

Arini Byng

How we breathe

6 June –
12 July 2025

Gertrude
Glasshouse

Sun and matter hum out of shadows
like something elemental or the next rooms easy
listening (lovely idea of us stretched out on grass,
lovely idea of us). Quiver of a blinds tassel
vaseline leaves open into winterish myth. Yearning
finds tones: you burning again into being.

– Travis Byng c. 2009

The artist and Gertrude acknowledge the unceded sovereign lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Eastern Kulin Nation, where this exhibition takes place. They pay their respects to their ancestors and Elders—past, present and emerging, and honour their enduring connection to land, waters and skies.

The artist would like to thank Alexandra Peters, Amaara Raheem, Amy May Stuart, Anador Walsh, Dan Rule, Emily McRae, Francis Carmody, Isobel Knowles, Jacob Coppedge, Justine Ellis, Lisa Radford, Olivia Koh, Peta Duncan, Peter Hatzipavlis, Storm Gold, Tamsen Hopkinson and her family, and the Gertrude team for their generous support, collaboration, and contributions.

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body.

Gertrude is assisted by the Visual Arts Craft and Design Framework, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments; and by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

The 2025 Glasshouse Program is supported by the City of Yarra.

Glasshouse is generously supported by Michael Schwarz and David Clouston. In 2025, Gertrude celebrates one decade of Glasshouse.



Australian Government
Visual Art, Craft and Design Framework



CREATIVE
VICTORIA



- 03 A life lived through gestures
by Anador Walsh
- 07 In the mi[d]st of mourning
by Olivia Koh
- 11 TRANSMISSION III:
An Expanded Index
by Tamsen Hopkinson
- 17 The Collected Letters
by Travis Byng
- 19 List of works
- 20 Biographies

A life lived through gestures by Anador Walsh

'The body's sensation, its feeling, its touch, are with history.' – Randy Martin¹

To be intimately acquainted with Arini Byng's practice, is to know that it is through her work that she attempts to understand the world, her own experience, and the structures that shape both. Arini works across conventional mediums—photography, video, performance, painting and installation—but it could be argued that gesture is the primary medium uniting her artistic output. Gestures do not merely appear in Arini's works, they shape them. Arini's works are borne of the body and the quiet assertion that the personal is political.

Dancer and cultural theorist Randy Martin considered movement as being indexed by the socio-political and the psycho-emotional.² He saw dance as having, 'a sentient apprehension of movement and a sense of possibility as to where motion can lead us, that amounts to a material amalgamation of thinking and doing as world-making activity'.³ Arini's performance works—which often include a mix of trained and untrained dancerly, artistic and/or musical collaborators—reflect this in their examination of our corporeality. They use careful gestures to distill the ways in which one experiences the world through the body, and the inherent cultural significance of each material self. To date, her performance works have conceptually troubled the body's encounter with specific spatial settings, personal and familial dynamics, and political and social issues.

Until 2023, Arini's practice was underpinned by a collaboration with her father, Travis Byng, a Black American man born and raised in Philadelphia. Travis migrated to Australia in 1984 with Arini's mother, Anna, and her sister Chren. Travis was Arini's best friend and the bridge between her life here in colonial Australia and her Black American family and cultural history. Arini's PHOTO 2022 exhibition *Some voices carry* at CAVES in Naarm Melbourne—in which she exhibited images from her family's archive, framed or mounted on steel screens—provides a poignant example. The exhibition emphasised the role that photography plays in connecting diaspora artists like Arini, whose cultural identity is conflicted, to the familial and cultural history from which they're removed.

Shortly before Arini entered the Gertrude Studio Program, Travis passed away suddenly, leaving Arini to grieve not only the loss of her parent and collaborator, but to come to terms with what it means to continue to make work engaging with her cultural heritage, without her primary link to it. The work that Arini has made during her studio tenure is marked by this grief. The paintings in *How we breathe* may be read as cathartic expressions of processing this profound loss. These paintings are laden with the gestures of Arini's hand and mirror the state of flux she has been in, whilst grappling with how to work without her father.

