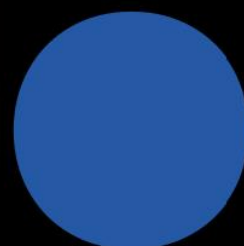


AN EXHIBITION BY MODERN ART
PROJECTS BLUE MOUNTAINS
WENTWORTH FALLS SCHOOL OF ARTS
29 AUGUST TO 14 SEPTEMBER 2025
FRIDAY TO SUNDAY 10AM TO 4PM

AERIE



Aerie

29 August to 14 September 2025
Wentworth Falls School of Arts

A Modern Art Projects Blue Mountains (MAPBM) exhibition that parallels the anthropological, social and material cultural history of the Wentworth Falls School of Arts with MAPBM's own history of contemporary art making and exhibiting.

ARTISTS:

New site-specific artworks developed for the exhibition in response to the Wentworth Falls School of Arts by

Fiona Davies

Tom Isaacs

Sean O'Keeffe

Naomi Oliver

Alan Schacher (with Sam James)

A new performance developed in response to the Wentworth Falls School of Arts by

Katya Petetskaya

Works from past MAPBM exhibitions by

Beata Geyer

Anne Graham (with Boris Hunt)

Eloise Maree

Peachey & Mosig

Rebecca Waterstone

CURATOR: Cassandra Hard Lawrie

Aerie is supported by Blue Mountains City Council and the Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust

MAPBM



MAPBM

Modern Art Projects Blue Mountains (MAPBM) acknowledges the Darug and Gundungurra peoples on whose land we live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded.

Modern Art Projects Blue Mountains (MAPBM) is a not-for-profit incorporated association that supports and advocates for the development, production and exhibition of contemporary, multi-form art in the Blue Mountains. MAPBM also aims to foster an independent environment that supports the development and practice of contemporary artists and curators and to engage with the wider Blue Mountains community in developing a new critical agenda for contemporary art in the region.

MAPBM was established by a group of predominantly Blue Mountains-based artists. It is run by artists, curators and others who are interested in, and dedicated to, the promotion and advocacy of contemporary art. MAPBM has partnered with a number of organisations in developing innovative exhibitions and projects and has received funding from the Blue Mountains City of the Arts Trust, Create NSW, Festivals Australia, the Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal and a range of other agencies and foundations. Our recent major projects include *Lumière: Mt Victoria's Festival of the Moving Image* and *Carnivale Catastrophe* at Cementa 22.

Aerie

Aerie is a Modern Art Projects Blue Mountains (MAPBM) exhibition that parallels the anthropological, social and material cultural history of the Wentworth Falls School of Arts with MAPBM's own history of contemporary art making and exhibiting. Six artists have developed new works that explore the activities and usages of this historic Arts and Crafts building (designed by Herbert Dennis) since it was built in 1914-15. The exhibition also presents five past works of artists that have been in MAPBM exhibitions within other historic buildings in the Blue Mountains.

Aerie shines a light on the extensive heritage of the region and how community buildings have supported its social and cultural fabric. The exhibition draws on the idea of community groups without their own walls nesting in these communal spaces. As an artist run initiative without a dedicated space, MAPBM has relied on community resources to hold exhibitions and present its members' work to the public.

Similarly, the Wentworth Falls School of Arts has been the temporary or longer-term venue for a surprising myriad of activities; cultural, social, educational, medical, political, charitable and more. Further, it has often been the first venue for artists, musicians and performers to present their early career exhibitions, plays and concerts. Like the nest's capacity to aid in the nurturing of the young before flight, the Wentworth Falls School of Arts has provided a launching pad for many an emerging creative.

Situated throughout the various rooms of the Wentworth Falls School of Arts, **Aerie** brings this historically significant building to life with artworks that invite you to consider its past occupants and their activities.

Cassandra Hard Lawrie

Curator

August 2025

Fiona Davies

First

2025

Found objects, text panels, balsa architectural models, projections and red and white striped plinths

Dimensions variable

New site-specific artwork developed in response to the Wentworth Falls School of Arts

DOWNSTAIRS DRESSING ROOM

Being the 'first' gradually became a primary focus revealed by the oral history project I undertook from January 2025 linking the physical and lived narratives held by the Wentworth Falls School of Arts building.

