artist to make this striking series, he has invited writer Suzanne Donisthorpe to interview each artist and Jazz improviser Robert Burke to compose a sonic component, available on the CAM SoundCloud. CAM too seeks to engage with artists in the region from early through to late careers, whatever the age of the maker and commends this as a love letter to those who have devoted their lives to art.



70

prue venables  
born: 1954  
years of practice: 47

The procedures and intelligence of making hold my attention. I delight in the relationships that spring and develop between objects as they stand together like elements of musical harmony. From the shadows that form between them to the implied movements across spaces, they dance.

An exploration of technical invention with origins in both studio and industrial spheres has resulted in handles fired separately, suspended, to be joined later. Such components extend formal and material possibilities and enliven my understanding of the porcelain I thought I knew so well. Objects now emerge, to challenge and enable fresh rhythms, different energies and spatial interactions. A final deceptive simplicity emerges.

Sieve with two handles, 2018  
Artwork photograph: Terence Bogue  
Artwork courtesy of Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney



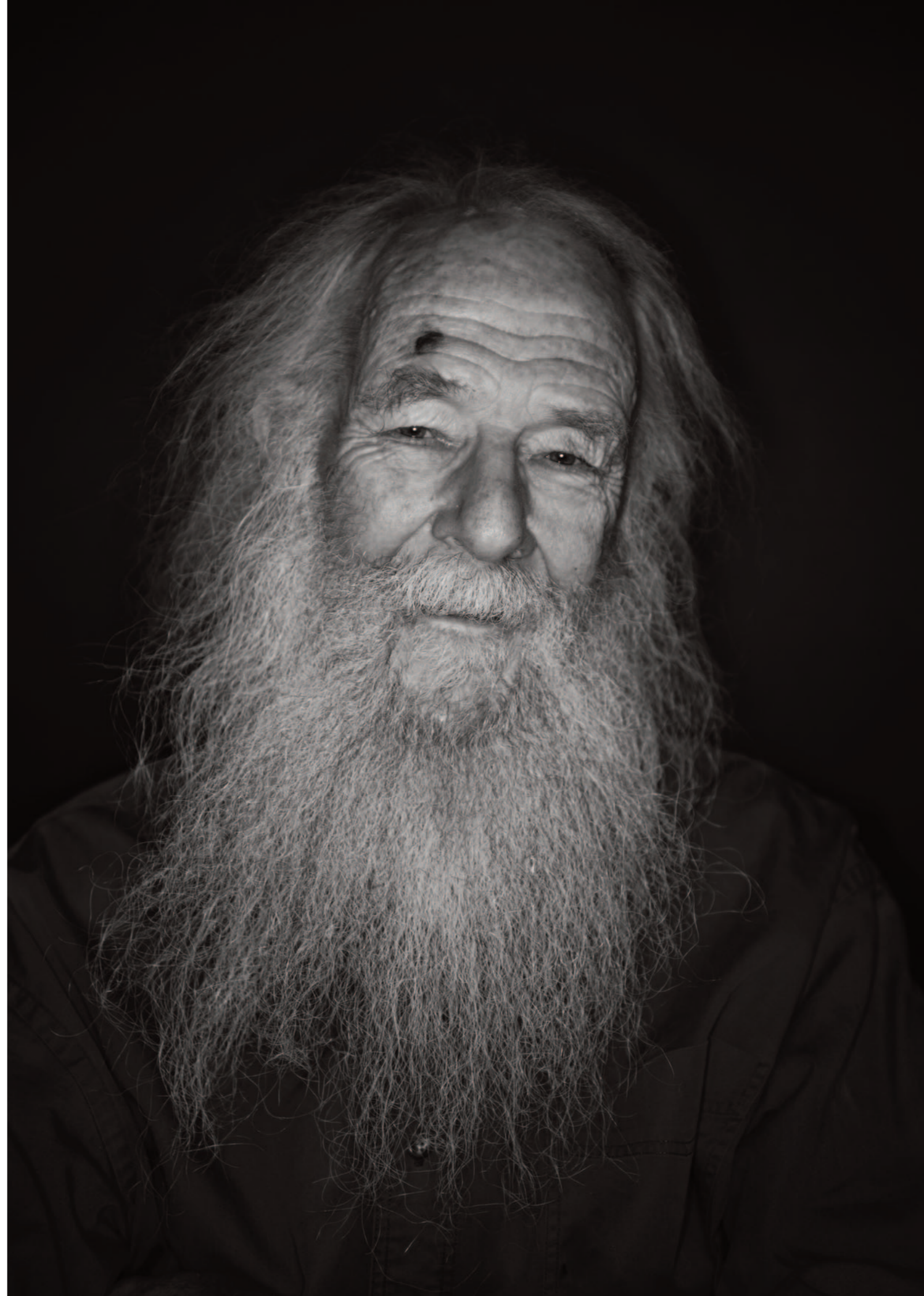


ray pearce  
born: 1949  
years of practice: 54

As well as working in clay, Ray is a painter and etcher. He has held numerous group and solo exhibitions of his paintings, ceramics and sculptures over the years. In 2007, the Bendigo Art Gallery held an exhibition of his sketchbooks from the previous decade to provide insights into his artistic practice and creative processes.

Over the past 30 years Ray and his partner, artist Deirdre Outhred, have built a two-storey house with a tower, wings and balconies, using over 10,000 mud bricks and a range of recycled materials. His ceramics and sculptures share some of this obsession with recycled materials which he says he uses because he is poor; however, this results in a quite extraordinary aesthetic.

