

CASULA  
POWERHOUSE  
ARTS CENTRE

# EVERYDAY MADONNA



# EVERYDAY MADONNA

18 May - 30 June 2019  
Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

**ARTISTS: EDDIE ABD, LINDA BRESCIA, LOUISA CHIRCOP, KARLA DICKENS, MONA IBRAHIM, NICOLE MONKS,  
SUSAN O'DOHERTY, PAMELA RODOREDA, MARIKIT SANTIAGO, ROKEYA SULTANA.**

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Cover Image:

**Original Sin**, 2018. Acrylic, oil, pyrography, pen, 9ct gold leaf, (pen and paint markings by Maella Pearl, aged 4; and Santiago Pearl, aged 2) on found cardboard, 148 x 218cm Courtesy of the artist



# INTRODUCTION

Throughout the documented Western history of art, motherhood has been represented with images of idealised, perfect, demure, passive, women and children. Depictions of the 'Madonna and Child' have further cemented this perfect image of motherhood, produced across mediums and forms for more than 2000 years. Rarely were these images created by artists who were women or mothers themselves.

*Everyday Madonna* features ten artists who share and represent their own experiences of being mothers. Each perspective is unique and their responses to these experiences and the influence that motherhood has had on their art practice is highlighted within the exhibition. The exhibition features existing work by artists who as part of their practice, produce works that explore notions of motherhood and the challenges and reality of the everyday.

The role of mother is a component of each of these individual artists' identity, an integrated part of their everyday experience. Some of the artworks explore changes to their art practice and to their altered sense of self that often comes with the new role of 'mother'. The works of Linda Brescia,

Pamela Rodoreda and Susan O'Doherty consider the changes in the everyday; the expectation and vulnerabilities of becoming a mother. Susan O'Doherty's works speak to the challenges and expected acceptance of stereotyped roles and the daily grind of being a mother. Her work *What Are You Staring At* highlights the struggle of discovering yourself as being 'the housewife' and mother and all that this entails. Another of Susan's work *Hung Out to Dry* explores the mental and physical shifts that come with the responsibility of nurturing a baby.

Pamela Rodoreda's work *Being Woman* considers the idea of motherhood through a series that takes us from the rose-coloured glasses of childhood expectations and the hopes of early pregnancy through to the realities of miscarriage and the vulnerable nature of being a new mother and carer. Linda Brescia in her series *Persona and performance in everyday life* investigates (in her words) 'the complex experiences of everyday life'. Linda transforms everyday domestic routines through costumed performance (using domestic objects such as sponges and 'Chux' cloths), to re-create iconic poses that explore identity within marriage and motherhood.

Two of the artists update the Madonna image for the contemporary age. Eddie Abd in her photographic series *We Are Holy* questions the Madonna image of her childhood in Lebanon and the notions of who and what this (often white-washed) image represents. She explores the societal, religious and cultural expectation embodied within the Virgin Mary figure and questions gender constructs in relation to parenting and in doing so, creates new contemporary icons. Pamela Rodoreda's work *My Own Self* compares the Madonna image of the middle ages to her own 'ordinary life' and chooses to 'add' to the original to give the image some 'personality'.

In her work *Pendulum*, Louisa Chircop explores her reaction after viewing Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's typically Renaissance work 'The Immaculate Conception' when she was a new mother and captures the feelings that viewing elicited of imperfection and humiliation in comparison to a portrayal of perfection. In her works *Roam* and *Mother Dreaming-Right/Wrong* Louisa reflects on the quandary of personal needs and needs of the child, wanting to create new work as an artist but torn by the guilt of needing to care for her child.

Linda Brescia and Mona Ibrahim explore obligations when the 'ideal' concepts of motherhood is challenged by health. In her video *The Fox*, Mona Ibrahim re-creates with her son, the moment that she realises that he has become her carer through their shared reading of a children's book 'The Fox'. She explores the consequences for her son and the challenges of being a single and unwell parent. In her video work *Life and Death*, Linda Brescia also considers the role reversal of becoming a carer for the parent, uses her performative practice to capture unheard conversations with her mother who was living with a terminal illness.

The exhibition also acknowledges the inner-strength and power that becoming a mother can elicit. Many societies have long and ancient histories of showing respect and reverence towards mothers and ancestral mothers, understanding them as goddesses, deities, earth mothers and warriors.

The works of both Karla Dickens and Nicole Monks explore spiritual bond to Mother Earth and the connection to the past as a source of strength and grounding in vulnerable times. Karla Dicken's *Black Madonna* series acknowledges an ancient, universal

# INTRODUCTION

connection to the Black Madonna icon, a connection where she finds both strength and encouragement. Nicole Monk's work *windi-windinmanha* is a self-portrait expressing the coming together of her experience of needing to be 'Wonder Woman' and drawing on her Aboriginal heritage to find the strength to function as a mother through connection to country.

