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*Vis-ability: Artworks from the QUT Art Collection.*  
QUT Art Museum, Brisbane, Qld.

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[https://issuu.com/qutartmuseum/docs/vis-ability\\_catalogue](https://issuu.com/qutartmuseum/docs/vis-ability_catalogue)





**Vis-ability**

Artworks from the QUT Art Collection

**11 May – 4 August 2019**





2 George Street, Brisbane  
[artmuseum.qut.edu.au](http://artmuseum.qut.edu.au) | 07 3138 5370 | FREE  
Tues–Fri 10AM–5PM, Sat–Sun 12PM–4PM





# Vis-ability

Artworks from the QUT Art Collection

**11 May – 4 August 2019**

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**Raquel Ormella**

*Walking through clearfells* (video still) 2009

two-channel video, 22 mins

Performers: Raquel Ormella and Joe Shemish

Editor: Abigail Moncrieff

Cinematographer: Joe Shemish

QUT Art Collection

Donated under the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program, 2018







# Introduction

Expanding experiences of art is what drives the program at the QUT Art Museum.

*Vis-ability: Artworks from the QUT Art Collection* is an exhibition conceived to broaden engagement with the significant holdings of artworks that form the QUT Art Collection—over 3,000 objects—as well as embrace different ways that people who are blind or have low vision experience art. *Vis-ability* seeks to encourage audiences to see differently, to understand some of the inherent assumptions of the art world, and the world at large, which privileges sight-driven experiences—it is after all called the ‘visual arts’.

With the QUT Art Collection as the starting point (specifically recent acquisitions from the past five years), *Vis-ability* draws upon the knowledge of university researchers and experts within the community who have lived experience of blindness or low vision. It proposes alternative ways of engaging with our art collection and considers how technologies can deepen our understanding of vision and our experience of art more broadly.

As a university art museum, we have a great advantage of being part of a cohort of researchers and experts, but most importantly being in an environment that values cross-collaboration and cross-disciplinary practices. *Vis-ability* grew organically from conversations between Dr Janice Rieger and Art Museum staff around ideas of how exhibition design and curatorial practice could

## Dale Harding

*Emetic painting 1 (ceremony for toxic masculinities)* 2018


dry pigment, gum arabic, pastel and pencil  
on Fabriano paper, 200 x 151CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2018

Photo by Charlie Hillhouse, courtesy of  
Milani Gallery, Brisbane





Call me a politician  
Call me a politician  
For you have made  
the queen language  
the king tongue  
corrupted.

Cast off  
nobility.  
Force yourself upon me.

You fuck with  
hatred on your breath.  
Spread the word.

Nagaya shiliga yinda



create alternate ways of experiencing art outside of vision-driven experiences. Under Dr Rieger's research, the School of Design had been working on developing technologies around vision impairment and bringing this research to the public by utilising the QUT Art Collection, an often publicly hidden reservoir of ideas and knowledge held behind the closed doors of the University's campuses and buildings. It made sense to make these knowledge streams visible.

The Wondrous Goggles is a research outcome of the university's School of Design academics (Dr Janice Rieger, Dr Marianella Chamorro-Koc, Dr Alexander Black) and students (Salvatore Fazio, Katyusha Methansia, Nicholas Sabulis, Corey Tinney). The goggles are designed to simulate the experiences of certain vision conditions, giving people the opportunity to interact with the world without all the senses upon which they may have become accustomed to rely.

*Vis-ability* also includes a co-created tactile interpretation, along with a soundscape by Aymeric Vildieu, of Catherine Parker's painting, *Present portal* 2017. Throughout the exhibition, audio descriptions by Dr Bree Hadley open new ways of understanding and experiencing the artworks of Karla Dickens, Karla Marchesi, and a collaborative work

by Lyndell Brown, Charles Green and Jon Cattapan. These audio descriptions can be heard before the artworks are seen. For many of us, our experience of the world is ocular-centric; touch and sound are often considered secondary senses. In an art museum, touching is normally not encouraged behaviour, and sound is usually reserved for media or performance works. However, through this exhibition, we encourage audiences to consider how they may engage with artwork by senses other than sight. For instance, the co-created tactile interpretation may appear small in scale to the eyes but not to the hands, as touch is a very different knowledge system that requires small detail and a longer, slower process of investigation. We believe that these other senses can give us a more in-depth understanding of the work and add a new dimension to the experience of art.

The texts in this catalogue speak in more detail about the concepts and processes behind creating each of these elements in the exhibition. To produce these texts, we have collaborated with Dr Alexander Black, Sarah Boulton, Dr Marianella Chamorro-Koc, Dr Bree Hadley, Dr Jasmien Herssens and Dr Megan Strickfaden.

Central to the exhibition was the desire to reveal to the public some of the more





**Louise Hearman**

*Untitled #1391 2016*

digital print on rag paper, 91 x 91CM

QUT Art Collection

Donated 2018

Cate Blanchett  
Actress

Born in Melbourne, 1960. After graduating from the National Institute of Dramatic Art in Sydney in 1982, Cate Blanchett joined the Sydney theatre group Company B. She appeared in the Sydney Theatre Company's *Top Girls* and *Oleanna*, for which she was awarded the Sydney Theatre Critics' Award for Best Actress.

Her television credits include Australian Broadcasting Commission's *Borderline* (1984). Her feature film credits include *Boys n the Moors*, *Thank God He Met Lizzie* and *Oscar and Lucinda*. In 1999, Blanchett received a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress for her role in *The End of the Affair*.

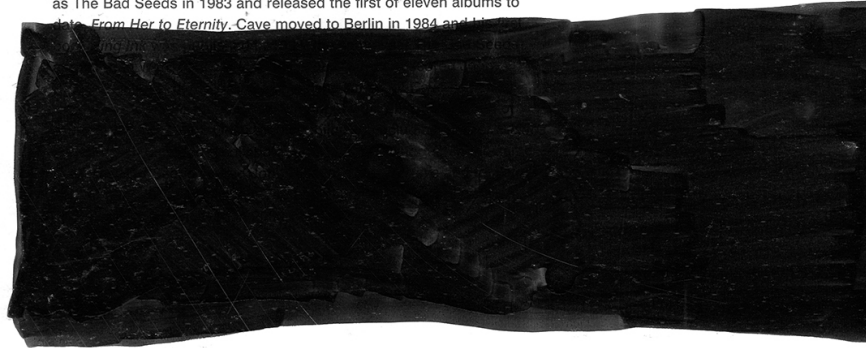
Oscar nomination for her lead role in *Elizabeth*. She also co-starred in *Pushing Tin* and *An Ideal Husband*. In 2001, she starred in *Penny in the West*. In 2002, she starred in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* and *The Man Who Cried*. Blanchett is currently starring in the Harry Potter's film *The Gift* and *The Lord of the Rings* to be shot in New Zealand.





