

onespace



Sebastian Di Mauro

Unsettled Ground

30 January – 28 February 2026

Exhibition Dates: 30 January – 28 February 2026

Opening Event: Saturday 31 January, 5 – 8pm | Artist Talk, 4 – 5pm

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

Gallery Walk Through: in conversation with Sebastian Di Mauro + Christian Rizzali

Saturday 14 February 2026, 2 – 4pm | Ticketed event via Humanitix

Sebastian Di Mauro interrogates the contradictions at the heart of a nation that calls itself modern yet remains bound to the symbols and systems of empire. Australia's continued membership in the Commonwealth and allegiance to the British royal family expose an unresolved colonial mindset—one that coexists uneasily with the realities of a contemporary, multicultural society.

The series begins with the arrival of British colonizers, whose imposition of governance, architecture, and cultural norms sought to overwrite the deep histories, laws, and traditions of First Nations peoples. These foreign systems, rooted in a monarchy and imperial hierarchy, were built for a monocultural world that no longer exists.

Today, Australia is home to people from hundreds of nationalities, speaking countless languages and shaping a vibrant, pluralistic culture. Yet, its symbolic head of state remains a monarch on the other side of the world—an emblem of a singular past presiding over a diverse present.

Through *Unsettled Ground*, Di Mauro exposes this dissonance, questioning why a country so enriched by difference still clings to inherited power structures. His work invites viewers to imagine an Australia that fully reflects its people—one free to define its identity without bowing to the ghosts of empire.

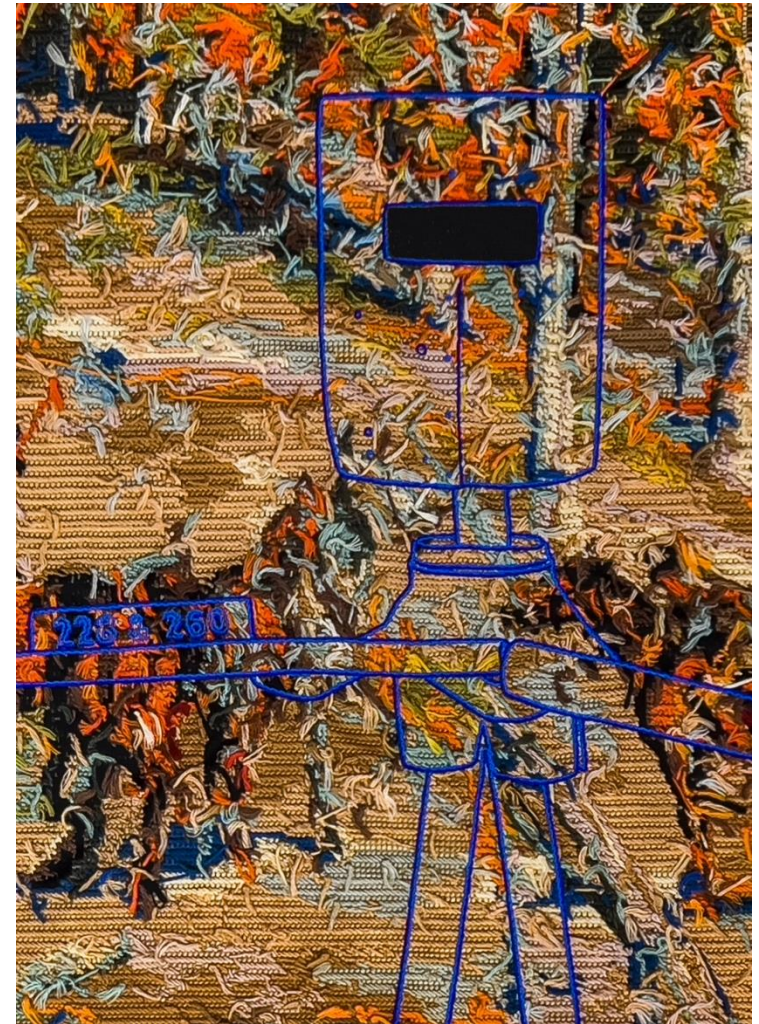


Image (detail): *Bolters*, 2026. Printed textile and hand stitched blended yarn in brown felt boarder, 168 x 303 cm.
Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Photo: Carl Warner. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.

Sebastian Di Mauro was born in Innisfail and currently lives and works between Brisbane and the United States. Since the late 1980s, he has presented more than 45 solo exhibitions and participated in over 100 group exhibitions across Australia and internationally. His diverse practice—encompassing painting, sculpture, artist books, and installation—is represented in major Australian collections, including the Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, the Art Gallery of Western Australia, McClelland Gallery and Sculpture Park, Bendigo Art Gallery, the Besen Collection, Artbank, the University of Queensland Art Museum, and Deakin University.

