

onespace



Wild Remembering

Claudia-Maria Luenig, Emma Gardner & Rachael Wellisch

6-30 March 2019

Wildernesses: Fabric and Form

Intricate, peculiar forms demand intimate inspection. Ghostly figures writhe in a vivid blue expanse. A slick, iridescent substance bubbles away seductively. The weight of something deeply spiritual lingers in the air.

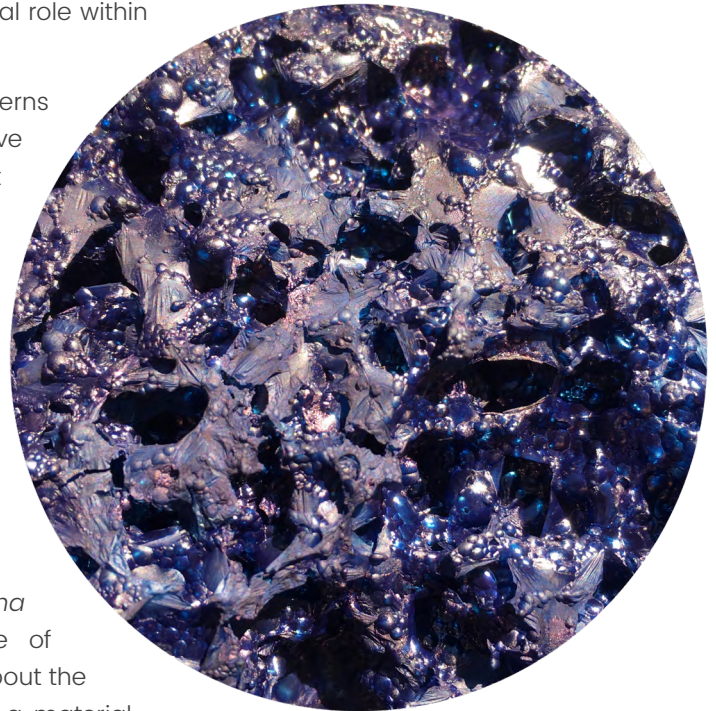
Wild Remembering brings together works by Claudia-Maria Luenig, Emma Gardner and Rachael Wellisch, three artists driven by their research into aspects of the human condition who are united by their shared interests in contemporary textile practices. Each artist works with specific materials and techniques that carry with them particular significance, allowing the creation of meaning to occur through both process and form. Performativity and embodied practice are vital to each, with the artist's active body playing a fundamental role within all three of their practices.

The points at which these artists' thematic concerns overlap and diverge prove fertile for contemplative consideration. Grappling with their distinct but fundamentally existential concerns, Luenig, Gardner and Wellisch are unified through shared themes of fluidity, nature and labour, key concepts that recur across each artist's works. Nevertheless, each is preoccupied with their own specific investigations: Luenig into the boundaries between body and spirit; Gardner into the connections between self and nature; and Wellisch into the relationship between nature and culture.

Luenig's suite of drawings and crocheted *Leibschema* (body schema) forms employ the language of absence and presence to communicate ideas about the liminal cusp of one's existence. Using elastic as a material analogy for skin, Luenig's sculptures are representative of the body as well as being apparatus for the artist's body to interact with. Luenig finds elastic to be a useful metaphor, because it speaks to the pliability of the physical body as well as that of one's inner self. Crocheting elasticated cord into concentric circles in a way that is highly structured and predictable, Luenig's forms embody a duality of physical tension through their construction and passive flaccidity; they await activation.

Her drawings are derived from performative experimentation using the *Leibschema* and gestural movements. Both precise and chaotic, Luenig's *Shift* suite of drawings renders the skin, both actual and metaphorical, as a site of perception and restriction. While informed by several processes—that of the objects' construction and then their performative function—these drawings are in and of themselves a process, part of the artist's phenomenological enquiry into consciousness and encounter. The implied body, through both its conspicuous absence and inferred presence, reverberates between Luenig's sculptures and drawings, at once hiding in plain sight and not really there at all.

Gardner's works are directly engaged with absence and presence in the process of their creation. Her silk wall hangings reference historical folklore tales in contemplation of the enduring narratives that link a journey through natural landscapes to a process of one's self-discovery. Gardner combines hand-embroidered and machine-stitched imagery with life-size cyanotype monogram prints of her posed body, employing an early photographic technique that exposes a silhouette image with the UV light present in the environment. Using her body in this way is a loaded action, implicating her own figure as both author and subject, and complicating the relationship between truth and fiction.



