



**GOVERNANCE**

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THE EXHIBITION



# **GOVERNANCE**

10 MARCH – 16 APRIL 2017

# OLD GOVERNMENT HOUSE

*Governance – The Exhibition* would like to acknowledge the Darug people as the Traditional Owners of this land. City of Parramatta Council also acknowledges the present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who now reside within this area.

## Governance - The Exhibition

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Duncan Harrex	Installation

**All exhibiting artists are alumni or 2017 studio artists at Parramatta Artists Studios, an initiative of the City of Parramatta.**

*Governance – The Exhibition* kindly acknowledges the support of



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Cover image: Naomi Oliver, Power Play - Part II. 2017, Digital Video

Old Government House – and the National Trust of Australia (NSW) - are delighted to host this innovative 2017 exhibition. This year marks the fifty year anniversary of this iconic property being in care of the National Trust, and accordingly our public programs and interpretation all focus on the complicated and variable concept of Governance as a binding theme.

Old Government House was the country residence for the first ten Governors of NSW from 1799 to 1855. It was a crucial hub for the governance and development of the fledgling colony, and is also one of 11 historic places that together form the Australian Convicts Sites World Heritage property.

Heritage properties such as our iconic Old Government House tell many stories which can change and evolve over time. While our specific story starts with the ten Governors who resided here, the property also harbours universal themes of governance, colonisation, social convergence and cultural identity still relevant today.

By providing the physical framework for the installations by the ten invited artists, the significance and symbolism of Old Government House is enhanced. The new, contemporary layer of interpretation intrinsic to *Governance* not only encourages our visitors to look at our existing displays with a new perspective, but will also bring in audiences not necessarily familiar with heritage properties and historic sites.

*Governance* also creates a unique opportunity for three iconic Parramatta institutions; Old Government House, Parramatta Artists Studios and the City of Parramatta Council to converge in order to make a powerful contribution to Western Sydney's dynamic cultural landscape.

*Roxanne Fea, Regional Manager Western Sydney*

THE NATIONAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA  
(NEW SOUTH WALES)

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# CATALOGUE ESSAY

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This exhibition began by asking the question “what is the role of governance today?” to a group of ten contemporary artists. The artist’s responses are varied, but rather than being comments on openly acknowledged systems of governance, they are exploring issues of the silent, the assumed and the imposed or unvoted for. Summarily the exhibition can be divided into responses to the external or the internal governing forces that impact our routines.

Four years ago, the initial question was inspired by the banal introduction to our civic lives of the quiet carriages on State Rail. At the time, I was a regular commuter, and remember the pilot programme that was to fulfil “what we wanted”. During the early weeks of the pilot programme I was surprised by two things: one how quickly the use of self-surveillance and control crept into play and secondly, by the lack of consultation. Unlike most people with whom I discussed the quiet carriage introduction, I was alone in being a conscientious objector. The rabid and fascist temperaments it brought to the fore in fellow commuters – even during the pilot programme - was frightening for me to watch.

Nevertheless, the pilot programme was deemed a success and furthermore we wanted it! Its system of order and control seeped into the psyche as each carriage needlessly had an overtly ‘citizen police’ claiming that others were disruptors to the silence. (Note: they are quiet carriages, not silent). However, it begged the question – was silence what was really wanted? Consequently, they seeped into the dominance, and it is now difficult to find a social carriage.

It lead me to a thought process from enforced frameworks of order and control to the subversive layers that govern the everyday. As a historical reference, I was reminded of the Irish oppression, of how public assembly, talking of Ireland, speaking the national language and religious faiths were all suppressed. Returning to my quiet carriage journey, I began to reminisce about all the stories I had been told in the past of friendships that were begun and even romances, on long commutes. I recalled incidents when I had met people and had struck up a conversation that had left a lasting impression to this day. I began to become sentimental to the idea of public assemblies as found in humble train carriages, and saddened by their loss as a space to have free conversation between diverse people.

Still troubled by the “silent carriages” (which are here to stay), I was reminded by the 1998 essay *Brown Morning* by Franck Pavloff – a parable written as a response to “*small compromises*” and the “*creeping normality*” of a society crumbling under incremental government infringements.

I realised that I was interested in subversive governing structures and whether we recognise these within ourselves. And I found, that sometimes by simply asking a question we can expose them more succinctly. The ten invited artists were asked to respond authentically to the question and each were chosen as their practices had previously dealt with issues of governance even if they had not framed it that way themselves. Systems do not occur in isolation and Old Government House as the original seat of governance became a ripe platform for artists to insert their responses into the object dense museum. The intertwining historical layers were intersected, traversed or ignored. However, each artist investigated and responded to their own relationship with governance, building a personal and cohesive narrative for audiences.

Marian Abboud's *Wa3jbat (code of conduct)* examines the family structure and how the unspoken rules of birth orders form a hierarchy which governs our identity far into adulthood. Furthermore, the creation of her work explores a nexus of the layering of histories as *Wa3jbat (code of conduct)* is a projected iteration of an in-situ performance, with additional family members digitally added into the production.

Oblique transections through history are a repeated area of investigation within *Governance*. Specifically, the rewriting of history through object placement within Old Government House. Many of the artists were fascinated that the objects within the house museum were not original artefacts of the house. As aware as we are of meta-histories and historical inaccuracies, Colonial history specifically, is open to interpretation.

