

EDUCATION RESOURCE

LIGHT SENSITIVE MATERIAL: WORKS FROM THE VERGHIS COLLECTION NEW SOUTH WALES REGIONAL TOUR



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Hossein Valamanesh *Nesting*, 2005, digital print on watercolour paper, 113.5 x 135 cm, 4/5. Image courtesy the artist and GRANTPIRRIE. Collection Rachel Verghis

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

EDUCATION RESOURCE

This resource has been prepared by Bathurst Regional Art Gallery in conjunction with Museums & Galleries NSW, to accompany the *Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection* tour.

It is intended to assist primary and secondary students and teachers in their understanding and enjoyment of the exhibition, and has been created in reference to the New South Wales K-6 and 7-12 curriculum. The resource has been designed for use on an interactive white board and encourages active classroom participation.

NAVIGATION OF THE RESOURCE

Throughout the resource, the following icons have been used to help identify the type of question or action:



Practice



Discussion



Research



Web Link



Video Link

Website Links - All of the focus works have website links to the artist's representative gallery and articles about their work and practice. These links are highlighted in **purple**.

Glossary Links - There are links throughout the resource that connect to the Glossary page. These links are highlighted in **blue**. The same word (in blue) can then be used to divert back to the original page.

Video Links - Two of the four works studied have video links. These links are also highlighted in **purple**.

On each activity page is a **Subject Link** suggestion panel. These panels list the potential cross subject opportunities presented by each work. It is by no means exhaustive but intended as a base guide. Given the nature of the work exhibited, Photography and Visual Arts subjects are obvious links to all of the focus works.



Vanila Netto *Little Red Rugged Rocking Roof*, 2003-4, digital print on aluminium, 72 x 99cm, 1/5. Image courtesy the artist, BREENSPACE Sydney and Arc One Gallery Melbourne. Collection Rachel Verghis

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

COLLECTION, EXHIBITION & TOUR

The relationship between collectors, artists and cultural institutions forms an important cornerstone to the art and cultural sector. Collectors support artists by funding or acquiring artworks and supporting the career of individual artists and groups through their collections. Collectors also lend and donate works or whole collections to cultural institutions, who are then able to present and offer these works for public viewing, reaching wider communities and broad audiences.

THE VERGHIS COLLECTION

Rachel Verghis is an Australian private art collector, now based in London. Stemming from an informal mentorship between Rachel and Richard Perram, the Director of BRAG, the gallery became the guardians of the collection after Rachel moved overseas in 2009. A large part of Rachel's vision for the collection is about supporting contemporary art and artists and making their work widely accessible to the general public. In line with this objective, BRAG agreed to display the collection and initiate a regional tour, resulting in the *Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection* exhibition.

THE EXHIBITION TOUR

The eight venue tour throughout regional New South Wales of the *Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection* exhibition has been made possible by another important relationship between BRAG and Museums & Galleries NSW. The tour offers a rare viewing opportunity for regional communities. The exhibition is a selection from the total Verghis Collection, featuring 21 works created between 2000 and 2008 by 14 emerging to mid career Australian artists. The result is an exceptional snapshot of current Australian contemporary art practice and a visual depiction of the time and culture we are living in.

Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection is a curated selection of works that all either directly reference light or explore the concept of light in alternate forms and processes, thus relating to the exhibition's title. Mediums included in the exhibition range from digital and photographic prints to video works, neon text and light installations.

Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection will tour to the following galleries in New South Wales in 2012 and 2013:

Lismore Regional Gallery 4 February 2012 - 18 March 2012	The Glasshouse Regional Gallery 29 November 2012 - 20 January 2013
Moree Plains Gallery 26 March 2012 - 6 May 2012	Tamworth Regional Gallery 1 February 2013 - 10 March 2013
Goulburn Regional Art Gallery 24 May 2012 - 1 July 2012	Grafton Regional Gallery 27 March 2013 - 12 May 2013
Hawkesbury Regional Gallery 13 July 2012 - 26 August 2012	Shoalhaven City Arts Centre 27 May 2013 - 14 July 2013

FOREWORD

BATHURST REGIONAL ART GALLERY

Bathurst Regional Art Gallery (BRAG) is delighted to tour *Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection* under the auspices of Museums & Galleries NSW. BRAG has been the custodian of the Verghis collection since 2009 when Rachel went to live in England. As a young collector she is passionate about the works in her collection being seen by the wider community. I thank Rachel for her support of BRAG and this exhibition. It has been a real pleasure working with her to realise her visionary and altruistic project.

