

Rosa Mar Tato Ortega is a site-specific artist who makes art based on her sense of materiality and the possibilities that evolve. Rosa's practice identifies, connects and embeds the potency of memory and storytelling in her artwork, and the individuals that she encounters in her collaborative projects give expression to the work, embodying unique responses to individual history, identity and lived environments. Rosa's work is often intricate, evoking the intimacy of the exchange and simultaneously honouring the confidentiality implicit in the work. Her artwork is highly considered and, while informed by individual encounters, is also highly context-specific with a deep understanding of the importance of community and place making. Rosa's ability to decipher, interpret and reflect these personal stories through symbol, pattern, motif, light and text define her art practice. As she explores and experiments with a variety of materials, whether steel, concrete, felt, or a subversive stitch or two, her stunning artmaking practice, enacted consistently using light, photography, collage, cutting, textiles - is an invitation to (re)consider the community and environs of Coolart.

The title of this exhibition, *Colourt* By Sea - A Kaleidoscope of Observations II*, emanates from Rosa's residency experience, "four full seasons in a unique studio space has meant that from this doorway, I have witnessed fragments of time and space. Whether a moment in time or an afternoon with a curious visitor, these experiences have informed the artwork and have focussed on place, sense of safety and connection to a community" (Rosa Mar Tato Ortega, October 2018).

This emphasises the significance of these Artist in Residence (AIR) programs, and in this case the opportunity for a year-long immersion at Coolart Wetlands was always going to be special as, from the moment Rosa arrived and introduced herself with a working title of *Sense of Place*, she has embedded herself in this community. Rosa describes herself as a Public Artist – in that she creates by involving the communities that she encounters and the observations she makes from within these communities. The depth of reflection afforded by the year of residency allowed her to mark the transition of the seasons, the movement and characters of the wildlife that permanently inhabit Coolart, and those that come and go, including the many local and international visitors.

The Coolart Studio has offered Rosa a 'bird's eye view' of her surrounds, acted as a hub for conversations and as a refuge to research and develop works. As you walk around the Homestead and the grounds, you will encounter the environment punctuated by Rosa's responses to her year in Coolart. She has flipped her works towards the lagoon in the two Bird Hides and installed works in the Shearing Shed, Stables and close to the Studio. And, as a reminder that Rosa's work is always responsive to the environment in which she is placed and evolves on that basis, the works in steel created during an AIR in China are situated in the Tack Room and bear witness to her commitment to always extending her skill-base and maintaining a dynamic practice.

The work for the mid-point exhibition (May 2018) enabled Rosa to show works in progress and the scale of her work has evolved as the year has passed. The small mid-point work titled *My Maggie*, a consistent visitor during Rosa's residency, is transformed to a much larger work, in situ at the Crake Bird Hide, enhancing and magnifying the stitches and colour of the thread. The typewriter, that took residency outside the Studio, beckoning visitors to press its keys, materialises in the Stables as a text inspired work, the outcome of nine months of visitor's typed responses. This large-scale work, *Addicted to Nature*, evokes emotional connections to nature, release from daily life and conversations that matter to community.

At the mid-point of the AIR, Rosa also invited visitors to place a stick and create a 'nest' outside her studio. The nest grew week-by-week and was frequented by local children and birds who liked to sit in the middle of the structure. The area where this transient work evolved is now occupied by an installation which resonates as 'shelter' embodying the many conversations about the importance of home, safety and place making.

Works at the end of a residency are often not fully resolved, given the challenges of creating large scale outdoor work, but this does create space for questions and possibilities and the inversion of home, place and safety – displacement, refuge and asylum seeking and homelessness. In a world of increased human mobility, where major drivers of displacement include conflict, poverty, climate related disasters, and human trafficking – striving for a peaceful, inclusive and sustainable world means responding to those who are displaced on a local and global scale. Rosa's art asks us to consider this.....

As the United Nations Deputy Secretary General, Amina Mohammed, reminds us, "...our shared human story is a mobile one, including a long history of people migrating in search of a better life - whether that means better material living conditions, access to quality education, decent jobs or greater protection of personal freedom. How many of us have a family history that includes more than one story of migration that enriched our heritage and made us who we are today?" (Opening address to the fifty-first session on the Commission on Population and Development, New York, April 2018).

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