Gardner was initially drawn to the Slavic legend of Baba Yaga and the German tale of *The Handless Maiden* for their strong female protagonists, whose stories centre around banishment to wild forests, and their references to witchcraft, an important theme within Gardner's practice. However, Gardner observed that these stories ultimately still serve male-defined ideals of femininity, and as such she subverts their narratives in her wall hangings, imagining different outcomes where untamed women revel shamelessly in their power and relationship with the landscape. Her series of works privilege and re-frame these qualities as strong, desirable, and inherently linked to embracing paganistic, nature-centred forms of knowledge.

Wellisch's works also foreground the importance of processes and materials drawn from nature, with a particular focus on the substance of indigo dye. Fascinated with this material to the point of near-obsession, Wellisch muses on the wealth of historical and cultural connotations that indigo is imbued with. She is concerned by humanity's anthropocentric approach to our existence, and as such works with salvaged materials, transforming discarded textiles from would-be landfill into her laboriously crafted sculptures. Formally, Wellisch returns persistently to circular forms, in an endeavour to articulate the underlying continuity and cyclic nature of the universe.



Wellisch's *Recuperated Material Monuments* installation is a kind of portal, inviting the viewer to enter and be surrounded by her ring of layered forms.

Reminiscent of ancient stone circles, the gradated layers of Wellisch's solid fabric sculptures shift from a deep indigo hue to stark white. Her moving image work *Indigo Revealed* and the derived suite of prints, *Pieces of Indigo Revealed*, capture moments throughout the process of preparing a vat of indigo dye, drawing attention to the expansive, alchemical qualities of the substance. With these works, Wellisch further explores the many iterations of the dyeing process, revealing the innate beauty and energy of her revered material.

Wild Remembering presents works that were created in pursuit of insight into the nature of knowledge and experience. All three artists strive to communicate ideas about long-felt connections, which run far deeper than many perceive. Through each of their practices, Luenig,

Gardner, and Wellisch encourage people to seek out such connections and, in doing so, to enrich their spiritual experience and appreciation of existence.

Lisa Bryan-Brown
Independent writer & curator

onespace



Wild Remembering brings textiles, crocheting and performance to ideas about the body and nature. This series of works by Vienna-based artist Claudia-Maria Luenig and Brisbane-based artists Emma Gardner and Rachael Wellisch express sensitive spatial relationships in their form. An earlier exhibition of this work seen in Vienna in December 2018 was applauded for its ability to frame its imagery in multiple spatial iterations. The exhibition title is drawn from connections to nature and bodily memory, creating links between humanity and a changing environment. Luenig creates weaving as physical drawings by stitching her own body into them; Gardner explores the environment and her own image from a feminine and folklore perspective; and Wellisch focuses on the relationship between nature and culture by making expanded paintings with indigo dyes.

Exhibiting Artists and Onespace Gallery would also like to thank:

Lisa Bryan-Brown, Louise Martin-Chew, Evie Franzidis, Jenny Watson, Jay Younger, Thomas Oliver, Simon Suckling, Lucas Gehrman (Curator of the Kunsthalle Vienna), *The West End Magazine*, Worldwide Printing Solutions – South Brisbane and Symons Signs.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands, winds and waters on which this gallery stands.

We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and future.

onespacegallery.com.au

13a Gladstone Road,
Highgate Hill QLD 4101
Australia
+61 7 3846 0642
Wed to Fri: 10am – 5pm
Sat: 10am – 4pm

Gallery Directors, John Stafford and Jodie Cox

john@onespacegallery.com.au
jodie@onespacegallery.com.au

Gallery Officer, Alicia Hollier
alicia@onespacegallery.com.au

Presented with the support of Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

Image (cover): Emma Gardner, *She followed her Intuition and the Initiation began – BabaYaga*, 2019, Cyanotype, hand and machine stitched silver thread and mono-trace oil stick on silk, 212 x 105cm. Photo: Thomas Oliver. Courtesy of the artist.
Image (above): Claudia-Maria Luenig, *Leibschema*, 2016, Grey elastic cord, crocheted, each piece approximately 70cm diameter. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

