

OUTER *SPACE*

SNAPSHOT

Holly Anderson, Madeline Bishop, Edwina Green, Nicholas Tossmann

Snapshot

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In the late nineteenth century, the emergence of gelatin silver bromide plates, with a shutter speed of 1/25th of a second, transformed photography from a technology of slow duration to a technology of instantaneity. At this moment photography brought into consciousness a form of instantaneity that is not possible to observe with the naked eye.¹ The snapshot progressed via technological innovation to become the dominant mode of photography, continuing today with increased presence owing to the ubiquity of mobile technologies for the capture and display of images.

For André Bazin, snapshot photography preserves a singular moment from the continual stream of interlacing moments that comprise life. By virtue of its speed and mechanical method of production, photography acts to extract a single moment and converts it into an object. The method of photographic production dislocates the image from its usual context, allowing it to continue outside of the flow of time.²

The titular term, *Snapshot*, acts as an apt metaphor for the process by which this exhibition was assembled. Each artwork in this exhibition was selected by the Outer Space programming committee from an open call earlier this year. The exhibition presents a selection of artworks that came together as proposals and exist now on the gallery walls and floor as objects. Side by side these artworks present a snippet of each artist's practice. Collected here, they function like a series of snapshots placed side by side in a photographic album.³

1 Doane, M.A. (2006) 'Real Time: Instantaneity and the Photographic Imaginary', *Stillness and Time: Photography and the Moving Image*, London: Photoforum and Photoworks, p. 25.

2 Bazin, A (1967) 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image', *What is Cinema?*, Volume 1, Trans. H. Gray. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.14.

3 Photographic albums, either paper or digital, act as an archive of chronological moments without a binding order.

The artworks presented in *Snapshot* are broadly concerned with the experience of the present moment as part of the continual flow of time and space, which extends before and after the moments depicted.

Holly Anderson's paintings depict the floorboards of the domestic space she occupied during the 2020 lockdown. Rather than representing the floorboards as they exist in space, she depicts them with a skewed perspective, reflecting the warping of our understanding of time and space when disconnected from the usual routines of daily life.

Anderson started each painting with a single floorboard at the centre and moved outward. Each floorboard was defined by the one that was painted before it. Slowly, the connection to actual space and its memetic representation became evasive and the space became elastic.

The floorboards of a Queenslander provide a porous barrier for the occupants of the house, as air whips through the cracks on a windy day and, of an evening, light shines from inside to out. Within the context of lockdowns these houses provide a poor form of isolation, they cannot be properly sealed and are always open to the elements, with insects and geckos moving in and out at will. The floorboards became a metaphor for the impossibility of total isolation.

The resulting paintings depict a psychological state that is unhinged from space and is located within the extended timeframe of lockdowns, which binds it to the historical moment of its construction.

Edwina Green's video, *Selah*, starts with a handheld point-of-view shot of the landscape. Wind animates the branches and leaves. The voiceover asks, "what do I do, to look after country?". As a visual response to this question, the video cuts to a point-of-view handheld shot looking down at an open fire, as oysters are placed, turned and removed. The voice speaks to a dislocation when one is off country, and the personal ways to connect when not physically present.

The last line of the video is a personal answer to the general question that opens the video. "I eat oysters, I cook them over a fire, I think of middens. Layers of familial lines, filled with familiarity." Middens that line coastal areas are sites that connect the past and present.

Nicholas Tossmann's text installation, *Foresight Downfall*, speaks to the dynamic between the fluidity of speculation and the stasis of a decisive conclusion. Foresight implies a projection beyond the present moment. Downfall, on the other hand, exists within the present and past, never in the

future.

