

Paula Quintela

The Shadows That Follow Me

16th May– 14th June 2025

onespace



The Shadows That Follow Me

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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Exhibition Dates | 16 May– 14 June 2025

Opening Event | Saturday 17 May, 5pm – 7pm

Artist Gallery Walk Through | Ticketed event | Saturday 24 May, 2 – 4pm

Onespace Gallery Hours | Tuesday to Friday 10am – 5pm, Saturday 12pm – 5pm

The Shadow That Follows Me, features a new body of work by Paula Quintela that extends upon her existing practice. Drawing from her early childhood memories in Chile, a country ruled at the time by dictatorship, she vividly recalls long and difficult years of hardship that have vehemently shaped her artistic practice today. Paula's new works beautifully transform her reflections on her childhood and desire to express her experience of diaspora into a world of fantasy, imagination, exploration, and wonder. *The Shadow That Follows Me* comprises an enthralling series of mixed-media works on paper, together with several new sculptures that draw upon her 2-dimensional motifs, bringing these unique characters to life.



Paula Quintela, *The Nursery*, 2023, Mixed media, etching, chine colle, and water colour, 120x 100cm. Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist..

Paula Quintela

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Photo: Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Paula Quintela is a multidisciplinary artist originally from Chile, now based in Brisbane, Australia. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from the Universidad de Chile and has undertaken further studies in professional photography at Fotoforum Institute (Chile), ceramics at Fanshawe College in London, Canada, and printmaking with Canadian artist Jean Pierre Sauvé in Montreal.

Quintela has exhibited widely in both solo and group exhibitions across Chile and internationally, with her work shown in France, Argentina, New York, Hong Kong, and Australia.

Her current practice explores the interplay between time, migration, and memory, drawing deeply from the natural environments she has inhabited. “In my journey as an artist, I have always been fascinated by Nature,” she says. “Three elements recur vividly throughout my work—water, air, and earth—each rising to prominence depending on the landscape around me.” From the dark oceans of South America and the dense Canadian forests to the starry skies of the Atacama Desert and the lush tropics of Queensland, these elemental themes inform her rich visual language.

Working across sculpture, printmaking, and mixed media, Quintela continues to evolve her practice, blending traditional techniques with contemporary approaches to reflect the complexities of place and personal history.

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The Shadows That Follows Me is a new body of work, both personal and universally relatable, kindled by Paula Quintela's memories of family and loss and flavoured with incomprehensible lived experiences. Inspired by a recent trip back to Chile and Quintela's father's death, a novel perspective of heredity, culture, and memory is seen through the eyes of a perpetual outsider.

Paula Quintela's life story reads like a novel, soaked in magic realism. Surrounded by her large, lovingly eccentric family, she witnessed the disappearance of family friends and the fear and uncertainty that came with political upheaval. Quintela's vivid and haunting memories as a young child during the coup d'état in Chile in 1973 and the oppressive atmosphere under Pinochet's regime are ever present in her art. These experiences have profoundly shaped her artistic narrative with themes of survival and resilience, blurring the boundaries between the physical and spiritual worlds.

Her imagined forests are populated with hybridised, shadow-dwelling creatures and anthropomorphic flora, and are scattered with forensic traces of the indigenous ancestors. Employing a multiplicity of techniques, Quintela's Chine collé and hand-coloured etchings are unique. Her painted ceramic specimens reveal a vulnerability in being visible, reflecting on her personal experience of a life spent hiding in plain sight.

The quote "Everything in the Universe has a rhythm. Everything dances" is often attributed to Maya Angelou¹. However, the origins of this phrase are complex, and similar ideas have been expressed by other thinkers throughout history. In an interview published in *Intellectual Digest* in 1973, Angelou said, "Everything in the universe has a rhythm". Referring to her process in writing poetry Angelou said that she would first write her spontaneous thoughts on any given topic in longhand, then read it back to herself, searching for the rhythms, allowing the poetry in the prose to emerge.

Trusting in the process and relying on her instinct, Quintela similarly allows her thoughts, ideas and inspiration to emerge unfiltered, before deciding which to

emphasise and which to play down in her work. Her works often start with the same printed image and demonstrate her method of revisiting the 'original' to bring a new emphasis to different elements within the complex landscapes of her imaginary worlds. The same story is retold, revealing and hiding different perspectives each time.