Recent exhibitions include *Throw* (2021) at Bundaberg Regional Art Gallery, *GREENBACK* (2019) at MARS Gallery, Melbourne, and the survey *Always and Altered* at Benalla Art Gallery, Victoria. *Collective Labour* marks his first solo exhibition in Australia since relocating to the United States. In 2023, he was a finalist in the Hadley Art Prize, and his *GREENBACK* series was featured in *Personal Structures – Reflections*, presented by the European Cultural Centre alongside the 59th Venice Biennale (2022).

Recognized as a leading Australian sculptor, Di Mauro's work has been the subject of two monographs: *Between Material* (1998) and *Footnotes of a Verdurous Tale* (2009). His national reputation has been shaped by key milestones such as inclusion in the National Sculpture Prize and Exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia (2001), artist residencies with Parks Victoria and the British School at Rome (2002), and selection as a finalist in The McClelland Survey and Award (2003). He received the Montalto Sculpture Prize (Mornington Peninsula, Victoria) and participated in the Helen Lempriere National Sculpture Award and Exhibition in 2003, 2005, and 2008. In 2009, he was awarded the Australia Council's Barcelona Studio residency, and the Queensland University of Technology Art Museum presented a major survey of his work.

Di Mauro has completed numerous public art commissions for prominent sites, including *Drift* at 33 Charlotte Street, Brisbane (2004), and *blur between* for the Brisbane Magistrates Court (2004). In Adelaide, he completed a commission in 2006 for Taylor Cullity Lethlean Landscape Architects, followed by *The Reel Project*, an ephemeral public artwork for Adelaide City Council (2011). His international public artworks include *Drifter* (2011) in Ningbo, China; *Bloom and Scatter* (2012) in Hong Kong; and *Rapture* (2013) in Suzhou, China. Most recently, in 2020, his sculpture *Bloom* was installed at the Ritz-Carlton, Fari Islands, Maldives.

Dr Sebastian Di Mauro is an Adjunct Associate Professor at Queensland College of Art, Griffith University.

Immigration has recently retaken centre stage in Australian politics. Indeed, this country has a long history of vilifying immigrants, from the Chinese labourers of the 19th century gold rush, through the Cronulla Riots of 2005, and into the noxious March for Australia demonstrations of 2025. In these outbursts, the conservative refrain is always the same: Australia should be the land of white, British peoples, whose culture should be dominant over all others.

Of course, this wilfully ignores the simple and unassailable fact that the British are also immigrants to this land. In fact, the British have been the most violent, virulent and domineering immigrants that Australia has ever seen, meting out genocide against the Indigenous populations and maintaining institutions of colonial domination and oppression to this day.

In his latest exhibition at Onespace, *Unsettled Ground*, Sebastian Di Mauro calls attention to this deep hypocrisy, visualising the discordant presence of British culture and law on Australian land. Through a wide array of techniques, and a healthy dose of humour, Di Mauro demonstrates the shocking absurdity of our enduring ties to Mother England.

His point is made emphatically in *Stitched*. Here, Di Mauro has taken a piece of kitschy Australiana—an image of gum trees in a quintessentially Australian landscape, copied from a tapestry the artist found in a second-hand store—and has inserted an English garden folly into the scene. Garden follies have a fascinating history; they are classic features of English landscape gardens, serving little purpose beyond their own ornamental presence. Perhaps above all else, they speak to that peculiarly English desire

to ‘tame’ the land—to render it safe, comfortable and thoroughly domesticated. But in Di Mauro’s landscape, the folly is obviously incongruent, a fact made explicit by the artist’s selective embroidery, which emphasises the folly’s alien character, its displacement within the landscape. The folly thus acts as a kind of visual cipher for the British presence in Australia: one of foreign imposition.

This message is presented with an edge of art historical humour in *Bound*. The work references a classic piece of early Australian art history: George Stubbs’ *The Kongouro from New Holland* (1772). In *Bound*, Di Mauro has superimposed a copy of Stubbs’ *Kongouro*, along with an equestrian statue of King George III (who ordered the colonisation of Australia, in 1787), in front of Uluru. The *Kongouro* is an incisive addition, as the work evidences what happens when imported traditions try to contend with unfamiliar local conditions. Stubbs’ *Kongouro* looks more like a Jurassic hare than a real kangaroo; in the original painting, this strange animal is set among a picturesque English landscape, with rolling hills and copses of oak and elm trees in the background.