Nick Cave  
Musician, Author

Born in Warracknabeal, Victoria, 1957. Nick Cave left Melbourne for London in 1980 with his band The Birthday Party. They re-assembled as The Bad Seeds in 1983 and released the first of eleven albums to date, *From Her to Eternity*. Cave moved to Berlin in 1984 and then to



PREVIOUS PAGE

**Dean Cross**

*PolyAustralis #19 (Cate Blanchett)* 2016

Hahnemühle archival cotton photorag,

59.4 x 84.1CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2016

Original image by Polly Borland

RIGHT

**Dean Cross**

*PolyAustralis #16 (Nick Cave)* 2016

Hahnemühle archival cotton photorag,

59.4 x 84.1CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2016

Original image by Polly Borland

NEXT PAGE

**Elisa Jane Carmichael**

*Can we see the burst of colours of wildflowers amongst the landscape?* 2018

synthetic polymer on canvas,

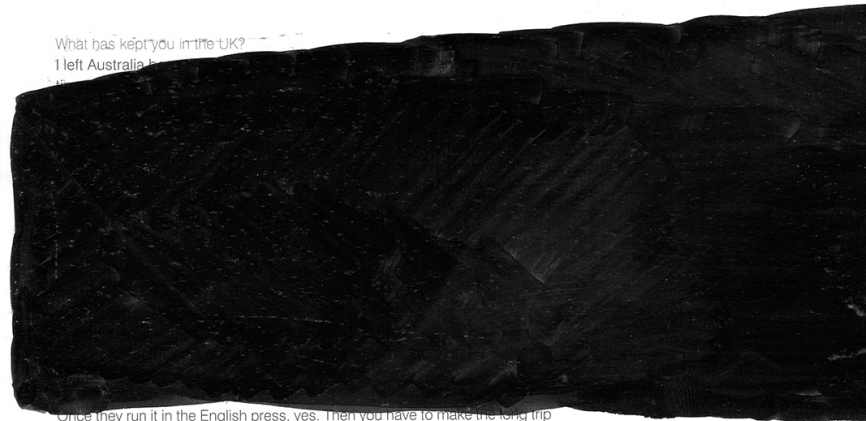
200 x 148CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2018

Photo courtesy of Onespace Gallery, Brisbane

What has kept you in the UK?  
I left Australia in 1984.

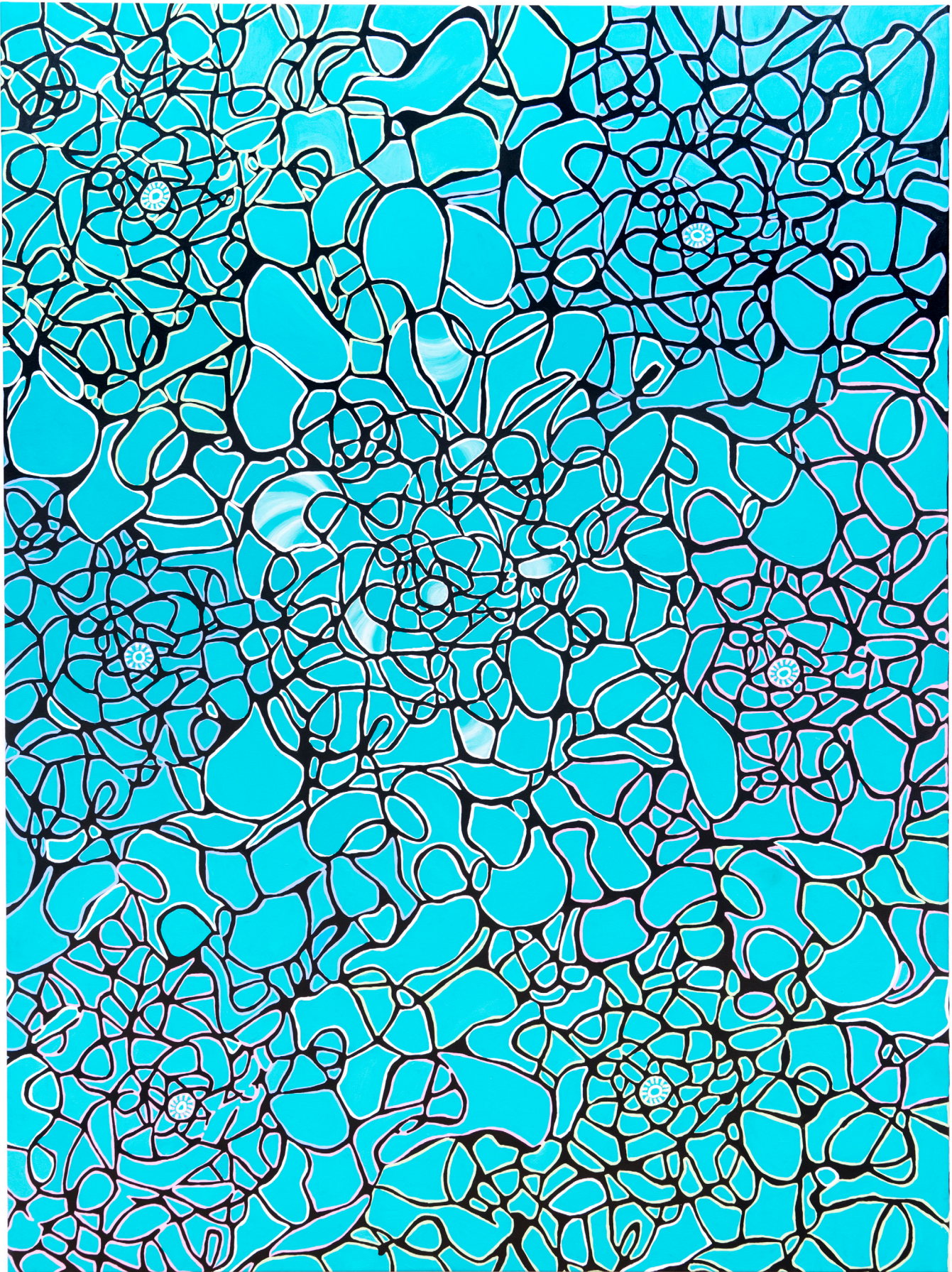


Once they run it in the English press, yes. Then you have to make the long trip back home. It's a roundabout way of getting your foot in the door in Australia. Do you enjoy the recognition now when you go back?

Yeah, twenty years on, the Australian record industry awarded me an up-and-coming songwriter of the year, or something like that. By that stage it was all too late and I didn't attend the ceremony. In London you realise that you can survive without being complicit with the industry here. That's the way we operate. We have an independent record company and we don't sign contracts.









recent artworks acquired by QUT over the last five years. The premise of visibility or the unseen is equally fundamental to this exhibition and has driven our curatorial approach, shaping the selection of works, the design of the exhibition, and the format of the catalogue (which has been published digitally for increased accessibility). We have included a number of works that embrace differing or unusual perspectives—both literally and conceptually. For instance, Raquel Ormella's dual-channel video *Walking through clearfells* 2009 takes a first-person point of view, scanning the ground, which gives no sense of the horizon or surrounding landscape, causing disorientation. In Dai Li's *View* 2013, a kneeling, nude figure looks over her shoulder at her reflection, and in Lyndell Brown, Charles Green and Jon Cattapan's *War and peace #7: Empire* 2011, the view onto the military scene is obstructed by a dotted grid overlayed onto the image. As a result of conversations and exercises with people who are blind or have low vision, we have also selected a number of works for their colour, pattern, contrast or scale. For example, Dean Cross's *PolyAustralis* series from 2016 employs contrasting, repeated black lines in varying thicknesses to create rhythmic patterns over existing photographs, and Jack Dale's *Rainbow* 2001 uses natural ochres to depict an unconventional rainbow in deep, earthy tones.

In curating an exhibition based on recent acquisitions, we often find that themes emerge organically. In this case, there are

a number of works that engage with ideas around identity or the self, and others that deal with nature or the environment. These themes reflect some of the most relevant and pressing issues of today. Often it is not until we curate a Collection-based show that we are able to step back and see themes like these emerge.

In the case of this particular exhibition, we have had the opportunity to think about the works in a completely different way. In developing audio descriptions and co-designing the tactile object, we saw the works differently to how we had seen them before. We noticed things that we previously had not; we questioned each visual device—how and why the artist used this medium or that technique. We also started to question the different ways that we interpret and communicate art and where description ends and interpretation begins. Constantly pushing against our own ocular-centric tendencies, we had to reconsider the orientation and scale of art and objects. We hope that audiences will have this same experience—that the exhibition will bring to light that which is unseen, drawing on different perspectives and senses, to encourage different ways of seeing.

