

Documenting Space

EXHIBITION DATES: 27 FEBRUARY—4 MARCH 2022

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Gabrielle Bergman, Ellyn Faye, Jack Murray and Anna Steele

Curated by Gabrielle Bergman



Documenting Space records the physical and cultural memory of the George Paton Gallery through the spatially sensitive approach of artist Anna Steele, architectural designer Jack Murray, interior designer Ellyn Faye and curator Gabrielle Bergman. The exhibition functions as an archival undertaking, and by doing so, expresses the way in which we engage in the space through various methods of documentation.

The exhibition looks back to the history of the GPG during the 1970's, while under the direction of Kiffy Rubbo. This is recognised as a formative time for the gallery, having had a profound impact on the development of contemporary and experimental art in Melbourne and Australia more broadly.

Documenting Space acknowledges the history of Kiffy by introducing the concept of an 'architectural memory device', defined by architect Sugendri Pillay as an "architectural component within the built environment (that) triggers memories relating to human ideas of place and people, local beliefs, events."

The concept of a 'window', referencing the pre-existing aperture at the front of the gallery that has since been plastered over, is an example of such a memory device as it forms part of the architecture that once existed during Rubbo's time as gallery director. Concrete casting, moulds, projections, and installation works also offer alternative methods of documenting the physical and cultural history of the gallery.

Documentation of exhibition by Gabrielle Bergman

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Anna Steele

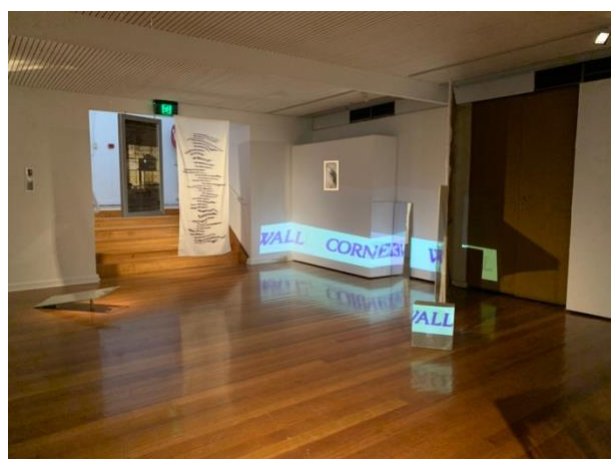
My work for *Documenting Space* was formed through the alignment of the history of my painting practice, and the ideas and sensitivities to space in conjunction with the other participants. Responding to curator Gabrielle Bergman's concept, alongside an interior designer and an architectural designer, was very exciting to me as I already think so much about these two practices when I am making my work. In a gallery setting, the arrangement of objects in the space is an employment of design with the use of existing architecture, so I felt like combining all our work and the actual process of installing it was in fact an exercise in design of space.

Knowing that designer, Ellyn Faye works with light projections of moving text onto walls, I knew I wanted to make work that sat off the wall. In thinking of the ephemerality of Faye's materials, soft swaying fabric and light, I decided to counter that with heavy concrete and paint. The idea to slot the paint surface (acrylic panels) into a concrete base became a suggestion of architectural practice in that it referenced a sort of functionality, but also the built environment.

That budding architect Jack Murray's work ended up being suspended from above and hovering throughout the space was also a beautiful counter to the floor-based work that I produced. Both our works became portals in that they are designed to be viewed through to other aspects of the gallery and other art works. Bergman's use of the cupboard space with her literal documentations of the space inside of objects was the perfect cap to the concept of the show. The decision to leave the doors open to access these museum style ceramics enabled the large white doors to intersect the space and alter the orientation of the viewer within the gallery.

The collaborative window projection sprang from my idea to recreate the old window that once existed as a sort of homage to the history of George Paton Gallery. That Bergman was able to find the perfect photograph of the actual window and project it where it used to be, enabled this concept to be realised and a new (but old) space was formed. We really did use the space in all its possible ways, and it was a pleasure to be invited to be a part of this show at such an institutional Melbourne gallery.

