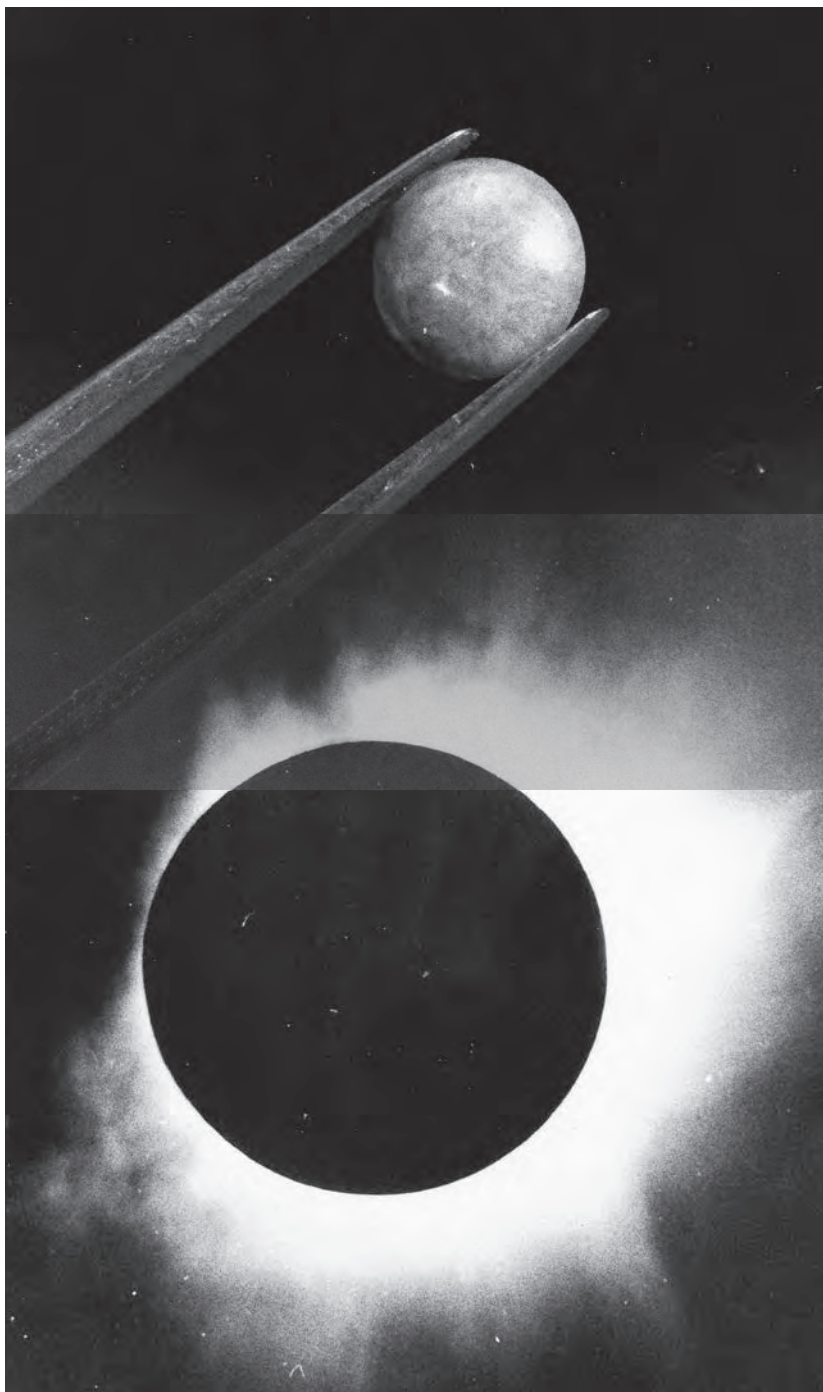


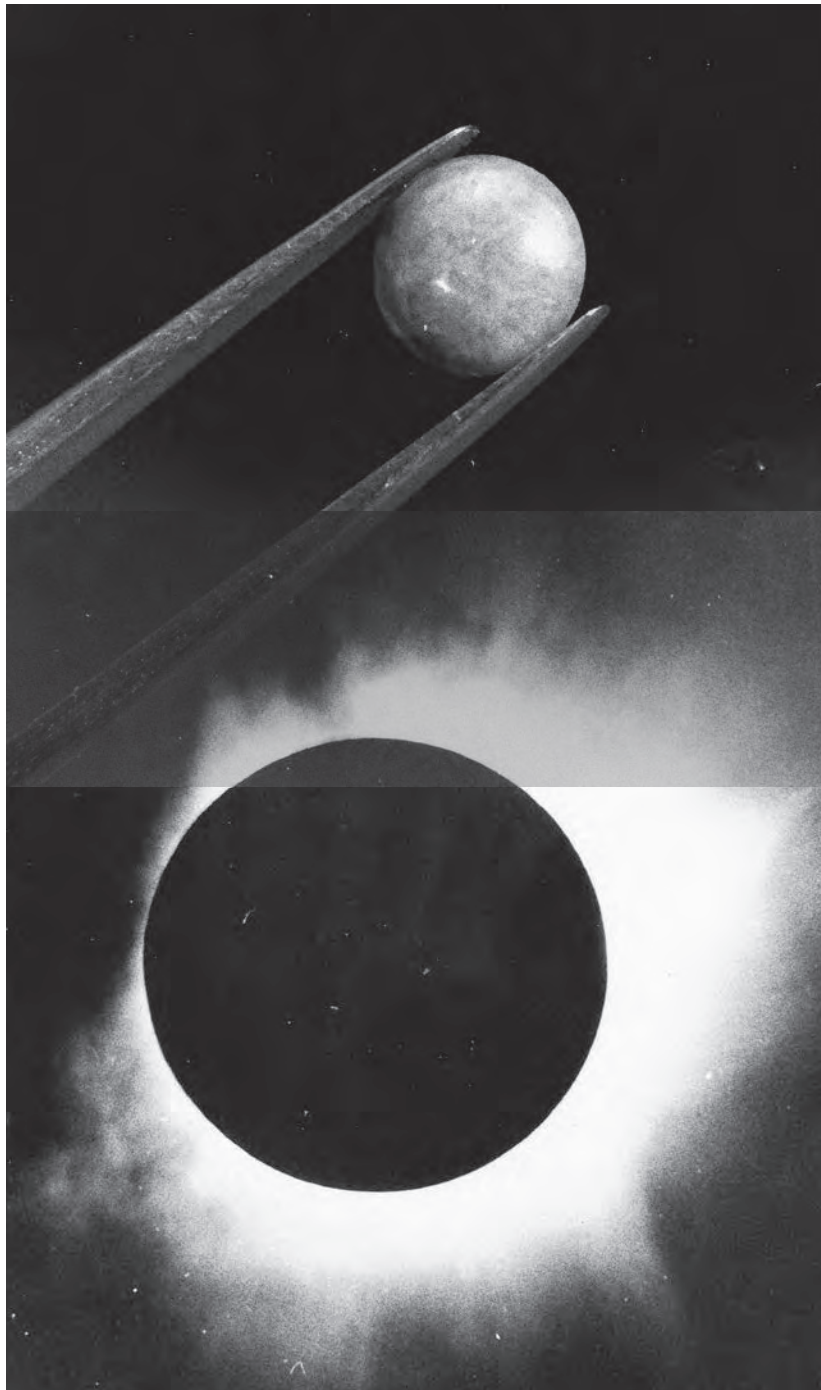
A FIELD GUIDE FOR STARGAZING



**PERTH
FESTIVAL**

Djinda
Visual Arts Program 2023

A FIELD GUIDE FOR STARGAZING



**PERTH
FESTIVAL**

Djinda
Visual Arts Program 2023

DUSK
[dəsk]

1. An act of transition. A spectral descent—the gradation from gold into blue [that dissolves into black].
2. A slow fall—a visible concession.
3. An act of sensory adjustment and recalibration. An opening of apertures, a dilation.
4. An end that marks a beginning.
5. A farewell to the sun that reveals *a field of stars*.





A FIELD GUIDE FOR STARGAZING

PERTH FESTIVAL 2023
VISUAL ARTS PROGRAM
10 February – 5 March 2023

Perth Festival and Mess Books acknowledge the Noongar people who remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this kwobidak boodjar. We honour and respect the significant role they play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

Commissioned by Perth Festival with support from Wesfarmers Arts and published by Mess Books, this publication is designed to compliment the Visual Arts Program for Perth Festival 2023.

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PREFACE

HELEN CARROLL

Manager, Wesfarmers Arts

Art, in whatever form it takes, is an invitation to give ourselves over to an encounter with ideas and experiences that lift us free from the mass and flow of the everyday.

Wesfarmers has enjoyed a long and enormously rewarding association with contemporary art in Western Australia—through our own collecting and commissioning of new Australian art for the Wesfarmers collection and through the partnerships we’ve developed with premier visual arts organisations—including of course our wonderful Perth Festival.

Together with the deeply committed and flourishing community of artists, galleries, studios and artist run spaces that weave the fabric of our visual arts universe, Perth Festival offers us the chance to connect with the art of our times at its most compelling and inventive.

It is our privilege and joy at Wesfarmers to support this ongoing work.

FOREWORD

IAIN GRANDAGE

Artistic Director, Perth Festival

A blank canvas.
An empty sky.
This is where artists always begin.

From there, a single source of light—a spark, a star, an idea—starts to define the space in which we dream and create. Slowly a complete picture emerges and a work of art is born.

In my previous life as a composer, I felt a need in my practice to establish the edges of a blank canvas—a sound world, a musical language, an instrumentation, a texture—in order to imagine a new composition into being, informed by those boundaries.

Similarly, I have enjoyed theming each of the Perth Festivals under my tenure—2020: Karla (Fire), 2021: Bilya (River), 2022: Wardan (Ocean) and now 2023: Djinda (Stars)—and loved the conceptual, philosophical and creative responses to those subjects, conceived as they were as ever-widening circles of inclusion.

So as we share the instinct to gaze upwards to the stars or reflect on the beautiful works that exist inside the Visual Arts Program of Perth Festival 2023, the questions for me are not of those stars themselves or even of the spaces between, but of the nature of our shared humanity on this pale blue dot, of our existential fortune at being rendered from star stuff into these complex yet incomplete beings on earth, wondering at the magnitude of it all.

I hope you enjoy the reflections contained within this publication. It is my great privilege to work alongside Annika Kristensen and I thank her for her wonderful curatorial sensibility. I thank also Helen Carroll and all at Wesfarmers Arts for their visionary support. But above all, I thank the artists and writers who are featured within these pages and throughout the program for their ability to fill that blank canvas—to render something from nothing. For that is everything.

A FIELD GUIDE FOR STARGAZING

ANNIKA KRISTENSEN

Visual Arts Curator, Perth Festival

“Intolerably bright holes, punched in the sky” wrote Louis MacNeice of stars in his short poem *Star-Gazer*. An evocative account of the relationship between an individual and the magnitude of the universe, *Star-Gazer* is a reflection on time and memory, as well as the remarkable magic—and inevitable futility—of life. In the closing minutes of 2022, with the sound of merry revellers and smuggled fireworks in the distance, I stepped outside to look up to the stars and remembered MacNeice’s words. It was a clear night, and from the garden of our small holiday cabin nestled in a dark Karri forest in the south-west of Western Australia, the sky was alive with mystery and wonder; impossibly distant and unknowable, yet somehow also familiar and constant. I felt in that instance a sense of both deep reverence and fleeting insignificance. It has long been the purview of artists—as with MacNeice—to attempt to reckon with and describe this distinctly human relationship with the cosmos, to translate the ineffable into images, music and words.

For as long as there have been humans, we have looked up to the stars. Omnipresent and elusive, their guiding lights have provided answers to major existential questions including who we are and why we are here, where we are and where we are going. From ancient cultural wisdom to contemporary scientific enquiry, there is a long history of knowledge gleaned from the stars. These understandings have shaped the world as we know it, as well as the many systems within it—from religion and mythology to notions of time, distance and navigation, democracy and science, architecture and art. There is still much to be learned.

This year’s festival, with the thematic *Djinda*—the Noongar word for stars—takes First Nations astronomical knowledge and stories as its starting point, allowing for consideration of the role of both the bright star and the darkness of the space between—the visible and invisible—in informing our understanding of the world. In turn, the projects included as part of this year’s Perth Festival Visual Arts Program embrace the multiplicity and diversity of stories, learnings and beliefs that shape our sense of being human, beneath a shared and universal sky.