*Katherine Dionysius and Dr Janice Rieger*



ABOVE

**Julie Fragar**

*Built environment #2* 2016

oil on paper, sheet 67.5 x 50CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2017

Photo by Carl Warner

RIGHT

**Julie Fragar**

*Deflected centre* 2016

oil on paper, sheet 67.5 x 50CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2017

Photo by Carl Warner







# Co-creating haptic and soundscape experiences

When a painting reveals more sensory experiences than the eyes can behold, would this be the tipping point for art? Experiencing art with all the human senses is natural and inclusive. These beliefs were embraced by open minds and a vision set at QUT Art Museum. The co-creation process began through a dialogue with art educators and curators for the selection of an artwork. Catherine Parker's painting, *Present portal* 2017, invites spectators to reflect and interact with embodied feelings. Experiencing this painting goes beyond visual aesthetics. In order to represent an expanded experience, experts in translating and interpreting sensory modes were invited to participate in a collaborative process to collect and connect as many different perceptions as possible and to create an object that encompasses the feelings imbued in the painting, beyond the actual visual elements.

After an extensive discussion between the artist and experts, who included people with low vision and design students, a brief was established whereby workshop participants were split into three sub-groups to develop a concept. Group One made a diorama that highlighted five important elements to be tactilely discovered on their model. Group Two started exploring the narrative of the painting through several devices including performance and sound. Group Three focussed on the actual tactile experience that was intended by the artist: a transitional time-related experience. Remarkably, these three groups each chose a different focus, which is representative of the multiple messages that can be explored through multi-sensoriality.





**Catherine Parker**  
*Present portal* 2017  
acrylic on canvas, 96 x 120CM  
QUT Art Collection  
Purchased 2017  
Photo by Carl Warner



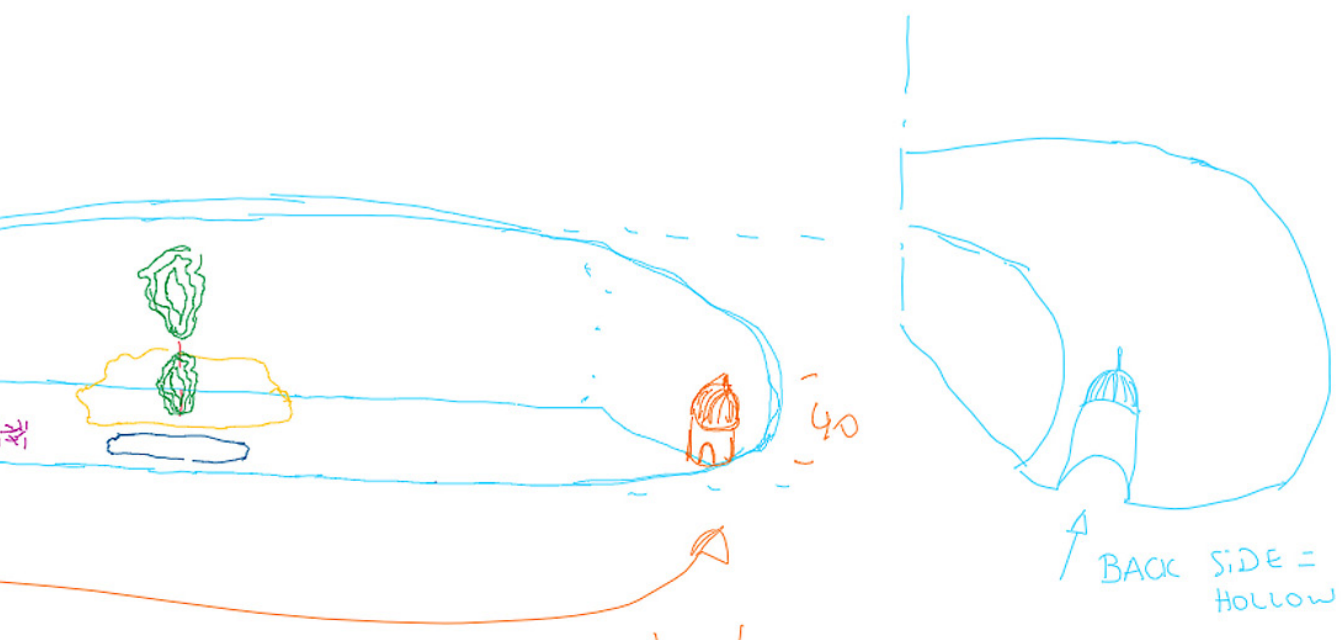




#### STEP 8

- At the right side of the eggshell there is a small building that looks like the Taj Mahal or a ~~stupa~~ <sup>stupa</sup>
- At the same height of the small lake you draw a positive model of the a "capitol"-like architecture with a width of maximum 30 millimetres and approximately 40 millimetres high
- You can add details that are sensible by touch at least 1.4mm thick





*Sketches and design directives  
for tactile model rendering*  
Photo by Jasmien Herssens





Research conducted by Megan Strickfaden and Aymeric Vildieu on tactile experiences of visual artworks has discovered that focuses can be categorised into three different groups to represent a tactile image: a moment in time, a context or an object; a place or a space; and an artist's view into lived experiences. Subsequently, the three workshop groups started with determining their focus and building their actual tactile models. The first group used well-known tactile representation techniques by means of textures, raised forms, and inclined details. The second group played with the scale and spatial experience of the museum to consider the experience of the visitor and perception of this artwork as a journey or representation of experiences. They combined an architectural model of the museum with a performance of a person experiencing the painting through the direction of a rope and soundscape. The third group started from a moment in time and tactile experiences of the painting, by exploring materials and the haptic feelings the artist was seeking to capture in the painting. The result was a temporal and layered experience of the materials evoking an exciting haptic sensation.

At the end of the workshop, these three concepts developed by each group were presented to a team of independent experts who provided feedback on the co-creation process and concluded that all three concepts formed the ideal components for a multisensory experience of the painting. Following this, the co-creation journey continued, blending the three concepts into a single experience that represents *Present portal*. Each of these concepts were captured in draft mock-ups that were discussed with the museum curators, experts in material translation and acoustic representation, and technical experts in modelling and museum conservation. The interpretation of these models resulted in a series of design directives towards a haptic model and soundscape.

The haptic model is designed by summarising the haptic experiences into a digital model representing a moment in time,

TOP

*Presenting tactile experiences*

Photo by Gnanaharsha  
Beligatamulla

FAR LEFT

*Exploring possible materials like  
timber for the final tactile model*

Photo by Jasmien Herzsens

LEFT

*Designing tactile mock-up*

Photo by Gnanaharsha  
Beligatamulla







**Click to play**

Soundscape by Aymeric Vildieu

a space, a place and a journey. Based on the content and given the technical specificities of 3D printing, we decided to give the digital drawing expert, Anna Svensdotter, freedom to translate the design directives into a moulded form. Communication in between the experts and the digital drawing expert steered the digital modelling towards a final 3D print file. A 3D-printed model was selected rather than other craft materials due to it being able to capture detail well, having an overall cohesive feel, being durable, easily cleaned, and relatively easy to produce.

The soundscape is a musical composition that represents both the artist's process of making as well as the viewer's journey. Similarly, the composer, Aymeric Vildieu, had the freedom to interpret our design directives into a soundscape. When translating visual art into haptic and aural experiences, we move from one perceptual mode to another, which requires a conscious selection of the content to be conveyed, and how it is to be conveyed. This co-creation process organically interpreted and translated from the visual mode to the haptic and aural modes, and involved layers of interpretation and translation due to many participants involved in the process. The result is a haptic model and soundscape that provides an expanded experience for museum visitors and embodies the sensations communicated in the painting, *Present portal*. The process also provides a model for co-creation and inclusive design within the gallery environment.