On the first day of recording oral histories, I met with people who came forward to tell of their memories. First in line was the historian, Peter Shoemark, who shared his record of rich and complex conversations with Val Clark, a long-time resident of Wentworth Falls. These included many memories of her interactions with the Wentworth Falls School of Arts including playing the woodcutter at the age of fifteen in the 1944 production of the 'Princess and the Woodcutter'.

It became clear that the Wentworth Falls School of Arts building has played a significant role in being either the first or one of the first places where large numbers of artists, performers, actors, filmmakers, dancers and musicians have taken the opportunity to present work to an audience and to reflect, develop and learn from that process. It is often a critical stage in the development of an artistic practice.

First is a site-specific work located in the dressing room beneath the theatre. This is a site of preparation for being the first, a place that physically supports the first public performance. It is a site lined with mirrors where reflections of appearances are checked and adjusted. The mirrors in this work locate the audience within the space and the changing light levels of the projections introduce a dynamic interaction between two of the many meanings of reflection – considered thinking and seeing an image.

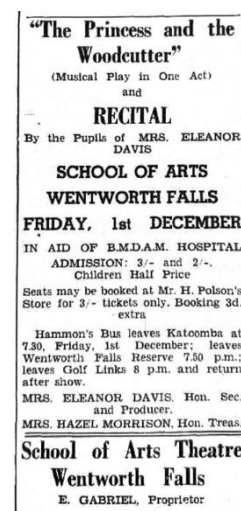


IMAGE Fiona Davies, *First*, 2025, found objects, text panels, balsa architectural models, projections and red and white striped plinths

Beata Geyer

Open Modular (Ultramarine Blue)

2015

MDF and paint

60cm x 60cm x 60cm each

Artwork from past MAPBM project; *Art and Architecture* at Everglades House & Gardens

Sectio Aurea

2014

MDF and paint

40cm x 40cm x 60cm each

Artwork from past MAPBM project; *Art and Architecture* at Morton House

EXHIBITION HALL

These works investigate colour as a structural principle, extending the language of painting into three-dimensional, site-responsive forms. Colour functions not as surface but as construction, determining proportion, articulating geometry and shaping the viewer's spatial experience.

In dialogue with the histories of abstraction and its expansion beyond the canvas, the works respond directly to architecture and landscape. Modular systems and mathematical ratios provide a formal scaffold, yet colour introduces indeterminacy, allowing the work to shift in relation to context and perception.

Focusing on colour, form and space, the works reframe abstraction as a spatial practice. They unfold as spatial propositions, where colour and geometry interact with site to transform both architectural and perceptual space.

Beata Geyer is a Blue Mountains based artist and curator whose practice spans painting, video, installation and public art, with a focus on colour, abstraction, and site-responsive work.

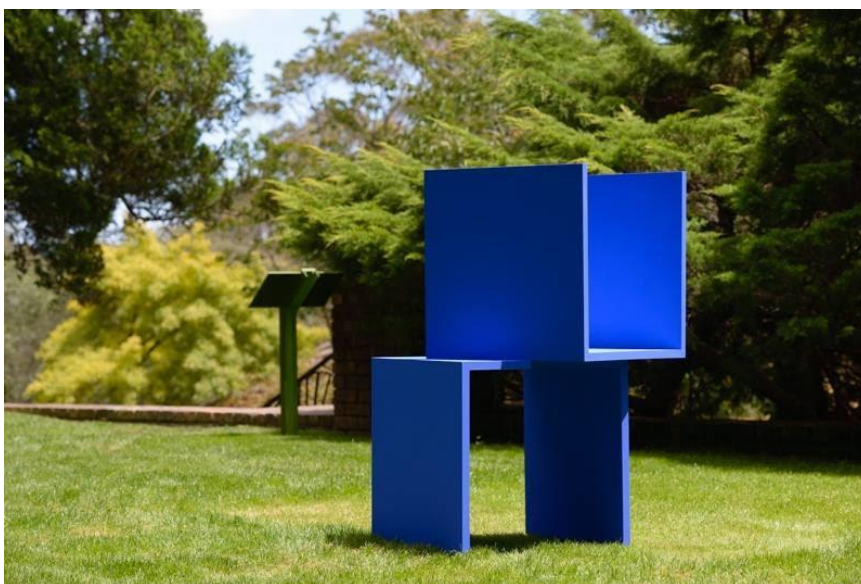


IMAGE Beata Geyer, *Open Modular (Ultramarine Blue)*, 2015, MDF and paint



IMAGE Beata Geyer, *Sectio Aurea*, 2014, MDF and paint

Anne Graham (with Boris Hunt)