Anna Steele is a Melbourne based artist and recent graduate from the Masters of Contemporary Art course at the Victorian College of the Arts, University of Melbourne.



Ellyn Faye

The approach towards *Documenting Space* at the George Paton Gallery in Union House began with my interest in texts and encounters in space, which stems from my final year research project. This has then evolved into observing structure and form in the gallery, specifically the wall, corner and ceiling. The projections aim to make aware and reflect an encounter with space and its interiority. Whilst the fabric seeks to unveil my virtual experience of the gallery through text and typography. This approach in documenting space hopes to enable individual exchange and encountering of both the exhibition and existing gallery space.

GEORGE PATON GALLERY
Level 2 Union House,
University of Melbourne
Gallery hours: 11am-5pm Monday to Friday
E: gpg@union.unimelb.edu.au W: umsu.unimelb.edu.au/gallery



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Jack Murray

1. Given to (#9 on diagram)

“Given to” draws on Marcel Duchamp’s “Given, or the Illuminating Gas” – the window in the small monastic cell pictured cuts through to frame Ellyn Faye’s projection work – allowing for a spatial collapse between the space of the viewer and the space depicted in the image. The shatter-glass individual quiet at work recollects some aspect of creative or scholarly pursuit.

2. Evening (#12 on diagram)

“Evening” depicts a plan of Duchamp’s Rookery, a small exercise completed as part of an architectural thesis at RMIT University titled “Given, Even” – the strange textural melange depicted in plan seems collage like, while the shadows cast in the view mirror the shadows cast in the space by the cutouts from the other pieces.

3. Rough for Kew House (#4 on diagram)

“Rough for Kew House” situates itself in Sean Godsell’s own home, stripped of furniture, a bastard-version of the Esprit Nouveau pavilion wall mural calls out – “it is the viewer who makes the art work”. The green gloves in the foreground reflect the green archivists’ gloves that accompanied the boxes that made up the original thesis submission. The handling of

artwork and the power afforded to the viewer brought together in the house of an architect notorious for his control and finesse.

4. Twelve thousand Glass Hot Plates (#10 on diagram)

“The Witness” takes pride of place in Godsell’s Design Hub, the building in which the thesis was completed. “The Witness” is one of the floating oddities that occupied the site in Kew. As it is brought back, the light of the space around it infuses it, allowing the GPG to form another layer in a thesis that was built on strange archival alliances.

5. in the Wood. (#5 on diagram)

In this piece, the overlaying of perspectives and references slams the three layers together. One layer, the wall of the GPG, the next the space of the Bachelor-machine Kew House, and lastly the projected reminisces of the Gallery on the hill. Now a new bride for a bachelor left by his wife, tired of changing in the closet.

6. He is Free. (#15 on diagram)

After Jean-Jacques LeQueu, “He is Free” includes a strange homage to that architect and pornographer, some believe to be an invention of Duchamp. The mirror and ring enmesh the viewer in the work, bending over in some Narcissus-like pose, as the mirror on the other side of the gallery casts Faye’s work into the corner opposite. The smear of light reflecting off the floor and bouncing up the wall.

Gabrielle Bergman:

During my residency at the gallery, I had the opportunity to think about the different ways in which to document the physicality of the space. I became interested in creating moulds of the different surfaces and textures in the gallery as a method of archiving its memory. By presenting these clay objects inside the cabinetry, I was able to encourage a sense of curiosity from the viewer, while also opening and exposing the internal structures that are otherwise hidden behind closed doors. The image of the window projected in the front of the gallery is in reference to the window that was once part of the GPG. This window helps to frame some of ideas that were explored by other participants in the exhibition, as it became a metaphor for the concept of creating perspectives and viewpoints within the physical space.