Quintela exhibits a high level of expertise in numerous techniques as a painter, photographer, installation artist and sculptor. Her primary medium has evolved as a unique form of Chine collé and hand-coloured etching. Without any preliminary sketches, her drawings are made directly on the etching plate. Each print then becomes a one-off, like a painting, incorporating collaged dressmaking patterns, ink, watercolour and pencil, elements that reference her familial and societal cultural origins.

The significance of family cannot be overstated when looking at Quintela's work. Family is our first culture and the foundation for our expectations, values and beliefs. Her home was a happy but unruly and tumultuous place, further disrupted by the political chaos and instability outside the gates. Meals were riotous and festive, and food was often devoured before the youngest had been served. The family and home were divided into three: each parent's first brood of children, the mother's domain, and the paternal grandmother's house. Two houses were separated by a garden, with a fence all around and a gate into each. As a child, Quintela saw the garden as a sanctuary. Of the seven children, only she and her sister, who shared the same mother and father, were "the natives of the in-between"².

Her mother's family were all exceptionally tall, with origins stretching back through Chilean history to the complex mix of Spanish colonial, indigenous and other European immigrant cultures. Quintela's paternal grandmother originally came from Barcelona. Alone and pregnant, fleeing the Spanish Civil War, she gave birth to Quintela's father onboard a ship on the open ocean in Colombian waters. He was, therefore, not Spanish, Colombian, or Chilean. Quintela adored her father and painfully recalls people staring at him and taunting children calling him *Jorobado*, a cruel translation for Hunchback.

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We first become aware of our own embedded cultural predispositions when we engage with individuals who are not like us. Exposure to otherness may provoke a sense of ourselves as also being 'other'. We begin to acquire strategies for navigating the differences and the spaces in between. Quintela recalls:

My father was a hunchback. He once took us in a yellow Mercedes with diplomatic plates into the jungle. He drove us to a remote Indigenous Mayan village. The villagers had never seen people from elsewhere. They looked at us. We looked at them. We were so much the same and yet so different ³.

To disguise his physical difference, her grandmother, a consummate dressmaker, fashioned beautifully cut and styled clothes for Quintela's father. Herein lies the basis for the use of vintage dressmaking patterns in Quintela's work. They are carefully layered and appear faintly topographical, mapping out borders and instructions to pin or gather or to cut here.

Aware of the constant presence of danger surrounding his eccentric, intellectual family, her father enrolled his children in private Catholic schools. His strategy was to protect them by hiding them in plain sight amongst the children of government officials and the elite. Quintela did not fit in and remembers the nuns asking her what she wanted to be when she grew up, to which she replied, "Invisible".

She believed lizards could become invisible, and so was attracted to them, she felt safest among the tiny creatures of the forest and garden. The artist states:

Invisibility is safe. Blackness is the absence of light. The lights that flicker and shine in the paintings also represent absence, in that they are the gaps between, as though the fabric of the world has been punctured to allow glimpses of the light through. Nothing is fully clear, all at once. Even the stories are dual. Everything is light and animated and dark and still ⁴.

For this artist, there are two contradictory forces at play: a fear of being perceived or judged and the desire to be understood; her fear lies in abandoning the security of anonymity. In her paintings, sometimes you are looking into the forest, and sometimes the forest is looking back at you, as the artist shifts perspective between viewer and subject.

Quintela's sculptural pieces are presented as posed specimens, conjured from her imagination, and are offered as previously undiscovered species, so insignificant and dark that, by hiding in the shadows, they have avoided detection and classification, until now. Charmingly grotesque, submissive and vulnerable, these creatures have familiar features and hybrid qualities that lie somewhere in between the factual and the fantastic. Their vices and virtues are reinforced and anthropomorphised in the way they are posed and presented to us. Removed from the forest, and exposed to the light, these blackened, charred creatures from the shadows are forced to be seen, appearing malformed and displaced. Closer inspection reveals that they are all female, representing the artist's state of scopophobia. Fashioned in clay, they have been fired before being painted with an impenetrable coating of extremely matte black paint. Here and there, tufts of fur and real feathers hint at their validity as true specimens, invoking comparisons with taxidermy.

