

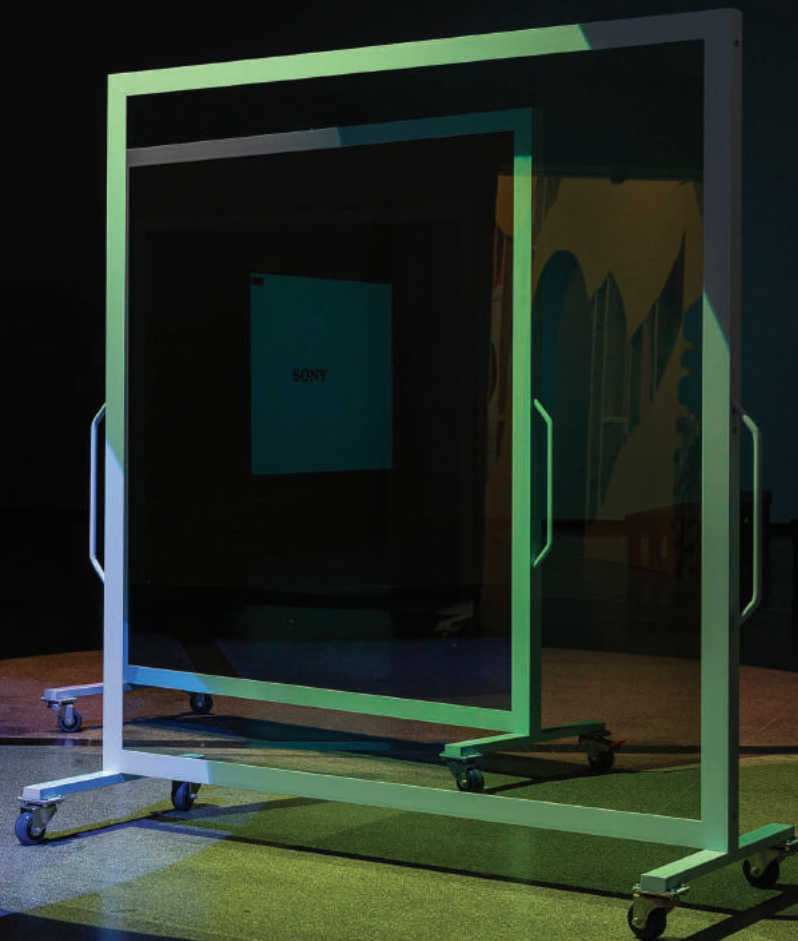
The Theatre is Lying: The inaugural Macfarlane Commissions

15 December 2018 - 24 March 2019

Education Kit

Australian Centre for
Contemporary Art

acca



Exhibition introduction

The Theatre is Lying: The inaugural Macfarlane Commissions is a new multi-year partnership with The Macfarlane Fund designed to support the production and presentation of ambitious new projects by contemporary artists. The exhibition is the first in this series of exhibitions, encompassing five new major works by Anna Breckon and Nat Randall, Sol Calero, Consuelo Cavaniglia, Matthew Griffin and Daniel Jenatsch.

The Theatre is Lying is an exhibition about fact and fiction, bringing together artists who create alternative narratives and worlds through illusionary, cinematic and theatrical devices, including installation, *misé en scène*, historical re-enactment, digital montage and compositions with video, light and sound.

The exhibition curators, Annika Kristensen and Max Delany built the exhibition around ideas related to “reality and the real” and how this can be thought about at a time “when truth and fiction are increasingly blurring on the international stage and in media and politics”. The exhibition isn’t overly political, but it does address the “double meaning of the word theatre – as associated with performance or an arena for performance, and also the theatre of life or the world stage”.

Borrowing elements from the theatre, the artworks in the exhibition take many forms and ask us to question what we think we know as the truth, to make us wonder about whether what we are seeing is real life or made up. The artists all have skills that extend outside of the ‘studio’ art environment – including sound, composition, film, set building, choreography and live performance.



How to use this kit

This Education Kit has been developed for use alongside visiting the exhibition *The Theatre is Lying* at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA).

Teachers can select and adapt the curriculum-linked questions and activities provided within the resource for learning experiences in the gallery or classroom. Victorian and Australian Curriculum descriptors are listed and expanded upon at the end of the document.

