

## Programme Notes

### *Carolee Schneemann's Cats*

#### Cats Like Plain Crisps

Blindside Naarm/Melbourne, Australia, 8 Nov–2 Dec 2023

The first major retrospective of Carolee Schneemann since her death in 2019 took place at the Barbican in London in 2022. Although Schneemann is best known for her ground breaking performances and critical feminist voice, many of her works in the retrospective are linked by the recurring presence of her cats—her companions and co-conspirators throughout her long career. ‘The cat,’ she even declared in 1974, ‘is my medium.’

*Carolee Schneemann's Cats* is an exhibition responding to this legendary artist's feline muses by the multidisciplinary collective, **Cats Like Plain Crisps**, a newly convened collective that includes members from eight countries.

Borrowed from an old piece of graffiti, preserved in an image by Roger Perry (1), the group's name encapsulates some of our concerns: public art, fieldwork, objets trouvés, and text/writing. It also speaks to a posthuman and ecofeminist orientation as well as a playful, inclusive creative approach. *Carolee Schneemann's Cats* is our first collaboration and—as we find Schneemann doing in her own work—explores the potential of the feral lurking within the domestic.

Through our own multimedia works, realised individually and collaboratively, we will tap into Schneemann's chaotic yet purposeful investigation into what is familiar and homely but turns out to be full of the unruly and unexpected.

(1) see <https://flashbak.com/cats-like-plain-crisps-brilliant-photos-great-graffiti-1970s-london-393876/>

*Participating artists: Roseanne Bartley, NZ/Australia, Catherine Clover, UK/Australia, Viv Corringham, UK/US, Iris Garrelfs, Germany/UK, Johanna Hällsten Sweden/UK, Shauna Laurel Jones, US/Iceland/UK, Yang Yeung, Hong Kong*

*Other artists (ancillary programme): Tariro Mavondo, Norie Neumark*

## Ancillary Programme

There are a number of events associated with this exhibition.

### **Opening Event: 9 Nov 2023, 6pm–8pm at Blindside**

We invite you to celebrate the opening with us, with two invited speakers, Norie Neumark and Tariro Mavondo, and Iris Garrelfs performing an extended version of the piece as duo with herself, via a turntable and a dubplate.

### **Artists' Syllabus - Cats Like Plain Crisps: 11 Nov 2023, 2pm–3.30pm at Blindside**

Join **Melbourne Art Library, Blindside** and multidisciplinary collective **Cats Like Plain Crisps** for a discussion with the artists inspired by a reading by Carolee Schneemann. Artists' Syllabus invites artists to select and share a text that has been influential to their practice. By sharing selected passages, the artist will give unique insight into the significance of the text from their perspective. Through this exploration we will seek to discover the direct, tangential and unexpected ways the text has had an impact on the artists' chosen discipline/s, creative process, and approach to presenting completed works. More broadly, we will get together to exchange our ideas. We'll be

discussing two texts by Carolee Schneemann: 'Of Cats, Dreams and Interior Knowledge' (1989) and 'From More than Meat Joy' (excerpts published in 'Happenings and Other Acts', ed. Mariellen Sandford, 1995).

### **Closing Event: 2 Dec 2023, 3pm at Blindside**

The closing event will feature performances by Yang Yeung, Tariro Mavondo, and Cath Clover.

## **Artist Statements**

walking clockwise, left to right around the gallery

### **Viv Corringham**

#### ***Feral (2023)***

#### **Audio installation**

For Carolee Schneemann, cats are muses, collaborators and lovers who lead her into “a very wild, savage part of the woods,” she said.

Feral animals are wild animals that are not owned or controlled by anyone.

Carolee’s work is seen as “shocking”, “bodily” and “wild”.

Feral:

“abandoned by – escaped from – society”, “living outside the mainstream”,  
“beyond the control of rules, regulations and accepted norms”, “gone wild”.

Feral, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, has three meanings:

“existing in a wild or untamed state”, “having returned to an untamed state from domestication”, “of, or suggestive of, a wild animal”.

Perhaps Carolee Schneemann was feral, aiming to return to that wildness under the surface of our domesticity.

The Guardian spoke about the “wild miraculous art of Carolee Schneemann”.

“Some conservationists believe that feral cats pose an enormous risk to biodiversity and public health and therefore should be eliminated from the landscape by any means necessary. There are good conservation and public-health reasons and evidence to be skeptical that free-ranging cats constitute a disaster for biodiversity and human health in all circumstances...”

