

Media kit



# Home and Away

Curated by Dr Luise Guest and Jennifer Yang  
22 November - 16 December 2023



Ida Lawrence (b 1988)

Jessica Bradford (b 1987)

Linda Sok (b 1993)

NC Qin (b 1992)

Pamela Leung (b 1951)

Ruth Ju-Shih Li (b 1992)

Shoufay Derz (b 1979)

Tianli Zu (b 1963)

# Media Release

16albermarle Project Space is delighted to present ***Home and Away*** as their final exhibition of 2023.

Opening on Wednesday 22 November and running till 16 December 2023, this exhibition brings together eight emerging and established women artists with ancestral connections to Indonesia, Cambodia, Singapore, Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Their practices are as diverse as their histories, encompassing painting, sculpture, porcelain, glass, textiles, photography and digital media, video, performance, and a contemporary reinvention of papercutting. Despite this diversity their work is connected by a common thread – they explore the elusive nature of ‘home’ from the perspective of the diasporic experience. What does it mean to live and work in many places, yet sense that ‘home’ is, somehow, always elsewhere? How does our increasing awareness of the fragility of our planet change our ideas about home?

For the eight artists in ***Home and Away*** constructions of selfhood are built upon their family ties to Asia, and from their transcultural Asian Australian identities. Some were born elsewhere and migrated to Australia, others are Australian-born with parents who came as migrants. Some live and work in Australia and some have moved to a third country, navigating new diasporic uncertainties.

In our re-opening post-pandemic world artists are restlessly global beings who travel for study, residencies and exhibitions. When you have multiple homes, where do you belong? Themes of memory, nostalgia, family, heritage and culture are examined in different ways through the eyes of artists who straddle two – or more – worlds.

‘Home’ is a complex social, economic, political and linguistic construct – *Home and Away* unravels its multiple and sometimes contradictory connotations. In multicultural Australia personal geographies and identities are complicated, encompassing migration, the crossing of oceans and borders, the learning of new languages and unfamiliar cultural norms, and the reinvention of self. For the eight artists in *Home and Away* connections to their ancestral homelands become imagined allegories, considerations of myth and memory, redolent with nostalgia, loss and desire. They draw on material practices and visual codes that link the past with the present, and overlay their Australian stories with diverse Asian histories and cultures.

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## Media Enquiries:

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Ida Lawrence, *Relations* 2022-2023, acrylic on polycotton, 155 x 120 cm  
Produced with the support of Berlin program for artists

# Selected works



Jessica Bradford, *Haw par villa rock study #25* 2018, 12.5 x 18 x 8 cm, bisque fired underglazed porcelain



Ruth Ju-Shih Li, *Self portrait 1* 2019, Jingdezhen porcelain, 12 x 10 x 5 cm



NC Qin,  
*Moongate 1* 2022, cast recycled glass, steel, perspex, wood, plaster, 73 x 85 x 21 cm  
*Moongate 2* 2022, cast recycled glass, steel, perspex, wood, plaster, 89 x 76 x 21 cm  
*Moongate 3* 2022, cast recycled glass, steel, perspex, wood, plaster, 76 x 83 x 20 cm  
Installation view at Art Atrium Gallery



Pamela Leung, *Hello 你好嘛? (Nei Hou Ma)* 2023, neon, 35 x 68 cm



Linda Sok, *Mending fragments of a memory* 2021, fabric (assorted), metal trinkets, string, rattan, paint, dimensions variable



Shoufay Derz, *Loving the alien, Bhitai: closed* 2023, pigment print on cotton paper, 91.1 x 71.6 cm

## Artists Biographies

### Ida Lawrence

Painter Ida Lawrence weaves stories of her Indonesian and Australian families and the interactions and absurdities of daily life through juxtapositions of colour, pattern, imagery and text. They are informed by research, observations and the tragi-comedic experiences of a life lived between Australia, Indonesia and Germany where she currently lives and works in Berlin. Lawrence has been based in Indonesia at different times, including 2010-2013 while studying dance with the Darmasiswa Scholarship at the Indonesian Arts Institute, Yogyakarta. Ida is a member of Woven Kolektif, a group of artists who formed through their shared connections to Indonesia and Australia.