The Beehive Lady and The Beehive Observatories, with music by Boris Hunt titled *The Transit of Beeness*

2017

Photograph, sound, LED globes, steel, fabric, beekeeper's hat, dressmakers model beehive and timber boxes

Dimensions variable

Artwork from past MAPBM project; *Explorers: Narrative of Site* at Woodford Academy

EXHIBITION HALL

This work was originally exhibited at The Woodford Academy in 2017 and was created as a response to site.

The Transit of Venus, observed at The Woodford Academy occurred in 1874. The Academy was then owned by Mr. Alfred Fairfax a wealthy amateur astronomer who possessed a Schroeder telescope that was used to make observations of the Transit. The telescope was set up in a Beehive Observatory in the grounds of the Academy. The design of the Beehive observatory was based on the traditional shape of a skep beehive, hence the name. In the bakery of the Academy I discovered a beekeeper's veil, and in the Academy archive there exists a photograph of a daughter of the house wearing this item. So clearly bees were kept at Woodford, honey would be a vital source of sweetness.

I enjoyed the odd conjunction of an observatory, where the movement of the planets was observed, alongside the dance of the bees in the garden, as they mapped and traced the source of their pollen. I made a version of the beekeeper's veil and photographed a friend of my sons wearing it.

I also made a replica of the Beehive Observatory to be placed in the bakery where I had discovered the original veil. Inside the observatory stands a dressmaker's dummy, made from strands of metal, she is wearing the beekeeper's hat and veil. There is something unearthly about this captive figure, maybe she echoes the rather lonely lives of the women who lived in what was a very isolated and sometimes dangerous place. I also made a form based on a skep beehive, an enclosed form made from cane and rope, the room smells of honey, the bees come and go.

The Woodford Academy was built in the 1830's on a key transport route since early colonial days. The gentle tracking marks of the First Nation owners of the land became a narrow dusty road that is now the Great Western Highway with the railway running alongside it. These patterns of contemporary movement overlay the quieter patterns of the past that hum and buzz in the rooms and gardens of the Academy.





IMAGES Anne Graham, *The Beehive Lady and The Beehive Observatories*, with music by Boris Hunt titled *The Transit of Beeness*, 2017, photograph, sound, LED globes, steel, fabric, beekeeper's hat, dressmakers model beehive and timber boxes

Tom Isaacs

Our Glorious Dead

2025

Felt, thread and Tasmanian Oak dowel with stain and varnish

Dimensions variable

New site-specific artwork developed in response to the Wentworth Falls School of Arts

EXHIBITION HALL

Our Glorious Dead acknowledges the impact of war on the community of Wentworth Falls and highlights the important role that the Wentworth Falls School of Art played in the community's response to war. The School of Arts was a site where young men volunteered to fight for their country, where valour and loss of life were commemorated during and after the war, and where celebrations were organised upon the signing of peace treaties. In 1919, the Wentworth Falls School of Arts Committee voted to mark the end of World War I by installing a new flagpole on site in order to fly the national flag. The flags in this work were each made from a single piece of fabric which was cut up and then sewn back together, echoing the violent effects of war on the social fabric of this community and the subsequent work by community members to repair the damage as best they can. The flags are made with a cross-pattern design which references, variously, medals of valour, grave markers of fallen soldiers, the humanitarian work of the international red cross, and the Christian faith with its promise of resurrection. The title of the work is taken from a poem of the same name, written by Wentworth Falls local Isabel Ewing and published in 1916.



