

# Into My Arms

**amira.h.**

**Katherine Botten**

**Eugene Choi**

**Matt Huppertz**

**Lonelyspeck**

**Grace Marlow**

**Sione Monu**

**Kate Power and Susie Fraser**

**Athena Thebus**

Curated by Frances Barrett and Toby Chapman

## **OPENING**

Thursday 10 May, 5pm

## **LIVE PERFORMANCE PROGRAM**

Saturday 12 May, 4pm

Saturday 23 June, 1pm

Saturday 7 July, 1pm



11 May – 7 July, 2018

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## INTO MY ARMS

**Into My Arms** begins with the simple gesture of an embrace. Co-curated by Frances Barrett and Toby Chapman, this exhibition and live performance program centres on a series of newly commissioned works, inviting artists to respond to the provocation: in a time of social and political precarity, how can an 'embrace' enact a form of resilience and care?

Each of the works presented in **Into My Arms** elucidate the twofold nature of the embrace; to draw somebody or thing near, and to accept an idea or change. For these artists, the embrace has resonance beyond a physical encounter. Familial relationships, cultural lineages, digital revelations and speculative imaginings each serve to illustrate the emergence of new kinds of intimacy. These intimacies speak to our entanglement to others, to the past and the future, to our surrounding environment, and to new forms of technology. In these instances, to embrace is to experience a sensual, complex and textured understanding of ourselves and of the world around us.

Drawing on the ongoing collaboration between the two curators - which have included endurance performances in the gallery - **Into My Arms** foregrounds the role of the body, gesture and encounter in the work of these selected artists. As an extension of the exhibition, **Into My Arms** includes a two-day live program, which animates the gallery space as a site of intimacy, sharing and care through performative actions.

**Frances Barrett and Toby Chapman, Co-Curators**

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| <b>NOTES</b> |
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We don't understand the world as made by stones — by things. We understand the world made by kisses, or things like kisses: happenings.

**Carlo Rovelli**, Gravity's Kiss

If every object and event is irreducible in its materiality, then part of learning to touch it is to come to love its particularity, its strangeness, its precious and inimitable place in the world.

**Laura Marks**, The Skin of the Film: intercultural cinema, embodiment, and the senses

Even more immediately than other perceptual systems, it seems, the sense of touch makes nonsense out of any understanding of agency and passivity; to touch is always already to reach out, to fondle, to heft, to tap, or to enfold, and always also to understand other people or natural forces as having effectually done so before oneself, if only in the making of the textured object.

**Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick**, Touching Feeling: Affect, pedagogy, performativity

Proximity can be what you struggle for; separation what you fight against.

**Sara Ahmed**, Living a Feminist Life

Life falls apart. We try to get a grip and hold it together. And then we realise we don't want to hold it together.

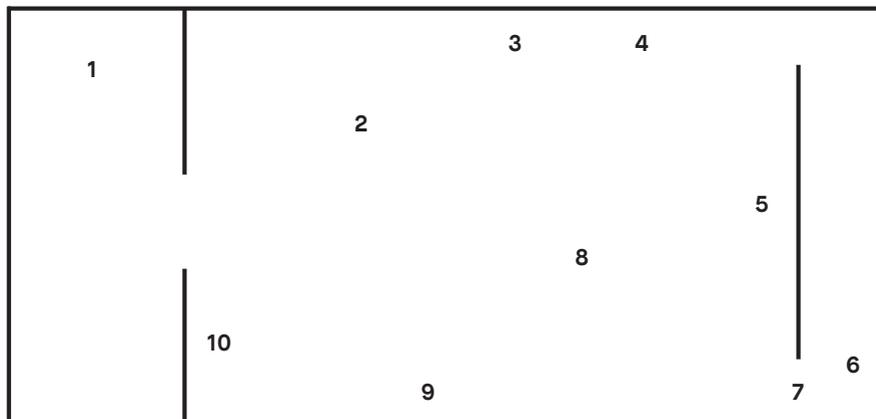
**Deborah Levy**, The Cost of Living

Tell me

How does it feel in my arms?