Sydney-based artist Michaela Gleave has a long-held fascination with the wonders of the universe, as well as the limitations of our human knowledge of the cosmos. Her participatory artwork *Between us* provides an opportunity for the public to reflect upon the provocation of the work’s title, considering ideas of space, time and distance. These musings—which the artist invites people to submit via the Perth Festival website—are then collated into a collective poem, translated into the dots and dashes of Morse code and beamed up into the sky. Positioned on the rooftop of the Art Gallery of Western Australia and viewable from a radius of several kilometres, *Between us* offers the audience an opportunity to commune directly with the stars, sending messages that, as light, will continue to travel infinitely throughout the universe.

Nearby, Perth Institute for Contemporary Arts (PICA) brings together the work of three separate artists who share an interest in language, technology and the relationship between humans and our natural environment. Berlin-based Italian artist Rosa Barba presents her first solo exhibition in Australia, *Emanations*, transforming the PICA galleries into flickering explorations of time and space. Across a decade of practice spanning film, sculpture and text-based installations, Rosa’s work centres light and time as key concerns shared between cinema and astronomy, bringing together subjects from both science and science fiction to examine the relationship between humans and our surrounding environments.

With a shared sense of kinetic movement and technological choreography, Robert Andrew’s *Held within a word* transforms the walls of PICA’s upper gallery into an immersive writing surface, employing natural materials such as wood, stone and ochre to leave marks informed by the language of the Yawuru people, from whom Robert descends. This interest in language further extends to consider the embodied possibilities of vocalising and listening in the moving image work *Scaffolding (Preface)* by Archie Barry, premised on an imagined society of children who have developed a fugitive mode of non-lingual communication to evade contemporary models of surveillance.

In Noongar stories of the Charnock Woman, stars are spirit children caught in the milky way of her long grey hair. Children appear throughout the Visual Arts Program, most notably in the series

of films *Children's Games* by Belgian-born, Mexico-based artist Francis Alys, screened weekly in advance of each feature in our Lotterywest Films Program at UWA Somerville. An ongoing body of work for Francis since 1999, *Children's Games* reveals childhood as a universally innovative and creative time, while subtly reflecting on the distinct geopolitics and issues impacting children's lives across the countries in which the works are filmed, including Congo, Belgium, Mexico, Hong Kong, Iraq, Nepal, Venezuela and Afghanistan.

At John Curtin Gallery, the group exhibition *However vast the darkness* is anchored by the multi-channel moving image artwork *Bow Echo* by Afghani artist Aziz Hazara. Filmed upon a hilltop, an assembly of five young boys blow small plastic trumpets into the wind. An urgent signal of the community's fight against oppression, the trumpets are nearly inaudible over the sound of wind, helicopters and drones, while in the distance the city of Kabul is seen, devastated by war. Also including work by Lisa Reihana and Indigenous collective ProppaNOW, *However vast the darkness* considers the importance of truth-telling as a beacon of hope, referencing the long-held inspirational human sentiment—immortalised in the words of Martin Luther King Junior—that “only in the darkness can you see the stars”.

Continuing ideas of resistance and rebellion, together with the idea of the sky as witness to political action and environmental destruction, *Black Sky* at Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery asserts sovereign visions of blackness, from creation stories beginning at the horizon and leading to the stars, to the nocturnal ambiance of a nightclub, the black of the Aboriginal flag and the deep cuts of mining. Bringing together independent projects by collective Tennant Creek Brio, Yanyuwa/Jingili filmmaker Michael Bonner with Gombawarrah-Yinhawangka Traditional Owners, and collection works by Tracey Moffatt, Julie Dowling and Roy Wiggan, *Black Sky* traverses unexpected spaces of resistance and cultural continuation.

At Fremantle Arts Centre, three women artists of colour—Atong Atem, Hayley Millar Baker and Jasmine Togo-Brisby—are celebrated in the exhibition *Other Horizons*. Extending from the idea of a shared sky, *Other Horizons* explores the varied experience of belonging in the context of Australia, from the perspective of artists with enduring attachments to Country founded upon thousands of years of custodianship, to those borne of the colonial adventure or more recent diaspora. Including a powerful new commission by Jasmine Togo-Brisby that explores blackbirding and slavery practices within the Australian and Pacific context, *Other Horizons* considers the sky as a witness to the many journeys undertaken, and diverse stories told, in forming our complex—and often fractured—national identity.

Beijing Realism, presented at Goolugatup Heathcote, takes a creation story of the stars from an old Chinese poem as its curatorial inception; a tale of a tree that, with branches wanting to pierce the sky, could only manage to puncture a few small holes. Artists

Tami Xiang, Han Bing, Hu Xiangquian and Li Xiaofei take on the metaphorical role of these branches, each artist offering brief glimpses into everyday life in China, reflecting on the way in which the country's past plays out in contemporary life. Meanwhile, at the State Buildings, artist Jason Phu will spend a week in residence in an open studio, welcoming audiences to engage in personal conversation and witness his creative process. Often referencing folkloric stories of ghosts, spirits, demons and gods from ancient Chinese culture, Jason employs humour and an everyday vernacular language to address identity and cultural dislocation within an Australian context.

At Moore Contemporary, a poetic offering by local artist Jacobus Capone returns our attention to the physical and spiritual relationship between humans and their surrounding environments. Through a suite of new paintings created by the artist while on a recent residency in Bergen—each one made in relation to seven individual mountains that surround the Norwegian city—Jacobus explores the transformational properties that natural landscapes, the sea and stars can have upon an individual's body and psyche.

This publication has been designed as both a compendium of and a companion to Perth Festival's 2023 Visual Arts Program. It has been conceived to steer the audience towards the many rich projects included in the program this year, as well as to encourage the mind to meander. In response to the provocation of *Djinda*—and to related ideas of time, space and light—writers and artists Cass Lynch, Sara Morawetz with Darren Engwirda, and Patrick Pound have contributed imaginative and inspiring new creative pieces. These are published alongside an existing work of fiction by Anna Dunnill; a humorous account of a group of astronomers extending their professional interests in a covert knitting circle.

As one of the earliest subjects of art, stars have long inspired human creativity—yet the virtues of art, like the universe, are often impossible to measure and describe. As with light leaving a star, the legacy of an artwork may continue to resonate and illuminate for an unknown period of time, touching audiences in the future as much as in the now. Like stars, art encourages us to look outwards and upwards, to consider our relationship to the environment and each other, across cultures and time. Gazing skywards as one year clicked over to the next, I felt enormous gratitude to the artists who work to light the way.



Michaela Gleave and Fausto Brusamolino, *Messages of hope, messages of love*, 2020. Durational public artwork: moving head searchlights, custom software, publicly sourced messages, live video stream. Installation view at Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2020. Photo: Silversalt Photography.

ANCESTOR CASS LYNCH



When we look up at night, we gaze into the million-kilometre-long shadow that Earth casts into space. The Earth's shadow is a moordang maarbiri—dark finger—dragging across the stars as we rotate around the Sun. Our planet spins on its axis and pulls the night umbra across the surface, a cloak of unlight that lets us consider space without the dazzling rays of the Sun, bouncing all that blue light off the gases in the atmosphere. Night appears on the horizon opposite the setting sun, but a band of light—pink or orange—briefly appears above the rising darkness. This is the antitwilight arch, a dusty halo reflecting the sunset back at itself across the long curve of the Earth.

In the sandy soil of a coastal plain and under fallen sheoak needles, folded legs shift under trapdoor hatch. She is stirring, eight limbs twitching, woken by the drop in temperature and change in birdsong. Her burrow is a silk sheath in the ground, plugged with a lid of web with leaf litter attached to disguise it in the undergrowth. This little spider is a creature of the night, entirely nocturnal, trapping night in her burrow, penning darkness to keep out the day. In this twilight she opens her hatch to stretch her legs, the sky above turning as dark as her armoured body. She is small, only three centimetres long, a tiny architect in a huge world. She crouches on the edge of her home, abdomen still inside, moving her head to look about. Something is different. Her leg hairs rise, pulling on the nerves and sensory organs beneath her exoskeleton. She is detecting an uncommon electrical field—a charged air—and a whisper from the sky above.

Earth moves through space carrying its own air, an atmosphere. It is vulnerable and uncommon in the solar system, delicate even, a soft clear egg with Earth yolk inside. One flash of solar wind would fry us, ionising the gases and blasting them away. Yet we are still here. Deep in the Earth, a rotating core of iron generates a powerful electromagnetic field. Its invisible field lines emanate out from the Earth like hair, and we trail a wake of plasma in space. This shields us from solar wind—that surge of charged particles ejected by the Sun.

The spider can feel unseen strands pulling at her body, energised silk lines drawing her upwards. She tentatively leaves her burrow, searching for higher ground to satisfy whatever has hold of her. She climbs up a sloping banksia trunk and moves into the branches. She avoids the roosting djidi-djidis who might want to eat her, and ventures onto the farthest golden flower of the branch, laying an anchor line of silk in case she falls. She has eight stationery eyes which look in fixed directions. Her lateral eyes sit on the sides of her head and she sees small lights all around—the stars. Her posterior eyes are looking overhead for predators, and her anterior eyes, the ones facing forward, see a full moon shining brightly. The Moon is an

Ancestor Place, and she feels a wave wanting to carry her skyward toward it. She is apprehensive, but she unhooks her safety line and lifts her abdomen upwards. She releases a fan of fine threads of silk, which float for a moment before she feels the pull of electricity in the air. With a surge of static charge, she is plucked off the tall flower and pulled upwards into the antitwilight arch of evening.

Earth's atmosphere is a layer cake held together by the electromagnetic field generated by the iron core. The lowest layer, the troposphere, is the weather region, the home of hurricanes, cyclones, dust storms, and pollen. Then 12 kilometres up, the stratosphere begins, the domain of the ozone layer, that cloak of gases that deflect harmful UV radiation. At 50 kilometres, the mesosphere begins, an understudied region of near space, where meteors break up, gravitational winds rotate, and electrical phantoms glow mysteriously. Above that, at the 80 kilometre mark, is the thermosphere. Where the lower layers are freezing, the thermosphere is hot, readily absorbing solar radiation, there beyond the shield of the ozone layer. When solar activity is high, this region on the edge of space can be 2000 degrees Celsius or more. The thermosphere is the range of the auroras, those colourful light shows caused by the interaction of cosmic winds with the electromagnetic field. Last is the exosphere, a low-density region which starts at 700 kilometres above the surface. Here is where the artificial satellites drift—bouncing telecommunications off the surface, taking photos of deep space, conducting experiments at 28,000 kilometres an hour. There is little to no drag at this altitude, but the gravity is still near that of the surface, so the satellites fire their jets intermittently to avoid being dragged back down to Earth.

The spider floats upwards, carried by the charged filaments through the many layers of the atmosphere. She is an armoured trapdoor spider, a descendent of Gondwanaland, the heir of those ancient arachnids who first dug burrows into the banks of ponds in the Middle Triassic. She can withstand bushfire, flood and frost, and is suited to this journey through the interplanetary medium. Higher she travels, passing through stinging air with frozen noctilucent clouds, then through a boiling zone where she is buffeted with buzzing winds. Red sparks and blue ghosts reflect off her shiny exoskeleton, her eyes catching light phenomena from three directions. It gets cooler again, and she finds herself moving past thousands of machines that are sitting in low Earth orbit—new stars moving in the Earthshadow. The electromagnetic webs take her further still and then she is alone in a sea of stars, the blue world behind her as she hurtles toward the Moon.

Prior to the invention of the telescope, early astronomers looked at Earth's satellite and saw a world of wide plains, tall mountains, and dark oceans. It was a tabula rasa for nomenclature, irresistible to the 17th century

stargazers who were living during the Renaissance; a time of European empires expanding, exploring, claiming, and possessing. They discovered the Moon anew through naming, assigning the seas, lakes, bays and marshes they perceived on the surface with terms for weather and states of mind. We know now that there have never been seas on the Moon, and that the sooty swathes are basalt basements that bubbled up from repeated cosmic collisions through time.

