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Tricking the eye— contemporary trompe l’oeil

26 November 2016 to 12 February 2017**Opening: Saturday 26 November, 2.00–4.00pm (by invitation)**

This summer, **Geelong Gallery** is delighted to present the group exhibition *Tricking the eye—contemporary trompe l’oeil*, which showcases the work of eleven significant contemporary Australian artists whose paintings, sculptures, photographs and moving images are intentionally illusionistic, play with perspective or may not quite be what they initially appear to be.

Drawing on the centuries old tradition of trompe l’oeil painting (or ‘trick of the eye’), *Tricking the eye—contemporary trompe l’oeil* investigates the work of these artists in a new and engaging context, drawing links with numerous art historical precedents. The exhibition includes existing and commissioned works created in response to the theme. With its historical origins in paintings that intentionally sought to deceive the viewer—if only momentarily—into mistaking a two-dimensional representation for the real object, the conventions of trompe l’oeil are explored (and expanded upon) through the works of contemporary artists painting on walls, stretched canvases, and three-dimensional forms.

Highlights include a commissioned wall painting by **Tully Moore** and **Colleen Ahern**, who take inspiration from nineteenth-century American trompe l’oeil painter William Harnett; a new series of painted canvases by **Jan Murray**, depicting air vents seen in various buildings and providing the opportunity for a playfully suggestive positioning within the gallery; and **Gregory Hodge’s** vibrant, abstract compositions, informed by the devices used in still life and genre painting to create the illusion of three-dimensionality on a 2D surface.

A new series of works by **Stephen Bowers** continues his long-standing interest in ‘shards’: the artist skilfully paints segments of broken pottery that float over exquisitely rendered marbled surfaces, suggesting notions of fluidity vs solidity, and surface vs depth; **Chris Bond** creates a painted version of a 1986 French fashion magazine recasting the text and imagery—a portrait of Sylvester Stallone and a male fashion model—in reverse;



Ricky Swallow
Magnifying glass with rope no. 5 2014
unique state, patinated bronze and oil paint
Monash University Collection
Purchased by the Faculty of Science 2015
Courtesy of Monash University Museum of Art
Reproduced courtesy of the artist and Darren Knight
Gallery, Sydney
Photographer: Fredrik Nilsen

and **John R Neeson's** site-specific project employs mirrors positioned on easels, referencing the illusory paintings of Rene Magritte, to capture vistas he paints as simulated reflections.

The exhibition extends beyond the medium of painting to explore optical illusion and tricks of the eye in sculpture, photography and moving images. **Ricky Swallow** humorously casts a faux magnifying glass to suggest a shift in the scale of everyday objects such as rope and tubular piping, in his playful bronze sculptures. Inspired by seventeenth-century Dutch painted perspective boxes and an illusion known as the Necker cube, **Georgina Cue's** three-dimensional sculptural installation merges tapestry, optical trickery and imagery from early twentieth-century New York crime scene photographs; **Anne Zahalka** photographs the trompe l'oeil dioramas at the American Museum of Natural History in New York in works from her series *Wild life*. Combining realistically painted backdrops with taxidermied specimens, these staged dioramas blur the line between real and non-real; and the video work of **Daniel Crooks** brings the traditions of trompe l'oeil into the twenty-first century, confounding viewers' sense of proximity and perceptions of space through collaged landscapes.

Tricking the eye—contemporary trompe l'oeil invites visitors to consider the artistic traditions of trompe l'oeil painting—that also extend into everyday life—in the context of the work of these contemporary Australian artists. – Ends –

Public programming—

Floortalks

Thursday 1 December, 11.00am

presented by Jan Murray, exhibiting artist

Wednesday 18 January, 12.00pm

presented by Lisa Sullivan, Curator

Saturday 4 February, 2.00pm

presented by Chris Bond, exhibiting artist

Meet the artist

Wednesday 30 November, 11.30am – 12.00pm

Saturday 3 December, 1.00pm – 1.30pm

Meet exhibiting artist John R Neeson as he completes his commissioned works for *Tricking the eye—contemporary trompe l'oeil* within the Gallery

First Friday—Illustrated lecture

Friday 3 February at 11.00am

Join Curator, Lisa Sullivan as she presents an overview of *Tricking the eye—contemporary trompe l'oeil*. Lisa explores the centuries old tradition of trompe l'oeil painting (trick of the eye) and works by contemporary practitioners that are intentionally illusionistic, play with perspective or are something other than what they first appear to be. Cost—Members: \$10 and Non-members: \$12

Exhibition sponsor



This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

Government partners



Geelong Gallery is supported by the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria

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Little Malop Street Geelong VIC 3220 | T: 03 5229 3645 | **Free entry** Open daily 10am–5pm
Closed Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day | www.geelonggallery.org.au

**Geelong
Gallery**