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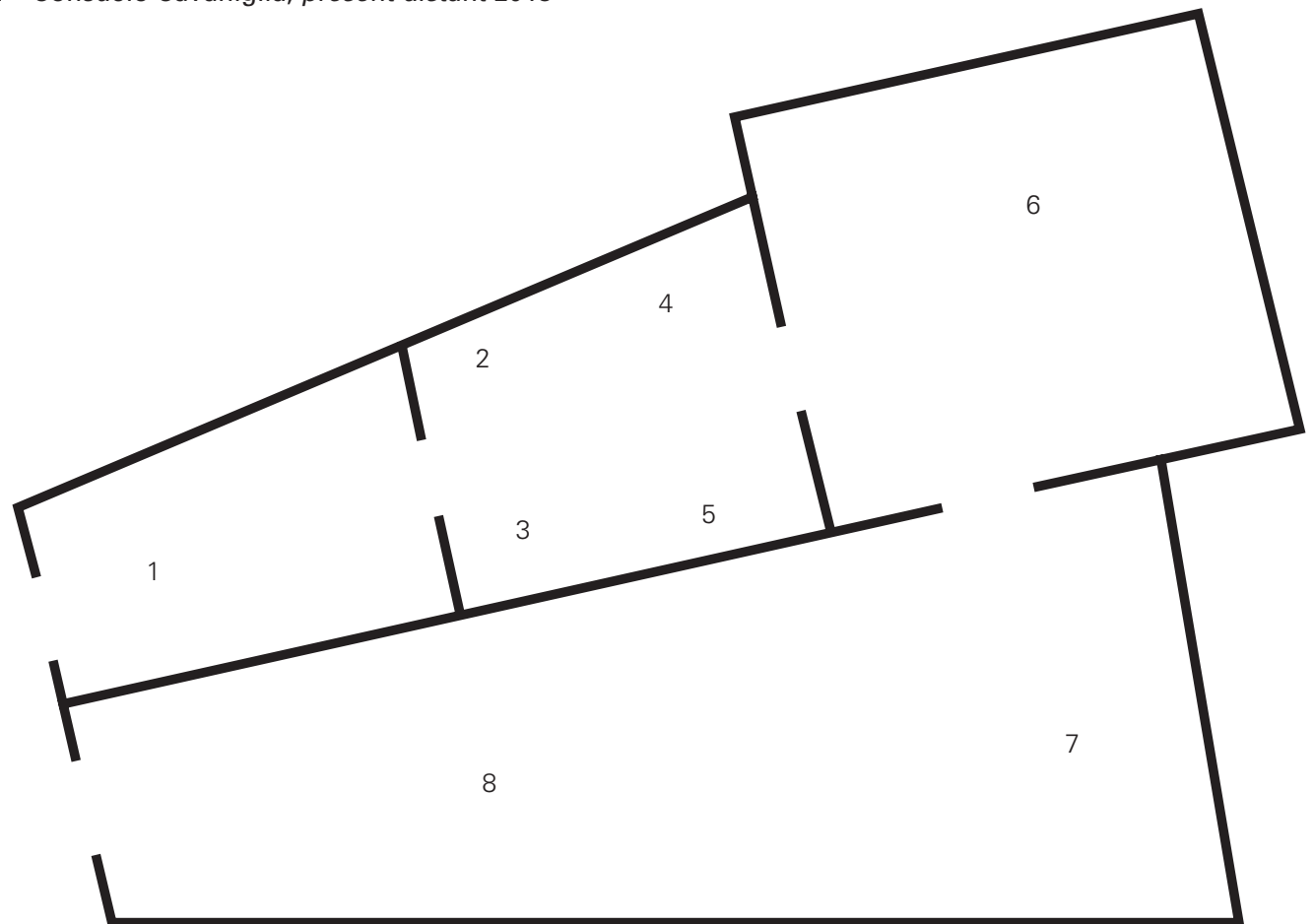
Images

Installation views, *The Theatre is Lying*, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA), 2018.

Photographs: Andrew Curtis

Exhibition Floorplan

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Anna Breckon and Nat Randall
***Rear view* 2018**

high definition digital video, multi-channel
sound 85:11 mins

Performers: Linda Chen and Nat Randall

Composer and sound designer: Nina Buchanan

Cinematographer: Ross Turley

Courtesy of the artists

Rear view continues Anna Breckon and Nat Randall's interest in durational or time-based performance, while flirting with the endless representational loop of film and video art. With all the clichés of a road movie genre, *Rear view* depicts two women – performed by Randall with actor and artist Linda Chen – on a road trip from Broken Hill to the town of Wilcannia in country New South Wales. Unlike mainstream cinema, where segments of filmed footage is edited together, *Rear view* is presented as a lengthy single take: performed in a studio by the actors in real time – bringing a liveness to the performance that belies its cinematic medium – set against previously recorded, rear-projected footage of the view from the tail end of a vehicle travelling between the two towns.

