



AUSTRALIAN  
CENTRE  
FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

# *Transfer*

**Education Kit**  
16 April - 15 May 2016

## Recommended for

Year 9-12 High School Students

Stage 5-6

Visual Arts

Photographic and Digital Media

This education kit is designed to assist discussion and promote a deeper understanding of the themes and techniques presented in ACP's exhibition by focusing on selected works.

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## Want to book a visit for your school or find out how ACP can assist your students to learn about photography?

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## EXHIBITION THEMES

Transition  
Change  
Boundaries  
Migration  
Cultural identity  
The domestic and the wild  
Environmental impact  
Hopes and fears

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## Introduction

*Transfer*, a new exhibition at the Australian Centre for Photography, examines the ambivalence of transitory processes, focusing on the experience of being in between. Implicitly conceived in response to the ACP's current state of transition, *Transfer* ultimately interrogates our abilities to adjust and locate ourselves within evolving contexts.

Exploring a diverse range of photographic forms, *Transfer* brings together seven contemporary artists, whose work addresses the subject across a range of contexts, from nomadism and migration to changes to environmental changes.

Artists Rachael Ireland, Leila Jeffreys, Katrin Koenning, Deb Mansfield, Stacy Mehrfar, Kurt Sorensen, and Jeroen Toirkens propose a range of attitudes and emotions towards the process of change, capturing visually the mixed feelings of anticipation, excitement and trepidation we all experience when change is upon us.

*Transfer* proposes a holistic view of the transition process, eschewing a linear understanding of change – ie: seeing it as a direct line from here to there – and asking instead, what truly lies in between?

### Questions:

After reading the roomnotes, outline the work of each artist in relation to the title of the exhibition.

What do you think the intention of the curator was in the selection and arrangement of works in the space?

The ACP is about to move premises. Have you ever had to move house or school? What are some of the emotions you experienced, and how might you express those through the medium of photography?

## THE WORK

Rachael Ireland, *Untitled #3* from *Passing By*,  
2014 - 2015. Courtesy and © the artist



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### The Frames

The following four frames can be applied to artworks to give meaning, assist with interpretation and define the relationship between the artist – artwork – world – audience.

#### **Subjective frame**

Focuses on the personal and imaginative viewing of artworks. Through this frame students can explore their own deeply felt experiences or retrieve individual memories. Students can uncover the varied meanings and interpretations of artworks, as well as their expressive qualities.

#### **Cultural frame**

Through this frame artists may be seen as agents for the documentation of social and cultural structures and formations. The cultural frame views artworks as reflections of social, cultural and community interests. Students explore how notions of cultural identity inform artistic practice.

#### **Structural frame**

This frame explores the formal organisation and visual qualities of an artwork to form a symbolic language that can communicate to audiences. Students deconstruct these visual conventions to interpret the artist's meaning and to develop an understanding of how these signs and symbols are employed by the artist.

#### **Postmodern frame**

The postmodern frame challenges and reveals mainstream assumptions about art, power relations and contradictions, through the artist's use of parody, irony, satire and appropriation. Students explore the meaning of art within the constantly shifting contemporary world and investigate how artworks can challenge authority and widely held beliefs.

For more information visit [http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus\\_sc/pdf\\_doc/visual\\_arts\\_710\\_syl.pdf](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/syllabus_sc/pdf_doc/visual_arts_710_syl.pdf)



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Working closely with animal rescue and environmentalist groups, **Leila Jeffreys** has been documenting birds by way of photographic portraiture since 2008. Just as in human portraiture, Jeffreys' carefully composed pictures convey the unique physical characteristics and individual personalities of each of her subjects, while inspiring a deeper concern for the conservation of these birds.

Raised in Perth, Leila Jeffreys has spent much of her childhood travelling, most especially in India where she grew up surrounded by wildlife.