IMAGES Tom Isaacs, *Our Glorious Dead*, 2025, felt, thread and Tasmanian Oak dowel with stain and varnish

Sean O’Keeffe

The Bow and the Lyre

2025

Mixed media

Dimensions variable

New site-specific artwork developed in response to the Wentworth Falls School of Arts

FUNCTION ROOM

This project uses keys, padlocks, and cupboards as metaphors for access, memory, and shared knowledge within the Wentworth Falls School of Arts. The final installation— oversized keys and exaggerated locks— emerged through research, observation, and time spent in the building.

The dining room where the work will be installed holds a series of locked cupboards—some labelled with group names, others nameless. These silent containers reflect the building’s many current and past users, evoking both presence and absence. Like these cupboards, much of the site’s history is obscured, accessible only to those with the right keys—literal or metaphorical.

The work engages with this layered reality: a community facility that fosters connection while also drawing boundaries. Keys here are symbols of both stewardship and exclusion, raising questions about who holds them, and what it might mean to share or remake them.

The School of Arts, rooted in Victorian-era Mechanics Institute ideals, has long hosted diverse groups, yet systems of access have privileged some while excluding others— particularly Indigenous, migrant, and less institutionally supported voices. This installation imagines a shift toward permeable boundaries, where cupboards open onto shared shelves and keys become communal tools. It invites viewers to consider how such a space might not just host many communities, but becomes one.



IMAGE Sean O’Keeffe, *The Bow and the Lyre*, 2025, mixed media

Naomi Oliver

Thresholds

2025

Single channel video, projected and installed with plastic magnifiers

Dimensions variable / Duration 6 minutes looped

New site-specific artwork developed in response to the Wentworth Falls School of Arts

FUNCTION ROOM

THEATRE AUDITORIUM

STAGE

This two-part video installation responds directly to the unique architecture and layered community history of the Wentworth Falls School of Arts. The work explores ideas of memory, impermanence, and sensory distortion through experimental video techniques and quiet interactions with the space itself.

In the first, projected video piece, shadows, cracks, textures and fixtures within the building become part of the projection, disrupting the image and creating a kind of ghostly presence, as if the building is remembering itself.

The second is a small, hidden video installed on a digital device and further partially distorted by a magnifying sheet placed at an angle. It's something that can only be discovered up close, asking viewers to slow down, look carefully, and sit with the fragility of the image.

Both works include performative moments. Together, the pieces offer a layered, slightly uncanny experience that invites reflection, curiosity, and a sense of quiet reverence for the traces that buildings, people, and time leave behind.



IMAGE Naomi Oliver, *Thresholds*, 2025, video still

Eloise Maree

Eloise Maree

Caducita's Daughters I, II and III

2019

aluminotypes

12.70 cm x 10.15 cm each (unframed)

Artwork from past MAPBM project; SEWNUP at Lyttleton Stores

EXHIBITION HALL

Caducita's Daughters I, II and III connects my practice to the needle person's practice.

To make these aluminotypes (direct positives on aluminium sheets), I used a silver nitrate sensitising solution. this seven percent solution is toxic, as are mercury, arsenic, perchloroethylene and other chemicals used historically if not now to groom fur, dye fabrics, dry clean and more. These aluminotypes are suffused with silver nitrate artefacts, which appear only after photographic fixation.

Heartfelt thanks to Gala Grahovac for modelling and Enrico Scotece and Michaela Gamble of the negative darkroom for assisting.



IMAGE Eloise Maree, *Caducita's Daughters II*, 2019, aluminotype

Peachey & Mosig

It doesn't matter what we think our reasons are

2017

Single channel video

Duration 1 hour, 7 minutes and 22 seconds

Artwork from past MAPBM project; *Drawing in the Expanded Field* at Katoomba Falls Kiosk

THEATRE AUDITORIUM

Developed on site at the Kiosk as part of *Drawing in the Expanded Field*, ***It doesn't matter what we think our reasons are*** arises from an uneasy relationship with drawing. In this looping video, Rachel Peachey's body and rope trace shifting lines that move between intention and accident. What begins as resistance to drawing unfolds into an experiment in play, site, and gesture. The work navigates anxiety and ease, permanence and ephemerality, imperfection and completion.



