



CURATORS ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Photography of Nusra Latif Qureshi's works by Christian Capurro.
Photography of Lara Merrett, Ben Pushman, Pip & Pop and Noël Skrzypczak's works by Tony Nathan.

An Ever Expanding Universe
Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts
12 June – 3 August 2008
Curator: Melissa Keys

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TOP LEFT: Pip & Pop (Nicole Andrijevic & Tanya Schultz),
Golden Apples of the Sun (detail) 2008
Collection of the artists, Perth

LEFT: Ben Pushman, *Untitled* 2008
Courtesy of the artist and Goddard de Fiddes, Perth

COVER: Viv Miller, *Planetarium* (detail) 2006
Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne
UBS Art Collection, Brisbane

LIST OF WORKS

Maria Cruz

Hard times are over 2007
oil on linen
51.0 x 61.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Sydney

Noao 2007
oil on linen
36.0 x 41.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Sydney

Snow & cotton balls 2007
oil on canvas
50.5 x 55.5cm
Collection of the artist, Sydney

Untitled 2007
oil and silver chain on linen
30.5 x 46.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Sydney

Voodoo 2007
oil on linen
187.0 x 137.0 cm
Private Collection, Perth

Yes 2007
oil on linen
36.0 x 46.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Sydney

Tim Johnson

Handan 2 2007
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
91.0 x 61.0 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Lister Gallery, Perth
Private Collection, Perth

Handan 3 2007
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
91.0 x 61.0 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Lister Gallery, Perth
Private Collection, Perth

Tim Johnson and Brendan Smith

Two Phoenix III 2006
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
183.0 x 224.0 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Lister Gallery, Perth
Private Collection, Perth

Wild Goose Painting 2007
synthetic polymer paint on canvas
183.0 x 152.0 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Lister Gallery, Perth
Private Collection, Perth

Lara Merrett

still vast reserves 2008
acrylic & ink on linen
2 panels 183.0 x 168.0 cm (each)
Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Viv Miller

Planetarium 2006
oil, enamel, fluorescent spray paint and pencil on canvas
168.0 x 138.0 cm
UBS Art Collection, Brisbane

Pip & Pop (Nicole Andrijevic & Tanya Schultz)

Golden Apples of the Sun 2008
adhesive vinyl, acrylic paint, ink, pigments and sugar
dimensions variable
Collection of the artists, Perth

Ben Pushman

Untitled 2006
acrylic on canvas
120.0 x 150.0 cm
Private Collection, Perth

Untitled 2008
acrylic on canvas
151.0 x 175.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Perth

Nusra Latif Qureshi

MARGINAL THOUGHTS – I 2008
gouache and acrylic on illustration board
60.0 x 42.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Melbourne

MARGINAL THOUGHTS – II 2008
gouache and acrylic on illustration board
66.0 x 42.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Melbourne

USEFUL FORMS OF DESIRE – I 2008
gouache, watercolour and acrylic on illustration board
66.0 x 42.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Melbourne

USEFUL FORMS OF DESIRE – II 2008
gouache, watercolour and acrylic on illustration board
66.0 x 42.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Noël Skrzypczak

Cave painting II 2006
acrylic
dimensions variable
Collection of the artist, Melbourne

Gulumbu Yunupingu

Garak, The Universe 2008
natural ochres on bark
219.0 x 65.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Melbourne