How to address the ethics and efficacy of lethal management relative to how people ought to value and coexist with cats and native wildlife. Society is better served by a collaborative approach to produce better scientific and ethical knowledge about free-ranging cats.” (Society for Conservation Biology)

Feral: Etymology: From Latin *fērālis* (funereal), from Proto-Italic \**fēz-ālis*, from Proto-Indo-European \**dʰéh₂s* (god, sacred place).

A wild animal that used to be domesticated and tamed. To “de-domesticate”.

“I discovered a feral cow that had escaped from its farm ...”

Feral cat, feral child, feral pigeon, semi-feral.

Feral: A person who has isolated themselves from the outside world; one living an alternative lifestyle.

### **Iris Garrelfs**

#### ***Infinity Kisses 23 (2023)***

#### **Fixed media, sound**

*Infinity Kisses 23* responds to Carolee Schneemann’s work of (almost) the same title, re-imagining the act of kissing that is presented in the original, though sound.

Cats were of importance to Carolee Schneemann throughout her life, as was her own body. It was therefore no surprise to me that Schneemann would engage in bodily interspecies intimacy, which the original *Infinity Kisses* series documents through photography. On the other hand though, for me it raised questions around what intimacy with animal companions actually is, and where it moves into zoosex with its inherent power issues. I was also thinking about the avalanche of cat images and cat videos I have watched on social media, where animals are made to imitate humans for our amusement.

The structure of the piece is part experiential - emerging from listening to the materials, part conceptual. One of Schneemann's *Infinity* works, *Infinity Kisses II* (1990-98) was recorded over an eight-year period, and *Infinity Kisses (23)* compresses this into 8 days. The original 35mm photographs were made in the process of kissing, essentially early selfies with uncontrolled light and focus and an aspect of improvisation (1). My kissing and cat sounds were recorded in my bedroom, with the windows open, equally improvised, uncontrolled and created haphazardly. In the second part of the piece I work these recordings into more of a dreamy state - Schneemann believed that one of cats communicated from the afterlife (2).

"I position the interspecies kiss, indeed the kiss in general, as performative" (3) declared Lynn Turner who researches how animal and sexual differences matter in visual and aural culture. In *Infinity Kisses (23)* I inhabit and perform both the role of human and cat for your amusement, but also your thoughtfulness, contemplating the amazing work of Carolee Schneemann and her humanity these embody.

1. Mantle, Jac (2012). *Carolee Schneemann: Carnal Visionary* (online). Available from <https://www.theskinny.co.uk/festivals/edinburgh-festivals/art/carolee-schneemann-carnal-visionary>
2. Thackara, Tess (2018). *Carolee Schneemann's lifelong love affair with her cats* (Online), Available from <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-carolee-schneemanns-lifelong-love-affair-cats>
3. Turner, Lynn (2010). When Species Kiss: some recent correspondence between animots. In: *Humanimalia – a journal of human/animal interface studies*, 2(1), pp. 60-85.

## **Catherine Clover**

### ***Cat got my Tongue (2023)***

#### **Installation – vinyl lettering, postcards**

*Cat got my Tongue* is inspired by Carolee's biographical *Life Books* in which she documents her own life as well as the lives of her cats. The focus of my work is Blackberry, my parents' cat. My parents are both recently deceased, and this project documents Blackberry's last weeks in their flat leading up to her new life living with my sister.

The work takes the form of a very short dictionary of cat words, vocalisations made by Blackberry as she stares out of the window watching wildlife in the long garden. It's winter in west London and we are spending time together at the window. As she watches she vocalises. She watches, listens, voices, watches, listens, voices. It is likely that some of her sounds are connected to hunting behaviour yet, as far as I know, she is not a cat that actively hunts when she is outdoors in the garden. One of the collective's broader concerns is the ecological. In our discussions about Carolee's significant artistic legacy and how her cats have been a key part of the evolution of her artworks, the idea of the feral within the domestic has emerged as a key discussion point.

There are eight definitions in the short dictionary, six words and two silences. The definitions are descriptive, speculative, subjective, full of unknowns. The words are installed on the eight window panes of Blindsight's Gallery 1 and also printed on black and white postcards. The window has a wide vista over the southern part of Naarm-Melbourne from the gallery's location on the seventh floor of the Nicholas Building. I have little doubt that Blackberry would appreciate spending hours at this window.

