

MEDIA RELEASE

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Natural environment shines in new exhibitions at Tuggeranong Arts Centre

Local and interstate artists have responded to the natural beauty of the ACT and surrounds in two new exhibitions opening at Tuggeranong Arts Centre on Friday 6th July.

Traversing Tidbinbilla features artists Ruby Berry, Holly Grace, Melinda Heal and Sally Mumford who all took part in Craft ACT's inaugural Spring Residency at Cinerea Cottage in Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve in 2017.

Craft ACT CEO Rachael Coghlan says, 'An annual Craft ACT artist in residence program has been running in Namadgi National Park in collaboration with ACT Parks for over 10 years... In recognition of the strong response to the 2018 Artist in Residence Program, we developed a new Spring Residency which acknowledged the value of uninterrupted time and space to artistic growth.'

The artists' responses to the residency cover a broad range of mediums and styles including glass, drawing, textiles and installation.

Spurred by interactions with clay soil and charcoal as drawing tools during the Tidbinbilla spring residency, Melinda Heal has been collecting and experimenting with coloured soils and rocks from around Canberra, creating natural pigment paints. Using these Canberran pigments and *katazome* stencil-dyeing, Melinda will be presenting a series of works that chart the unique and interrelated species of birds and plants at Tidbinbilla.

Sally Mumford was similarly inspired by the granite tors of Tidbinbilla, which were created through the process of heat and pressure over geological time. Mumford says, 'elemental forces continue to form and reform the matter that makes up these rocks. Alongside this, our own human presence is observed in traces of interactions scattered throughout the landscape.'

Human presence is also a theme for Melbourne-based glass artist Holly Grace, whose recent artwork explores local histories of the Kosciuszko and Namadgi regions. Meanwhile, textile based artist Ruby Berry works with three dimensional sculptural textile works and sensory engagement. Her work explores ideas of protection, comfort and containment.

Alongside *Traversing Tidbinbilla* will be *Abstractions* by renowned local photographer Martin Ollman. Ollman describes his work as, 'Very much a spur-of-the-moment style of photography - nature is chaos, finding order or beauty is the challenge. It will jump out at you.' Ollman's work is also attuned to the natural environment. 'Light will change everything,' he says, 'a macro lens gives you zoomed vision or being 5000ft up in a plane lets you frame out all but the earth.'

Coghlan says, 'I hope that visitors will take the opportunity to appreciate the natural beauty of our nearby national parks and the value of artists to bring new perspectives to the landscape and create beautiful contemporary work.'

***Traversing Tidbinbilla* and *Abstractions* will open at Tuggeranong Arts Centre at 6pm on Friday 6th July with remarks by CraftACT CEO Rachel Coghlan. The exhibitions continue until Saturday 28th July.**

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