

Early Spring

7-28 September 2023

Blackwood Tokonoma Series

Early Spring

The start of the seasonal year, peak wattle flowering yellow everywhere, black buds on golden ash, light green clouds of elm trees, early orchard tree blossom pink flowering almonds, crabapples, beautiful ringing bush bushwalking and wildflower season (petyan in the gariwerd calendar – season of the wildflowers in the grampians), but watch your step snakes are waking up, birds begin nesting, welcome gentle warmth, the currawongs are calling, guling (orchid) season and poornet (tadpole) season

Blackwood Tokonoma is a curated installation space at the top of the stairs on entry to Mr Kitly. The wall is native Blackwood timber (*Acacia melanoxylon*), with display niche inspired by the concept of tokonoma - a recessed space in a reception room - "the place of honour in a Japanese room where paintings and flowers are placed for the edification of the guests" (Kakuzo Okakura *The Book of Tea*)

The exhibition calendar denotes six seasonal phases of the year and draws on the Kulin nations calendar and the Melbourne Botanic Garden's outgoing director Tim Entwisle's proposition of a renewed seasonal calendar that more accurately reflects the conditions of our land. This calendar brings a seasonal context to each exhibition. Whilst not prescriptive, the changing seasonal focus for each exhibition aims to provide a source of inspiration for the works included. The hope is that with each passing year the 'by season' exhibitions will tell a story.

Kristina Tsoulis-Reay
Apple eye with flowering weeds (2019)
Oil on linen board
23 x 18 cm
\$680

Kristina Tsoulis-Reay
Strawberry patch with fingertips (2019)
Oil on linen board
18 x 23 cm
\$680

Cara Johnson
Unravelling II (2021)
willow, found baling twine
180cm circumference/length
\$1,785

Cara Johnson
Verdant IV (2023)
willow, found baling twine, paint
108cm circumference/length
\$1,260

Cara Johnson
Tether III (2023)
iron, found tree guard
180cm circumference/length
\$1,785

School of Clay and Art (SoCA)
SoCA Spring term
glaze and surface tests
NFS

Tess McAuslan-King
Cloud Bottle
Glazed mid fire clay, lustre
10cm x 20cm h
\$560

*Cara Johnson appears
courtesy of Funaki

Kristina Tsoulis-Reay

The works in Early Spring were painted from snapshots of the garden, taken during periods confined inside looking after small children. These images of emergent spring afford an escape from the limitations and gloom of the domestic interior—the liveliness of new growth articulated through the restless process of painting.

Kristina Tsoulis-Reay grew-up in Aotearoa and currently lives and works in Naarm Melbourne. Recent solo exhibitions include *Windows for Mirrors* at MADA Gallery, *Rondures* at Lon Gallery, *Bloom Shadow Circle* at Caves, *Movements* at Gallery 9, and *Shared Ruin* at Sutton Gallery Project Space. In 2023 Kristina completed her PhD at Monash University, where she teaches painting and studio practice in the Fine Art undergraduate and honours programs.

Cara Johnson

I've started to feel warm pockets of air in between the cold. Everyday I walk the same track through bushland - right now the pale yellow puffs of blackwood are lighting up the washed out greys of the surrounding messmate. My place is a little slice off the corner of a farm, I look out across paddocks and see rows of silage wrapped up tightly in pale green plastic. There are new colours that are becoming part of this place, tree guards luminated by the sun and baling twine snagged on fences.

Cara Johnson's craft-based works interrogate tensions and narratives connected to the ways land is treated and used through material, intention and invested labour. Her practice is entwined with her rural location, and primarily concerned with traversing the complexities between people and plants. Recent solo exhibitions include *Understory* at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria and *Semblance of Repair* at Gallery Funaki. Cara's works are held in various collections including the National Gallery of Victoria.

School of Clay and Art (SoCA)