This exhibition could also not have occurred without the dedicated support of BRAG's staff including our Curator, Sarah Gurich, Collection Manager, Tim Pike, Office Administrator, Marion Maskill and our Education and Public Programs Officer, Emma Hill who has prepared the excellent education kit accompanying the exhibition.

I would like to thank Dr Uros Cvoro for his insightful catalogue essay written especially for the tour. I would also like to thank all the staff at M&G NSW in particular Lillian Lim and Rachel Arndt for realising the tour in a seemingly effortless way and to the eight regional galleries who are hosting the exhibition.

Finally I would like to thank all the artists in the exhibition for allowing us to share in their vision.

Richard Perram
Director, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES NSW

Museums & Galleries NSW (M&G NSW) is the key advocacy and support body supporting a dynamic mix of galleries, museums and Aboriginal cultural centres in both metropolitan and regional areas throughout the state. As part of the National Touring Exhibition Support (NETS) Australia network, M&G NSW is committed to the delivery of best practice touring exhibitions of contemporary visual culture to remote and metropolitan communities throughout NSW and Australia. M&G NSW are delighted to be partnering with Bathurst Regional Art Gallery to tour *Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection* to eight regional galleries across New South Wales in 2012 and 2013, bringing innovative and thought-provoking artworks to new and broad audiences.

Featuring twenty-one works from fourteen emerging and mid-career Australian artists united in their exploration of light through photography, digital media or sculpture, the exhibition presents a wonderful opportunity to introduce and engage students with contemporary Australian art and current forms of artistic practice. As an organisation that understands and values community engagement, education and life long learning, M&G NSW keenly encourages schools to take advantage of this Education Kit as an informative resource on a fascinating exhibition but also to promote enquiry and further interest in all forms of cultural and artistic expression.

Michael Rolfe
CEO, Museums & Galleries NSW

LIST OF WORKS

David Knight *Ada Jones #0118*, 2007, photographic print, 113.5 x 135 cm, 2/5.

David Knight *Alyssa #6577*, 2006, digital print, 141 x 103.5 cm, 2/5.

Grant Stevens *In the Beyond*, 2008, digital video, 7:33.

Hayden Fowler *Goat Odyssey*, 2006, digital video, 16:9 format, sound, colour, single channel, 15:10 loop, 61/70.

Hayden Fowler *Hunger*, 2007, digital video, 4:3 format, no sound, black and white, dual channel, 15:40 loop, 7/20.

Hayden Fowler *White Australia*, 2005, digital video, 24:52 loop, 20/50.

Hossein Valamanesh *Nesting*, 2005, digital print on watercolour paper, 118.5 x 148 cm, 4/5.

Jonathan Jones *white poles*, 2003, fluorescent tubes and fittings, dimensions variable. Photo: Fiona Morrison.

Julie Rrap *Camouflage #4 (Eiko)*, 2000, type-c colour photograph, 125 x 125cm, 5/9.

Michael Riley *Untitled (split wing) (from the Cloud series)*, 2000, chromogenic pigment print, 119 x 196 cm, 4/5.

Newell Harry *Beginnings and Endings/Endings and Beginnings*, 2008, neon (Helvetica, snow white), 10 x 330 cm, 2/5 + 2 AP.



Hayden Fowler *Goat Odyssey*, 2006, digital video, 16:9 format, sound, colour, single channel, 15:10 loop, 61/70. Image courtesy the artist. Collection Rachel Verghis

LIST OF WORKS

Petrina Hicks *Lauren (eyes closed)*, 2003, light-jet print, 6/8 + AP, 152 x 127cm.

Petrina Hicks *Shenae and Jade*, 2005, lightjet print, 142 x 134cm. Edition AP.

Rosemary Laing in collaboration with Stephen Birch *Between a rock and a place with no fish* (from the series one dozen unnatural disasters in the Australian landscape), 2003, set of 4 type-c photographs, 93 x 158 cm each, 4/9.

Shaun Gladwell *Self-Portrait Spinning (Invalides)*, 2001, type-c print, 40.5 x 52cm, 5/5. Photo: Josh Raymond.

Shaun Gladwell *Self-Portrait Spinning (Bastille)*, 2001, type-c print, 40.5 x 52cm, 1/5.

