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BOTANICAL ART



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Cornucopia

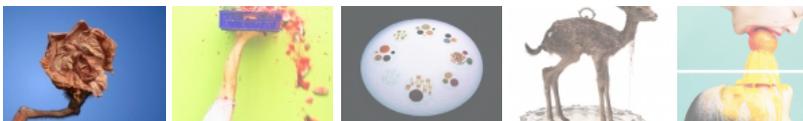
29 February 2016 | Sara Sweet

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Cornucopia, meaning 'horn of plenty', is a symbol that originated from classical Greek and Roman antiquity. It was presented as a horn with an overflowing abundance of, fruits, vegetables, nuts and flowers. Shepparton Art Museum's (SAM) exhibition 'Cornucopia' presents the work of 14 Australian and international artists, and collectives who work with food or flora as an artistic material, or as a departure point for their ideas and concepts. The artists venture down paths that make inquiries into the production, consumption and distribution of food together with its metaphorical potential and representation within art history. Genetic modification, the results and consequences of globalised production as well as socio-cultural uses are some of the issues uncovered in the selection of works.



Patricia Piccinini, Peter Hennessey, Dennis Daniel, Metaflora (Timelapse: Aqua), 2015, video work Courtesy the artist, Tolarno Galleries, Melbourne and Roslyn Oxley9 Galleries, Sydney



Senior Curator, Anna Briens who created the exhibition was interested in responding to site and context together with the unique social and cultural histories that relate to place. She explains that 'Cornucopia' was conceived to respond to the Greater City of Shepparton which is known as the 'food bowl of Australia'. The exhibition takes place across the entire upper level of SAM encompassing six exhibition spaces. Mediums include painting, photography, print, video, installation and sculptural works. One hundred ceramic vases from the SAM collection will feature in the show with some taking the form of cornucopias. Kawita Vatanajyankur's *The Scale* [still] (2015) sees a fluoro mix of refreshing colours collide with the artist who is in a precarious position as she attempts to sustain the overpowering weight of the fruit bearing down on her body.

The exhibition was an exciting curatorial project that saw the team succeed in attaining works by renowned artists including Mishka Henner and Sam Taylor-Johnson. Briens worked closely with collectives such as the

The Art Deal

Hotham Street Ladies, and A Centre for Everything which saw the development of new site referential works that related directly to Shepparton. Briers says, "At SAM we are very much about using great contemporary art as a platform for deep community engagement." Unconventional materials such as herbs, grains and pulses have been brought into the gallery space. The inclusion of these raw materials presented a number of challenges which needed to be solved in ways that balanced the integrity of the artists' intention with the most suitable conservation standards to maintain the protection of the SAM collection.

'Cornucopia' draws attention to the unseen consequences of every day decisions that affect ourselves, others and the environment. Some of the most crucial issues of our time are proposed in the exhibition and the space provides reflection on these areas of concern. Briers hopes that the exhibition offers "... some sense of the zeitgeist, a lens through which to view and begin to make sense of our time through contemporary art. I hope that audience members experience moments of wonderment, delight and celebration, though given the vexed nature of the topic I also expect certain content may challenge some viewers."

[Shepparton Art Museum](#)
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Victoria

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