Marikit Santiago considers representation of the feminine, woman and mother together with her identities as Australian and Filipina, to explore the tensions within those plural identities. In her self-portraits she is (in her own words) simultaneously 'challenging and perpetuating the models of womanhood and motherhood' through works that are (in her words) both 'powerful and vulnerable, defiant and submissive'. In her work *Yagu*, Nicole Monks presents herself as a strong woman ready to give birth, as a response to and defiant of the men who didn't think portraits of her pregnancy suitable or interesting.

In her long-term project, *The Madonna* series, Rokeya Sultana rebels against the traditional notions of the placid and submissive female by presenting herself as a protector, understanding of the risks to her small child in her home,

the busy city of Dhaka, Bangladesh. She presents herself, in traditional clothing, as the Madonna, a determined and fierce protector in the face of daily perils and ready to fight for a safe and better life for her child.

The idealised representations of women continue today despite decades of women's liberation and feminist movements. Advertisers use this type of representation as a way to sell domestic and baby products to an often vulnerable target audience. Techniques such as the use of 'vaseline-d' lenses or Photoshop have been used to give an almost 'saintly', perfect appearance to the women in these ads, hiding the blemishes of reality and spotlighting the shortfalls they feel in their role as parents.

Social media has provided new platforms where advertisers bombard viewers with pop-up ads and Instagram influencer accounts related to parenting 'needs', are accessed as part of daily lives. Social media also provides celebrities, friends and peers a new platform to share their self-proclaimed 'perfect' moments in their lives providing an increased opportunity for vulnerable new mothers to compare their own lives and achievements.

The artists question common assumptions and expectations of mothers and challenge community and cultural stereotypes and traditions. Their experiences transcend the archetypes of women as demure and of men as the protectors. They present mothers as warriors, protecting their children from everyday risks, advocating for changes in their communities that protect their environments and the world that their children will inherit. Each of these artists have an art practice that considers their role as mothers, and they challenge and question how their image of themselves fits in within the history of images of mothers; be it the classical Madonna of art history or its reinventions through advertisements and media. This exhibition is a showcase of mothers who have reclaimed their own representation while facing the challenges that motherhood brings.

## – Jenny Cheeseman

Mother of Billy, Jayne, Tim and Clare  
Head of Curatorial  
Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

# EDDIE ABD

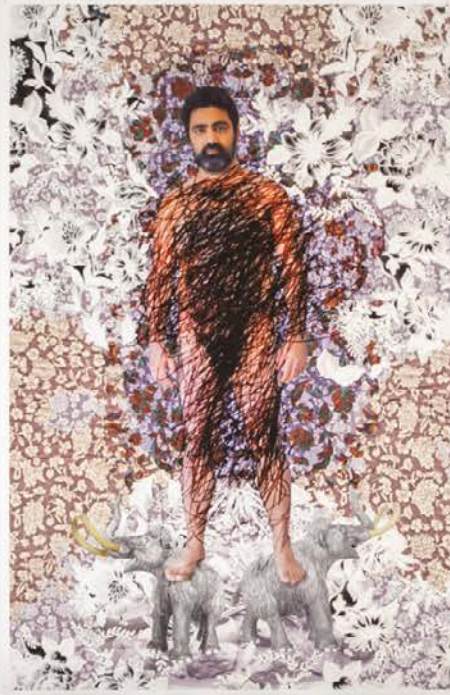


## ***We Are Holy*, 2019**

Digital Print on paper, with  
digital markings by Aram and  
Yasmeen El Haddad  
155 x 100cm each

Courtesy of the artist

As a nine year old, I was chosen to  
play the role of the Virgin Mary in our  
annual school nativity play in Lebanon



for a few successive years. I guess the  
nuns of the Maronite Sisters of the Holy  
Family decided I looked the closest  
between my classmates to the Jesus  
of Nazareth's Mary – "she looks white".  
During my childhood, the Virgin Mary  
was for me the ultimate Mother, the  
divine, the one I prayed for to seek  
guidance and comfort.



*I am Mother.*

*I am tired.*

*I am learning how to control and let go.*

*I am adored by my children, clothed and scarred by their markings.*

*I am inspired by my diverse cultural heritage and experiences that eclipse a  
"white" Virgin.*

*The mother hands the man the apple, he cuts it and feeds the kids.*

– Artist Eddie Abd,  
Mother of Aram and Yasmeen





# KARLA DICKENS

Black Madonna sits tight in the collective heart and mind, fully glorified and beloved over thousands of years around the globe.

Night is older than day and from the darkness of unconscious comes the light of illumination, a vital aspect of the feminine world.

As an Aboriginal woman, the universal connection of this icon and mother is powerful, real and always encouraging.

The Black Virgin connects me to my mother, grandmothers, Mother Earth (and her children).

The Child is an expression of the spiritual nature of the feminine, it is light which impregnates her and gives birth to the divine spirit.

Women all around the world find identification and strength in the beauty and darkness of their skin: 'Black, blacker than black'

She shines not only of scared light but stands tall, knowing suffering and endurance.

