

# MEDIA RELEASE

9 February 2023

**LOUISE CURHAM: KAMBAH**

An investigation of place and community

Showing until 4 March, 2023

Artist Louise Curham's exhibition *Kambah* draws on her professional practice as an archivist, her creative art practice and community responses to the question 'what do you know about Kambah that you think is important to share with others?.'

Louise's started out in film and has worked across most media. She focuses on old media and the lessons we can learn from it. Her work often involves building communities. It has been shown in numerous venues across Australia and most recently as part of the Canberra Art Biennial, Canberra's SoundOut festival and the University of Canberra's exhibition *Upending Mending*.

Focusing on what is valuable to people who live in Kambah and the diversity of those calling this place home; this exhibition is the result of extensive research, conversations with many Kambah residents, collaborations with artists and academics, and community entries into an online digital map.

Alongside the digital map, is the Bennet family home movie (usually only viewable via the National Film and Sound Archive) and a series of photographs made using pinhole photography and cyanotypes. Curham's photographic works began as a family project during lockdown and create very literal portraits of Kambah.

Curham's *Kambah* exhibition forms part of a much bigger and multi-layered project.

"My goal is to build a community map of our experience. The digital map, which is really starting to take shape, will eventually be developed into a paper map representing the Kambah communities view of the place they call home," Curham said.

Designed to be used on your phone, the digital map, called 'locative media,' was made by Curham in collaboration with artists in Belgium and Spain (introduced to Curham by Canberra artist Tracy Benson).

Visitors to the exhibition can add to the digital map or share a story, a cup of tea or make a cyanotype with Louise. You can listen to Louise giving an in-depth description of the map and view at transcript of the [audio here](#) or take look at the draft map online at: <https://cgeomap.eu/urambi/>.

Louise will share unique stories about Kambah in a series of Saturday gallery events and local site visits. Delightfully traversing time and scope, some of Curham's early stories recall memories of the 1970's Skylight Discotheque at the Kambah Tavern, or the 1969 Sociological Seminar on the 'sociological and environmental planning' for Canberra's next new town, Tuggeranong.

**Media contact: Cassidy Richens, 6293 1443 or [Cassidy.richens@tuggeranongarts.com](mailto:Cassidy.richens@tuggeranongarts.com)**

"The Ngunawal history of the south goes back a long way. Many people know about the Isabella Plains yam daisy fields or the story of a Kambah local, who lives east of Drakeford Drive and reported finding an axe in her garden, which was then given to the government.

More recent stories include personal memories of kids walking along the newly built Athlon Drive to get to basketball, and the arrival of Red Rooster and the pastime of Wanniasa/Kambah locals stealing the 's' and renaming it Red Roo\*ter.

"And there's a whole bunch of stories shared by a generation of Kambahians who know the Boddington Crescent IGA as Vick and Rick's, who were the owners for a long time," Curham says.

Curham hopes by drawing attention to stories of what it's like to live in Kambah now and what was like in the early days, the local community, and Canberrans more broadly, will come to treasure it more.

"2008 research found Kambah suffers a condition called low 'social capital'. This means we don't do much together or build much together as a community. Not surprising, as other than our exceptional cafes, we have few places to gather.

"The perception of Kambah in the Canberra community is mixed; we're known on the internet as one of Australia's biggest bogan suburbs. For some of us that's a blessing, others don't square that with how they think about themselves," Curham says.

Kambah celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> birthday next year and Curham hopes that community responses to the digital map will also help identify ways the community can celebrate together.

This Saturday, Louise is inviting the community to join her on a site visit to some of Kambah's remaining historic buildings, including farm workers' cottages built in the 1940s.

"The cottage is now the ACT Diversity Hub, a humble but precious gathering place for the queer community of the south. We'll serve afternoon tea at 4, then take a walk with local historical knowledge holder Glen Schwinghammer," Curham said.

Before the Diversity Hub site walk, Louise will present the Kambah Community Noticeboard F2F meet-up for residents to chat about common interests and concerns. Registration is essential for catering purposes. [Click here to register.](#)

This is the first event in a series of other exhibition related events happening on Saturdays during the exhibition. Details about a kitchen table discussion with Geoff Pryor on February 18, a Bring-a-Plate Southside Artists meetup event on the February 25, and Louise's closing event on March 4 are available on the [Tuggeranong Arts Centre website here.](#)

The community is also invited to attend a group tour of the exhibition. Times and booking links are available on the TAC website. Louise acknowledges support for her project from an artACT Homefront grant, and in her role as lecturer at Charles Sturt University.

## Links

[Flickr images](#)

[Description & transcript of the map](#)

[The map](#)

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Details of the Public Program:

### **Saturday 11 February**

Louise Curham will be in the gallery, 1-4pm with her pinhole camera images and cyanotype prints. At 2pm join her in the gallery for the "Kambah Community Noticeboard F2F meet-up". It's a time to meet new people and chat about issues of common interest to residents and friends of Kambah. At 4pm, drop in for afternoon tea at the Diversity hub in Kambah, then at 5pm, join Louise and local history knowledge holder, Glen Schwinghamer for a tour around Springbett Street.

### **Saturday 18 February**

"Kambah is turning 50 in 2024: let's talk about Kambah 2050 and Kambah 2074. What do we hope for ourselves, what we want for the future?"

Louise will be in the gallery from 1-4pm and will be joined by local identity Geoff Pryor for a "kitchen table discussion" at 2pm. Come and have your say, share your memories of Kambah and make some new friends.

### **Saturday 25 February**

Louise is in the gallery from 1 to 4pm with her evolving "Kambah Peoples Map", the Bennett Family home movie and her intriguing pinhole camera images and ethereal cyanotype prints. Join her for a chat about Kambah or bring a plate for the 2pm Artists of Kambah/Artists of the South afternoon meet-up. Don't miss this special opportunity to meet other like-minded creatives based in the local area.

### **Closing Event: Saturday 4 March**

Artist Louise Curham's exhibition *Kambah* will close with a special event on the last Saturday of the show! Join her in the gallery at 2pm to enjoy light refreshments and a delightful choral selection from the LDK Greenway Choir led by Sarah Louise Owens. Established in 2021, members of the choir have sung together for several years and performed for aged care facilities all over Canberra. Their 'playlist of life' repertoire embraces: hits from the 50s, 60s, 70s, favourite show tunes, International folk songs and some popular classical pieces. The choir won the ACT Positive Aging Award in 2019 as "Seasoned Voices" and they happily welcome any members of the Seniors' community to join.