**Kylie Minogue**, In my Arms

## EXHIBITION MAP



- 1. Athena Thebus, Dreaming about you woke me up, 2018**  
Plasterboard, cow hide & neon  
Variable  
Courtesy of the artist
- 2. amira.h, Life Online with @amiraball, 2018**  
Two-channel video of yearlong live performance on Periscope  
4:07:36 & 7:07 min.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 3. Matt Huppatz, Portal Form (Net Work 2), 2018**  
Oil pastel & water-based spray paint on paper with timber supports  
220 x 375 x 3.4 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 4. Susie Fraser & Kate Power, Stories from the Interior...Em/brace, 1999/2018**  
Two-channel video  
20:17 & 20:17 min.  
Courtesy of the artists  
Susie Fraser would like to acknowledge the assistance of  
Lisa Philip-Harbutt.
- 5. Sione Monu, Kafu Couture, 2016-**  
An ongoing Instagram series presented as 14 digital prints  
30 x 42 cm. ea.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 6. Katherine Botten, Untitled (showing up for my life), 2018**  
Collage on newsprint with acrylic adhesive  
420 x 594 mm.  
Courtesy of the artist

- 7. Katherine Botten, Untitled (showing up for my life), 2018**  
Collage & text on newsprint  
297 x 420 mm.  
Edition of 150  
Courtesy of the artist
- 8. Eugene Choi, My mother only speaks Shanghainese when she talks to her brother on the phone (these plants are a gift for her), 2017**  
Two-channel video, galvanised steel pipe, cast steel clamps, pine-wood & various plants  
8:38 & 11:27 min.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 9. Matt Hupatz, Portal Form (Net Work 1), 2018**  
Oil pastel & water-based spray paint on paper with timber supports  
220 x 375 x 3.4 cm.  
Courtesy of the artist
- 10. Lonelyspeck, Mantle, 2018**  
Single-channel video with stereo sound  
4:46 min.  
Courtesy of the artist

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| <b>LIVE PERFORMANCE PROGRAM</b> |
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**SATURDAY 12 MAY 2018, 4PM-6PM**

- 4pm**                    **Sione Monu**  
Experimental Kahoa Workshop Presentation
- 4.15pm**                **Athena Thebus**  
DOGGY
- 4.30pm**                **Grace Marlow with Virginia Barratt**  
(again, back remain through
- 4.45pm**                **Katherine Botten**  
Open Window (DJ Set)
- 5.00pm**                **Lonelyspeck**  
Lave

**SATURDAY 23 JUNE 2018, 1PM-2PM**

- 1.00pm**                **Matt Huppatz & Toby Chapman**  
Artist Talk

**SATURDAY 7 JULY 2018, 1PM-3PM**

- 1pm**                    **Toby Chapman & Frances Barrett**  
In conversation
- 1.30pm**                **Kate Power & Susie Fraser**  
Stories from the Interior... Em/brace
- 2pm**                    **Kate Power, Susie Fraser, Grace Marlow & Lonelyspeck**  
Roundtable discussion

## PERFORMANCE & WORKSHOP LISTING

**Sione Monu**

**Experimental Kahoa Workshop, 2018**

Connecting place, people and different environments, New Zealand-based artist Sione Monu's practice reinterprets traditional practices for contemporary contexts. For **Experimental Kahoa Workshop**, Monu has worked with local emerging artists to create a series of Tongan flower garlands on display for the duration of the event.

**Athena Thebus**

**DOGGY, 2018**

As part of their installation work, **Dreaming about you woke me up**, Athena Thebus will perform the text work, **DOGGY**, which has inspired the artist's immersive reading room.

**Grace Marlow**

**(again, back remain through, 2018**

The prefix 're-' originates from the Latin, again, back. Back, again? Re-iterate, reticence, re-perform. Parentheses (put in beside) are used to hold apart language as an aside. Often an aside that the writer wants the reader to see but not to hear. To look, but not to hold?

**(again, back remain through** is a commissioned performance by Grace Marlow, that embraces the site of ACE Open, its memory of experimental performance art, and the artists time researching and working in the space. This new work negotiates ideas of the performative, reiterative function of language to consider the structural conditions of an embrace, and undertakes acts of translation from one form into another – written, vocalised, inscribed – and asks how can an embrace be performed in a body and through language.