– Artist Karla Dickens,  
Mother of Ginger



***Beloved Mother I*, 2011**

***Beloved Mother II*, 2011**

***Beloved Mother III*, 2011**

Ceramic, 46 x 16 x 8cm each

Courtesy of the artist and Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane

# KARLA DICKENS

TOP ROW FROM LEFT:

***Mother of All III***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 34 x 14 x 5cm

***Mother of All II***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 39 x 16 x 5cm

MIDDLE ROW FROM LEFT:

***Global Mother II***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 30 x 30 x 6cm

***Shadow Mother II***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 26 x 6 x 3cm

***Global Mother I***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 30 x 30 x 6cm

BOTTOM ROW FROM LEFT:

***Mother of All II***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 36 x 12 x 5 m

***Mother of All VI***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 34 x 14 x 5cm

***Mother of All III***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 34 x 14 x 5cm

***Mother of All V***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 43 x 10 x 5cm

***Mother of All X***, 2011

Ceramic and mixed media, 40 x 16 x 5cm



Courtesy of the artist and  
Andrew Baker Art Dealer, Brisbane

# LINDA BRESCIA



***Stretched, Persona and Performance***  
***in Everyday Life series*, 2014**

Solvent ink digital print, 85 x 53cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Photographic Technician: Alex Wisser



***Icon, Persona and Performance***  
***in Everyday Life series*, 2014**

Solvent ink digital print, 85 x 53cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Photographic Technician: Alex Wisser



***Veiled truth, Persona and***  
***Performance in Everyday Life series*, 2014**

Solvent ink digital print, 85 x 53cm

Courtesy of the artist.

Photographic Technician: Alex Wisser

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*Icon, Stretched* and *Veiled truth* are from the series 'Persona and Performance in Everyday Life'. I investigate the complex experiences of everyday life through painting, photography and performance. Using a costumed performance persona, I re-enact domestic routines, gestures and iconic poses to transform the mundane rituals of daily life into theatre. These works are a comment on body image, marriage, the traditional expectations of women and the roles they play.



***Life and Death, 2012***

Video

Courtesy of the artist

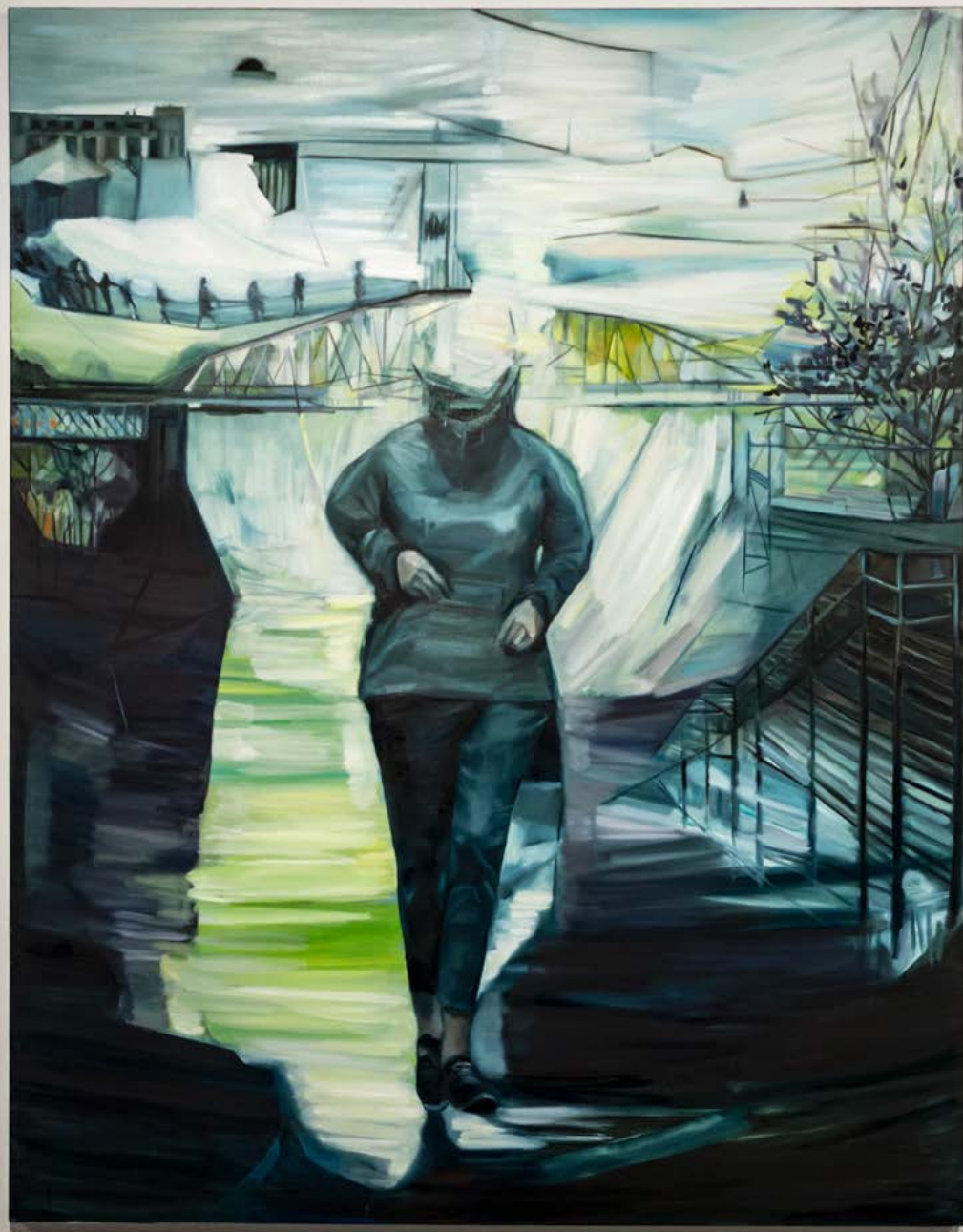
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My mother stares death in the face as she lives with a terminal illness. Bringing my art practice into her bed, I make work about life. Juggling responsibilities and caring for families and parents are ongoing obligations. Mothering is always about caring. Mothering is wearing. My mother tells her stories and is oblivious to my tears, shed behind the mask of the mothering daughter. Performance is successful.