Rear view's script is constructed from hundreds of excerpts from Australian and Hollywood films in which women appear travelling in cars. The work depicts Randall and Chen tightly framed in the front seat of a convertible car and captures their changing gestures and shifting emotions; echoing the tone and form of the original cinematic fragments. These fragments are curated into a continuous form that shifts in mood, tone and genre over ninety minutes.

Advisory note: this work contains some verbal content of a sexually explicit nature.

Key Vocabulary

> **Durational:** the length of time something continues or exists

> **Genre:** a style that involves a particular set of characteristics

> **Single take:** when the video or film has been shot in one continuous take without stopping

> **Cinematic:** having qualities characteristic of films

Activity

The artists developed a script for *Rear view* by splicing together different fragments of conversation from pre-existing films. Artists often use cut up techniques to produce new artworks from objects, images or texts that they find. Using a manual cut and paste technique, create an artwork from a found writing or images. Explore a variety of ways of arranging the cut-up segments before deciding where to fix the segments into place. How does changing the sequence of words or arrangement of images create new meaning in your artwork?

Curriculum Links / Visual Arts / 7 & 8

[VCAVAE033, ACAVAM118](#)



Anna Breckon and Nat Randall, *Rear view* 2018, production still. Courtesy the artists.
Photograph: Ross Turley



Sol Calero
***La puerta* 2018**

synthetic polymer paint and paper on
composition board, plywood, cotton, pine site-
specific installation
Courtesy of the artist, Barbara Gross, Munich
and Crèvecoeur, Paris

Reflecting her experience growing up in Venezuela and Spain as part of a Latin diaspora, Sol Calero's paintings and installations reference the complex social and political histories that inform constructions of Latin identity and aesthetics. Trained as a painter – a medium devoted to creating the illusion of depth within a flat surface – Calero's work has expanded to embrace the idea of painting as spatial installation, in the creation of three-dimensional staged sets and *mise en scène*.

Calero's *La puerta* is an architectural threshold centred around a highly decorated proscenium arch, a reference to the archways of Spanish colonial architecture that commonly appear in Latin American patios and buildings. The passage from a monochrome environment to one bursting with colour references the historical translation of black and white reproductions of Baroque European paintings by indigenous Latin American artists into their own art-historical genre.

Ideas of perspective, illusion and *trompe l'oeil* are central to Calero's method, along with a high-key chromatic scale and motifs reminiscent of tropicalia, referencing the fusion of European and Latin positions, as much as the stereotypes and clichés inherent in the (mis)representation of Latin identity.

Key Vocabulary

- > **Spatial installation:** an artwork - often large scale - that addresses and transforms a given space
- > **Mise en scène:** a French expression, commonly used in film and theatre, that translates to 'placing on stage'. The arrangement of many elements to create a visual theme or tell a story
- > **Trompe l'oeil:** a French phrase that means 'tricking the eye'
- > **Stereotypes:** widely held but fixed and oversimplified images or ideas of a particular type of person or thing

Inquiry

Calero is interested in the way that historical artworks from one place have been interpreted by artists living and working in other places. Does an artwork have the same meaning for everyone? How does the time and place you live in shape the way that you view artworks from other places, or artworks that were made long ago?

Curriculum Links / Visual Arts / 6 & 6

[VCAVAR032](#), [ACAVAM114](#)





Consuelo Cavaniglia
***present distant* 2018**

powder coated steel, laminated glass, float glass, two-way mirror, rubber spacers, bolts, castors, lighting

7 panels, each 241.0 x 204.0 x 91.0 cm;
installation, dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist, STATION, Melbourne,
and Kronenberg Wright Artist Projects, Sydney

Consuelo Cavaniglia cites architecture along with film and photography as key influences for her experiments with the perception and experience of light, colour and space. *present distant* is an installation of seven sculptural screens which serve both as architectural stage and spatial composition. Sheeted with vitreous surfaces including coloured glass and two-way mirror, Cavaniglia's screens frame aspects of the gallery, encouraging reflection, refraction and the experience of perception in space.

