



Sun-Raysed
2022

**Exhibition
catalogue**

Aaron Bailey ~ Luci Callipari-Marcuzzo ~ Piero Clemente Garreffa ~ Kate Cotching ~ Neil Fettling ~ Ross Lake ~ Jeremy Matthews



Curatorial statement

Sunraysia is often referred to as an ill-defined region in the Mallee, also named 'Australia's Fruit Bowl', and as the name states, it is rightly so - but much debate has followed. So where did it all start? Clement John ("Jack") De Garis (22 Nov 1884 - 17 Aug 1926) was an Australian entrepreneur and aviator who worked in the dried fruits industry in the 'Sunraysia' area around Mildura in the early 20th century. He was noted for his vibrant personality and colourful marketing style.

De Garis went to Mildura State School where he was described as an above-average student. However, he left at the age of nine to work in his father's businesses in Mildura. He returned to school for his secondary education at his father's urging, boarding at Wesley College, Melbourne from 1899 to 1901, where he rose to become dux of his class.

Described as being short in stature, he capitalised on an affectionate smile and a magnetic personality. As part of his publicity campaign for the Australian Dried Fruits Association (ADFA), De Garis engaged the services of popular composer Reginald Stoneham to put tunes to promotional lyrics he had written. The resulting *Sun-Raysed Waltz* was published as sheet music. He and Stoneham then worked on an ambitious "mystery" musical comedy *F.F.F.*, which had a short but successful season for Hugh D. McIntosh's Tivoli theatres in Adelaide, Perth and Melbourne in late 1920.

Growing up in the region, I have always been fascinated by the area defined as Sunraysia and how the name derived from the contest that entrepreneur Jack De Garis staged in 1919, as part of a promotion on behalf of the Australian Dried Fruits Association (ADFA).

The public were invited to submit a name to describe the dried fruits grown in the Mildura area. The winning name *Sun-Raysed*, was modified to Sunraysia to describe the district as a whole. The following year, in 1920, De Garis founded the Sunraysia Daily newspaper. I have reproduced this concept by inviting the seven artists to respond to the same theme.

It has always been an aspiration of mine to curate an exhibition based on this theme, to showcase our amazing region and talented artists. The work of the seven artists I have selected responds and connects to the area known as Sunraysia - exploring themes of irrigated and dryland farming, horticulture, sunshine, media, and identity since 1919.

Rohan Morris
Curator



Aaron Bailey

My family has a rich history in the Mallee with numerous generations living in Mildura, Werrimull, and Cullulleraine. My parents purchased a fruit block at Mildura South in the mid 70s just before I was born. This is where I grew up and still live today. Following primary school and high school, I was in the first group of students to study at Mildura Senior College. Throughout these years I had teachers that nurtured my artistic abilities, which pushed me to keep going with my passion.

On completing my secondary studies, I stayed local and attended Sunraysia TAFE, completing a Diploma in Visual Arts. This experience of the 'art world', is what hooked me. I continued my studies at La Trobe University and obtained a degree in Bachelor of Fine Arts, majoring in Painting. Wanting to broaden my knowledgebase even more, I then completed a Diploma in Photography and studied Museum Studies (Curatorial) at Deakin University in Melbourne, which followed on to working in several public galleries before returning to university to study Education, majoring in Art.

As a painter first, I now call myself an artist. Through my practice I realised that I don't like to stick to a single media or technique. In later years, I have looked at the construction of a work, drawing on the medium or technique to carry the concept rather than a pure image-based method. This has led to a more sculptural based practice that takes in the readymade, photographic processes, textiles and mark making.





***Under the Mallee sky*, 2022**

Cyanotype print on cotton and hessian
90 x 120cm

Aaron Bailey

"What would you say to tomorrow's sky? I dream of (Mallee) sunsets most every night."

The Mallee sky, those mallee sunsets, that people just don't understand until they have experienced them. This was and is who I am. Have you heard the saying 'saltwater or freshwater person?' I say, Mallee sky person.

The sky is what has shaped this land and how we use it. From my father growing up on a wheat farm at Cullulleraine to the dried fruit blocks of Mildura. We have all experienced the power of that blue wonder. It is strange to think that this same sky has looked down upon this land for hundreds and thousands of years. The same blue sky. All the changes it has seen, and those yet to come. All under the same blue sky. We all look to the heavens and have our own dialogue. The shapes, colours, thoughts, and emotions. These conversations change like the clouds that float along the blue, but the Mallee sky still stays the same.

The flag is a way of respecting the sky, what it has done, does and will do for us. A flag symbolises respect, pride in what and who we are. It's a positive affirmation of loyalty and commitment to the blue Mallee sky. After all we would not be here, if it wasn't for the blue Mallee sky



Luci Callipari-Marcuzzo (BAFA, BVA - Hons, RMVA) is an multi-disciplinary artist, mother, researcher, arts educator, curator and writer, based at Red Cliffs in North-West Victoria, Australia.