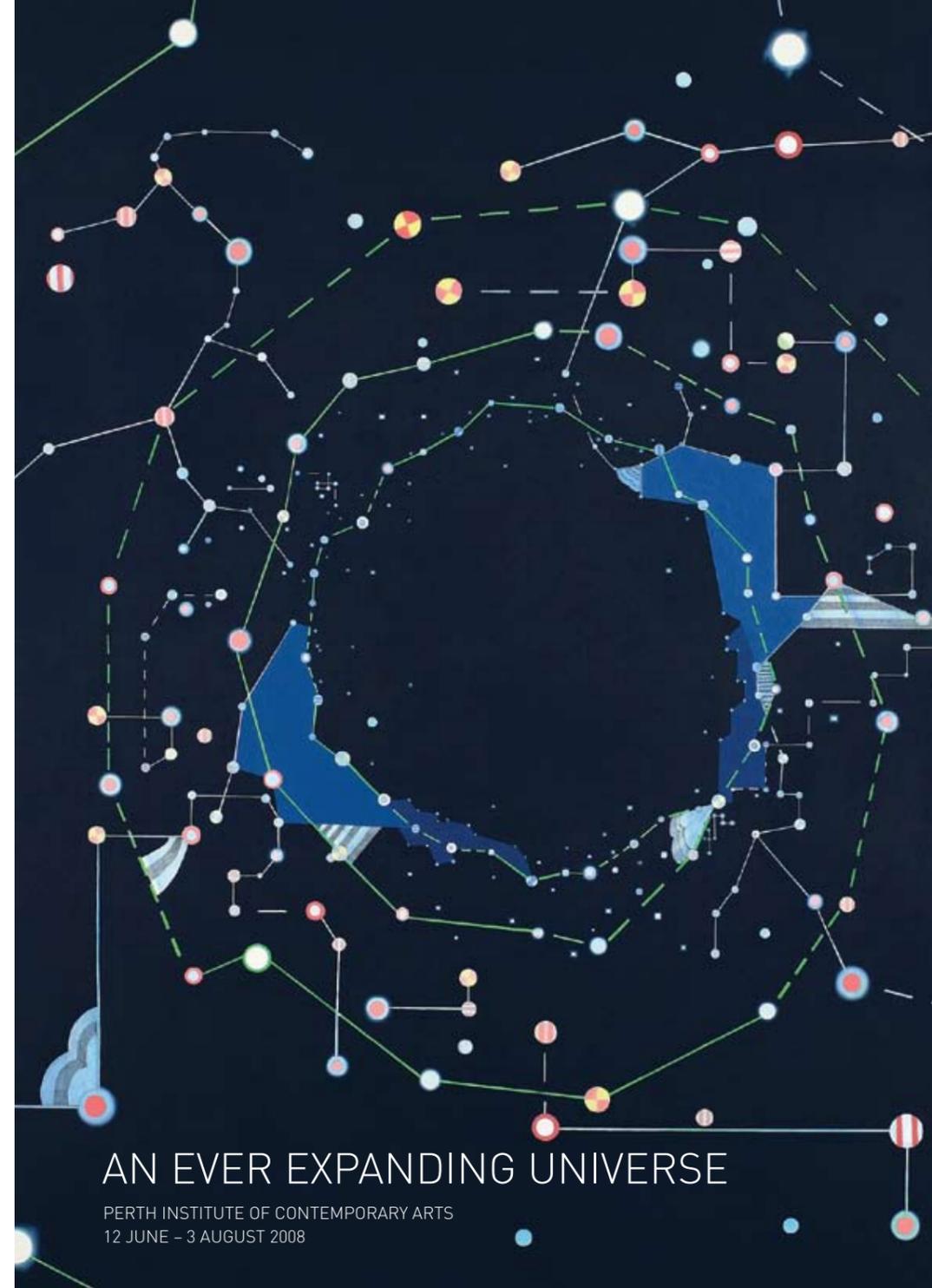
Garak, The Universe 2008
natural ochres on bark
197.0 x 63.0 cm
Collection of the artist, Melbourne



Gulumbu Yunupingu,
Garak, The Universe 2008
Garak, The Universe (detail) 2008
Courtesy of the artist, Buku Larrngau Mulka, Yirrkala and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne



Nusra Latif Qureshi,
MARGINAL THOUGHTS – I 2008
USEFUL FORMS OF DESIRE – II 2008
All works courtesy of the artist



AN EVER EXPANDING UNIVERSE

PERTH INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS
12 JUNE – 3 AUGUST 2008



perth cultural centre james street northbridge tue-sun 11am-6pm fridays 11am-9pm tel +61 8 9228 6300 info@pica.org.au pica.org.au



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Noël Skrzypczak, *Cave painting II* 2006
 Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne

AN EVER EXPANDING UNIVERSE

An Ever Expanding Universe traces a series of trajectories in the vast and constantly evolving realm of Australian painting today. Navigating a constellation of distinct traditions and cultural histories, this exhibition journeys into a particular sphere of contemporary art practice.