Last year her book *Birdland* (Hachette, 2015) was highly commended in the Australian Photobook of the Year Awards.  
[www.leilajeffreys.com](http://www.leilajeffreys.com)

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### The Work:

*Burnum Burnum* 2016, *Portrait of a Budgerigar Jimmy* 2008, *Portrait of a Budgerigar Spencer* 2008, *Portrait of a Budgerigar Suzie* 2008  
archival pigment prints

In the exhibition, a wild budgerigar is presented alongside three domesticated budgies, a much-loved family pet in Australia. In the wild, budgerigars can move significant distances in response to climatic conditions, particularly rainfall, as they search for sources of water and green vegetation. It is believed that their name derived from the indigenous word *betcherrygah* meaning 'good food' and that, by following the birds, the Aboriginal people were able locate water and food plants.

### Questions:

Portraiture is an artistic practice we typically associate with a human subject, sometimes a person of significant status. Using the Post Modern and Structural frames discuss how Leila Jeffreys' choice of subject challenges historical painting and studio photographic portraiture conventions, personalises and humanises each bird.

What statement might the artist be making in regards to native wildlife and our relationship to animals?

### Activity:

Create your own portrait using a living, non-human subject. How would you use composition, lighting, colour, posture, depth of field and title to personify your subject?  
Consider the message you would like to convey through the portrait.



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Suggestive and lyrical, the work of Melbourne based photographer **Katrin Koenning** is concerned with our physical and emotional connection to place, and our relationship to environment. In 2014 Koenning received the Bowness Photography Prize, People's Choice Award and was a finalist last year in the Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Award. She has published and exhibited widely in Australia, Europe and the United States, and won many other international awards and prizes. Koenning was recently featured as one of Alec Soth's favourite 5 Instagrammers on TIME Magazine. Her work is held in numerous public and private collections across Australia and Europe, and she is a former editor of the Australian PhotoJournalist Magazine. [www.katrinkoenning.com](http://www.katrinkoenning.com)

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### The Work:

*The Crossing* (selection) 2009-2016  
archival pigment prints

In her new series, *The Crossing*, the artist deals with human impact on the environment. Koenning's evocative imagery proposes a poetical perspective on the conflicting relationship human beings maintain with their planet. Like a delicate and yet sombre speck of dust, each of Koenning's images alludes to the constant concealed violence that we impose onto the fragile ecology to which we belong, irreversibly.

### Questions:

Using the Structural frame can you identify any similarities between individual photographs?

Close your eyes and imagine Koenning's photographs. What do they remind you of? How has Koenning used light to evoke emotion in the viewer?

Comment on the ambiguous and enigmatic nature of Koenning's photographs, considering her use of colour, tone and indefinite subject matter. How does this reflect the themes of her series and her personal relation to them?

### Activity:

Produce a series of 10 images that convey an emotion (anger, fear, joy...), without being descriptive or literal. Consider the use of colours and contrasts as well as the titles of your work.



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Divulging the unsolved dramas of nations where the centrality of landscape is constituent to the national consciousness, **Kurt Sorensen's** eerie landscapes, captured with an old medium format camera, reveal the precarious relationship that prevailed between the early European settlers and the harsh Australian or American landscapes.

Currently based in the Blue Mountains, Kurt Sorensen has won the Iris Award, Judges Prize (2011) and has been a finalist in numerous other photography prizes such as the Hazelhurst Art on Paper Award, the Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Prize and the Festival of Fisher's Ghost Art Award. His work has been widely shown in Australia including Bathurst Regional Gallery, Perth Centre for Photography, Queensland Centre for Photography, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery, amongst others.

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

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### The Work:

*Sunk Without A Sound* (selection) 2016  
c-type prints from medium format film

In 1928 newlyweds Glen and Bessie Hyde set out to travel the length of the Colorado River, famous for its rapids and being responsible for the Grand Canyon. It is a journey as dangerous as it sounds. Neither were experienced in running rivers in such hazardous conditions but both had a taste for adventure. Indeed, Bessie stood to be the first female to make the journey in an open boat. When they reached the Bright Angel trail around river mile 94 they met with canyon photographers Ellsworth and Emery Kolb who would take their portrait before they headed off into 'the granite cathedral'. The Hyde's boat would be found some weeks later, floating aimlessly in a river pool. There was no sign of any damage and all of the couple's possessions were still neatly stowed away, including Bessie's book of poetry. Glen and Bessie have never been found.

