

Sustain

Holmes à Court Gallery
West Perth

Artists: Maggie Baxter (Australia), MORII Design (India), Lisa Mori (Australia), Dias Prabu (Indonesia), Yim Yen Sum (Malaysia), Nyukana Baker, Vipati Kuyata, Tjariya (Nungalka) Stanley (Pitjantjatjara Australia), Lawrence Leslie (Kamiloroi Australia)



LAETITIA WILSON



The Indian Ocean Craft Triennial, IOTA24, brings together a kaleidoscopic assortment of artists, exhibiting over a diversity of venues, spanning WA and crossing the seas to both come from and exhibit in parts of Southeast Asia. This year's theme is *Codes in Parallel* and it 'investigates the languages codified in contemporary craft'; the ability for craft to be a powerful voice within the worlds of contemporary art. It is only the second instalment of the triennial, yet it boasts an ambitious array of artists and exhibition venues.

At the Holmes à Court Gallery, the IOTA exhibition features the works of nine artists from WA, India, Malaysia, Indonesia and the communities of Utopia, Ernabella and Kamiloroi. The focus of the exhibition is large-scale textile artworks spanning weaving, batik, block printing, screen printing, Sujni embroidery, mirror embroidery and dying, digital editing and applique on gauze. This is one of the major international exhibitions under the title of *Codes in Parallel* with the subtitle of *Sustain*.

Sustain considers the sustainability of not only the environment but also of different cultures and traditions. In the current era, the most pressing issue faced is climate change and connected to this on the cultural front is the loss of traditional skills and the loss of communities as they face pressures from multiple angles. *Sustain* celebrates a variety of skills and crafts, some of which are indeed on the brink of extinction.

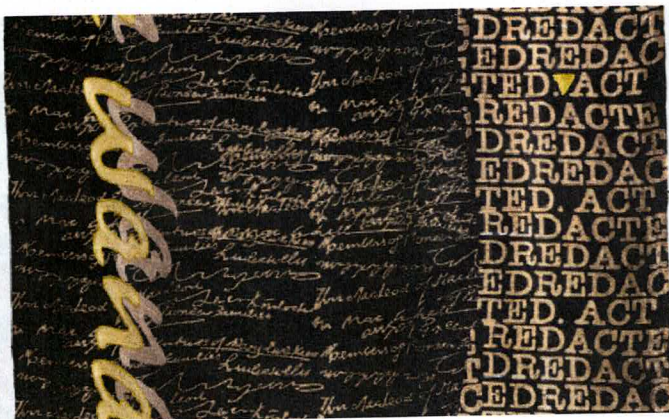
At the entrance to the gallery, viewers are greeted by lengths of batik on silk. These works date back to the

◆ *Threshold of Memory*, 2021 by Yim Yen Sum (Malaysia).

1980s, a time in which artists in the community of Ernabella, including Yipati Kuyata and Nyukana Baker, and then artists at Utopia, such as Emily Kame Ngwarreye, were pouring hot wax over silk and refining the recently learnt techniques of batik printing. This was a dynamic era of textile work and the works in this exhibition attest to a vibrant response to the land.

The warm colours of the silks connect with the next work by the Indian design group MORII. Here a large seven-metre textile work bifurcates the gallery. The artists write that the work draws "attention to the significant impact of climate change on artisan communities, using the endangered Bela print tradition as a case study. The Bela river's drying and the subsequent migration of artisans symbolise a parallel narrative to the evolution of traditional crafts amidst shifting landscapes." This piece is layered with traditions and science. It includes Sujni and Mirror embroidery and transitions from blue to red climate stripes, creatively showing the rise of global temperatures over the past 70 years as originally visualised by climate scientist Ed Hawkins.

Alongside this work is a sculptural woven work by local artist Lisa Mori. Mori repurposes found materials, weaving discarded kitesurfing sails and marine debris into sculptural forms that hang from the ceiling. This work gives new life to environmental waste and sustains the traditions of weaving, bringing them into conversation with contemporary environmental issues.