– Artist Linda Brescia,  
Mother of Tony, Alana, Paul  
and Isabella



# LOUISA CHIRCOP



## ***Roam*, 2014**

oil on canvas, 213 x 167cm

Private Collection of Marilyn and Michael  
Reardon-Small

‘Roam’ is a painting about the synapse that exists between motherhood and being an artist.

Many western paintings depicting Madonna use the image of a snake beneath her feet as a metaphor for her victory over the devil. This concept is paralleled in my work ‘Roam’, however in this painting the headless figure dressed in a blue hooded garb, walks directly out towards the viewer as if stepping into the actual physical space as she confronts her demons head on.

In this painting I ask myself...Where do these demons come from? What are they? Where are they going? Is it possible that these demons are exorcised by the act of painting itself? These are all questions I ask myself when I create.

I saw Giovanni Battista Tiepolo’s Madonna in ‘The Immaculate Conception’ the year before I created this work. I had confronted Madonna centre stage, suspended in space in the heavens.

The figure in ‘Roam’ mimics a similar construction, however, although the figure is central my subliminal focus is the purgatorial space created in the painting. This is the space that exists in the daily state of my mind as a woman, mother and an artist.”

– **Artist Louisa Chircop,**  
***Mother of Charley***

# LOUISA CHIRCOP

My first artist residency and my first experience being separated from my daughter for a period of time to create art.

Being invited as part of the PLC residency was an honour and a dream. It gave me an opportunity to indulge in deep conversation with myself about my creative visions and desires, but at the same time there was an element of guilt attached to the idea of mothering my practice and being away from my duties as a mum.

'Mother Dreaming - Right/Wrong' is not only a response to the primeval elements of the Riversdale landscape. It presents my feelings about being split between the demands of motherhood, my artistic practice and other roles in which I'm divided. The dilemma of my emotional enigma is thrust onto a weepy and watery stage for all to scrutinise.

In a Pieta-like formation of fabric and limbs, the Madonna (the mother) figure wrestles with both internal and external forces. She's entwined and almost strangled with the snake and intruding masculine limbs that circulate her body.

When concocting this image I worked purely and subconsciously, letting the forces at play take charge of my inner voice. The snake usually symbolically associated with the Madonna was accidental in it's making. However, in dream interpretation the snake can allude to many things.

One being to evil, and unsettling or difficult situations. Another, as seen here as healing and transformation as the snake sheds it's skin. Snake becomes woman and woman becomes snake.

– Artist Louisa Chircop, *Mother of Charley*



***Mother Dreaming - Right/Wrong*, 2016**

Mixed media and photomontage on Arches, 56 x 76cm

Private Collection of Marilyn and Michael Reardon-Small



# LOUISA CHIRCOP



## ***Pendulum*, 2015**

Mixed media and photomontage on  
Arches, 46 x 37cm

Private Collection of Jeannette Siebols

I remember the first time I laid eyes on Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's Madonna 'The Immaculate Conception' painted in (1767-69). It was at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne in an exhibition titled 'Renaissance to Goya - Prints and Drawings from Spain'. I stood there, gazing up, frozen body, mouth slightly gapping, marvelling her perfection, her power and purity and feeling everything quite the opposite, totally imperfect.

Walking away and turning my back to Tiepolo's painting was like turning my back on my mother.

The feeling of humiliation was intense and I turned to take one more glance at her. It was crystal clear to me that she was supreme and I was merely the ripples in the pond.

Those ripples in the pond resurfaced a couple of years later in my work *Pendulum*. Completely unplanned she surprisingly re-appeared subconsciously in my image, a surreal reflection of that day.

