

# art et al.



An inclusive, curated international art platform that commissions and presents collaborations between artists from supported studios, artist peers and arts professionals. We elevate diverse voices and creative practices.

[artetal.org](https://artetal.org)



# Peer / Peer

*Through Peer to Peer, we commission new artwork created by two artists internationally, with one artist working from a supported studio. Over several months, the artists have conversations over zoom or through shared video content, with the creative output taking any form, and in any medium or scale.*

## Matt Robertson × John Powell-Jones

In 2021/22 Matt Robertson from the ArtGusto studio in Geelong Australia, met over zoom with John Powell-Jones in Manchester, in the UK. Both with a fascination of character creation and storytelling, and also wanting to share real-life emotions and events, the story boarding began.



### Two Worlds

Introducing you to Mhought and Flaze created by Matt Robertson, and Atomur, created by John Powell-Jones. The characters decided to go across into each other's worlds to see what might happen. Across two separate story lines we get an insight into the minds of two incredible illustrators with their own unique styles, both telling stories of developing trust and overcoming anxieties. Art et al. co-founder Jennifer, interviews the artists to learn a little more – the full interview is on the Art et. al website.

Jennifer Gilbert: Can you tell us a little about the work you have produced during the collaboration?

Matt Robertson: It was a way to show off my world and different sceneries and seasons. A way to introduce new friends into the world of my characters, and to introduce my work to people who don't know me or haven't seen my work before.

It was a story of bringing two worlds together. By introducing our characters to each other's worlds, and bringing them out of their comfort zones. The characters realise they weren't all that different from each other and that they could learn from each other.

John Powell-Jones: During the time together we developed a collaborative story in which existing characters of ours crossed over into each others worlds. Each week as Matt and I got to know each other better so did the characters. Each week we would individually draw our characters, the environments they inhabited, and ask questions. These separate elements were then digitally compiled to make comic book/story board pages.

JG: If you could describe the other artist's work in three words, what would you say?

MR: Horror, bizarre, insightful... in that order.

JPJ: Absorbing, detailed, thoughtful.

JG: How have you found the project and what were your favourite parts?

MR: I found it engaging and it brought together two continents. It came at the right time for me. It gave me my mojo back and helped me to be creative.

JPJ: I've found the project really positive, I feel that Matt and I immediately struck up a great rapport, and it was a very easy process to share and develop ideas between us. My favourite part of the project has been getting to know Matt and Sharon (the facilitator from ArtGusto in Australia) and seeing how the work developed each week. The process of collaborative storytelling made it really exciting to see what would develop week by week.

### MATT ROBERTSON / AUSTRALIA

Being a true artist Matt Robertson is always thinking of his art and what he is going to create next. He brings characters to life on paper, that have evolved through his imagination. His narratives are quirky and he delights audiences with his instinctual use of colour. He has attended the ArtGusto studio in Geelong since 2015. Robertson has had his work featured in several group exhibitions, including at The Geelong Gallery, Deakin Waterfront Gallery and in Federation Square in Melbourne.

### JOHN POWELL-JONES / UK

John Powell-Jones is a Manchester based artist whose practice deals with themes of perception, power structures and personal reality, in an on-going study into how the warped western view on progress and success acts to inform our perception of morality. These ideas are explored through the use of speculative fiction played out through video, performance and installation. Recent exhibitions include: a solo show at Castlefield Gallery, Manchester (2021) and a solo show at IMT Gallery, London (2021).



LEFT: John Powell-Jones' world, digitally manipulated with all the characters and part of the story added in.

RIGHT: Matt Robertson's world, digitally manipulated with all the characters and part of the story added in.



# Holly Stevenson × Georgia Szmerling

In 2021/22, Georgia Szmerling from Arts Project Australia in Melbourne, and British artist Holly Stevenson delved into their shared interest in flora and fauna. Notebooks, collages, and textures were sent to each other overseas to inspire the creation of new ceramic works.