Shaun Gladwell *Storm Sequence*, 2000, digital video, SD, 4:3 format, stereo, 8:40 loop, 3/4. videography: Techa Noble, original soundtrack: Kazumichi Grime, commissioned by Peter Fay.

Shoufay Derz *Radii Heart (340/360)*, 2004, Lamda print, face mounted on acrylic, 80 x 80cm, 1/5.

Vanila Netto *Little Red Rugged Rocking Roof*, 2004, digital print on aluminium, 72 x 99cm, 1/5.

Vanila Netto *Mini-Flex Super-Comfort*, 2003-4, digital print on aluminium, 75 x 93cm, 1/5.

Vanila Netto *Normal distraction from good conversation part 3*, 2002, digital print, 85 x 100cm, 5/5.



Shoufay Derz *Radii Heart (340/360)*, 2004, Lamda print, face mounted on acrylic, 80 x 80cm, 1/5. Image courtesy the artist. Collection Rachel Verghis

JONATHAN JONES



Jonathan Jones *white poles*, 2003, fluorescent tubes and fittings, dimensions variable.
Photo: Fiona Morrison. Image courtesy the artist and Gallery Barry Keldoulis. Collection Rachel Verghis

“The notion of a community in many ways is an impossibility, as there is no group of people who are exactly the same constituting a community. Therefore, all communities can be broken down to individuals. The individual by itself is a further impossibility, as all individuals are products of their community and must relate to the powers of each other.”

Jonathan Jones, 2003

Jonathan Jones is a Sydney-based artist of Kamilaroi/Wiradjuri heritage who explores his indigenous world through western materials. His use of everyday household objects is highly innovative and greatly contributes to the _____ of the works. Jones' work often takes the form of sculptural _____ which make comment on the dilemma between the community and the individual.

'Fluorescent tubes and fittings, dimensions variable' are the materials and dimensions listed on the _____ for Jones' work *white poles*. The light tubes used are ordinary household items and can be bought off the shelf at any regular hardware store. The work also has no set installation instructions meaning each _____ will display it in a slightly different arrangement. The intended arrangement draws its references from the famous and controversial Jackson Pollock painting *Blue Poles* which was bought by the National Gallery of Australia in 1973.

Jones' use of light in the work extends past the materials. Each work is an expression of societal structures and networks, both in the design of the wiring and the interplay between light and shadow. The groupings of bulbs and tubes form light masses which in turn result in shadow masses and crossover sections. These sections are not light or shadow but a mix of the two creating a space that is neither one or the other.



K-6 Design your own symbol or light _____ using the lines and shapes in the letters of your name.

7-12 Take one common household item and explore this item's function, form and design. Compose an installation that references these concepts and utilizes repetition. Create a work that comments on a societal issue as Jones has.



K-6 Jones is an indigenous artist. Discuss how he pays tribute to his ancestry through the use of tribal markings and repetition.

7-12 Study the play of light and shadow in the works and surrounding space. Discuss the relationship and dialogue created between the work and the gallery space. Now review the composition of the installation in relation to the theoretical context provided by Jones' quote on community.



7-12 Compare and contrast *white poles* and the work *untitled white poles* exhibited on the wall in the *Art in Reverse* video at 2.11 sec. How successful is the second piece in terms of evolution of his art practice? Consider elements of practice such as the conceptual links, technique, materials, 3D vs 2D works.



_____ is the gallery that represents Jonathan Jones. There are three excellent _____s, one written by Jonathan, that can be downloaded from the Gallery Barry Keldoulis website.



Jonathan Jones – *Art in Reverse*

VANILA NETTO



Vanila Netto *Mini-Flex Super-Comfort*, 2003-4, digital print on aluminium, 75 x 93 cm, 1/5. Image courtesy the artist, BREENSPACE Sydney and Arc One Gallery Melbourne. Collection Rachel Verghis

“I am interested in subverting the symbolic power of goods and utility by making photographs that suggest alternative systems, where modest, underrated sources are invested with unusual functionality and nobility. The human figure and selected discarded objects or materials are reconfigured to emphasise the intense, the unexpected, and the unusual in simple, improvised interventions.”

Vanila Netto, 2006

Vanila Netto originates from Salvador, Brazil. She has been living and practicing in Australia since 1987. Architecture, design and futuristic influences permeate her photographic work. Netto's practice sorts through contemporary modes of design, production and living, much like the modernist architects of the 20th century Charles E.J Le Corbusier and Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. She deconstructs these modes for us, carefully addressing each element and function in a methodical fashion while challenging each rule along the way.