In her essay "Teddy Bear Patriarchy", Donna Haraway presents a perspective that the taxidermized panoramas we see in museums are rooted in patriarchal and colonial ideologies, which prioritise certain groups and viewpoints over others ⁵. The exploitative nature of display, by immobilising animals in specific poses and environments, can reinforce existing power structures and ideologies. Quintela's collective display of creatures caught in the act of birthing, in pregnancy, or lactating reveals their vulnerability in being visible.

Quintela's understanding of her maternal instincts began with her feelings towards her father. She comments:

I am the mother of myself and the mother of my father. I gave birth to myself as a mother and versions of myself as each of my daughters.

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To be maternal is to become the animal you always were. The act of birth and the creatures you give birth to are purely animal in nature. Along with physical features and characteristics, the continuing matriarchal line also carries forward instincts and generational trauma; malformations are reproduced generation after generation⁶.

Nurturing her two daughters brought Quintela to a realisation that her protective instincts began in her childhood with her fiercely protective feelings towards her father and the way his physical disabilities were perceived. Patricia Piccinini, in her 2005 artist statement for her work *Big Mother*, says: "In the face of grief and the pain of losing a child, the differences between different species aren't that important. We have more in common in the love for children than we differ genetically"⁷.

Quintela's experiences through life were never about belonging. She is always an immigrant, an imposter, an impossible hybrid, travelling with someone else's luggage, full of disguises.

Cassandra Lehman

Cassandra Lehman is a highly regarded and respected arts industry professional and contributor to the arts and culture sectors, both within Australia and internationally. With over two decades of industry experience, Cassandra has worked as a curator, gallery director, arts policy writer, and theatre production manager.

1. Quote Research, "Quote Origin: Everything in the Universe has a Rhythm," February 19th 2023, <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2023/02/19/rhy>
2. Personal Interview with Paula Quintela March 2025
3. Personal Interview with Paula Quintela March 2025
4. Personal Interview with Paula Quintela March 2025
5. Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908-1936," *Social Text* 11 (1984): 20.
6. Personal interview with Paula Quintela March 2025
7. Patricia Piccinini, "Big Mother," 2005, <https://www.patriciapiccinini.net/writing/50/>

Paula Quintela

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Paula Quintela

La Exploradora Muda (The Mute Explore I), 2023

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela

La Exploradora Muda (The Mute Explore II), 2023

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Paula Quintela

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Paula Quintela
Three Head Lady Bird, 2024
Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Three Head Lady Bird II, 2024
Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Paula Quintela

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Paula Quintela

The Underworld II, 2024

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela

The Underworld, 2024

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
God of Fire and Light II, 2025
Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
God of Fire and Light, 2025
Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

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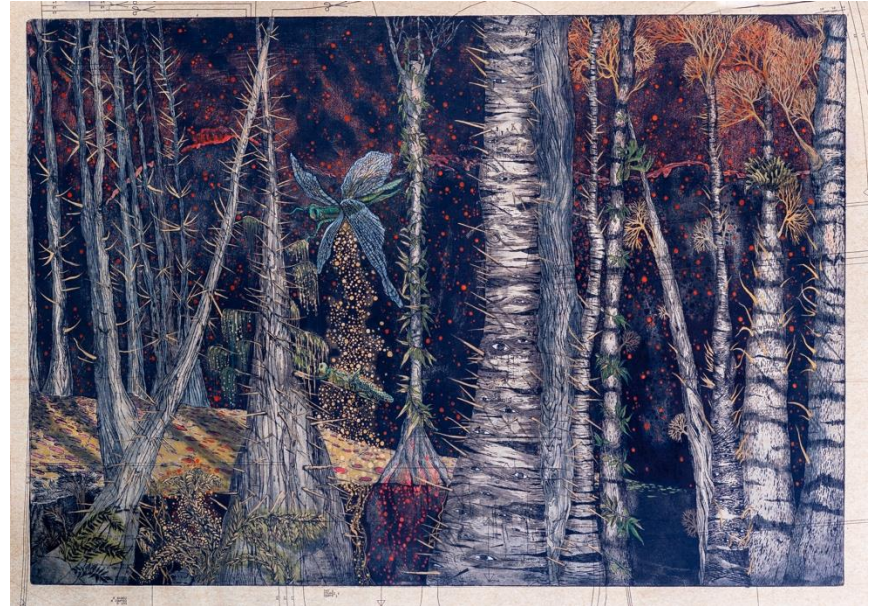
Paula Quintela

The Heavenly Garden, 2025

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
104 x 133 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela

The Dreamer, 2024

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
106 x 135 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$5,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Paula Quintela



Paula Quintela
The Departure, 2024

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
90 x 80 x 5 cm (framed)

\$4,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

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Paula Quintela
The Nursery, 2023

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
90 x 80 x 5 cm (framed)

\$4,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Paula Quintela

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Paula Quintela
Resurrection I, 2024

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
80 x 89 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$4,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Resurrection II, 2024

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
80 x 89 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$4,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Paula Quintela

The Shadows That Follow Me

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Paula Quintela

Quintai, 2024

Mixed media, etching, Chine Colle, and watercolour,
80 x 89 x 5 cm (Framed)

\$4,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Flowers of The Forest

“Quintela's sculptural pieces are presented as posed specimens, conjured from her imagination, and are offered as previously undiscovered species, so insignificant and dark that, by hiding in the shadows, they have avoided detection and classification, until now.

Charmingly grotesque, submissive and vulnerable, these creatures have familiar features and hybrid qualities that lie somewhere in between the factual and the fantastic. Their vices and virtues are reinforced and anthropomorphised in the way they are posed and presented to us. Removed from the forest, and exposed to the light, these blackened, charred creatures from the shadows are forced to be seen, appearing malformed and displaced. Closer inspection reveals that they are all female, representing the artist's state of scopophobia.”

Cassandra Lehman



Front



Side

Paula Quintela

Ulmo, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, timber, feathers, synthetic fur and dolls eyes, 29 x 21 x 25cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Inca Lily, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, and dolls eyes, 15 x 28 x 10cm

\$1,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Quisco, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, feathers, and dolls eyes, 25 x 26 x 10cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Chachacoma, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, feathers,
synthetic fur and dolls eyes, 38 x 14 x 10cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Great Soldier of the Mountains, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, feathers,
and dolls eyes, 21 x 13 x 10cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Back



Side

Paula Quintela

Quillay, 2025

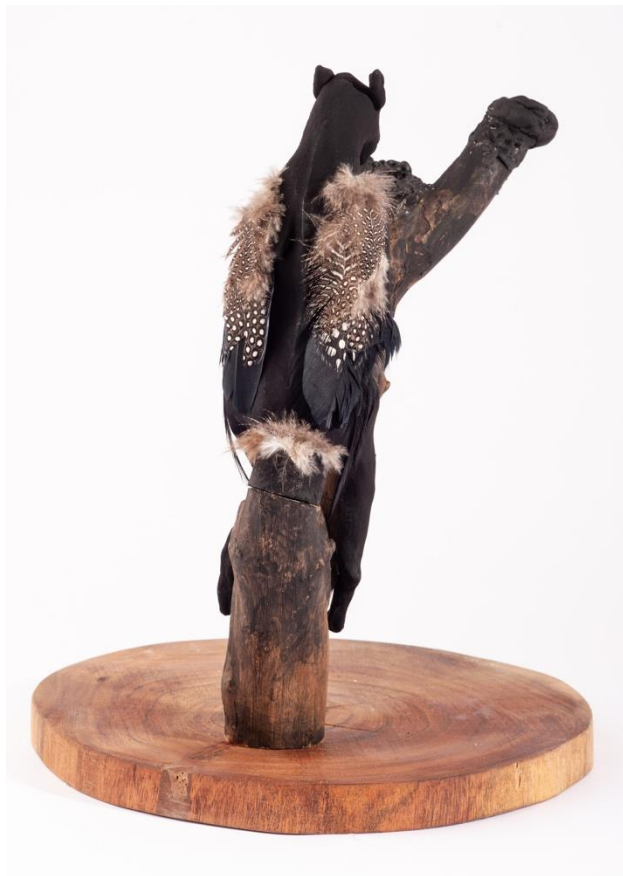
Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, timber, feathers, and dolls eyes, 14 x 14 x 10cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Side



Back

Paula Quintela
Cerastium, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, timber, feathers, synthetic fur and dolls eyes, 31 x 28 x 25cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Capachito, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, and dolls eyes, 12 x 30 x 10cm

\$1,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Quilloi, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, feathers, synthetic fur and dolls eyes, 20 x 26 x 10cm

\$1,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Ortiga Caballuna, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, feathers,
synthetic fur, synthetic rope and dolls eyes,
17 x 17 x 14cm