## **Shauna Laurel Jones**

### ***Ping, Purr (2023)***

#### **Illustrated poetry chapbook**

It has been difficult communicating the extent to which my family's life has been upended since Helen, my partner, became incapacitated with long Covid nineteen months ago. It's not only that people might not understand how debilitating post-viral fatigue can be; it's also that when I describe Helen's condition—and its impacts on our daughter and me—I worry I sound like I'm exaggerating. The truth is, though, it's been *really* hard. *Ping, Purr* attempts to communicate this extremity via a different medium.

After ruminating for several months on themes I wanted to explore, a booklet-length poem burst out in a few fervent days. But I was also a writer who needed to draw. For I was examining how Helen's regular delivery of Instagram cat reels had become her new way of connecting with me and lightening the mood—yet I couldn't escape into them like she can. Tracing (and retracing, and retracing) stills helped me engage more deeply, to truly "receive the information," as Schneemann said about ailing cats' gestures of care for human carers. Yes, as has been observed, this meant *more work* in my overwhelming workload; however, my meditative, painstaking retracings were also a singular means of satisfaction at a time when our lives are so constricted.

And despite the constricted spaces of their domestic interiors, these illustrations helped me expand. Parallel to the public, viral nature of reels—and to the public health concern that post-viral fatigue should be—I took the risk of crowdfunding the endeavour. In so doing, I reconnected with individuals whom I hadn't felt able to talk to about our situation, and I opened up to support. A modest risk, compared to many of Schneemann's. But like escapist pleasure, vulnerability means different things to different people. I'd like to think Schneemann would be pleased to know she inspired me to push myself.

### **Roseanne Bartley**

#### ***Tommy, Kitch, Cluny, Vesper and La Nina (2023)***

**Tommy XV: 2023 repurposed domestic wooden artefacts, hand spun string, colour pencil**

**CC...: 2023, Oxidised Sterling Silver, lipstick, talc, charcoal.**

**Howling: Necklace. 2023 Oxidised Copper sterling silver**

My work is dedicated to the cats. Carolee's earliest family cats Tommy IV (there were 14 iterations which seems a lot) (1), and later *Kitch, Cluny, Vesper and La Nina* who were active agents in her life and work.

An ailurophile, Carolee's cats were her muses, collaborators, lovers, and spirit guides. In her life/work they observe, kiss, direct and speak to her. *Vesper* in particular she believed, was capable of relaying messages to her from the afterlife.

Inspired by Carolee's psychic experiences I attempt to summon the vitality of her cats in votive objects, carving their features from wooden cups and bud vases. Aided by silver stamps and stencils I trace the residue of their affective energy through lipstick, talc and charcoal, and mark the resonate howling of their caterwauling in the cyclical form of a necklace.

In rendering these accessories, I note the relationship I have with our aging family cat pales in significance to Carolee's. Lulu figures as more of a somnolent domicile companion and retired rodent dispatcher than artistic muse; an interspecies cohabitation grounded in colonial pragmatism rather than a means to confront the patriarchy. As with everything introduced by colonialism the manner in which felus-catis inhabits this continent is under revision.

(1) See <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-carolee-Schneemanns-lifelong-love-affair-cats>

### **Yang Yeung**

#### ***Untitled (2023)***

*artist statement*

now that you are here...

### **Johanna Hällsten**

#### ***Foxed Bodies (2023)***

**handsewn hemp and paper, metal, sound**

*Foxed bodies* explore the feral nature of our bodies, and in particular my body. A body that is becoming blotched and scared as it ages. Inspired by Carolee Schneemaan's intimate and messy relationship to bodies, both human and nonhuman this work delves into this during an 8-week period of confinement to one room. Difficult surgery, long coming rendering me immobile, in metal – a body changing, scarring getting stuck, recovery from surgery still ongoing. Just outside, inches away, the fox and her cubs were calling, screaming and crying every night – their calls echoing the pain of the healing and scarring in real time. Our bodies slowly developing, the cubs growing up and moving on, whilst mine becomes mobile again.

