Media release

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Australia Council Fellows showcase artwork

The dynamic works of the Australia Council’s current visual arts fellows are now on show at the Councils’ Surry Hills office.

Australia Council Director Visual Arts Julie Lomax said the exhibition, Visual Arts Fellowships: Robyn Backen, Lindy Lee and Hilarie Mais, celebrated the artistic achievements of these three artists, who were awarded two-year fellowships in 2012. The show includes several pieces by the artists as well as a short film on each artists’ practice and their advice on applying for funding from The Australia Council.

“The Australia Council is proud to support diverse artistic work through our various grants and initiatives, as well as with exhibitions here at Council, so artists can share their innovative work with the arts sector and the community,” Ms Lomax said.

“Robyn, Lindy and Hilarie are all celebrated contemporary artists, working across drawing, projections, sculptural form and installation.

“Visual Arts Fellowships provide $120,000 to artists to undertake ambitious new projects and develop their artistic careers.

“Fellowships are only granted once in an artists’ lifetime and support them to take time out to research, reflect, create work and expand their practice.

“Over their fellowships all three artists have embarked on ambitious projects and shown their work at significant exhibitions and arts events.

“Robyn’s large-scale public commission for Brisbane City Council, Night Watch, now floats on Brisbane’s skyline and references the original printer building on this site.

“She was also in residence here last week creating one of her signature site-specific works, which involves drawing large text onto a white background that is read by lying down.

“Lindy has had two solo exhibitions at Sydney’s Roslyn Oxley9 gallery and Brisbane’s UQ Art Museum.

“She has also been working on New Century Garden, a public art project in Chinatown for the City of Sydney, which draws on the principles of Taoist and Buddhist philosophy to create a contemporary interpretation of traditional Chinese gardens.

“Lindy, along with Fiona Hall, has been funded by the Australia Council to exhibit at the Kochi Muziris Biennale 2014 in India, which opens in December.

“Hilarie spent part of her fellowship undertaking research at the Museum of the Native American in New York, Musee du Quai Branly in Paris and the Natural History Museum in London.

“She also exhibited work across Australia and the UK, including Square One at Wollongong City Gallery; Triptych: Mais Mais Wright Wright at the Australian National University’s Drill Hall Gallery, and Contemporary Australian Drawing #2 at the University of the Arts, Wimbledon Gallery in the UK.”

Visual Arts Fellowships: Robyn Backen, Lindy Lee and Hilarie Mais will run until 26 January at the Australia Council for the Arts’ Rover Thomas Auditorium at 372 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills.

It will be open to the public from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and entry is free.

To see the video on the artists and photos of their work, go to: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/woo4z2m8zs0osq7/AAAsJyDkrFQx87Q_cmyYhPbRa?dl=0
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Robyn Backen:

Robyn Backen is an interdisciplinary artist and recipient of the Australia Council Visual Arts Fellowship for the period 2012-14. Backen’s recent work evolves from her research into the acoustics of ancient whispering architecture. Her installations are often technically complex yet are minimal in appearance. Systems become the subjects of her work, like those of language and code, classifying, remembering.

Backen has completed many large public commissioned artworks such as Weeping Walls, Sydney International Airport 2001; Delicate Balance at Ballast Point Park for the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority 2009 and Walls that Whisper Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House, Canberra 2009.

Lindy Lee:

Born in Brisbane in 1954, Lindy Lee is one of Australia’s foremost contemporary artists and recipient of the Australia Council Visual Arts Fellowship for the period 2012-14. Lee’s work explores her Chinese heritage through the prisms of identity, selfhood and Zen Buddhism. ‘Almost all of my life I’ve been preoccupied with the nature of ‘self’ in the world. For me it has to do with being a divided self – Chinese and Australian – and the feeling of being neither this, nor that, but both.’

Lee’s bronze sculpture Continents Drifting is inspired by traditional Chinese ‘flung ink’ painting. In this practise, Buddhist monks meditate before spilling ink onto blank paper. The resulting mark represents the release of the ego or the self, in favour of a unified mind, body and universe.

Hilarie Mais:

Hilarie Mais was born in Leeds, United Kingdom in 1952 where she trained at the Winchester and Slade Schools of Art before moving to New York. She has lived and worked in Sydney since 1981 and was recipient of the Australia Council Visual Arts Fellowship for the period 2012-14. Mais is known for grid-based structures, which define and partition space with their lines and shapes.

Mais’ works are not pre-conceived or pre-determined, rather they are allowed to form organically, evolving patterns as they grow and respond to their environment. Many of Mais’ works have developed out of observing natural growth processes. In the growth of shells, leaves and other natural forms, Mais found they had genetically-determined growth patterns and sequences. Mais has exhibited extensively internationally and nationally and is held in many major collections worldwide.