Last Rays, 2015





S3

Juliana Hilton

born: 1940

years of practice: 63

Juliana's remarkable, sustained and diverse body of work has been mainly concerned with studio interiors, still life and landscape based on the Castlemaine environment and the legacy of Chinese and European settlement and mining.

Juliana Hilton has lived in Castlemaine, Maldon and other Central Victorian towns for over 50 years, achieving the balancing act of a dedicated studio practice with teaching art and raising a family, while making an enduring contribution to the cultural life of her community. Juliana studied printmaking with Mary Macqueen at RMIT and with Bea Maddock at Latrobe University.

Open Window and Wisteria, 2010



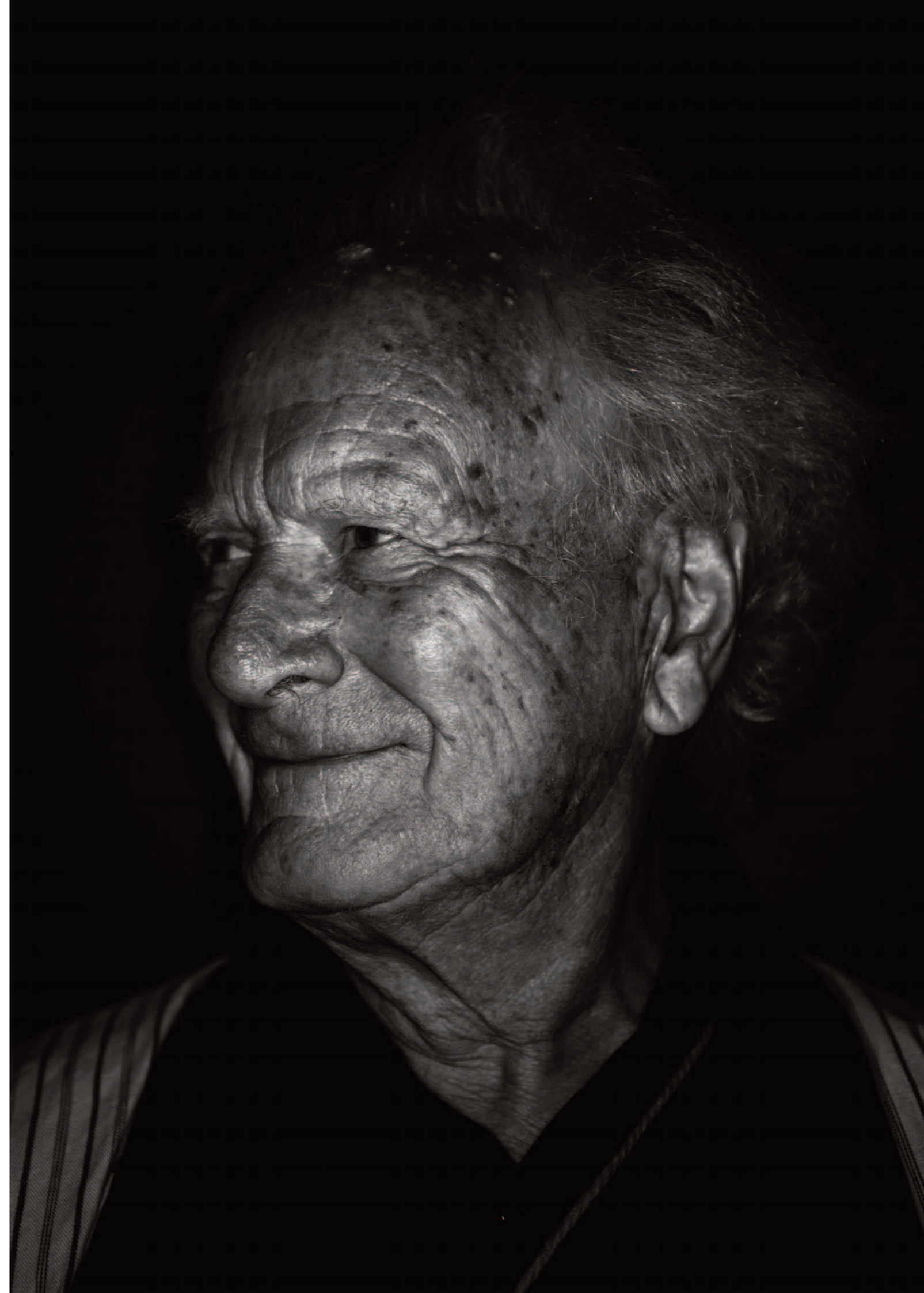


S5

john walseley  
born: 1938  
years of practice: 65

My work over the last 45 years has been a search to discover how we dwell and move within landscape. I have lived and worked all over the continent from the mountains of Tasmania to the floodplains of Arnhem land. I see myself as a hybrid mix of artist and scientist; one who tries to relate the minutiae of the natural world – leaf, feather and beetle wing to the abstract dimensions of the earth's dynamic systems. Using techniques of watercolour, collage, frottage, nature printing and other methods of direct physical or kinetic contact I am finding ways of collaborating with the actual plants, birds, trees, rocks and earth of a particular place.