# Introductory Talk

Norie Neumark

## *Wondering about Carolee Schneemann's cats*

I'm honoured to have been invited to speak at the opening of this delightful and thought-provoking exhibition. Rather than try to introduce each of these compelling works—which speak eloquently for themselves—I was asked instead to contextualise the exhibition by talking about art and animals, sound and media, and, of course, Carolee Schneemann's cats. I have to say straight up that I'm not an expert on Schneemann, or cats (though I am a huge fan of both) but, like this collective, I find her work with cats provocative and wonderful – full of wonder, as was she (She used to say, 'I am just a visual artist wondering about things' <https://www.anothergaze.com/conversation-carolee-schneemann-interview-feminist/>) And the more I've engaged with Schneemann's relationships with her cats, which she says was one of the key things that shaped her work – their motion, their energy, their voices—the more I understand why they were so important to her—a source of joy, grief, and inspiration—all of which also animate this exhibition which, as the artists explain, honours Schneemann's legacy through curiosity about cats in her works.

Ok, I'll admit it – I'm a cat person. We've heard that people start to look like their dogs, or is it vice versa? It's different with cats, it's more like feelings that reverberate between us. This reminds me with my own history of 22 years living with a cat who was a poltergeist. She took my own emotions and expressed them, animated by emotions I didn't know I had til I saw her racing up and down the hallway-- bravely spiriting my emotion away, generously, crazily, taking it on and letting it out. As I watched her, as I listened to her paws pounding the floorboards, voicing my anxiety, I realized just how deeply disturbed I was. More recently, I've been living with two cats, one is a bodily somatiser who gets sores round her ears when she's unhappy; and the other is also an earful – a very chatty fellow whose conversations I share without actually knowing what we're talking about— which doesn't bother me, though I'm not sure how he feels about it, actually he does sound quite annoyed at times. What I do understand, though, is that he's a channeler.

Living with channeling cats was an everyday experience for Carolee Schneemann. Cats channeled each other and spoke to her through her grief after death, from death. Here's one of her stories about the two cats from *Infinity Kisses*. This is not Schneemann's only work with cats, nor the only work of hers inspiring this exhibition, but it's a work that speaks to me of broader concerns – animals, voice, movement, grief and of course, specifically, specific cats.

Cluny dies on October 6th here in this house on my stomach during a violent ice storm. There's no light, there's no heat. There's nothing. I'm trying to keep him alive with parsley juice. I'm chewing things and hoping he'll swallow it [mouth to mouth I ask? anyway].... Anyway (she says) my cat dies, and I'm devastated. It's so awful. I adored him. Next door there's a pregnant cat, and she has kittens... one crawls up my knee into my lap, rolls over on his tiny back, and throws its paws in the air. [Laughs] And then he turns around and continues; he crawls all the way up, puts his little paws on my neck, sticks his tiny cat tongue in my mouth. And I start crying. Are you back? He's back. And he's named Vesper.... He knows things, paranormal things ....it's uncanny. (Oral History, 36)

That's a story from an oral history interview that I love because Schneeman gets the dates all wrong to the mild frustration of the interviewer. But I don't worry, I'm from a different school of oral history where it's not about 'factual' chronology but about what matters to the speaker. And in this interview, chronology is often punctuated not by dates but reference to cats--by which cat and when, what happening with the cat, and sadly, when the cat died.

And Cluny, who died, weaves through the interview as he did through Schneemann's domestic life and artistic work. It was Cluny who came up with the idea for *Infinity Kisses*. The kissing cats one after another would kiss her good morning and she would happily kiss them back—infinately and into infinity. Looking at and sensing the sound within Carolee Schneemann's photos of kissing with her cats, I'm enthralled and disturbed, fascinated and repelled all at once. After all these years, it's still a confronting and transgressive work, which expresses another side to the more well-known presence of the female body associated with Schneemann's work. She described it:

Cluny kisses every morning ritualistically. And it's so strange that I get my 35 mm little camera. And this is when I begin what's going to be a 16-year project of shooting these kisses almost every morning. And of course the kisses are so interesting to me because the cat grows, his shape changes, his paws are slightly different positions.... And there's always the missing hand in these images. You never see the agency of it [the hand holding the camera.] So he's my precious amazing cat. (Oral History, 35)

The agency is not just hidden, it's disturbed. Of course, because whose idea was this work? The cats initiated it, Schneemann says, and what cat lover could resist that offer, that demand? Is it the cat, then, that's the muse for the artist, as Schneemann's was known to say, or the artist the muse for the cat? One of the things that I particularly respond to is how she works with her cats, attuning to them and leaving them their space. She responds to her muses... as they speak to her in dreams and waking life. This is where, for me, artists offer something that philosophers, with all their debates, still seem to struggle with. Schneemann works in way that is different from the trend toward 'becoming animal' that has been popular amongst followers of philosophers Deleuze and Guattari. *Becoming animal* can be an alluring concept, as in the hands of curator Christof Cox, who says,