The image is Stubbs’ failed attempt to wrangle Australian flora and fauna into a distinctly English way of seeing and depicting the world. By reinserting the *Kongouro* back into a real Australian landscape, Di Mauro shows just how absurd Stubbs’ image is, and in doing so provokes deeper reflection on the British presence in Australia. Why should we accept the continued dominance of a culture that, like Stubbs’ English painterly tradition, so clearly does not belong here?

More is at play in these works by Di Mauro. In all the watercolours featured in *Unsettled Ground*, the artist has overlaid his images with passages of text from the *Australian Constitution* and its preamble. This textual element is not arbitrary—it is not some kind of self-reflexive, conceptual art commentary on the relationship between words and images. By taking those passages of the *Constitution* that enshrine British rule over Australia (as a Constitutional Monarchy), Di Mauro pointedly reminds us that the imposition of British culture on Australian land is not just about art and architecture. Rather, it is embedded in and holds immense power over our very legal and political institutions, keeping us under the rule of unelected aristocrats, the worst remnants of an age long past. This travesty was, of course, most acutely displayed in the 1975 dismissal of Gough Whitlam, an event referenced in the textual overlay of both *Pomp* and *Britannia*.

The recurrent use of embroidery throughout the exhibition is also noteworthy. In some instances, as already mentioned, Di Mauro has used embroidery to highlight particular features or passages of text in his watercolour works. Other works, however, such as *Ghost Ship* and *Abridged Landscape*, have a more overtly textile quality. These works are both based on an enlarged reprinting of the tapestry that Di Mauro used as his source material for *Stitched*. Over one side of the scene, *Ghost Ship*, Di Mauro has embroidered an image of the HMS Endeavour; over the back, *Abridged Landscape*, is an image of Tasmania's Ross Bridge. In these two works, there is a kind of violence to the embroidery—a puncturing, or scarring of the land. While we may laugh at Stubbs' preposterous *Kongouro*, these works speak to the bloodshed and barbarity lying beneath these once-celebrated symbols of Australia's colonial history.

In all these works, Di Mauro *denaturalises* the presence of British culture and law in Australia. He lifts a veil that has been maintained over centuries—a veil still wielded today by bad-faith actors drumming up anti-immigrant sentiment—and shows the British themselves as foreigners in this land. In a society enriched by immigration, by difference and multiculturalism, *Unsettled Ground* suggests that perhaps it is time to finally break away from our old colonial overlords.

- Dr Christian Rizzali

Dr Christian Rizzali is a Teaching Associate in the art history department at UQ. His research is concerned with the relationship between art, photography, architecture, and politics, particularly in the context of the interwar avant-garde. More recently, he has been working on publications concerning radical left-wing politics and Australian art history.



Sebastian Di Mauro

Stitched, 2026

Digital print on Twill Waratah fabric, hand stitched
blended yarn in blue felt boarder, 165 x 197cm

\$10,000

The image in this work is based on Sebastian Di Mauro's watercolour
artwork, *Temple of the Winds Folly*, 2024.

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

Seam, 2026

Digital print on Twill Waratah fabric, hand stitched
blended yarn in blue felt boarder, 165 x 197cm

\$10,000

The image in this work is based on Sebastian Di Mauro's watercolour
artwork, *Tethered*, 2024.

Artwork Image detail. Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

Bolters, 2026

Digital print on Twill Waratah fabric, hand stitched blended yarn in brown felt boarder, 168 x 303cm.