Salote Tawale has created a homage to her own artistic practice through her installation *Here*, a type of rewriting of history in itself. Her notable works to date *Sometimes you make me nervous and then i know we are supposed to sit together for a long time*, and *The Bust*, are assembled reflecting her present concerns for this exhibition. The extension of her practice is exemplified by her using contemporary machine made materials that have replaced the Fijian traditional materials of her ancestry. She intertwines her heritage within the site-specific installation with calico fragments which literally reach and attach to the objects of a Colonial past.

Abdullah M.I. Syed chose to rewrite Lady Mary FitzRoy's history by examining the role of portraiture and replication. His eight interpretations of Lady FitzRoy interweave historical references and the power of reach through portraiture's ubiquitousness in civic life. His extensive investigations into money are also linked, as economics also govern the concerns of daily lives.

Interestingly the interpretation at Old Government House emphasises the role of Governor Lachlan Macquarie, yet, the single and little known silhouette of Lady FitzRoy also became the inspiration for Linda Brescia. Brescia has taken her from black on white into the painterly and colourful. In Brescia's reviewing of the *Role of Lady FitzRoy* she has literally replaced her much loved position within the house museum with her own edition, and in so doing, has provided a new perspective on her historical role. Brescia's lens for Lady FitzRoy is the role of the woman within a domestic setting. This is explored not only as a position of power, but through Brescia's personal life expectations (which references family structures, much like Abboud). *Bride*, through the very materiality of the chux superwipe undermines the splendour of the luxurious wedding gown by foretelling of a more practical structure to the daily rituals of the marital framework.

External governing contexts are further explored via methods of physical structures through Naomi Oliver's *Power Play (Part I and Part II)*. Taking inspiration from the architecture of Old Government House, Oliver's videos reference the omnipresent role architecture plays in civic life. Within *Power Play* the formidable architecture of the house is contrasted with the fragility of the colonial history of site and its conceptual framework.

Extending the investigation of civic space and the role it governs in our pedestrian movement is Nadia Odum's site-specific *One step removed*. Within the space, Odum has disrupted the inclination of the human circulation patterns within the exhibition environment. By playing with the interweaving narratives of the historical and the house museum her work interrupts the patterns of visitor flow through the exhibition space. Within the contemporary set up of the room, visitors no longer interact with a domestic environment but a contrived condition of "not touching". Traditional exhibition design delivers the audience experience on a series of

right-hand turns and also considered the natural inclination for visitors as they gravitate to the largest object in the room. Here, Odum disorders their normal flow, re-coursing their physical perception and offering a new awareness of an internal dialogue of decision making.

Fiona Davies installations formulate a diptych within the mirrored offices of The Butler's Pantry and the Governor's Office. Divided by a stairwell, the traffic flow further unites the flow of power between them. Davies site-responsive installations are a continuation of her seminal *Blood on Silk* project. Much like Syed's investigations into the pervasive nature of currency, Davies centres her work on the commerce of blood products and their regulated distribution – a far cry from the Colonial commerce that would have occurred within both offices, but a commerce that would have harnessed much currency were it around in Colonial times.

Liam Benson's practice has been centred on a process of reviewing the white male identity within Australian culture. His diverse offerings within *Governance* explore, subvert and critique this identity via themes of nationality, cultural diversity, alliances with the monarchy, colonialism, motherhood, masculinity, sovereignty and interweaving past, present and future. Within the context of the exhibition, Benson's photographs, embroideries and opening night performance provide an overview of the internalisation of society's governing structures into a self-governance of identity.

The nature of external surveillance being internalised to become self-surveillance is explored through Hannah Toohey's *Docile Bodies*. Toohey provides a pivotal shift within the exhibition that is less to do with our penetrable past, but with the impenetrable present and future for which we have a lack of control within our digital worlds. Her installation is a reminder of the residue we leave but can never escape in cyber realities, and how these identities (debris) are accumulated in our every day.

Drawing direct reference to the site's colonial agricultural past, Kath Fries' multiple installations for *Governance* continue her use of the material beeswax whilst appropriating the concerns of control mechanisms and global food insecurity. Fries' *Reservations* uses the bee colony as a metaphor for structures of governance that provide a tenuous balance between order and civil decline.

The Ariadne's thread of the exhibition is provided by Linda Brescia's text works. Placed in what could appear to be a random order throughout the house and art installations, her text pieces are words in context, misused without context, nuanced and announced, all providing slippages of meaning. Our recent awareness of "alternative truths" and "alternative facts" make Brescia's works even more politicised than she probably intended. Her works are a perfect fusion of perceived contradictions between the written word and the spoken word. Especially as we announce the written word internally, adding our own inflections whether consciously so or not. Brescia's words will provide many meanings to our visitors – some will read them in relationship to the other artworks in situ, others will link them to their tacit knowledge of the heritage setting. Either way, Brescia's texts will provoke an ongoing internal dialogue and continuation of our inherent narratives as we make sense and attach meaning to their singular placement.

Up until recent times the exhibition could have been accused of soft politics, however, many of the issues have become frontline political concerns today. The cross-referencing of the artist's responses are as dense as the matrix of histories that conceptualise governance, and the site in which the exhibition resides. Through the artworks we can view governance as multiplicities in action – it is a structure of history, sociology, economics and philosophy. The multiple perspectives provided within the exhibition are present and contemporary but not conclusive. But neither is governance just. Perhaps it is best understood as a strategy for implementing order.