To become animal is to be drawn into a zone of action or passion that one can have in common with an animal. It is about unlearning old habits and learning anew—to experience common capacities with animals rather than imitating their forms. It is about entering a shared affective and productive zone. And in this movement, one experiences new physicalities, new emotions, and new relations with others and with the world. (Cox 2005, 23)

But not everyone is easy with the move toward 'becoming animal'—Donna Haraway expressed concern with what she sensed that this exalted, romantic, figure leaves out, what it occludes; she contended that “the old, female, small, dog- and cat-loving: these are who and what must be vomited out by those who will become-animal.” (Haraway 2008, 30) For myself, I prefer to leave that debate aside and lean more toward the artists who attune, respond, and engage in situated encounters with animals, animals who keep their own mystery, surprise, unknow-ability as they work, play and create as an assemblage, what Steve Baker has called a “provisional and informal coming-together” (Baker 2000, 64, 136) and a doing-together of artist, animals, audience, place. I sense this in Schneemann's and Cluny and Vesper's work, even as they came so close, kissingly close.

In this coming close, their mutual kisses speak to a key concern for animals and art—how to work with animals without hurting, exploiting or sentimentalizing them? How to work together as part of a relationship? How to work “with”? How to learn from them? For many artists, impelled by critical animal studies and other attentions to animal/human animal relations, this question comes to the fore. And it's a tricky one—many, I suspect, wouldn't be happy with Schneemann's having the cats as part of her work. Yes, it is a messy one, but then Schneemann was not afraid of mess, revelled in it, learned from it. And it's important to me that her cat was uncompelled, relaxed (as only a cat knows how!)—all his idea in any case. For Schneemann this just seemed to happen easily within their relationship and in their shared domestic space—the cats voiced and expressed what was possible and right for them, and she responded. Call and response. This was a voicing that is more than human language. Philosophers have long debated about animals and language. Recently there are those who worry Jacques Derrida was called by his cat to write *The Animal that Therefore I Am*-- a cat, who never spoke in the text. But I wonder, what is this obsession with human language as a way of speaking, and as the only basis for ethical relationships and authorship? I've been thinking a lot about a more expanded sense of voice in the last decades. I've come to hear voice as a sound that calls out for a response. With humans and nonhuman animals, it may start with the ground zero voice of—breath—or with coughs, ums and ahhs—all non-semantic bodily sounds (LaBelle 2014, Neumark 2010)—or purrs and miaows and other cat voicings that echo through these rooms. These are voices that awaken the mouth of speaker, artist, audience. As Brandon LaBelle speaks of the mouth:

The mouth affords entry onto the complicated weave of language and assemblage where breath and spit, food and vomit, desire and angst, for instance, all stage their particular events to ultimately surround, interrupt, flavor, and support forms of agency and communion. (LaBelle 2014, 2)

And the wet, mouthy kisses voiced demand on Schneemann's attention as an artist. Was this what she meant And the wet, mouthy bodily kisses demanded Schneemann's attention as an artist. Was this what she meant when she said cats were her medium? Hmmm, did she mean medium or *medium*? Or something in between? Again, critical animal studies might have worries here—worries about artists using animals as a medium. I get it, yet, I can't worry when Schneemann writes of working with her dead cat, Cluny. Both cat and artist were channelers, as are many of the artists in this room! Maybe what spoke to Schneemann was cats' refusal to fit into expected categories, to be knowable—not to mention useful, efficient, controlled, and compliant. These are refusals that cat lovers admire, that cat admirers love—despite occasional frustration with the little refuseniks.

Refusing to comply, refusing to be reduceable or useful. So far from the scientific paradigm that demands animals be useful for “us” (think beagles and mice in the labs of universities and Big Pharma). The voices of these instrumentalized animals are stilled in our culture, which demands nature be there for our use. The philosopher Martin Heidegger alerted us to the folly of what he called nature as 'standing reserve,' nature 'there for us.' Animals pay a heavy price for this relation to nature, not just in labs but in the world where their habitat and life

is destroyed in the rush to yet another technological ‘solution.’ But that’s another question, though one not far from Schneemann who named nature, following cats, as one of her key motivations. With both, she responded to intentionality and subjectivity, a refusal to be subjected. And, as ever, it was not a romantic or simple relationship, Schneemann was fine with uncertainties.