In the other works in *How we breathe*, the artist can be seen emerging from this period of uncertainty and starting to carve out a new way of working. The photographic collage works in this exhibition continue the work begun in *Some voices carry*, but using a new methodology. They overlay images from her familial archive with pages taken from issues of EBONY magazine from the year 1980, when her parents met, and 1982 when they got married. Published by the now-defunct Black-owned Johnson Publishing Company, EBONY is described as a magazine, 'by us, for us'.⁴ The periodical centres on issues of social justice, health and wellness, beauty, fashion, sports and education, spotlighting the experience and contribution

of Black Americans.

Arini's collages employ a similar approach to that used by Theaster Gates in the 2024-25 exhibition, *When Clouds Roll Away: Reflection and Restoration* from the Johnson Archive.⁵ Gates bound his personal collection of EBONY magazines in three pink leather editions and inserted blank pages at the centre to demarcate space and create room for future engagement.⁶ So too are Arini's collages an incursion into archival material. Arini's placement of private family photographs over pages from EBONY with corresponding headlines or content is an attempt to situate her familial narrative in the broader cultural experience of the time these photos and magazines were made. In this respect, this overlaying is a strategy to travel—emotionally and temporally—and connect with that which has been lost—a time, place and context she feels distanced from. Arini describes it as, 'an attempt to deconstruct my (her) understanding of Blackness.'⁷

The performance *How to Just Be*, which opens and closes this exhibition, is a new iteration of a work commissioned for Performance Review's 2025 *Performing Care* project. *How to Just Be* is both the first performance Arini has made without Travis and the first working with an all-Black ensemble. To make this work, Arini collaborated with performers Jacob Coppedge (Philadelphia, USA), Peta Duncan (Mer Island, Torres Strait), and Amaara Raheem (Colombo, Sri Lanka). These performers both assumed the role that Travis held in Arini's work—as a sounding board and critical eye—and also brought their own lived experience into the work, in an attempt to answer the question, 'What feels meaningful to express in a world shaped by absence?' The question is both deeply personal in the context of Arini's grief and universal in this present moment marked by mass loss, economic disparity, and social upheaval.

Through a series of choreographic workshops, Byng, Coppedge, Duncan and Raheem generated a co-authored score that explores the gaps between language and movement, relational dynamics and the ways that vulnerability physically manifests. In *Performance as Political Act: The Embodied Self*, Martin wrote, 'the body as it is revealed through performance stands as a source of political activity. Like any agent of social change, it forges its own agenda and responds to a particular history. The body then cannot be reduced to a mere reflection of what it opposes.'⁸ *How to Just Be* is proof of this idea, that the performing body does not reflect the political, but rather is political. Through subtle, yet impactful gestures, this performance does not simply evoke a representation of tender kinship, but presents to us a collective. In this way, it evokes the quiet yet powerful activism implicit in coming together as a mode of resistance.

Marrying movement and dialogue, Coppedge, Duncan and Raheem move slowly through different choreographic sequences. They either move together or in a combination of solos and duos, and when they speak, they either break off alone or do so in chorus. Duncan and Raheem build a tent—purchased by Arini's parents in 1981—while Coppedge watches on, dancing beside them. The performers oscillate around each other, resting their heads against one another's shoulders and backs, pausing in different configurations. What unites this performance is a palpable sense of support and an acknowledgement of shared experience. Coppedge, Duncan and Raheem's constant physical contact with themselves, each other, or props, tangibly affirms the care that exists between these three performers.

How to Just Be emphasises the necessity of a support network, as a salve against deeply uncomfortable and divided times, and as a paddle to wade through grief.

The three bodies of work in *How we breathe*, chart Arini's journey over the last two years and the role that artistic practice has played. United by subtle gestures, Arini's paintings see her moving through and coming to terms with loss; her photographic collages see her testing new approaches to broach subject matter she has felt blocked from working with since her father's death; as does the performance *How to Just Be*, which sees her forming new relationships and seeking new modes of support to continue practicing in this medium. *How we breathe* is an exhibition about grief and becoming, about losing kin and finding others. Graceful and restrained, it is a show about strength and resilience.