Unlike Tiepolo's painting there is no heaven here. Nor is there celestial light or angels floating in clouds amongst the stars. The work, a self portrait using my face modelled on Tiepolo Madonna's creates a mask of time suspended below a bridge. In the void of shadows, hands appear to tickle my ears, teasing my conscience and in a Goyaesque gesture I have skewered my head with shafts of wood. One shaft resembling a pendulum bears a vulture that swings over an infant's head.

– **Artist Louisa Chircop,**  
***Mother of Charley***



# MARIKIT SANTIAGO

The works presented in *Everyday Madonna* consider my ethnic identities as an Australian and Filipina, and the conflation of this with my social identities as a woman and mother. The maternal and sexualized modes of femininity are represented as simultaneously powerful and vulnerable, defiant and submissive. Members of my family or my own portrait stand in roles normally occupied by saints, goddesses or the divine; or even by self-proclaimed 'ideal woman' Hollywood celebrities. By appropriating these figures, I challenge and perpetuate the models of womanhood and motherhood reflecting my personal experience.

My practice, represented in these paintings, allows a visual language in which to interrogate the conflicting sensations, values and ideals associated with the tensions that exist between and within my plural identities.

– Artist Marikit Santiago,  
Mother of Maella, Santi and Sarita



**Original Sin**, 2018

Acrylic, oil, pyrography, pen, 9ct gold leaf, (pen and paint markings by Maella Pearl, aged 4; and Santiago Pearl, aged 2) on found cardboard, 148 x 218cm. Courtesy of the artist



# MARIKIT SANTIAGO



***Blessed Virgin Fierce,***

2018

Acrylic, oil and  
pyrography on ply  
132 x 65 cm

Courtesy of the artist



***The Weaning Madonna,***

2015 – 2017

Acrylic, oil, Dutch metal  
gold leaf, pyrography,  
PVA, pen on ply, (pen  
markings by Maella  
Pearl – 2 years old),  
fresh banana leaves,  
97 x 77cm.

Courtesy of the artist



# MONA IBRAHIM



## ***The Fox*, 2019**

Video

Courtesy of the artist

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All my life I believed that Art, Philosophy, and Science couldn't be separated. A scientist without Art is limited and an artist without philosophy and science is stagnant.

This became the foundation of my daily life, to me everything happens for a reason, my soul and body can't get every reason for everything; but my spirit does.

Every piece of my films and videos is built on the intertwining relation between Art, Philosophy and science, and the message my spirit gives to my soul and body whenever they listen.

Body and soul could hear the spirit when they stay still and when the mind stops jumping like a monkey.

2018 challenged me when I was diagnosed by hypothyroidism, which means simply a malfunction of my thyroid gland (a butterfly - shaped gland located in the neck).

After long periods of feeling extremely tired and exhausted and although it does seem life threatening disease, it made life almost stop and go on slow motion, not on self-reflecting

meditative way, but in nonsense meaningless death way, being a mother in such condition made life nearly impossible. My young son often needed to care for me.

And along came this book "The Fox", a story that my son and I read together, a story where a young boy brings a fox back to life. I realised I was the fox and the consequences of my illness on him. It's not only my story but it's mainly about my son, he is the only one who will suffer the consequences of my choices, so I decided to choose life and be with him.

– **Artist Mona Ibrahim,**  
***Mother of Youssef***



# NICOLE MONKS



## ***yagu gumbarri (many mothers)*, 2019**

Fabric lightbox digital print

Edition 1 of 6 +1AP, 150 x 150 x 5cm

Courtesy of the artist

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In an industry dominated by white males, this work stands defiant. As a black pregnant woman my body questions the illusion and hierarchy of western power.

*Yagu 'mother'*

*dedicated to all women who have come before and all those  
that will come after,  
connected in our womanhood.*

*being a woman and*

*becoming a mother*

*I have known*

*nothing more expansive yet narrowing*

*nothing more powerful yet vulnerable*

*nothing more grounding yet uplifting*

*nothing more tangible yet spiritual*

*nothing more responsible yet impulsive*

*nothing more Interconnected yet introspective*

*nothing more instinctual yet frightening*

*here, I call on the power of all women throughout time to give  
me strength to birth  
my child.*

– Artist Nicole Monks,  
Mother of Yarra

# NICOLE MONKS

Within my practice I use my body as a medium of expression.

*windi-windinmanha* is a self-portrait symbolising an unbroken connection to my heritage and to everyone who has come before, it is a signifier to my lived experience of the now, and a memorandum to everyone who will come in the future.