The Moon becomes huge in her anterior vision and the spider feels herself slowing down. She descends toward the lunar surface and lands on the shores of *Sinus Iridum*, the Bay of Rainbows. She settles her feet in the shining soil and looks about. Snowy wattles line the dunes, colourless as chalk in their cloud-like masses. Her anterior eyes see the tall forms of ivory tuarts beyond them, and her lateral eyes make out an arc of bleached mountains ringing the bay, a crescent moon within the Moon. This is an Ancestor Place, like she heard about in her mother's stories, told to her before emerging from the brood chamber to go make a burrow of her own. An ancestor lives here, a grandmother who dwells in her giant burrow north of the lunar seas, beyond the banksia woodland that fills this side of the Moon. The spider rotates her body around and looks across the bay to the massive *Mare Imbrium*, the Sea of Rain, sitting beyond. She begins the long task of a building a trapdoor lid out of silk to swim to the other side.

Liquid water cannot exist in the vacuum of space; it boils away instantly in the absence of atmospheric pressure, and any remaining gas particles are dissociated by the high energy solar winds. The Moon has neither atmosphere to pressurise liquid water, nor an electromagnetic field to protect from the Sun's radiation. The red planet Mars had an atmosphere once that sealed in its oceans, lakes and rivers—but it was short-lived. Its iron core—smaller and weaker than Earth's—cooled rapidly in the early days of the planets and its magnetic armour dissipated. The oceans on Mars then misted away in the cosmic rays, moving at 450 kilometres per second through the solar system.

A tall grevillea stretches blossoms the pale hue of owl feathers over rocks intercut with snowy succulents. Albino honey possums sip from iridescent banksia, the woolly flowers frosted with glistening nectar. Every tree, flower, plant, animal and insect the spider encounters is the colour of moonlight. She walks in the direction of the ancestor's burrow, which sits on high ground ringed by low open forest. Her steps feel strangely light so she trails a line of silk as a safety measure lest she fall back up into space. She walks past *Palus Putredinis*, the Marsh of Decay, and near *Mare Vaporum*, the Sea of Vapors. A shimmering cricket sitting on a quartz boulder tempts her,

looking fat and delicious, but she will not eat anything here while on her journey. She travels along *Sinus Aestuum*, the Bay of Seething, stopping momentarily for a large opalescent tiger snake who crosses her path. She cuts across the boggy seafloor of *Mare Nubium*, the Sea of Clouds, more mud than waterbody, and on the other side there she sees it. A knot of thick ropey fibre spread across a giant coastal boulder and extending into the sea—the end of one of the great silk triplines that radiate out from the ancestor’s burrow.

100 million years ago a meteor struck the near side of the Moon and created Tycho Crater. Tycho is a vast astrobleme 85 kilometres across, with long white lines of rocky ejecta stretching 1500 kilometres in all directions. Without the dynamic plate tectonics that cause the constant crustal change on Earth, the crater sits undisturbed on the lunar surface as a timeless register of cosmological bombardment—the everywhen star wound gazing out into space.

The spider is dwarfed by the burrow, its edge a rising escarpment in front of her. The ancestor would be in there, feet clutching the trapdoor shut, waiting for the right meal to come along—perhaps a comet passing in dark space. The little spider is careful not to touch the triplines, the protocol is to sit with ancestors, not disturb them, so she climbs as close to the lip as she dares. She can’t ask why the cosmic threads brought her here; she would likely be eaten. She bunches up, gathering her legs around her, and sinks into her senses. Her anterior eyes peer over the white banksia landscapes of the moon, interspersed here and there with dark seas and glassy hills. The blue egg of the Earth lies beyond, half-sunken in night shadow, her home in the vastness of time and space. Her posterior eyes are facing the lip of the burrow, watching for any stealthy emergence of a pale, clawed foot, and her lateral eyes on the side are filled with stars. She notices vibrations moving through her body. Close by, the steady breaths of the Grandmother in the burrow—further away, the scurry of quail feet across grass tree needles. Further again, she can feel soft waves lapping on the shores of *Mare Tranquillitatis*, the Sea of Tranquillity, far west from where she sits. Below the rhythms of the lunar mare, something is there. The hairs on her legs react to the invisible filaments that cloud the air, bending and pulling at her. The threads are here.

The most likely theory for the origin of the Moon is that a Mars-sized object struck the proto-Earth shortly after the formation of the planet, ejecting molten magma into orbit that would solidify and become our satellite. The near side of the Moon is tidally locked to Earth’s surface, forever the same pale face looking down as it draws Earth’s oceans up toward space.

Threads, billions and billions of threads, extend out from Earth and wrap around the Moon. It is no accident that the Ancestor Place remains within reach—spider kin hold the ancestors close so they don’t lose their roots to outer space. The spider understands what led her here, and she climbs up onto the lip of the burrow. She attaches an anchor thread to the edge, fastening it tight, then rotates around, lifting her abdomen up in the direction of home. She feels vibrations intensify under her feet and quickly releases the fine threads that allow her to become airborne. Without a moment to spare, the giant lid bursts open and she is launched from the surface, a great white trapdoor spider emerging from the burrow beneath. Two huge crystal fangs gleam in the starlight, eight eyes cluster like Pleiades across its brow, pedipalps as thick as trees grope in her direction, and for a terrifying moment she feels like she might fall back toward the waiting jaws. But her silk threads jolt with static charge and she is flung back toward the Earth.

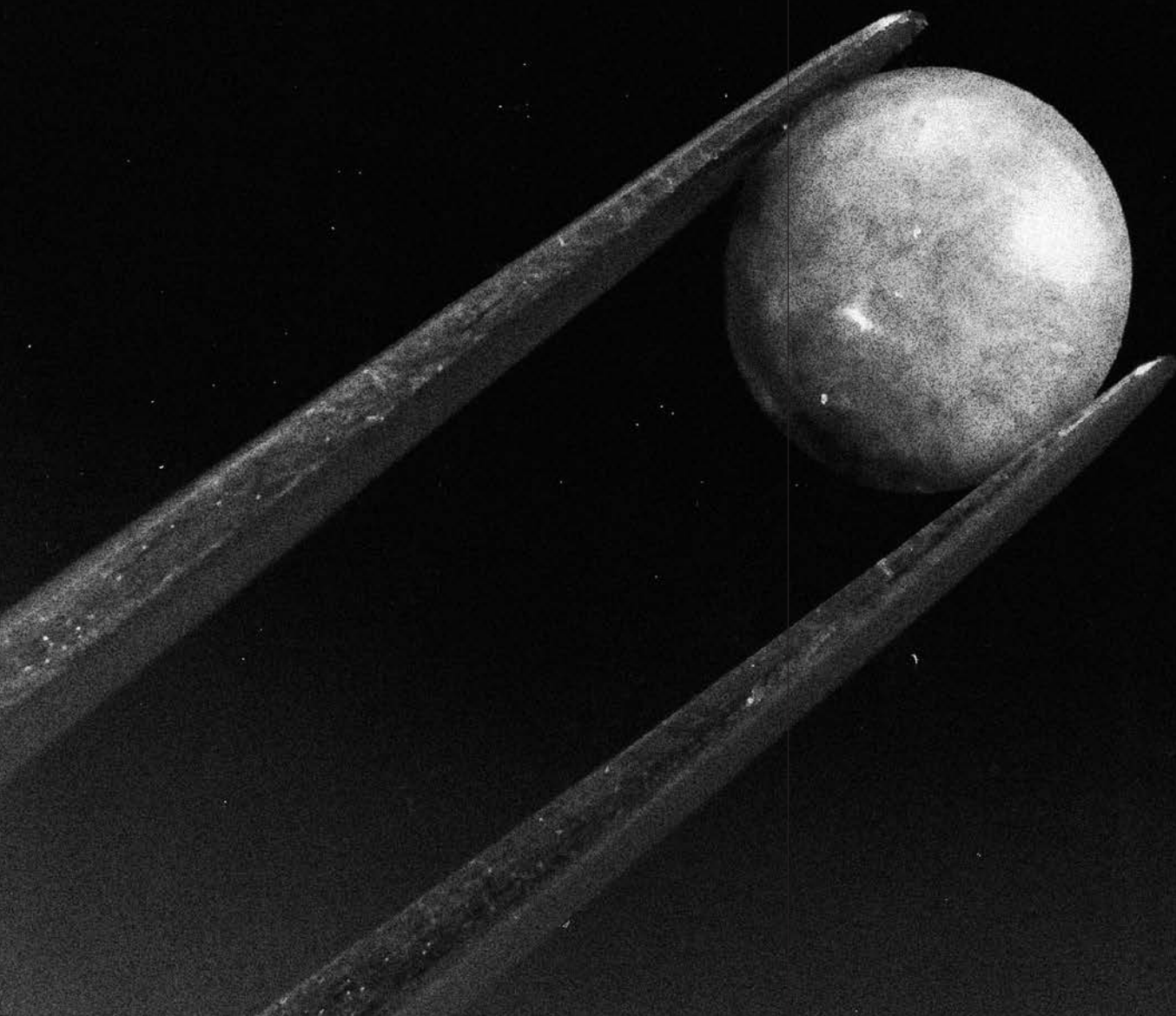
Mars has a tenuous connection to its two moons. The close one Phobos, named for the Greek god of fear, is in the process of being crushed by Mars’ gravity and will likely become a ring of debris. The far moon, Deimos, named for the Greek god of dread and terror, is drifting away and will eventually escape Mars and become an asteroid captured by the gravity of the Sun.

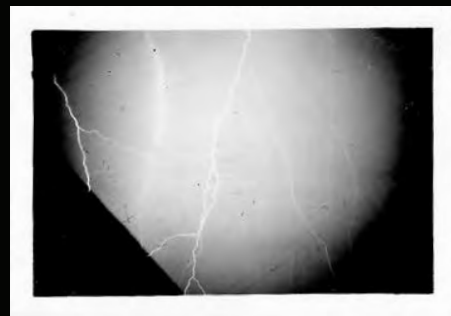
The Moon shrinks in the spider’s view and she is hurtling toward her world of blue oceans, green trees and rich soil. She passes the clouds of satellites that twinkle metallically and then begins her descent through all the layers of Earth’s shell of air—hot, cold, thick, thin, charged, irradiated. By the time she reaches the mesosphere she is a hot comet scorching her way through light phantoms and static storms. Soft filaments catch her and she cools down as she glides through the troposphere and down towards the sheoak grove of her family. As she drifts she tests the anchor thread she tethered to the Moon and it is firm—she has contributed a tie that holds the ancestors close for all the spiders to come. From above, her family’s burrows are a constellation in the dark earth, triplines beaming like rays, each a solar eclipse paused in time. The spider lands and disappears into penned night beneath burrow lid, her dusty footprints gleaming in the moonlight, a silken thread holding up the sky.

