

Patrice Sharkey lives on Wurundjeri Land in Naarm Melbourne and is currently the Head of Exhibitions and Programs at TarraWarra Museum of Art. As the guest curator of *Ricochet*, she has drawn upon her ongoing interest in revisionist histories and intergenerational exchange, alongside a sustained engagement with artists she encountered and collaborated with during her time as the Artistic Director of Adelaide Contemporary Experimental (ACE), 2019–23. Previous to this, she was the Director of West Space, 2015–18; and Assistant Curator at Monash University Museum of Art, 2011–15. Between 2020 and 2024 she served as an elected organisational representative and Deputy Chair on the Board of the National Association of the Visual Arts (NAVA).

Sharkey has worked on major projects with a wide-range of leading Australian artists, including Fiona Abicare, Sidney McMahon, Sam Petersen, George Egerton-Warburton, Lisa Radford, Jason Phu, Ryan Presley (Marri Ngarr), Yhonnie Scarce (Kokatha, Nukunu) and Hossein Valamanesh. Her most recent curatorial initiatives at ACE include *A river that flows both ways*: Selected works from the 23rd Biennale of Sydney: *rivus* and *Peter Waples-Crowe: PRIDE*, co-curated with Dominic Guerrero for *Tarnanthi: Festival of Contemporary Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Art*.

Octopus 24: Ricochet

Curated by Patrice Sharkey

Destiny Deacon, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Chelsea Farquhar, Dominic Guerrero, Truc Truong and William Yang

Gertrude Contemporary
15 June – 4 August 2024

We respectfully advise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that this exhibition contains names, footage and voices of deceased persons.

Since 2001, the annual *Octopus* exhibition series has supported ambitious curatorial practice, inviting a curator to develop a project informed by their current research and providing a platform for new forms of exhibition making. This year, Gertrude welcomes Patrice Sharkey, who has drawn upon her ongoing interest in revisionist histories and intergenerational exchange, alongside a sustained engagement with artists she encountered and collaborated with during her time as the Artistic Director of Adelaide Contemporary Experimental.

Ricochet is an exhibition conceived to honor those who have reckoned—and continue to reckon—with the power of representation to influence our social and political lives. Forming the foundation of *Ricochet* are multidisciplinary visual artist Destiny Deacon (KuKu and Erub/Mer, 1957–2024), electronic music pioneer and performance artist Cosey Fanni Tutti (1951–), and social history photographer and gay rights activist William Yang (1943–).

Each groundbreaking in their own right, these artists are united by a compelling, often subversive, ability to blend autobiography and performativity—whether examining the wide discrepancies between representations of Aboriginal people by the white Australian population and the reality of Aboriginal life (Deacon); channeling personal experiences in pornographic modeling and striptease (Fanni Tutti); or documenting Australia's queer scene in the late 1970s and 1980s (Yang).

Select works by Deacon, Fanni Tutti, and Yang are presented in dialogue with new commissions by South Australia-based artists Chelsea Farquhar, Dominic Guerrero (Kurna, Ngarrindjeri), and Truc Truong. In so doing, *Ricochet* recognises the work undertaken by these senior artists to broaden critical spaces

around lived experience, thereby paving the way for a new generation to interrogate and self affirm their own ideas concerning identity, sexuality, community, friendship, family, activism, and power.

It is with great sorrow that Gertrude and curator Patrice Sharkey respectfully acknowledge the recent passing of artist and political activist Destiny Deacon (Erub/Mer and K'ua K'ua), and the mourning and grief of Deacon's vast and loving communities.

All efforts and consultations have been made to ensure cultural protocols are followed in regard to the exhibition of works by the artist. Permissions are given by the artist's family and estate to exhibit works during this significant period of mourning.

Acknowledgements

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Gertrude would like to acknowledge and thank our generous supporters, patrons, sponsors and programming partners whose support enables us to continue building the careers of Australia's contemporary artists.

Gertrude is supported by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria; the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body; and through the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.

Gertrude acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the traditional owners and custodians of the land and waters on which we operate. We pay our respects to the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and their ancestors and Elders – past, present, and future.