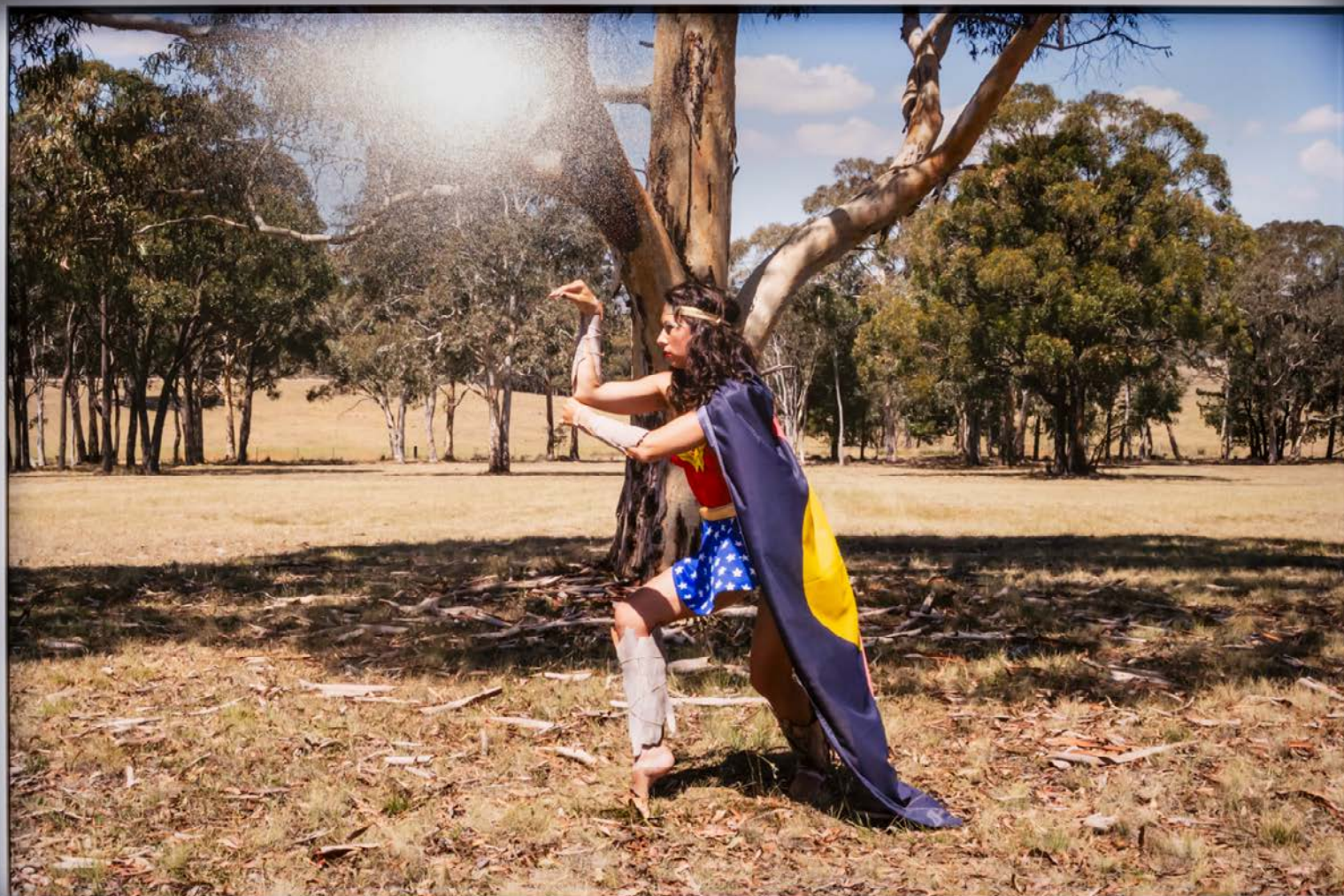
Combining white ochre, bark, twine, superhero genre, Aboriginal flag, movement and spirit *windi-windinmanha* expresses my experience of contemporary culture and the coming together of mixed heritages.

*my world is spinning  
I need to draw strength, ground myself,  
find the capacity to continue alone...*

*I need to be a Wonder Woman  
unsure I have the inner strength  
I connect to country,  
plants, animals, people, spirit*

*I pause, reconnect  
remember the knowing  
everything is as it should be.*

– Artist Nicole Monks,  
Mother of Yarra



*windi-windinmanha (mixing up)*, 2018  
Photography, Edition 1 of 6 +1AP, 100x 150cm  
Artbank Collection, purchased 2019



# PAMELA RODOREDA



## **'Being Woman' Series**

(Each print is numbered, from 1 to 9), 2000

Monoprints in oils on heavyweight paper, 99 x 80cm each. Courtesy of the artist

These vignettes emerged from an effort to portray aspects of the female condition from the perspective of "mother":

the innocent vulnerability of childhood and the growing awareness of our bodies as we approach puberty through to the susceptibility of adolescence.

the messiness and confrontation of bodily functions; the apprehension of giving birth and the mask we so often assume; to the relief when the discomfort and fear of birthing has passed and we begin to nurture our own small creation.

the full awareness of ourselves as confident mature sexual beings, to the sometimes overwhelming responsibility and vulnerability of motherhood.

– Artist Pamela Rodoreda,  
Mother of Luke, Suzette, Martin &  
Clinton, Grandmother of Noah, Isaac,  
Jacob, Abigail, Thomas & Emilia



# PAMELA RODOREDA

This work evolved from the idea of creating a map of my own “mind”, even to the point of folding the work in some way as with a traditional paper map. A folding triptych seemed a perfect solution.