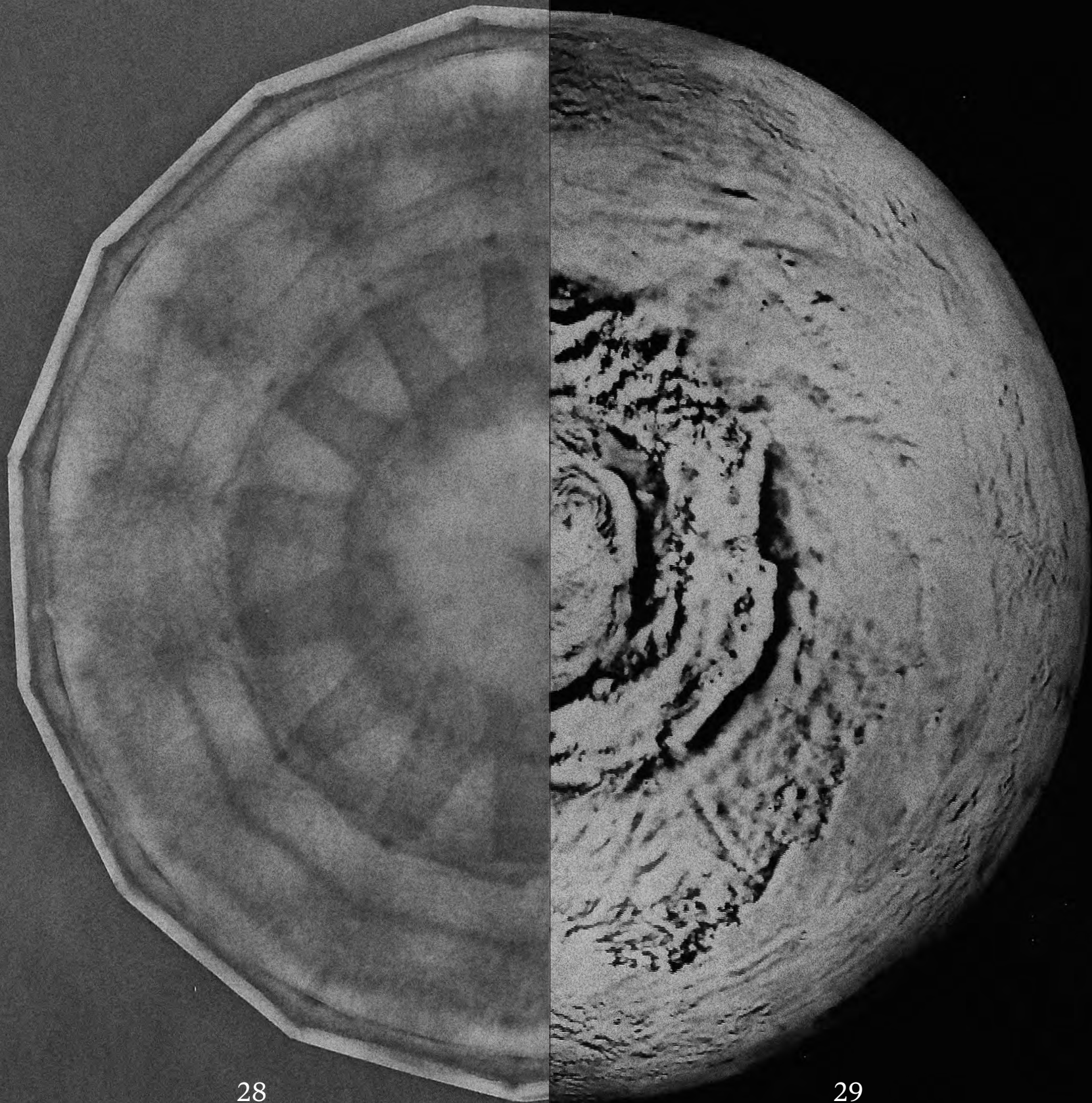
CONSTELLATION
PATRICK POUND

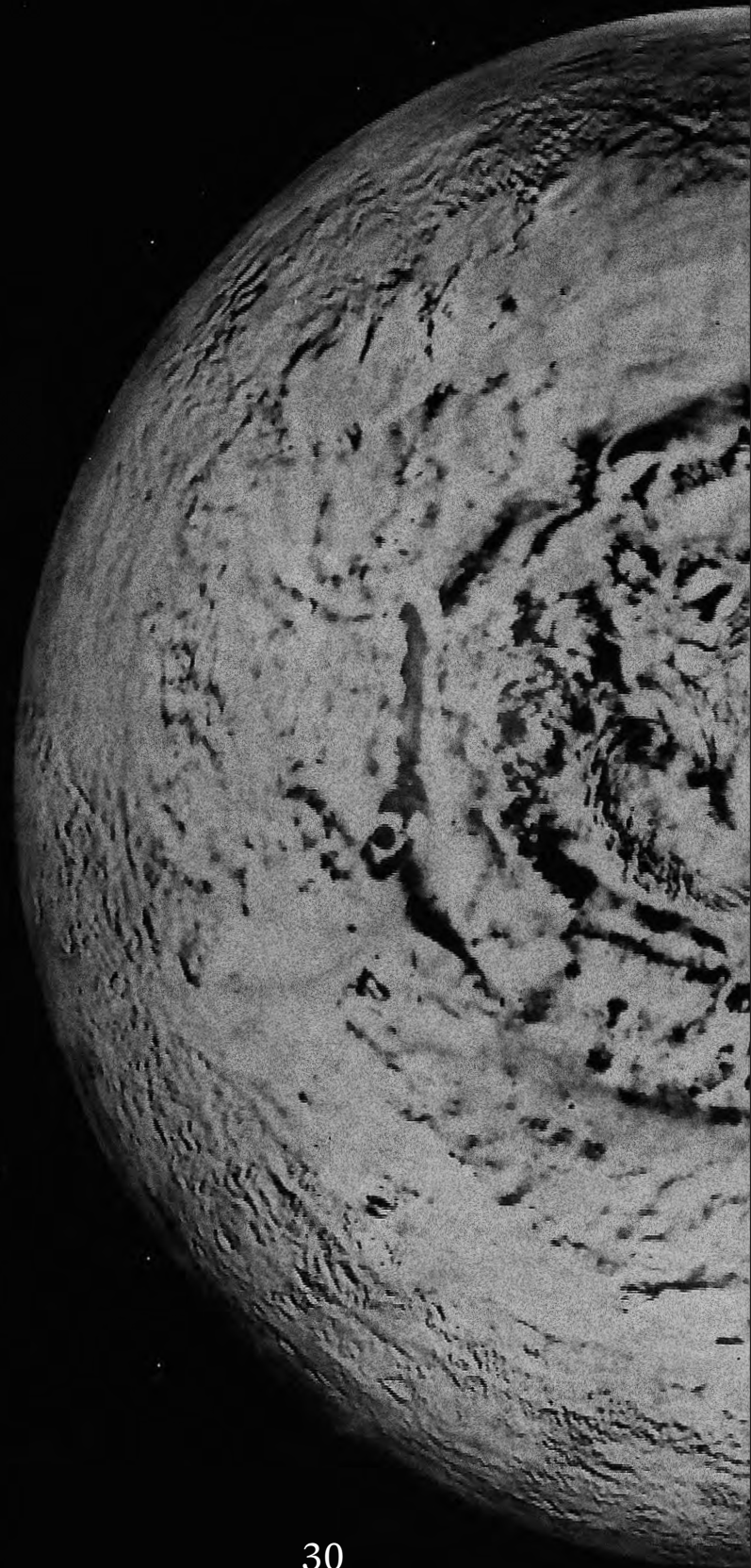
From the observatory of unhinged planets



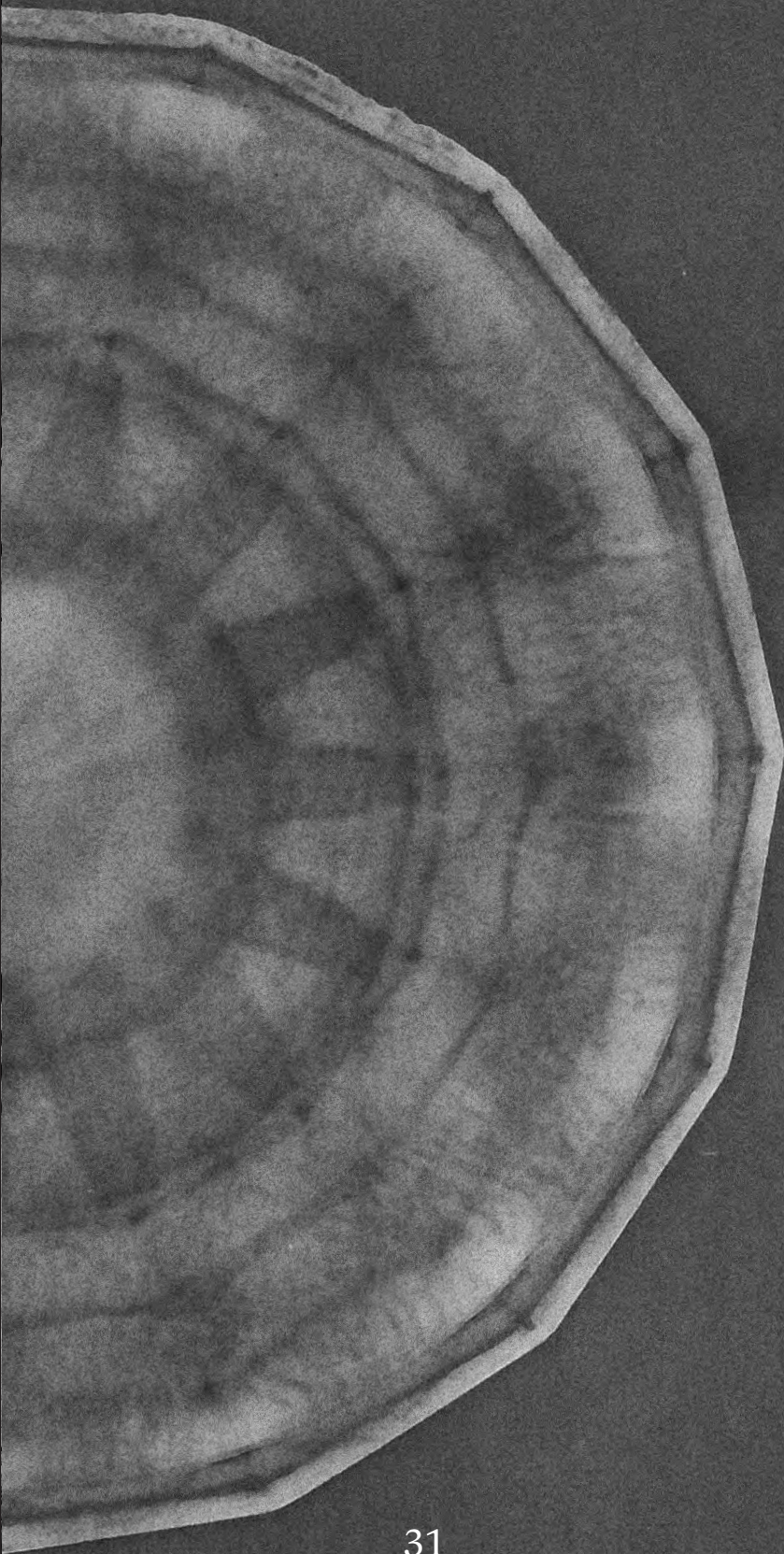








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HC121703-12/17/56-PASADENA, CALIF. Two Downes meet as the Rose Bowl bound bookies are greeted on their arrival here 12/17 for the Rose Bowl game Jan. 1 against Oregon State. Princess with Algonquin, formerly of Estevanville Iowa, greets Big Ten's most valuable player as she shares an orange with Iowa's quarterback Ken Gano. 12/31
UNITED PRESS TELEPHOTO



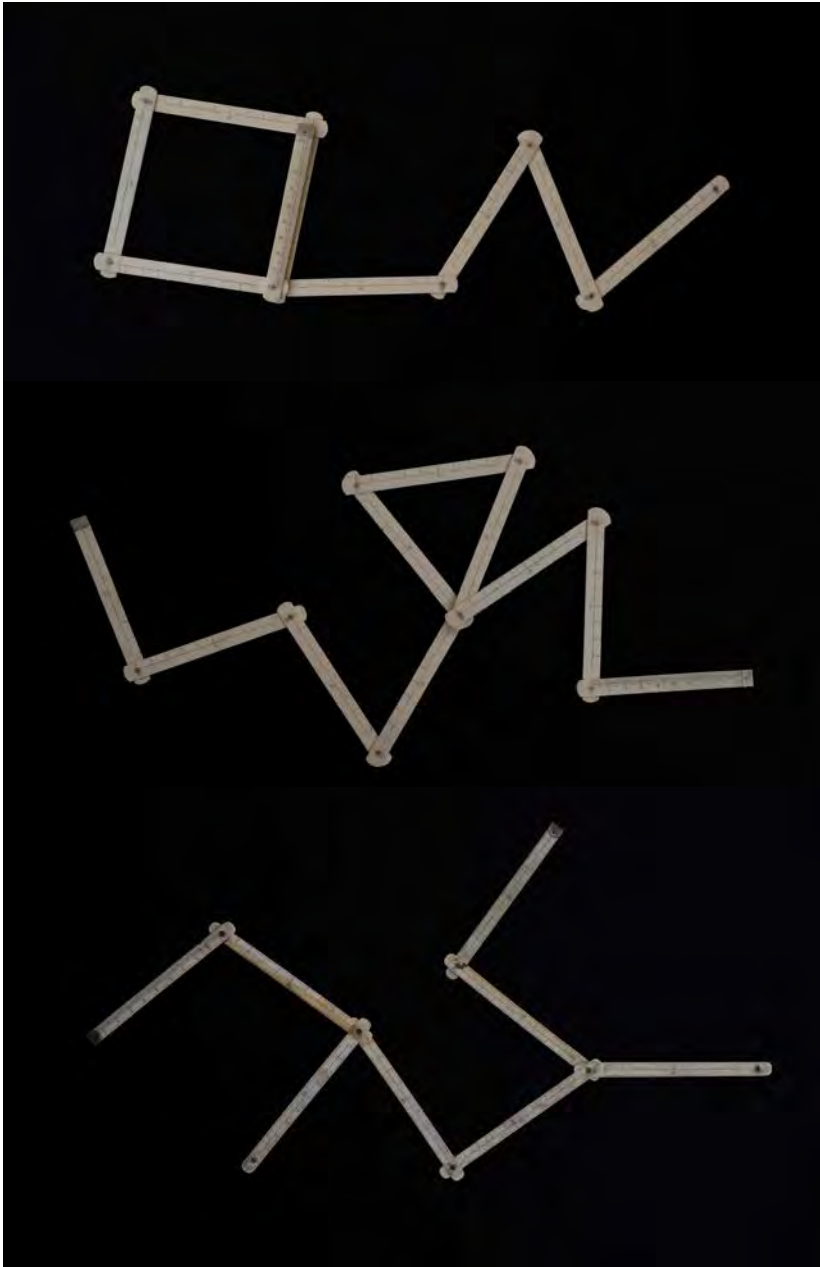








TO MEASURE THE STARS
SARA MORAWETZ AND DARREN ENGWIRDA



STAR
[stär]
(noun)

1. A point of luminescence [suspended in darkness]. A transitory beacon.
2. A focal point [both to look upon and aspire toward]. A radix that serves as both compass and anchor.

