

Huw Davies Gallery
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Canberra Re-seen

Peter Bailey, Andrea Bryant, Abby Ching, Annette Fisher, Susan Henderson, Tessa Ivison, Peter Larmour, Caroline Lemerle, Louise Maurer, Greg McAnulty, Yvette Perine, Brian Rope, Aditi Sargeant, Eva Schroeder, Sari Sutton, Beata Tworek, Grant Winkler

Canberra Re-Seen explores the idea of our city as a community of people, a built environment, and a physical landscape. Developed in collaboration with Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG), the project brought together sixteen artists to create new work responding to three of Canberra's landmark photographers – Marzena Wasikowska, Edward (Ted) Richards and Ian North – each featured in CMAG's current exhibition, Seeing Canberra.

Curated by Wouter Van de Voorde, Canberra Re-Seen selects and interweaves work from across this broader project, drawing together digital and darkroom works to generate a simultaneously affectionate and challenging look at our city and what it means to live here today.



Louise Maurer, *Weetangera II, 2021*. Inkjet print on cotton rag

Standing on shoulders – looking far

For a city inaugurated in the first years of the twentieth century, photography – the emergent and quickly dominant medium of the new age – was always going to be important in shaping the way Canberra was depicted and understood.

The camera was there to record the first flurry of official events on the dry open paddocks with the official parties in their stiff regalia and the great and good standing awkwardly in the blinding sunlight. In the late 1920's, the precise compositions taken on glass plate negatives by Mildenhall, carefully cropped out that wide view to focus on the first government offices, the gracious arches of the Sydney Building and the new plantings that started to give the nascent capital its form.

At the same time, Harold Cazneaux found simple drama in the high billowing clouds above the gentle rolling hills and printed them in subtle tones on silvery paper. From the late 1950s, Max Dupain's crisp architectural documentation, made usually on commission for the National Capital Development Commission, the Australian National University or the occasional corporate client, depicted a city of hard and confident surfaces with, very occasionally, a figure to indicate scale.

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By the early 1960s when it really came time to attract more people to come and make their lives in Canberra, commissioned photographic imagery switched to a dominance of smiling families in new suburban homes, lakeside picnics under a canopy of pink blossoms and bustling modern shopping centres with all modern conveniences.

But it was at this time too, that the independent eye of artists working with photography began to see Canberra in other ways. These kinds of works are a small but growing area within Canberra Museum and Gallery's collection, and some have been displayed within CMAG's Seeing Canberra exhibition curated by Virginia Rigney and Sita McAlpine (on display 8 March 2020 – 24 July 2021). This show presents four distinct chapters in the city's history to explore how artists have made work in response to this place.

The Canberra Re-Seen project developed as a partnership between PhotoAccess and Canberra Museum and Gallery as a way of using these collection works and the exhibition as a pathway for local practitioners to undertake their own process of reviewing and conceptualising how they see the city.

The project comprised three, four-week workshops: City of People, Secret Scenes and Ambivalent Landscapes, each focusing on the work of one of three artists – Marzena Wasikowska, Ted Richards and Ian North. Their practice has been the shoulders to stand on, to look further both inwardly and outward. Each series began in the gallery space itself, with the focus artists present and able to discuss their images with the insight of a resident of the city, particularly as each had produced their work as private, independent projects without the intervention of a commissioning agent. With the physical presence of the works on the walls, it was possible to consider scale, print quality, colour, tone and the differences in intention and effect between painting and photography of similar themes.

During the late 1960's, as the city seemed to double in size overnight, Ted Richards ran a busy camera shop and photographic business in Manuka. Outside of his regular work for media and the inevitable weddings and portraits, he took his medium format and 35mm cameras out and found extraordinary moments that were otherwise overlooked in conventional narratives of the developing capital.

At the workshop, Richards was able to tell the stories of those images; why a tree behind the Melbourne Building was garlanded with worn out bicycle tyres, how he came across a stoic older couple carting firewood on their bicycles through grounds of the university and the one-shot moment of finding a bird's eye view composition of a couple dancing within the grids and diagonals of the tiled basement floor of the newly opened Monaro Mall. With workshop leader Wouter Van der Voorde, Richards was able to walk the workshop participants through the streets of Civic and find each one of these original locations and discuss how being quietly alert to what is around you is a way to finding such images.