**Katherine Botten**

**Open Window (DJ Set), 2018**

*Many loves, in the form of non-romantic relationships (forcing myself to believe, ram the window open). Many families in the form of any leaf on any tree (so much empty reframing). Camila Cabello - Never Be The Same. Swiggle swiggle moosh mash. What is life without love? uh.... Real Life and My Methodology B2B and try to cum.*

Katherine Botten will activate the text that forms one half of her poster installation, **Untitled (showing up for my life)**.

**Lonelyspeck**

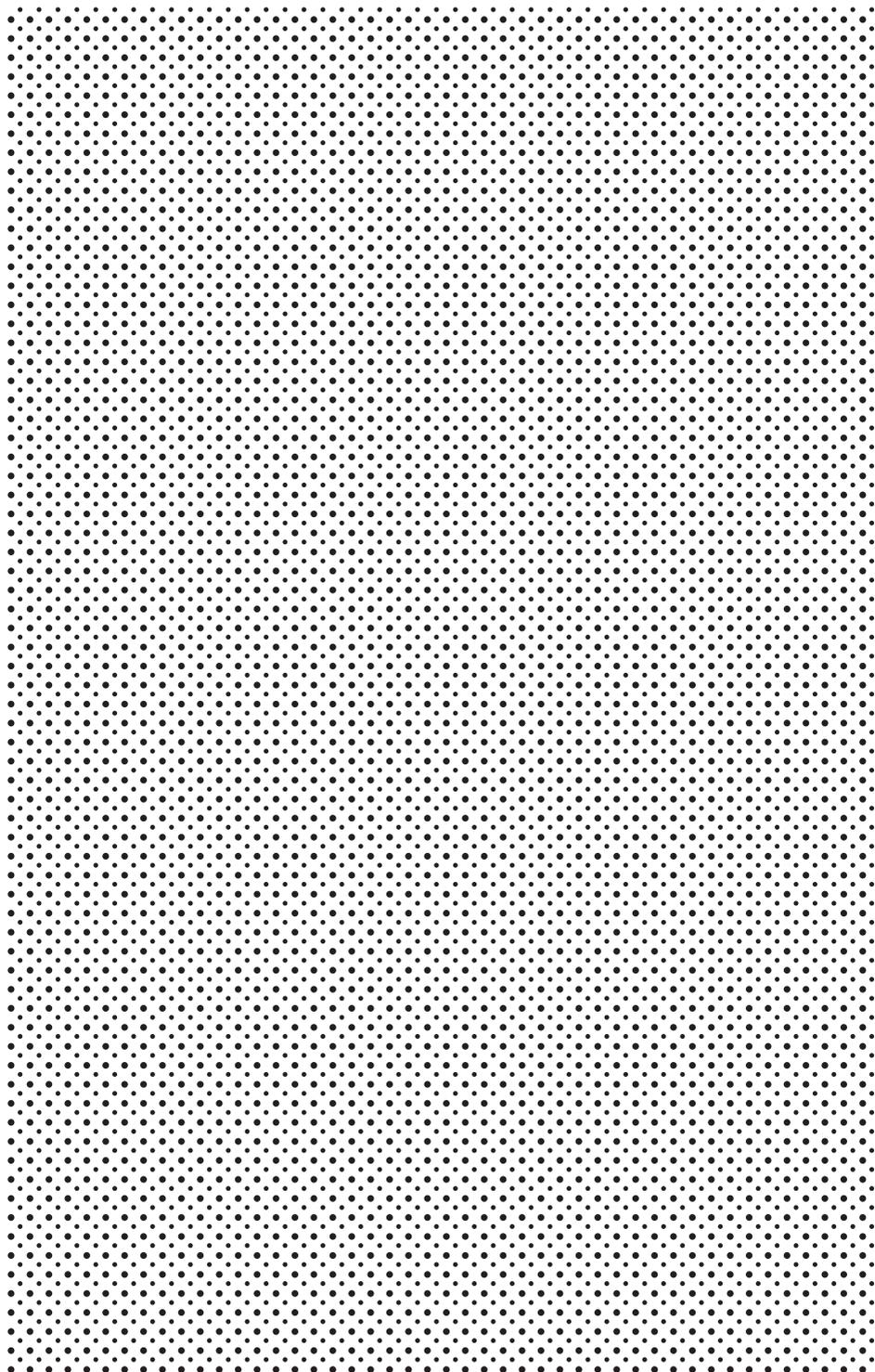
**Lave, 2018**

Surround yourself with the intimate world of Adelaide-based musician and visual artist, Lonelyspeck. Devised specially for this program, Lonelyspeck will perform their 2017 EP, **Lave**, within the gallery and working with the acoustics of the space to create a wholly immersive experience.