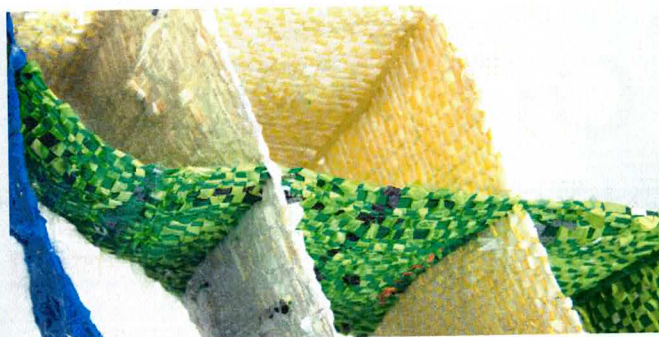


♦ *Literary Scraps*, 2024, (detail) by Maggie Baxter.

Running along the length of the large wall is a work by Malaysian artist Yim Yen Sum. Like a coastline, it weaves in and out and is inspired by the traditional Chinese handscroll. It is a 'scroll' of black gauze about thirty centimetres high, stitched and crafted with decals of building windows. Conceived during COVID, it considers the windows between apartment buildings as the only means through which to maintain and sustain social space and connection with other human beings in a time of isolation. This work also has an interactive component – where the artist will take down parts of the artwork which are purchased throughout the course of the exhibition.

In a series of both wall and floor-based works, local artist Maggie Baxter makes use of the traditions of weaving, printing and embroidery practised in Kutch, Gujarat in India. The works interrogate the term 'redacted' and its meaning in today's world of fake news and censorship, while also sustaining these traditions in the different communities in which the pieces are worked on.

At the end of the gallery is an expansive hanging installation by Indonesian artist Dias Prabu. Prabu uses the technique of Batik Tulis as "a bridge that connects the



♦ *A Love Like This*, 2024, work in progress detail, by Lisa-Mori.

history of the past that can still be linked to the present and the future." In an investigation of time, Prabu uses and so sustains traditional symbols of plants and animals and local Indonesian legends to consider contemporary times and the future through the teachings of the past.

Codes in Parallel/Sustain is bookended by Batik, from traditional to a hybrid of traditions and contemporary aesthetics. This, in itself, shows the evolutionary potential of skills such as Batik that are so essential to the livelihood of communities in places such as Indonesia. This resonates with the other crafts within the exhibition, which together demonstrate the vibrancy of traditions as meaningful within the complex socio-political and environmental realities we face today.

Sustain is on show at Holmes à Court Gallery @ No 10 from 23 August until 18 October.

CODES IN PARALLEL

2 AUGUST – 29 SEPTEMBER



iOTA24

INDIAN OCEAN CRAFT TRIENNIAL



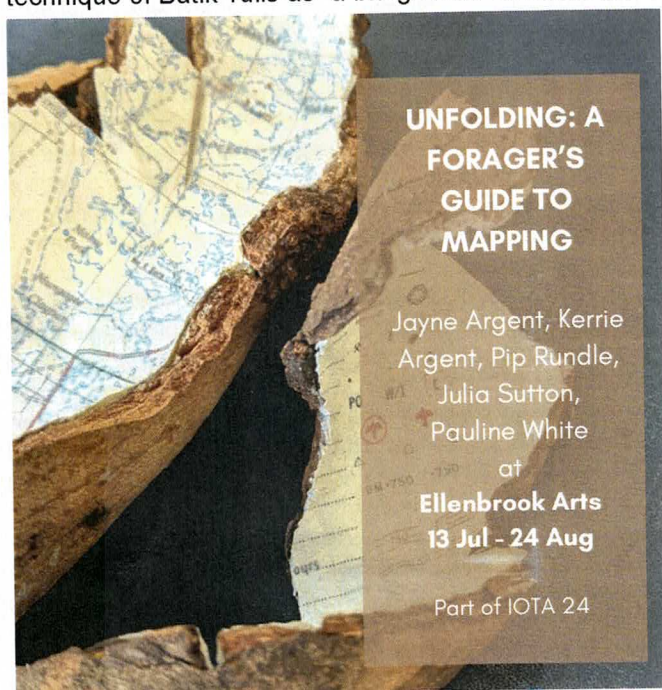
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Image: Kim Dodd,
Shapes on Country,
2022, tjampi (native grass)
and raffia woven on
salvaged metal car
seat frame. Photo by
Thea Wischusen

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