Ian North kept his Canberra Landscapes series made in 1981 from public view while he worked in a curatorial role in the Department of Photography in the early years of the National Gallery of Australia. With his rare access to the large scale new colour topographic work coming from Germany and from America, North refined his own way of making images of Canberra to show joyless and banal suburban streets under a cloudless blue bleached sky, seeing their empty perfection as monuments to the utopian experiments in urban planning for which Canberra was incessantly derided. North was able to participate in a Zoom session with students from his home in Adelaide and discuss these now forty-year-old images that look eerily contemporary. Led by local artist David Hempenstall, over the workshop period, the participants headed to Canberra's newest crop of suburbs and were able to bring sensitivity of future imagining and suburban dreaming to these landscapes.

Marzena Wasikowska began her series of family portraits in 2010 with Jess Danny and Mia in 2010 within the privacy of her own family's backyard. With its seats and shade, it was clearly a place of many happy gatherings of artists and friends, children, and family. The image's formal composition references Manet's famous painting *Le Déjeuner sur L'herbe* with the artist's then heavily pregnant daughter Jess, taking the character of the nude. Manet's shockingly ironic image becomes tenderly and perfectly natural in this new suburban context.

Wasikowska has continued her portrait series every year since, with recent COVID-19 restrictions bringing new challenges to placing each family member within the frame. She led a discussion about how her thinking has evolved to take these intimate portraits in the context of a particular place and the way that they can speak of their time as well as emotional relationships between the subjects and herself as artist. Over the weeks of the workshop Wasikowska worked with participants to encourage this kind of depth of thinking and to challenge the dominance of landscape that has largely prevailed in image making of Canberra. The participants became so involved in this process that they requested the workshop be extended by another 4 weeks.

In this unusual period of limited opportunities for travel, this workshop series seems to have come at the right time. The participants produced a striking array of works, with a selection of their total portfolios curated by Wouter Van de Voorde to create the Canberra Re-Seen exhibition. Propelled by the rigor of the process undertaken over the past months, together, these works reflect a new level diversity of perspectives and offer a deeper consideration of relationship to the place that is both National Capital and home.

Virginia Rigney

Virginia Rigney is a Curator, writer and creative producer. Born in Canberra, like many of her generation she left the city after her education and worked in a range of museums and galleries in Australia and the UK. She returned to Canberra in 2018 to work as Senior Curator at CMAG.

Artists' Statements

Andrea Bryant

Since the beginning of 2020, and as a result of the COVID restrictions, my photography has focussed more closely on my local environment and neighbourhood. The series of images I have been working on are portraits of my neighbours and other local community members. This image is of my long-term neighbour, Maria Staykova, a strong and feisty woman.

Maria was born in Bulgaria, in Plovdiv, one of the ten oldest continuously inhabited cities of the world. She emigrated to Australia many years ago, at the invitation of the Neurosciences Research Unit in the ACT. An internationally recognised scientist, she is a Visiting Fellow at the John Curtin School of Medical Research, Australian National University.

Her Bulgarian heritage continues to play a very important role in Maria's cultural life. In Maria's words: 'My home, my work, my loved one and friends are in Canberra. In Bulgaria are graves and my youth. A heart on two continents.' My interpretation of 'Canberra Unseen' is to reflect the underlying multicultural elements of our city, and people's ongoing connections to their homelands and heritage.

Abby Ching

In response to Ted Richard's work, the photos captured people in various scenes in the present 2021 living in Canberra. The photos are responding not only through street photography but also through experimenting with similar style to Richard's work displayed in CMAG's exhibition 'Seeing Canberra'.

Annette Fisher

The visual influence of Edward (Ted) Richards, *Dancing in the Mall* led to me looking for the impact of line and shape on an image and an appreciation of the placement of the figures within the frame. I like the relationship between the figures, the black and white and art deco type design. The tree with the postman's bike tires is balanced visually and is quirky. I am now more thoughtful about the relationship between the city and the figure. Meeting Ted and hearing him talk about his photography added to the overall affect of the course.