Uncertainties. Uncertainties were alive at the breaking of borders that animated so much of Schneemann’s work as a painter, as an artist. She reveled in movement rather than boundaries. Cats’ play, between feral and domestic, moved and motivated her, as it has the artists in this exhibition. The boundary-breaking passion and provocative energy that animated Schneemann’s work with cats has inspired this exhibition. Responding to the potentials of Carolee Schneemann’s cats, Carolee Schneemann’s Cats is itself confronting and entrancing, intimate and exuberant—its breath and kisses, intersected with sounds, screams and silences. The wonderful artists here tonight have enlivened this room with celebration and grief, with traces and memories—all calling for you to look, read, listen and engage. I’m sure your attention to them will be richly rewarded.

#### References:

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“In Conversation with Carolee Schneemann” *Another Gaze*, 2020. <https://www.anothergaze.com/conversation-carolee-schneemann-interview-feminist/>

## Spoken Word Piece

Tariro Mavondo

render me	the feline /	the woman you
proof /	first deity	are now /
for I am	in a pharaoh’s	death is an offering welcome
feminine	pantheon /	in this assemblage of altar /
pudding /	relegated to	pre menstrual
spark	the domain	the landscapes
fuel/	of the domestic/	of my dreams (shape)
set fire	you can take the	shift /
to a	cat out of the wild	
woman’s	but not the wild out of	I drench the soil
body /	the (purring) (ra-ra-ra) (roar)/	with the first blood
it will	communion	of my moon cycle /
burn/	with the feral	A rose petal
but spirit	is spiritual	falls in prostration/
smothers	dominion /	mama earth
smoke/		soaks in this
choke-hold/	drop the carcasses	aromatic solstice/
	of every self that	arousal of
the female’s	needed to die	sweet fervour
muse is	at the feet of	and fevers

are welcome  
upon holy mats/  
  
libation for the  
ancestral woman/  
from Sodom  
to Salem  
Senegal  
Suriname  
from Samoa  
Scandinavia  
all the women  
who strayed  
ya /  
  
a liturgy  
for the  
wild path  
you walked /  
  
revolting  
savage  
sterility /  
  
clinical  
civility  
forced choice  
on its back to  
abort the many  
divinations of life  
a woman could live/  
  
a seance  
for your resistance  
resistor  
resuscitator  
rescuer  
you renaissance  
  
flowering  
possibility /  
your guts  
was oxygen/  
  
air  
that  
titillated  
the bosoms  
of each statue  
of liberty to  
quiver  
and  
quake  
awake

to the  
power of  
your own  
vulva/  
  
to the historically  
distorted /  
this is a  
sonic sound bath  
from a sister  
standing like  
levitating lavender  
dancing with the  
skirt of  
a flirtatious future/  
  
in an empty  
hallway  
in an empty  
meadow  
unmade yet  
seen /  
  
why  
fear a feline's  
independence?/  
why always  
comfortable  
with playing master?  
why the incantation  
that a feline's  
love got to be  
manipulative  
cold with it  
when it just be boundaried /  
  
I will not turn myself  
over legs up  
so can you pat me  
I'll tell you how  
and when I want to  
be stroked /  
  
stretched out  
on the plush  
grey sofa  
by the window/  
my mother's  
body weight  
is slumped  
all the way  
to the left /  
  
I encourage

her to sprawl  
upright and  
to relax into  
relaxing /  
she is  
still working  
too hard /  
I encourage her  
to entertain  
the head rest /  
assure her it  
will hold  
her thinking mind/  
  
it is still so hard  
to receive gifts  
like the sun/  
marmalade  
coloured rind  
this female rhyme  
we feel we must earn  
rest /  
unfold your  
nile river  
sip parched lips  
on these matrilineal  
tears /  
now  
fold it back up into  
the abdomen of your  
purse/  
don't you know  
the beauty  
of the feline,  
the companionship  
of the feline,  
heals/  
  
the work  
you do  
takes /  
  
so rest /  
  
this poem is a dowry /  
as you paid it forward  
I am paying it back  
so presence is felt  
and we can be present /  
  
entice the incense  
of your essence  
to come out and play  
frivolous fruitful foolish/