GAZE
[geiz]
(verb)

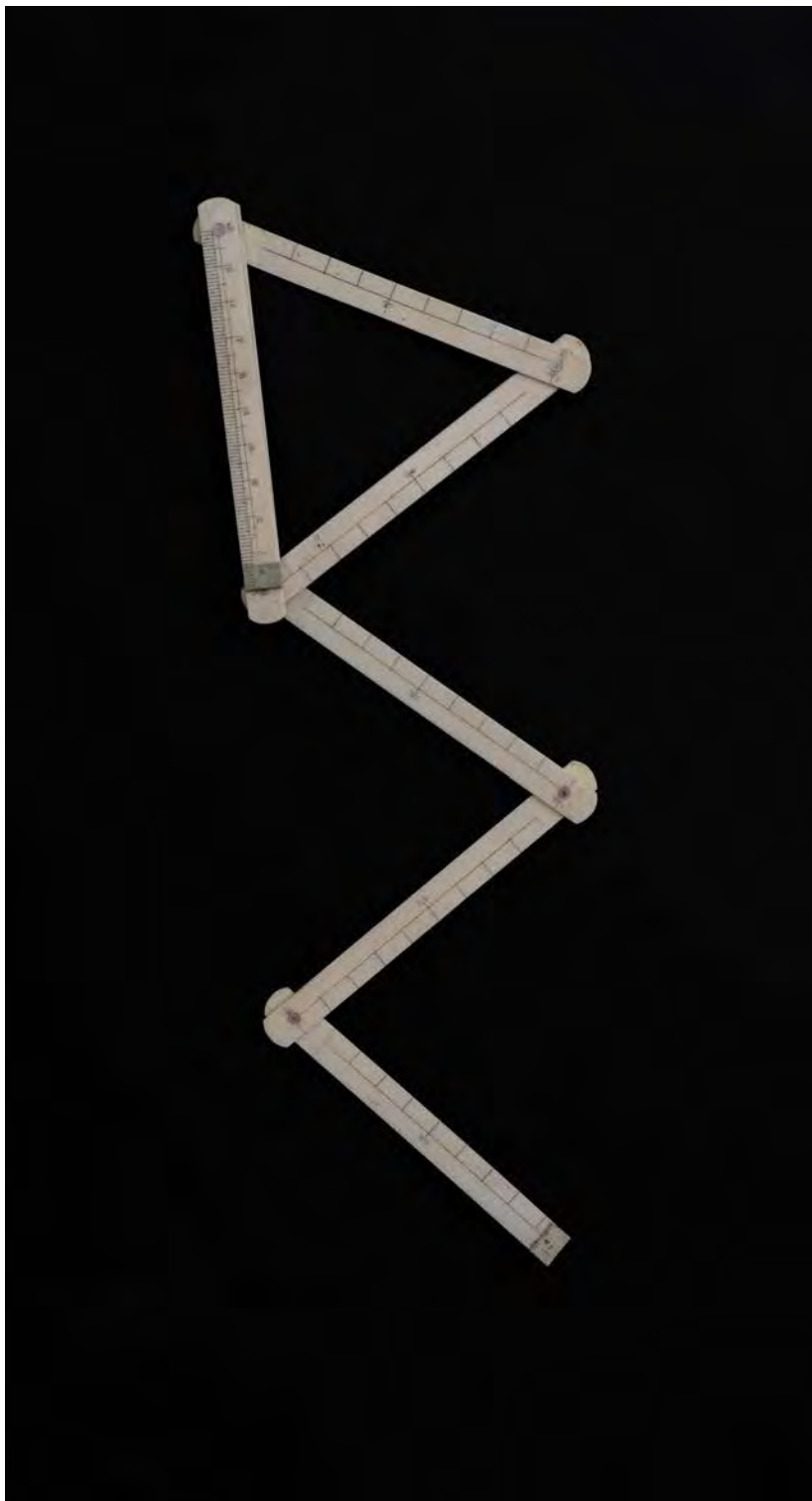
1. To look into, up at, upon.
2. To fix eyes with steady intent—to consider, to observe, to study. To arrest space with a glance that both pauses and holds [to linger as one contemplates].
3. An intimate act of visual suspension—a drawing out that is also a pouring in. A melding of thought and emotion [between what is seen and what is felt].
4. To see starlight as an expression of time. To look forward beyond the present and into the past; to witness a competition between the speed of light and an ever-expanding universe. To look for hour upon hour and catch but a *glimpse*—an incomplete snapshot—a moment of light and time passing, of motion and dynamics relative to *no fixed centre*.
5. To engage in an act of visual asymmetry. To look upward and outward, and paradoxically receive light directed inward from afar. To look at objects straight-on and to fix their position and physicality, only to be cheated by the reflection and refraction of light-in-transit [true origins are always shrouded by the *beast of time*¹].
6. To look at distant, burning orbs; gaseous clouds of elemental particles in the throes of nuclear fusion, and perceive humanity—a heavenly celestial sphere upon which the myth and rumour of imagination, of storytelling and exploration, are inscribed in the subconscious.

LIGHT
[Iīt]
(noun)

1. A natural agent that stimulates sight—that which makes all things visible.
2. A state of brilliant incandescence—a source of illumination. A measure made in lux, lumens, watts and wavelengths—a visible (and unseen) spectrum.
3. A fundamental quantity in physics; a universal constant. Electromagnetic radiation—a particle / [wave] / [probability-function] travelling at approximately 300,000 km per second. A signal that permeates the ether. An upper bound on speed in the [known] universe and a constraint on our ability to peer *into the folds of time*.
4. An oppositional entity—surpassed by none and yet defined relative only to nothingness. [A companion and counterpoint to darkness].
5. A carrier of information. A ghost that punctuates the present, a receipt of the past—a celestial artefact.
6. A concept bent to our own perception, with [sun]light and [star]light distinguished only by the position of our clocks [and the frame of our minds].

FRAME
[frām]
(noun, verb)

1. A rigid structure that surrounds as it supports. The encasement of an environment; an enclosure. [The structure, constitution, or nature of an abstract space]. A scaffold.
2. A point of [relative] perspective, of reference. A device for comparison, a metric against which one can subtract. *A centre*.
3. An assembly of stars into a structural apparatus—an elaborate fabrication. A stencil drawn onto [and into] the night sky.
4. An illusory construct [when considered



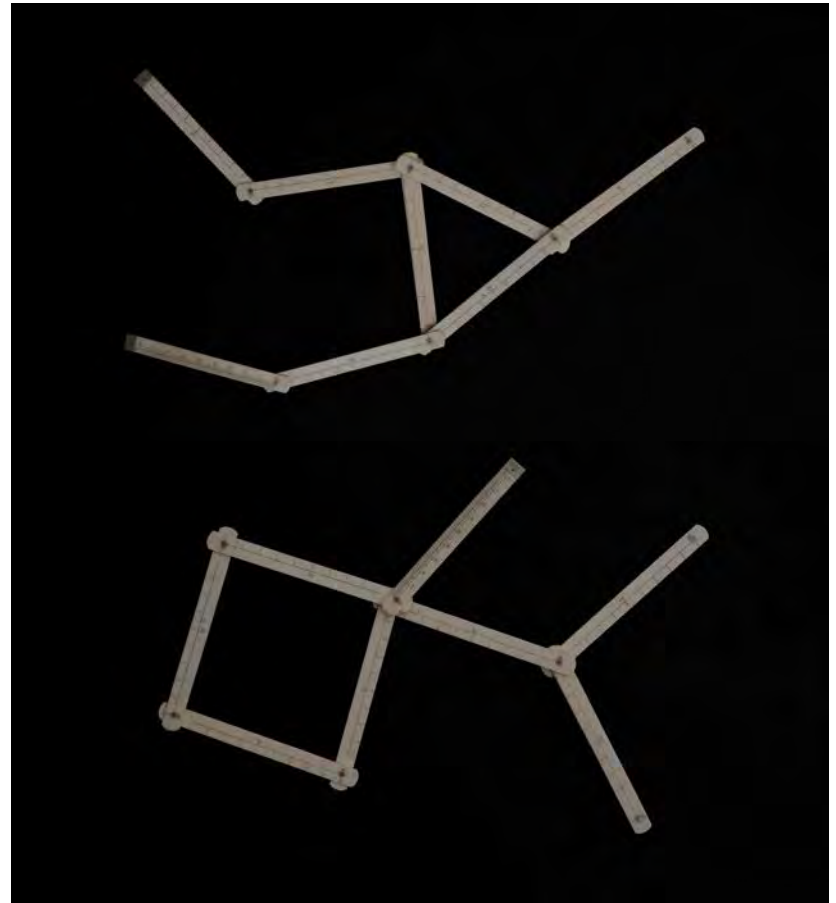
universally]. An arbitrary choice set amongst wheels within wheels and cycles within cycles; [*An infinite cascade / turtles all the way down*²].

5. A tessellation of the night sky, a set of constellations [arbitrarily chosen]. A plane upon which the measure of the universe can be computed and assessed [and be instead supplanted by imagined interconnections].
6. An alignment determined for functional purpose—a compression of the observable into legible terms. A chart, a catalogue, a map [*that need not be folded*]; a workable interface in the infinite expanse—a means of positioning, of bearing, of orientation.
7. A point of inversion; of transposition—a

pivot about which the universe can be recontextualised. An acknowledgement of vantage point and indexation; that we view the universe from a terrestrial standpoint. An understanding of innumerable alternatives—a *recognition that our sun is somebody else's star*.

¹ Daniel Blanga-Gabbay, "The Distance with the Present, On Agamben's Notion of the Contemporary" in *Documenta* 34, No. 2 (2016), 94.

² Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, Bantam Books, 1988, Ch. 1



WHY THE ASTRONOMERS ARE BUSY

ANNA DUNNILL

All the astronomers are busy all the time. They have excuses: "Oh, I'm at a conference." "Oh, I'm writing a research paper." Actually they are all in a secret knitting club for astronomers. They're making a giant representation of the cosmos, a scale model. They have to knit fast because the universe is rushing away from itself. They argue about the proper way to render black holes in yarn. Derek specialises in nebulae; Megan details asteroids.

They're making this in three dimensions and because the universe hasn't ended, so far, they're going to keep knitting until it does. Or until they run out of yarn, maybe? Lately Astrid has been buying the cheap, itchy stuff; they're kind of annoyed. (Astrid's name really is Astrid, which means 'star'. She's tall and red-haired and bony, and when people smirk at her name she fixes them with a hard stare. No one's brought up the yarn thing yet. They're working up to it.)

The astronomers meet at Derek's house. Their knitted model of the universe is kept there, folded up on itself. It takes up a lot of room, which is why it's at Derek's—not that he has a bigger house, particularly, but he doesn't have much else, and no wife or anything since she left. He says she's at her sister's, but it's been over a year. Everyone knows. The main thing is that she's not around to bitch about a giant woolly universe taking up space (ha, ha) in the study, spreading outwards into the kitchen and bedroom, bunched up against the TV. Other things she's not there to complain about include the fact that Derek hasn't published anything lately, and he's dropped a bunch of his grad students. On the upside, he never drops stitches.