Through multiplicitous methodologies, her work actively engages with her familial and feminine history. An integral part of Callipari-Marcuzzo's practice-led research is the self-transformation into an imagined version of her Calabrese Italian grandmothers. During these enactments, she makes artefacts utilising traditional women's modes of making: sewing, embroidery, and crochet, reinventing these notions through her practise, reclaiming these practises, through memory and intention. The work is a manifestation of the hopes, dreams, and desires of migrant women, and also, their lived realities. It strives to honour their voices which were often silenced by the dominant gender roles within the Italian Calabrian diaspora.

Luci Callipari-Marcuzzo



***Tracing threads and weaving stories*, 2022**

Cotton crochet thread, found objects

Dimensions variable

Luci Callipari-Marcuzzo

Tracing threads and weaving stories, is a new performative artwork made from crochet artefacts created during several participatory collaborative workshops, *Collective Crochet*, from 2017 to the present. *Tracing threads and weaving stories*, will grow over the duration of the exhibition, with the artist actively weaving in the exhibition space at pre-scheduled times.

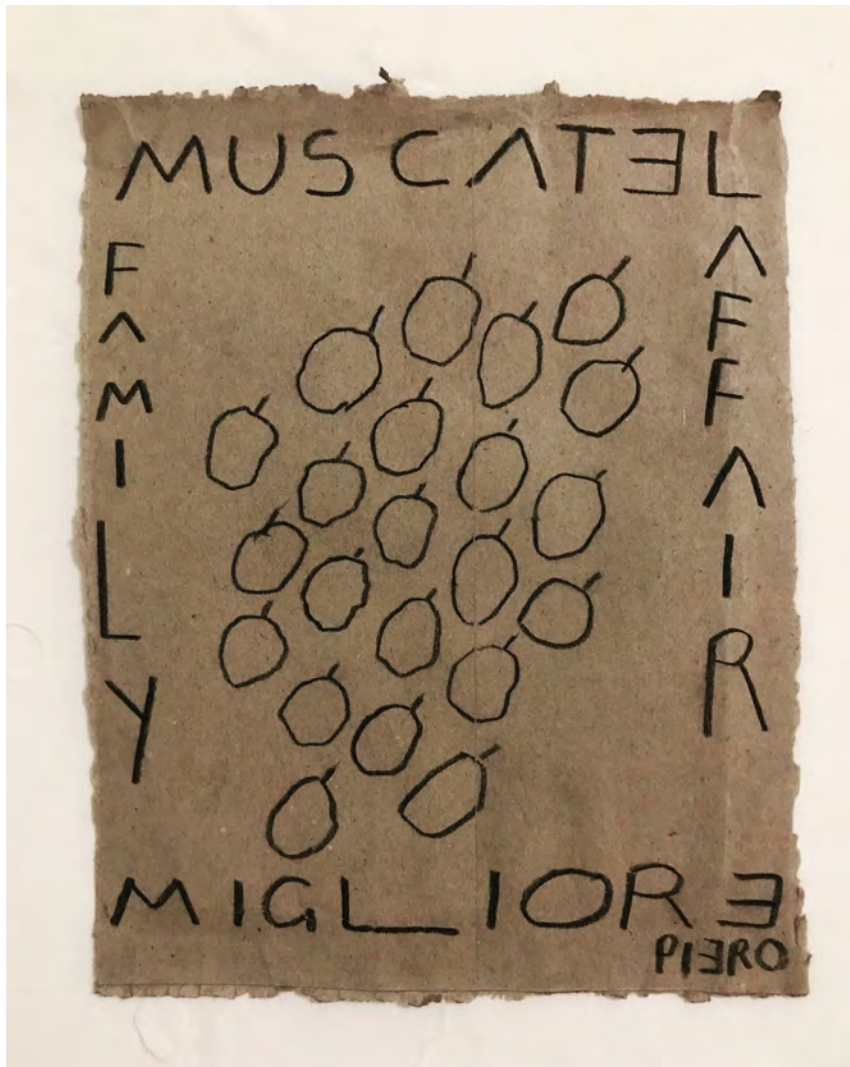
Tracing threads and weaving stories, incorporates chains of crochet made by previous *Collective Crochet* participants, from Mildura and Melbourne, Australia; Rome, Italy; Los Angeles, Long Island, and Staten Island, USA. *Collective Crochet*, interprets chains of red crocheted thread, into symbols of the chain migration scheme in which many immigrants to Australia and other parts of the world were participants. The work reflects on the continuous experience of movement and migration, for economic, social and familial reasons, and translates these handcrafted artefacts and spoken word exchanges into transcultural conversations of our shared interwoven stories of departure and arrival.





