



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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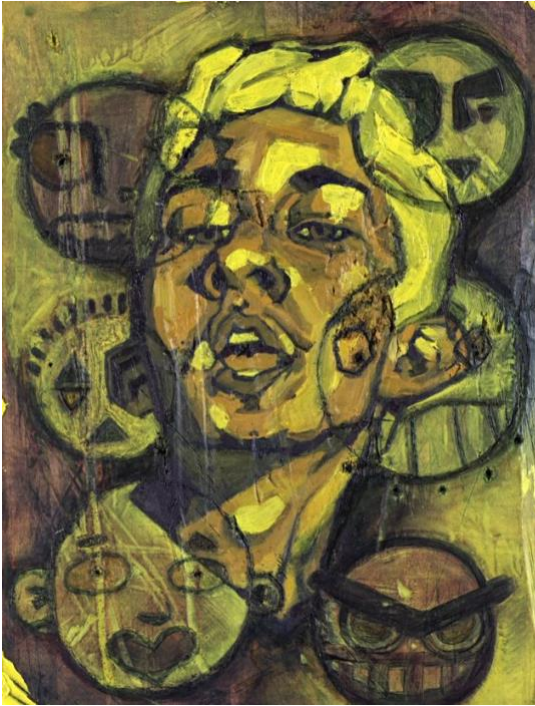
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Top Arts 2021

The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia | 26 March – 11 July 2021 | FREE



Top Arts 2021 is a showcase of forty-six artworks by young artists from across Victoria who studied VCE Art and Studio Arts in 2020. Exploring ideas related to isolation, contemporary life, the environment and identity, the exhibition celebrates the achievements of these students who, despite the challenges posed to their schooling as a consequence of the global pandemic, have created extraordinary work that offers a thought-provoking insight into the thoughts and ideas of young people at this time.

The annual exhibition, now in its 27th year, has been organised around two themes, inside and outside, which emerged from the works after the selection process. In creating their works during the pandemic, many students looked outwards, observing their surrounding environment and changes to daily life, while others turned inward to explore the complex realities of cultural and personal identity, emotion and mental health.

Lucy Schacher's series of paintings titled *Routine*, plays on the shift in routine students experienced in lockdown and celebrates the little moments in everyday life spent at home. Similarly,

Bronte Green's work *Streets of your town* reflects nostalgia and sentimentality in the understated beauty of suburbia. Milie Fraser-Smith is fascinated by the development of architecture over generations and expresses its layers and contrasts in her linocut print *Urban*.

Margaret Handolias's *For he's a jolly good fellow* shares the pain of solitude, exploring ideas of disconnection and isolation while Milly O'Donnell's *untitled* collages reflect a desire to change stigmas in society around mental health conditions.

A variety of media including painting, photography, drawing, collage, video, print-making, sculpture, textiles, digital work and installation were used to convey the concerns and perspectives of Victoria's young emerging artists. The works on display in Top Arts 2021 also highlight the innovation and resourcefulness of young artists, who, while learning from home, created artworks using found objects or digital media when access to traditional materials or studio spaces was not possible.

Cultural heritage and identity are central to many works in Top Arts 2021, such as Haiyue (JoJo) Zheng's digital drawing *Going home*, which celebrates migration and Francesca Di Paolo's slam poetry *Mother(land) – a poem about immigration*, which verbalises the difficulties of assimilating into a new culture. Current events were also a point of inspiration, seen in Matthew Chan's deliberately crass sculpture *The holy trinity of 2020 (whilst stocks last!)* which reflects on global events, while Amilie Hsiao's cartoon-like series considers viruses that plague society.

Tony Ellwood AM, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, said: 'This exhibition is a testament to the resilience of Victoria's young artists during one of the most tumultuous years in recent memory. Top Arts 2021 showcases the many ways in which young people use art and design to explore, contemplate or challenge the world around us. The exemplary works on display have been selected from nearly 1,300 submissions, demonstrating that creativity can flourish even during times of adversity.'

Artworks in the exhibition are chosen by a selection panel made up of VCAA State Reviewers and regional representatives, and NGV Learning and Curatorial staff. Top Arts 2021 will be complemented by a dynamic schedule of online opportunities including introductory talks, virtual tours and folio viewings to inspire and support current VCE students in their Art and Studio Art studies.

Top Arts is a part of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority's (VCAA) annual VCE Season of Excellence showcasing outstanding VCE and VCE VET students through a festival of concerts, exhibitions, film screenings and a research presentation program.

Top Arts 2021 will be on display at The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia from 26 March to 11 July 2021. Entry is free. For further details, please visit the NGV website: NGV.MELBOURNE

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Image caption:

Tomas Ording-Jespersen

Finding balance, 2020

Oil paint on wood

Sandringham College, Sandringham

VCE Studio Arts

Images: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/dz9oapni6zw7tin/AAA81ptK1Cq1--_ySnEn9JCea?dl=0

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Top Arts is part of the VCE Season of Excellence