Derek's wife left about the time they started the knitting club. No one's quite sure which happened first. Cause? Effect? It's unclear. Theories abound, but nothing, yet, is proven.

The last person in the knitting club is Shaun. He has large hands, clumsy fingers. He's been working on Betelgeuse for weeks, hunched on the green corduroy sofa, needles close to his face, eyes slightly unfocused.

The model of the universe fills most of the house. Astrid and Megan climb out on the roof. It's night, but the city stains the sky orange. A famous comet is due to transit next month. They're all making a trip out to the state observatory at Curtis Creek.

"I'm worried about Shaun," Megan says.

"Shaun? He's all right," says Astrid. "He's mangling Betelgeuse, but we can redo it." Astrid is working on dark matter. She is using tiny needles and fine silk thread. Her fingers twitch like spiders' legs.

(Why is Megan worried about Shaun? She must have noticed something—a thing, or the absence of a thing. Bags under the eyes, knitting clumsier than usual? It's hard to put a finger on.)

Megan peers at the thread that Astrid is knitting and sees that actually it is fine, dark human hair. Where did Astrid get so much hair? Enough hair to knit all the dark matter in the universe?

There are a lot of things Megan would like to ask Astrid but she does not.

The astronomers have not told their colleagues about the knitting club. Their colleagues are serious people, and knitting is not a serious activity; they might not approve. The astronomers are worried they'll lose respect and, therefore, funding; and what would happen then? An astronomer cannot live on thread alone, Derek says, half joking, half mournful, untangling Shaun's most recent disaster. Megan shoots him a sharp look: her uncle was a Baptist minister; she knows the reference; is plunged for a minute back to her scrubbed Sunday-school childhood. *Shake it off.* She picks up the knitting needles again. Slip one, knit two together.

Megan is working on the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. She's still inside the Milky Way—inside our solar system—barely a step away from the earth. Megan cannot compete with Astrid, who is unfazed in her scope and ambition. Megan forms the asteroids diligently, accurately, plodding among rocks while Astrid flies out through distant galaxies. Even Derek is further away than Megan, over in the Crab Nebula; even muddling Shaun has Betelgeuse. How did this happen? Certainly the asteroid belt is detailed; certainly it requires skill and precision. Megan tells herself this. She knits for five more minutes, then gets up and goes to Derek's mini-bar, pours a drink: gin and tonic, easy on the tonic. She feels Astrid's eyes on her, or maybe Derek's? They're sitting next to each other on the sofa. But when she glances up they're concentrating on their work.

"There is a perfume," Astrid says, still not looking up, "that smells like gin and tonic. You can buy it. You can smell like a glass of gin and tonic." Astrid can be relied upon to know things like this. Also to know what everyone is doing without looking at them.

"Would you wear it?" Derek says.

"No," Astrid says, "but I'd like a perfume that smells like rocks. Igneous rocks, specifically."

"You could make that," Derek says.

"I will."

In the beginning, the astronomers met once a week. Thursday nights. They traded knitting patterns and quantum theories, complained about their grad students (so sloppy!) and their colleagues (so dull!). They drank wine. They worked, slowly, on the model of the universe.

After a while they started meeting on Tuesdays as well as Thursdays. Then Sundays. Always at Derek's. They did not talk about this, but more and more often they converged in the same place, sat in Derek's living room trying to make sense of the universe with wool and needles, not talking much. Now it's nearly every night. Often they don't leave Derek's until two or three in the morning. They eat if

someone remembers to order takeout: Derek's bar is well-stocked, his fridge less so.

This is why the astronomers are always busy. Their partners probably think they are having affairs, but they are not, except with the cosmos.

Their partners: are you surprised to learn that they exist? Is it surprising that the astronomers aren't all alone in the world? Shaun's wife Linda is a librarian. Astrid's husband Jeremy is an accountant. Megan's partner Susan designs furniture. These things are not necessarily relevant, or important, but they are facts, and facts can't be overlooked if one is pursuing the truth.

The astronomers are not sure what they are pursuing. It may or may not be Truth.

Derek has heard about this rich businessman in Cyprus. Oil or diamonds or something. He owns half of Cyprus but he's scared to death of the apocalypse. Is Cyprus an island? Derek isn't sure, but he thinks this could explain the fear somewhat. This man ended up buying a farm out in Australia and hiring people to run it for him, and he figures that if the end of the world happens he'll be able to survive out there for a while at least. He'll have crops and meat and wool and so on. He's thought about the contingencies.

This rich man has a lot of staff. They all know about this plan and they all know whether or not they're marked to go with him. Mostly, they are not. Mostly they have to make their own contingency plans.

Derek hasn't told anyone, because imagine what Astrid would say, but he has been thinking recently that he needs a contingency plan of his own. He isn't sure how long this knitting will take. Or how they're supposed to know when to stop.

Derek's wife, Melody, is a neurologist. Her absence from his house is palpable. She is a black hole.

I'm going to be frank with you at this point. I don't know how this story is going to end. Neither do the astronomers. They're driving out to Curtis Creek, to observe the comet. They met at Derek's house to carpool. Astrid drives. Derek sits shotgun. Megan and Shaun are in the back, like overgrown children on a day-trip. Megan has a pile of papers with diagrams of the comet's trajectory. She's making calculations. She's measuring yarn. They're going to knit the comet into the model of the universe.

Shaun, beside her, fiddles with the wool. He's sick of Betelgeuse, which has never been his favourite star, but it's not even half done. Really he'd like to help Astrid with dark matter.

Astrid hasn't joined the dark matter to the rest of the model

yet. The dark matter has no stray ends, no irregularities: it is fine and slippery and does not reflect light. It's hard to tell how big or small it is. It must be fairly sizeable, Shaun thinks, because Astrid has been working on it for weeks now and she's a fast knitter, the fastest of any of them. But somehow it still fits in Astrid's pocket. She keeps the knitting in the left pocket and the hair on the right. Astrid is left-handed. (This may not be important. It's difficult to tell.)

Once Shaun went into the living room and Astrid's knitting was folded up on the coffee table. He picked up the piece of tightly-woven hair. It was heavier than he'd expected, and it slithered in his fingers and he fumbled and dropped it. The dark matter did not seem to have a beginning or an end. For a moment Shaun thought it was spreading, growing, covering the floor. Then Astrid was in the doorway. Their eyes met, and Shaun looked down, and Astrid came over and picked up the dark matter and put it in her pocket. She didn't say anything to Shaun. She turned and left the room and shut the door with Shaun inside.

This is what Shaun thinks: people are always shutting doors on him. He may as well be dark matter. No: he may as well be a sub-atomic particle. In an extinct species of lichen. (Lichen, by the way, is one of the oldest and hardiest life forms. It has colonised basically the whole planet, from desert to tundra to rainforest. Shaun doesn't know much about lichen, but it's possible that his whole life would have been better if he had studied lichen instead of astronomy. He's more suited to it: slow-growing, persistent and tangible in a way that the cosmos is not. Shaun does not know this.)

Astrid's supply of long dark hair has not run out. Also, the other astronomers have been watching, but they've never seen her join two pieces of hair together, as you would expect, to make longer pieces. It seems possible that the hair is one single strand that continues, perhaps, indefinitely.

It is not clear when Astrid will attach the dark matter, or how. The thing is that without dark matter the universe makes no sense, and this is necessarily true in the scale model, too.

In the model of the universe there are no people. There are no life forms at all. This is partly an issue of scale and partly because the astronomers find life forms confusing. Distracting, even. They are concerned with events on a much larger scale (light years and so forth), and also a much smaller scale (subatomic, using tinier measurements than you could possibly believe). The tedious area in the middle isn't of much interest. Also, when you're dealing with life-forms, it's harder to predict accurately: people don't move on orbital planes. (The astronomers themselves, possibly, are exceptions to this rule, but they haven't noticed it yet.)

Actually, in the model of the universe the Earth does not yet exist. No one has volunteered to make the Earth. It's possible that

they've forgotten about it. Looking outwards all the time, you can forget where you are.

In the model of the universe there is no language, no art, and no mathematics. Just to name a few things.

In the model of the universe there is no Earth, and so the astronomers do not exist inside it; are not (in the model) travelling to the observatory, all in the same car like a climactic accident waiting to happen. (If this was a different kind of story Astrid would swerve and lose control of the car and they'd skid into a tree and the dark matter in Astrid's pocket would bloom and spread through all their bodies.) (If this was a different kind of story the comet would leave its orbit and hurtle towards the Earth, specifically the car with the astronomers, wiping them out instantly.)

The model of the universe is in the car. It fills the back seat and most of the front. No one knows how Astrid can see to drive. Maybe she doesn't need to see. As they headed further away from the city the radio dissolved into white noise. That's what they're listening to, now.

One thought: who taught the astronomers to knit? Their mothers (Derek), their grandmothers (Shaun), online video tutorials (Megan). Astrid can't remember, or in any case won't say.

Anyway, I don't know what happens in the end. The astronomers are driving, as I've said, towards the observatory, but I can't see them any more; I've zoomed out, zoomed back in at a different place, a house where Astrid's husband is looking at the kitchen clock and wondering where she is, not that she ever says these days, and if she'll be back by the time the lasagna is done, and why the house feels so much emptier, suddenly, like she's even more not there than usual.

The comet travels on its orbit, past the Earth on its own plane, and out into the depths of space.

Note: 'Why the astronomers are busy' was originally published by *The Toast* in 2014. [the-toast.net]



MICHAELA GLEAVE BETWEEN US

Art Gallery of Western Australia, Rooftop
Fri 3 – Mon 6 March, 8pm – 12am

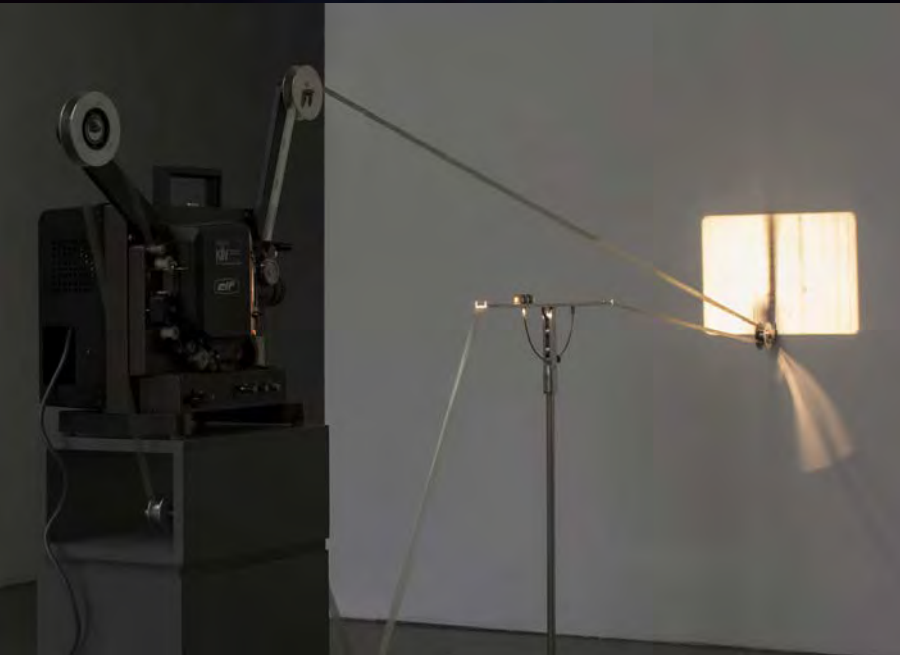
Continuing Michaela Gleave's interest in connecting intimate experience with cosmological expression, *Between us* is a public art project that considers 'the space between'. Encompassing the micro and macro, personal and public, local and universal, the project engages audiences in a poetic consideration of the spaces that exist between the structures and systems that shape our lives: the space between day and night, seasons, tides, epochs; the space between galaxies, stars, atoms, quantum particles; the space between knowledge, belief, history, understanding; the space between words, letters, phrases, heartbeats and breaths.