*Dr Jasmien Herssens, Dr Janice Rieger and Dr Megan Strickfaden*

*Detail of portal on one of the tactile mock-ups*

Photo by Janice Rieger









FAR LEFT  
*Exploring one of the tactile  
mock-ups*  
Photo by Gnanaharsha  
Beligatamulla

TOP  
*Co-creating soundscapes and  
one of the tactile mock-ups*  
Photo by Gnanaharsha  
Beligatamulla

MIDDLE  
*Inspirational objects for the  
co-design workshop*  
Photo by Gnanaharsha  
Beligatamulla

BOTTOM  
*Co-design workshop*  
Photo by Kyle Zenchyson





ABOVE  
*Touching artworks at  
 QUT Art Museum*  
 Photo by Kyle Zenchyson

RIGHT  
*Audio describing Catherine  
 Parker's painting in the  
 co-design workshop*  
 Photo by Gnanaharsha  
 Beligatamulla

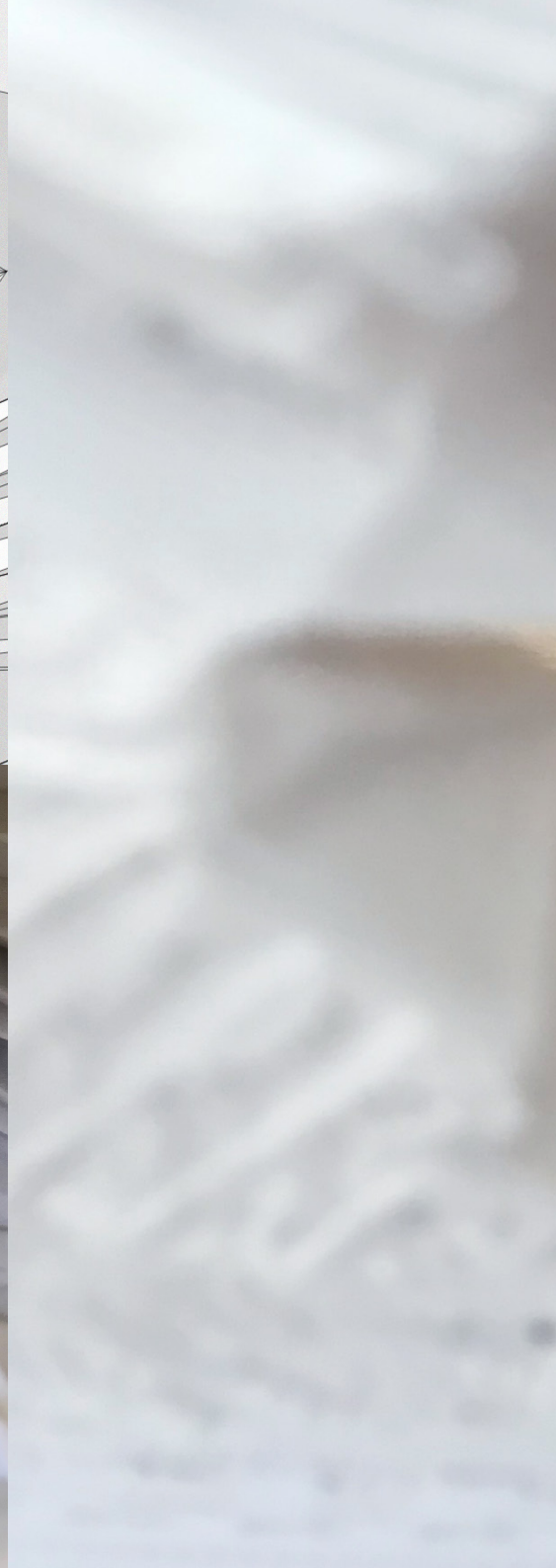
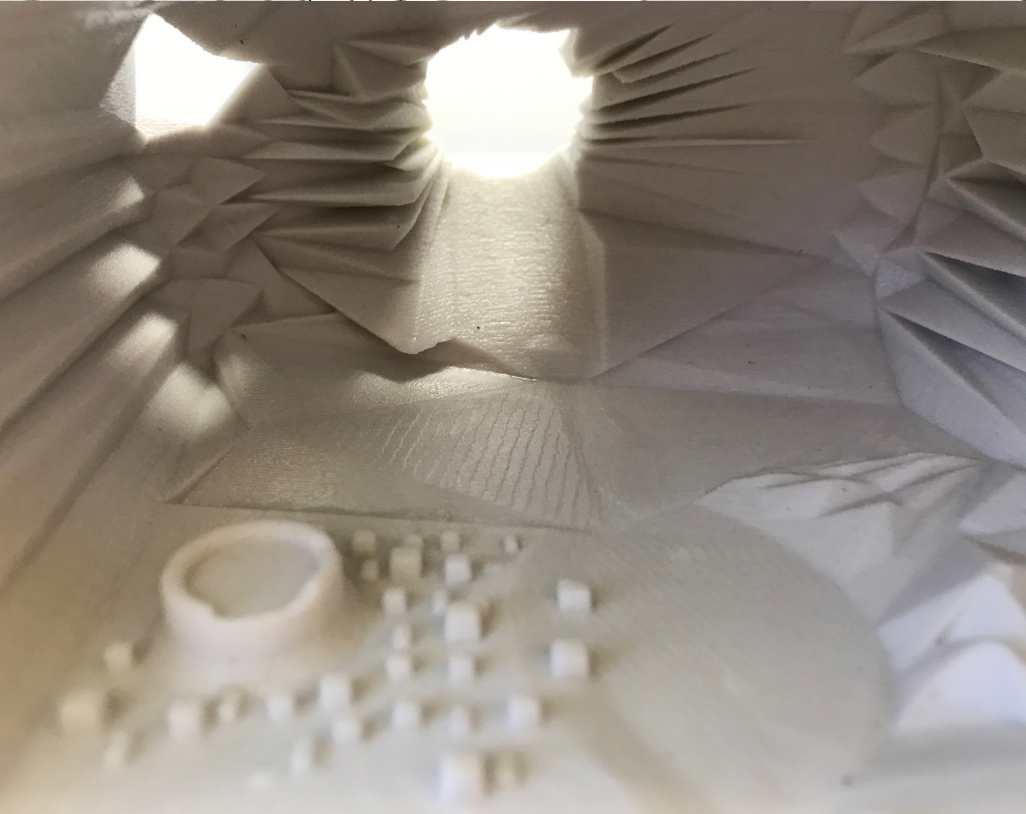
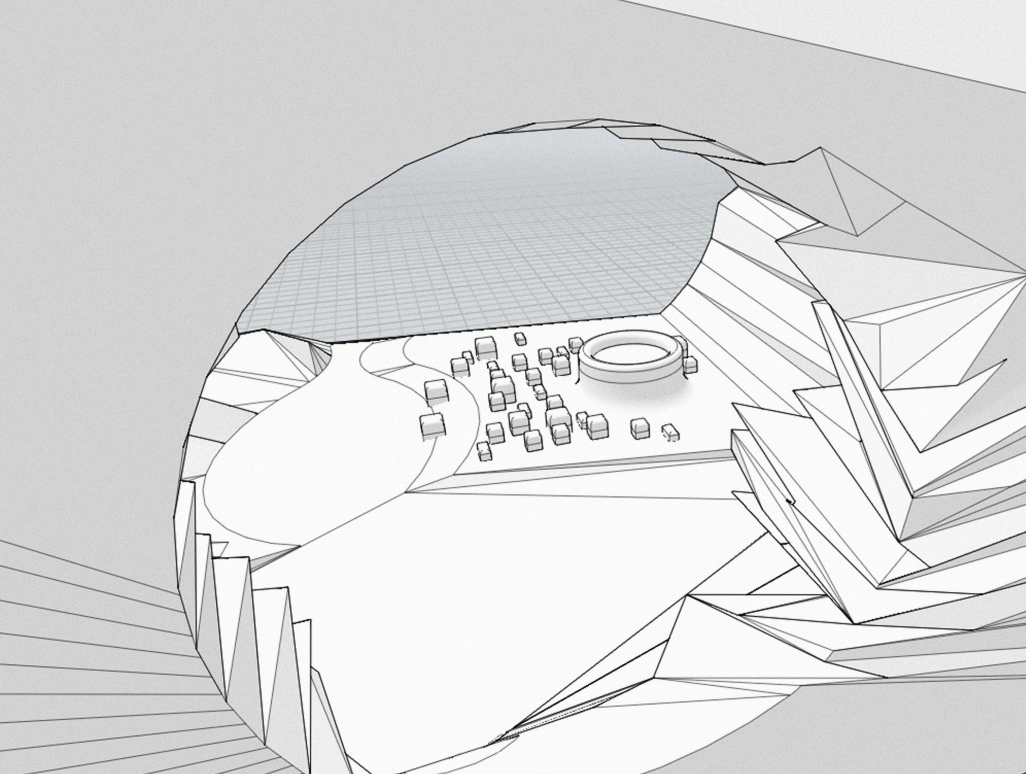
FAR RIGHT  
*Touching artworks at  
 QUT Art Museum*  
 Photo by Kyle Zenchyson











