



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FLORA

10 February - 21 April 2018 | Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery

The Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery proudly presents the exhibition *FLORA*, curated by Gemma Weston.

Drawn from the **Cruthers Collection of Women's Art**, *FLORA* presents a bouquet of works in which a variety of floral images are documented, mused upon, celebrated, or deconstructed.

Flowers have a multitude of meanings and uses: they are used as decoration, in medicine, they can represent love, honour or death. Art historians describe the 'useless beauty' of floral imagery while botanists study the vital role of the flower in sustaining ecosystems.

Flowers are often culturally aligned with women or with femininity, connections that colour the ways in which we value, understand, and construct our world. *FLORA* features works depicting flowers by prominent female artists - including Margaret Preston, Rosalie Gascoigne, and Grace Cossington Smith - but Weston acknowledges that there are many factors that attract artists to the subject:

'In Western art history, women artists often used to paint flowers and still lifes because they were banned from life drawing classes that would train them to produce figurative painting, so there's definitely social factors that have contributed to that association. *FLORA* is a really good opportunity to examine that,' says Weston.

In Mei Swan Lim's *Sky Life* and *Ground Life*, 2018 a two-part audio response to the exhibition, field recordings captured from wetlands around Perth are played in the gallery space. Through *Sky Life* and *Ground Life* recordings Lim asks us to acknowledge the 'urban wild place nestled among human settlement', the custodians of the environment, and to consider our shared human responsibilities.

Throughout the exhibition a series of workshops, presentations, and tours will take place at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery. The FLORA Symposium: Challenges sustainability of plants in WA today, to be held Saturday 7 April, 12.30-4pm, will explore current Western Australian-based research in plant science, conservation biology, ethno-biology, and environmental issues that challenge our future.

Perth artist Alina Tang invites participants to discover traditional Victorian gift-giving practices in a workshop on Saturday 24 March, 2-4pm to create a Tussie Mussie - a bouquet of herbs, fresh blooms and dried flowers, each with their own symbolic meanings.

'FLORA has been curated as a companion exhibition to the Perth Festival's *Human Nature* by Zadok Ben-David that is running concurrently at the gallery' says UWA Chief Cultural Officer **Ted Snell**. 'It explores the ways in which women have embraced the depiction of flowers as a way of looking at some aspect of themselves.'

Artists

Portia Bennett, Susanna Castleden, Grace Cossington Smith, Peggy Crombie, Penny Cross, Elizabeth Cummings, Moya Dyring, Rosalie Gascoigne, Lena Skinner Gnale, Nora Heysen, Anna Kristensen, Mei Swan Lim, Fiona Macdonald, Clare McFarlane, Mary Moore, Ann Newmarch, Margaret Preston, Ellis Rowan, Clara Southern, Angela Stewart, Nat Thomas and Kylie Wilkinson, Lesbia Thorpe, Edith Trethowan, and Memnuma Vila-Bogdanich.

Artwork and Additional Information

(High resolution images are available [here](#))

[Exhibition Website](#)

Collection Bio

The [Cruther's Collection of Women's Art](#) (CCWA) is the only public collection focused specifically on women's art in Australia. The CCWA began in 2007 with a substantial gift of artworks made to the University of Western Australia by Sir James and Lady Sheila Cruthers. The Cruthers family began collecting women's art in the 1970s, focusing on portraiture and isolating key areas such as still life, abstraction, early post-modernism and second-wave feminism. Exhibitions from the CCWA are supported by SHEILA A foundation for women in visual art.

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