Australian Government
Visual Arts and Craft Strategy



Government of South Australia
Arts South Australia



List of works

1. Truc Truong
Torn Asunder, 2024
Wooden church pew and pre-owned soft-toys
340 cm (long), 80 cm (wide), 1 m (high)

Courtesy of the artist

2. Chelsea Farquhar
Glass hood, 2024
Glass, solder, copper, ribbon, aluminium spikes
Dimensions variable

3. Chelsea Farquhar
CMYK triptych, 2024
Glass, screen printing ink, chain, solder, copper
Model: Macey Smith
Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

4. Dominic Guerrera
Us, 2024
Vinyl text composed of three individual poems
Graphic design: Tyrone Ormsby
Dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

5. William Yang
Family at Dimbulah, circa 1957, ~1957
Ink jet print on fine art paper
37 x 50 cm

6. William Yang
The Disguise, 1989
Ink jet print on fine art paper
56.5 x 36.5 cm

7. William Yang
Three Epiphanies, 2013
Ink jet print on fine art paper
27 x 130 cm

8. William Yang
William at Thornborough (2006), 2006-2009
Ink jet print on fine art paper
65 x 89 cm

9. William Yang
Self portrait with stars, 2007
Ink jet print on fine art paper
46 x 70 cm

Courtesy of the artist

10. Destiny Deacon
I seen myself, 1991-2003
Lightjet print from Polaroid original
100 x 139.5 cm

11. Destiny Deacon
Waiting for Goddess A, 1993-2003
Lightjet print from Polaroid original
60 x 48 cm (image size), 75 x 62 cm (print size)

12. Destiny Deacon
Waiting for Goddess C, 1993-2003
Lightjet print from Polaroid original
60 x 48 cm (image size), 75 x 62 cm (print size)

13. Destiny Deacon
Waiting for Goddess D, 1993-2003
Lightjet print from Polaroid original
60 x 48 cm (image size), 75 x 62 cm (print size)

14. Destiny Deacon
Blak lik mi, 1991-2003
Colour laser print from Polaroid original
100 x 214.5 cm

15. Destiny Deacon
I don't wanna be a bludger, 1999
Digital betacam shown as single channel digital video,
colour, sound, aspect ratio: 4:3
48 minutes 43 seconds

Courtesy of The Estate of Destiny Deacon
and Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Eora Sydney

16. Cosey Fanni Tutti
Harmonic COUMaction, 2017
HD Film, colour, stereo sound
35 minutes 58 seconds

17. Cosey Fanni Tutti
Incognito, 1979-2021
Seven c-type prints
7 parts, each 35.5 x 35.5 x 3 cm
Edition 3 + 2AP

Courtesy of the artist and Cabinet Gallery, London



Biographies

Dr Destiny Deacon was a descendant of the KuKū (Far North Queensland) and Erub/Mer (Torres Strait) people.

An artist and political activist, Deacon trailblazed the contemporary Australian art world with incisive wit, repurposing stereotypes to reclaim Indigenous self-representation. Working across photography, video, sculpture and installation, her work often features members of her family and friends as well as items from her collection of ‘Aboriginalia’ (i.e. assorted black dolls and kitsch) to reflect and parody the world around her.

Key works featured in *Ricochet* include the triptych *Blak lik mi* (1991)—widely accepted as the first time an Aboriginal person used the spelling ‘blak’—and the 1999 video *I don't wanna be a bludger* that, starring the artist in the lead role, takes a satirical look at urban Aboriginal life.

Major surveys of Deacon’s thirty-year practice have been presented by the National Gallery of Victoria (*DESTINY*, 2020) and Museum of Contemporary Art Australia (Walk and don’t look blak, 2004). Internationally acclaimed, she has also been included in the 24th edition of the Biennale of Sydney (*Ten Thousand Suns*, 2024); Sharjah Biennial 15 (*Thinking Historically in the Present*, 2023); and 10th Havana Biennial (2009).

Cosey Fanni Tutti is a founding member of the performance art collective COUM Transmissions and its influential offshoot—the industrial band Throbbing Gristle. She is also known as one half of pioneering electronic acts, Chris & Cosey and Carter Tutti.

Fanni Tutti began her art and music career in the North of England in 1969, appearing in live performances and musical improvisations in and around Hull until 1972. Often working naked in her performances, she went on to investigate self-image within the context of sex magazines and sex films, glamor modeling and striptease. Her experiences within these industries were brought into her art practice between 1973-84, as she explored the many aspects of sex as it is perceived and transacted as a commercial product.