1. Randy Martin, *Performance as Political Act: The Embodied Self* (Connecticut: Praeger, 1990),
2. June Miskell, "the feeling that moves us," Free Association, 07.04.2021, <https://freeassociation.com.au/?texts=the-feeling-that-moves-us>.
3. André Lepecki, *Of the Presence of the Body: Essays on Dance and Performance Theory* (Connecticut, Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 48.
4. "EBONY Magazine: Moving Black Forward," EBONY, viewed 1 May 2025, <https://www.ebony.com/about-ebony/>.
5. "Exhibitions:Theaster Gates When Clouds Roll Away Reflection and Restoration from the Johnson Archive," Rebuild Foundation, viewed 1 May 2025, <https://www.rebuild-foundation.org/exhibitions>.
6. "EBONY Books, a Theaster Gates Collection," The Conservation Centre, viewed 1 May 2025, <https://www.theconservationcenter.com/articles/2016/9/14/ebony-books-a-theaster-gates-collection>.
7. Arini Byng, in conversation with Anador Walsh, 20 May 2025.
8. Martin, *Performance as Political Act*, 2.

Anador Walsh is a curator, writer and the Director of Performance Review. She has worked with Arini Byng for over six years. This piece is informed by her ongoing dialogue with the artist.

In the mi[d]st of mourning

by Olivia Koh

Ebony

noun

eb·o·ny / e-bə-nē

plural ebonies

1. a hard heavy blackish wood yielded by various tropical chiefly southeast Asian trees (genus *Diospyros* of the family Ebenaceae, the ebony family)
2. a) a tree yielding ebony
b) any of several trees yielding wood like ebony ¹

What is the meaning of the color ebony The color ebony was named after the wood from a tropical tree commonly found in South Asia, a distinguished material known today for its use in piano keys and chess pieces. The historical popularity of ebony wood was extensive, and the color ebony inspired displays of opulence from architecture to artifacts. Today, ebony material is unsustainable to harvest and the species of tree is considered endangered. The color ebony belongs to the green-gray color family and is considered an undertone of black. Ebony color is often paired with white for a timeless palette. ²

You Press the Button – We Do the Rest ³

Against the backdrop of Jim Crow, Ebony magazine addressed African American cultural and political realities. From the lives of Hollywood celebrities to the ongoing fight for human and civil rights, Johnson Publishing Company publications documented key moments in African American life that changed how we think about ourselves as a nation.

Starting with its first issue in November 1945, Ebony chronicled black life and contributions across regions and generations. In documenting the American experience, Ebony extended its value beyond its iconic place in American popular culture. As an archival resource, the publication reimaged its meaning and value as a vital record of American history. ⁴

A photograph is clinical

A photograph is observational

A photograph is a record

A photograph is an instrument

A photograph is intuitive

A photograph stills a moment in time

Ebony was founded to provide positive images for blacks in a world of negative images and non-images. It was founded to project all dimensions of the black personality in a world saturated with stereotypes. ⁵

Image description: A vintage colour photo, 6 × 8 inch print depicting a person standing on a street sidewalk amongst passersby, wearing a white, short-sleeved shirt, black trousers and black sandals. Holding an array of commercial sized balloons, one arm is raised above head-height to hold the neck of the balloons, while the other arm clutches

the bunch of red strings they are tied with. The photograph is taken at eye level, where the sidewalk appears as a straight diagonal line, meeting the road in the foreground.

Under frameworks of Western social values, loss and grief are often siloed; only appropriate in certain circumstances. Western mourning practices are marked by offering condolences, like: 'I'm sorry for your loss'. A western singular understanding is that mourning follows a linear trajectory or 'stages of grief'.⁶

Stuart Hall makes the point that the West is an idea or concept, a language for imagining a set of complex stories, ideas, historical events and social relationships. Hall suggests that the concept of the West functions in ways which (1) allow 'us' to characterise and classify societies into categories, (2) condense complex images of other societies through a system of representation, (3) provide a standard model of comparison, and (4) provide criteria of evaluation against which other societies can be ranked.⁷

I want to tell how sorrow makes a shape that is familiar. And how that familiar thing can be difficult both to name and to narrate.⁸