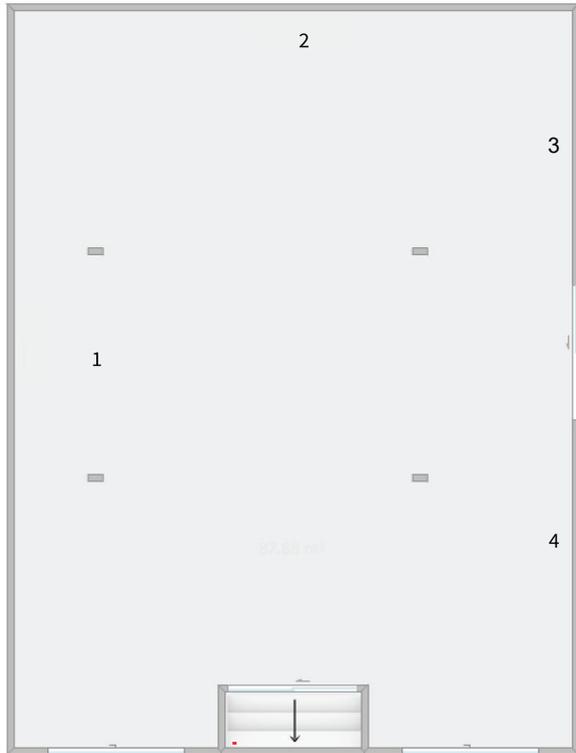
Tossmann takes words and turns them into objects that occupy space within the gallery. The word "downfall" seems to have fallen off the wall and lays on the floor as a reflection of "foresight". For Tossmann, the work contains a feeling of lament as a focus on the future inhibits an ability to live in the present. In this way we might think of the word downfall as a shadow that follows foresight. Downfall is the fear that drives an obsession with foresight, speculation and prediction, to the detriment of the present.

Madeline Bishop uses photography to document performative moments that have been staged for the camera. The bodies in each image are defined by their context, which is made clear via the presence and absence of figures in the paired photographs on the wall.

The photographs depict maternal relationships. However, the consistency of staged elements across each group of images reference the means of production as well as the content. The photographs evoke the indexical nature of photography, as they document a moment that actually took place between mothers and children, while actively working against the indexicality of the image, because the gestures enacted are staged. As mothers and daughters embrace, synchronise movements or entwine in awkward gestures, physical proximity is translated as an image of closeness. This speaks to a central tension between the photograph as a suspended moment and as a representation.

The works in *Snapshot* were selected via a circumstantial process: a call out, a series of unrelated proposals, a selection committee and a gallery. The works in the exhibition will sit together for four weeks. During this time, audiences will draw connections between the works and the works will become intertwined for this moment. But, as the exhibition is packed down and the works returned to the artists, they will resume a life that is independent of each other. Earlier, I spoke of the exhibition as a photographic album, but if we are to think more broadly, we might think of a pile of snapshot photographs that are arranged and re-arranged and this exhibition is one arrangement among many in the life of each artwork.

Simone Hine



1

Nicholas Tossmann, 2021, *Foresight Downfall*, Black vinyl.

2

From Left to Right

Holly Anderson, *Boards (blonde)*, 2020, oil on panel, 30.5 x 40.6 cm.

Holly Anderson, *Boards (skylight)*, 2020, oil on panel, 23 x 30.5 cm.

Holly Anderson, *Boards (verandas)*, 2020, oil on panel, 41 x 51 cm.

Holly Anderson, *Boards (bridge)*, 2020, oil on panel, 35.5 x 28 cm.

3

Edwina Green, 2021, *Selah*, Digital Video, 3:41.

4

From Left to Right

Madeline Bishop, 2020, *David and Penny*, Inkjet prints from photographic negatives

Madeline Bishop, 2019, *Deb and Anita*, Inkjet prints from photographic negatives

Madeline Bishop, 2020, *Stef and Marina*, Inkjet prints from photographic negatives

Madeline Bishop, 2020, *Neil and Vasantha*, Inkjet prints from photographic negatives

Madeline Bishop, 2020, *Farah and Farida*, Inkjet prints from photographic negatives



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