TOP  
3D digital model  
Photo by Anna Svensdotter

ABOVE  
*Tactile model interior*  
Photo by Janice Rieger

ABOVE  
*Exploring tactile model*  
Photo by Janice Rieger







# Wondrous Goggles: An empathy experience device

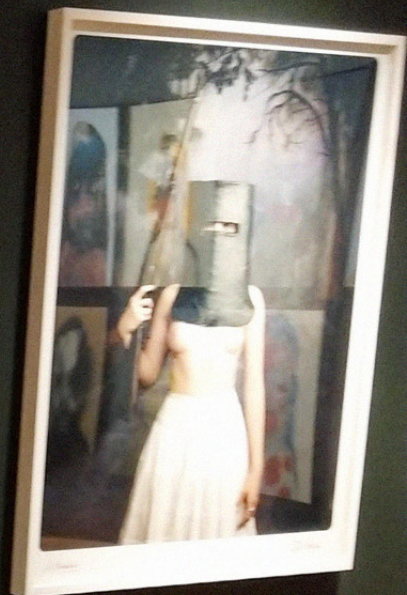
We are all different, with different abilities, experiences and perceptions of the world around us. Many of the environments that we encounter on a daily basis have barriers for inclusion, whether they are physical barriers or socio-cultural barriers. Through empathy experience devices, we can begin to understand the perceptions and experiences of others to try to eliminate these barriers in order to create environments that are more inclusive. Museums and galleries are a great starting point to create inclusion, as they have historically been exclusionary spaces. In collaboration with the QUT Art Museum, we began to create a culture of inclusion through the exploration of the Wondrous Goggles—a research tool developed by the QUT Design Lab.

Our relationships to the world are changing and the ever-fast pace of new technologies are shaping our everyday experiences, assisting or transforming our work and play activities to enable us with amplified access to ‘everything’. Through automated machines, robots, virtual and augmented reality, people can now feel immersed in

RIGHT  
*Simulation testing in the  
QUT Art Museum*  
Photo by Corey Tinney

NEXT PAGE  
*Ten still photographs from  
video simulation of Retinitis  
Pigmentosa*  
Photos by Janice Rieger









...likely  
...necessary for the  
...wealth, alcoholism,  
...community along with  
...what makes  
...are not affiliated  
...group of  
...organization  
...people  
...many







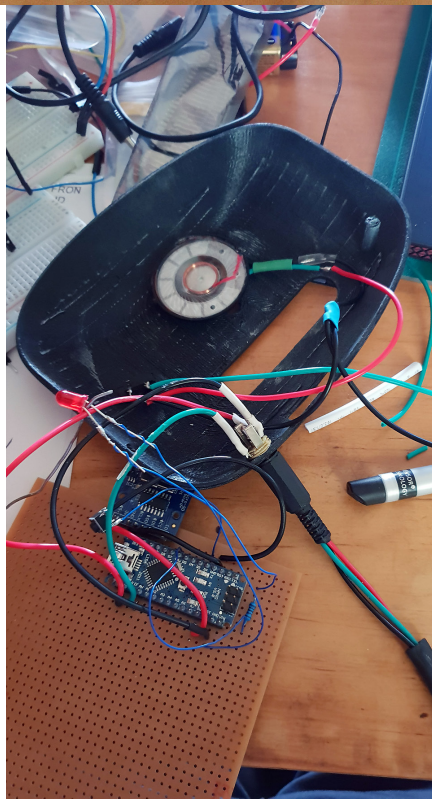


ABOVE  
*Early prototype testing in the  
QUT Art Museum*  
Photo by Corey Tinney

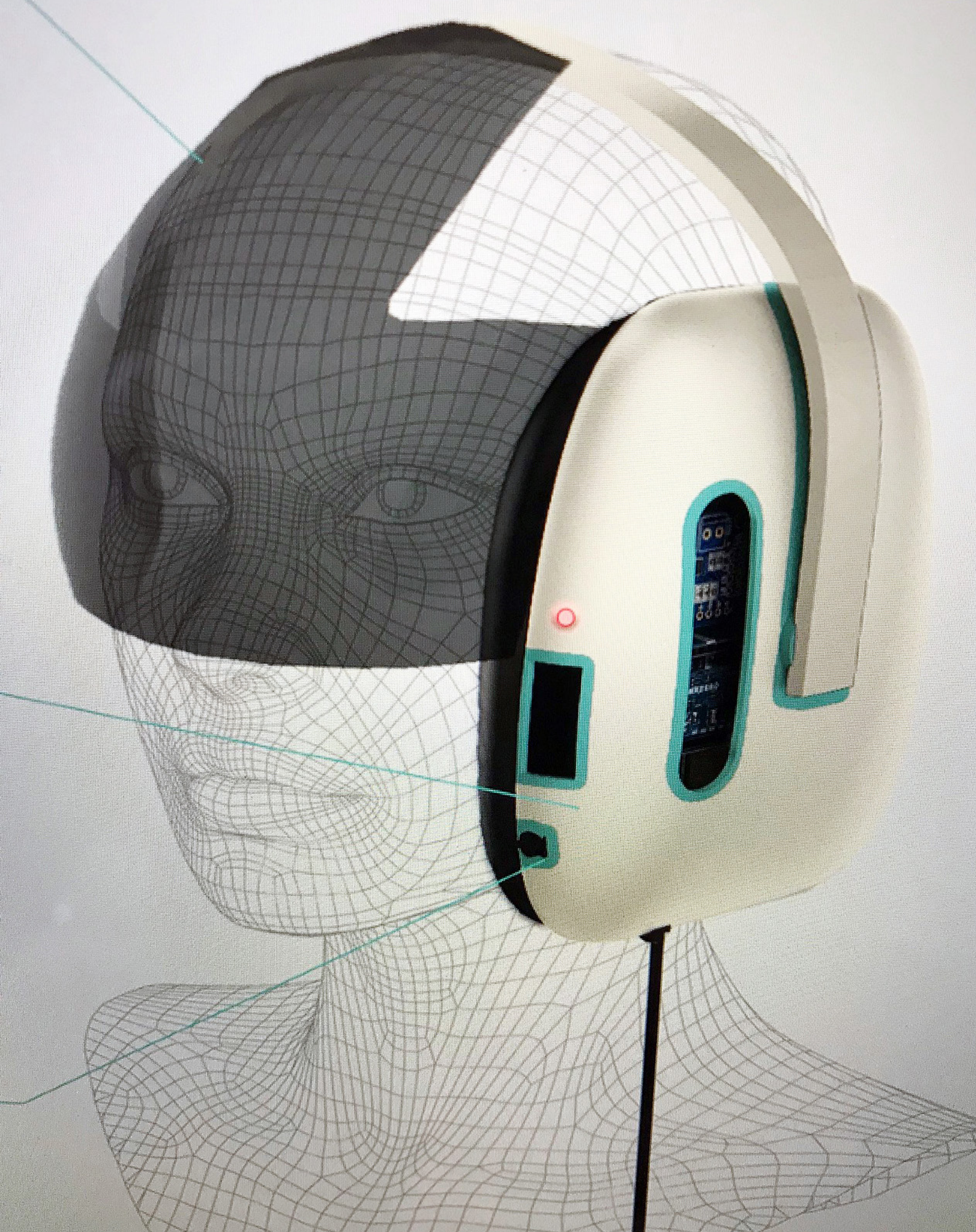
RIGHT  
*Prototype electronics*  
Photo by Nicholas Sabulis