IMAGE Peachey & Mosig, *It doesn't matter what we think our reasons are*, 2017, video still

Katya Petetskaya

Light & Mirrors

2025

Live performance

Duration variable

New site-specific artwork developed in response to the Wentworth Falls School of Arts

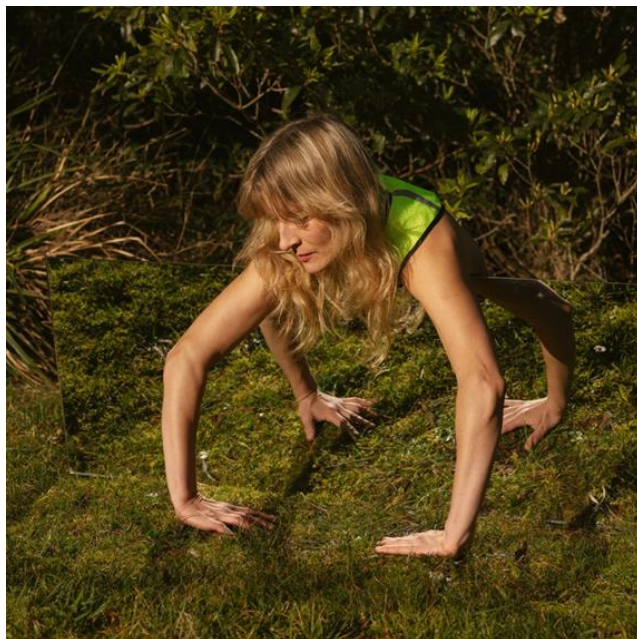
PERFORMED 3pm Saturday 6 September and 2:30pm Sunday 7 September 2025

Presented at the historic Wentworth Falls School of Arts, ***Light & Mirrors*** is a site-responsive performance that illuminates the fragmented and layered histories embedded in the building and the land it occupies.

The well-documented history of the Wentworth Falls School of Art's use begins in 1915. Prior to that, aside from the rare and progressive fact that the land was donated by a woman, Marie Pitt, the deeper story of the site remains elusive. Aboriginal presence in the Blue Mountains dates back at least 22,000 years, yet many locations, including the School of Arts, remain silent in the historical record.

Light & Mirrors explores these layered and partial histories, creating space for reflection, both literal and metaphorical, on how we engage with historical complexity. Using mirrors of varied shapes and sizes, the performer reflects fragments of the building, its architectural features, the natural surroundings, herself and the audience. These shifting reflections destabilise fixed images of the Wentworth Falls School of Arts and its landscape, offering new and unexpected ways of seeing.

Drawing on the phrase “smoke and mirrors,” often associated with theatrical illusion, ***Light & Mirrors*** reclaims the mirror not as a tool of deception, but as a medium of clarity—inviting reflection, multiplicity and transformation. Mirrors become portals, multiplying perspectives and refracting time. Light becomes a medium of disruption and revelation. Viewers witness themselves and others reflected within the context of the site: watching and being watched, reflecting and being reflected. In this layered gaze, the work invites us to consider our relationship to historical representation, presence and perception.



IMAGES Katya Petetskaya, *Light & Mirrors*, 2025, photographs of performance. Photos: Maja Baska

Alan Schacher (with Sam James)

An Empire of Daffodils

2025

photographs and photographic still projection with galvanised metal trays, white flour, white salt and white sugar

Dimensions variable

New site-specific artwork developed in response to the Wentworth Falls School of Arts

STAGE

In researching the history of the Wentworth Falls School of Arts I was fancifully taken with how significantly the daffodil contributed to its existence. The fact that Robert Pitt grew daffodils for market sale and the idea that the Hall was financed by daffodils. To this is added the history of the annual Daffodil Fete held there.

The Blue Mountains Grammar School, formerly the Pitt home, still has a planting of daffodils and in the 1950s-60s students and teachers sold daffodils by the roadside and in Sydney to support the school. In 1885 Pitt's plantings included 250,000 daffodils, which he grew commercially until 1905. He is credited as the first person to plant them in Australia, importing bulbs from England, Ireland and Japan and was responsible for introducing them to the Blue Mountains. He hybridised and experimented with daffodils and named two varieties after his children. Reflecting on the history of species introduction to Australia, and on both the positives and negatives, inevitably leads to the subject of Empire and colonisation.