Ideas of sustainability and waste also feature prevalently. Netto's clever reinvention of found objects asks the viewer to stop and think about material, consumer trends and renewed utility. The work *Mini-Flex Super-Comfort* is perhaps the best example of this. The image presents the viewer with two objects resembling mini modular lounge suites. These lounge suites started life as styrofoam corners left over from the packaging of a digital scanner. Netto has taken the waste and given it a new function, aesthetic and story.

What is also interesting about Netto's work is her use of photography. The static and still images of the scenarios she has constructed offer a duality between the activities of the futuristic times the object's reference. This duality offers the viewer a unique perspective on modern progress, time and its documentation.



K-6/7-12 Visit the IKEA website and other modern furniture stores and explore the furniture designs. Collect recyclable waste objects from your home and let the readymade forms inspire you to build modern furniture like that of Netto's. Think about the new object you have constructed. Does it have a new story, place and function in a futuristic world?



K-6 Do you feel that we are a wasteful society? Think about some of the things that your household throws away. Could they have new uses like Netto's mini lounges?

7-12 Mies van der Rohe was famous for his 'less is more' attitude towards architecture and design. Discuss his effect on Netto's work and that of the wider contemporary art and design world. Consider the contemporary modes of design, aesthetic and living.



7/12 Architect Mies van der Rohe held the philosophy that 'a house is a machine for living in' and each of his designs were a reflection of this. Consider his philosophy and reflect on the points of his influence in Netto's work.



Vanila Netto is represented by the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation Sydney. There is an informative video by Tanya Peterson on the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation website. Just click on the *2004 - Cushion - Do Not Crush Insulation* exhibition catalogue on the left side panel.

SHAUN GLADWELL



Shaun Gladwell *Storm Sequence*, 2000, digital video, SD, 4:3 format, stereo, 8:40 loop, 3/4. Videography: Técha Noble, original soundtrack: Kazumichi Grime, commissioned by Peter Fay. Image courtesy the artist and Anna Schwartz Gallery. Collection Rachel Verghis

“I enjoy watching athletes push the barriers, particularly outside the competition format when they have to think for themselves. I don’t distinguish [sport] from art. To me, that is the same objective as contemporary art.”

Shaun Gladwell, 2011

Shaun Gladwell

is one of Australia's most celebrated . Gladwell has enjoyed a strong and colourful start to his career both in Australia and overseas. His practice is not exclusive to video and extends into performance, painting and sculpture. The three works in this exhibition are a video and two video stills.

Gladwell has contributed much to his chosen genre. He has researched, practiced and exhibited extensively overseas. In 2009, he represented Australia at the Venice Biennale, and became the first video artist to be appointed by the Australian War Memorial as an official war artist. His breakthrough work *Storm Sequence* still holds the title of most expensive video artwork sold at an auction in Australia.

His practice circles around the investigation of the movement of the body in space and time. Gladwell infuses these investigations with historical, cultural and contemporary links. *Storm Sequence* is an excellent illustration of this inquiry process. The video documents the intersections between Gladwell's many loves: skate boarding, street culture and landscape. His treatment of the footage; slow motion, looping and use of atmospheric sound scapes, draw together to bring a meditative quality to the work which entices the viewer to delve deeper, past the physical act of skateboarding and into the realm of .



K-6 / 7-12 During the interview (video below) Gladwell speaks about his inspiration for *Storm Sequence* and some of his other works. He comments on his aim to connect his weekend activities to his art practice. List your weekend activities, pick one and document your movements during the activity.



K-6 *Storm Sequence* takes place at Bondi Beach, a special place for Gladwell both as a child and artist. Discuss how and why specific places become special to us and what happens when these places are documented by artists.

7-12 Discuss Gladwell's quote. Do you agree with his view on contemporary art, if not why?



7-12 Explore the stylistic links between master painter [Turner's](#) brooding land and seascapes and that of Bondi beach in Gladwell's *Storm Sequence*. Consider the differences and similarities in technique, medium, composition and ambience.