MIDDLE  
*Early prototype testing*  
Photo by Corey Tinney

FAR RIGHT  
*First modelling of Wondrous  
Goggles*  
Photo by Nicholas Sabulis, Katyusha  
Methanisa and Corey Tinney



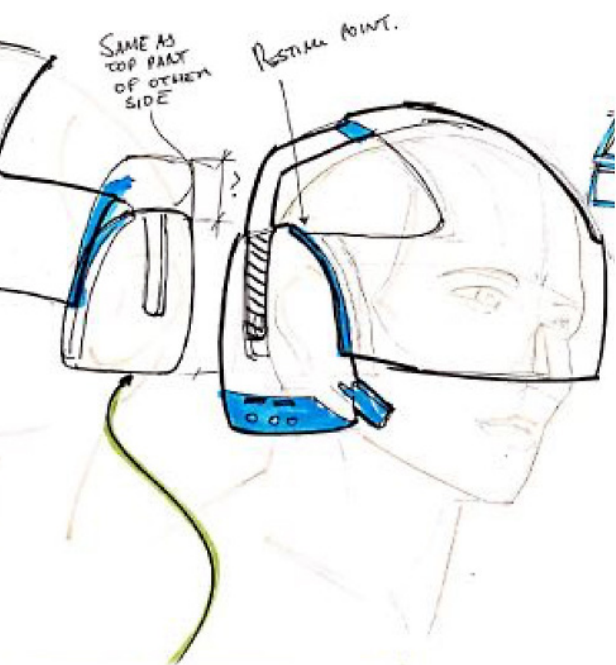








*Wondrous Goggles*  
Photo by Corey Tinney



Concept sketches of  
Wondrous Goggles  
Photo by Nicholas Sabulis



**Click to play**

Narrative by Sarah Boulton walking  
through QUT Art Museum

remote scenarios and experiences. However, do these technologies enable us to increase our ability to understand others' needs? The Wondrous Goggles project focuses on identifying design requirements for a portable technology to represent the experiential world of people who are blind or have low vision with the aim of contributing to raise awareness about inclusive places for work and play. The need for this exploratory technology is predominantly educational, as a tool to inform designers, policy makers and technology developers of how public spaces are experienced by someone with low vision.

The Wondrous Goggles are an empathy experience device. They are specifically designed to facilitate an understanding of the navigational and spatial perception of people with low vision. The Wondrous Goggles are a

lightweight head-mounted device comprised of headphones, a visor, and a three-functionality device: audio stream prompting experiences narrated by someone who is blind or has vision loss; simulation of a low vision condition; and voice memo recording. The Wondrous Goggles' visor simulates a low vision condition, while the headphones deliver an audio narrative of navigating a particular place from the perspective of a person with low vision. The memo recording functionality allows the user to record ideas and reflections while navigating the space with the goggles.

During use, the Wondrous Goggles provide a tool for the user to gain a sense of limited vision and provides a vehicle for the wearer to embark upon a process of feeling, sensing and reflecting while listening to the narration



of someone who has navigated the space with low vision. The iterative process of feeling, sensing and reflecting engages the wearer to create a new experience and is conducive to the building of empathy. Empathy in this context is the result of a process that is lived differently every time a person wears the device—a process that augments a person’s perception of others’ views, that builds sensitivity and a first-person experience through the use of the low-tech device. Unlike other technologies that create virtual reality or an augmented reality based on vision alone, the Wondrous Goggles create a multisensorial empathic experience through the lived experience of a person with low vision. This project sought to explore the design requirements for the development of a portable device that

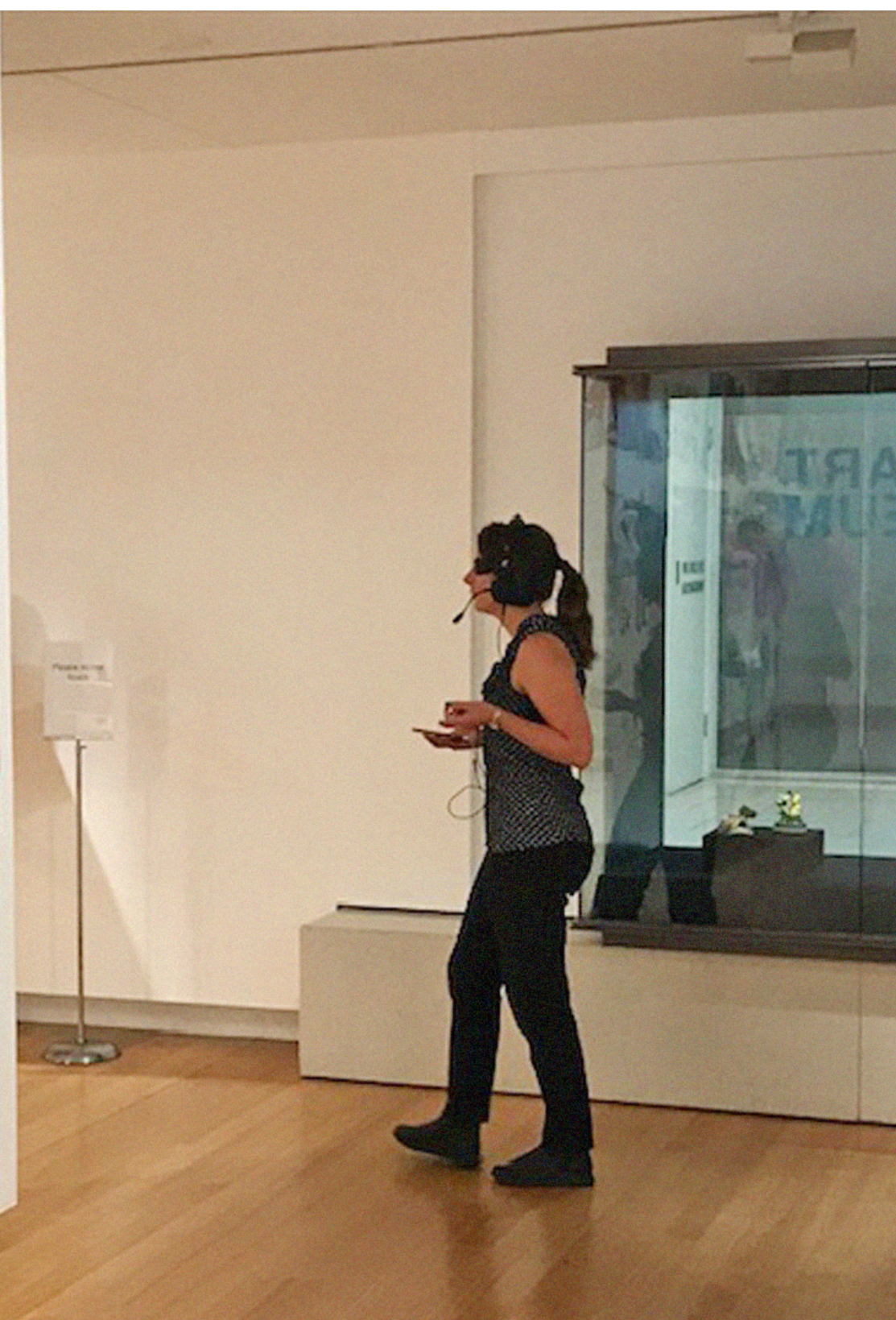
stakeholders could use to gain understanding of people’s lived experiences in order to create environments that are more inclusive. From this collaboration with QUT Art Museum, we learned that this is a process that requires iterative experiences, reflections, time and the expertise of people who have low vision or who are blind. Following these wondrous paths will allow us to experience the world in new ways.