For my work I have devised a performance for camera: A Man of Flowers, channelling the image of Robert Pitt amongst his fields of daffodils. Below the quadriptych of three large-scale photographs lie three humble galvanised metal trays, each containing respectively a square of white flour, white salt and white sugar, materials which have featured in my installation oeuvre.

I'm thinking of the annual Daffodil Fete once celebrated in the Hall, of cakes, damper and scones that would be baked and sold. Also, the similarity of sound between the words flower and flour, of the imprint yellow daffodils might leave on the surface of the flour. In doing so I also reflect on the colonial history of Australia, on the extensive yellow wheat fields, on white and yellow as racially characterising terms. Looking at Australia as a Nation built on imports, daffodils and flour serve as signifiers of the domestic. Wheat flour was one of the white refined staples introduced by missionaries to the Aboriginal inhabitants of this country along with salt and sugar. These refined basics have possibly been a contributing factor to poor indigenous health.



IMAGE Alan Schacher (with Sam James), *An Empire of Daffodils*, 2025, photographs and photographic still projection with galvanised metal trays, white flour, white salt and white sugar



IMAGE Blue Mountains Grammar School students selling daffodils by the roadside circa 1950s – early 60s. Image from The Australian Women's Weekly.

Rebecca Waterstone

Here / there

2017

Split-screen video with sound

Duration 20 minutes and thirty seconds

Sound pieces: Rebecca Waterstone, Abi Fry, CC

Artwork from past MAPBM project; *Lumière: Mt Victoria's Festival of the Moving Image* at Mount Vic Flicks

EXHIBITION HALL

A visual dialogue between two films, made in the Blue Mountains, Australia, and the Isle of Skye, Scotland. Merging and blurring realities, they depict the liminal experience of living between one place physically, and another in mind and heart. The motif of mountains binds the films' narratives together. The pull and yearning for one place - and the people within it - when in the other, is profound. The spoken word is a reading of a (fictional) British Shipping Forecast. Listened to by folk in the UK, it acts as a reassuring anchor, or lullaby. Tuning in late at night to the mellifluous tones of the broadcaster, it conjures romantic images of life at sea around the wild coastlines of the Inner and Outer Hebrides, while listeners rest safe and dry in their beds, or rugged up by a warm fireplace. This is a safe way to experience two opposing realities at once. Often describing elemental, tempestuous, potentially life-threatening weather outside, it is also a fitting metaphor for the liminal experience of being in a protected, nourishing place physically, while searching for a safe way to ride out the internal storms of aching for loved ones, navigating uncertainty, and coping with the kind of enforced distance and isolation that tears at the soul.

Over the course of 15 years, I moved in and out of these states of overlapping realities - living in two places at once. In Australia, I was sometimes in my body, and other times I was there only in my head and heart. Simultaneously, or alternately, I was physically or mentally located in Scotland. This duality was both intensely rich and nourishing, while also creating a heightened sense of uncertainty and limbo.

These films establish a third, merged reality that can be observed from a safe distance. The work was made to bring this experience outside of myself, transforming it into external matter, giving respite to my mind, and creating the conditions for others to experience this reality. Making the internal states into separate external entities was an attempt to understand the tangled complexities and navigate my existence between two hemispheres, two continents, two states of being, two full lives of families, friends and places. The mingling of images and sound, alternately fusing and pulling in opposite directions, is the embodiment of the tensions experienced while living simultaneously in multiple worlds.

Rebecca Waterstone has worked in Australia and internationally as an artist, art educator and curator for 30 years. Her work is comprised of multi-disciplinary creative practice (as research), site-specific curation, creative project management, art education, exhibition development, and public programming. She devises and delivers situational, community-engaged contemporary art projects that blend and expand definitions of creative disciplines, challenging traditional norms of public exhibition by fostering new dialogues between artists, community groups, and historic architectural spaces. In her own practice, she makes work focusing on materialities, and experiential qualities of colour, time and place.



IMAGES Rebecca Waterstone, *Here / there*, 2017, Split-screen video with sound. Video stills

MAPBM: <https://www.modernartprojects.org/>

Aerie: <https://www.modernartprojects.org/project/aerie-exhibition-celebrates-school-of-arts-and-mapbm>

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