**Kate Power & Susie Fraser**

**Stories from the Interior... Em/brace, 2018**

Kate Power & Susie Fraser's collaborative project, **Stories from the Interior... Em/brace** (2018), is a supportive conversational process that allows both artists to lean on one another for their respective needs. The process embraces healing rituals, resilience and the constructive power of uncertainty in order to encourage new ways of working toward momentum and sustainability in their practices.



💧 **Life online with @amiraball** 💧  
amira.h., 2018

From October 2016 to October 2017, I decided to live the majority of my social life online through a tiny iPhone 5 screen on Periscope, a live streaming app owned by Twitter. On Periscope, broadcasters stream to a global audience who can respond to the content in real-time through comments or hearts which appear publicly on screen. As a performance artist, this form of instantaneous interaction and documentation appealed to me, and I started broadcasting under the name @amiraball to strangers all over the world (some of who became followers and friends), as well as some supportive IRL friends. Eventually, I committed myself to a yearlong experiment in endurance performance art, all captured and stored online.

My previous gallery and video-based performance work focused on endurance and testing my physical and mental limits, as well as those of the audience. With my live stream works, I wanted to continue to experiment with audience participation and chance, favouring this over the 'finished product'; I wanted to see how far and how deep the audience would go, how much they were willing to give, or not give, of themselves. I wanted to see what could happen when I let an audience that was not familiar with me or with my performance art be active contributors and collaborators. Some questions I started with were: *What can happen when you let the audience take over? Are online relationships as real as "IRL" relationships? How "real" could I be online?*

Performing on Periscope was sometimes traumatic, sometimes joyful, always intimate. It was sometimes a drag show, sometimes a radio request show, and sometimes a confessional. At times, I was surprised by the empathy I received from complete strangers, and I like to think that the experience has made me more compassionate. Just like real life, it was a rollercoaster of emotions. Although I streamed over 150 times, Periscope only displays the most recent 100 broadcasts and some have been deleted/hidden, so what remains is an excerpt of my year online (the experience also bleeds out into performances on Facebook Live and my Youtube channel).

I extend the invitation to you to enter my room in Footscray, Victoria, and to insert yourself into the conversation between artist and audience.

**(again back, remain through**

Grace Marlow

With Virginia Barratt (performer)

& Toby Chapman (interlocutor), 2018

**performance script in parts**

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AN ACTIVE EM-BRACE OR A SPOKEN  
CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT

A BODY THAT IS NEWLY WITH A LANGUAGE  
WITH A BODY THAT IS WITHOUT WHAT YOU  
HAVE WHAT DO YOU HAVE?

TAKE THIS WEIGHT (ON) THE OUTSIDE FACE  
WITH IN WORK. LABOUR. LIFTING. A LINE IS  
CROSSED. TOWARD. AWAY. HERE.  
LASTING THROUGHOUT BUT NOT WITHOUT—  
A CARRYING OF TIME?  
I SPEAK. THE OPENING TO A BODY'S ECHO.

and what would it  
mean for the curator to  
be the body to embrace  
this lasting—  
And what does it mean  
that you opened your  
body to this?

A body beside

Weight that is inside  
with no way of  
showing; sometimes  
sounding, out, get out.

A steady leak

THE APPOINTMENT IS CANCELLED.

*BEGIN. THE PROPOSITION OF A TATTOO TAKE  
THIS WEIGHT BECOMES HEAVY.*

*RESPITE—*



## DOGGY

Athena Thebus, 2016

Kylie Minogue's *Can't Get You Out of My Head* is a perfect soundtrack for a girl walking down the street with a dog

For a year I lived with a stupidly obedient golden retriever whose only vice was to occasionally get into the trash and eat whatever scraps there were. Always hungry, but ridden with guilt and shame, she would then hide under the table and piss herself (accentuating the guilt and shame).

