A fascinating exhibition showcasing the way that women artists have used pattern in their work will open at The University of Western Australia’s, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery on Friday 2 October.

OBJECT LESSONS III: Pattern Recognition is the final chapter in a year long, three-part exhibition of contemporary art from the Cruthers Collection of Women’s Art. Curator Gemma Weston said the exhibition showcases the many different ways in which Australian women artists have utilised pattern, either as a surface treatment or as a sequence.

Ms Weston said that pattern has a special significance in the history of women’s art. “The association of pattern with decoration has often placed it in opposition to ‘highbrow’ modernism, which sought functionality and the ‘essences’ of form.” she said.

“Anything considered ornamental or decorative was therefore frivolous, distracting and superficial, discounting both the sensuousness of pattern and ornament and the significance they carry in Classical, non-Western or sacred art.”
Ms Weston said the ‘frivolity’ and ‘superficiality’ of decorative pattern, and its connection with domestic space, became synonymous with femininity, leading feminist artists to eventually stage a reclamation of ornament, pattern and decoration as valid art forms.

“OBJECT LESSONS III: Pattern Recognition offers the opportunity to consider pattern in a contemporary context, where relationships between surface, structure and significance reveal it as anything but superficial,” she said.

While most of the works in OBJECT LESSONS III: Pattern Recognition are sourced from the collection, local emerging artist Rebecca Orchard has been commissioned to create a piece specifically for the exhibition.

Rebecca’s multi-disciplinary practice incorporates sculpture, textiles, drawing and collage and examines how representations of the environment and ecosystems find their way into our day-to-day lives.

“Rebecca’s work for OBJECT LESSONS will incorporate a series of sculptures, using both found and constructed rocks to play on the ambiguity between the natural and the manufactured,” said Ms Weston.

Other featured artists include Barbara Brash, Julie Dowling, Agatha Gothe Snape, Elizabeth Gower, Carol Kngwarreye, Michelle Nikou, Rosella Namok, Raquel Ormella and Gloria Petyarre.

ABOUT THE CRUTHER’S COLLECTION OF WOMEN’S ART

The Cruthers Collection of Women’s Art is Australia’s largest specialist collection of women’s art. Founded upon a substantial gift made by Sir James and Lady Sheila Cruthers in 2007, the collection includes works by women artists from the 1890s to present day in a variety of media.

It features well-known historical figures and prominent contemporary artists as well as a host of significant, yet under-recognised practices.

A dynamic program of exhibitions drawn from the collection can be viewed year-round in the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery at The University of Western Australia.

For media enquiries and interviews contact:

John McCarten on 0403 900 193 or john.mccarten@uwa.edu.au

The Cultural Precinct maintains an extensive library of professional-quality photography. To request an image, contact Clare McFarlane on 08 6488 7806 or clare.mcfarlane@uwa.edu.au

Image page 1: Elizabeth Gower, Choices (detail), 1986, acrylic on paper, 53 x 42 cm, CCWA 868 © Courtesy the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.
ADDITIONAL IMAGES MEDIA SUITE FOR OBJECT LESSONS II: CURTAIN SITUATIONS

For high res images please contact Clare McFarlane on 08 6488 7806 or clare.mcfarlane@uwa.edu.au

Barbara Brash, *Heatwave III*, 1981, screenprint, needs to be measured, CCWA 861 © the artist’s estate

Elizabeth Gower, *Choices*, 1986, acrylic on paper, 53 x 42 cm, CCWA 868 © Courtesy the artist and Sutton Gallery, Melbourne and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.