# Biographies

In alphabetical order

## **Roseanne Bartley, NZ/Australia**

Roseanne Bartley is an artist-jeweller whose practice attends to the social and symbolic function of Jewellery in studio, exhibition and public engagement situations. She works with text, found object, peripatetic and social process devising solo and participatory activities that yield jewellery as wearable and non-wearable object, photographic documentation, performance trace, models and printed accessories. Her expanded approach considers Jewellery as relational and performative – a vital and affective means to examine communication, haptic knowledge and place. Her work has featured in national and international exhibitions, publications, festivals and symposiums. She was awarded an ARC scholarship in 2014, an Australia Council Barcelona residency in 2004, and has received support from Australia Council (2001, 2006, 2012) and Arts Victoria (2001, 2008), Punctum and the Ian Potter Foundation. Her work has been collected by NGV, Powerhouse Museum and Toowoomba Regional Gallery.

[www.roseannebartley.com](http://www.roseannebartley.com)

<https://www.instagram.com/roseannebartley>

## **Catherine Clover, UK/Australia**

Catherine Clover's multidisciplinary practice addresses communication through voice, language and the interplay between hearing/listening, seeing/reading. Using field recording, digital imaging and the spoken/written word she explores an expanded approach to language within and across species through a framework of everyday experience. The artworks are social in nature and frequently involve collaboration with artists and with audiences. Clover lives between London, UK, and Naarm/Melbourne, Australia, on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. Her work has been exhibited and performed regularly both within Australia, the UK and internationally since the 90s.

[www.ciclover.com](http://www.ciclover.com)

<https://www.instagram.com/cathclover>

## **Viv Corringham, UK/US**

Viv Corringham is a vocalist and sound artist, active since the late 1970s. Her work includes concerts, soundwalks, radio works and multi-channel installations that have been described as "Ululating, humming and chanting to produce not language but a present soundscape" by The Wire. She is interested in exploring people's sense of place and the link with personal history and memory. She studied and worked with Pauline Oliveros for many years receiving a Certificate to teach Deep Listening. She now facilitates workshops in listening and sounding, most recently in Hong Kong, London, Bangalore, New York, Kolkata and Manila. Recent work has been presented at Harvestworks Flow Festival, Governors Island NY, Issue Project Room New York Electronic Art Festival, Hong Kong Arts Centre Multichannel Festival, Fonoteca Nacional de Mexico, Universities in Bangalore, Calcutta and Delhi, Ftarrri Tokyo, Cafe Oto London, Ohrenhoch Sound Gallery Berlin and many more. Recordings are available on Innova, OTORoku, Flaming Pines, Farpoint, FMR, Linear Obsessional, Slowfoot, Zeromoon, NoMansLand, ARC Music, MASH, Slam, Deep Listening and other labels.

<http://vivcorringham.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/viv.corrynham>

## **Iris Garrelfs, Germany/UK**

Based in the UK, Iris Garrelfs works on the cusp of music, art and technology across improvised performance, multi-channel installation and fixed media projects, often using her voice as raw material. Her work has featured internationally, for example Iklectik (UK), Café Oto (UK), Tate Britain, Hundred Years Gallery, National Gallery London, Royal Academy of Arts (London), fruityspace (Beijing), Palazzo delle Esposizioni (Rome), MC Gallery (New York), Transmedia Borders (Mexico). Residencies have included Grizedale Art, Institute of Modern Art Celje (Slovenia), Onassis Cultural Centre (Athens). Labels include Pany Y Rosas Disos (UK), BipHop (France), Linear Obsessional (UK). where she also runs the Improviser Collective at co-heads the Sound Practice Research Unit.

[www.irisgarrelfs.com](http://www.irisgarrelfs.com)

<https://www.instagram.com/irisgarrelfs>

### **Johanna Hällsten Sweden/UK**

Johanna Hällsten is a Swedish artist working primarily with text, sound and performance, where the work focuses on translation between different cultures, species, and forms, to address the interrelation between sounds and environments. Her work was performed at Nottingham Contemporary as part of InDialogue by Juxtavoices, and exhibited in e.g. Personal Structures, Venice Biennale, Translation Zone(s): Constellation Hong Kong, Sze Chi Ching Exhibition Gallery, ANTI festival, EV+A. She has published in e.g. The Front Edge of Environmental Aesthetics, Contemporary Aesthetics, Somatechnics, EUP journal, and in n.Paradoxa. Hällsten currently runs the BA Fine Art course at London Metropolitan University, UK.