# MARIAN ABBOUD

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## TITLE OF WORK

*Wa3jbat (code of conduct), 2017*

## MEDIUM

multi channel projection, CRT TV, mirror,  
fabric, site specific location

## DIMENSIONS

variable

## ARTIST'S BIO

Marian Abboud is a Western Sydney based artist who works across various disciplines in visual arts, performance, dance, installation and site-specific actions. Working primarily with the projected image, Marian collaborates with family, community and audience to create multi-layered narrative driven artworks that challenges perceptions of the migrant identity through ritual, cultural obligation, complex historical ideology and socio political frameworks that continue to form the basis of her research driven practice.

Marian graduated with a Bachelor of Visual Communication, from the University of Western Sydney in 2002 and has exhibited extensively locally and nationally. She has collaborated on various projects across a broad range of disciplines including social engagement, interactive live performance, theatre and public art.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

My ancestors are from Phoenicia, trading in letters and numbers. A place where I have never been. I am named after my paternal grandmother, but I would of really preferred Leila after my maternal Aunt. I will never offer my mums namesake. Missing my father's tongue.

Occupied by the French, the Americans, the Syrians, the Israelis. Bombs bullets and holes in the wall. We were the third wave of migrants that came from the north of Lebanon, We were makers and farmers loyal first to our grandmothers and grandfathers, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, 2nd 3rd and 4th cousins and extended family and second to the people from the village.

"*Wa3jbat*" is about family obligation. The untold rules, expectations and responsibilities the organized family structure influenced by cultural, religious and political agendas that govern our everyday. Collaborating with my 4 sisters and brother this work looks at family order from firstborn to lastborn.

"*Wa3jbat*" is influenced by the writings of Suad Joseph professor of anthropology, in particular her research on gender; sociology of the family; selfhood and citizenship.

*(here we go again,  
my sister Susan asks  
how much longer are you going to wear black for?  
Its been nearly 3 years,  
it is time*

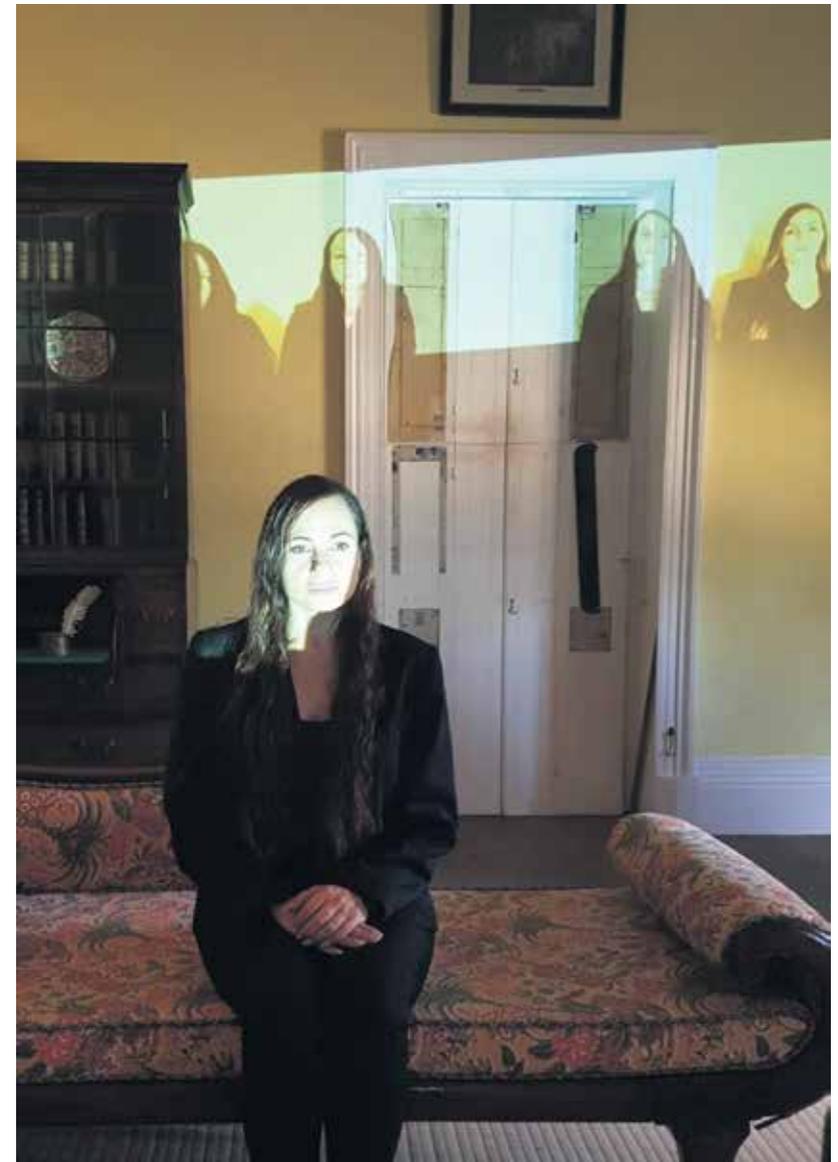


Image courtesy of the artist

# LIAM BENSON

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<b>TITLE OF WORK</b>	<i>Silly Gubba</i> , 2015
<b>MEDIUM</b>	glass seed and bugle beads, sequins, cotton, organza, bamboo embroidery hoop, crystal diamantes
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	19cm diameter
<b>REPRESENTED BY</b>	Artereal Gallery

## ARTIST'S BIO

Liam Benson is a multi disciplinary artist working with performance, photography, video and textiles. Benson's work deconstructs the social perceptions of gender, race, cultural and sub-cultural identity, and explores the possibilities evolving identity by engaging the community through supporting creative cultural and sub-cultural conversation.