David L. Eng and David Kazanjian argue for a reframing of Freud's concept of Melancholia in Mourning and Melancholia. Instead of something dysfunctional and pathologised, Melancholia has a great creative potential and a palimpsest like quality.⁹

For Barthes:
the operator is the photographer
the spectator, the viewer of the photograph
the studium is a photograph within its cultural world; that which seems to lend and convey meaning
the punctum is subjective and personal – it is that not-predetermined aspect of a photograph that has an effect on the viewer.¹⁰

In *Ordinary Notes* (2023) Sharpe points out Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida* (1980) composes what he imagines to be a universal taxonomy of the photograph (one that he also wrote shortly after the death of his mother).

Sharpe elucidates *Camera Lucida* from a black perspective, observing that many of Barthes's photographic examples are of Black people, including those drawn from colonial archives. She writes: 'Barthes's survey of blackness (and Black people) is a gaze and not a look; and within that gaze are all of the ordering structures of white supremacy, such that he performs a misnaming and mis-seeing...'¹¹

Sample image colors with the Eyedropper tool
Select the Eyedropper tool.
Use the Options Bar to customize tool settings,
like Sample Size and Sample, to get the effect you
want. Click on the color you want to sample.

The sampled color will become the foreground color and will be added to your Swatches panel.¹²

*The Ebony Advisor is a question and answer column designed to help our readers with their problems. Answers to all questions are thoroughly researched and, if necessary, checked with competent psychiatrists, medical doctors, sociologists and other experts in the counseling of families and individuals.*¹³

When Arini Byng paints, she thinks about a range of things, including times spent with her father.

This is the condition by which Barthes not-seeing comes to (not) see himself – to insert his look as universal.¹⁴

A painting is gestural
A painting is abstract
A painting is haptic
A painting is tactile
A painting is commissioned
A painting is bestowed
A painting is shared

Reach out and touch someone.¹⁵

As well as using a brush, Byng uses her hands to paint. She uses a combination of thumb and fingers, including her index, the side of her hands, her palms.

1. Merriam Webster Online "ebony", 2025, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ebony>
2. Adobe Express, The Color Ebony, 2025, <https://www.adobe.com/express/colors/ebony>
3. George Eastman, Kodak Company slogan, 1888.
4. National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/75-years-ebony-magazine>
5. John H. Johnson "Publisher's Statement," November 1975, National Museum of African American History and Culture, Smithsonian, <https://nmaahc.si.edu/75-years-ebony-magazine>
6. Olivia Koh, Editor's Introduction, un Magazine Issue 18.4, un Projects, 2025.
7. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, University of Otago Press, 1999, 'Chapter 2: Research Through Imperial Eyes' pp. 42–43.
8. Christina Sharpe, Ordinary Notes, Daunt Books Originals 2023, Note 83, pp. 128.
9. David L. Eng and David Kazanjian, Loss: The Politics of Mourning, University of California Press, 2001.
10. Christina Sharpe, Ordinary Notes, Daunt Books Originals 2023, Note 123, pp. 183–184.
11. Ibid.
12. Sample image colours with the eyedropper tool, Adobe Support, <https://helpx.adobe.com/au/photoshop/using/tool-techniques/eyedropper-tool.html>
13. The Ebony Advisor, Ebony Magazine, Johnson Publishing, January 1982.
14. Christina Sharpe, Ordinary Notes, Daunt Books Originals 2023, Note 83, pp. 128.
15. Ebony Magazine, Advertisement slogan, Bell System, 1981-1982.

Olivia Koh is an artist based on the Eastern Kulin Nations, on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung land. She organises recess (recess.net.au), an online platform for moving image works. She teaches photography for a living.

TRANSMISSION III: An Expanded Index by Tamsen Hopkinson

↑ TRANSMISSION considers the role of text to expand on an experience of an exhibition while also existing within its own parameters. *An Expanded Index* was designed to fit in other formats and has been expanded for Arini Byng's exhibition *How we breathe*. It is a navigation tool for the viewer and has space to add personal notes and annotations. It is the third iteration of an ongoing series.