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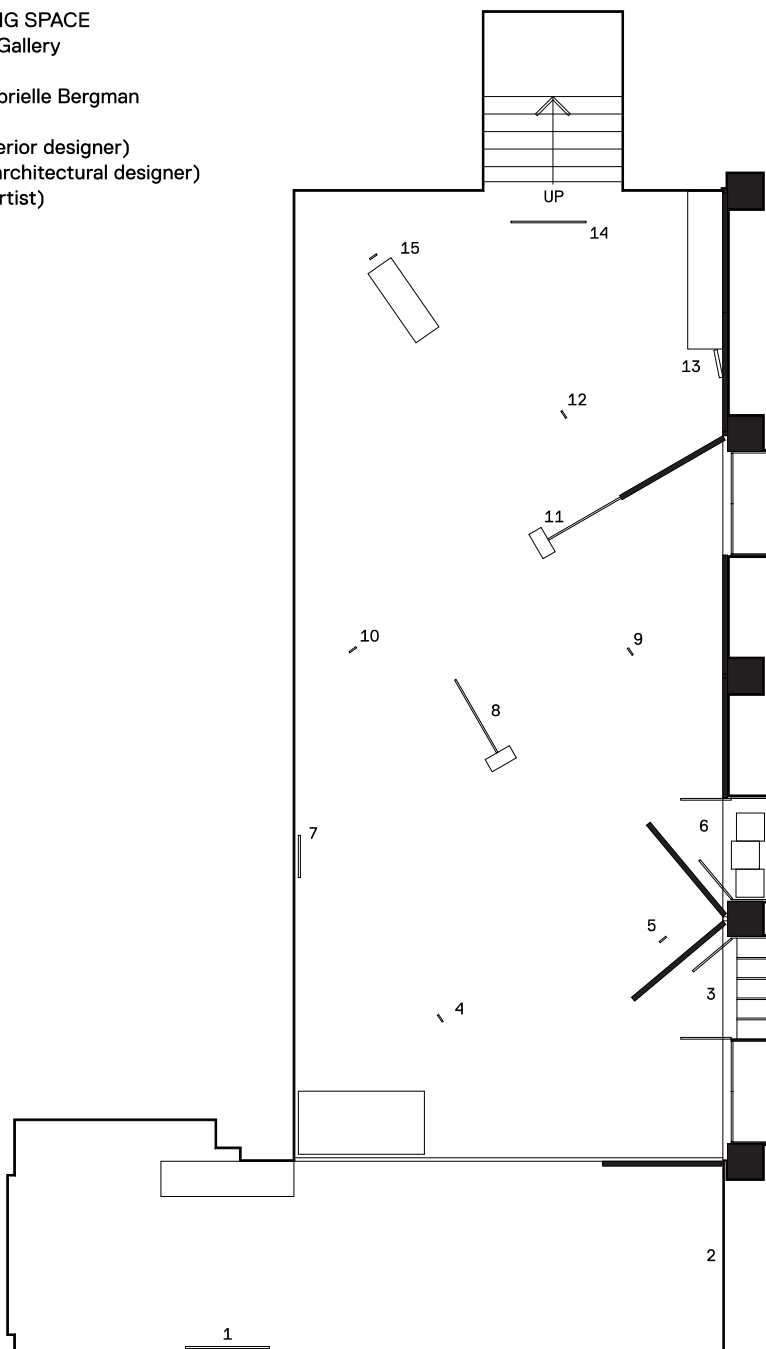
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George Paton Gallery

Curated by Gabrielle Bergman
with
Ellyn Faye (interior designer)
Jack Murray (architectural designer)
Anna Steele (artist)



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| 1. Exhibition introduction text. | 10. Twelve-thousand Glass Hot Plates, Jack Murray |
| 2. Implied Opening, Gabrielle Bergman | 11. Untitled #02, Anna Steele |
| 3. Casts, Gabrielle Bergman | 12. Evening, Jack Murray |
| 4. Rough for Kew House, Jack Murray | 13. Wall/Corner, Ellyn Faye |
| 5. in the Wood, Jack Murray | 14. this space is, Ellyn Faye |
| 6. Casts, Gabrielle Bergman | 15. He is Free, Jack Murray |
| 7. Wall/Ceiling, Ellyn Faye | |
| 8. Untitled #01, Anna Steele | |
| 9. Given to, Jack Murray | |

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