

Media release

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ART
GALLERY
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Danie Mellor *A time of the world's making* 2019, wax crayon, oil pigment wash, watercolour, metallic ink, pencil, felt-tipped marker, collage, twine, satin bower bird feathers and gilding on paper, 236 x 292 cm. Collection of the artist © Danie Mellor

Real Worlds: Dobell Australian Drawing Biennial 2020

24 Oct 2020 – 7 Feb 2021

The Art Gallery of New South Wales presents *Real Worlds*, the fourth Dobell Australian Drawing Biennial, from 24 October 2020 – 7 February 2021.

Supported by the Sir William Dobell Art Foundation, this exhibition presents new work by eight contemporary Australian artists who create extraordinary new worlds in drawings of great complexity and invention.

Real Worlds features drawings by **Martin Bell, Matt Coyle, Nathan Hawkes, Danie Mellor, Peter Mungkuri, Becc Ország, Jack Stahel** and **Helen Wright**.

Exhibition curator and Art Gallery of NSW curator of Australian art **Anne Ryan** said the exhibited works evoke distinctive ways of seeing and making sense of the world.

“*Real Worlds* brings together the work of eight artists who seek to interpret and comprehend the world through subjective reinvention via drawing. For some, it is grounded in a deep connection to place or Country. For others, it is a reinvention that springs forth from imagination and the subconscious, inflected by subjective experience and rich with narrative suggestion,” said Ryan.

“The immediacy and intimacy of drawing is particularly attuned to the urgency of our times, and the work of each of these artists reflects the human capacity to imagine something better, or different.

“The real world can be reckoned with, be re-seen, be understood anew, as we face its mercurial challenges. While conceived before our wild year of 2020, and created both before and during it, the drawings of *Real Worlds* speak with urgency and directness to where we are now.”

Real Worlds presents **Martin Bell's** epic drawing, rich with nostalgic associations of a 1980s childhood, which invites us into a tangled world of infinite narrative possibility.

Darkly gothic drawings by **Matt Coyle** have a dreamlike, filmic quality that hover between real and surreal, forcing viewers to form their own stories from the clues offered in each work.

Nathan Hawkes' lyrical pastel drawings are a poetic evocation of feeling in visual form, recalling fairy tales or dreams, with a richly muddled and compressed quality that suggests time is simultaneous and knowledge is fugitive.

Danie Mellor's large drawing installation works are informed by his ongoing connection with the Country of his mother's family of the Ngadjon and Mamu peoples in the Atherton Tablelands in Far North Queensland. Mellor's works emphasise the transcendent ecology of nature and give life to cultural histories and Dreaming narratives.

The work of **Peter Mungkuri**, a senior Yankunytjatjara man from Indulkana in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands in South Australia, is firmly grounded in his knowledge of Country. Mungkuri's lyrical ink and wash drawings depict different species of trees and emphasise the symbolic importance of trees for Anangu culture.

Familiar, yet strange, **Becc Ország's** meticulously rendered pencil drawings are composed from an assemblage of unrelated and anonymous landscape images sourced from the internet. They are not scenes taken from the world as we know it, but rather are works of fiction.

Jack Stahel's intricate, complex drawing installations use languages of scientific illustration and taxonomic systems of classification, implying that they are objective assertions of information. In fact, they are an 'informative bunch of nonsense', part of an 'imaginary science' that is paradoxically fictional in content, yet subject to rigorous methodology.

Helen Wright's drawings depict teetering piles of industrial detritus, symbolising cautionary tales against egocentric hubris and the defiance of nature. At the core of Wright's art lies a concern for the natural world, with an emphasis on the fragile balance between humanity and nature.

Each Biennial has a different curatorial concept and seeks to showcase the vitality and breadth of drawing in contemporary Australian art. Some of the exhibited works from each Biennial are acquired for the Gallery's permanent collection.

Following the Art Gallery of NSW exhibition, *Real Worlds: Dobell Australian Drawing Biennial 2020* will tour regionally to two NSW venues, [Lismore Regional Gallery](#) (27 February – 25 April 2021) and [Museum of Art and Culture Lake Macquarie, Yawang](#) (8 May – 18 July 2021).

The Gallery will continue to be guided by the NSW Government's health guidelines. For more information and updates, please [visit our website](#).

Media contact

Sarah Shields

Art Gallery of New South Wales

p: 02 9225 1674

m: 0408 283 091

e: sarah.shields@ag.nsw.gov.au



Becc Ország *Fantasy of virtue / All things and nothing* 2018-20 (detail), graphite pencil and 24kt gold leaf on Fabriano watercolour paper in custom wood frame, 86 x 169 cm.
Collection of the artist © Becc Ország