* definitions and words sourced from EBONY vol. XXV no. 10, August 1970.

ABSENCE / PRESENCE

Absence is the state of being away or not present in a place where one is expected to be. It commonly refers to situations where someone does not attend an event, class, meeting, or workplace. Absence can be temporary or prolonged, excused or unexcused, and it may carry different implications depending on the context. For example, in a school or work setting, repeated absences might affect performance or attendance records. In a more abstract sense, absence can also refer to the lack or nonexistence of something, such as the absence of light, sound, or emotion. Regardless of the setting, absence generally implies that something or someone that should be present is missing.

Presence is the state of being present or existing in a particular place or situation. It often refers to someone's physical attendance or participation, such as being present at a meeting, event, or classroom. Presence can also extend beyond the physical, encompassing the impact or influence a person or thing has in a given environment. For example, a leader may have a strong presence that affects the mood or direction of a group. In more abstract terms, presence can refer to the existence or recognition of something, such as the presence of love, danger, or tension in a particular setting. Overall, presence signifies that someone or something is actively there and capable of being noticed, felt, or acknowledged.

ANGEL / NUMBERS

Angel numbers are sequences of repeating numbers believed to carry spiritual messages from the divine or guardian angels. Each pattern, like 111 or 444, is thought to offer guidance, reassurance, or insight, with specific meanings tied to each number, such as new beginnings or protection. Popular in numerology and New Age spirituality, angel numbers are seen as signs to trust intuition and stay aligned with one's path.

BLACK / WHITE

The term Black refers to people of African descent, though it encompasses a diverse range of ethnicities, cultures, and histories. It emerged through systems of racial classification, colonialism, and the slave trade, and today it includes individuals from sub-Saharan Africa and the African diaspora across the Americas, the Caribbean, Europe, and beyond. While people within the black community share a history of oppression and marginalisation, their experiences and identities can differ greatly depending on their region or background. Black identity is not just about skin colour, but also about shared cultural heritage, resilience, and the ongoing fight for equality. Despite the diversity within Black communities, there is a common thread of solidarity rooted in a collective history of resistance and pride. Black also refers to the colour that symbolises darkness, the absence of light, or the deepest shade in the colour spectrum. It is often associated with mystery, elegance, and power, as well as negative connotations like grief, mourning, or the unknown, seen in phrases such as "black hole" or "black mood."

The term White often refers to people of European descent, particularly those with lighter skin tones. It has historically been used to categorise and separate people based on race, often tied to systems of privilege and power in many societies. White identity has been shaped by cultural, social, and historical factors, with different groups within the "white" category, such as those from Northern or Southern Europe, having distinct backgrounds. Outside of race, white refers to

the color associated with light, purity, and cleanliness. It's often linked to ideas of innocence, peace, and simplicity, as seen in symbols like white doves or wedding dresses. In design, white is used for its clarity, brightness, and minimalism, offering a sense of space and calm.

BLAK

Blak is a reimagining of the word "black," with the "c" deliberately removed. It was coined by artist and activist Destiny Deacon as a way to challenge the traditional, colonial understandings of race and to emphasise the cultural identity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The removal of the "c" serves to separate Indigenous identity from the ongoing project of colonisation. The word Blak is a powerful tool for reclaiming and redefining Indigenous experiences, histories, and narratives that have long been marginalised or distorted. It's a statement of resistance, pride, and survival, aiming to break free from the racial categories imposed by colonisation by fostering a sense of empowerment, encouraging Indigenous peoples to define their own identity on their own terms.

CIRCULAR / LINEAR / TIME

In Te Ao Māori time is cyclical; both the beginning and end are part of the same phenomenon. The past, present and future are experienced simultaneously. The whakatauki 'Ka mua, ka muri' is the idea that we walk backwards into the future. It tells us that we must look to the past to inform the future. Circular time in Te Ao Māori reflects the belief that events and experiences recur in cycles. In contrast, time in Western culture is a progression from past to present to future, with events unfolding in a linear sequence. This perspective often focuses on progress, development and the pursuit of individual goals over time.