Entomology of a Salt Lake, Detail 1, 2018





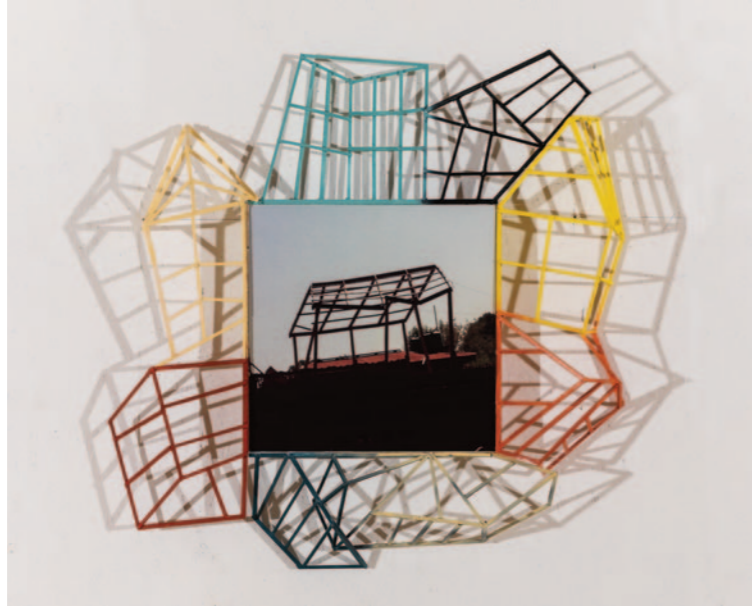
abbie heathcote  
born: 1941  
years of practice: 74

This morning I heard Paul Kelly singing the poem 'Pied Beauty' by the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins. I first heard the poem in primary school and loved it and have always remembered it. Suddenly, I looked at my latest paintings and realised his influence had crept into my work without me noticing it. My paintings were filled with spots and stipples and dapples and repetition. "Brindles, stipples, all things original, spare and strange." These are the things I sought and found in the Australian bush!

I am now looking at my works with new eyes, consciously searching for these things and wondering how I can add more. A whole new inspiration at the age of 82! I'm ecstatic.

Sunlit New Leaves, 2023





# S1

bill gregory  
born: 1942  
years of practice: 60

Bill's background and career as an artist and educator spans many decades.

Bill has participated in some forty exhibitions, including 11 one man shows, he is represented in public galleries in Oz, private collections in Australia, Spain and UK.

Bill retired from his position as Professor and Dean, Faculty of Art, Design & Communication, RMIT University in 1999 and was subsequently awarded an Emeritus Professorship.

He relocated to Faraday, country Victoria, following retirement to pursue full-time studio practice. Current work follows on from his exhibition titled 'Passages' in March '23, held at Lot19 Gallery, Castlemaine. His home and studio are now located in Harcourt. Bill intends to show new work from his studio in April 2024.