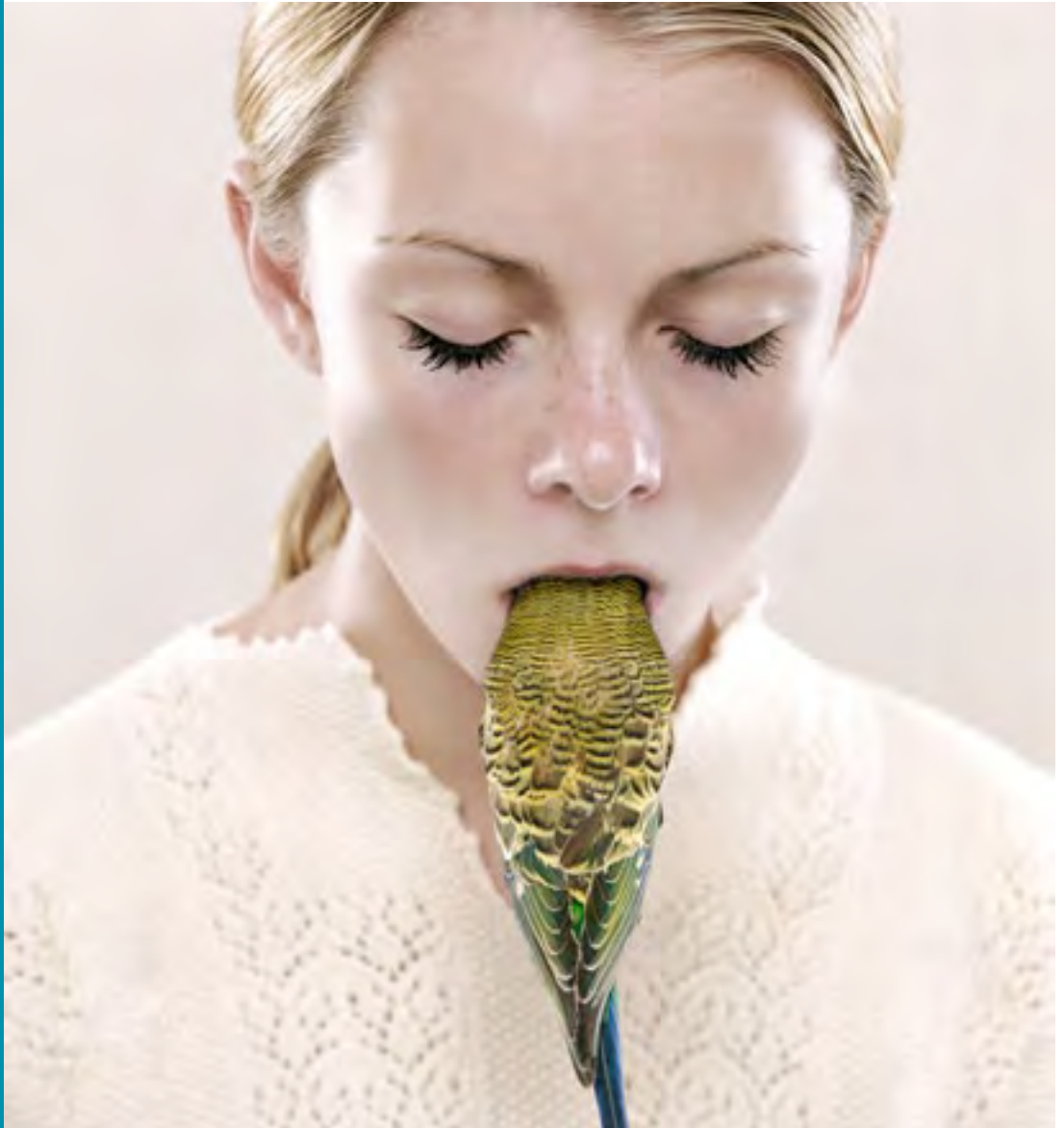


Shaun Gladwell is represented by [Foundation](#) Sydney. Steve Meacham wrote a great [article](#) on Shaun Gladwell for the Sydney Morning Herald.



Shaun Gladwell

PETRINA HICKS



Petrina Hicks *Shenae and Jade*, 2005, lightjet print, 142 x 134 cm, edition AP. Image courtesy the artist and Stills Gallery. Collection Rachel Verghis

“Aside from making a photographic portrait of the sitter I’m primarily concerned with defining, portraying or translating photographically a particular feeling. Not a feeling that’s easy to express, one that is abstract and one which the following words could describe: eerie, isolation, anticipation, sickness, doom or terror. I then try to soften this feeling by creating images that are soft in colour and tone and resemble perfection so a subtle tension between these opposing forces can be created.”