His practice investigates the intersection of heritage and emerging site-specific subcultural identity, challenging what it means to be white, male and how patriarchal privilege collides with a queer perspective.

Liam's work simultaneously critiques and confronts the incongruity that is inherent within Australian identity. As a performance artist he is able to harness his own experiences as a gay, Anglo Australian male and empathise with multiple experiences of difference.

Benson's work embraces a dialogue with the community to support and contribute to the acknowledgement of diversity. Through community collaboration, Benson's work subverts colonialism, embraces Indigenous perspectives and celebrates diverse cultural voices.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

*Silly Gubba* is a continuation of the artist's investigation into the power structure, privileges, cultural and subcultural identity of 'white people'.

Benson's embroideries feature open ended language, double-entendres and words associated with the complex dichotomy of white identity. Text such as 'same', 'original', 'talk is cheap', 'new', 'thank you', 'I know' and 'refuge' have also featured in Benson's work.

Gubba, also spelled Gubbah is an Aboriginal slang word for a white person. Gubba evolved as a satirical abbreviation of the authoritative title Governor, and became it's sarcastic parody.

Silly gubba is a term, which can be used to describe a white person who lacks a critical understanding of their privilege and place within society or as a retort to racist language.

Benson embraces the term and pleads guilty to its connotations by meticulously hand embroidering the words onto transparent organza stretched on a European embroidery hoop.



Image courtesy of the artist

# LINDA BRESCIA

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## TITLE OF WORK

*Truth Is*, 2016

*Bride*, 2016

## MEDIUM

acrylic on illustration board,  
series of 13

acrylic on domestic cleaning  
wipes on artist's board

## DIMENSIONS

12cm x 51cm

36cm x 28cm

## ARTIST'S BIO

Linda Brescia is a Sydney-based artist who investigates the banalities and complexities of everyday life experiences and rituals through painting, photography, sculpture and performance.

Selected exhibitions and performances include, Cementa 17, Kandos NSW (2017) Parramatta Artists Studios Exhibition and Finnisage at Artspace Sydney (2015); Words don't work for me, Number Forty Seven Gallery, Rylstone NSW (2015), SafARI Live (2014); Life and Death, MOP (2012); Living Liverpool, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre (2010) and Licorice Allsorts, King Street Gallery on William, (2009). Her work has been collected by Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Artcell Collection Management, Blacktown City Council and private collectors.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Lady Mary FitzRoy died in a tragic carriage accident, a victim of her husband's masculine bravado. No painted portrait is currently on record of Lady Mary so I painted her portrait based on Queen Victoria, another woman of the time who not only governed an empire but also a home and family. On a personal level, as a girl I was brought up to believe in family. The expectation I'd get married and continue their traditions. The implications of what that life entails causes me to question all notions of governance. In the *Bride* portrait, the domestic cleaning wipe underlies practical truths of domesticity in which material and social matters are cleaned up.

Governance is authority and power. Words are authority. In the 'Image of a Word' series, words are based on what I'm questioning, thinking and contemplating about at that particular time and trying to contextualise with truth in mind. Despite the fact that these works are 'written' works, I feel more comfortable calling them paintings in which every word becomes an object.

The words in this work were not created in the context of governance; when they are seen through the frame of governance, their meaning changes. These words along with the portraits speak of reason and rebellion. They are meant to disrupt the authority and power of Governance. Oxford Dictionary's word of the year for 2016 was post-truth:

*Relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.*

Governance is being further and further removed from the truth. Truth is my favourite word. It appeals to something that's beyond the constant stream of words that take up my train of thought. It's something real. Something that exists regardless of whether you choose to acknowledge it. The truth just is.

Truth is, lies are.



Image courtesy of Racheal Samuels



Image courtesy of the artist

# FIONA DAVIES

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**TITLE OF WORK** *Blood on Silk: Buy/sell*  
**MEDIUM** zinc, fabric, ink, video and found objects  
**DIMENSIONS** 165 x 70 x 110 (h)cm

## ARTIST'S BIO

Fiona Davies is a PhD candidate at the University of Sydney. She holds a B.Sc.(UNSW) and Bachelor of Visual Art (UWS). She was awarded a MFA from Monash University in 2005.

Her current theoretical practice examines ICU medicalised dying, intertwining the emotional landscape with contemporary medical practices – specifically, definitions of death, the materiality of blood and processes of surveillance. Her ongoing project, *Blood on Silk* (2009 - ) included working in collaboration with the late physicist Dr Peter Domachuk.