<https://johannahallsten.co.uk>

[https://www.instagram.com/sigrid\\_hallsten](https://www.instagram.com/sigrid_hallsten)

### **Shauna Laurel Jones, US/Iceland/UK**

Shauna Laurel Jones is a writer with a background in art history and environmental studies. Her essays and poetry are driven by a desire to connect: to bring together seemingly disparate strands of knowledge and experience; to integrate reason and emotion, perception and intuition; and to communicate her fascination with the intricacies of the world around her. In 2021 she was shortlisted for the Nan Shepherd Prize for underrepresented voices in nature writing, and she has a column on visual art in the environmental magazine *Orion*. American by birth and naturalised Icelandic, Jones now lives in London.

[www.shaunalaureljones.com](http://www.shaunalaureljones.com)

<https://www.instagram.com/shaunasvana>

### **Tariro Mavondo, Zimbabwe/Australia**

Tariro Mavondo is a multi-hyphenate artist- performer, speaker, poet, creative collaborative coach and cultural consultant. Systems change is a driver for Tariro's activism and advocacy in the Australian art sector.

Tariro was the former CEO/ co-Artistic Director of Western Edge Youth Arts, a thriving community of next generation artistic and cultural leaders, borne from Melbourne's West at the new frontier of contemporary Australia. An award-winning performance poet Tariro was nominated for an Aria Music Award in 2021 with her collaboration with The Australian Art Orchestra for Best Jazz Album last year and won an APRA AMCOS award in 2020 for Work of the Year: Electroacoustic/Sound Art, for *Closed Beginnings*. Tariro also works as an actor on the Australian stage (MTC, STC, Bell Shakespeare, Belvoir, Black Swan, Red Stitch, Street Theatre) and screen (Neighbours, Winners and Losers, Other People's Problems), has been an actor in the internationally acclaimed, award winning web series Shakespeare Republic and the award-winning short films Arrivals and Home. As a voice over artist, Tariro has worked with La Trobe, AFLW, Thomas The Tank Engine (UK), HESTA, PWC, BMW etc. Tariro's piece 'The Dangers of a Single Story' is part of an anthology 'Growing Up African in Australia' published by Black Inc Books (2019). Tariro is the founder of Africa's Got Talent Australia and a Co-Founder of Centre of Poetics and Justice. Tariro's Podcast Episode with Genna Chanelle, 'Black Woman White Woman' is one of the highest viewed on the Loving Podcast series. Tariro's career highlights have been training with legendary dancer and teacher Anna Halprin in Northern California and attending the Decolonial Summer School in UniSA in Pretoria, South Africa both those experiences inform a lot of her work and artistic practices. In 2021, Tariro gifted herself the space to go on a personal sabbatical to Hawaii, Costa Rica, Bali and the Caribbean Islands. Tariro has been living in Barbados and recently returned to Australia.

<https://www.instagram.com/tariro.mavondo/>

### **Norie Neumark, Australia**

Norie Neumark, a sound and media artist, is an Honorary Professorial Fellow at the Victorian College of the Arts, Emeritus Professor at La Trobe University and a practising media artist and theorist. Her current passions are human-animal relations, environmental concerns, and voice. She is the founding Director of the Centre for Creative Arts, La Trobe University. Previously Neumark was Professor of Media Art at University of Technology, Sydney, where she was founding Director of the Centre for Media Arts Innovation (CMAI) at UTS. As well as being the founding editor of *Unlikely: Journal for the Creative Arts*, (Neumark's writing on voice includes *Voicetracks: Attuning to Voice in Media and the Arts* (MIT Press, 2017) and *Voice: Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media* (MIT Press, 2010), lead editor and contributor. She is also part of Out-of-Sync, a collaboration with Maria Miranda.

<https://unlikely.net.au/>

### Yang Yeung, Hong Kong

Yang Yeung is a writer on art. Her recent publications include “Algirdas Seskus” (for *Art News*, Vilnius), “What good is *this?*” (for “After Hope”, Asian Art Museum, San Francisco), “caring is a quality: on being touched by Alecia Neo’s Care Index” (for Dance Nucleus, Singapore). She founded the non-profit *soundpocket* to support the art of sound and listening in 2008 and is currently its Artistic Director. She is Lecturer in the General Education Foundation Programme of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, teaching ancient and modern classics of various cultural traditions.

<http://www.aicahk.org/eng/author/YangYEUNG>

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