



Title	Shopping for butterfly, 2024
Artist's dates	b. 1961 (63 y.o.) Glasgow, Scotland, migrated to Australia 1962.
Gallery/source	N Smith Gallery
Date of purchase	28 November 2024
Buying Circle	Nancy Nossal, Sarah Kremer, Kate Worth
Shadow members	Sarah George, Wendy Kozica, Fiona Hardie
Dimensions (H X W)	106 x 102.5 x 4 cm (framed)
Medium	hand-coloured pigment print on rag paper, unique state print

### CONTENT/SUBJECT/AESTHETIC QUALITIES

- A well-dressed gentleman has caught an over-scaled colourful butterfly in a net perhaps to add to the kind of botanical collection that imposed a scientific order and method on an unfamiliar land. He holds a rifle and to further invade the scene he is accompanied by a fluorescent dog.
- Joan Ross uses colonial landscape (often Joseph Lycett or John Glover) and figure paintings as backdrops, applying elements from the modern era, specifically fluorescent yellow and high-visibility clothing to symbolise colonisation and fear. She uses 'cut and paste' technique to explore critical issues like climate change, greed and consumerism.
- The act of depicting people in bright clothing and placing fluorescent objects in the landscape does more, however, than simply illustrate colonisation; it also highlights and exaggerates the foreign or alien aspects of her work and its association with the landscape and the cultural and spiritual connection to place.

### CONTEXT

- Joan Ross Australian artist born in Glasgow working on Gadigal Country, Sydney. Over her four-decade career, she has probed the ongoing consequences of colonisation in Australia with wit and wry critique.
- She is an acclaimed multidisciplinary artist based, exhibiting since 1980s across drawing, painting, photography and sculpture to installation, video, and virtual reality.
- Her experimental works combine colonial iconography and landscape painting with collaged elements of western commodity culture connected to land tenure.

### COLLECTION STATEMENT

- After identifying Joan's work as highly desirable on many levels and closely aligned to our intention statement we set out to find a suitable piece months ago. *Shopping for butterfly* has the added benefit of what has become a fairly consistent theme this year - wit and wry critique of the ongoing consequences of colonisation in Australia particularly the effects colonialism has had on Indigenous Australians.
- We were delighted to find this piece currently in an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. (Those trees came back to me in my dreams August 2024 - February 2025) In a first for the National Portrait Gallery, Ross was invited to explore the collection and select historical portraits to sit alongside and in conversation with her own artworks. Featuring over 100 paintings, prints

and drawings, sculpture, video and digital animation, the resulting exhibition considers how colonial artworks are contextualised within cultural institutions and asks us to question the stories that sit within the archives of history.

- We were so keen to see it in the flesh but couldn't quite work out a trip to Canberra at a time that suited us all. Many in the buying circle know or have her work already so it was easy to convince us all that this beautiful piece had a worthy place in our collection. Once it is finished in Canberra we take possession in February next year. We cannot wait to see it!