

EMBEDDED 2020



Foreword

Embedded 2020 has been developed for exhibition at Flux Gallery Perth following the success of its 2019 debut at Noir Darkroom Gallery, Melbourne. In celebration of International Women's Day 2020 and of all women, this bold initiative presents nine personal interpretations of the domestic quilt. Thanks to the City of Perth for its generous support of *Embedded 2020*.

As a national representation of women artists, featuring quilts from NSW, Victoria and WA, this exhibition is a visual arts project that recognises the disparity in representation and support of women artists worldwide. Its presentation at Flux Gallery Perth is significant: the majority of the initial seven artists are Perth expatriates. Some have created new works for *Embedded 2020*, alongside two more WA artists, Claire Bushby and Molly Werner. **Claire Bushby's** quilt is symbolic for a number of these artists as it addresses a disturbing personal affront while embracing the right to move forward as an empowered woman. Alternatively **Molly Werner's** work recognises the softer fluidity and calmness that a handmade, handstitched quilt can impart; the humanity that can envelop you. These two artists are at differing stages of their artistic lives and of separate generations, with Werner an innovative emerging artist and Bushby thriving in mid-career. Indeed the entire exhibition intentionally spans the generations from twenty-somethings to 70-plus, thus indicative of the myriad of responses to the humble quilt.

Sandra Murray, Curator, *Embedded 2020*

Emma Ruby Armstrong-Porter reminds us that the female genitalia are no-one's property but a woman's. She uses "soft and slippery materials from the beds of others, and garments often worn by women for the male gaze" to reconstruct and exaggerate the vulva form, thus reasserting it as the property of the female. Her quilt is fleshy and voluptuous, and deeply embedded with bold assertiveness and tantalising humour.

Olga Cironis addresses the migrant experience with her big, bold capitalised statement THANK YOU FOR RADICALISING ME embedded within an ornate bed covering associated with migrant homes. This is a powerful statement in the current immigration climate. It poses questions about belonging and connecting the past with the present.

Music culture T-shirts have been cut up to create **Nikita Dunovits-Ferrier's** quilt. Cutting up and reassembling with safety pins references punk, rock, grunge and heavy metal fashion and culture. In going through this process Dunovits-Ferrier is psychologically dismantling and shedding her teenage identity with both relief and regret.

For most of us, cosy beds and cups of tea represent homeliness and comfort. **Michele Elliot's** quilt project, *slip, sleeve, cover* is dedicated to a woman who set up 'home' in a bus shelter. "I thought about what it meant to locate a bed, a most intimate space in our life, in one of the most public spaces..." The work is delicate with a sense of vulnerability that replicates the situation of the woman who inspired it, stitched with the artist's hair.

Tania Ferrier's work is an extension of her 1988 New York *Angry Underwear* project, the starting point of which was bearing witness to a sexual assault and her personal experience of childhood sexual abuse. Her quilt is imbued with resilience and humour, gained in the process of making the angry underwear. It emerges triumphant over childhood trauma and bites back at sexism and contempt for women, still prevalent and widespread today.

Transformative Quilt by **E. Anne Jeppe** also comes from a dark story embedded deeply in her past, and unravels the dissociation/disconnection of crimes perpetrated against her decades ago. Continuing her interest in etymology, connections between the words 'quilt' and 'femininity' are given a voice by being stitched into the fabric. The unfinished reverse of the quilt alludes to life's messy loose ends. Both Ferrier and Jeppe snap the thread of silence surrounding sexual abuse.

Ironically titled *Sweet Dreams*, **Pamela Kleemann-Passi's** playful quilt sprouts human and cat hair, the detritus shed that we're endlessly brushing off our quilts and doonas. Given the materials, this quilt could be teased out as simply frivolous and fanciful. Exquisitely beautiful, but with an undercut that's ticklish and irritating, it's possibly more nightmarish than snug!

From birth to death, the quilt swaddles and shrouds us. We might have separation anxiety from it as toddlers, or fondly fumble under it the first time making love – or hate it if it was rape. It's home if you're homeless, or an inverted magic carpet if your Grandma sewed and carried it from one shore to another. Finally, it might cover us for our final breath and be the cocoon to blossom in the memories of those we loved.

Pamela Kleemann-Passi (with a contribution from Tania Ferrier) 2020

Catalogue of works

all measurements in cm, height x width x depth | all works courtesy the artist

Emma Ruby Armstrong-Porter

Not Urs 2019
found bedding and haberdashery,
gold thread, mother's dress
200 x 100

Why should I have to remind you?

As medieval Sheela na gig sculptures exposed and exaggerated the female genitalia, I too have exaggerated the form using soft and slippery materials from the beds of others, and garments often worn by women for the male gaze. I reassert the subject as the property of the female.