Theatrical lighting, in the form of follow spots, provides an additional element in the artist's spatial composition, extending Cavaniglia's idea of active colour mixing in space. Colours proliferate as one screen is experienced in the field of another, with choreographed lighting sequences – programmed to scan the space and then stop in set configurations – adding further chromatic variation and complexity to the spatial play of light and colour. Cavaniglia's spatial variations register the appearance of one's own and others' bodies in their field, which we experience as the result of chance rather than design.

Cavaniglia's spatial variations register the appearance of one's own and others' bodies in their field, which we experience as the result of chance rather than design. As a play of illusion, the artist's enigmatic compositions revel in the drama between transparency and reflection, the tangible and intangible, appearance and disappearance, the imagined and the actual.

Key Vocabulary

> **Perception:** the ability to become aware of something using the senses

> **Architectural:** relating to the design and construction of buildings

> **Spatial:** relating to, occupying or taking up space

Inquiry

present distant is the first work that Cavaniglia has made that includes moving or mobile elements. Imagine for a moment that this artwork was static – that the glazed and mirrored screens were unable to be moved and that the spot lights stayed in fixed positions. How would your experience of this work in the exhibition change?

Curriculum Links / Visual Arts / 9 & 10

[VCAVAP044](#), [ACAVAM129](#)





Matthew Griffin

Gums 2018

site-specific installation with two channel, high definition digital video
8:41 mins; installation dimensions variable

Melbourne shuffling 2018

single channel, high definition digital video
13:02 mins

The outernet 2018

two channel, high definition digital video
33:34 mins

Shallowest part 2018

single channel, high definition digital video, printed cardboard packaging, steel, found materials
11:58 mins; installation dimensions variable
All works courtesy of the artist

Matthew Griffin takes a humorously existential look at contemporary life, art and culture through social media, installations, performance and video montages, and digital collages of 'found', internet sourced, or newly constructed visual material.

Griffin deliberately blurs fact and fiction: creating digital collages that combine internet memes with references to global politics, popular culture, art world trivia and personal narratives – exploring subjects including deepfake, photoshop, body politics, body manipulation and internet regulation. He is interested in how the now commonplace use of screens, smartphones, cameras and simple editing software can obscure the production and distribution of trustworthy imagery. Irony and humour are employed to examine ideas relating to the meaninglessness of human experience, the disconnection of mind and body, and communication breakdown.

Through performance, video and digital display (from lo-fi to the latest high-definition technology), Griffin extends his interest in fictions and falsehoods from the shadowy online world, into the bright space of the gallery. In an eclectic mash-up of found footage with staged performance, and real-life sound bites with crafted scripts, American politicians rub shoulders with amateur contortionists, talking heads and a musical Goth, traversing subjects from the deep web to dental surgery. Through playful manipulation and irreverent sleight of hand, Griffin's overload of images and ideas reflects the absurd chaos of contemporary life in the Information Age.

Key Vocabulary

> **Existential:** having to do with human existence
> **Deepfake:** the name given to a technique that combines existing and source videos to create a fake video that shows a person or persons performing an action at an event that never occurred in reality
> **Lo-fi:** where the quality of production is lower than usual contemporary standards and imperfections are evident and celebrated
> **Information Age:** a period in the 21st century characterised by the rapid shift from traditional industry to an economy based on information technology. Also referred to as the Computer Age, Digital Age or New Media Age

Inquiry

Can you identify the found footage and the staged performance in Griffin's work *The outernet*? How does this artwork reflect on contemporary life and challenge the saying, 'the camera never lies'?

Curriculum Links / Visual Arts / 7 & 8

[VCAVAR038](#), [ACAVAR123](#)

ASIS raid: no charges to be laid

MELBOURNE: The Australian Security Intelligence Service agents who conducted a mock raid on Melbourne's Sheraton Hotel last year will not be charged under Victorian law.

Victoria's Chief Police Commissioner, Mr Mick Miller, said yesterday that he had accepted the advice of the State Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr John Coldrey, QC, not to lay any charges.

Mr Coldrey had advised that Victorian law had been breached at the time of the raid, but that there was insufficient evidence to warrant the prosecution of anyone.

The actual cost of organising the exercise itself, excluding salaries, was \$5,091,23, according to Senator Evans, including \$7,240 for Mr Hermes services, and \$25,800 for legal representation.