### Questions:

Research medium format film cameras and consider the scale and point of view of Sorensen's photographs in relation to their subject matter. How do you think the artist is using the qualities of film to convey eeriness and mystery?

Discuss how you can create different moods and atmospheres with a smartphone.



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Deb Mansfield** looks to the peripheral sites - islands, travel, care - as a way of investigating the nature of boundaries and borders. In choosing spaces that are neither here nor there, and by conflating truth and fiction, her practice echoes the type of exploratory travel that first inspired it. She makes use of these stop-overs, moments of respite in her navigation across a contemporary cultural landscape.

Since 2000, Mansfield has participated in over thirty-five group exhibitions and had nineteen solo exhibitions. She has completed several artist residencies both locally and overseas and has received several awards and public art commissions (Australia Council of the Arts, COFA Travel Grant, APA Research Scholarship, Siganto Travel Scholarship, amongst others. [www.debmansfield.com](http://www.debmansfield.com)

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### The Work:

*The Jumbled House* 2008  
palladium print (artist proof)

*The long drop down* 2009, *The long tangle up* 2009  
photo-tapestries

Mansfield's two photographic tapestries were produced in 2009 from images that the artist took in 'littoral zones' – where water meets land – near Launceston, Tasmania and Newcastle, New South Wales. Drawing attention to the ambiguous identities of these areas, where rich but often undiscovered ecosystems and myths developed, the artist's photographic tapestries conceal the boundaries between mediums. Existing between photography, textile art and sculpture, Mansfield's installation gives materiality and texture to the idea and the experience of in-betweenness.

### Questions:

Mansfield's area of research looks at liminal geographies, Ecosystems and 'Littoral zones' – where water meets land. How does her choice of medium relate to these themes?

Would you classify Mansfield's Photo-tapestry as sculpture, installation or photography? How does the work's physicality present the viewer with a sense of uncertainty?

### Activity:

Using one or several photographs, create a sculpture that represents a space or a landscape that is meaningful to you. Consider the differences between 2-D and 3-D and how different medium can complement one another to represent a place.

Deb Mansfield, *The long drop down*, 2009. Courtesy and © the artist and Gallery Pompom, Sydney





## ABOUT THE ARTIST

For **Rachael Ireland**, the act of photography functions as a tool to investigate shifting and multiple perspectives of home and place.

Guided by inquiry into personal and social histories, cultural perspectives, and place-making industries, her photographic art practice reflects on how these intersect to create constructions of place, and inform our experiences of home and non-home.

Since graduating in 2011, Rachael Ireland has exhibited regularly, participated in local and international artist residencies, and has work held in private and public collections. She has been a finalist in the Muswellbrook Photographic Award; created an interactive photographic installation for the Art Factory Project Space at Maitland Regional Art Gallery.  
[www.rachaelireland.com](http://www.rachaelireland.com)

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### The Work:

*Making Place* (selection) 2015  
pigment prints

*Passing By* (selection) 2014 - 15  
silver gelatin prints

Disrupting thresholds and dissolving constructed distinctions between home and non-home, real and unreal, Ireland combines physical and in-camera interventions, darkroom and digital photographic processes to provoke a sense of curiosity into how we locate ourselves within home and place. Rachael Ireland's series *Passing By* and *Making Place* find their starting point in a residency at Haefligers Cottage in Hill End, New South Wales, where the artist spent time in one of the small tourist town's historic cottages.

### Questions:

In class, discuss the notion and the feeling of 'home'. Is this something that can easily be defined with words and images? Explain why.