These were prevalent during the Middle Ages as Church altarpieces. Featuring religious imagery, the three panels were hinged together and could be folded up to protect the artworks and allow for easy transport, storage and/or concealment behind a decorative facade.

I enjoyed the irony of portraying myself – a very ordinary woman, wife and mother of the 21st Century – in this superfluous manner.

However unlike traditional religious imagery such as the Madonna, which reveals nothing of her personality or existence outside a couple of “snapshots” of her as triumphant Mother of the Infant Jesus or as grieving Mother of the Martyred Son, I wanted to infer a depth of experience and personality that is rarely evident in these religious altarpieces.

The outer facade of my triptych, while decorative to a degree, is still relatively plain and low key as a reflection of my own person, while the inner “workings” portray – I hope – a mother who is first and foremost, herself.

– Artist Pamela Rodoreda,  
*Mother of Luke, Suzette, Martin & Clinton,  
Grandmother of Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Abigail,  
Thomas & Emilia*



*'My Own Self' (Mind Map) Triptych, 2005*

Triptych in Oils on canvas board mounted in wooden case painted and stencilled in acrylic, 65 x 130 x 5cm. Courtesy of the artist

# ROKEYA SULTANA

My practice has largely focused on my internal life and exploration of the feminine; fluid emotional states and sensual abstract topographies.

The Madonna works are a strong feminist statement of determined womanhood. Here is the everyday woman, moving about in the world, jostled and always in peril, but always a beacon, a presence and a protest in her own right. "Madonna is me; Madonna is my daughter; Madonna is my mother; Madonna is love; Madonna is desire; Madonna is movement; Madonna is a fight...Madonna is vulnerable because she is peacemaker but she is ready to fight. She is a symbol of me and all women, she changes throughout time, but she is forever performing the same role. What she did not get in her life, because of the limitations of being a woman, she wants to give to her child, holding her hand. In this way she is a protest against society. She is always draped in a magenta sari, because I want to show that she is feminine and rooted in tradition. Her rebellion is deeper... The magenta is a symbol of transforming the negative through the feminine psyche. Magenta is on the verge of aggressive red, but is softer, playful, positive. My Madonna is every girl and every woman.

– Artist Rokeya Sultana,  
Mother of Fariba Laura Haque





# ROKEYA SULTANA



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

1. **Madonna 2**, 1991  
Softground and aquatint etching 50 x 30cm  
Courtesy of the artist
2. **Madonna 3**, 1991  
Softground and aquatint etching 39 x 56cm  
Courtesy of the artist
3. **Madonna with her Passengers**, 1996  
Softground and aquatint etching, 55 x 93cm  
Courtesy of the artist
4. **Madonna on the Street, Dhaka, 1**, 1996  
Softground and aquatint etching, 62 x 49cm  
Courtesy of the artist
5. **Madonna on a boat**, 2019  
Softground and aquatint etching, 62 x 49cm  
Courtesy of the artist



# SUSAN O'DOHERTY



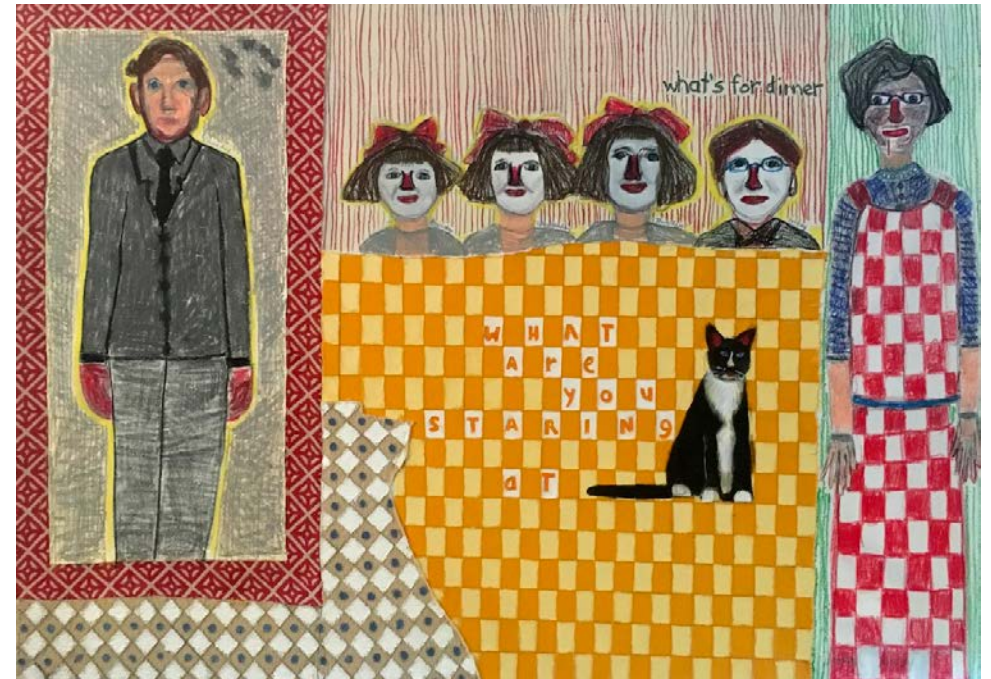
## ***My Reflection*, 2018**

mixed media sculpture (plinth): plaster hand, buttons, nail polish, iron, textiles, paint and wood, 50 x 40 x 22cm. Courtesy of Art Atrium

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When the kids were small I spent years washing, hanging, ironing and folding clothes. This went against my better inclinations as I'd never really cared about perfect presentation before. School years changed all that and I felt guilty, like an uncaring mother if my boys' uniforms were not up to scratch.

