

WISH YOU WERE HERE
AN EXHIBITION OF CERAMICS
INSPIRED BY TRAVEL

ZOE BAKER
FRIDA BIRKIC
SIMONE BRAUND
AMY COHEN
KATHY FAHEY
SUSAN FRISCH
ANN-MAREE GENTILE
TERRY MARSTON
SHARYN MASSON
MIRTA OURO
JO QUIRK
INGRID TUFTS



When we travel what do we bring back?...

Memories and glimpses of different landscapes, different lives and cultures... How do our experiences affect the way we see and approach our work?

How do we then interpret our experiences?

The work in this exhibition is inspired by things seen and experienced on Holidays and travels. The work makes some comment or observation about the process of travel or concerns itself with some deeper experience of other landscapes or cultural influence. Some artists have responded to the theme with an exploration of their experiences in a particular city whilst others have responded to the memory of a summer holiday. The idea of souvenir or object collected is also explored.

The exhibition features 12 artists and makers.



Zoe Baker

Postcards from Raymond Island

We went to Raymond Island every holidays when I was a teenager. My parents joined with four other families to buy a block of land, and for years they spent their free time building a large shared holiday house with their own hands.

At first we camped on the block. Later, we found places to spread a sleeping mat or string a hammock amongst the half-constructed house.

I may have picked up a hammer once or twice; but mostly we kids ran free around the island, rode our bikes, swam in the lake, and went sailing. We weren't bothered by the jellyfish, or the seaweed, or the mosquitoes.

Nowadays I take my own family to Raymond Island from time to time, and my kids also love the freedom of the place.

Fragmented and abstracted memories become overlaid with new impressions. My own experiences merge with my children's tales of adventure. Was it I that swam to the point among the jellyfish? Or was that my daughter? Was it Gaffer taking my son out in a sailing dinghy for the first time? Or was that my dad teaching me to sail?

Ready about... Lee oh!

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Frida Birkic

Wish you were here has inspired me to re-visit the memories and the myriad of photos that I took from my trip to South Korea two years ago where I was invited by a fellow friend, potter and teacher.

My time in South Korea was mostly spent in Mungyeong, a town renowned for its pottery and history. Not to mention its spectacular mountains along the back drop around the town and home to the International chatsabal (tea bowl) festival.

Since my return I have endeavored to embark on a pilgrimage of all the pieces I wanted to make whilst on my travels. It is only now I feel I have satisfied my creative urges and have been inspired to continue making what I originally always loved to make, teacups and bowls.

As a whole my trip to Korea was not only about ceramics but a cultural experience of food, tea ceremonies, history, landscape and the people you meet along the way. As I wandered through the festival and on top of the mountains, I thought how fortunate I was to be here and experience this wonderful place.

I still wish we were there.

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Simone Braund

“Travel need not be to far away shores. Enjoying the tranquility of quiet strolls along Melbourne’s bayside beaches, I am always enchanted by the shells on the shore line, transported to another world, and have trouble limiting myself to just one or two finding their way into my pocket.”

Perceiving ceramics as being part of a much larger narrative is central to my work, and I explore clay within the context of other passions and experiences in my life.

Subscribing to Bernard Leach’s view of the ceramic object being both functional and beautiful, I love to live with and use my work, and the work of others.

I am inspired by the deceptive simplicity of traditional Chinese porcelains and glazes that combine in harmony and balance. The Arts & Craft and Art Nouveau European movements, with their emphasis on the revival of craftsmanship, nature as a source of inspiration are fundamental influences on my work.

Both the physical process of making, and the technical challenge of translating traditional celadon glazes to achieve beautiful forms, are very attractive to me.

The notion of functionality is important to me, with the possibility of people using and connecting with the work in everyday life. I hope the vessels evoke a “here and now/in the moment” experience when being used and/or observed.

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Amy Cohen

In my work I use themes developed from the world of nature to create a personal, intuitive interpretation of the feminine. I develop natural forms based on seashells and plant forms combined with the human anatomy to create images that are organic but do not have a direct resemblance to any actual natural object. Rather, my works serve as a way of reminding the viewer of nature and our relationship with the natural world. I draw analogies between these natural forms and the female anatomy through the use of curves and lines in order to make clear the parallels that I see between myself, my work and the natural world.

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Kathy Fahey

Ceramics forms but a part of my art practice which also includes painting, printmaking and artists books.

I make work in these mediums around a theme or subject matter thereby linking the different mediums together as a coherent whole.

My subject matter generally relates to the landscape, whether rural or urban.

The work for 'Wish You Were Here' is inspired by my artist-in-residency in Georgetown, Penang, in March 2010.