Srinigar Coding, 2021





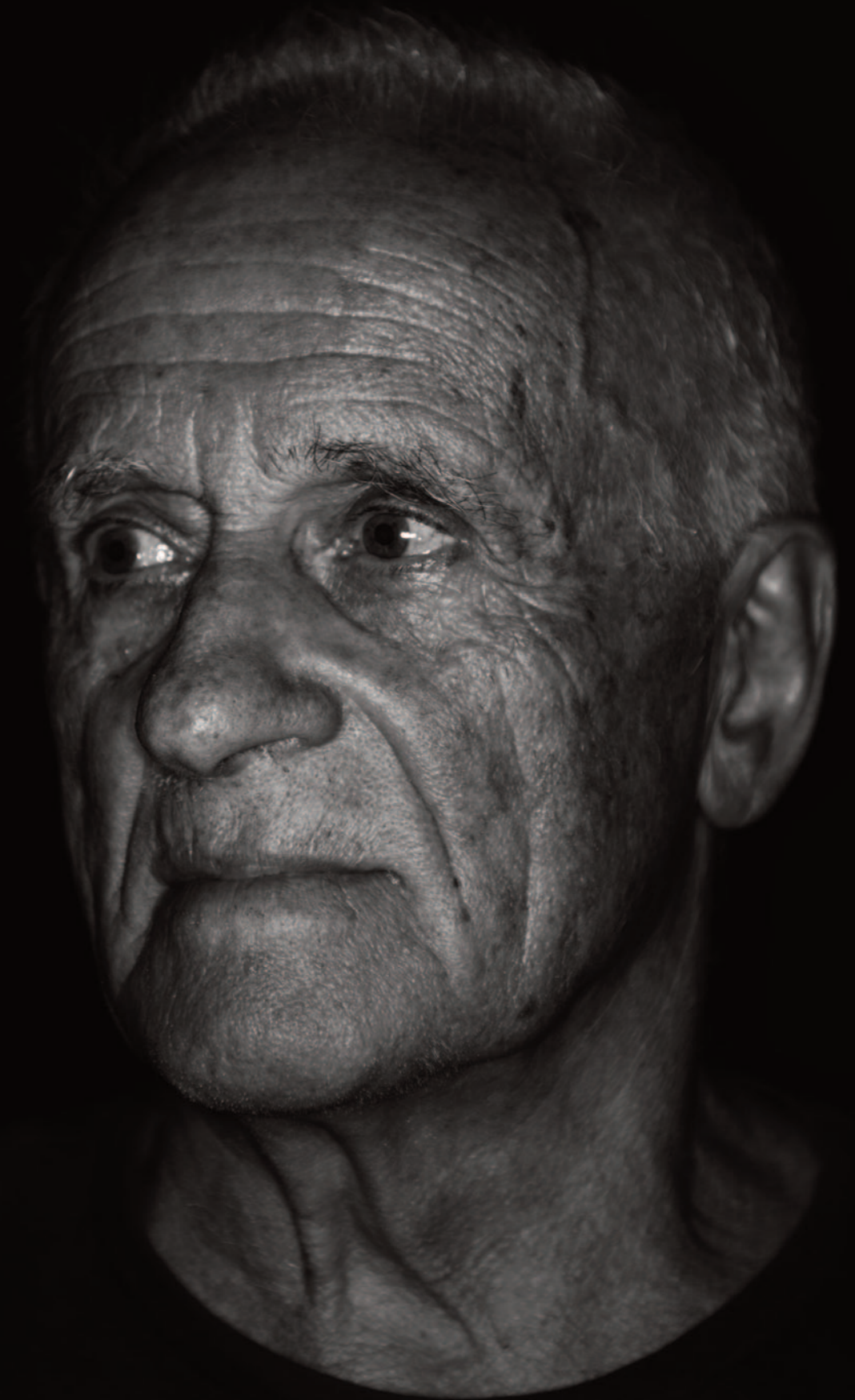


76

david moore  
born: 1947  
years of practice: 66

A painting cannot relay emotion if no emotion is felt during the work. I believe that the real effect and feeling aroused by a subject can only be understood and communicated when the artist relates directly to the subject matter.

Now For Home Harcourt, 2024





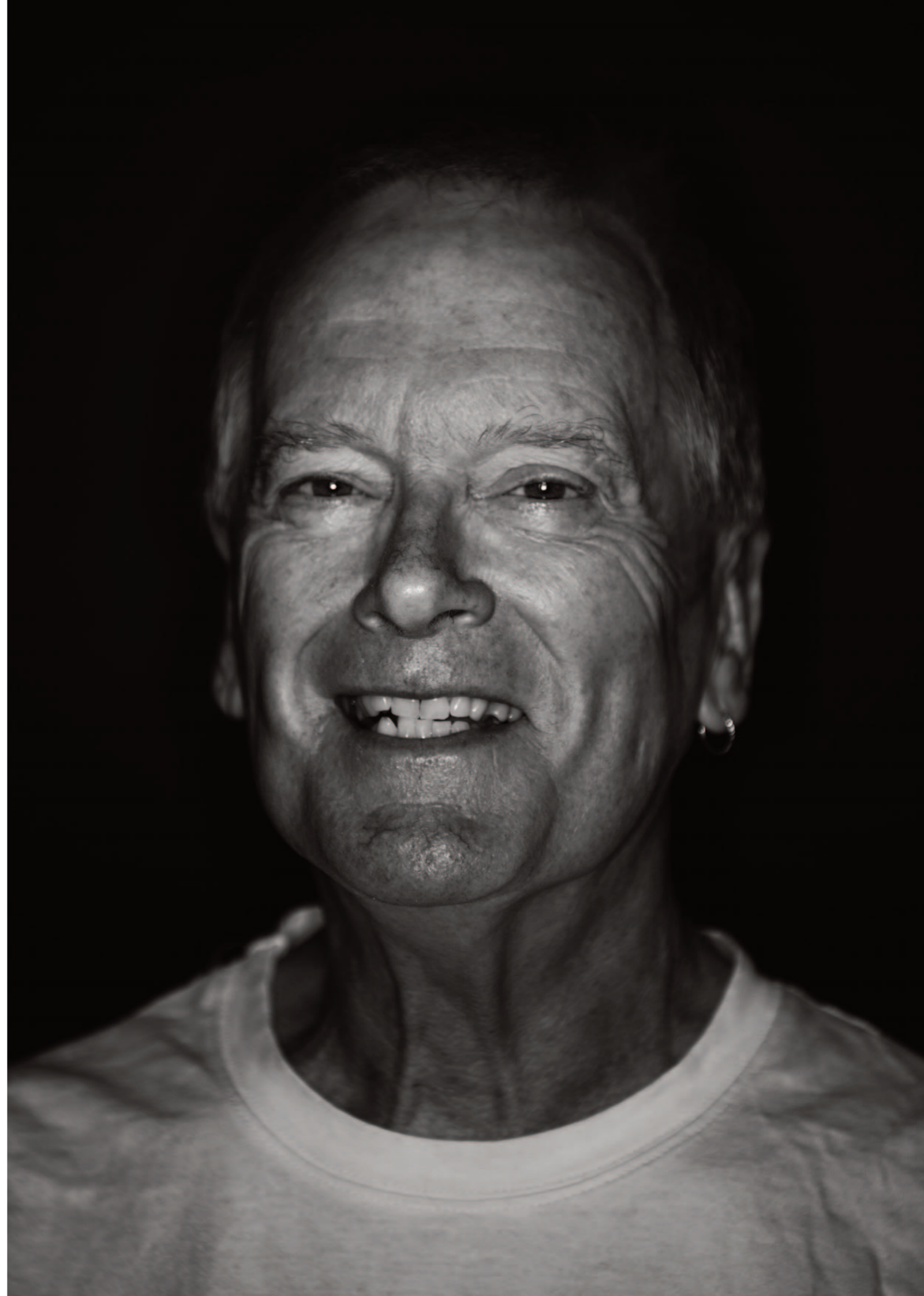
71

phil elson  
born: 1952  
years of practice: 40

My art practice is strongly informed by the ceramics of South East Asia; in particular the art of Japan, China and Korea. I have been fortunate over my years as a potter. I have undertaken an Australia Council studio residency in Barcelona. I have travelled to Berlin and beyond, the rural areas of India and Nepal, inviting my arts practice to be challenged by these environments. The influence on my work following this period of travel was displayed in a strong change in the colour palette of glazes that I subsequently used and still am engaged with in an ever changing and evolving practice.

Place has become very important to me and the significance of place, both culturally and artistically really commenced in Barcelona. The powerful role of place has developed in my work and this continues today.