Consider Rachael Ireland's layering of images and discuss how her photographic process reflects the complexity of defining 'home'.

### Activity:

Working in small groups, venture outside the classroom to take pictures of your school grounds. Notice the exterior structural details of buildings, the textures of surfaces and the distant landscape/cityscape beyond the schools' boundaries. Using a class projector, take turns projecting your photographs onto different areas of the classroom. Discuss your choice of subject matter, the symbolic relationship between elements and which photographs created the most interesting layered effect.



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Dutch photographer **Jeroen Toirkens** focuses on social documentary photography and slow-journalism, frequently capturing radical societal and ecological changes.

Based in The Hague, Toirkens has worked internationally as an independent photographer and filmmaker since 1995. In 2012 he was awarded the Dutch CANON prize for his book *Nomad* (Lannoo, 2011), a diverse and often poignant picture of nomadism in the 21st century. Toirkens has published extensively in national and international newspapers and magazines. His work has been exhibited in the Netherlands, Russia, Italy, Germany and the United States.

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

### The Work:

*NomadsLife* (selection) 2000-2007  
archival pigment prints

After following the lives of various nomadic tribes in Central Asia, Russia, Mongolia and the Arctic region for more than 10 years, Toirkens published *Nomadlife*. The multi-awarded photobook highlights how globalisation, poverty and climate change are making it increasingly difficult for nomadic communities to maintain their traditional way of life.

### Questions:

Research the different types of nomadic lifestyle and discuss their connection to the natural world. How is it different to your own?  
Why do you think this lifestyle is at stake today?

Using the cultural frame, how does the environment and of the Mongolian people compare to your own? Consider the gaze of the photographer. What does the perspective of Toirken's images reveal to the viewer?

### Activity:

Design a photobook about your own nationality or ethnicity to share with others. Begin by thinking about the kind of story you wish to tell and the types of photographs that could visually communicate your narrative. Some images may include titles or captions which convey additional information to the audience. Storyboard your ideas in sequential order so that all the elements combine into a cohesive whole. Some questions to consider are; is the narrative historical, contemporary or futuristic? Who are the characters in your story and what kinds of daily activities do they perform? Are there any environments or objects that are of significance? How does the aesthetic of your book reflect your chosen themes?



## ABOUT THE ARTIST

American-Iranian photographer

### **Stacy Arezou Mehrfar**

predominately works on long-term projects that investigate cultural identity and migration.

Her photo-media works explore distinctions of the self and the human habitation of environments, be they geographically specific or indeterminate virtual spaces.

Stacy Mehrfar holds an MFA (Research) from UNSW A&D, a BA from the University of Wisconsin,

Madison, and a certificate

from the International Center of Photography, New York. She

has been exhibited in the United States, Australia, Poland and

Germany.

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

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### **The Work:**

*The Moon Belongs to Everyone* 2015

8 Channel HD Video, Colour Stereo Sound. Approx. 7 mins 30

*The Moon Belongs To Everyone* captures the modern-day story of migration, of shifting continents and mindsets, of hybridisation and dislocation through a non-linear narrative. An alternating kaleidoscope of a collective of seemingly diverse individuals, viewed in isolation against a common, unidentifiable space, this mesmerizing and immersive multi-channel videowork frames a metaphor for an increasingly ubiquitous, non-specific global identity. *The Moon Belongs To Everyone* consists of photographic portraits, landscapes, still-lives, and stillvideo, and invites the viewer to navigate around and through the architectural environment defined by the installation.

### **Questions:**

Why has the artist chosen multiscreen video format to present this work? How does the medium support the content of the work?

How has technology influenced global migration?

### **Activity:**

Interview three members of your family or friends about their experience of migration. Based on their testimonies, produce a slideshow/video about the multiplicity and richness of migratory experiences.

Consider including text, audio, portraits, photographs of objects and places that are meaningful to the person you will interview, family or vintage photographs, written notes...