

A Gathering

Asher Bilu | Bea Maddock | Brendan Lee | Brent Harris | Chris Bond | Christopher Heathcote | Deborah Paauwe | Fiona Foley | Heather B. Swann | Ian Abdulla | Janet Burchill + Jennifer McCamley | Joseph Stanislaus Ostojka-Kotkowski | Justin Andrews | Kate Ellis | Lin Onus | Mike Brown | Natalie Ryan | Narinda Reeders | Noel Counihan | Norman Lindsay | Pat Brassington | Paul Batt | Paul Knight | Peter Tyndall | Robert Jacks | Roger Kemp | Ronnie Jakamarra Lawson | Sam Leach | Sonia Payes | Tim Gresham | Tommy Lowry-Tjapaljarri

Sometimes things can be two different things at once. The title of this exhibition is a reflection of that idea. *Gathering* is an action, a sweeping motion that pulls together a group of things; *A Gathering* is a momentary collection of things. The art in this exhibition was actively chosen in a sweeping motion through La Trobe University's Collections. Presented here as they are now, set in place for five weeks, they are momentarily gathered. And after five weeks they will be dispersed from the venue and, for the most part, put into darkness. That is, until the sweeping arm returns to gather a new ensemble, or singular works are taken back out into the world.

In any gathering, it is the relationships between the participants that gives the occasion its own character and flavour. The University's Collections are vast and the variety and volume of different relationships that exist across the thousands of pieces we have in storage and around our campuses is of an exponential order. For a few weeks in late 2017, this one particular ensemble was assembled. A selection of a selection.

This exhibition could exist, potentially, as a reflection on other types of collections. Perhaps a gathering of objects for a purpose like an exhibition is not dissimilar to a gathering of people for the purpose of social and community ends. Who stands next to who at the party; how many people of the same age at a work conference; all the cousins swimming in the pool at Christmas. And sometimes, maybe the person you are placed next to at a wedding or in an office is not the sort of person you might normally choose to sit with.

This notion echoes an idea by Brian Eno – musician, producer, artist – proposing that moments of historical significance come about as a consequence of *scenius*. The concept runs like this: in the old days moments of cultural shift – like the eureka moment of Archimedes; Einstein’s elegant equations; Newton’s apple – are attributed to the genius contained in a single person. Now, perhaps more than ever, that sort of evolutionary step is generated by the actions of a scene of people in a particular place and time – the New York 500 in the 1980s; the Secessionists of Vienna; the Beats; the Angry Penguins.

This exhibition was also designed collaboratively and reflects the choices of people working together as a collection of colleagues. Any group of people working on a process that they enjoy almost always results in interesting outcomes, sometimes even unwittingly. We are by no means proposing lofty cultural claims for this exhibition, just that it may operate as a meditation on such notions.

To mark the occasion of these artworks gathering, we invite all artists and art lovers to join us for A Gathering on Thursday 2 November, 530-700pm. Let’s meet, chat and conspire. And we’ll share what we’re doing at the LAI in 2018.