Bowls on Fire, 2023





deirdre outhred  
born: 1950  
years of practice: forever

Since graduating in Bachelor of Arts, Deirdre has worked predominately in oil painting and printmaking. She has contributed regularly to group exhibitions but now works mainly towards solo exhibitions. Each year she enters the Portia Geach Memorial Award and sometimes her portraits are hung. She Persists.

The musician, the conductor





geoff hocking

born: 1947

years of practice: 63

Geoff Hocking grew up on the Bendigo goldfields where he lived in, aptly-named, Chum Street, Golden Square – in the shadow of ‘the Quartz King’ George Lansell’s Fortuna Villa.

Geoff studied art & design at the Bendigo School of Mines, later named Bendigo Technical College, and until recently was senior lecturer in the School of Visual Arts & Design at La Trobe University, Bendigo.

His interest in the early illustrations of the goldfields, a love of collectable ephemera, old photographs and newspapers has led to the publication of many books on Australia’s social history.

Masters of War





75

julie millowick  
born: 1948  
years of practice: 51

Whilst studying at Prahran College of Advanced Education [1974–76], Julie Millowick worked part-time in the darkroom of Athol Shmith / John Cato / Peter Barr. From 1977 she freelanced out of Peter Barr & Associates, Melbourne CBD. Her clients included Mayne Nickless, Westpac, Victorian Arts Centre, State Bank, Australian Wheat Board, Australian Wool Corporation. In 1977 Millowick was part of a group exhibition curated by and exhibited at the National Gallery of Victoria and Australian Centre for Photography [Australian New Work]. She has exhibited continuously including in 1993 Intimate Lives with Sally Mann, Nan Golden, Jacques Henri Latique at Fotofeis International Photography Festival, Edinburgh. Over the past 30 years Julie has explored vintage photographic techniques in addition to documentary and portrait. Her work is in the collections of NGA, NLA, SLV, NGV, MAPH, CAM, HRAG.

St Kilda Baths, Black Cat, 1975

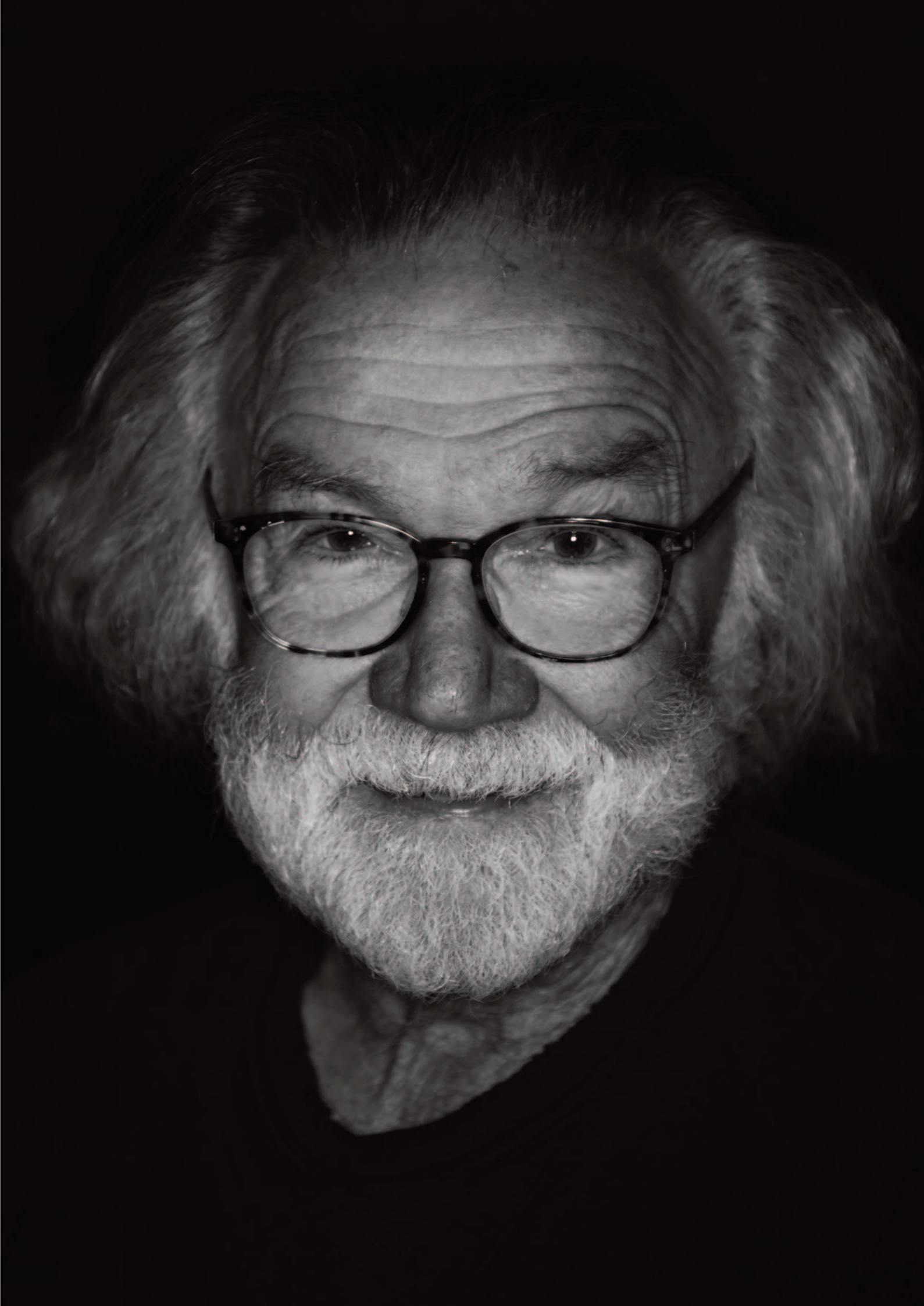




graeme galloway  
born: 1951  
years of practice: 50

Graeme has been a professional artist for fifty years,  
recently retiring to the Castlemaine area.  
Painting small intimate panels, en plein air, chasing the  
many moods of the surrounding countryside.