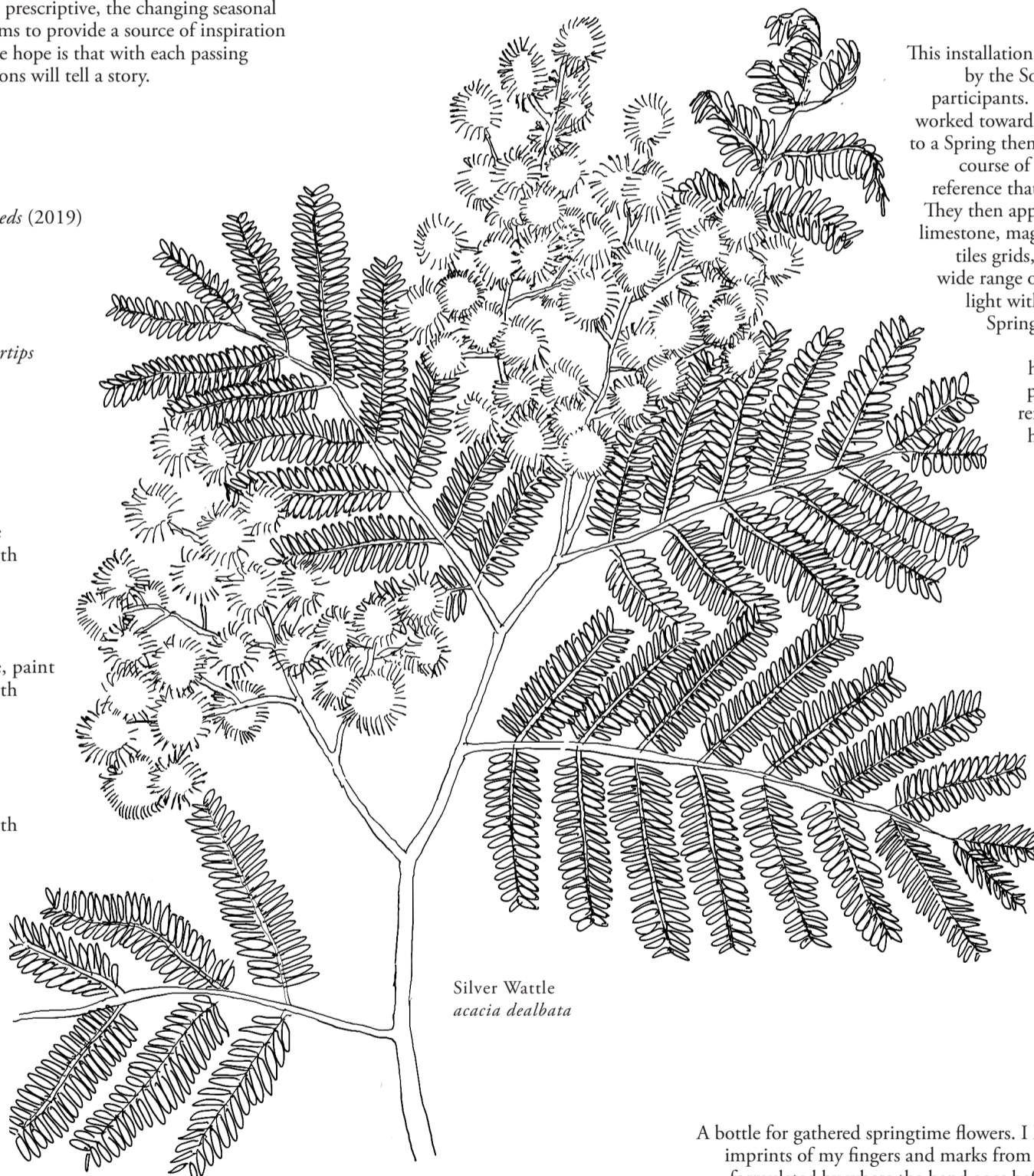
This installation is a series of glaze and surface tests by the SoCA Studio Program Term 3, 2023 participants. Participants of the Studio Program worked toward the development of pieces relating to a Spring theme - growth and renewal. Over the course of the term students selected a colour reference that evoked their own sense of Spring. They then applied SoCA base glazes (feldspathic, limestone, magnesia and woodash) to various test tiles grids, forms and clay bodies to explore a wide range of surface qualities and responses to light within the parameters of their selected Spring colour reference. Adding mineral oxides and stains to the base glazes helped to develop a nuanced colour palette that related to each student's reference, incorporating a contrast of hue, tone and colour intensity. The collection presented here is a selection of these tests.

SoCA's Brunswick studio is a fertile learning, making, drawing, and exhibition space. The SoCA Studio Program provides in-depth learning that supports each individual to deepen and refine their engagement with clay and art. The studio environment, and the creative processes taught at SoCA, stimulate and nurture the development of a rich, multi-dimensional practice that embraces multiple ways of knowing and connects self, culture, history and craft. Projects consider a theme together with material investigation and the development of museum-quality historical glaze surfaces.

Tess McAuslan-King

A bottle for gathered springtime flowers. I have loosely coiled this pot, leaving imprints of my fingers and marks from the movement of soft clay. A shape formulated by where the hand goes before the mind arrives. The surface is decorated with underglaze, glaze and lustre in a repetitive cloud-like pattern underneath milky-blue. This slow method of making reminding me of our emergence out of the cold and into the delicacies of the warmer months.

Tess McAuslan-King (she/her) is an artist and mother living and working on Yaegl Country in the Clarence Valley of Northern NSW. Tess works with a variety of clays, layered glazes, lustres and vitreous enamels to investigate materials and processes within her practice. The majority of her works are semi-functional in nature, highly decorative, hand-built vessels or sculptures hinting at the vessel form. Many kiln firings are involved in achieving the layered and luminous surfaces. Tess completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts with First Class Honours at RMIT in 2016, majoring in Object Based Practice. She has exhibited regularly with various commercial galleries and artist run spaces since this time.



Silver Wattle
acacia dealbata



Mr Kitly / mrkitly.com.au
381 Sydney Road, Brunswick VIC 3056
ph 03 9078 7357

Mr Kitly is located on Bulleke-bek country. We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurung people as the traditional custodians of the unceded land and waters where we live and work and pay our deepest respect to Elders past, present and emerging. It's a privilege to walk this land together.