The exhibition presents a range of works that either reference astronomy or cosmology, or are charged with a feeling of unbounded open-endedness. Each of these singular works is brought together by a sense of infinite possibility, multiplicity and wonder.

Gazing into the spiraling blue vortex at the centre of Viv Miller’s *Planetarium* (2006) induces a faint sensation of vertigo. In Miller’s painting a dynamic tracery of star-like forms and points of colour mesmerise the viewer, conjuring images from astronomy, myth and science fiction. Choosing to portray the night sky as seen through the theatrical technology of a planetarium rather than by the naked eye, Miller imbues her painting with a heightened feeling of awe and starry rapture, offering a portal into the magical realm of individual imagination.

Similarly spanning the length of the gallery wall, Noël Skrzypczak’s *Cave Painting II* (2006), creates the impression of a vast horizon beyond the white cube. Made with liquid swirls, drips and eruptions of paint, Skrzypczak’s work has variously been described as anatomical, astronomical and ectoplasmic.¹ All is in flux. Morphing ceaselessly as one moves around it, *Cave Painting II* locates the viewer at a frontier, confronted by a shifting series of thresholds between interior, exterior, stellar and interstellar.

Nusra Latif Qureshi’s paintings are composed of fragments that suggest indistinct figurative forms. With their origins in the seventeenth and eighteenth century traditions of Mughal miniature painting, the works derive from Pahari paintings of female nudes. Qureshi breaks the images down into constituent parts, eschewing a single focal point and splintering the original form into a myriad of suggestive remnants evocative of a ‘landscape of sensation’.²

Like a cloud nebula, Pip & Pop’s³ installation *Golden Apples of the Sun* (2008) expands across the wall and floor of the gallery. Drawing on Buddhist and Hindu spiritual motifs such as mandalas, tanka and sand paintings, along with the materials and tactics of commerce, *Golden Apples of the Sun* explores the co-existence and mingling of the sacred and the profane. Assembled from arrangements of candy coloured pigments and intricately layered designs of incandescent vinyl and paint, Pip & Pop’s installations generate multiple, and sometimes conflicting, spatial, spiritual and consumerist references and impulses.

Maria Cruz’s paintings are interventions in the universe of visual language. Using traditional genres and conventional styles as her starting point, the artist conflates representation, abstraction and text in order to explore the relationship between language, visuality and meaning. Each painted word or phrase initiates a series of associations that move in numerous directions. Sweeping gestural brushstrokes, splashes, drips and richly varied textures convey both presence and process and ensure that the material matter of paint is primary. Cruz’s searching and unsettlingly elusive pictures trigger questions and raise propositions about what painting is, what it isn’t, and what it might be.⁴



Lara Merrett, *still vast reserves* 2008
 Courtesy of the artist, Karen Woodbury Gallery, Melbourne and Kaliman Gallery, Sydney

Nyoongar artist Ben Pushman’s *Untitled* (2008) registers the wounds of dispossession and scarification. It also suggests the undulating topographies of land and the rhythmic passage of time. His red palette resonates with allusions to earth and blood. Pulsating bands of colour merge into one another as they run across the canvas, suggesting the wave-like forms of windswept country and seasonal flux. Unbroken horizons and river channels appear to extend or radiate beyond the confines of the canvas, creating an unending space. A type of optical oscillation is created by shifting and alternating contrasts in colour and forms evoking searing sensations of grief and dispossession, sublimity and cultural continuity respectively.