\$1,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Butterfly of Los Molles, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, feathers,
and dolls eyes, 20 x 26 x 22cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Cenecio, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, feathers,
and dolls eyes, 33 x 17 x 10cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Herb of the Worm, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink and dolls
eyes, 10 x 20 x 10cm

\$1,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Front



Back

Paula Quintela

Nipa, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black ink, feathers and dolls eyes, 19 x 18 x 13cm

\$1,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Lenguilla, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black
ink and dolls eyes, 30 x 10 x 10cm

\$1,750

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Paula Quintela
Notro, 2025

Mixed media, ceramics, acrylic paint, ultra-black
ink, and dolls eyes, 26 x 10 x 5cm

\$1,500

Photo: Paula Quintela. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Onespace is a Brisbane-based gallery that presents and sells contemporary art, including work by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

We curate an exhibition program exploring diverse themes and media, showcasing emerging, mid-career and established artists whose works inform, stimulate and challenge. Onespace welcomes you to engage with the artists and artworks we exhibit.

Onespace is uniquely located adjacent to Maiwar (Brisbane river) beneath the Spice Apartments near the Go Between Bridge in South Brisbane. We are proudly surrounded by the dynamic buzz of the Queensland cultural precinct that is significant to this area of Brisbane.

Director, John Stafford: john@onespace.com.au

Director, Jodie Cox: jodie@onespace.com.au

Exhibitions Manager, Demi Conrad: demi@onespace.com.au

Interns, Mae Stanton & Poppy Saines: intern@onespace.com.au

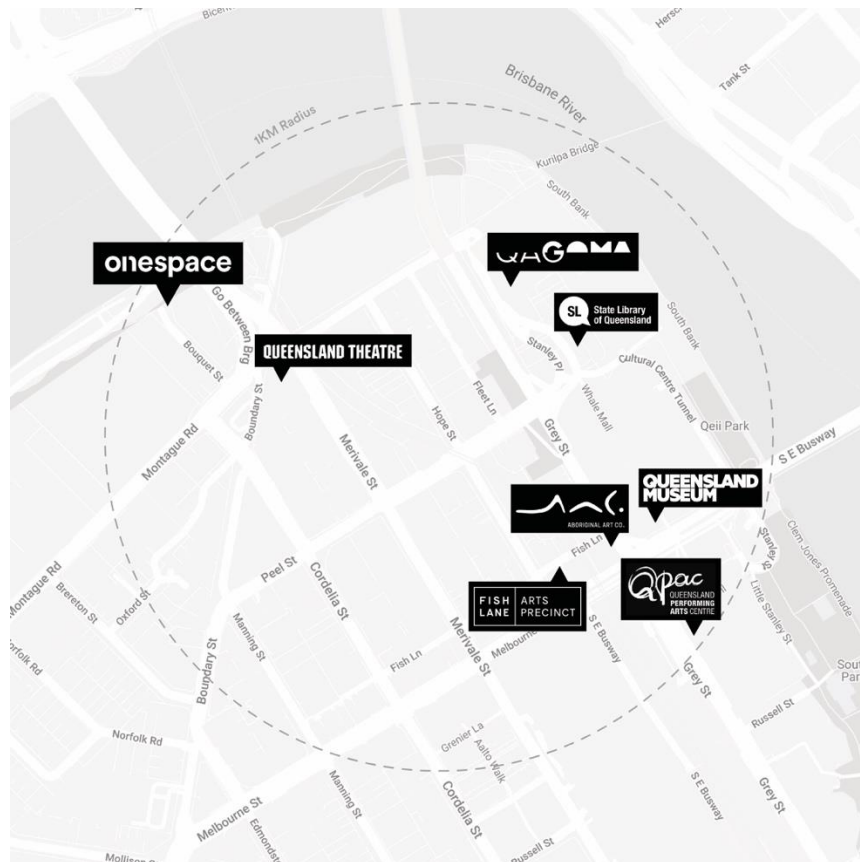
onespace.com.au

[@onespace.au](https://www.instagram.com/onespace.au)

Onespace Gallery Hours:

Tuesday to Friday 10am – 5pm, Saturday 12pm – 5pm

25A Bouquet Street, South Brisbane Q 4101 Australia



Onespace acknowledges the traditional custodians of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to the land, waters, culture and community. We pay our respects to elders past and present.