Studio Throne, 2023





70

jo lane  
born: 1954  
years of practice: 30

In a constant quest to articulate the ineffable Jo uses her practice to explore social and psychological subjects. Working between UK (until covid) and Australia she is a 'drawer' first and foremost, using charcoal, graphite, coloured pencils, and any other material that is present-to-hand, honouring the texture, immediacy and authenticity of drawing and its effect. Her practice increasingly turns to sculpture to express this space.

somethin' going on around here, 2020





70

harry nankin

born: 1953

years of practice: 40

For forty years my focus has been our contested material, spiritual and ethical relationship with the non-human world. In pursuit of what I call an 'ecological gaze' I've recorded the shadows of nature — ocean, rain, forests, live insects, the light of the stars — on photographic paper and film without a camera. Employing procedures that are as much land art, printmaking and ritual as photography I've tried to turn the landscape into a camera. To interpret the landscapes of central Victoria where I now live, in 2020 I returned to the film camera.

The Rain/Fragment 2, 2005







78

trefor prest  
born: 1945  
years of practice: 54

Prest's work, produced using engineering techniques including forging, turning, riveting, pressing and welding with some woodworking and sewing, and made from scrap iron, brass and copper with some wooden and canvas elements, is mechanical in appearance and structure, though it is based on the human form. His early experiences of the Welsh docks provided inspiration for the machine-like, and sometimes operable, structures he makes.

His work has been described as "mechanically perfect but functionally absurd machines," while critic Robert Rooney asserts that; "Nothing could be more eccentric than the 'sculptures' of Trefor Prest. These structures which look like ancient dental equipment or some other type of torture machine seem to have no reason except to satisfy the sculptor's desire to construct a well-engineered, but useless, contraption."

Tango, 2023





79

mary caspar  
born: 1944  
years of practice: 60

After concentrating for many years on ceramic sculpture and unique pottery, Mary began to paint seriously, and has developed into an impressive colourist with a distinctive interpretative style. While being harmonious and decorative, the paintings often make subtle social commentary, which takes them into a realm beyond decoration alone.

To Live, 2000



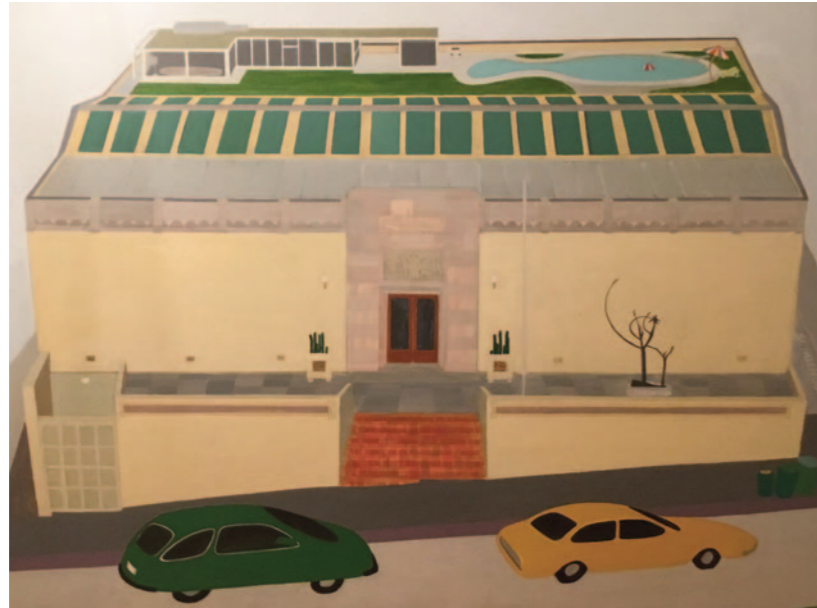


paul cavell  
born: 1946  
years of practice: 55

As a painter and printmaker, Paul has been prolific, exhibiting widely since 1973. He has won a number of arts prizes. Hundreds of his works are represented in public, corporate and private collections, nationally and internationally, and several regional art galleries.