Incognito (1979-2021) is part of a larger body of work in which the artist systematically documented her then current and complete wardrobe of striptease costumes. Only made public in recent years, Incognito was previously presented as part of *Women In Revolt! Art and Activism in the UK 1970-1990* at Tate Britain (2023). It is presented alongside *Harmonic COUMaction* (2017) which uses imagery drawn from Fanni Tutti’s personal archive to create a melting and morphing portrait of her life.

Fanni Tutti’s career spans almost forty years of performance, music production and exhibitions internationally. In 2017, she published a best-selling autobiography titled *Art Sex Music* (Faber & Faber). This was followed, in 2022, by *Re-Sisters: The Lives and Recordings of Delia Derbyshire, Margery Kempe and Cosey Fanni Tutti*.

William Yang grew up in northern-Queensland as a third generation Australian of Chinese descent. Belonging to the tradition of private and candid social photography, he remains unshrinkingly devoted to documenting hidden subjects in Australian culture, beginning with Sydney’s LGBTIQ+ community in the 1970s. Overtime, his diaristic approach to photography has engaged with the impact of HIV/AIDS on his friends, his identity as a Chinese-Australian, and his family history and relationships.

Ricochet features a selection of individual works by Yang that represent the wide-ranging personal and social topics he has embraced across his fifty-year career.

His first solo exhibition, *Sydneyphiles*, was held at the Australian Centre for Photography in 1977, causing a sensation at the time due to its frank depiction of the local gay scene. He has since held over twenty individual exhibitions across Asia, Australia, Europe and North America. A major retrospective of his work, *William Yang: Seeing & Being Seen*, was presented at Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, in 2021.

Chelsea Farquhar creates sculptures utilising non-traditional materials, such as silk, beads, glass, sunlight, horsehair and beeswax. Extravagant and flamboyant in nature, contorted or abstracted bodies often appear, as do friends, who serve as models (cast or photographed). Exchange and collaboration are important to Farquhar; as is working with traditional techniques, including blacksmithing, lead lighting and costuming, in idiosyncratic ways—inside and beyond the gallery.

Farquhar’s works for *Ricochet* are partly inspired by American artist Nancy Grossman who, known for her wood and leather sculptures of heads, combines exquisite craftsmanship with a long-standing exploration of the nature of violence and power.

Recent exhibitions include *In Other Words*, KINGS Artist-Run, Melbourne, 2023; and *How one should turn to stone*. —..., West Space Window, Melbourne, 2021.

Dominic Guerrera is a Ngarrindjeri, Kurna and Italian person who resides on Kurna Yarta, with a creative practice that spans poetry, photography and pottery. As a queer Aboriginal person involved in activism and community development, Guerrera’s work also extends across producing, curating and editing roles in the visual arts and literature.

In 2021 Guerrera was the recipient of the Oodgeroo Noonuccal Indigenous Poetry Prize for his poem ‘unwelcome to country’. He recently published the anthology *The Rocks Remain: Blak poetry and story*, co-edited by Karen Wyld (Wakefield Press, 2024) and is currently the First Nations Literary Editor for Cordite Poetry Review.

Ricochet shares Guerrera’s skills as a storyteller through the graphic translation of three selected poems: *birth*, *quandong* and *Them Boys*.

Truc Truong works across assemblage and sculpture, drawing inspiration from experiences and stories retold by her family. Treading a fine line between rage and humour, she unpacks forces of assimilation and cultural adaptation—especially the ways they impact the Vietnamese community in Australia.

For *Ricochet*, Truong has turned her attention to the complex layers of trust, knowledge, acceptance and religious indoctrination. A punchy juxtaposition, *Torn Asunder* features a three metre church pew completely enveloped by dismembered soft toys, which serve as a recurring emblem of childhood innocence and comfort in her practice.

Recent exhibitions include *Primavera 2023: Young Australian Artists*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney; *macro-stuffed-supper*, Post Office Projects, Adelaide, 2023; and *hai con lân việt kiều* (*Two overseas Vietnamese unicorns*), 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney, 2021.