Petrina Hicks, 2006

Petrina Hicks is currently one of Australia's best known young photographers. Having worked in both the commercial and fine art fields of photography, Hicks' work presents a fresh and interesting combination of the two areas. Practicing in what is traditionally termed _____, Hicks constantly challenges the boundaries of photography to create works of lasting impact and _____ beauty.

Hicks is very interested in the tension created between beauty and imperfection. Her models are predominately people. Some of Hicks' more interesting works are of adolescent or pre-adolescent models.

Hicks is concerned by the unreality of 'perfect' images which teenagers are exposed to through popular media. She employs advertising techniques such as _____ in her work which is interesting as she quite often emphasises certain imperfections of her models in order to celebrate them. It is Hicks' unique exploration and documentation of what it is to be human that makes Hicks' work so exciting to the audience and collector.

Shenae and Jade is one such image which showcases Hicks' signature tensions. It is an unsettling and unconventional portrait. The crisp clear background, appearance and clothing of the model are juxtaposed with the confronting image of the model holding the head of a brightly coloured budgie in her mouth. Hicks also challenges the audience with the delicate nose freckles on the otherwise unmarked face of the model. All of these details combine to create a complex story and tension in the work.



K-6 Consider your reaction to this work. What does it make you feel? Do you like it? If not, why? How does the odd positioning of the budgie make you feel?

7-12 The old expression 'the camera never lies' has been dispelled by many artists. Discuss how Hicks' photography depicts both truth and lies. Which is more powerful and why?



7-12 Hicks has practiced across the commercial and fine art realms of photography. She purposely employs techniques of advertising to convey issues of seduction and consumption to the viewer. Identify the commercial and fine art techniques Hicks has used in *Shenae and Jade* and evaluate the effects of these techniques. Do the commercial techniques have the same function in a fine art work?



Petrina Hicks is represented by _____
The _____ held an exhibition called *What's in a face? Aspects of portrait photography* in 2011, which featured Hicks' work *Shenae and Jade*. An exhibition information pack is available on the gallery website.

GLOSSARY

- easy to approach, enter, use, or understand.

- a principle of taste or style adopted by a particular person, group, or culture.

- to alter the image of (a person or thing) by concealing defects beneath a bland exterior.

- the harmonious arrangement of the parts of a work of art in relation to each other and to the whole.

- advocacy of a high rate of consumption and spending as a basis for a sound economy.

- the descriptive panel that accompanies an art work on exhibition.

- the state or quality of being two or in two parts; dichotomy.

- false, fake.

- having or serving a utilitarian purpose; capable of serving the purpose for which it was designed.

- works of specialized skill and concept, which carry specific cultural value. Usually considered Fine Art.

- involving or characterized by particularly realistic graphic representation.

- art that is created, constructed, or installed on the site where it is exhibited, often incorporating materials or physical features of the site.

- the art or practice of capturing the likeness of a person, especially the face. Traditional mediums include painting, drawing, or photography.

- an imagined or projected sequence of events, especially any of several detailed plans or possibilities. A scene.

- the scene or locale of any action or event. Example: A gallery or cultural institution.

- an artist who works in the genre of video art.

Video art - an art form involving the creative exploitation of video technology.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection is a Bathurst Regional Art Gallery exhibition in conjunction with Rachel Verghis, toured by Museums and Galleries NSW.

Cover image credit:

Petrina Hicks, *Shenae and Jade*, 2005, lightjet print, 142 x 134 cm, edition AP. Image courtesy the artist and Stills Gallery. Collection Rachel Verghis

Referencing of focus artist quotes:

Jonathan Jones, *Volta a Crociera catalogue* essay (2003.) Gallery Barry Keldoulis.

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Bathurst Regional Art Gallery

70-78 Keppel Street
Bathurst NSW 2795
T (02) 6333 6555
F (02) 6330 8320
W

Richard Perram, Director & Curator of *Light Sensitive Material: Works from the Verghis Collection*

Sarah Gurich, Curator

Tim Pike, Collections Manager

Emma Hill, Education & Public Programs Officer

Marion Maskill, Office Administrator

Museums & Galleries NSW

43-51 Cowper Wharf Road
Woolloomooloo NSW 2011
T (02) 9358 1760
F (02) 9358 1852
W

Michael Rolfe, CEO

Rachel Arndt, Manager, Touring Exhibitions Services

Lillian Lim, Coordinator, Touring Exhibitions Services

Jasmin Dessmann, Administrator, Touring Exhibitions Services