

# MEDIA RELEASE

## GERTRUDE

contemporary art spaces

### **OCTOPUS 9: I FORGET TO FORGET**

Curated by Stephen Gilchrist

Artists: Tony Albert, Daniel Boyd, Andrea Fisher, Helen Johnson, Jonathan Jones, Reko Rennie

**EXHIBITION DATES: 31 JULY - 29 AUGUST 2009**

**OPENING: Friday 31 July, 6pm**

GCAS is pleased to present its annual flagship curatorial project, *Octopus*. Now in its ninth year, *Octopus* invites leading young curators to experiment with their ideas, opening up new forums for discussion and new possibilities for innovation in their curatorial practice.

This year *Octopus* has been curated by Stephen Gilchrist, who is a curator of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria.

This major exhibition delves into the heart of many key issues within this contemporary post 'Sorry' moment in Australian history. *Octopus 9* considers the work of Tony Albert, Daniel Boyd, Andrea Fisher, Helen Johnson, Jonathan Jones and Reko Rennie. *I forget to forget* critically reflects on the myriad ways that history shapes the present. As curator Stephen Gilchrist explains, "The artists in this exhibition demonstrate a defiance to remember, and a struggle to bear witness, with their excursions into the past helping to release them from it."

The artists in this exhibition primarily employ a process driven practice that allows them to both uncover, and recover from cultural problems which continue to unsettle contemporary Australia. *Octopus 9* examines these investigations, revealing the use of repetition in an attempt to counter the weight of our often empty national rhetoric.

The exhibition features two floor based installations, one by Jonathan Jones and another by Helen Johnson, that expose the desecration of nature sanctioned by unsympathetic administrative systems. Tony Albert and Andrea Fisher dilute and reconstitute the aesthetics of racism that were employed in the re-presentation of cultural objects that have defined and confined Indigenous people. Daniel Boyd and Reko Rennie appropriate history and public space to subvert entrenched positions within the politics of colonisation.

Stephen Gilchrist has been curator of Indigenous Art at the National Gallery of Victoria since July 2005. He has co-curated several exhibitions including *Land Marks*, 2006; *Across the Desert: Aboriginal Batik from Central Australia*, 2008-09; and *Shared Sky* 2009. He also curated *From little things, big things grow* at the National Gallery of Australia in 2004. He has been published in numerous exhibition catalogues and has written for *Art&Australia*, *Eyeline* and *Photofile* magazines.



IMAGE CAPTION: ANDREA FISHER, Worn (from the Breastplate series), 2009, etched brass, coloured pencil. Courtesy of the artist

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