*Dr Marianella Chamorro-Koc, Dr Janice Rieger and Dr Alexander Black*

**Click to play**  
Narrative by Richard Attwater walking  
through QUT Art Museum



*Simulations in the  
QUT Art Museum*  
Photo by Janice Rieger









# Audio descriptions

Fashioning an effective audio description is no easy task.

At one level, an audio description needs to provide a near literal translation of an image, for audiences who are blind or have low vision.

At another, it needs to convey context, tone, and texture to make the meaning of that image clear.

High quality audio description can add to the impact of an artwork, not just for audiences who are blind or have low vision, but for broader audiences, using the unique aesthetic and meaning-making possibilities of words to amplify the experience of encountering an artwork.

It can, as a result, be an important contributor to new genres of museum experiences—expanded genres of museum experiences—for modern audiences.

It is important to note that there is no one audio description that is ‘correct’. There are many different approaches and one artwork could result in any number of descriptive interpretations—this is the nature of translating visual imagery into language.

However, it is equally important to note that if a describer becomes too creative, or fails to flag creative or curatorial interjections, listeners may not be clear when they have stopped describing what they see in the work and started describing what they see and know in their own head.

## **Karla Dickens**

*Bottom feeder II* 2018  
acrylic and collage on board,  
60 x 48CM  
QUT Art Collection  
Purchased 2018  
Photo by Mick Richards









**Click to play**  
Audio description of  
*Trashout*

**Karla Marchesi**  
*Trashout* 2010  
oil on board, 105 x 120CM  
QUT Art Collection  
Purchased 2017  
Photo by Carl Warner







**Karla Dickens**

*Bottom feeder I–IV* 2018

acrylic and collage on board,

each work 60 x 48CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2018

Photo by Mick Richards



**Click to play**

Audio description of  
*Bottom feeder I–IV*

In developing the audio descriptions for this exhibition, we have brought the unique perspectives of the blind spectator, the curator, and the describer together, to produce descriptions in which we have tried to bear the following principles in mind:

- **How words convey basic information about the artwork:** Who created it, what medium(s) did they use, what is the resulting format of the work, is it large or small, is it two- or three-dimensional, is it still or moving, is it static or time based?
- **How words convey character, scenario, context, and tension in the artwork:** Is the work abstract or realistic, does it include human, animal, or natural figures, are they in particular settings, are they in particular relationships, are these evocative of emotions?
- **How words convey actions and interactions via analogy or via instruction or via invitation to try out movement:** If figures and their interactions are difficult to describe, is inviting the viewer to adopt the same position, or offering an example of a situation where they might adopt an analogous position, likely to make the scenario in the work clearer?



- **How words convey perspective on the subject of the work:** Is the work taking a wide view of the subject, a mid level view of the subject, a very close up view of the subject, a combination of these, a collage of different subjects?
- **How words convey medium, composition, and technique:** Is the work using an elite, virtuosic style or a more everyday, vernacular style, is it simplistic or very detailed, is it using a large palette of colours or a limited palette of colours, are these choices related to and reinforcing the themes in the work or sitting in contrast with the themes of the work?
- **How words convey colour and texture:** Is the work smooth, even, and well proportioned, or is it rough, jagged, and unevenly proportioned, are the colours vibrant or muted, does this relate to or contrast with the themes of the work?
- **How words convey the soundscape associated with the scene in the work:** Is the work set in nature, in the suburbs, or in the city? Should the onomatopoeia of the words convey this? Should subtle sound effects combined with words convey this?
- **How words operate as indexical, iconic, and arbitrary signifiers of meaning:** Should descriptions include indexical words which are directly related to the object in the real world they represent, iconic words which sound like the object in the real world they represent, arbitrary words which only by mutual cultural agreement relate to the object in the real world they represent, or combinations, to amplify or diminish the level of literalness or poetry in the description?