Between us begins with the intimacy of this proposition and projects it out into the universe, with text generated by the community translated into Morse code signals that will travel through space and time forever. Executed as a moderated

exquisite corps, a web portal collects the growing archive of responses, with text accumulating and building over time to form the collaborative poem at the centre of the work. This poem will then be translated into the Morse code language of pulses and pause, to be beamed up into the sky from the Art Gallery of Western Australia rooftop as light signals, the coded message leaving earth to continue its conversation across space, time, light and distance in a powerful and evocative expression of community.

Presented in association with
the Art Gallery of Western Australia.
Supported by City of Perth.

To submit a message,
visit [perthfestival.com.au/events/
michaela-gleave/](http://perthfestival.com.au/events/michaela-gleave/).



“Cinema is an investigation that allows time and space to vibrate, collapse, overlap and extend. It is a thinking space with no linear direction.” – Rosa Barba.

Terrestrial and celestial realms intersect and collapse in Italian artist Rosa Barba’s flickering explorations of time and space.

In her first solo exhibition in Australia, Rosa presents a selection of works from the past decade, including 16mm and 35mm film, sculpture, installation, and text-based works.

Situated between experimental documentary and fictional narrative, Rosa’s film works examine the relationship between historical record, anecdote and filmic representation to create spaces of memory and uncertainty, more closely resembling myth than the reality they represent.

The exhibition revolves around her long-standing explorations of the connections between film and astronomy, and their shared engagement with light, time, and distance. Films include *Drawn*

ROSA BARBA EMANATIONS

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts
Fri 24 Feb – Sun 23 Apr, Tue – Sun 10am – 5pm

by the Pulse (2018), shot at the Harvard College Observatory and dedicated to American astronomer Henrietta S. Leavitt (1868 – 1921) whose study of the brightness and rhythms of the ‘flicker’ of stars (also a film term) revolutionised our understanding of the size of the cosmos. In *The Color Out of Space* (2015), images of shimmering stars and planets collected at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, are projected through a series of coloured glass panels while the voices of scientists, writers and artists ruminate on the universe and its enigmas.

Also on view is *Somnium* (2011), a Latin word meaning ‘dream’ and the title of German astronomer Johannes Kepler’s novel, written in 1608 and considered the first work of science fiction. *Somnium* documents the environmental damage

caused by the expansion of Europe’s largest harbour, the Port of Rotterdam, while two narrative voices (and times) transform the location into another mysterious planet.

Interlocking themes of astronomy, science fiction and environmental change unfold across the exhibition, calling attention to the limits of human knowledge and our relationship with the world and galaxy around us.

Presented in association
with PICA – Perth Institute of
Contemporary Arts.



ARCHIE BARRY SCAFFOLDING (PREFACE)

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts
Fri 10 Feb – Sun 23 Apr, Tue – Sun 10am – 5pm

Scaffolding (Preface), a new work created by Narrm/Melbourne-based artist Archie Barry, is premised on an imagined society of children who have adapted to contemporary and late-modern conditions of surveillance by evolving a fugitive mode of non-lingual communication. Joining footage of microscopic organisms, rock pools and construction sites is an elusive 'narrator'—the vibrant 3D-animated cranial persona glimpsed at the close of the video who can vocalise without a prefrontal cortex. This character is both a figure of wonder and agent of evasion, eluding the ubiquitous technologies of facial recognition.

While many of Archie's works explore presence and self-portraiture through the affective and sensorial potential of the body, prostheses and voice, *Scaffolding (Preface)* suggests the self-determined and embodied possibilities of

vocalising and listening.

"*Scaffolding (Preface)* happens at multiple dimensions: in the microscopy of a drop of ocean water, in the sunny loungeroom of a dilapidated house, in the cross beams of a construction site at night and in a CGI cross-section of my head. My body and this world lose their usual characteristics and reveal sublime and intricate inner workings. I wanted to construct a stage for a time when people no longer appear, speak or write in familiar ways, and their exquisite singing voices cannot be traced or decoded. I want the work to offer another world, already inside us, different from the ubiquity of individualism and characterised by interconnection." – Archie Barry

Presented in association
with PICA - Perth Institute of
Contemporary Arts.



ROBERT ANDREW HELD WITHIN A WORD

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts
Fri 10 Feb – Sun 23 Apr, Tue – Sun 10am – 5pm

Robert Andrew's kinetic installations combine programmable technologies with natural materials such as wood, stone, ochres and soil. A descendant of the Yawuru people whose Country is of the Broome region of the Kimberley, Western Australia, Robert's installations are expressions of experiences deeply rooted in his own family's history and his ongoing recovery of knowledge about his family and identity.

Yawuru language occupies a central place in Robert's work. In his new installation for PICA, the artist treats the walls of the gallery as a writing surface. Over several weeks, suspended objects move and interact to create an ever-evolving, ever-building 'landscape'. The movements of the strings, rocks and charcoal follow a pattern directed by words in Yawuru that are slowly outlined on a mechanical plotter. The resulting gestural

'topography' bears no trace of the text that drives its formation yet is inherently embedded in ancient knowledge systems.

Robert challenges the use of the English language and the act of writing itself as colonial tools, relinquishing control to produce artworks that embrace uncertainty and ambiguity. Robert says: "I do this to claim my language and to tell stories in my own way." Through a complex choreographing of mechanisms and materials, he creates visual, aural and linguistic experiences that forge new connections between image and text, language and identity, history and now.

Presented in association
with PICA - Perth Institute of
Contemporary Arts.



In *Other Horizons*, various portrayals of journeys under a shared sky and across vast seas to the continent we now call Australia—some revealing the terror of slavery, others focusing in on early migration histories—are presented alongside cinematic depictions of contemporary First Nations ritual, spirituality and power.

Celebrating the works of First Nations women and women of colour, *Other Horizons* comprises three independent artist projects from Atong Atem, Hayley Millar Baker and Jasmine Togo-Brisby. It offers consideration and nuance to discussions around sovereignty, the colonial adventure, migration, national identity and belonging in contemporary Australia.

South Sudanese artist Atong Atem's *Banksia*, commissioned by RISING (Naarm/Melbourne, 2021), reveals the

complex experiences of African diaspora in Australia, from those who travelled with the First Fleet, to more recent migrations, such as those of the artist's family. Created during a residency at the Migration Museum in Naarm/Melbourne, the work explores these early diasporic movements through cinematic, opulent and timeless film and photographic work. In approaching these narratives from a non-Eurocentric vantage point, Atong unpacks notions of 'Australian-ness' and belonging, mythologies of national identity and the history of migration policies in Australia.

Abyss, a solo exhibition of recent works by Australian South Sea Islander artist Jasmine Togo-Brisby explores South Sea Islander identity and history and interrogates plantation colonisation, blackbirding practices and slavery within the Australian and Pacific context. *Abyss* showcases Jasmine's interdisciplinary

ATONG ATEM, HAYLEY MILLAR BAKER, JASMINE TOGO-BRISBY

OTHER HORIZONS

Fremantle Arts Centre

Sat 4 Feb – Sun 23 Apr, Mon – Sun 10am – 5pm

approach to revealing personal and painful histories while also highlighting the formation of new cultures and identities in the bellies of slave ships. Alongside a significant body of existing works, Jasmine will present an ambitious new commission, taking over Fremantle Arts Centre's Wardong gallery.

Nyctinasty, a recent filmic work by Gunditjmarra and Djabwurrung artist Hayley Millar Baker, speaks to spaces between the physical, emotional and spiritual realms, the in-between spaces that First Nations people occupy simultaneously. In the Western Australian premiere of this filmic work, originally commissioned for *Ceremony: The 4th National Indigenous Art Triennial* (National Gallery of Australia, Kamberri/Canberra, 2022), Hayley centres female strength and power, employing horror film tropes and challenging notions of female psychosis

through purposeful revealing of a strong, open and resilient protagonist who is grounded in her own magic and ancestral connection—played by the artist herself.

Collectively, the three projects that make up *Other Horizons* explore varied experiences of, and reflections upon, belonging in the context of Australia. From enduring attachments to Country founded in thousands of years of custodianship, to those borne of the colonial adventure or more recent diaspora, this exhibition is a timely reminder of the many ways we connect with and belong to this place we call Australia, exploring the stories that comprise a complex—and often fractured—national identity.

Presented in association with Fremantle Arts Centre.



AZIZ HAZARA, LISA REIHANA, PROPPANOW

HOWEVER VAST THE DARKNESS...

John Curtin Gallery

Fri 10 Feb – Thu 6 Apr

Mon – Fri 11am – 5pm, Sat & Sun 12 – 4pm (Feb)

Sun 12 – 4pm (Mar & Apr)

However vast the darkness... brings together work from nine artists in celebration of John Curtin Gallery's 25-year partnership with Perth Festival.

Bow Echo by Afghani artist Aziz Hazara is an award-winning project that confronts the viewer with an assembly of young boys from Kabul, desperately struggling to announce the urgency of their community's plight against repression amidst the cultural desolation of war-torn Afghanistan.

Aotearoa New Zealand artist Lisa Reihana's *in Pursuit of Venus [infected]* is the acclaimed project from the 2017 Venice Biennale that interrogates the impact

of empire building upon the peoples of the Pacific from a unique First Nations perspective.

Vernon Ah Kee, Tony Albert, Richard Bell, Megan Cope, Jennifer Herd, Gordon Hookey and Laurie Nilsen all feature in *OCCURRENT AFFAIR* as First Nations artists from the Brisbane-based artist collective proppaNOW, celebrating the strength, resilience and continuity of Aboriginal culture.

Presented in association with the John Curtin Gallery.



Black Sky asserts sovereign visions of blackness—from the deep wounds of mining up to the expanses of the night sky. Far from neutral backdrops, skies are spaces that hold life and story, incite creation and dreams, and witness political action and environmental destruction. The exhibition traverses unlikely spaces of resistance and cultural continuation—from creation stories across horizon lines, to ambiances of the night club, to the atmospheric effects of mining, to creatures of flight, to the black of the Aboriginal flag as a symbol of sovereign solidarities

across skies. *Black Sky* is an unending, eternal horizon of Indigenous life.

An immersive new film by Gombawarrah-Yinhawangka Traditional Owners and Yanyuwa/Jingili filmmaker Michael Bonner brings the ever-present creation story of the Western Ranges into the present-day reality of mining on Yinhawangka Country. Maintaining links to this significant story, which begins at the horizon line and goes up into the stars, is challenged by the constant dust from mining which obscures the very sky.

An installation by the artist



JULIE DOWLING, TRACEY MOFFATT, ROY WIGGAN,
TENNANT CREEK BRIO, JOSEPH WILLIAMS AND LÉVI MCLEAN,
GOMBAWARRAH-YINHAWANGKA TRADITIONAL OWNERS
AND MICHAEL BONNER

BLACK SKY

Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery
Sat 11 Feb – Sat 22 Apr, Tue – Sat 12 – 5pm

collective Tennant Creek Brio captures the sprawling experimental energy of the group, traversing dark spaces and matter, from mining chasms to cosmological visions. Material layers of everyday life in a frontier town are transformed – discarded pokie machines sprout wings and old mining maps are reclaimed and over painted. A film and installation by Joseph Williams and Lévi McLean contemplates colonial residues on Warumungu country and the gold mining boom.

The Cruthers Collection of Women's Art will present major works from Julie Dowling and Tracey Moffatt, which position the sky and horizon in relation to human figures. Julie Dowling's

intimate painted portraits capture everyday relationships within a longer purview of ancestral deep-time, while Tracey Moffatt's rarely seen series *Up in the Sky* (1998) presents ambiguous narratives in an outback setting. The prominent skies and harsh light, under which various scenes unfold, raise the dramatic stakes and scale of these very human dramas.

Presented in association with the Berndt Museum, the Cruthers Collection of Women's Art and Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery.



FRANCIS ALÿS CHILDREN'S GAMES

UWA Somerville
Mon 21 Nov – Sun 9 Apr
Screening nightly before the feature film

Francis Alÿs, who was born in Belgium but has lived in Mexico City for several decades, trained as an architect. Since he began his art practice at the end of the 1980s, his projects have often focused on navigating the urban landscape or bringing the latent violence and power structures of the built environment into focus.

Documented on the artist's travels since 1999 and now comprising nearly 20 videos, *Children's Games* is Francis' short film series featuring scenes of children at play around the world. It shows how children use simple, everyday things to create their own worlds with clearly defined structure and rules. In this they create a world parallel to that of

adults, one that overlaps with it but uses its physical resources quite differently. Games like hopscotch, musical chairs, tag and rock paper scissors are all instantly recognisable but take on new meaning given their cultural setting and physical locations—in a war zone, surrounded by desert, during a pandemic, against a background of poverty. The series demonstrates the singularity of cultures, but also the many transcultural aspects of childhood experiences. It also highlights play as a way for children to understand their place in the world. A selection of these understated yet poignant videos screens before each feature in the Lotterywest Films Program.