### Jessica Bradford

Singapore-born, Sydney-raised Australian artist Jessica Bradford works across painting, ceramics, video and installation. She explores her mixed-race heritage, questioning representations of an 'authentic' cultural or national identity. Her work in *Home and Away* riffs on the artificial landscape of an eccentric Singaporean theme park, Haw Par Villa. Bradford's small porcelain forms emulate the artifice of Chinese gardens, and of the Chinese 'scholar rocks', or gongshi, that members of the élite Imperial bureaucracy liked to place on their desks to remind them of the fantastical forms of the natural world.

### Linda Sok

Cambodian Australian artist Linda Sok navigates complex memories of loss, dispossession, love and family through the medium of discarded, repurposed textiles. Her work in *Home and Away* utilises fabrics that her grandmother and aunt had sewn together many years before, producing a cross-generational collaborative work as a means of sharing language and culture. Like other artists in the exhibition, Sok feels disconnected from her Cambodian heritage and language. By piecing together these different textiles she is piecing together stories from her childhood, including her family's flight from the Khmer Rouge and the Cambodian genocide.

### NC Qin

NC Qin is an Australian-born emerging sculptor who works mostly with glass. Her works reflect on her ancestral Chinese culture from the distance of this further shore. *Compass Broken* and three *Moongates* explore this sense of dislocation. *Compass Broken* refers to the ancient Daoist compass which shows the symbols of each of the mythical guardian beasts that rule the cardinal directions – the Tortoise of the North, the Tiger of the East, the Phoenix of the South and the Dragon of the West. But this compass is cracked and no longer functional, representing 'third culture kids' who try to reach out to the culture of their ancestors but find only a superficial sense of connection.

### **Pamela Leung**

For Hong Kong-born multidisciplinary artist Pamela Leung, the idea of home is increasingly painful and the sense of loss acute. Is ‘home’ any longer recognisable when its history of a distinctly Cantonese language and culture is steadily erased? In neon signs, installations and performance works Leung examines how the loss of a unique Hong Kong identity exacerbates the pain of being separated from her own history. Her ongoing project, *Agglomerate*, is a collaborative work begun with her mother and continued with participants across the globe who send her Cantonese newspapers. She turns the newspapers into a woven mat of unreadable text – creating an artifact of an invisible and endangered cultural and linguistic history.

### **Ruth Ju-shih Li**

Ruth Ju-shih Li is a Taiwanese-Australian artist whose works draw on her cultural and spiritual heritage. Li works with fine porcelain and also creates intricate, ephemeral raw clay installations. Her work is a celebration of renewal, natural cycles of life and the gradual progression of time. Speaking in the universal language of flowers, these chimerical microcosms of organic forms are autobiographical, yet mirror and extend onward to consider the fleeting nature of the human condition. Informed by her interest in articulating the complexities of her cultural identities, Li examines cultural confluences and intersections between humans and the natural world. Li divides her time between her studio in Sydney, her birth city Taipei and her ancestral homeland of China - where her second studio is based in the porcelain city of Jingdezhen.

### **Shoufay Derz**

Born in Australia to a Taiwanese mother and German father, Shoufay Derz explores themes of the fragility of existence and the possibility/impossibility of communication across languages and cultures. The photographic and video works exhibited in *Home and Away* grew out of a project that brought indigenous history, water research scientists and artists together at Gulgadya Muru, a wild area of the Manly Dam Reserve in Sydney and then continued in Berlin. For *Ritual of Eels: Loving the Alien* her participants were painted bright, chromakey green and photographed submerged in the water, only their heads visible between the lily pads. For Derz the figure of the ‘alien’ represents the possibility of transformation. It also alludes to the ‘illegal alien’, the undocumented, the unwelcome, the foreigner – the ‘other’. Derz sometimes says her works are like ‘bad poems’ – grasping at the ineffable, the unsayable. She imagines fragile, mysterious threads of connection and belonging that tie us to the natural world and to each other.