St. Kilda, 2023



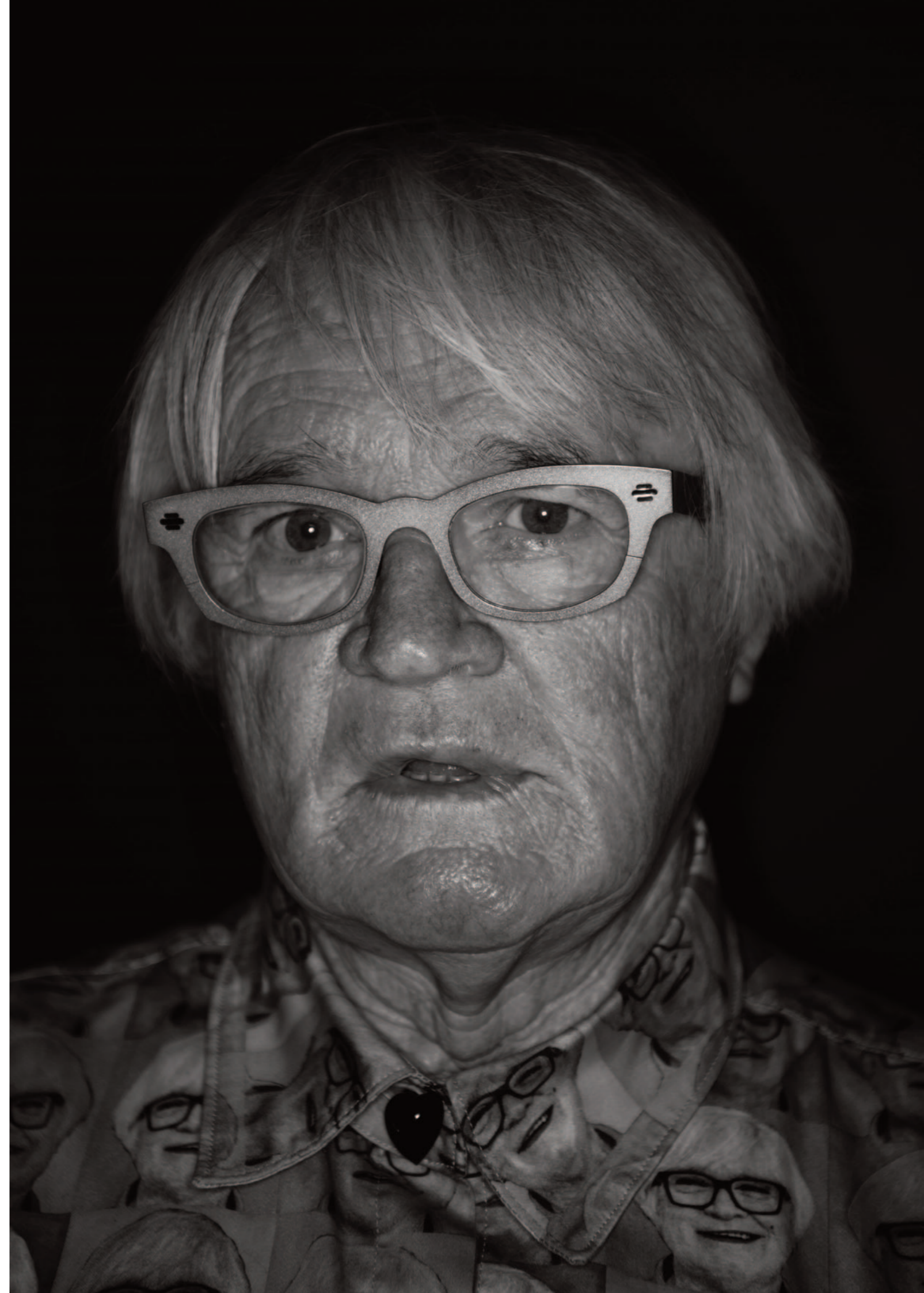


sir leslie thornton  
born: 1950  
years of practice: 57

Sir Leslie Thornton has lived and worked in Castlemaine for 50 years. His body of work includes paintings of local icons—bridges, shops, buildings and mountains. His practice also encompasses clocks, cartoons, collages and deconstructed objects, he also likes to make sculpture from electrical components.

Sir Leslie's work is whimsical, invigorating, compelling and light-hearted. With an abiding interest in geography and geopolitics, he looks at cities, landscapes, buildings and places uniquely. Leslie takes what may seem mundane subjects and honours them with a tinge of facetiousness.

Castlemaine Art Museum – Director's Little Known Rooftop Pleasure Garden. 2015





75

roz avent  
born: 1948  
years of practice: 50

In my latest body of work I explore the formal language of painting – line, form, colour, texture and space in a playful way. In some works my years of teaching dance come into the image as I create a sense of movement using calligraphic marks across the surface and allow colour to weave depth into the image. In other works the forms spin or pulsate, lines twist and turn and colour vibrates to create a tension that is partly joyous and partly perilous.

Playground, 2024





70

jackie goring  
born: 1953  
years of practice: 52

My art making is in the form of prints, sculpture and drawing. It is about my home and places I have been, people, flora and fauna, travels to Asia, and Europe and within Australia. Text, and words overheard or seen as signage. Neighbours' bizarre habits, their animals and plants, comings and goings all find their way into my work.

diablo, 2020





76

smiley williams

born: 1947

years of practice: 48

I give myself the liberty of being involved in many different mediums. Painting and drawing are my main ways of working at the moment. I paint in oil and gouache and occasionally acrylic. I will paint or draw anything. Usually I paint landscape and the human figure. I most often paint in gouache in the bush, and that is the basis for larger oils, that are made in the studio. I am not a slave to exact representation, but allow myself the freedom to change all the elements of my subject. When I push colour I know who I am. In the mystery of the visual process, realism and abstraction vie for control in the combination of colour, tone, composition, texture etc. My strongest concern is for the feeling of the visual subject, not the look of it. When I start a landscape I hope to end up with a painting.

Remnant, 2023





Pic: Penny Ryan

**Michael Wolfe** is a painter and photographer who draws inspiration from the landscape and built environment around his home on Jaara Country in Castlemaine Victoria. He has exhibited widely in Australia and internationally and his work is included in public, corporate and private collections. [www.michaelwolfe.com.au](http://www.michaelwolfe.com.au)

With love and thanks to my beautiful family Barbara Murphy, Melody Wolfe, Cas Wolfe, Helen Wolfe, Bronwyn and Stephen Mellor, Alix Mellor, Ben Goodwin; my supportive and brilliant friends Rob Burke, Atia Cader and family. In a contemporaneous iteration of this project Rob and Clare Hall have created a deeply resonate soundtrack to a documentary featuring the artists. Many, many thanks to my compassionate co-conspirator Suzanne Donisthorpe who completely bought into the idea of celebrating older artists and interviewing them for all our posterity, and photographer and editor Craig Gaston who brought his own lifetimes worth of experience, insight and wisdom to a project that has continued to change shape and take on new possibilities. Youth really is wasted on the young. Many thanks to Naomi Cass, Director and Sarina Meuleman, General Manager of Castlemaine Art Museum for their curatorial skill, patience and support while the aforementioned shape shifting was occurring over a long gestation.