Raid costs \$750,000

The total cost to the Commonwealth of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service training exercise at the Sheraton Hotel in Melbourne last year will be more than \$750,000. Figures given by the Attorney-General, Senator Evans, in reply to a question on notice in the Senate, show \$365,400 to have been paid out in damages to the hotel and to its employees; a cost of more than \$165,000 for the inquiry conducted by Mr Justice Hope; and for administrative costs incurred by ASIS in its

Anonymity of ASIS agents protected

Legislation to protect the anonymity of Australian Security Intelligence Service officers involved in the raid on Melbourne's Sheraton Hotel was passed without amendment in Parliament yesterday.

The Judiciary Amendment Bill complements Victorian legislation to protect the confidentiality of ASIS agents in criminal proceedings arising out of the incident by ensuring that their names cannot be published in other

Hotel

MELBOURNE: The Sheraton Hotel in Melbourne, the Australian Secret Intelligence Service training exercise at the Sheraton Hotel in Melbourne last year will be more than \$750,000. Figures given by the Attorney-General, Senator Evans, in reply to a question on notice in the Senate, show \$365,400 to have been paid out in damages to the hotel and to its employees; a cost of more than \$165,000 for the inquiry conducted by Mr Justice Hope; and for administrative costs incurred by ASIS in its

where an ASIS officer told me the team was to be disbanded.

Daniel Jenatsch
The Sheraton Hotel Incident 2018

two channel, high definition digital video,
5.1 surround sound
15:00 mins
Courtesy of the artist

Daniel Jenatsch is an artist and composer with an interest in the space between documentary and fiction, historiography and invention. His work with sound and music, video and performance has ranged from multi-media documentaries to experimental operas, video and sound installation, film and choreographic scoring.

The Sheraton Hotel Incident is a satirical recreation of an historical event. In 1983, at the then Sheraton Hotel in Spring Street, Melbourne, a group of Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) agents undertook a training exercise involving the simulated rescue of a hostage from fictional foreign agents. From their base in Room 007, and without the hotel's knowledge or consent, the agents embarked upon a rescue mission wearing masks and balaclavas, whilst openly wielding firearms. In what became a bungled operation, hotel staff and guests were confronted and alarmed, police were called, several agents arrested, and ASIS – then a little-known, top-secret organisation – were thrust embarrassingly into the public spotlight. The incident led to the cancellation of ASIS's powers, which were not reinstated until 2004.

For *The Sheraton Hotel Incident*, Jenatsch recreates a historical event borrowing elements from spy fiction, a genre of literature and cinema. The figure of the spy in fiction has long been a character that, by necessity – and not unlike the artist – moves fluidly between the realms of truth and deception. Jenatsch's two-channel video and sound composition re-enacts historical artefacts – news reports, witness testimonies and tropes from espionage film and music genres. The artist reflects upon the implications of security, intelligence and the law, and the production of real life events in which form follows fiction.

Key Vocabulary

> **Historiography:** the study of the writing of history and of written histories
> **Satirical:** containing or using satire. Satire is the use of humour, irony, exaggeration, or ridicule to expose and criticize stupidity or vices

Activity

Jenatsch has researched a particular historical event that happened in Melbourne, the city where he lives. He has used information and knowledge gleaned from his research to create *The Sheraton Hotel Incident* – an audiovisual work that blurs fact and fiction. Research a newsworthy story or incident that has occurred in your suburb, town, or city. What materials and processes might you choose to give form to an artwork inspired by your research? Give reasons for your choices.

Curriculum Links / Visual Arts / 9 & 10

[VCAVAV035](#), [ACAVAM126](#)





Curriculum Links

Anna Breckon and Nat Randall, *Rear view* 2018

Students will use Breckon and Randall's practice and the work of other artists (historical and contemporary) as inspiration to collage and sequence their own material into an artwork.

Victorian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Levels 7 & 8 / Explore and Express Ideas

Explore visual arts practices as inspiration to explore and develop themes, concepts or ideas in artworks. (VCAVAE033)

Australian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Years 7 and 8

Experiment with visual arts conventions and techniques, including exploration of techniques used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent a theme, concept or idea in their artwork. (ACAVAM118)

Sol Calero, *La puerta* 2018

Students will use *La puerta* as a starting point to discuss how artworks are informed by historical and cultural contexts, and how viewers their own experiences and backgrounds to their interpretation of an artwork.