There I was able to immerse myself in the sights, sounds, smells and foods of this wonderful city and to enjoy the hospitality of its multicultural population. The work for this exhibition relates to the colonial architecture of this World Heritage Listed city and to the bustling life and energy of Penang.

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Sue Frish

My fascination with tall trees lead to a visit to the Styx Valley in Tasmania a number of years ago. This place had a profound effect on me. It's home to Eucalyptus Regnans, the world's largest flowering tree as well as Australia's tallest species of gumtree, the quintessential icon of Australia. This place of quiet contemplation and reflection, with its almost cathedral like qualities, has been at the centre of a long protracted campaign to protect it from logging. It was here I started to question our role in the degradation of such irreplaceable environments.

Do we want to look back once it's gone and wonder why these archaic practises were allowed to continue.

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Ann-maree Gentile

Wish I Was There...

What's not to love about Venice? There's the architecture and narrow laneways, the gondolas and glass, (especially the chandeliers, which one day I will own, if I could ever decide my favourite) dramatic skies, the distinct lack of cars, oh and my favourite, the gelati.

I have wandered for days in that city, aimlessly at times, in the midst of a sensory overload, thankful it was not the height of the tourist season. But I will say, enough with the pigeons already, they're the rats of the sky.

I had not intended the pieces of work I made for Wish You Were Here to be solely about one city but that is what has happened. Some jesters that morphed into the stripy poles I saw in a multitude of colours up and down the canal meant it made sense to make the gondolier. When those pieces were finished they triggered a memory. The last time I returned from Venice, a little glass bead, inspired a body of work. Some oversized beads, which once made, got packed in box and forgotten. But while making and meditating on Venice, they called to me.

A city like Venice can get under your skin and seep into your art very easily. I thought I'd also like to share some of the images locked in my head. But all that has done is make me want to go again. Oh well, the Biennale is on this year so I might have to consider going.

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Terry Marston

I wish you were here

The invention of the Morse Code in the 1830's totally changed means of communication for those who travelled far from their homeland.

Today we are lucky enough to have many forms of Technology to keep us in touch with friends and family while we are on holiday. More importantly, for those who emigrate to strange lands, these forms of communication become an absolute necessity.

But before all these modern wonders, imagine how marvellous to be able to send a message to someone far away and know that it will reach them in days rather than in weeks!

The message on these pieces is simple. It is a timeless and heartfelt inclusion in personal letters and postcards- 'I wish you were here.'

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Sharyn Masson

The pieces in this exhibition are a continuation of my “Out of the Earth” series of ceramic works. Fashioned using Southern Ice porcelain, they illustrate the fragility of coral. This fragility echoes the delicate nature of the world in which we live.

Charles Darwin described tropical coral reefs as “Oases in the desert of the ocean”. The Great Barrier Reef is one such oasis which is now under threat from mankind. All the marvellous colours which I have seen while snorkelling there may, at some time, become a distant memory.

They will be little scraps of remembrances, pallid and bleached of all their brilliance; mere ghosts of their former glory. Over the past five years I have developed as an emerging artist working and playing with clay. I love the natural properties of the raw materials, especially Buff Raku clay and the changes that the firing can create.

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Mirta Ouro

For five years now, I have had the privilege of refocusing on my career as a ceramic artist, completing a Diploma of art-Ceramics, and participating in several group exhibitions, competitions and workshops.

I produce my work using various methods of building; wheel throwing, hand building, moulds and slip casting depending on the project I am developing and the final result I want to achieve. I particularly like working with porcelain and terra sigillata. I enjoy saggar and raku firing.

This body of works refers to my 2010 trip to Argentina, my home country. It relates to belonging, reunion, and connectedness.

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Jo Quirk

“Jo likes to work conceptually and finds joy in the challenge of translating concepts and marrying them with her constant interest in technical experimentation. A sense of humour helps to cushion the inevitably unpredictable results but they are all fuel for the imagination and next project. The natural world is her toybox but she needs to be plugged into the digital universe. She sees her work as a continuation of a meme that may linger in the universe and fuel other imaginations disconnected from her time and space.”

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Lucky Carbon Cap

For this piece the travel memento hasn't been picked up from a far away destination. It is the cheap and simple keepsake that travels the globe with the traveller and becomes infused with sentimentality and sometimes mysterious powers of good fortune. Its fatigued state adds to its status as a symbol of loyalty. As it is imbued with all these powers it also accumulates carbon miles so that eventually because of its intriguing history it cannot be disposed off and becomes a fossil of one's life adventures.

Ingrid Tufts

I am interested in the romance of travel...

A modern city is probably not too different from my own environs - but when we travel we experience a city with notions we have already of the place at various points in time. So our experience is a concoction. My work in wish you were here is about these romantic notions of place in time and explores these preconceptions that enable us to experience a place aside from the day to day experience.

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