I'll take anything

*(Take your body to the floor)*

I'm lying on your mother's Persian rug that you laid out on the living room floor, imagining your shadow coming over me

I'm strung out

Taut between longing and withholding

When you laugh, I'm there, I lapse

I'm on all fours, lapping it up, ravenous

For a moment—wild and feral

All my tameness keeps me from gnashing my teeth

To know the tenderness of your flesh

X, in the final undoing of our relationship, labelled me a cowardly dog

It was a heated moment but I wasn't moved either way—it was an apt, even description

I had gotten into the trash (over and over again)

Loving you deeply, adoring you always

I hadn't thought about sex in a few days (unusual, perhaps it's not being connected to the internet), until I sat next to you in the tray of that Toyota ute. It was odd to be wet and swollen in the searing red, dry heat, midday in the arid zone of inland New South Wales.

Being a dog is wanting everything, and for it be handed to you by moving through the most simple tasks. To sit and stay. To wait.

Half expectant, half surprised when it actually comes through.

I muscled my way to your dorm,

At the kitchen table,

I ripped my favourite drawing out of my sketchbook using the pointed end of a nail and handed it to you. You didn't even kiss me.

The bravado was half-assed

When I think of anchoring myself, being spiritually and physically steady

I feel a thick stream of piss

Slinking down from my body like heavy lengths of chain

The draining sensation that's also relieving

Rimbaud notes two ways to die: earthly and of devotion

I'm coming 'round to the possibility of surrender, of being a sub for once

*I'm the one*

*Love me, love me, love me, love me*

Lyrics from the song *The One* from Kylie Minogue's tenth studio album titled *X*, released in 2007

18/3/16

Woke up late—slept in

Walked through Surry Hills post-rain—beautiful

Grocery shopped

In haste, ate half a box of Corn Flakes

In the morning I missed you but I turned it around

My handwriting is becoming more and more like my mother's

*How do you describe a feeling?* Kylie asks at the beginning of the song *In My Arms*.

I've only ever dreamt of this.

In that glimpse of you pressed against a set of bars—I knew how to touch you

I want to be humiliated and for that to be my penance

I want you to be the source of my daily pleasure

Q: How do you take your eyes off a fawn?

A: You can't, and so you don't.

'I can't wait for you to fuck me,' you said

I hear it echo in my head and pulse through my pussy and then I see you and your sixty-five roses,  
and how do you fuck someone who's only years away from their life expectancy?

Resisting the urge to adore you wholly

'I want to devour you—with my cunt,' you said

I think I'll let you this time

Being a dog is how I want to move through the world

Maybe it is to do with some kind of primal intuition

Though, in all my clumsy honesty, it is to be dumb, and fuck, and still be fed

## BIOGRAPHIES

**amira.h.** is a Lebanese Muslim performance artist who works extensively in the areas of endurance and body art. Her practice has employed ritual performance, object-making and installation, and most recently, performing to audiences via online platforms (Facebook Live, YouTube Live, Periscope). Themes of transgression and failure are explored in her work, as well as the binaries of joy and sorrow, celebration and mourning, and the spaces in between.

Periscope: [periscope.tv/amiraball](https://www.periscope.tv/amiraball)  
YouTube: [youtube.com/c/amiraball](https://www.youtube.com/c/amiraball)  
Twitter: [twitter.com/amiraball](https://twitter.com/amiraball)  
Instagram: [instagram.com/amiraball](https://www.instagram.com/amiraball)  
Facebook: [facebook.com/amiraball33](https://www.facebook.com/amiraball33)

**Athena Thebus'** practice spans sculpture, drawing, and writing. Her practice is driven by the desire to generate an atmosphere by which queer life is sustainable. Part of figuring that out is to make sculptures and installations that use materials that are connotative of capitalism's excess, nuanced with past shame and queer hope. Presently, her writing practice involves feeling like a dog and swimming in other people's waters. She is a Scorpio with a Sagittarius rising and a Capricorn moon.

**Eugene Choi** is a performance-based artist whose practice has evolved around the physicality of constructing internal and external structures working across sculpture, performance, installation, video and text. Often influenced by the body in movement, Choi's practice travels between controlled and uncontrolled states by engaging herself in unfamiliar, yet composed situations, relying on the live response of her physical and emotional body. A self-made system of geometry becomes integral between objects, bodies and space, attempting to achieve equilibrium.