Susan Henderson

The name Canberra is derived from an Ngunnawal word for "meeting place". Meeting place seems appropriate when it comes to the workshops Marzena Wasikowska tutored and when viewing and discussing the photographs created by the group. These photographs are a personal response to Re-seeing Canberra; they record a favourite family destination, enjoyed over decades and by generations. The Cotter, once again thronging with Canberrans, seeing and re-seeing this ancient and treasured meeting place,

Crossing the Cotter - Two of my children and their children - five of my granddaughters - met at the Cotter Reserve, as their parents had decades ago, and as the Ngunnawal people have probably done for thousands of years. Here they are crossing the River, exploring - the girls' dresses bring vibrant contrast to the green of river trees and coolness of the water. My oldest granddaughter is not much older than I was when I first came to Canberra - memories come flooding back.

Cotter Picnic - John takes a moment to himself after a family gathering at the Cotter - remembering other family gatherings there, re-seeing the Cotter after the devastating fire of 2003 - when this favourite gathering place was razed - and seeing how nature has recovered her composure.

Peter Lamour

Ian North's famous Canberra suite was photographed in 1980-1. It echoed American work in the New Topographics Exhibition of 1975: large, flat, and casual about what was excluded and included at the edges. It was open to colour (though there was only one colour photo in the original exhibition). It often took pictures of working class life. Lee Grant's *Belco Pride 2012* was a later Canberra equivalent. Modernism favoured flatness, but I took some 3D images of landscapes rendered as anaglyphs. They could be viewed with red and cyan glasses, but sharing glasses is risky in the pandemic. The stereo effect attenuates with distance. There was a moment at which the setting sun illuminated buildings far down in the valley, including the NGA building where North had worked at the time.

Caroline Lemerle

The demographics and landscape of Braddon have changed dramatically over the past decade. The old industrial façade has been replaced, and the streetscape is now dominated by millennials living in 'architectural' apartments and dining on buzzing street cuisine. These images, taken over 20 minutes, capture the diversity of humanity residing/working in Braddon today.

Throsby, a new suburb in north Canberra, exemplifies the ambivalence of urban development in the ACT. The tension is palpable, between people's lifestyle dreams and the commercial realities of 'quick' house building and a developer's need to 'make a buck'. These images illustrate the conundrum of large scale housing development, with both beauty and ugliness present concurrently. And not much has changed since North made his pictures of Canberra's urban development decades ago!

Louise Maurer

Weetangera, like many suburbs of Canberra, is in a state of change due to rapid infill. Developers fall over themselves to acquire the houses for sale in areas classified RZ2, driving the price beyond the dream of aspiring young families. They often knock on the door of adjacent properties to inquire if the owner wants to sell. While infill is necessary to accommodate a growing population and slow the expansion of the capital city of Australia into an amorphous array of look alike suburbs, ever encroaching on the remaining vegetation and grassland, there seems to be little control or vision in the resulting array of fence to fence, brown and black clad units replacing gardens and houses.

My composite Weetangera II speaks to the importance of diminishing green spaces and native ecosystems in every street. It also speaks for the people of all generations who tirelessly maintain them in the face of pending obliteration. Devoid of a vision for the future, the Garden City is becoming a thing of the past.

Greg McAnulty

Under the professional and experienced guidance of Marzena Wasikowska in workshops designed around a theme of Canberra Re-seen I was excited to explore the Canberra Re-seen concept. An Italian friend of mine and four generations of his family get together to continue an age old Italian tradition of making pasta sauce. This was well timed and I felt it fitted the workshop theme in as much as it highlights activities in Canberra that reflect culture and traditions of migrant Australians and helps us to see our environment and Canberra neighbourhood in a broader light. As I said this photo represents 4 generations of an Italian / Canberra family carrying on a tradition from Italy of getting together (annually) and spending the day making pasta sauce. At the end of the process there is a feast of Italian pasta dishes for the entire family using the newly created sauces. The sauce is then shared with family and friends.

Yvette Perine

My mum was always curious about the neighbours. She would stand on her tip-toes to peer over the fence...any fence... and would be indignant if any of the neighbours' complained.

For Mum was drawn to the shapes and colours of their everyday lives (there was an element of nosiness there, too), and like the photographer Ian North saw on his walks home from buying milk, there was beauty in those seemingly mundane bricks and roofs.

I, too, am drawn to those bricks and roofs, but my fascination is in the transitions between a place. I like to document how the landscape is carved out into roads and allotments and very carefully designed spaces to the documentation of the necessities of life now left behind to rot in the landscape.

Brian Rope

My approach was to make portraits in different styles to anything I had previously done. If I were to Re-see people of Canberra, I thought that using a different approach (for me) was a way to do it. Instead of seeking to make traditional portraits concentrating on faces, I looked for groups of people interacting with each other whilst out and about in a variety of places - private home gardens, indoor venues, public spaces. I sought images that revealed something of those people from their interactions. Rather than simply show what the subjects look like, I was exploring elements that would provide viewers with facts or clues about each person's characteristics - what are they interested in, how do they live these parts of their lives. Along the way I photographed individuals and some couples as well, because I saw opportunities. I also tried other approaches, including smart phone selfies so beloved of young folk and the creation of composites.

Keeping Clear shows two people who walked in front of my camera and settled down before an emergency exit. It suggest to me that, at that point in time at least, they were simply focussed on what they wanted to do - possibly revealing something of their characters.

Braddon Nightlife - a composite combining opposite sides of someone using a smart phone near a queue to a popular night-time venue. It suggest to me that she is interested in such venues, in dressing up for a night out and in keeping in contact with at least one other person.

Aditi Sargeant

Ted Richards' work for me is representative of a classic kind of Canberra. One that reminds me of being outside and walking through the city on crisp Canberra days. The photos I've taken and chosen for this exhibition are sort of an homage to Ted's work. I've tried to combine his passion for capturing a moment as it's happening, with my love for photographing people.

Pictured are photographers, finding ways of seeing through the work of Ted Richards. And with that, I have done the same. I connected with Ted's way of seeing the world of photography as the opportunity to capture moments in time that will only ever happen once. For me, photography has always been about holding memories in your hands.

Eva Schroeder

Having been born and bred in Canberra, I find myself passionate about the city, its culture, its people, and the ease of living here. I have also seen enormous changes over the years - from the ultra-conservative city of the past to the diverse Canberra of today. Whilst workshoping for this exhibition, I found myself wanting to express the metamorphosis of Canberra without using the traditional scenes and symbols associated with the city. During my research I discovered that approximately 2-4% of Canberra's community identify as Trans and over the past few years the ACT has led the nation in breaking down barriers for gender diverse people. As a result, Canberra as a community, has diversified, and transitioned from one state or condition into another - a total metamorphosis.

Imagine being born as one gender but having an internal sense that your identity is the exact opposite of your outward appearance.

This is 31-year-old Norgaria, an introverted trans-woman, who upon discovering the prohibitive cost of changing her gender presentation decided to find an alternative creative route with which to reveal her real self. Using prosthetics, wigs, makeup, and costumes, Norgaria decided to enter the world of Cosplay - the acceptable Japanese practice of dressing up as a character from a book, comic or film. In this instance, Norgaria chose a character from the world of Anime.

To me, Norgaria represents metamorphosis and a Canberra Re-Seen.

Hair and Makeup Artist - Sumitra Joshi

Beata Tworek

My series of photographic collages responds to the legacy of Ian North's Canberra Suite 1980-1981 and extends his vision of new/developing urban landscapes of Canberra. I reversed North's innovative, seemingly optimistic yet haunted colour treatment of deserted streetscapes and went back to austere, monochromatic representations reflecting my intensely felt disdain for these urban topographies. I re-imagined these landscapes as dismal, bleak, sectioned, architectural fragments; as non-habitable landscape forms denying any individuality or creative merit. This disturbing manifestation of Canberra re-seen finds its only creativity in manipulating finite number of ready-made Lego-like elements, hiding all that reflects individual, non-conforming, emotional or spontaneous. This vision develops the underlying, disturbing tones of Canberra Suite 1980-81, as well as re-working its formal, photographic form to its dystopian limits creating a truly ambivalent landscape.

Grant Winkler

Canberra is often referred to as the Bush Capital but as the city grows and suburban creep extends, the bush disappears to be replaced by monumental dwellings that sit heavily on the earth and what is left of nature is moulded and manicured and is not particularly natural anymore.

There is a uniformity and conformity in design and materials that is imposed by regulation, but which would occur anyway because my belief is that the inhabitants prefer to fit in, not to stand out.

For me, the aspect of the Canberra suburban landscape that stands out is the absence of people from it. The signs of them are everywhere: parked cars, washing on lines, bin lids that don't quite close. There is building apparatus and materials in front of partially completed structures and empty blocks have their modesty protected by haphazard wire fencing with signs pro-claiming the transfiguration that is coming any time now. Not quite like the angel appearing to Mary but running a close second.

I also prefer it when there are no people. There is an odd kind of purity in the emptiness and the silence. This is finally what I respond to and why I photo-graph these spaces.

List of Works

10	Caroline Lemerle, <i>Braddon @ 6.35pm – 6.55pm !!</i> , 2021, Inkjet print, 594 x 420 mm	NFS
11	Grant Winkler, <i>That Sinking Feeling</i> , 2021, Inkjet print, 487 x 330 mm	NFS
12	Sari Sutton, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Inkjet print, 450 x 300 mm,	NFS
13	Annette Fisher, <i>4 Abstracts from Canberra Re-seen</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin prints, 200 x 250 mm, edition 1 of 2	\$250
14	Andrea Bryant, <i>Maria</i> , 2021, 2021, Inkjet fine art print, 500 x 700 mm, edition 1 of 5	\$150
15	Tessa Ivison, <i>Canberra Pastoral #1</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 254 x 203 mm	NFS
16	Tessa Ivison, <i>Canberra Pastoral #2</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 254 x 203 mm	NFS
17	Tessa Ivison, <i>Canberra Pastoral #3</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 254 x 203 mm	NFS
18	Susan Henderson, <i>Cotter Picnic</i> , 2021, Archival inkjet print, 180 x 130 mm	\$120
19	Aditi Sargeant, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 200 x 250 mm	NFS
20	Beata Tworek, <i>Ambivalent Collages</i> , 2021, C-print, various sizes, edition 1 of 5	\$300
21	Eva Schroeder, <i>Metamorphosis</i> , 2021, Archival print on hahnemuhle photo rag, 1200 x 600 mm, edition 1 of 5	\$390
22	Louise Maurer, <i>Weetangera II</i> , 2021, Inkjet print on cotton rag, 523 x 500 mm	NFS
23	Annette Fisher, <i>The Woman on Telstra Tower</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 200 x 250 mm, edition 1 of 2	\$185
24	Annette Fisher, <i>Peter</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 200 x 250 mm, edition 1 of 2	NFS
25	Susan Henderson, <i>Crossing the Cotter</i> , 2021, Archival inkjet print, 600 x 420 mm, edition 1 of 10	\$450
26	Brian Rope, <i>Braddon Nightlife</i> , 2021, Inkjet print on ilford galerie prestige gold fibre, 329 x 483	\$200
27	Abby Ching, <i>Lonsdale Roaster</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 203 x 254 mm edition 1 of 3	NFS
28	Abby Ching, <i>Woden Library</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 203 x 254 mm, edition 1 of 3	NFS
29	Peter Bailey, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 200 x 250 mm	NFS
30	Peter Bailey, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 200 x 250 mm,	NFS
31	Abby Ching, <i>Street Crossing</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 203 x 254 mm, edition 1 of 3	NFS
32	Caroline Lemerle, <i>Throsby Dream House</i> , 2021, Canson platine fibre rag, 420 x 297 mm	NFS
33	Caroline Lemerle, <i>Throsby At Play</i> , 2021, Canson platine fibre rag, 420 x 297 mm	NFS
34	Greg McNulty, <i>Pasta Making Day</i> , 2021, Inkjet print, 290 x 200 mm	NFS
35	Peter Bailey, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 250 x 200 mm	NFS
36	Aditi Sargeant, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 250 x 200 mm	NFS
37	Sari Sutton, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 250 x 200 mm	NFS
38	Peter Lamour, <i>Southern Anaglyph</i> , 2021, Dye sublimation on aluminium, 420 x 297 mm	NFS
39	Brian Rope, <i>Keeping Clear</i> , 2021, Inkjet print on kodak premium gloss, 210 x 210mm	\$150
40	Sari Sutton, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 300 x 400 mm	NFS
41	Yvette Perine, <i>Whitlam</i> , 2021, Inkjet print, 420 x 300 mm	NFS
42	Yvette Perine, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Inkjet print, 420 x 300 mm	NFS
43	Sari Sutton, <i>Untitled</i> , 2021, Silver gelatin print, 300 x 400 mm	NFS

More Online

Visit www.gallery.photoaccess.org.au to explore *Canberra Re-seen* online, including extra works not in the gallery.