I should not have to remind you that it is not yours.



Photo: Pamela Kleemann-Passi



Photo: Claire Bushby

Claire Bushby

Bushpig 2020

mixed media: cotton, silk, eucalyptus dye,
eucalyptus branch, beads
115 x 81

Bushpig is the name I was called all through my school years on a daily basis. I was bullied heavily and learnt early to be ashamed of myself. I sunk into myself and believed I was unlovable, repulsive and wanting to disappear. Many of us develop feelings of self-hatred and shame in our childhood years, when we are impressionable and working out our sense of identity. These feelings get carried into adulthood though the origin has long gone.

This work is a call to radical self-love and shedding the judgements of others. I am claiming the power of the *Bushpig* as a persona, a woman who is strong and connected to the Earth. She is not ashamed of her body and the bush is her refuge.

Olga Cironis

THANK YOU FOR RADICALISING ME 2020
recycled bed cover, linen thread,
Balkan embroidery, velvet
230 x 160

This work explores how we conceptualise the meaning of identity to create a space for belonging and is a statement as well as a contemplation or reflection. It is one of a number of hangings using bed covers and text referencing corporal and spiritual human-ness while exploring global political turmoil of the 21st century, in particular human migration. As a migrant woman born to Greek refugees, I am interested in the created spaces between the haves and have-nots.

Using personal experience, research, interviews and collected stories, I question and pull apart accepted notions of belonging to create work that references our human connection with, and dependence on, our world and each other.



Photo: Tony Bowers

Nikita Dunovits-Ferrier

Sweet child o'mine 2019-20

T-shirts, safety pins, bedroom installation: curtain, rug, wooden crate, old television with audio/visual component
quilt: 230 x 140

These t-shirts represent a period in my life for which I am both nostalgic and glad to be done with – my teen years. They are a reflection of my teenage identity and the way I used music and fashion to project a certain image of myself.

Some of these t-shirts I wore day in and day out (hence why I have chosen to exclude the ampits). Each t-shirt tells a different story and has lived a life whilst covering my torso. Some even lived a life before mine, having been hand-me-downs and purchased from op-shops.

I feel bad for the other band t-shirts I once owned which did not make it in to this quilt on account of being lost, thrown out, vomited on or used as a tea towel. Somewhere along the way I started to grow out of wearing these t-shirts. Now by boycotting wearing them I am (subconsciously) straying from my teenage identity. The cutting up and pinning together is a way of both distancing myself from that previous identity and having something to look back on and feel nostalgic about.



Photo: Nikita Dunovits-Ferrier

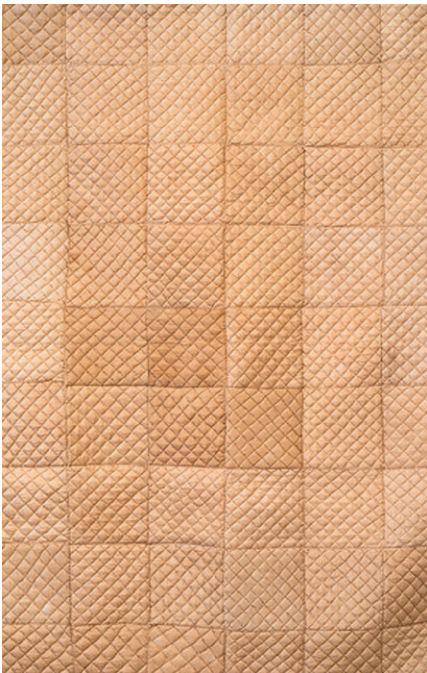


Photo: Ian Hill

Michele Elliot

slip, sleeve, cover 1995

silk, hair, wadding, satin, found clothing
slip: 66 x 42, sleeve: 18 x 55 , cover: 156 x 106

In the 90s, I was making work based on abjection and the body, on liminality and transition. The edges and boundaries where one becomes another. Hair was a material focus to investigate/represent these matters. The object, that which is out of place, is observed as a trace or fragment, detached from its whole. In the dislocation, the object creates an anxiety, threatens to disrupt the social order.

I made *slip, sleeve, cover* in response to a woman who had shifted into the bus stand at Railway Square in Sydney, with her few possessions and ritual bed making. She lived there for many months, as I witnessed on my daily commute.
A most private space occupying the most public of spaces.

Sleeve came first, found and adrift. Skin coloured satin embroidered with her vulnerability. An arm's length. The hand stitched hair my own ritual, a spell, a light quilt for warmth, a shield for protection. In recent years, the number of women experiencing homelessness in Sydney has doubled. There are ongoing calls for more shelters, for community and public housing.