– Artist Susan O'Doherty, *Mother of Declan and Otis*



## ***What are you Staring At*, 2018**

mixed media drawing: primed canvas, woollen blanket, bath towel, felt, lead pencil, oil stick, felt tipped pen, nail polish and acrylic paint, 152 x 213 cm

Courtesy of Art Atrium

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This is a family portrait, a collage of blankets, bath towel and clothing on primed canvas to convey home décor and kitchen setting in the daily grind that I found myself in as a mother, becoming the primary carer while my husband was away with work for weeks at a time. I found myself in the cycle of breakfast, school lunches, feeding the cat, dinner, shopping, school drop offs and pickups, sport, music lessons, parent and teacher nights and the incessant running around. Then, exhausted at the end of the day and still with a load of washing to do and thinking about tomorrow's lunches. The endless stream of unpaid domestic work crept up over time and set us up in the stereotypical gender roles of breadwinner and housewife.

# SUSAN O'DOHERTY



## ***Hung Out to Dry*, 2017**

mixed media: wooden coat hanger, milk bottles, bra, paint, wood and varnish,  
54 x 54 x 10cm. Courtesy of Art Atrium

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It was amazing how my consciousness and focus was redirected to the needs of my newborn babies. Not only was there a mental shift but the physical changes were enormous. Nature hijacked my body and I become a feeding machine.

– Artist Susan O'Doherty, Mother of Declan and Otis



## ***Material World*, 2017**

mixed media: handbag, high heel shoe, hair curlers, watch, jewellery, pebbles,  
animal skull, paint and wood, 60 x 60 x 15cm. Courtesy of Jeannette Siebols

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As a female our handbags are vessels carrying the accoutrements of our intimate worlds; a collection of our personal effects, a mirror to a woman's domain. We take them everywhere we go. These works are time capsules, spilling out a chronicle of life experiences - marriages, motherhood, careers, highlights and disappointments from birth to death; the cycle of life and passing of time.

– Artist Susan O'Doherty, Mother of Declan and Otis



# SUSAN O'DOHERTY



***We're not all the Same***, 2019

acrylic on canvas, 167 x 152cm

Courtesy of \* PLEASE SUPPLY \*

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This painting signifies three stages of my life, from small child, to teenager, to adult. As a little girl I had expectations of a fairytale life, getting married and having children. TV, movies, literature, social media and advertising reinforced these ideals. These dresses are a cut- out version of myself as if lifted out of a children's book and placed on paper bodies waiting for the flesh and blood and personality to inhabit them. I have different personas for different situations and play many roles. Looking at photographs of myself as a young mother it's like I'm looking at someone else from a distance. I don't really recognize myself.

– *Artist Susan O'Doherty,  
Mother of Declan and Otis*



# CASULA POWERHOUSE ARTS CENTRE

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the Cabrogal Clan of the Darug Nation who are the traditional custodians of the land that now resides within Liverpool City Council's boundaries. We acknowledge that this land was also accessed by peoples of the Dhurawal and Darug Nations.

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### **Exhibition produced by:**

Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre

**Exhibition Curator:** Jenny Cheeseman

### **Additional gallery installation photography:**

courtesy of Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre -  
photographer: Chantel Bann

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Nikita Karvounis - Assistant Director

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Brittany D'Chong - Curatorial Assistant and Exhibitions Administrator

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Alice O'Brien - Assistant Registrar

Leigh Perrett - Technical Producer

Sean Falconer, David Langosch, Rochelle Briggenshaw - Assistant Technical Producer

Roy Marchant - Producer of Public Programs

Cayn Rosmarin - Public Programs Officer

Di McClaughlin - Public Programs Officer

Nikki Akbar - Events Producer

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Clare Cochrane - Customer Relations And Visitor Experience Supervisor

Simon Fry, Vesna Ristevski, Ance Frasca - Visitor Services Officer

Hamish Ta-mé - Marketing Officer

Cara Lopez - Marketing and Communications Assistant

Koby Hollingworth - Administration Co-Ordinator

Lisa Bowen - Administration Assistant

Federico Rekowski - Head Chef, Bellbird

Steven Pham - Sous Chef, Bellbird

Rosemary Becker - Bellbird Café Staff

Daniel Charet - Site Caretaker (Internal)

Lauren Booth - Gardener And Caretaker