### **Tianli Zu**

Beijing-born and Sydney-based multidisciplinary artist Tianli Zu’s practice spans painting, sculpture, multimedia installations and video. But at the heart of her work are techniques of papercutting and Chinese folklore. Zu’s grandmother taught her simple paper cutting techniques, and her grandfather taught her calligraphy. Later, as an art student in Beijing she travelled to rural Shaanxi Province. Seated in tiny rural homes she learned papercutting from women who knew the traditional methods, listening to stories about the sources of imagery and symbolism. ‘It’s told through the story, the folklore, it’s lots of things that are forbidden, and there are lots of things that are so wild,’ she says. Her work in *Home and Away* juxtaposes Chinese traditions relating to health, longevity and the sharing of food with her love for the natural world.

# Exhibition Personnel

### **Dr Luise Guest | Curator**

Dr Luise Guest is a writer, curator and academic, living and working on the lands of the Gadigal people. Her research focuses on the work of contemporary women artists in Asia, most particularly in China. Her book *Half the Sky* (Piper Press, 2016) was based on interviews with more than 30 Chinese women artists, and she has contributed to publications including the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Art, the Journal of Chinese Contemporary Art, *Yishu*, Australasian Art Monthly, Randian, CoBo Social and Artist Profile. Guest was an academic advisor for *Stepping Out: Female Identities in Contemporary Chinese Art* at the Lillehammer Museum, Norway; Kunstforeningen GL STRAND, Denmark (both 2022) and Museum der Moderne, Salzburg, Austria (2023). Curated exhibitions include *Half the Sky* at Red Gate Gallery (Beijing) and Hotel Art Stage (Hong Kong) in 2016. Most recently she curated *Her Secret Code: Tao Aimin and Nüshu* at Vermilion Art, Sydney. Her research interests include issues of gender and national/transnational identity in Chinese contemporary art, and the influence of Buddhism and Daoism on contemporary art in Asia. She is currently working on a book about women artists who subvert the male-dominated ink painting tradition.