Tania Ferrier

Ms Angry Underwear Quilt 2019

op shop undies, material, kapok, beads, thread, Gif video
218 x 176

My quilt is an extension of my art project *Angry Underwear* that began in 1988 in New York when I made vicious underwear for strippers after witnessing a sexual assault. After this I created a business making hand painted feminist underwear and selling it at an exclusive lingerie store in Manhattan. Back in the day it garnered a lot of media attention with Madonna, Naomi Campbell, Lauren Hutton, Reno and Odetta being amongst many women who own my bras.

In 2017, I started writing the script for a feature film titled *Angry Underwear* based on my life and delving deeper into the sexual abuse I experienced in childhood. The script is in development with funding from Screen Australia and Screen West.

Making the quilt for the *Embedded* exhibition took me back to that place in childhood, but now with the resilience and humour I learned making *Angry Underwear*. The quilt gave me the opportunity to play with fabrics and thread and let lingerie have the chance to stare down and bite back at misogyny, sexism and the silence around sexual abuse.



Photo: Tania Ferrier

E. Anne Jeppe

Transformative Quilt 2019

wire, fabric, acrylic paint, antique silk tassels, metal sheeting, rough opal chips, pins, various types of thread
195 x 130

My research uncovered that the origins of the word 'quilt' connect to old meanings of 'femininity'. Some of these connections are depicted in the text on the quilt.

After recent reporting of historical crimes against me, this quilt reflects the disintegration of 'dissociation' – a disconnection from events that perpetuated for decades. The reality of reporting initiated the beginning of the ending of that disconnection.

The back of the quilt has deliberately been left exposed without a fabric covering – showing I'm not neat, I don't like sewing and life is messy with many loose ends.



Photo: Pamela Kleemann-Passi



Photo: Pamela Kleemann-Passi

Pamela Kleemann-Passi

Sweet Dreams 2019

human/synthetic & cat hair, tulle, cotton fabric/thread, ambulance blanket
216 x 137

Ironically titled *Sweet Dreams*, this quilt sprouts human and cat hair, the waste we're always trying to brush off our quilts and doonas! Hair is ubiquitous; there's no escaping from it. It's often seen as the key to a person's or animal's identity. It is acceptable in its presence or absence and people engage with equal fervour in the process of its growth and removal. As a fetish, it is tactile with a tantalising smell. Hair can be a source of individuality, beauty, eccentricity, authority, ridicule or class distinction. There's the hair we can talk about and the hair we can't. Luscious long cascading locks can feel like a security blanket; pubic fly-aways found between the bed sheets are vile, disgusting...

A good night's sleep, drifting off into dreamland buried under the comfort of a cosy quilt, is often seen as the key to unlocking a healthy life. Given the materials, this quilt could be teased out as simply frivolous and fanciful. Exquisitely beautiful but ticklish and irritating, it is the antithesis of comfort, rendering it nightmarish.

Molly Werner

OVER/UNDER 2020

polyester chiffon remnants, leftover project thread
370 x 150

Layered shapes of lightweight, transparent fabric is repurposed from multiple iterations of re-use to become a composition of its own. From manufacture to the roll, to the unrolling, cutting and hanging in space, to the packing away and eventual unpacking, to the ironing, sorting, tearing and discarding, the material embodies its own histories. The layered quilt evolves into a new textile, the superfluous object is transformed into something new, something worthy of being.

These leftover chiffon remnants were collected from the waste product of my work as a costume technician. They are the offcuts from the production of dancewear designed to use up some stock fabric, which was originally purchased for a stage set. In the future, this quilt will be re-purposed again to enact a continual regeneration of materials in space.



Photo: Molly Werner

A quilt is a cosy and comforting bed covering.

Padding, encased between layers of fabric, is kept in place by rows of stitching usually applied in a geometric or decorative pattern. 'Embedded' means to fix something **firmly and deeply** within a mass or material substrate: to envelope or enclose; incorporate or contain as an essential part or characteristic; insert, implant, assign or place. In the exhibition *Embedded 2020*, nine **women unpick and re-stitch** the meaning of the quilt to reveal their personal politics about the bed, and what embeds them in it – the quilt. They have been assigned a quilt space in which to insert their story **deeply and firmly**. The conversations around these quilts could become a bit hairy – fraught with difficulty. Some of the stories are whimsical, some are poignant and some are downright disconcerting, filled with discomfort, uncovering dark uncomfortable **secrets that have been tucked up** in the psyche for years.

EMBEDDED 2020

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FLUX GALLERY

King Street Arts Centre, Perth

e fluxgalleryperth@mail.com | [facebook/fluxgalleryperth/](https://facebook.com/fluxgalleryperth/)

Published by Sandra Murray

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Curator and Editor: Sandra Murray

Curatorial Intern: Aimee Dodds

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City of Perth