**Frances Barrett** is a curator and artist currently based on Gadigal land, Sydney. Recent roles include: Co-Director of Barbara Cleveland (since 2007); Canvas FBi Radio host (2014-2015); Campbelltown Arts Centre Curator Contemporary Performance (2014-2017); and Monash University PhD Candidate (since 2017). In 2018 she will present two new projects: curating the live performance event, *All Ears: A listening party*, at Campbelltown Art Centre and exhibiting a newly commissioned work at Hessel Museum of Art.

**Grace Marlow** is an artist practicing on the land of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains. She graduated with a Bachelor of Visual Art (Honours) in 2016 from the Adelaide Central School of Art. At this time, Grace is working across performance and writing to form a practice of interruption. She locates herself within this practice in conversations about labour and gender, and questions understandings of authorship and value.

**Kate Power** is an artist and writer based in Adelaide. Her practice embraces video, performance, textiles, sculpture and installation to investigate coexistence and enforced social constructions that can complicate the way people relate to one another. She performs micro moments that occur between people with an emphasis on the humorous outcomes of navigating socially acceptable behavior. Through a lens of queer and feminist theories, Power considers modes of generating knowledge through everyday experiences and making processes.

**Katherine Botten** adopts neo-liberal modes and frameworks of generating value [social and economic] from damage [psychic wounds and failures] through the mechanisms of art production. Her practice is concerned with the constitution of Self, and enacts the instability of The Subject in Post Capitalist conditions. Ethics regarding the role of The Artist today, and the repetition of dominant power structures, are problematized by an oscillating tension between their ambiguous perpetuation and subversion.

**Lonelyspeck** is a musician and visual artist currently based in Adelaide, South Australia. They graduated with a Bachelor of Visual Arts from AC Arts, before focussing on their musical career. In 2017, Lonelyspeck released their second EP, Lave, which was recorded, mixed, mastered and all artwork designed in their home. They have toured nationally as a headliner act and supported musicians such as Jack Colwell, Nosaj Thing and Perfume Genius.

**Matt Huppertz** is an artist and thinker based in Adelaide, South Australia. His work draws upon everyday and altered experiences, often touching on areas of dark and colourful transgression. The nightclub and related underground sites have offered fertile ground for his practice, being contradictory places of community and freedom, chaos and dissolution. Huppertz is interested in our search for meaning in a post-capitalist world, and the narratives we use to construct ourselves (as individuals, subcultures, and societies).

**Sione Monu** is an interdisciplinary visual artist of Tongan descent based in Auckland. He uses instagram (visit @sione93) as an art tool, to create artworks that utilises the platform as a way of re-indigenising space and creating a narrative relevant to queer indigenous bodies for his community to engage with the works. He is a recent member of the arts collective, FAFSWAG and a graduate of a Diploma in Fine Arts from Campbelltown Tafe, Sydney.

**Susie Fraser** is an Adelaide-based artist who makes autobiographical works and immersive installations using body, text and projected imagery. Her earlier work, including collaborative hybrid practice, explores intimate events that interrogate preconceptions of identity. Building on her experiences in multiple roles of caring, she now re-enters the conversation in an intergenerational dialogue with artist Kate Power.

**Toby Chapman** is a curator and producer who has delivered a broad range of artistic and cultural projects in partnership with local, national and international organisations. He has curated major socially-engaged and site-specific projects, as well as exhibitions, for organisations such as the Museum of Contemporary Art, Australia; 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art; the 9th Shanghai Biennale; and the 13th Jakarta Biennale.



**ACE Open**  
Tuesday through Saturday  
11am-4pm

[aceopen.art](http://aceopen.art)  
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ACE Open respectfully acknowledges the traditional country of the Kaurna people of the Adelaide Plains and pays respect to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land. We acknowledge that they are of continuing importance to the Kaurna people living today.

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South Australia**

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**Australian Government**  
**Visual Arts and Craft Strategy**  
South Australia



Australian Government

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for the Arts**

C O N T E M P O R A R Y  
A R T S  
O R G A N I S A T I O N S  
A U S T R A L I A