



New Energy

Kalanjay Dhir
Jonathan Kim
Audrey Newton
Luce Nguyễn-Hunt
Nathan Nhan
Angie Pai
Nadia Refaei
EJ SON
Zoe Wong



4 June - 24 July 2022

The idea of connection lies at the heart of *New Energy*, an exhibition that brings together nine of the freshest voices in Australian contemporary art. Across this exhibition are ruminations of the relationships that bind together friends, families, communities and concepts, explored through diverse artistic practices.

The works in *New Energy* are explorations of concepts that range from intensely personal studies of identity and belonging, to deconstructions of the Western cultural canons of science fiction and art history. These artworks reflect contemporary approaches to both media and method, using creative expression as a tool to provide comment on the world around us, spinning a web of intricate conversations.

Stone and Cloth on Wood (2020) by **Jonathan Kim** is a site-specific installation guided by the artist's conceptual framework of gong-gan-seong (spatiality). The delicate composition of natural and processed materials draws attention to ideas of object relativity, and makes visible the unseen energies that exist within our world. Similarly **Kalanjay Dhir's** video installation *the best thing I can do is redirect energy* (2021/2022) asks audiences to consider the immense power of the sun as a natural resource to benefit both humans and our environment. In the video, Dhir follows the instructions of digital avatar Petalli as they encourage him to polish a sheet of brass to direct the sun's rays and feed the computer generated humanoid plant character.

The works of **Luce Nguyễn-Hunt**, **EJ SON** and **Zoe Wong** utilise their bodies as sites of study in queerness and acceptance. Nguyễn-Hunt revisits her family elders in *I'm Half* (2019/2022) and *Repercussions* (2021) as a way of evoking acceptance and healing by physically reaffirming their identity and place in the family narrative. SON plays with their Korean heritage to expose the divide between understanding feminism and body politics. Their amusing usage of sexually suggestive objects, such as flowers, capsicums and carrots, as substitutes for human anatomy, are attempts at normalising the oft-polarising issues explored in *Titty Tree* (2021) and the *Flesh Work* series (2022).

List of works

Ground floor (L-R):

Angie Pai, *Papa / DiTing One*, 2019, Acrylic and sand render on wood, 1500 x 1200 x 60mm.

Kalanjay Dhir, *the best thing I can do is redirect energy*, 2021/22, mixed media installation, dimensions variable.
Commissioned by Sydney Opera House for Shortwave.

Angie Pai, *Love is like a three legged race*, 2021-2022, enamel on paper, 1500 x 1200mm x 50mm.

Jonathan Kim, *Stone and Cloth on Wood*, 2020, stone, cloth and timber, dimensions variable.

First floor (L-R):

Zoe Wong, *Oriental Futures*, 2019, six-channel video, dimensions variable.

Audrey Newton, *A Rosebud Bloomed with Each Step That I Took*, 2022, roses, epoxy resin and latex, dimensions variable.

Nathan Nhan, *Sickly sweet tenderness*, 2022, earthenware and cone 6 glaze, 164 x 205 x 166mm.

Nathan Nhan, *Dreaming of being sick and well*, 2022, earthenware and cone 6 glaze, 196 x 125 x 129mm.

Nathan Nhan, *A Smiths song in a pot*, 2022, earthenware and cone 6 glaze, 175 x 215 x 178mm.

Nathan Nhan, *Grimace*, 2022, earthenware and cone 6 glaze, 159 x 183 x 171mm.

Nathan Nhan, *Trophy #2*, 2022, earthenware and cone 6 glaze, 196 x 125 x 129mm

EJ SON, *Titty Tree*, 2021, silicone, steel and LED lights, 1550 x 650 x 650mm.
Commissioned by Murray Albury Museum of Art.

EJ SON, *Flesh Work* series, 2022, bisque-ware, earthenware, glass, pearl, silicone and stainless steel, dimensions variable.

Luce Nguyễn-Hunt, *Repercussions*, 2021, single-channel video, 13min 02sec.

Luce Nguyễn-Hunt, *I'm Half*, 2019/2022, digitally manipulated inkjet print on matte photo paper, cut vinyl, dimensions variable.

Nadia Refaei, *Picking Geranium*, 2022, single-channel video, 14min, 32sec.

Nadia Refaei, *Sorting Rice*, 2019, single-channel video, 22min 50sec.

Wong seizes the roles of Asian femininity to subvert the Orientalist gaze portrayed in Western science fiction. *Oriental Futures* (2019) challenges the idea of using Asian futurism as an aesthetic stand-in for global technological development, and steers the lens away from stereotypical white characters by placing herself as the protagonist.

This idea of challenge is at the centre of **Audrey Newton's** new installation *A Rosebud Bloomed with Each Step That I Took* (2022). Composed of 200 red roses, Newton takes the symbolic flower and applies a suffocating coat of epoxy resin and latex to each rose in a cruel act of artificial preservation, prompting viewers to reconsider their ingrained and habitual understanding of beauty and love. **Nathan Nhan** combines the ancient earthenware vessel with a modern sporting cup trophy to question ideas of celebration in a new series of ceramics. His wheel-thrown trophies appear almost defeated with folded clay and sagging handles, but suggest the small victories of everyday life should be made to feel important.

Intergenerational care is central to **Angie Pai** and **Nadia Refaei**, as they both seek to understand their place as part of greater familial stories. *Love is like a three legged race* (2022) and *Papa / DiTing One* (2019) represent the process of comprehending methods of communication and love between Pai and her mother and father respectively. Refaei's video works *Sorting Rice* (2019) and *Picking Geranium* (2022) feature the artist undertaking imagined rituals related to memory and cultural knowledge. Both artists concern themselves with memory as a mode of acceptance and portray deliberate attempts at connection.

New Energy is a glimpse into the future of contemporary art in Australia through the practices of artists from the Asian diaspora. In our 25th year, this exhibition continues 4A's long history of presenting and supporting the careers of emerging Asian Australian artists.

New Energy is curated by Con Gerakaris.

4a.com.au/new-energy