Piero is a first generation Italian artist based in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Influenced by the religious icons he observed at his grandparents house as a child, as well as artists such as Piero della Francesca and Piero di Cosimo, Piero's work explores his own identity, nostalgia, and cultural heritage. Piero has exhibited as a finalist in the Paul Guest Arts Prize at the Bendigo Art Gallery as well as in several group and solo exhibitions. He has recently completed his Masters of Fine Art at RMIT.

Piero Clemente Garreffa



***Yabby from the Murray the way to the heart*, 2022**

Acrylic on Canvas

90 x 112cm

***Family affair*, 2019 (Pictured)**

Pen on paper

28.5 x 23.5cm

Piero Clemente Garreffa

It's summertime and the school holidays are on. Our family vineyard on Sultana Avenue, Irymple south, backs down to Kings Billabong. My older brother Dino and I would jump on the 4-wheel motorbike or if Papa had hidden the key instead, we would get up on the tractor - a red Massey Ferguson 35 - and ride down to the banks of the River Murray. We had our spot just below the banks from where there were shell middens made by Indigenous people who lived there before us. We would chuck our nets by tying the rope of the net to a stick and then carefully hiding the rope by sticking it below the water so our nets would not be found by the "Jolly Swagman" trying to steal our catch. We would leave the nets overnight and go down the next day in anticipation, hoping we would have caught a massive loot of yabbies to return home with to impress our parents.



Kate Cotching lives in Mildura, Victoria where she runs an Art Therapy studio alongside her own art practise. Kate has exhibited regularly in Artist-Run Spaces and Public Galleries throughout Australia since 1997. Recent solo exhibitions include "Untitled Community" at Mildura Arts Centre and "Disquietude" at Ararat Regional Gallery. She has been awarded the Australia Council Rome Residency, the Deacons Award Traveling Scholarship to Beijing, a two year residency at 200 Gertrude Street in Melbourne and three months at Thirning Villa in Ashfield, Sydney. Her work can be found in collections of the National Gallery of Victoria and Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, to name just two. She has also contributed to a number of community arts projects in Mildura, and Bristol, UK. Cotching has worked as a lecturer at La Trobe University's Mildura campus and was a founding member of two artist-run initiatives in Mildura, Gallery F and whitecubemildura. Kate holds a Bachelor of Arts (Painting) and a Master of Arts (Fine Art) from RMIT University. She has a Bachelor's degree in Social Work from La Trobe University (2013) and completed a Masters in Mental Health (Art Therapy) from the University of Queensland in 2018.

Kate Cotching



Know where you are, 2022

Thread, starch & chair
20 x 20 x 150cm

Kate Cotching

Next morning, when we went to school, we could hear it ourselves, Boom, Boom, Boom, a noise like that, only much louder...
Crushing the timber...
Knocking the trees down that were in its way.

This is from my grandmother's account of Big Lizzie as it traversed the Mallee and arrived in Sunraysia. *Know where you are* is a visual account of my own journey through the Mallee on foot, a quieter journey that allowed time and space to experience the subtle richness, and to consider what we have and what was.

Please sit, take some time, and enjoy.



Neil Fetting

Neil Fetting is an exhibiting artist, with numerous solo and group exhibitions held throughout Europe, USA, Asia and Australia.

His current work and research involves the history and sociology of North West Victorian Mallee dry land farmers and their determination to tame a vast semi desert land. This is traced through the collection and re-interpretation of the relics left behind on their farming properties. Neil is interested in the abundant waste and bloated heritage of our post industrial materialism and how the cultural artifact has replaced nature as a signifier of meaning.

Neil was the inaugural Director of the La Trobe University Art Institute, and has previously been the Chair of *Murray Darling Palimpsest* - a biennale contemporary visual art event where artists are invited to respond to environmental and social issues affecting inland Australia.

Neil has a PhD at Monash University, Australia, and a Master of Arts by Research from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Previously, he completed a Diploma of Fine Art at Bendigo Institute of Technology and a Certificate of Fine Art and Language at the Paris American Academy in France.



Gyre, 2022
Oil on Linen
120 x 98cm

Slag, 2022 (Pictured)
Oil on Linen
120 x 98cm

Neil Fetting

These works, *Gyre*, and *Slag*, both from 2022, are part of an on-going series of paintings based on the Mallee and its ecological sustainability.

This is viewed through the region's boinkas (salt-pan or shallow groundwater depressions) that, occasionally brim with water, but generally (are) dry and glittered with salt rime and edged with gypsum shards and muddy sand' (Carter, 2010, 71).

The boinkas are largely the result of remnant surficial salt crusting from an ancient inland sea, but more recent clearing of adapted indigenous flora, (Eucalyptus Dumosa, pines and casuarinas, heath, Saltbush and Spinifex), for dryland cropping, grazing, rabbit and mice plagues and the gradual incursions of irrigated horticulture, have seen these ubiquitous environments undergo further stress.