EBONY AND IVORY

Ebony and ivory refer to two different materials—one dark and one light—that are often used to represent contrast, especially in terms of race and unity. Ebony is a dark, almost black wood prized for its smooth texture and used in fine furniture and instruments. Ivory, on the other hand, is a white substance from elephant tusks, historically used for carvings and luxury items, and represents the colour white. The phrase ebony and ivory is famously used in the song "Ebony and Ivory" by Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder.

FATE / SYNCHRONICITY

Fate refers to the idea that events or outcomes in life are predetermined and inevitable, beyond the control of individuals. It suggests that certain occurrences are destined to happen, regardless of human effort, and that the course of one's life is guided by an overarching, often mysterious force. In many philosophical, religious, and literary contexts, fate is seen as an unavoidable power that shapes the future, often contrasted with free will, which emphasises personal choice and autonomy.

Synchronicity is a concept introduced by psychoanalyst Carl Jung, referring to the meaningful coincidence of events that seem unrelated but occur together in a way that is not due to chance. These events are connected by meaning rather than by cause and effect, suggesting that there is a deeper underlying order in the universe. Synchronicity highlights how personal experiences or external events align in a way that feels significant, often providing insight, guidance, or a sense of connection to something greater.

FATHER / DAUGHTER

Father typically refers to a male parent, someone who contributes to the biological creation of a child and, in many cases, takes on the role of raising, nurturing, and providing for the child. The concept of a father goes beyond biological connection, however, and can include a figure who offers emotional support, guidance, and care, regardless of genetic relation. Fathers often play a crucial role in the development and upbringing of children, influencing their social, emotional, and intellectual growth. In broader cultural or societal contexts, the term "father" can also be used to describe a founding figure or a male leader, such as in the case of the "Founding Fathers" of a nation. Ultimately, the role of a father is shaped by both biological and social factors, and can vary significantly across different cultures and family structures.

A daughter is a female child in relation to her parents. She can be born to or adopted by a family and is part of the family unit. The role of a daughter often involves growing up with the care and guidance of her parents. The term can also refer to a female descendant or offspring in a family line. Expectations of a daughter can vary based on culture and family, but it generally represents a connection to one's family and heritage. In a broader sense, "daughter" can also refer to something that comes from or is a result of something else, like a "daughter company" being owned by another.

FRAME / MEDIA

A frame is a structure that surrounds or supports something, often used to give shape or stability. It can refer to a physical object, such as the border around a picture, a window, or a door, or it can describe the framework of a building or a vehicle. In a broader sense, a frame can also refer to a structure in a more abstract way, like the framework of an idea or argument. The purpose of a frame is usually to provide support, protection, or context, helping to define the boundaries or limits of what is inside. In media and communication, "framing" refers to the way information is presented to shape how it is understood.

Media refers to the various channels or platforms used to communicate and share information, entertainment, or news with a wide audience. This includes traditional forms like television, radio, and newspapers, as well as digital platforms such as websites, social media, and podcasts. Media plays a key role in shaping public opinion, influencing culture, and providing a space for people to connect and share ideas. It can be used for entertainment, education, advertising, and even activism. Over time, the way we consume media has evolved, with digital technology enabling more interactive and immediate forms of communication. The term "media" can also refer to the collective industry or institutions involved in the creation and distribution of content.

GRIEF / DURATIONAL

Grief is the deep emotional response to loss, typically experienced after the death of a loved one, but it can also arise from other significant losses, such as the end of a relationship, loss of a job, or major life changes. Grief is a complex and multifaceted process that involves a range of emotions, including sadness, anger, confusion, guilt, and sometimes even relief. The experience of grief is highly individual and can vary in intensity and duration depending on the person and the nature of the loss.