Victorian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Levels 5 and 6 / Respond and Interpret

Identify and describe how ideas are expressed in artworks by comparing artworks from different contemporary, historical and cultural contexts, including artworks by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. (VCAVAR032)

Australian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Years 5 and 6

Explore ideas and practices used by artists, including practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to represent different views, beliefs and opinions. (ACAVAM114)

Consuelo Cavaniglia, *present distant* 2018

Students are to experience Cavaniglia's artwork *present distant* by moving the sculptural screens in the space and then are to consider how the display and their experience of the work would change if static.

Victorian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Levels 9 and 10 / Present and Perform

Create, present, analyse and evaluate displays of artwork considering how ideas can be conveyed to an audience. (VCAVAP044)

Australian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Years 9 and 10

Present ideas for displaying artworks and evaluate displays of artworks. (ACAVAM129)

Matthew Griffin, *The outernet* 2018

Students analyse visual conventions in Griffin's artwork by closely investigating the artist's use of found and performed material. They discuss how and what materials and techniques Griffin uses to blur truth and fiction to express ideas about contemporary culture.

Victorian Curriculum / Levels 7 and 8 / Respond and Interpret

Analyse how ideas and viewpoints are expressed in artworks and how they are viewed by audiences. (VCAVAR038)

Australian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Years 7 and 8

Analyse how artists use visual conventions in artworks. (ACAVAR123)

Daniel Jenatsch, *The Sheraton Hotel Incident* 2018

Students will consider how Jenatsch commenced his artistic process by researching a real event and are to experiment with materials and technologies to communicate and express an idea by creating an artwork informed by the place they live.

Victorian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Levels 9 & 10 / Visual Arts Practices

Experiment with materials, techniques, technologies and processes in a range of art forms to express ideas, concepts and themes in artworks (VCAVAV035)

Australian Curriculum / Visual Arts / Years 9 & 10

Manipulate materials, techniques, technologies and processes to develop and represent their own artistic intentions. (ACAVAM126)

Artist Biographies

Anna Breckon and Nat Randall
Born 1984 Auckland; 1986 Canberra
Live and work in Sydney

Anna Breckon and Nat Randall have worked collaboratively since 2014, developing a practice situated at the intersection of live performance, video and film. Producing works that are evocative of both the live and the cinematic, they draw on Breckon's history of film criticism, filmmaking and film theory, and Randall's experience with durational models of performance practice. In 2016 Randall and Breckon created critically-acclaimed twenty-four-hour live performance work *The Second Woman*, which premiered at the 2016 Next Wave Festival in Melbourne and has since been performed as part of the Dark MOFO festival in Hobart, 2017, the Liveworks program at Performance Space, Sydney, 2017, and Perth Festival, 2018. The *Second Woman* premiered internationally in November 2018 as part of the opening of Weiwuying, The National Kaosiung Centre for the Arts in Taiwan.

Sol Calero
Born 1982, Caracas, Venezuela
Lives and works in Berlin

Sol Calero was born in Caracas, Venezuela in 1982, relocated to Spain in 2000, and has lived in Berlin since 2009. Calero received a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Universidad de La Laguna in Tenerife, Spain, in 2006, and a Master of Design from the Universidad Complutense in Madrid in 2009.

<http://solcalero.com>

Consuelo Cavaniglia
Born 1971, Rome, Italy
Lives and works in Sydney

Consuelo Cavaniglia completed undergraduate studies with a Bachelor of Arts in Languages and Fine Art at the University of Western Australia in 1993, then in 2002 with Bachelor of Arts (Visual Art) with Honours at Curtin University. Cavaniglia relocated to Sydney from Perth in 2015, and completed a Master of Fine Art at the University of Sydney in 2017, where she currently lectures in the School of Architecture, Design and Planning.

<http://stationgallery.com.au/artists/consuelo-cavaniglia>

Matthew Griffin
Born 1976, Bendigo, Victoria
Lives and works in Sydney

Griffin completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne, in 1998.

Daniel Jenatsch
Born 1985, Sydney
Lives and works in Melbourne

Daniel Jenatsch was born in Sydney in 1985, and relocated to Melbourne in 2003, where he completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Sound, (Honours) at RMIT University in Melbourne in 2008. Jenatsch worked as the studio manager and assistant to composer Jonathan Bepler from 2009 to 2013, has since worked independently as an artist and composer.



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This education resource has been produced by the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art to provide information and classroom support material for education visits to the exhibition *The Theatre is Lying: The inaugural Macfarlane Commissions*. The reproduction and communication of this resource is permitted for educational purposes only.

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