She exhibits in both formal institutions and non-traditional spaces nationally and internationally.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

The butler's pantry and Governor Macquarie's office are two centres of power within Old Government House and are where these two men ran their respective empires. The butler oversaw the internal domestic workings of a large house and the Governor administered the colony of New South Wales from 1810 to 1821, as the seat of European governance in this region.

During this time the tensions between the rule of law, self-determination, anarchy and autocracy were evident and were played out in complex and changing patterns. This can be likened to the models found in markets supplying many contemporary commercial products and services. In the contemporary situation, the impact of the characteristics of a product or service is controlled by the relevant layer of government through a framework of regulation and law.

These works are multimedia installations encompassing both the real and virtual. Davies current theoretical practice examines medicalised dying within a hospital's ICU and intertwines the emotional landscape with contemporary medical practices – specifically, definitions of death, the processes of surveillance and the materiality of some of the key products used in ICU, blood, blood components and body parts. This last focus on the materiality of blood reflects the impact of the market and specifically the black market in many parts of the world.

Within a globalised market the intersections of anarchy or the black market, the practice of self-administration and the administration of international law can become very complicated and overlaid with multiple tensions. These two works by Davies reflect the central tension between the relatively controlled domestic market with periods of abundance and drought and the globalised market of unethical and unsafe practices but with guaranteed supply for a price.



*Image courtesy of the artist*

# KATH FRIES

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**TITLE OF WORK**            *Reservations*, 2017  
**MEDIUM**                 beeswax, glass and wood  
**DIMENSIONS**            13cm diameter spheres and 85x154x8cm standing piece

## ARTIST'S BIO

Kath Fries works with context-responsive embodied processes, exploring how our senses connect us to our surroundings. Her sculptural installations engage with the tactility of materials, notions of time and the complexities of ecological entanglements. She is currently a PhD candidate at Sydney College of the Arts, University of Sydney. Kath has received awards from the Australia Council, Japan Foundation, Ian Potter Cultural Trust and National Association for Visual Arts. Recent projects include *Future Stratigraphy*, SCA Galleries (2016), *Silence Awareness Existence*, Arteles, Finland (2015), *Permeate*, Hawkesbury Regional Gallery, Windsor (2015), *Decant*, Fairfield Museum (2014), *Making Ground*, Blue Mountains Cultural Centre (2013).

## ARTIST STATEMENT

*Reservations* considers issues of containment, control and bio-power governance. In these sculptures, beeswax polyps push up against glass, gazing out at us, trying to escape from orb terrariums. Like micro greenhouses, the glass barrier suggests the imposition of divisions, boundaries and separation, as well as surveillance. *Reservations* questions the enthusiastic escalation of indoor horticulture, asking if such technical feats of exclusivity will really assist with global food security while the environment outside is exploited and neglected. These spherical forms conjure fortunetelling crystal balls – perhaps predicating future ramifications and distress. A larger standing glass-pane filled with beeswax, is similarly ghostly and prophetic, mirroring the present physical space of a human body.

The title, *Reservations*, implies the enforcement of limits and containing conditions; having misgivings or concern about a situation; keeping something back; preservation for later; setting aside land or food for specific use; and watching with concern but failing to take action.

Beeswax as a material conjures the necessity of insect pollination for crops and the wider complexities of bio-diverse ecosystems. Western honeybees (*Apis Mellifera*) play an essential role in global food security, pollinating almost 75% of the world's agricultural crops. But these bees are currently in crisis, dying on mass in a decade long global epidemic termed Colony Collapse Disorder. Now honeybees are frequently referred to as the earth's 'canary in the coalmine', their deaths are foretelling our own – as human impact on the environment brings us to the brink of catastrophe.

Historically, the first fleet's initial attempts at agriculture failed and the colony nearly starved until crops were eventually cultivated at Parramatta. Subsequently western honeybee colonies were imported for crop pollination and they proliferated across the continent. However, today Australia imports more food than is exported, and globally intensifying pressures of worldwide overpopulation, climate change and food insecurity are leading to future predictions of suffering, gross inequality, riots and revolts.



*Image courtesy of the artist*

# NADIA ODLUM

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<b>TITLE OF WORK</b>	<i>One step removed</i>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	steel and rope
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	120cm x 190cm

## ARTIST'S BIO

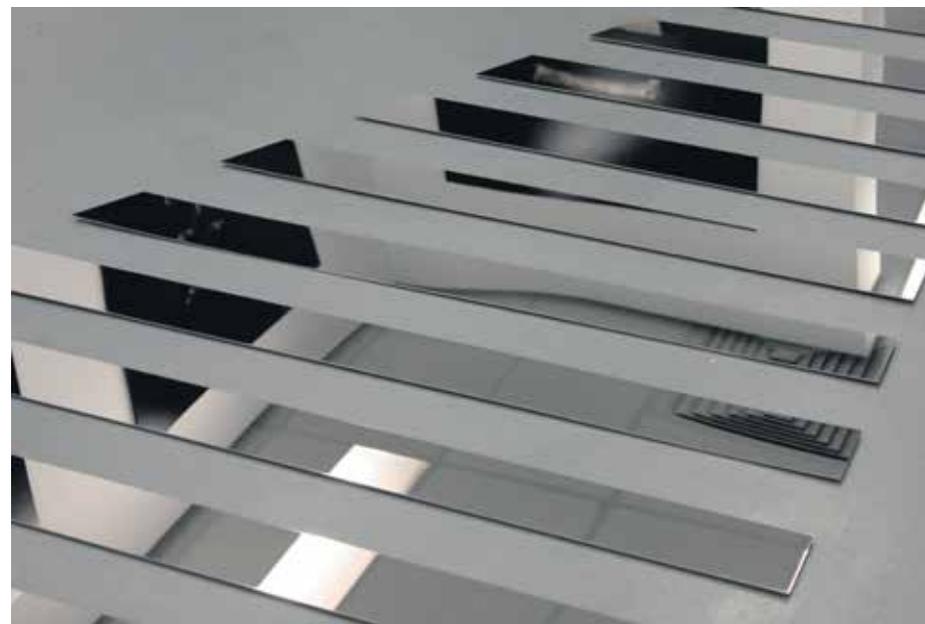
Nadia Odlum completed a MFA by research at UNSW Art & Design in 2016. Previously, she attended the National Art School, graduating in 2012 with a BFA (First Class Honors) and the Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement. She has exhibited at galleries such as the Murray Art Museum in Albury, Artspace (Ideas Platform), Firstdraft, Archive, Gaffa Gallery, and Kudos Gallery. Nadia was a PAS resident in 2016, and was commissioned by the Studios to create a site-specific work for their collection. She has received grants from UNSW and the AGNSW, and has undertaken residencies in Sydney and Paris.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Nadia Odlum approaches the theme of governance by exploring the impact our physical bodies, and perceptual capacities, have on the spaces we create, and the way we explore or navigate these environments.

The size and shape of the buildings and structures we create are a reflection of one of the most defining, or governing, factors of our existence: our position within a human body. Proportions, passageways, objects and places of egress are all created in relation to this fundamental materiality. The perceptual faculties of our bodies equally, and inescapably, dictate our experience of these spaces. The built environment thus emerges as part of a relational dynamic between the needs and the capacities of the human body.

*One step removed* is a site-specific response to the exhibition space at Old Government House. The custom cut, mirror-polished stainless steel is placed in such a way as to deliberately disrupt the visitor's natural movement within the room. The upside-down reflection playfully distorts the image of the surrounding space, and the viewer themselves. Forced to slow down, and negotiate their path with more attention, the viewer may be encouraged into a greater awareness of their own body and movement within the space. Coiled atop of the mirrored pieces is a length of rope, the span of which measures the exact height of the artist's own body, a symbolic representation of her own past presence within the space.



*Image courtesy of the artist*

# NAOMI OLIVER

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**TITLE OF WORK** *Power Play (Part I and Part II)*, 2017

**MEDIUM** digital video

**DIMENSIONS** 16:9

## ARTIST'S BIO

Naomi Oliver has an art practice based on digital video and animation, sound, and performance art. Her current work often investigates flaws in technology, such as corrupted digital imagery, as well as psychology, the body and environment - and how these elements interact. She recently worked with Club Weld at the Information and Cultural Exchange in Parramatta, collaborating with musicians on the autistic spectrum to create music videos using analogue video synthesiser. Oliver lives in the Blue Mountains and works both in the Blue Mountains and Western Sydney.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

*Power Play - Part I* is a short looped video presenting a simple image, a living tree next to a tree stump. This serves to highlight a jarring contrast between the natural environment and human industry. The image fades to a more otherworldly one, as a divine, sharply-pointed crystalline object hovers in the slow rotation above the stump. It is as though a chrysalis of some manner has manifested over the site of destruction, potentially dangerous in its potency.

In *Power Play - Part II*, viewers are shown alternate videos of the exterior architectures of the site. At times we see calm, single-shot views of the building, with barely any movement apparent besides birds wandering or flying, or the gentle swaying of branches and leaves. And then at other moments, the picture shatters into a floating, fragmented looking glass, like a haunting, and perhaps ominous, kaleidoscope. The straightforward imagery becomes complicated, and motion is introduced.

Though gentle, the sounds of a scorching Australian summer are heard in both videos, and serve to remind the viewer of the contrast between the realities of Parramatta weather conditions, flora, and fauna, and the preposterous act of attempting to foster a British decorum within it.

The establishment of Old Government House in Parramatta was a method of promoting and maintaining an image of governmental triumph, authority, and power. The Palladian style of additions to the house in the early 1800s certainly adds to the appearance of prosperity and asserts a position of gentility within the formal and social hierarchies of the day.

The result of convict labour, the building of Old Government House signified the expansion British Empire and cultivated confidence in its organisational abilities. In digitally undermining the structure of the architecture in this video work, these efforts become surreptitiously impaired, vandalised.



*Image courtesy of the artist*

# ABDULLAH M.I. SYED

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## TITLE OF WORK

*Myth of a Silhouette: Portrait III of Lady Mary Rose FitzRoy,*

2017

## MEDIUM

graphite, ink, rose petals, Australian banknote, thread, fabric, printed paper and 24c gold leaf on archival paper, (series)

## DIMENSIONS

13cm x 9.4cm

## ARTIST'S BIO

Dr. Abdullah M.I. Syed (b.1974) is a Pakistani-born contemporary artist and designer working between Sydney, Karachi and New York. His art practice weaves real and fictional narratives of east and west, seamlessly knitting together cultural and art historical references and concerns from each. Syed holds a PhD in Art, Media and Design (2016) and a Master of Fine Arts (2009) from University of New South Wales, Sydney. Syed's works have been featured in ten solo exhibitions and several national and international curated group exhibitions. His awards include the Blacktown Art Prize (2010), the UNSW Postgraduate Research Scholarship (2009) and the IAO Installation Art Award, USA (2003).

## ARTIST STATEMENT

Appearing across currency, stamps, history books or hanging in offices and museums, portraits of governing officials and their families not only communicate and mythologize their power in the state but are also intended to echo their legacy. For *Governance*, the lack of archival presence of the unassuming but heavily utilized and loved silhouette portrait of Lady Mary Rose FitzRoy (wife of Sir Charles Augustus FitzRoy the tenth Governor of the colony of New South Wales) - who inhabited the Old Government House Parramatta - was highly intriguing. The portrait's provenance does not identify the artist or year of execution; neither does it demonstrate itself to be an intended communication of Lady FitzRoy's achievements in the community, or the qualities she possessed. Yet the messy ink marks and crude execution of the silhouette hauntingly mirror the very tragic and gruesome death of Lady FitzRoy - the only thing about her that was recorded in detail. The cause of her death, a tragic horse carriage accident, even formed most of her obituary, overshadowing what little was known about her aristocratic roots, her "good looks", "dignified, unaffected manners" and "amiable disposition which formed a large circle of friends."

*Myth of a silhouette* and *Bust* takes such omissions and aesthetic erasures as a point of departure to relationally speculate the recorded history, creating realms of conceptualization where alternative visuals spin expanded narratives. *She was a migrant, an industrious community worker, animal lover, avid gardener, passionate homemaker, lover of arts and craft and most importantly a much loved public figure.* Collectively, the works draw a new picture of Lady FitzRoy and how her life matters today.

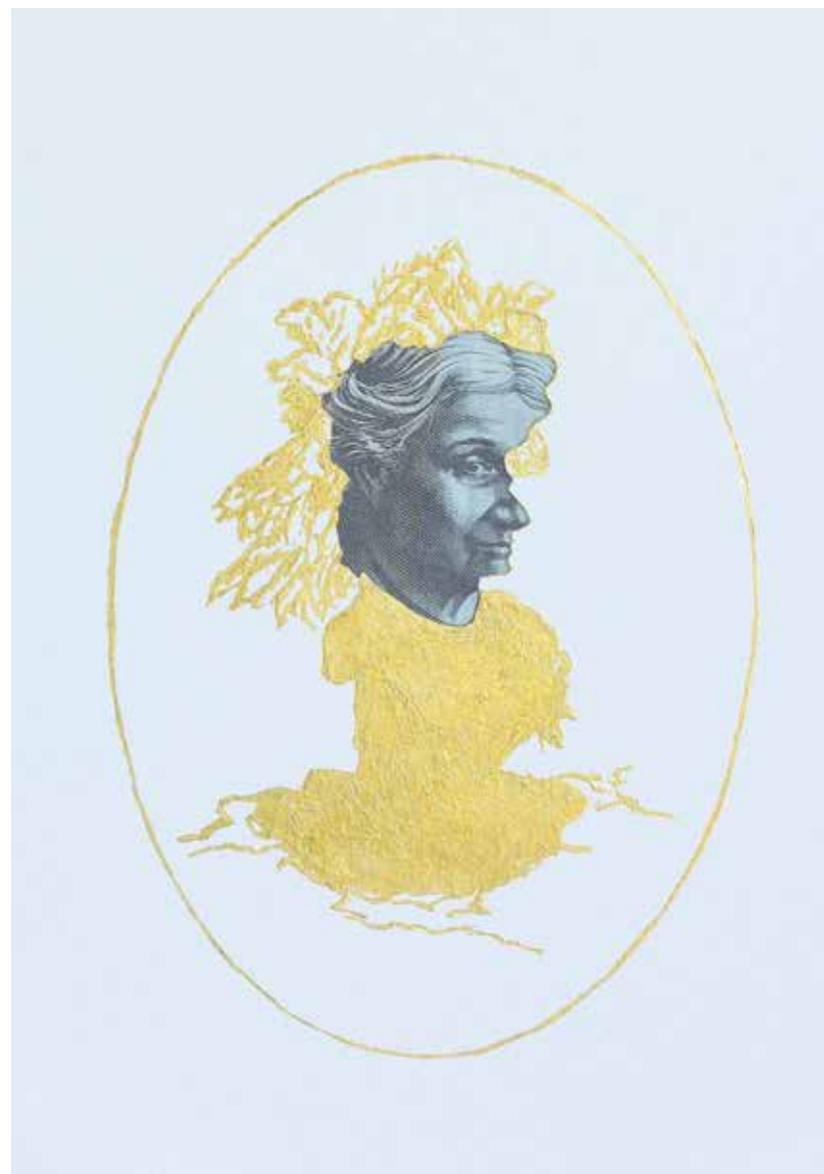


Image courtesy of the artist

# SALOTE TAWALE

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<b>TITLE OF WORK</b>	<i>Here, 2017</i>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	sculpture, video, tarp, wood, plastic
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	variable

## ARTIST'S BIO

Salote Tawale explores the identity of the individual in collective systems; society and communities. Projects draw upon personal experiences of race, ethnicity and gender, growing up in suburban Australia. Often using her own body to examine her Pacific Australian heritage and Diasporic Indigeneity. Tawale received the 2017 Arts NSW Fellowship and has exhibited widely within Australia and internationally including the Wellington Art Centre (NZ), Indonesian Contemporary Art Network Yogyakarta (IE), and Oxford Modern (UK) and has been included in publications including, *Mapping South: Journeys in South-South Cultural Relations*; *Art in Australia*; *Realtime*; *Art Monthly*, *Artlink* and *Canadian Art Magazine*.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

A sculpture in the middle of the room that imposes itself on the European architecture and furnishings: Materially distinct from what would be conventionally recognised as precious, in relation to interior design: tarp, wood, plastics all relate to materials that are machine made and are readily available. Mass production and exploitation of resources (both material and human) are significant and deliberate colonial interventions.

I have selected the suite of these materials because they relate to my indigenous Fijian and colonial Australian backgrounds. These commercially produced materials have replaced traditional methodologies. These include tarp, corrugated iron and cotton that have primarily replaced Masi (Fijian bark cloth, also known as Tapa).

Analogous to how Old Government House in Parramatta sits apart from, and imposes itself on the landscape, my intention is to disrupt this colonial structure from within. Using the materials described above, my construction sits on a platform to assert itself inside the dining room. On top of this platform is a bust of my own head and shoulders - and by reaching into the room and subtly shifting the placement of these "in-house furnishings," the tarp-like tentacles and calico fragments work to spread over and establish a new narrative amongst the European furnishings.

This occupation is intended to disrupt the carefully constructed design and lay out of the National Trust - NSW heritage house. The reverberations that constitute this chain of spatial and cultural disruptions articulate the structural impositions and counter-colonialisms that are the very real and everyday struggles of power. Not only between communities of the colonised and the colonising, but also the programmatic confusions between the institution and the individual.



*Image courtesy of the artist*

# HANNAH TOOHEY

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<b>TITLE OF WORK</b>	<i>Docile Bodies, 2017</i>
<b>MEDIUM</b>	tarlatan
<b>DIMENSIONS</b>	variable

## ARTIST'S BIO

Hannah Toohey is a Western Sydney artist living in Castle Hill and currently in residence at Parramatta Artist Studios. Her practice is an exploration of printmaking as a sculptural medium, creating installation work based on the idea of "print" and "multiple". In opposition to the traditional notion of printmaking, Toohey's work has developed around the idea of the "unique state multiple" championing the imperfect and idiosyncratic.

## ARTIST STATEMENT

The impression that we are under constant surveillance is in no way a new one, however, the way in which we are vulnerable has shifted with our split presence between a physical and virtual world. *Docile Bodies* references the concept of the Panopticon, put forth by philosopher Jeremy Bentham, which describes an architectural design that allows for a watchman to observe occupants from a central tower without the occupants knowing whether or not they are being watched. This work seeks to explore the resonance of panopticism in the context of the digital era.

There is an understanding that our activity online is being monitored, both by those we know and those we don't. But in the private space of our personal browsing we do not have that same feeling of exposure, in part, this is due to the fact that we do not know where our 'body' of data begins or ends. We live so much of our lives online, share so much data, but feel nowhere near as much attachment to this information as we do to our own bodies. In response to this, I wanted to give the incorporeal notion of our online presence a tangible form, presenting the 'costumes' we wear without the wearers.

*Docile Bodies*, alludes to the diaphanous costumes we adopt and discard, and the defensive mechanism of switching identities. Over the course of 27 days, the human skin is able to fully replace itself and I am drawn to this idea of our identity being in constant flux. The act of assuming ever-changing costumes, is in itself, a perpetual performance; we are not sure who is watching or when they are watching but enthusiastically perform for them all the same. As Michel Foucault says in his text *Discipline and Punish*, "They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible."



*Image courtesy of the artist*

# PUBLIC PROGRAMS

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Held in conjunction with *Governance – The Exhibition*, The National Trust NSW proudly presents our season of public programs.

**1. Curator's Tour, with Lizzy Marshall.**

Join independent curator Lizzy Marshall for an indepth experience of the exhibition's contemporary reflections on the role of governance today.

19 March, 1.30 – 3.00pm (25 pp max)

**2. Artist's Talks in Situ with the Curator.**

Come along to an intimate conversation led by the Curator with exhibiting artists Marian Abboud, Linda Brescia and Abdullah M.I. Syed, as they discuss their works in situ of Old Government House.

25 March, 11am – 12pm (25pp max)

**3. "Thoughts and Prayers" beading workshop with artist Liam Benson. Assisted by Naomi Oliver.**

Benson's practice investigates identity and diverse cultures through community beading workshops. Join us for this artist-led workshop of skill learning and story sharing. Participants go home with their own embroidery.

2nd April, 12pm – 3pm (10pp max)

**4. Curator's Tour, with Lizzy Marshall.**

Join independent curator Lizzy Marshall, for an indepth experience of the exhibition's contemporary reflections on the role of governance today.

8 April, 1.30 – 3.00pm (25 pp max)

**For all public programs, book online at [www.nationaltrust.org.au/event/governance-exhibition/](http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/event/governance-exhibition/) or ph (02) 9635 8149.**