JACOBUS CAPONE FALLING FROM EARTH

Moore Contemporary
Sat 4 Feb – Fri 10 Mar
Wed – Fri 11am – 5pm, Sat 12 – 4pm

In a series of new paintings created on a recent residency in Bergen—each one made in relation to seven individual mountains surrounding the Norwegian city—as well as a one-off live-streamed durational performance broadcast during Perth Festival, Jacobus Capone explores the transformational properties that physical landscapes, the sea and stars can have upon an individual's body and psyche.

Created through a process of reverence, devotion and physical

endurance, this new body of work carries a gentle trace of the poetic engagement that transpired between artist and the environment.

Presented in association with Moore Contemporary.



JASON PHU ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

State Buildings
Mon 20 – Fri 24 Feb, 10am – 2pm

Working across drawing, installation, painting, performance and film, Jason Phu frequently uses humour and poetry as a device to address identity and cultural dislocation within an Australian context. Often employing stories of ghosts, spirits, demons and gods from Chinese culture as a personification of these concepts, Jason's playful, deliberately naïve style and tongue-in-cheek subject matter are connected to the now while being simultaneously timeless.

Over the course of one week, Jason will work from an open studio in the State Buildings, welcoming audiences

to engage in personal conversation with him and witness his creative process. In a new body of work created especially for presentation at *All the Stars: A Party*, an opening celebration for Perth Festival's Literature & Ideas Program at Fremantle Arts Centre on Friday 24 February, Jason will explore ideas of conversation between anthropomorphic planets and stars.

Presented in association with the State Buildings. Supported by COMO The Treasury.



TAMI XIANG, HAN BING, LI XIAOFEI, HU XIANGQUAN

BEIJING REALISM

Goolugatup Heathcote Gallery
Sat 11 Feb – Sun 26 Mar, Mon – Sun 10am – 4pm

An old Chinese poem tells of how tree branches wanted to pierce the sky, but only managed to poke a few small holes. In *Beijing Realism*, Chinese artists Tami Xiang, Han Bing, Li Xiaofei and Hu Xiangquian are these branches, and they offer us glimpses into the way history plays itself out in everyday life—through the Cultural Revolution, the one child policy, economic reforms and into the present.

This timely exhibition presents four significant Chinese and Chinese—

Australian contemporary artists working in photography, video, and installation, two who are exhibited in Australia for the first time.

Presented in association with Goolugatup Heathcote.

IMAGE CREDITS

Cover & pp. 22–41

These photographs come from the artist Patrick Pound's vast archives of discarded vernacular photographs. These anonymous images come from defunct newspaper archives, and from amateur snaps sold through eBay. The artist claims no copyright of these photographs.

pp. 4–5

Francis Alÿs, *Children's Game 12: Sillas [Musical chairs]*, 2012, still. In collaboration with Elena Pardo and Félix Blume (Oaxaca City, Mexico).

pp. 14–15 & p. 52

Michaela Gleave and Fausto Brusamolino, *Messages of hope, messages of love*, 2020. Durational public artwork: moving head searchlights, custom software, publicly sourced messages, live video stream. Installation view at Art Gallery of New South Wales, 2020. Photo: Silversalt Photography.

p. 16

Image courtesy of NASA.

p. 42, pp. 44–45

Sara Morawetz, *To Measure the Stars*, 2022–23.

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Rosa Barba, *Somnium*, 2011, 16mm film transferred to video, colour, sound; 18:20 min. Installation view at Void Gallery, Derry, Northern Ireland, 2018. Photo: Paola Bernardelli. Image © Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2022.

Rosa Barba, *Enterprise of Notations*, 2013, 16mm film loop, projector, metal spheres. Installation view at Meyer Riegger, Germany, 2015. Photo: Trevor Lloyd. Image © Rosa Barba / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2022.

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Archie Barry, *Scaffolding (Preface)*, 2021, single-channel 4K video, stereo sound; 11 minutes 20 seconds, 3D modelling; Savannah Fleming, 3D animation: Ben Jones. Image courtesy of the artist.

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Robert Andrew, *Tracing Inscriptions*, 2020. Installation view, *Overlapping Magisteria: The 2020 Macfarlane Commissions*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. Photo: Andrew Curtis.

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Jasmine Togo-Brisby, *Passage*, 2022, crows wings, stained wood, crows feathers, plexiglass and brass. Photo: Jim Cullen.

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Aziz Hazara, *Bow Echo*, 2019 (detail), production still from five-channel video installation with sound, 4:17 minutes. Image courtesy Aziz Hazara & Experimenter.

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Gobawarrah-Yinhawangka, Paraburdoo area. Photo: Michael Bonner.

Tennant Creek Brio member Fabian Brown in the studio, 2020. Photo: Jesse Marlow.

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Francis Alÿs, *Children's Game 15: Espejos*, 2013, still. In collaboration with Julien Devaux and Félix Blume (Ciudad Juárez, Mexico).

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Jacobus Capone, *Untitled (body as a constellation)*, 2022 (detail).

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Jason Phu, *om ma ni pa dm eh um*, 2019.

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Tami Xiang, *Lucky 88*, 2019.

Tami Xiang, *Lucky 88*, 2019.

Anna DunniII is an artist and writer who grew up in Perth and is now based in Naarm/Melbourne. She has held solo exhibitions in Perth, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Kansas City (Missouri, USA). She is also one half of Snapcat, in collaboration with Renae Coles. Anna is a former editor of *Art Guide Australia*, and her writing has appeared in *Art+Australia* online, *un magazine*, *Runway*, *Semaphore*, and *The Toast*, among others. In 2019, she completed a Master of Fine Arts (Visual Art) at the Victorian College of the Arts.

Annika Kristensen is an experienced curator with a particular interest in the civic role of galleries and museums, art in the public domain, and broadening audiences for contemporary art. Currently Visual Arts Curator at Perth Festival and Associate Curator at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) in Melbourne, Annika has worked with major international and Australian artists to commission new work and curate significant solo and group exhibitions. Annika was Exhibition and Project Coordinator for the 19th Biennale of Sydney (2014) and the inaugural Nick Waterlow OAM Curatorial Fellow for the 18th Biennale of Sydney (2012). She has also held positions at Frieze Art Fair, Artangel, Film and Video Umbrella, London; and The West Australian newspaper, Perth.

Cass Lynch is a writer and researcher living on Whadjuk Noongar Country. She has recently completed a Creative Writing PhD that explores deep memory features of the Noongar oral storytelling tradition; in particular stories that reference the last ice age and the rise in sea level that followed it. She is a descendant of the Noongar people and a student of the Noongar language. She is a member of the Wirlomin Noongar Language and Stories group who focus on the revitalisation of culture and language connected to south coast Noongar people. She is the co-founder of Woylie Fest, an all-Aboriginal culture-sharing and literature festival, and through the associated Woylie

Project she facilitates bringing Noongar stories into print. Her Noongar language haikus, published in *Westerly* 64.1, won the 2019 Patricia Hackett Prize. Her audio storytelling works have been featured at Perth Festival, Arts House Melbourne, Cool Change Contemporary and PICA. Her short story *Split*, a creative impression of deep time Perth, can be found in the UQP publication *Flock: First Nations Stories Then and Now*. Cass is represented by Benythn Oldfield at Zeitgeist Agency.

Darren Engwirda is a computational mathematician, a scientist in the Theoretical Division at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and Sara Morawetz' plus one. When not engaged in experimental art projects, he develops computer models used to understand planetary climate processes. As someone generally interested in representations and implicit assumptions, he feels that art and science need not necessarily be divested from one another, but that perhaps some combination of both can provide a better mechanism to engage with the world as we try to understand it. Darren obtained his PhD at the University of Sydney, and was a postdoctoral researcher at MIT and the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies.

HeIen CarroII is Curator of the Wesfarmers Collection of Australian Art and manages the Wesfarmers Arts sponsorship programme, providing over \$4 million annually to the performing and visual arts in Western Australia and nationally. Prior to joining Wesfarmers in 1999, Helen was Curator of Australian Art at Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, The University of Western Australia. Helen joined the board of the Art Gallery of Western Australia in 2008, serving in the role for eight years and retiring in August 2016. She now serves on the boards of the Murdoch University Art Collection, Co3 Contemporary Dance Australia and the Sheila Foundation. In August 2019 Helen was awarded the Business Leadership Award in the national Creative Partnerships Australia Arts Leadership Awards.

Iain Grandage is Perth Festival Artistic Director 2020–2024. He has been celebrated for bringing a sweeping sense of place to the festivals he has curated, with a strong commitment to Noongar artists and stories standing alongside events of scale, such as *Highway to Hell*. Iain is one of Australia's most highly regarded collaborative artists, having won Helpmann Awards for his compositions for theatre (*Cloudstreet*, *Secret River*), for dance (*When Time Stops*), for opera (*The Rabbits* with Kate Miller-Heidke), for silent film (*Satan Jawa* with Rahayu Suppangah) and as a music director for *Meow Meow's Little Match Girl* and *Secret River*. Iain has been music director for large scale events for Perth, Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide Festivals over the last two decades and has an extensive track record of collaboration with Indigenous artists across the country.

Patrick Pound is an artist working with collections. Patrick collects photographs as if on a dare. He has amassed over 70,000 vernacular photographs, which he gathers from across the globe in categories assembled under personal and universal poetic constraints. Patrick has compiled a huge collection of analogue photographs (and recently redundant objects) in over 100 collection categories. Within these collection constraints, the world always sneaks in. His collections of photographs and objects range from a museum of holes to a museum of falling.

In 2017, the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia staged a vast survey exhibition of his collection-based art practice titled *Patrick Pound: The Great Exhibition*. Patrick has worked with many Public Gallery and Museums from Aotearoa to Spain, rethinking their collections through his ever-growing collection-based artworks. His work with photography as a collecting device has been included in five surveys of Australian Photography. In 2020, Patrick's collection-based works featured in David Campany's German photo biennale. In 2022, Campany's *A Trillion Sunsets* at the ICP in New York included a matrix of Pound's collections of images and objects.

Sara Morawetz is an interdisciplinary artist whose work explores the processes that underpin scientific action, examining how these concepts can be leveraged through artistic inquiry. Interested in the "Scientific Method" and its philosophical implications, her work is devised to test and expose the internal processes of methodological labour. Her practice examines how concepts of observation, experimentation, method and standardisation operate as both scientific and cultural apparatus, exploring the dichotomies inherent in these dual perspectives. Her recent projects have incorporated diverse collaborations between the arts and sciences, including partnerships with scientists from NASA, MIT and NIST. Sara's work has been exhibited throughout Australia and internationally including exhibitions at the Musée des Arts et Métiers (Paris) and the Australian Consulate-General New York (New York). She was also the winner of the 2017 Vida Lahey Memorial Travelling Scholarship (QAGOMA Foundation).

COLOPHON

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For as long as there have been humans, we have looked up to the stars. Omnipresent and elusive, their guiding lights have provided answers to major existential questions including who we are and why we are here, where we are and where we are going. From ancient cultural wisdom to contemporary scientific enquiry, there is a long history of knowledge gleaned from the stars. These understandings have shaped the world as we know it, as well as the many systems within it—from religion and mythology to notions of time, distance and navigation, democracy and science, architecture and art. There is still much to be learned. This year’s Festival, with the thematic *Djinda*—the Noongar word for stars—takes First Nations astronomical knowledge and stories as its starting point, allowing for consideration of the role of both the bright star and the darkness of the space between—the visible and invisible—in informing our understanding of the world. In turn, the projects included as part of this year’s Perth Festival Visual Arts program embrace the multiplicity and diversity of stories, learnings and beliefs that shape our sense of being human, beneath a shared and universal sky.

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DAWN
[dôn]

1. The emergence of light, an ascendance.
The awakening of colour—a transition of muted greys to pale yellows, orange into red.
2. A gentle rise—a soft elevation.
3. An active unfurling—a stretching of limbs.
4. An end [*that marks a beginning*].
5. A dissipation of moon and stars and a warm embrace of the coming sun.

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