

24 September 2024

Challenge colonial power and sovereignty with new exhibit from the Unbound Collective

Celebrating 10 years of critical and creative work, [Sovereign Acts | Love Praxis](#) is a new exhibition opening next week, curated by the Unbound Collective in partnership with Flinders University Museum of Art (FUMA).

Starting September 30 and running until April 2025, with an opening night reception on October 3, the exhibition brings together the first comprehensive survey of the Collective's work and is supported by state and national funding bodies.

Working on Kurna Yarta, the Unbound Collective is a group of activist-led creative arts practitioners and scholars based at Flinders University; Dr Ali Gumillya Baker, Mirning woman, visual and performance artist and filmmaker; Dr Faye Rosas Blanch, Yidinyji/Mbararam woman, and performance poet; Dr Natalie Harkin, Narungga woman, and mixed-media activist-poet; and Dr Simone Ulalka Tur, Yankunytjatjara woman, singer and performer.

The group began collaborating a decade ago to challenge colonial power structures through experimental, uncompromising and politically charged creative practice.

"Our connections to Country extend from the coast to the desert lands of South Australia and Western Australia, and the rainforest of Far North Queensland and our work is grounded in First Nations methodologies of creative resistance, refusal, activism and sisterhood," says Dr Ali Gumillya Baker.

"We want to engage with complex ideas of sovereign identity and representation, through a collective lens of First Nations knowledges and methodologies, offering radical new ways of speaking back to the enduring hold of colonialism in this country.

"As a Collective, we embrace difficult questions of what it means to be sovereign peoples and to exist both within and outside institutionalisation of the colonial settler state that continually seeks to categorise and contain us."

Featuring moving images, installations, song, poetry and performance, *Sovereign Acts | Love Praxis* traces Unbound Collective's journey from its inaugural exhibition in 2014 at Fontanelle Gallery in Adelaide's inner west, to presenting their video-work *PERMEATE | mapping skin and tides of saturated resistance*, for 'unsettling Queenstown' in the Australia Pavilion for the 18th Venice Architectural Biennale.

The group has always worked in partnership and collaboration with their communities, as well as other First Nations artist-academics for site-specific work. They are currently leading an Australian Research Council Indigenous Discovery Award, titled *Reimagining the Humanities through Indigenous Creative Arts*, with Professor Katerina Teaiwa, Dr Lou Bennett, and Dr Romaine Moreton.

"We continue to reclaim and reposition First Nations narratives – rupturing stereotypes and reimagining relationships with colonial sites of power and knowledge production, including universities, galleries, libraries, archives and museums," says Dr Baker.

"In reflecting on this shared praxis, we want to ask, 'What are the ideas that we can collectively bind ourselves to and what are the ideas that can set us free?'"

The work of Unbound Collective emerged through a commitment to anti-racist creative praxis, de-institutionalisation, honouring their ancestors and future descendants, and the work of Indigenous people's globally in protecting Country.

Sovereign Acts | Love Praxis echoes and builds on these concerns to include development of new work on the Nullarbor, and Yankunytjatjara anti-nuclear descendants of the Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta. This includes the translation and recording of their song *Purple Flowers*, co-written in 2018 with Dr Lou Bennett (formerly of Tiddas).

FUMA Director Fiona Salmon says *Sovereign Acts | Love Praxis* will be a significant exhibition highlighting the scope and impact of the Collective's work over the past decade.

"Creating a living dialogue that bridges past, present, and future, the work of Unbound stands in solidarity with Indigenous peoples globally, emphasizing the collective responsibility to protect and sustain Country, and reminding us that true sovereignty lies in the continuous act of cultural resistance, reclamation and reinvention," says Ms Salmon.

The *Sovereign Acts | Love Praxis* project will be augmented by a program of public-facing events presented by Unbound with FUMA and Vitalstatistix, a contemporary arts company in Port Adelaide, with which Unbound Collective has a long association.

A new publication, *Sovereign Acts | Love Praxis*, is being published by Wakefield Press, for release in 2025. Contributors to the book include Romaine Moreton, Léuli Eshrang, Clo Bullen, Nici Cumpston, Karina Lester and Julie Gough.

Exhibition details:

Title: *Sovereign Acts | Love Praxis*

Dates: Monday 30 September – Friday 13 December 2024 // Monday 17 February – Friday 11 April 2025

Opening reception: 5:30 – 7:30pm, Thursday 3 October 2024

Location: Flinders University Museum of Art, Ground Floor, Social Sciences North Building, Flinders University, Bedford Park

Media images and captions:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/ofj5hl6l1dgtadxtry5us/AHY0i4HkGcjr1HtwbX3uu4?rlkey=84bel3nqid278lhae5go721q0&st=941ub5ok&dl=0>.

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