## The Power of Making

Holly Stevenson speaks of her collaboration with Georgia Szmerling

I had never been to Australia. As children my brother and I dug a huge hole in the lawn in an attempt to get to the other side of the world. The exchanges between Georgia and myself have come to represent a journey, one that I have long desired to take. My interest in Australia originally came from having seen a koala and indeed I am sad to say in those days souvenir koalas were made from real koala fur and I was given one as a present, I loved it! This intense interest in flora and fauna became the communal focus of our collaboration because we swiftly recognised that Georgia and I both took great inspiration from the nature of things.

Australia and England we know are very different. Georgia was always dressed in beautiful floral summer outfits, sending me videos of her baking hot studio and a sketchbook of images from the rainforest. In exchange I sent her videos of freezing cold duck ponds, icy images of the Thames, and soggy oak leaves, from beneath my woollen pink hat. We both love the colour pink, I am excited to see our works together, to see how our thoughts about glazing and colour have materialised.

As you will see our collaboration has yielded amongst many things ceramic birds, a form that I may never have made had it not been for Georgia's influence. Importantly this collaboration has given me the opportunity to think about what Georgia sees as an Australian artist: the joys of her nearby Merri Creek, her walk to work compared to mine, what it means to consider the animal as a ceramic form, and what the power of making can do for us all.

## Trying Something New

Georgia Szmerling chats with Art et al. co-founder Sim Luttin about her collaboration with Holly Stevenson

**Sim Luttin:** Before we have a chat about the Peer/Peer project, I just wanted to know what it means to you to be an artist and work at Arts Project Australia.

**Georgia Szmerling:** It means I am doing something I enjoy that I am good at. I get to share my work with other people, and I hope that they like it. It's good to get the support from staff at APA to make art and to work with friends in a safe space. Working in a safe space means the world to me.

**SL:** Describe was it like working with Holly Stevenson, an international artist?

**GS:** Working with Holly was different but interesting. It was good to get to know someone from England, who had the same interests as me. It was interesting to get to know someone else and see what was in Holly's environment; like the scenery on the way to her studio. It was nice to see the work Holly made that came out of her kiln and for her to share the work with me. I shared my work too.

Also the book that Holly sent over for me, that (APA staff artist) Marcel showed me of Holly's writing and pictures of her environment. I liked using the book and the things she sent over to me. That was really enjoyable.

**SL:** What was the Peer/Peer process like?

**GS:** It was good, but the time zone was hard. It would have been good to talk on zoom or the phone but the times were too tricky. But it was a good experience to work with someone on the other side of the world, even if it was on email and packages were sent in the post. It would be good if Holly could come to the studio here in Melbourne and catch up face to face and see where I work.

**SL:** What was your favourite thing about working on this project?

**GS:** I liked trying new glazes that Holly suggested. It was good to see what Holly does and see her ideas. It would be nice to hear from Holly again and work on another collaboration. It would be nice to see her in person.

**SL:** If you had the chance to talk to an artist, who is thinking of working on a collaboration like the one you have done with Holly, what advice would you give them?

**GS:** It's a good experience to try something new and to work with someone else. I'd say, take the opportunity when you get the chance and meet new people. Let other artists and people overseas know who you are.

**SL:** Who do you hope will get to see your collaborative artwork?

**GS:** I hope other artists and people who live in England see the work. I hope Holly likes it and artists from other supported studios like APA in England like it. Are there other studios like ours over there?

**SL:** There sure are.

**GS:** Also people in school and other people who live in the UK get to see it and like my work.

**SL:** Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience?

**GS:** If it wasn't Covid, it would be good for Holly to come to APA and see the studio, or for me to go to her studio in England and see how she works. I wouldn't go on my own, but if I had the support I'd love to see her studio.