The new series builds on earlier painting-based exhibitions, *Of tracks and traces: works of Fletchers Lake, 1989* and *The sum of all elements and the existence of the whole, more works of Fletchers Lake, 1993*, where the earth's skin and biota reveal the cycles of inscribed human incidents and wounds inflicted by the forces of nature.

In this third (and final) series of these Mallee works, all references to life sustaining water, however oblique, are gone and the primal mud has turned to apocalyptic sludge. In these works we are occasionally reminded of the remnants (either human or animal) of our threatened natural world.



Ross Lake is a local businessman well beyond his retirement date but occasionally finds time to indulge in his love of local history and art. His family came to the district in 1956 and his father commenced in the fuel industry a business Ross still manages today. He has previously exhibited his efforts in portrait and landscape photography in Melbourne (Black Sphere gallery Richmond) and in Mildura at Gallery 25 and as part of the White Cube Project.

Ross Lake



...Selling the Sun..., 2022

Archival print
84.1 x 118.9cm

Ross Lake

The 1920's were a brief respite period (Spanish Flu pandemic aside) in which an economic boom occurred between the two World Wars and prior to the upcoming Great Depression of the 1930's. In the course of this period graphic art was characterised by three overlapping genres - Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Heroic Realism. The marketing of the Australian Dried Fruits Association (ADFA) took on an amalgamation of these styles to promote the dried vine fruit products of the region. The images displayed are a sampling of that campaign. The chief characterisation of these genres included the use of modern lines, sunbursts, high contrast colours, the female form and a flat perspective. All evident in these images.



Jeremy Matthews

My family moved here from Queensland. As a child I would often hear them speak of their connection to the land "back home". I however was born in Mildura. I have lived almost my entire life thus far in this region and while I do share a connection to the land up there, my connection to this area, my birthplace, will always remain a part of me. The techniques I employ are a combination of what I've been taught from others and what I see in my head (dreams and stray thoughts). Recently I have started working with more natural materials because I feel they are symbolic of the connection I feel and I find the unpredictability they possess challenges me to think outside the box. No two branches of a tree will ever be identical there will always be some unique bump, scrape or crack that forces you to adapt to the situation.

Identity plays a big part in my story and is the reason I turned to art. I am an indigenous Australian and growing up I often struggled with matters of culture. I felt it came with strings attached. Unspoken expectations of who I had to be. School only reinforced this notion. Their general style of teaching saw me participating in activities that made me feel uncomfortable and only drove me further away. I felt I was being forced to choose one side or the other. Between who I felt I was and who I was expected to be. That was until I joined ATSICA (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Arts).

As a student of ATSICA, I was given the tools I needed to find answers and to reconcile these two parts of me. This is what my work is based upon. It is my attempt to give form to my thoughts and feelings and tells the story of my journey so far in the hopes that someone who is experiencing similar struggles may view it and feel inspired to start their own search for answers.

I studied as a student of ATSICA for 3 years until circumstances forced me to go my own way. In that time I was given the opportunity to display my work, alongside my peers, at SuniTAFE, the Art Vault and the Mildura Arts Centre. Although I'm not a student any longer I do intend to go back and finish my ATSICA journey. In the meantime I continue to explore my culture and think of new designs/concepts as my story continues.



***The tragedy of misunderstanding*, 2021**

Tree branches, raffia, coffee-stained string, and stone

Dimensions Variable

Jeremy Matthews

"It is better to understand little than to misunderstand a lot" – Anatole France

Magic has always been rife with misunderstanding, leading to many tragic events. Massacres, witch trials, and even more recently (2011), the execution of a Saudi Arabian woman, Amina bint Abdul Halim Nassar, for allegedly practicing witchcraft.

The misunderstanding surrounding magic has caused me to question who I am. My whole life I was given the impression that magic is "Black or White" (good or evil/Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal etc.). The notion that myself or any aspect of who I am, must align with one side or another is something I find absurd.

I am an Indigenous Australian and my family's spiritual connection to the land "back home" (QLD) is important to me. However, my spiritual connection to this land (the Mallee), the place of my birth, holds equal importance within me. I am not forced to choose between the two.

Following this trend, I as an indigenous Australian (like most people who carry this title), possess mixed heritage.

I am not one part of my ancestry, nor the other. I AM ME.

Therefore my magic is not representative of any ONE part of me. It is my will, my intention, that determines whether its "Good or Bad". For if you intend evil that is what you will achieve. Likewise if your intentions are good you will achieve benevolence.

Labels such as 'black' and 'white' are shackles and I refuse to place such things on my magic, my culture or my individuality, due to the tragedy of misunderstanding.



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