\$12,000

Artwork Image detail. Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

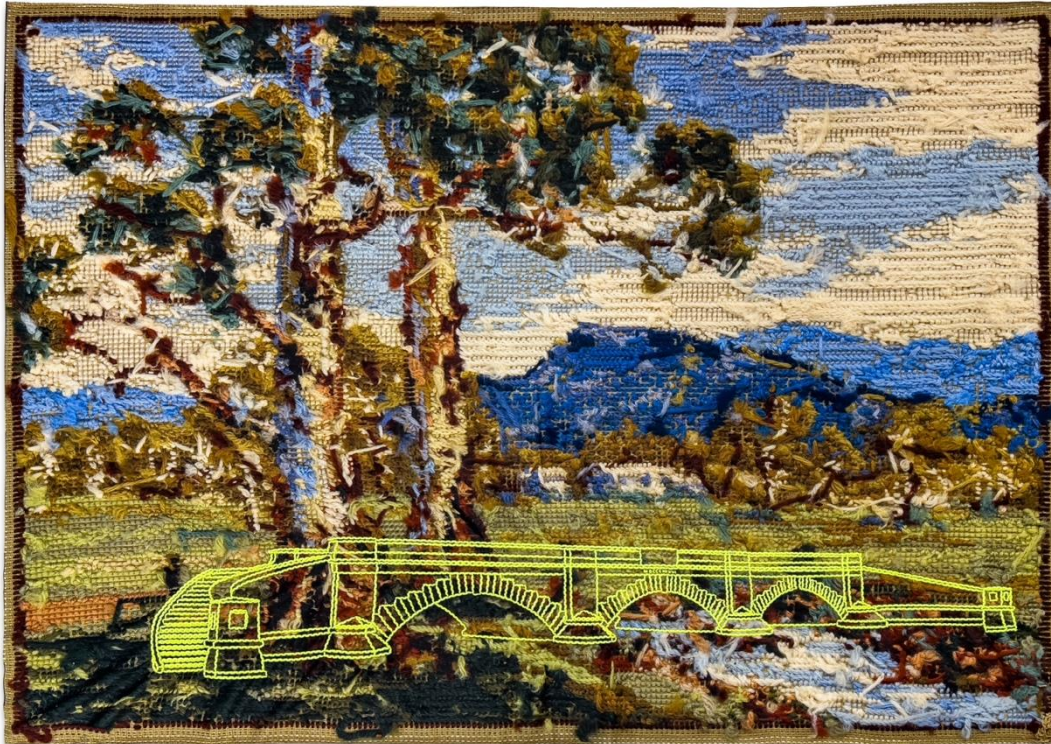
Ghost Ship, 2025

Digital print on Twill Waratah fabric, hand
stitched blended yarn in green felt boarder,
177cm x 237cm.

\$10,000

Artwork Image detail.

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

Abridged Landscape, 2026

Digital print on Twill Waratah fabric, hand
stitched blended yarn in green felt boarder,
177cm x 237cm.

\$10,000

Artwork image detail.

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

Bound, 2025

Watercolour on Arches paper, framed with conservation acrylic.

64.5 x 75 x 4cm (framed)

\$3,750 (framed)

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

Britannia, 2025

Watercolour on Arches paper, framed with conservation acrylic.

64.5 x 75 x 4cm (framed)

\$3,750 (framed)

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

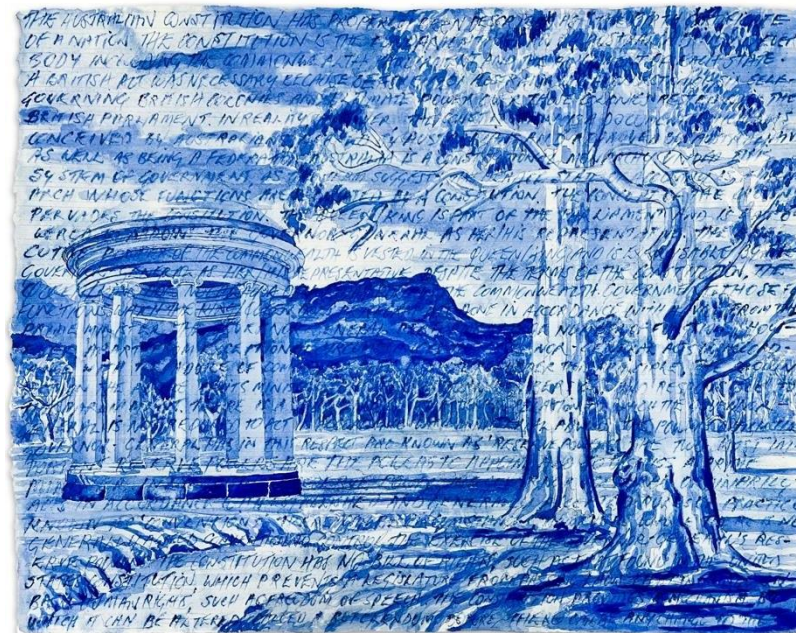
Clutch, 2025

Watercolour on Arches paper, framed with conservation acrylic.

64.5 x 75 x 4cm (framed)

\$3,750 (framed)

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

Temple of the Winds Folly, 2024

Watercolour on Arches paper, framed with conservation acrylic.