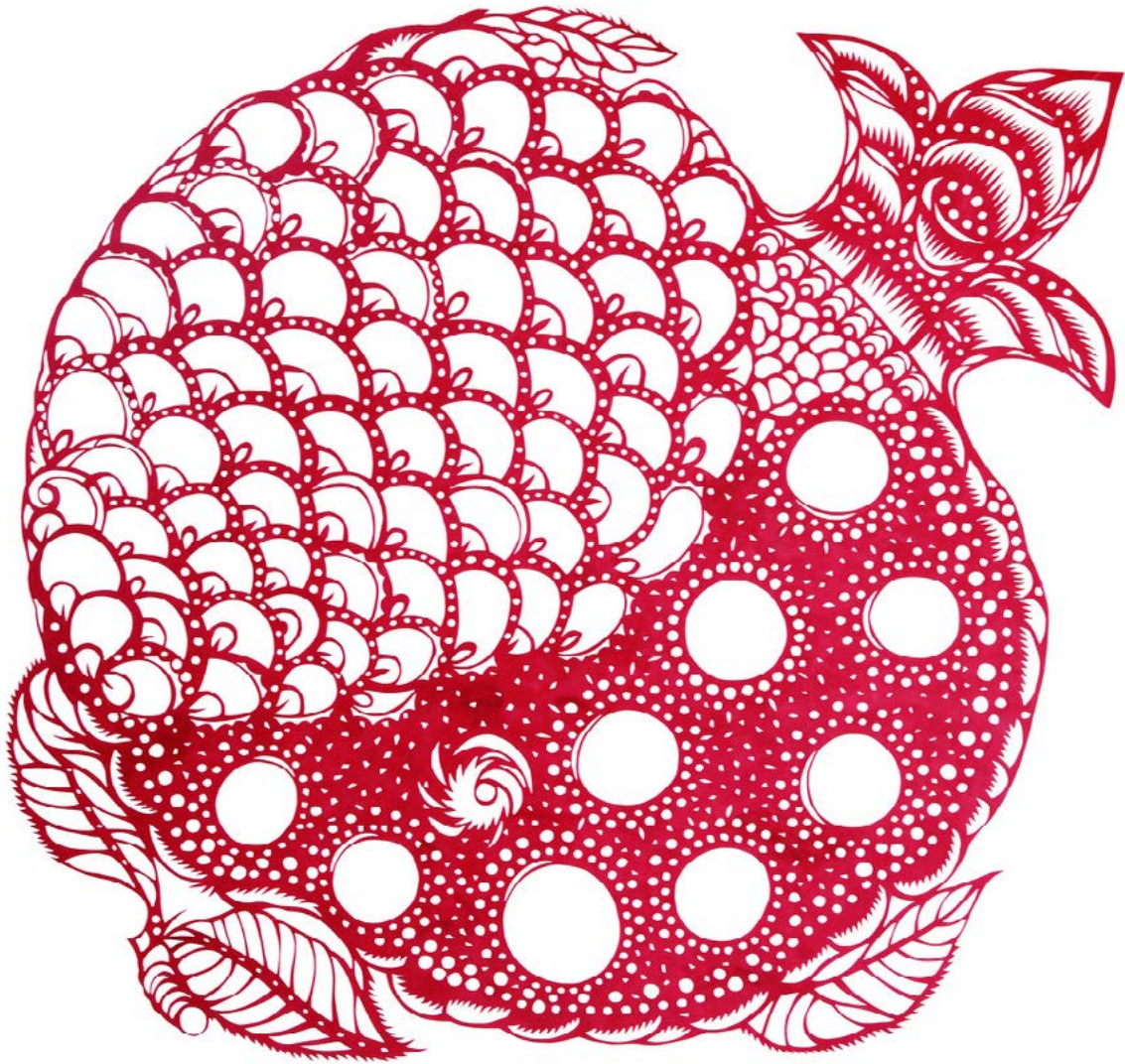
### **Jennifer Yang | Curator**

Jennifer Yang is an Eora-based art historian, arts writer, and curator. In 2022, she completed her Bachelor of Arts in Art History and Diploma of Language at the University of Sydney with First Class Honours and the University Medal. Jennifer has previously curated *Our Grandfather Road* (2022) at 16albermarle project space. Her writing appears in *Artlink*, *Memo*, *New Mandala*, *Art & Market’s Check-In*, *Trans Asia Photography Journal*, and *Southeast of Now* (latter two forthcoming). Research interests include photographic cultures, migrancy, and transnational and feminist histories in Southeast Asian contexts. She is due to commence her PhD candidature at the University of Sydney in 2024.

### **16albermarle Project Space | Exhibition Venue**

Established in October 2019 by Australian art adviser/collector/curator John Cruthers, 16albermarle presents contemporary southeast Asian art in an intimate space in inner-city Sydney. Our aim is to connect Australian audiences to southeast Asia through art and encourage their deeper engagement with the countries of the region. Alongside this cultural agenda, we also promote the artists showing here and sell the artworks to return funds to the artists, most of whom live from the sale of their work. We have staged 16 exhibitions to date, with artists and artworks from Indonesia, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, the Philippines and Singapore. The focus is on younger and mid-career artists with established practices and reputations in their home countries whose work has not been seen in Australia. Exhibitions are accompanied by public programs, catalogues and educational materials for HSC and IB students. School visits are encouraged. Artworks are available to view online and all catalogues can be downloaded for free.





# Home and Away

Curated by Dr Luise Guest and Jennifer Yang

22 November - 16 December 2023

**16albermarle Project Space**

16 Albermarle Street

Newtown NSW 2042

Thu - Sat, 11am - 5pm,

or by appointment