## HOLLY STEVENSON / UK

Holly Stevenson is an artist working predominantly in clay and at the centre of her practice is an ongoing sculptural ceramic project neatly titled *Sigmund Freud's Ashtray*. Stevenson graduated from Chelsea College of Art and Design Fine Art MA in 2011 with the generous help of the Stanley Picker Foundation. Recently her work has been exhibited in *CERAMICS: THE CENTRAL CORE, Part II*, Richard Saltoun Gallery (2021), *Reading Between the Lines* (2021) a solo show at Sid Motion Gallery. She is currently installing her first outdoor public work, *Another Mother*, commissioned by the CoLAB, for The Artist's Garden.

## GEORGIA SZMERLING / AUSTRALIA

Georgia Szmerling is a multi-disciplinary artist working in painting, drawing, and ceramics, with a penchant for studying and reinterpreting the natural world. Rich in texture and highly expressive, her abstract plant and water formations revel in expressive movement through her application of colour, line and form. Szmerling has worked at Arts Project since 2003 and held her first solo exhibition in 2005. She has featured in numerous group exhibitions in Australia and internationally, including Spring 1883 and Melbourne Art Fair. Her work is held in private collections throughout Australia.



LEFT: Holly Stevenson  
*With Gratitude* 2021  
ceramic, glazed stoneware  
28 × 25 × 23 cm  
Courtesy the artist

ABOVE: Georgia Szmerling  
*Untitled* 2022  
glazed earthenware  
1 × 27 × 27.5 cm  
Courtesy the artist and Arts  
Project Australia, Melbourne



## Writing + Reviews

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*Commissioning distinguished writers to explore the work and narratives of artists from supported studios, and to contextualise their work within international art conversations.*

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JENNIFER HIGGIE

### *Life Work.* The art of Mathew Calandra, Matthew Clarke and Lisa Reid



In 2021, Matthew Clarke painted a portrait of a fellow artist and friend. Titled *Del Kathryn Barton is a Good Listener*, it was one of only 52 artworks out of 1,500 to be selected for the 2021 Archibald Prize. It's clear why the life-size painting made the cut.

Its personality, bold colours and vibrant lines leap off the canvas. Clarke – whose work recalls the intense energy of expressionist painters such as Jean-Michel Basquiat and David Larwill – depicted the artist's blue eyes as bright beacons of hope; she faintly smiles beneath her elaborate hairdo, which adorns her head like a trophy. The room she's in is as lively as her blocky purple, green and yellow pyjama suit. It's a picture that radiates joy and friendship – and it's a welcome counterpoint to one of the toughest years the planet has experienced. That Del Barton has twice won the Archibald gives Clarke's portrait a neat symmetry: the painter paints the painter.

Clarke met Del Barton on Instagram, where he avidly documents his work in progress. At the time of writing, in early August 2021, Clarke has just posted a photograph with his latest painting: *Lost in Sydney with Matthew Clarke*. (Many of his intriguing titles function like short stories). The artist portrays himself gazing directly out at us: his face is a blazing pink, his clothes green, purple and blue. He's surrounded by the sunny exuberance of Sydney Harbour; the famous bridge arcs behind him like a crown. He gestures with his right hand; by his left, a giant, orange-crested parrot gazes out to sea. Despite the title, it's a composition that seems less about the anxiety of getting lost than the excitement of discovering a city you don't know.

Clarke describes himself as 'an action-style painter' who wants to express 'my happiness to people'. Inspired by his daily life, travel, his friends, family and animals, his paintings, which seem to glow with an inner radiance, often recall intricate mosaics and stained-glass windows. Clarke has also painted inner-city murals and a Melbourne tram and created sculptures: recent ones include a flamboyant cat on its hind legs, that appears to be dancing a little jig and a house that seems to be morphing into a human: it has eyes like windows and has sprouted arms.