**Lyndell Brown, Charles Green and Jon Cattapan**

*War and peace #7: Empire* 2011

acrylic on inkjet print on paper, 60 x 80CM

QUT Art Collection

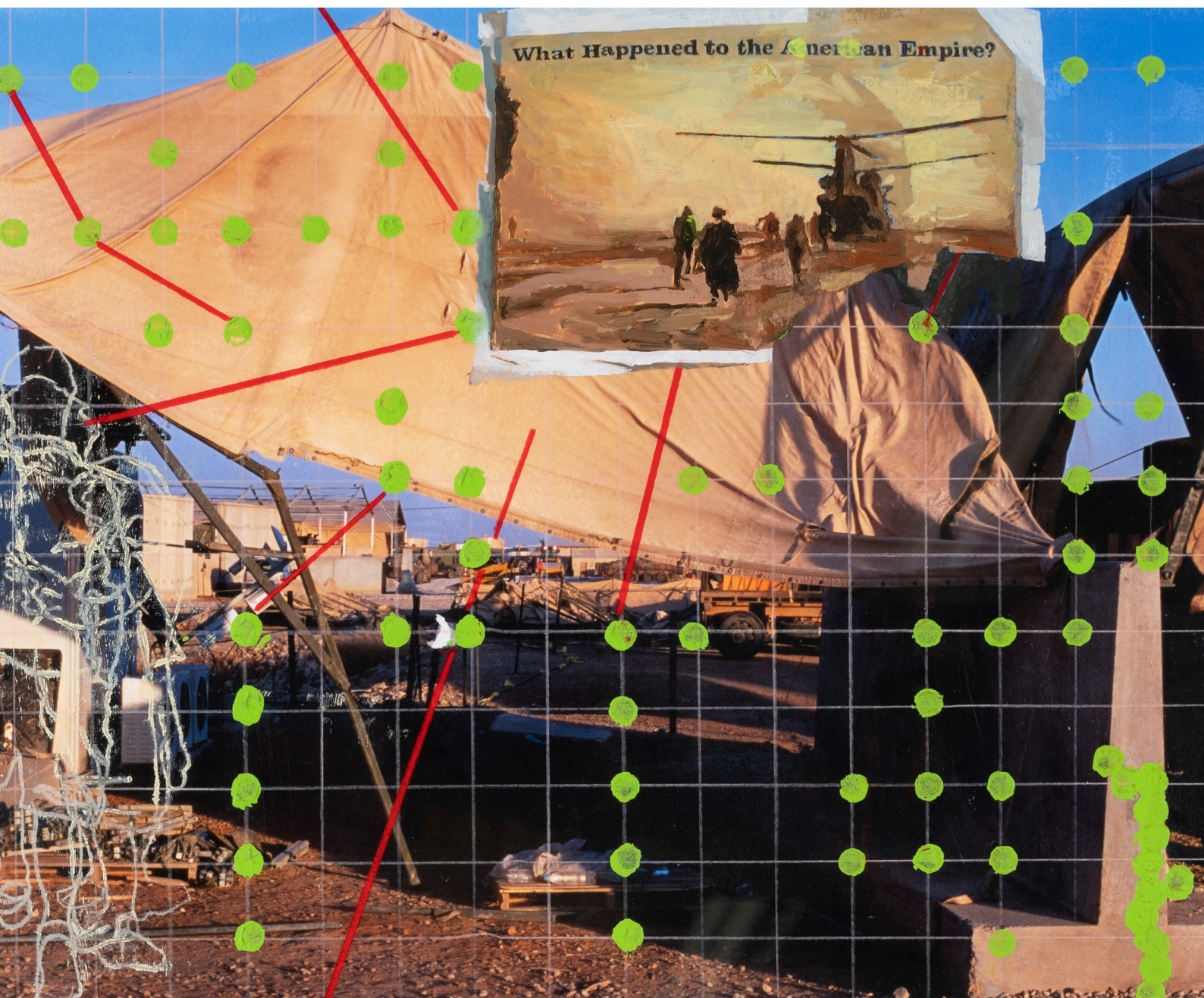
Purchased 2015

Photo by Carl Warner



**Click to play**

Audio description of  
*War and peace #7: Empire*





## Dean Cross

*PolyAustralis #26 (Sir Les Patterson) 2016*

Hahnemühle archival cotton photorag,

59.4 x 84.1CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2016

Original image by Polly Borland

### Sir Les Patterson

Cultural icon and the Count of St. James aka Barry Humphries

Born in Sydney, Lesley Colin Patterson left Our Lady of Dolours School at 17 to find his first job as a cinema usher because 'entertainers' owned the Sydney football club. His show business experience and labour political connections secured him favours from the charismatic Whitlam administration, securing him the appointment as Australia's first Quirly Attaché to the Communist Soviet Union in 1974.

Sir Les was knighted by The Queen for his services to Australian culture, and awarded an honorary doctorate in Australia Studies by the University of Cambridge, in spite of his popularity with the British Royal Family. Sir Les, true to his Irish-Catholic roots, is an avid Republican and was a highly rated candidate in the Australian Presidency where his diplomatic credentials and media popularity gave him the advantage. He is a past president of the Sydney Institute and sits regularly on the Australian Presses Board, being a wine authority on Tasmanian Camembert. He is now one of the movers and shakers of the corridors of the Senate Chamber.

He has released a number of urban folk songs, *My Life in Les*, and is author of a best-selling memoir of political life, *The Traveller's Tale* (revised edition *The Enlarged and Extended Tale*). He recently had a restorative sex re-education for schools and church organisations entitled *Les Patterson Has a Story to Tell*.

Mine is a sedentary job; I've always been a potter and shaker and in this photograph, I'm doing both.





- **How words convey the experience of encountering the work:** What is the first thing that strikes a spectator when encountering a work? Is it the medium? The size? The colour? The human figure? Should the words describing the work follow the standard order, starting with information about artist, artform, and medium before moving on to themes, or, if the colour or theme is striking, start with that?
- **How professional/technical words include or exclude specific audiences:** Should the description include only language which can be understood by all audience members, or start introducing art historical language, or other technical language, which may be less familiar to general public?

As museums today expand their offers, and try to come up with engaging new experiences for all, there is enormous interest in the creative potential of audio description, interactive experiences, tactile experiences, sign language descriptions, and other techniques traditionally used to make artwork accessible to audiences with disability—in the potential, that is, to use these techniques creatively, to come up with new artforms, which engage all audiences in new ways. This certainly holds rich potential for innovation and inclusion. At the same time, however, creative use of such techniques can make them less functional for the audiences with disability they were initially intended to serve. In following these principles, we have tried to strike a balance, between the functional purpose and creative engagement possibilities of audio description in a museum context.

*Dr Bree Hadley, Katherine Dionysius and Sarah Boulton*



# Plain language summary

## Introduction

An exhibition called *Vis-ability: Artworks from the QUT Art Collection*, at QUT Art Museum, gives visitors an idea of how people who are blind and have low vision experience art. It also gives everyone access to some artworks in a way that isn't just visual. The exhibition shows the art collected in the last five years by QUT Art Museum. QUT staff worked together with people who are blind and have low vision to create this exhibition. It includes goggles, audio descriptions of art, and touchable objects. The exhibition gives you the chance to listen to, touch, and feel some art rather than just look at it.

## Empathy goggles

Empathy tools are used to help people to understand each other better. A tool called 'Wondrous Goggles' was made to be used in museums and other public spaces. The worlds of people who are blind and have low vision are shown when wearing the goggles. When

you wear the goggles, you feel what it's like to be in a room or place if you have low vision. The goggles help people who design places like museums, parks and shopping centres, to make them safer and easier to walk around for people who have low vision. The goggles were created by the QUT Design Lab.

## Touch and sound in art

A painting in QUT Art Museum called *Present portal* by Catherine Parker was turned into experiences that can be touched and heard. It was complicated to turn a visual painting into something to touch and hear. Catherine Parker was part of creating the touch and sound experiences for her painting. More than thirty people—experts who are blind and have low vision, students, researchers, and museum staff—worked together to make the touch and sound experiences. Three groups came up with three different ideas. These ideas were put together into one idea. The new experiences that can be touched and



heard focus on the story of the painting that's about a journey to another place. A blind DJ created a soundscape to listen to and a model maker created a 3D model to touch. Now you can understand *Present portal* by looking, touching and listening.

### **Hearing about art**

Audio descriptions of three artworks at QUT Art Museum are created so people can hear about the artwork before they can see it. The

audio descriptions were made by a theatre performer, a person who works in the art museum, and a person who has low vision. It is hard to make audio descriptions and there is no right or wrong way to do it. When you listen to the audio description, you can hear about who made the artwork and what it looks like, some of the parts in the artwork, and what the artwork is about.







#### **QUT Art Museum**

Level 1, U Block  
QUT Gardens Point Campus  
2 George St  
Brisbane, Queensland 4000  
artmuseum.qut.edu.au

#### **Staff**

**Senior Curator** Vanessa Van Ooyen  
**Assistant Curator** Katherine Dionysius  
**Collections Officer** Lilian Yong  
**Public Programs Officer** Sarah Barron  
**Education Program Officer** Pia Robinson  
**Administrative Assistant** Emma Cain  
**Senior Marketing Officer** Sian Conway Lamb  
**Intern** Jessica Simpkins

#### **Research partners**

Dr Janice Rieger, QUT Creative Industries Faculty and QUT Design Lab



#### **Advisors**

Richard Attwater, Gnanaharsha Beligatamulla, Dr Alexander Black, Ann Bosserez, Sarah Boulton, Dr Marianella Chamorro-Koc, Salvatore Fazio, Jack Fitzwalter, Dr Bree Hadley, Dr Jasmien Herssens, Sarah Johnstone, Katyusha Methansia, Annie Rolfe, Nicholas Sabulis, Dr Megan Strickfaden, Anna Svensdotter, Gunawan Taduwidjaja, Corey Tinney, Aymeric Vildieu, Vision Australia, and Michael Whelan

#### **Designer**

Lisa Rafferty

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#### **Vis-ability: Artworks from the QUT Art Collection**

11 May to 4 August 2019

QUT acknowledges the Turrbul and Yuggera people of the lands on which QUT now stands, paying respect to their Elders, lores, customs and creation spirits. QUT recognises that these lands have always been places of learning and teaching.

COVER

**Karla Dickens**

*Bottom feeder I* 2018

acrylic and collage on board,  
60 x 48CM

QUT Art Collection

Purchased 2018

Photo by Mick Richards





Artworks from the QUT Art Collection