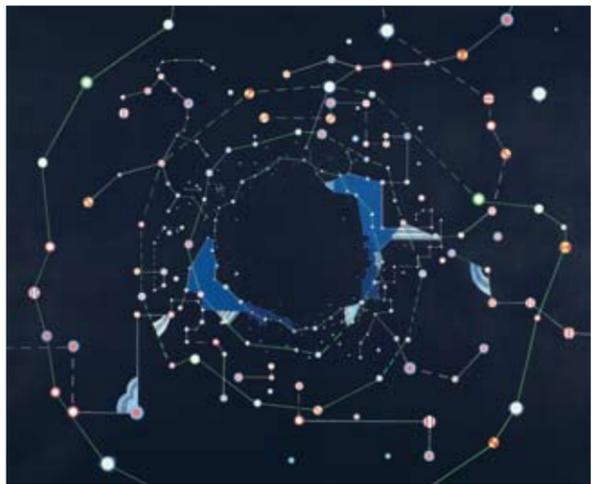
In Tim Johnson’s paintings, conventional notions of space and time are suspended. His polymorphic works feature symbols and motifs sourced from Buddhist tradition; Shinto shrines; Egyptian figures; UFOs; Papunya and Native American cultures. These motifs float indeterminately in shimmering hazes of colour, semi transparent screens of dots, fields of stippled pointillism and painterly brushstrokes. Their co-existence in Johnson’s parallel worlds suggest optimistic possibilities for cultural synthesis and harmony. The artist’s multi-referential vocabulary has accrued through more than thirty years of collaboration, intercultural dialogue, experimentation and meditative search. His work has been described as ‘images of impossible unity’ and ‘landscapes of desire’.⁵

In contrast to Johnson’s serene, transcendental compositions, Lara Merrett’s luminous works are both dynamically chaotic and carefully ordered. Constructed from layers of acrylic paint and ink, *Still Vast Reserves* (2008) erupts with nebulous forms, fine ink tracteries, swirling masses and explosions of glowing colour. The title communicates Merrett’s playfulness and sense of painterly possibility. Alive with subtle interplays and monumental dramas, Merrett’s romantic and sensual work emanates a sense of adventure and imagination and unfolds with a finely tuned historical consciousness.

Dizzying fields of innumerable stars spread across Gulumbu Yunupingu’s work. A senior Yolngu woman, Gulumbu Yunupingu’s *Garak, The Universe* (2008) explores the cosmos, ‘all around, every tribe, every colour’ – and the link between the people on earth and the stars in the sky.⁶ Fields of subtly varying yellow and white stellar-forms and dots dazzle the viewer. Their vast numbers generate a feeling of wonder, at the mystery of the infinite. Looking closely, these stars appear to cluster in certain locations, suggesting the formation and movement of manifold galaxies. Painted in local pigments and ochres and spiraling in unbroken masses across the surfaces of the barks and the hollow logs, these mesmeric works tell Yolngu stories and welcome contemplation.



Maria Cruz, *Voodoo* 2007
 Courtesy of the artist and Kallman Gallery, Sydney



Viv Miller, *Planetarium* 2006
 Courtesy of the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne, UBS Art Collection, Brisbane



Tim Johnson and Brendan Smith, *Two Phoenix III* 2006
 Courtesy of the artist, Lister Gallery, Perth and Tolarno Gallery, Melbourne

Highlighting some of the ways in which painting continues to provide us with visual and intellectual succour, this exhibition muses on what Peter Schjeldahl once described as paintings’ ‘inexhaustible, always potentially thrilling mystery’.⁷ Participating in a continuous cycle of reformation and invention of painterly practice, the artists featured in *An Ever Expanding Universe* work across time, space, history and culture, each one envisioning expansive new horizons and possibilities for art into the future.

Melissa Keys
 2008

¹ Edward Colless, ‘Smart Art Under \$3000: Noël Skrzypczak’ in *Australian Art Collector*, No.41, July 2007, p.168.
² Nusra Latif Qureshi, artist statement 2008.
³ Nicole Andrijevic and Tanya Schultz comprise the collaborative practice Pip & Pop.
⁴ Jacqueline Milner, ‘Maria Cruz: Crucial Manoeuvres’, in [e-journal] *Globe* issue 10, courtesy Sarah Cottier Gallery, www.artdes.edu.au, 1999.
⁵ Linda Michael, ‘Three Views of Emptiness’ in *Three Views of Emptiness: Buddhism and the Art of Tim Johnson, Lindy Lee and Peter Tyndall*, Monash University Museum of Art, 2001, p.10.
⁶ Gulumbu Yunupingu, artist statement 2004.
⁷ Peter Schjeldahl, ‘The Rise of Abstract Painting II’ in *Abstract Painting Once Removed* [exhibition catalogue], Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, 1998, p.37