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*Inspired by his daily life, travel, his friends, family and animals, his paintings, which seem to glow with an inner radiance, often recall intricate mosaics and stained-glass windows.*



OPPOSITE:  
Matthew Clarke  
*Del Kathryn Barton is  
a good listener* 2021  
acrylic on canvas  
Courtesy of the artist

BELOW LEFT:  
Mathew Calandra,  
*Chicken Lady (Emily)* 2017  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Studio A, Sydney

BELOW RIGHT: Lisa Reid  
*Self Portrait of Me Wearing  
My Best Dress* 2017  
colour and greylead pencil on paper  
Courtesy the artist and Arts  
Project Australia, Melbourne



*While his work is deeply engaged with the contemporary moment, it also nods to expressionist artists from the past such as Egon Schiele and John Brack.*

The work of Mathew Calandra also focuses on the human figure, and he too creates a range of intensely animated images via meticulous patterning. However, his palette is earthier and his use of line more delicate; as with a new portrait of the writer James Baldwin, he often builds a face from a web of meandering lines. While his work is deeply engaged with the contemporary moment, it also nods to expressionist artists from the past such as Egon Schiele and John Brack. *Chicken and Lady (Emily)*, for example, is a portrait of a woman against a dusty, drought-like background. The deep red of her blouse vibrates under her pale blue wrap, animating the exotic, jewel-like chicken she holds close. She looks directly at us; her mouth is slightly open, as if she's about to smile; her face is formed of a series of flat planes – she seems weathered and wise. In another beautiful untitled picture, a cluster of small white wildflowers, outlined in red, float above the ochre-and-blue landscape. Deep blue-green gum leaves shimmer with minuscule dots;

small, brilliant red flowers beat at the heart of the image. It's like an ode to the ever-shifting beauty of the natural world.

I wrote to Mathew and asked him what inspires him. His answer attests to the scope of his sources: 'Friends, ancient Egypt, Harrison Ford, Nightmare on Elm Street, my Mum – she is so sweet and kind – my new cat Angel, also caramel slice. Also, old stories and myths like the *Never-Ending Story* and the ouroboros.'

A variety of characters – from her family to celebrities and sportsmen and women – also populates Lisa Reid's imaginative world. Working across a range of media – from intricately detailed ceramics and atmospheric prints and paintings to economical drawings and an autobiographical digital animation – Reid finds inspiration in her environment, her family, photo albums and magazines. Whether employing a monochromatic palette or an explosion of colour, she moves fluently between macro and micro-observations: from the design of a man's suit or a young girl's jumper to the weave of a tennis net and the expressions on a dog's face. Often working from photographs, some of her pictures are labour intensive and takes months to complete.

Reid's talent for observation is acute. In her swift, unflinching drawings, she creates sparse, minutely detailed portraits,

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*Their discipline, enthusiasm and restless experimentation is a testament to the potential of the imagination to not only respond to the minutiae of our lives – but to delight in the infinite possibilities contained within a pencil, a pot of paint, a lump of clay, or a video camera.*



which bring the sitter to life: the hair on a man's chest recalls the scales of fish; a girl has turned her head and her eyelashes flutter like a bird's wing; a smiling woman sits on a rug and glances to the side, as if she's glimpsed a friend. Many of her ceramic works echo Pop Art's celebrations of mass culture. She's conjured a series of marvellously realistic objects from clay: a glossy black zero Coke can with a straw, a box of battered fish and chips, a cash register – complete with notes and change – and a pair of fancy shoes.

Her paintings often focus on the pleasure she takes in her community, be it picnics, car journeys or playing sport – Reid speaks from experience, as she's a gifted swimmer who has been a finalist in the Special Olympics.

Although they each approach their subjects with great originality, collectively, the skill and wit of Clark, Calandra and Reid's wonderfully vivid work is an important contribution to the development of figurative art in Australia and internationally. Their discipline, enthusiasm and restless experimentation is a testament to the potential of the imagination to not only respond to the minutiae of our lives – but to delight in the infinite possibilities contained within a pencil, a pot of paint, a lump of clay, or a video camera.