64.5 x 75 x 4cm (framed)

\$3,750 (framed)

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

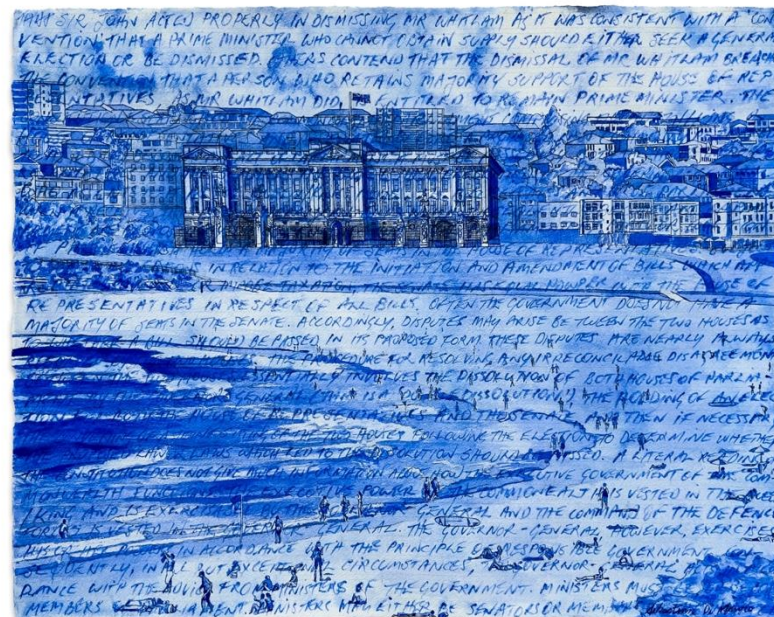
The Tower on Cockatoo, 2025

Watercolour on Arches paper, framed with conservation acrylic.

64.5 x 75 x 4cm (framed)

\$3,750 (framed)

Photo: Louis Lim. Courtesy of the artist and Onespace.



Sebastian Di Mauro

Pomp, 2025

Watercolour on Arches paper, framed with conservation acrylic.

64.5 x 75 x 4cm (framed)

\$3,750 (framed)

Photo: Louis Lim. 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

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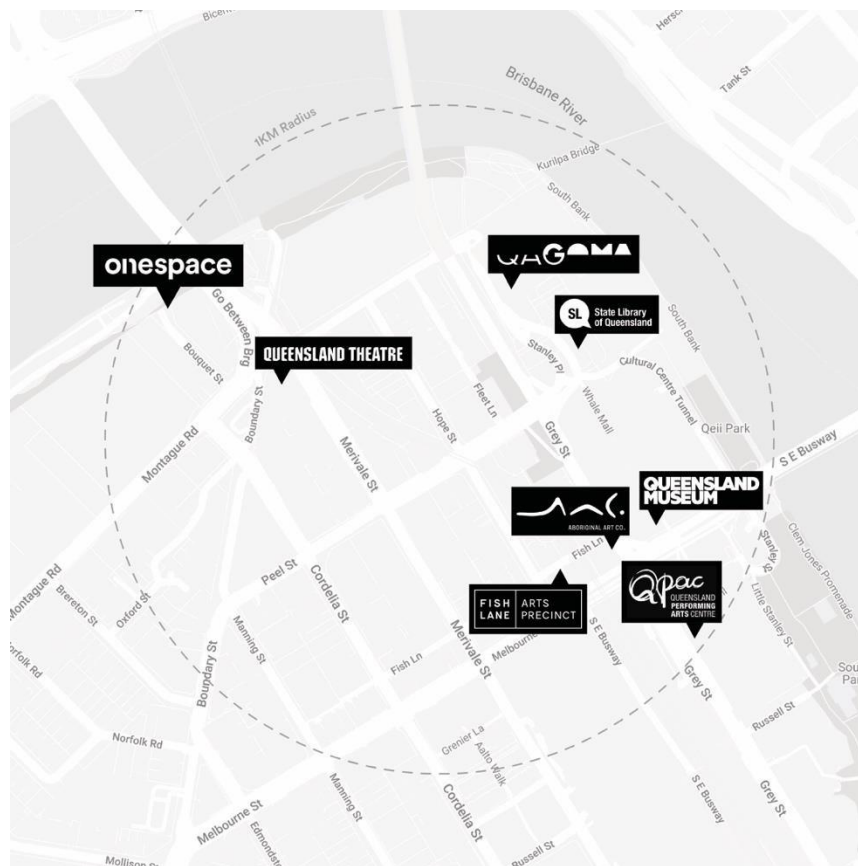
onespace.com.au

[@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.

Sebastian Di Mauro would like to thank Dona Marcus, Pam Smith, Sam Di Mauro, Kat Walsh, Louis Lim and Burl By Design. As well as a heartfelt thanks to his partner, Denis Chandler, whose enduring support, patience, insight, and humour continue to anchor and enliven this journey, and whose hands-on assistance in the stitching of *Seam* was invaluable.