Durational refers to something that is related to or characterised by a specific

duration or length of time. In various contexts, it is used to describe events, actions, or phenomena that are defined by how long they last. For example, in music, "durational" can refer to the length of time a note or sound is sustained, such as in rhythm or tempo. In other fields like linguistics or philosophy, "durational" may describe the temporal extent of a particular process or event. Overall, the term emphasises the importance of time and duration in understanding the nature of the subject it describes

INTEGRATION*

Integration refers to the process of combining or bringing together different elements into a unified whole. It is often used to describe the blending of people, groups, or systems to work together harmoniously. For example, social integration involves the inclusion of people from different backgrounds or cultures into a society, promoting equality and interaction. In the context of technology or business, integration might refer to the combining of various systems or processes to improve efficiency and functionality. Integration can also apply to education, where students of different abilities or backgrounds are taught together in the same environment. Overall, it emphasises the idea of bringing separate parts together to create unity, cohesion, and cooperation.

LIBERATE*

Liberate means to set someone or something free from restriction, control, or oppression. It involves removing constraints or limitations, allowing for independence, freedom, and self-determination. For example, a nation can be liberated from colonial rule, or an individual can be liberated from unfair circumstances or social restrictions. The term can also apply to freeing people from mental or emotional barriers, helping them overcome fear, ignorance, or prejudice. Liberating something often involves effort, struggle, or resistance, as it is about breaking away from forces that keep it confined. In essence, to liberate is to empower by granting freedom or autonomy.

SEPARATION*

Separation refers to the act of dividing or keeping things apart. It can be used in various contexts, such as the physical or emotional distancing of people, objects, or ideas. For example, separation can describe the process of ending a relationship, dividing materials in a scientific process, or distinguishing different concepts in a discussion. It can also refer to the state of being apart, like the separation of countries or groups based on political, cultural, or social differences. In legal terms, separation often refers to the process where married couples live apart, either as a precursor to divorce or as a legal arrangement. Generally, separation involves creating or acknowledging a gap or division between two entities or states.

SUSPENDED / SCENE

A suspended scene refers to a moment where the action pauses to create a sense of anticipation or tension. It's often used for dramatic effect or to build suspense. In such scenes, characters may be caught in a critical situation, facing a decision, or experiencing a significant revelation, leaving the observer in suspense as they await the resolution or continuation of the scene.

Tamsen Hopkinson (b. 1986, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Pāhauwera) is an artist and curator from Aotearoa based in Naarm. She is interested in systems of measurement, and the fraught application of these systems to ideas of language, sovereignty and agency.

The Collected Letters

by Travis Byng

The collected letters are now
away in a little box
amongst the other boxes,
in the tightly packed closet
of the shared terrace's
silent spare room upstairs.

In the leaf-drenched light
at a bright mornings end,
the others all away
for their own weekdays
routine indulgence,
now the room's forgotten orders

And collective anonymity
leave it better not less,
for all its pale green spareness
a lanky eucalypt just chases
its wild and resourceful shadow
over a box that says:

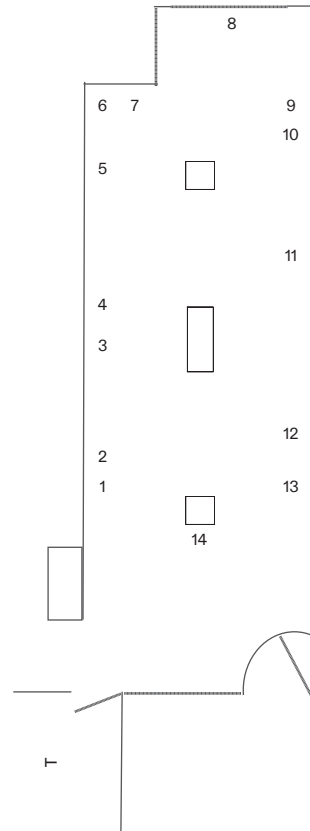
ITEM: WINNING SPIRIT FOREVER
A mattress drowns against
the wall and the honeyed
floorboards grow warm in their skins,
the last moments pass truly
until some plan comes together