# What is Art et al.?

*Art et al. exists to create an open, diverse, and inclusive contemporary art world. The team has invested resources to help ensure that the content on the website is clear, concise, and appeals to a wide range of people. As such, we have created a mind map, to demonstrate who we work with, the projects we commission, and how our projects and the people we work with are linked.*





# Digital Curation

*Curating Collections with  
Billy Mann & Monash University  
Museum of Art | MUMA*



## *Australian Memoir*

Curating Collections commissions artists working from supported studios to curate projects with artworks from an established collection. Art et al.'s second iteration was a collaboration between artist Billy Mann and the Monash University Museum of Art | MUMA.

Billy Mann has been at Submit to Love Studios in London for nine years, following a brain injury that cut short his career as a magazine journalist. The Monash University Collection includes a diverse range of media from painting, sculpture and photography to video, installation and new media. Known for its adventurousness and commitment to contemporary art as it develops, the Collection is recognised nationally for its currency, depth and diversity.

Through zoom discussions and digital access to the Monash University Collection, Mann selected 24 works by artists such as Yikartu Bumba, Teelah George and Richard Larter. Titled *Australian Memoir*, he also wrote a text documenting his three week journey across Australia in 1997, sharing how the images he has selected reminded him of memories and scenes from the trip. Art et al. has produced an online exhibition and catalogue for this.



ABOVE: *Australian Memoir*  
Curator, Billy Mann working  
from the Submit to Love Studios.  
Photo courtesy Headway  
East London.

Teelah George, *A Clearing,  
a Periphery* 2019, Thread, linen  
and bronze, 105 x 100cm,  
Monash University Collection,  
Melbourne Purchased by the  
Monash Business School 2019  
© Teelah George

# #Monday Muse

*An open call to neurodiverse  
artists, presenting themed  
artwork on social media*

Every Monday, Art et al. features a new artwork on our social media that has been submitted by an artist under the title #MondayMuse. We have a theme that changes very two months, so be sure to check our website or social media to see what the current theme is and the deadline it will change. In 2021 we promoted 30 artists through this platform to our audience of 1600+ followers.

How to get involved:

Are you an artist that identifies as neurodivergent, intellectually or learning disabled? Would you like to email us your work for a themed open call?

If you need help, please ask someone you know for support, or email us and we will attempt to help you.

- You can submit under the bi-monthly theme, in any medium that you, or the artists you support, work in – be that drawing, painting, ceramic, textile, and so on.

- To be considered, submit the information requested in the online form on our website or by emailing [info@artetal.org](mailto:info@artetal.org).

- There is no guarantee your artwork will be selected and shown online, however, we will share as many as possible.

- If you run a group and want to submit several works on behalf of artists for a group, please pop the images into an email with all the relevant information that we are requesting on the website.

- We will close submissions once we have reached capacity for that theme and it will be noted on our website too.

We greatly appreciate you taking the time to submit your work for consideration.



# Exhibitions & Events

*Commissioned projects  
presented in the  
UK & Australia*



## *Art et al. x Cromwell Place: Season One*

Art et al. is proud to announce its first UK exhibition, *Season One* at Cromwell Place, London. The exhibition is supported by and presented as part of the UK/Australia Season 2021–22, a joint initiative from the British Council and the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *Season One* will highlight several international commissions, collaborations, and artists featured during our first year of programming.

In line with Art et al.'s ethos of championing a more neurodiverse contemporary art world, *Season One* will exhibit neurodivergent, intellectually and learning-disabled artists, alongside their non-disabled peers. A focus of the exhibition will be the work produced during five Peer/Peer collaborations – digital residencies pairing international artists with and without disabilities. Artists discussed in our commissioned published texts, including in essays by Jennifer Higgie, Francesca Gavin, and Katrina Schwarz, will also be featured.

