

MEDIA RELEASE

28 January 2021

For immediate release



Ray Harris: *Ritual Nature*

22 February – 16 April 2021

Guildhouse and Flinders University Museum of Art kick start 2021 with a new exhibition of evocative performance videos by South Australian artist Ray Harris, developed in response to The Collections Project.

Ritual Nature explores ritual actions in connection to cleansing and death. Harris' work is the result of a research-based residency investigating Flinders University Museum of Art's mid-1960s and 1970s Australian and international Post-object and Documentation collection enabled by Guildhouse through The Collections Project.

Grounded in her quest to unpack the effects of profound sorrow and trauma, Harris' works showcase meditative time-based actions that situate her body in dialogue with the environment, alluding to death and its associations with grief and loss, decay and dirtiness, and the possibilities of cleansing and transformation. In this intimate relationship rests a delicate tension between the female body and the environment, where Harris' seemingly passive acts of surrender to her surroundings can also be considered acts of gendered resistance.

Harris says, '*Driven by collection works and personal loss I took refuge in the natural environment and found meaning in the water, animals, trees and the colours of the sky. The Collections Project gave me an*

opportunity to transform lingering ideas and my ongoing physical exploration of trauma and selfhood into this new series of performative works.'

In a nod to the international conceptual art movement that inspired them, Harris' new videos will be presented in juxtaposition with works by Jill Orr, Mike Parr, Ken Unsworth, David Thorp and Mary Fish, among others from the FUMA's collection.

Guildhouse CEO Emma Fey says, *'It is so gratifying to see the culmination of Ray's research at FUMA. These raw powerful works illuminate the artist's ability to reach us as humans and shed new light on the human experience by drawing on the riches of the FUMA collection.'*

Flinders University Museum of Art Director Fiona Salmon says, *'The Guildhouse Collections Project presented in partnership with Flinders University Museum of Art represents an exceptional opportunity for South Australian artists as attested by the poignant outcomes of Ray's work'.*

PERFORMANCE AND EXHIBITION LAUNCH

Thursday 11 March 2021 | 3pm-5pm

Flinders University Museum of Art
Flinders University | Sturt Road | Bedford Park SA 5042

Located ground floor Social Sciences North building
Humanities Road adjacent carpark 5

Ray Harris

Ray Harris (born 1970) holds a Master of Visual Art (2014) and a Bachelor of Visual Art (Honours) (2009) from the University of South Australia. She is founder and director of Holy Rollers Studios and its former Gallery and was co-director of FELTspace (2010-2015). Harris has exhibited and performed in solo and group exhibitions nationally and internationally with significant exhibitions including *Video Contemporary* (2018) curated by Kelly Gellatly for Sydney Contemporary, Carriageworks, Sydney; *PP/VT: performance presence, video time* (2015), curated by Professor Anne Marsh for the Australian Experimental Art Foundation AEAF, Adelaide; *do it (adelaide)* (2015), Samstag, Adelaide; and *Subject to ruin* (2014), Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney. Her work has been presented in contemporary art fairs and festivals in Sweden, South Korea, Turkey and the United States, and featured in publications such as *Artlink*, *Art Collector*, *Broadsheet*, *RealTime*, *fine print* and *ETC*. Harris' work is held in the Turkish collections of Proj-4L Elgiz Museum of Contemporary Art and Borusan Contemporary, and private collections nationally.

The Collections Project is a collaborative project between Guildhouse, the Botanic Gardens of South Australia, Flinders University Museum of Art and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

This unique project provides artists the opportunity to research an area of one of the institution's collections and develop new work for exhibition. Championing the art and artists of our time while celebrating our cultural, historic and scientific heritage, The Collections Project has the demonstrated ability to provide new audience experiences while delivering long-term benefits to the artistic and career development of participating artists.

Guildhouse is the leading South Australian organisation supporting and creating connections for South Australian visual artists, craftspeople and designers for over 50 years.

This initiative is generously supported by the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund and the Government of South Australia through Arts South Australia.

Image: Ray Harris, *Salt Waters* (HD digital video still), 2020. Photograph: courtesy the artist.

For more information or interviews, please contact:

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Media images and captions are available here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/1vhw8lo7o9qahgt/AADhjNv-WdAVCE2V5PbUn0t7a?dl=0>

Guildhouse is supported by the South Australian Government through Arts South Australia and by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments.