

GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY

MEDIA RELEASE



FROM THE COLLECTION: GERTRUDE CONTEMPORARY REGIONAL RESIDENCIES, CHAPTER TWO

ARTISTS: LAUREN BERKOWITZ, OPEN SPATIAL WORKSHOP (OSW—TERRI BIRD, BIANCA HESTER AND SCOTT MITCHELL), GEOFF ROBINSON

EXHIBITION DATES: 1 August–20 September 2015
OPENING CELEBRATION: Friday 14 August, 6–8pm

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Latrobe Regional Gallery, 138 Commercial Road, Morwell, Victoria

Gertrude Contemporary and the Latrobe Regional Art Gallery are pleased to present *From the Collection: Chapter Two*, a new exhibition curated by Emily Cormack that invites three leading contemporary artists/artist collectives to respond to objects within the Latrobe Regional Art Gallery collection and the physical, historical and social context of the Latrobe Valley. Many of the objects in the Gallery's collection reflect the shifting attitudes towards land use—whether it be mining or farming—in this highly active landscape, and the artists in this exhibition provoke these dynamics.

OSW began their thinking by focusing on an approximately 23 million year old, partially fossilised Kauri log that was dug up from the Loy Yang open cut mine, one of three major coal mines in the Latrobe Valley. Now in the Museum Victoria Collection, this log is to be repatriated to the region,

and displayed as part of their work in the exhibition, titled *Splinter*. This large log then forms a conceptual and material nexus for a selection of works from the Latrobe Gallery collection focused on material conversions. In their selection, OSW highlight the corresponding transformations between the Latrobe landscape—with its gaping pits—and the ever increasing size of Melbourne.

For Lauren Berkowitz's sculptural installation *Energy Fields*, she has collected native Eucalyptus species which she has used to create a modernist cube. Drawing on their potential as an alternative energy source, this cube will hang alongside a floor work that quotes Malevich's 1915 *Black Square on a White Field* painting, through the use of locally sourced coal briquettes and crushed quartz from the Victorian goldfields. Combined, both works point to the restraint of nature, processing its errant energy and training it into rigid, man-made templates.

Geoff Robinson's new project *...turn right at the palm tree(s)* responds to Colin Sugget's work *Greeting from Electric Valley...* *turn right at the palm trees* from the Latrobe Regional Gallery collection. Robinson draws on this work to create a sound

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map of Morwell, highlighting its proximity to the Yallourn, Hazelwood and Loy Yang power stations. Robinson will work with brass players to act as sonic beacons (much like fog horns at sea) to create sounds at each power station and at the site of the iconic twin palms in Morwell. Replayed in the gallery, the sounds will create a scaled spatial map whose coordinates are the three power stations and the palm trees, emphasising the triumph of industrial markers over geographic orientation in the Latrobe region.

Embedded within each new commission is a focus on the complex interplay between humankind and our unsustainable reliance on the land, tracing the ways in which this relationship has played out over and over since the mid nineteenth century in the Latrobe Valley.

From the Collection is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria. This project has also been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. This project also received development funding from the National Exhibitions Touring Service (NETS) Victoria.

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Image: Geoff Robinson, ...*turn right at the palm tree(s)*(site images), 2015.