Celebrating the diversity of cultures in both countries, British and Australian exhibiting artists will include David James (Venture Arts), Alasdair McLuckie, Thom Roberts (Studio A), Cherelle Sappleton, Holly Stevenson, Sandra Lott (Submit to Love Studios), Emily Ferretti, Georgia Szmerning (Arts Project Australia), Alan Constable (Arts Project Australia), Andrew Omoding (ActionSpace), Nnena Kalu (ActionSpace), Barry Anthony Finan (Venture Arts), Matt Robertson (ArtGusto), and John Powell-Jones.

Art et al. will host a workshop for visitors on Saturday 19 March exploring the UK/Australia Season 2021–22 theme of *Who Are We Now?*. Visitors will get the chance to create a page, in a variety of materials, to feature in a zine that will be produced and shared online following the exhibition. We will also host a panel discussion with artists and curators who participated in our first year of programming, on the final day of the exhibition, Sunday 27 March, from 2–3pm.

16–27 March 2022  
VIP Opening 22 March,  
5–7pm, Cromwell Place  
4 Cromwell Place,  
London, SW7 2JE

ABOVE: Andrew Omoding,  
*Small Door Underneath*,  
2021. Courtesy of the artist  
and ActionSpace, London.





COVER: Matt Robertson's characters stepping foot into the world of John Powell-Jones characters for Peer / Peer 04

BELOW: Paul Hodges, *The Royal*, 2020. Courtesy Arts Project Australia and the artist.

## Creating an open, diverse, & inclusive contemporary art world

In 2020, founding partners, identified a need for more inclusive programming and access in the contemporary arts for neurodivergent, intellectually, and learning disabled artists to be seen, heard, and participate.

Art et al. was conceived and developed by Arts Project Australia (curator Sim Luttin), Slominski Projects (curator Lisa Slominski) and Jennifer Lauren Gallery (curator Jennifer Gilbert) in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts. The project is funded through arts funding from the Australia Council, DFAT through their Australian Cultural Diplomacy Grants Program (ACDGP), British Council AU/UK Season 2021–22, and the Aesop Foundation.

### Advisory Groups

Art et al. is shaped by Australian and UK advisory groups of artists who self-identify as neurodivergent, and intellectually or learning disabled. They provide essential feedback for the intercultural growth of the platform.

The Australian advisory group consists of emerging and mid-career artists from 'The Northcote Penguins' at Arts Project Australia. Artists include Amani Tia, Monica Lazzari, Christian Hansen, Mark Smith, Jordan Dymke, Michael Camakaris, and Lachlan Turk.

The UK advisory group consists of three artists from across the UK: neurodivergent artist Sonia Boué, Billy Mann who attends Submit to Love Studio in London, and Stacey Fish who attends Artists First in Bristol.

### Founding Partners

#### Arts Project Australia / Australia

Arts Project Australia is an internationally renowned social enterprise that supports artists with intellectual disabilities through its studio and gallery, promoting artists and advocating for their inclusion in contemporary art practice.

#### Slominski Projects / United Kingdom

Slominski Projects is a leading international curatorial platform and consultancy collaborating with significant private collections, institutions, supported studios, and archives with an interest in neurodiversity and self-taught practices in a contemporary art context.

#### Jennifer Lauren Gallery / United Kingdom

Jennifer Lauren Gallery is a highly respected UK-based gallery that champions, exhibits and shares voices from international self-taught, disabled and overlooked artists who create works outside the mainstream art world and art history.

### Thanks to

Katrina Schwarz  
Curatorial advisor, international

Liz Cox, [www.studiomono.co](http://www.studiomono.co)  
Branding & design

Artists, writers, supported studios, staff, board members and funders who have supported Art et al.

**ARTS  
PROJECT  
AUSTRALIA**

slominski  
projects

**JENNIFER LAUREN**  
GALLERY



the Aesop Foundation

C R O M W E L L  
P L A C E

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



Downloadable  
Easy Reads  
available on the  
website and at  
each exhibition.



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[www.artetal.org](http://www.artetal.org)