c. 2009

List of works

1. *Nana and Beulah* 2025
pigment inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper
35.3 × 27.1 cm
2. *Face Color: Pure Brown Glo Perfect Finish with Precious Plum Creme Rouge and Plum Pearl Beauty Blush* 2025
oil on canvas board
40.6 × 30.5 cm
3. *Reach out and touch someone* 2025
pigment inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper
35.3 × 27.1 cm
4. *Wax Poetics* 2024
oil on canvas
40.5 × 30.3 cm
5. *Let Us Never Speak Of It Again* 2025
oil on linen
51 × 40.7 cm
6. *Voodoo Guru* 2024
oil on board
25.3 × 22 cm
7. *19 Lombardy Street Richmond Virginia (where my sister was born)* 2025
pigment inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper
35.3 × 27.1 cm
8. *WINNING SPIRIT FOREVER* 2025
oil on linen
97 × 76.5 cm
9. *Smokestack Lighting* 2024
oil on board
29.9 × 23.9 cm
10. *Lovely idea of us stretched out on grass* 2024
oil on board
35.5 × 28 cm
11. *The EBONY Advisor (Mum and Dad selling balloons in Seattle)* 2025
pigment inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper
35.3 × 27.1 cm (diptych)
12. *Zoo* 2025
pigment inkjet print on Hahnemühle Photo Rag paper
35.3 × 27.1 cm
13. *S.T.R.E.E.T. D.A.D.* 2025
oil on linen
46 × 36 cm
14. *Every volume of EBONY from the year I was born* 2025
twelve EBONY magazines from 1987, edited and published by John H. Johnson
27.8 × 20.6 × 8 cm
15. Arini Byng with Jacob Coppedge, Peta Duncan and Amaara Raheem *How to Just Be* 2025
performance, carpet squares, Mum & Dad's Moss Tent (1981), bricks from home, salvaged pine bench and stools by Emily Mcrae
dimensions variable

All works courtesy of the artist



Biographies

Arini Byng (b. 1987, Gadigal Country) is a multidisciplinary artist who works with the affective qualities of materials, gestures and settings; undertaking exercises in image, movement and form to negotiate political scenes. Arini's output traverses photography, performance, video, and painting, to create complex, intimate studies in gesture and action. In recent work, Arini has incorporated her personal family archive to navigate lived experiences. This work draws on her Black-American-Anglo-Australian heritage to explore how culture and memory shape selfhood, providing a personal perspective on the complexities of diasporic identity.

Recent exhibitions and performances include *Performing Care* presented by Performance Review (2025); NGV Australia's *Melbourne Now* (2023); *Some voices carry*, presented at CAVES for PHOTO Australia and *The Singapore International Photography Festival* (2022); *Group Exhibition* at ReadingRoom (2022); and *I felt it when you fell*, performed at Bus Projects (2021), Gertrude Glasshouse (2022), and Ararat Gallery TAMA (2022). Selected works have been published by Perimeter Editions, Higher Arc, Le Roy and Photofile; with work held in the publication collections of V&A, MoMA, MOCA and Tate Modern.

Amaara Raheem is a solo and collaborative dance-artist and writer living between Narm Melbourne and Gariwerd Grampians. Her work is interdisciplinary, intercultural and site-specific. With a background in choreography and performance, Amaara's ongoing practice and research are on artist residencies. She makes performances, field-guides, video-essays, podcasts and other things that explore acts of residing. Amaara is a Creative Fellow at the State Library of Victoria, researching artists' colonies in the early 20th Century in Naarm. She is co-developing an artist-led residency on bushland in regional Victoria, where she's learning about bush regeneration practices and alternate ways of living in these complex and turbulent times.

Peta Duncan is a proud Pindjarrimbal person whose roots hail from Mer Island in the Torres Strait. Peta is a self-taught and emerging lens-based artist whose work is both an exploration of her identity and a love letter to her culture and community. Through her work, Peta explores familial relationships, cultural practices and the juxtapositions of embedding cultural knowledge in different contemporary photographic mediums and approaches.

Jacob Coppedge (b. 1996, Philadelphia) is among one of the young Black and queer talents shaping the Melbourne creative landscape. Known under many monikers for their performance work, Jacob is part of the ballroom Oceania community as a member of the House of Silky (Est. 2018). Coppedge's practice traverses plains as a multidisciplinary artist, engaging with modalities of illustration, movement/dance, and performance to expand and limitlessly delve into the realms of queer self-expression, identity, time, space, and what it means to exist.

GERTRUDE