I'm indebted to the artists who sat for these portraits. Remarkably, although we live in a world saturated by images, the camera is still viewed as an instrument for recording facts and the photograph evidence of this benign truth, without prejudice or intervention. That just existing is proof of its veracity. It's a little more complicated than this, and like all the forms of communication humans employ, it's mostly about crafting a narrative and the stories we tell about ourselves. If these photographs have an intention, an ambition — in the split second moment, in the dark, in the stillness and silence, consciously, deliberately — it's about creating a space for contemplation, about intimacy rather than mere familiarity. You'll no doubt let me know how successful I've been in this.



**Suzanne Donisthorpe** is a writer, producer, curator and arts broadcaster. She worked on the various incarnations of the books and arts programs at ABC Radio National for over 20 years. Her novel *Getting Up* was published by Pan MacMillan in 2013. Since leaving the ABC, Suzanne has been closely involved with the local Castlemaine Public radio station 94.9 MAINfm and presents a weekly program called *The Retronauts*. She is also a board member of the Castlemaine Documentary Festival, FOCAL, the Newstead Artshub and the RedShed Arts Workshop and has curated shows at Lot 19.

I have loved working with Michael on this project and its focus on the trailblazing generation — slightly ahead of me — who were 20 in the 70's and are now 70 in the 20's. Each of these artists have spent their lives pursuing the elusive muse and have much to say about their work and the big questions art and life pose. Hence the interviews I am conducting which will be compiled as a series of radio features to accompany these wonderful portraits, crafting an audio version of the narrative Michael has been exploring.



**Robert Burke** is an Associate Professor in Jazz and Improvisation studies at Monash University (He was head of the Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music and Performance from 2011 – 2014). An internationally acclaimed improvising performer and composer, Rob has released 16 CD's under his own name and has composed and performed on a further 300 CD's. His sensitive and balanced perspective has allowed Rob to traverse many different styles and this has, in part, been expressed as collaborative performances with international leaders in classical, jazz and experimental music. His embrace of many genres of art and the clear expression of his diversity in his role as an educator, researcher and performer, has given rise to a vibrant dialect that resonates through his students and also his performances.

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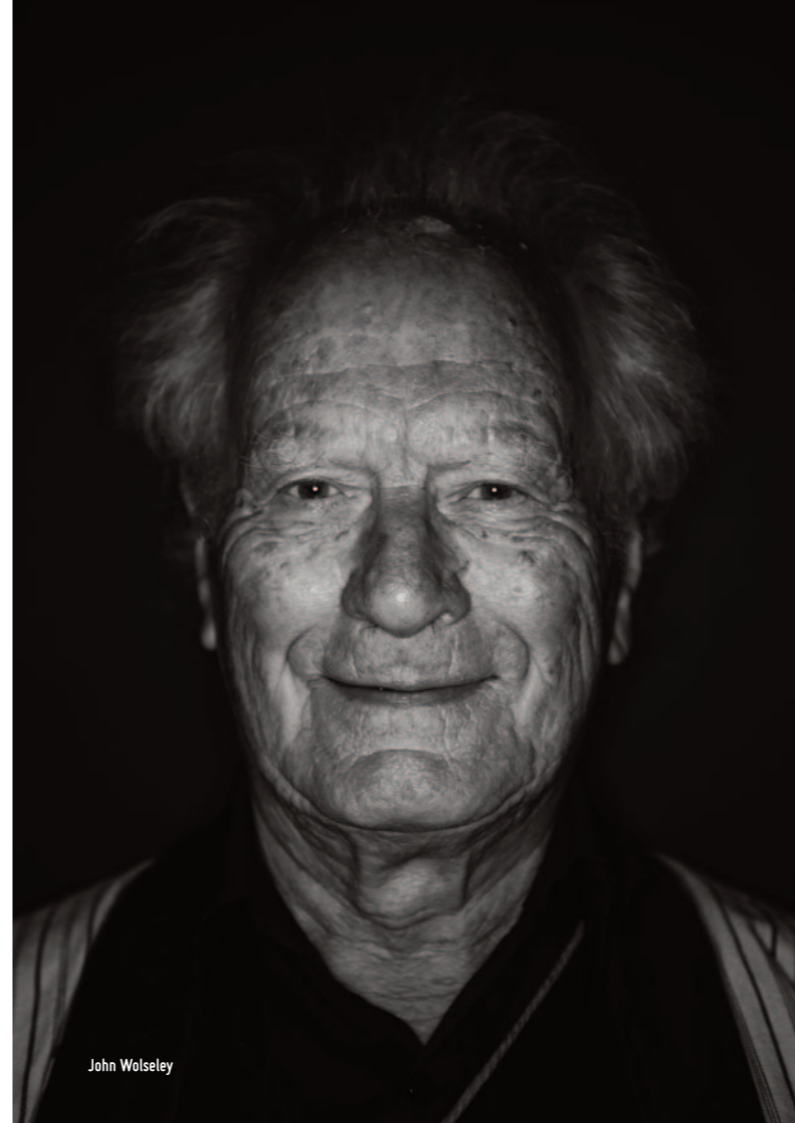
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John Wolseley



Paul Cavell



Harry Nankin



Juliana Hilton



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