

MEDIA RELEASE



Tuesday, 14 April 2015

Strange Embrace

30 May – 19 July 2015

Blue Mountains Cultural Centre exhibition curated by Rilka Oakley

“My work is embracing the people, its embracing the town but because I am doing it in a slightly awkward way the normal rules of how you engage with someone are not quite the same.” **Astra Howard**

Strange Embrace is an exhibition of new works resulting from five artists working in a variety of art forms including experimental, installation, action research, live art and photography to create artwork addressing what the concept of *Strange Embrace* means to them.

Finding ourselves in odd or unusual situations with another human being can often mean embarrassment, awkward silence, random exchanges or uncanny recognition. The works in *Strange Embrace* all explore the edges of what is comfortable with regard to social encounters. The exhibiting artists; Cath Barcan, Anne Graham, Astra Howard, Daniel Kojta and Honi Ryan, all interpret this in their own exceptional way.

This exhibition is particularly unique as the five artists jointly attended a seven day live-in residency at [Bilpin International Ground for Creative Initiatives](#) (BigCi) as part of the exhibition development. This intensive residency allowed them to gain understanding into each other’s practices and to form collaborative and meaningful relationships while working towards a common exhibition. Artist Cath Barcan said of the residency “I work in a slow immersive way and it was interesting to be around artists who are comfortable creating work in a moment that may only last for one minute.”

The artists are all making new work specifically for the *Strange Embrace* exhibition. Cath Barcan has been photographing visitors to the Blue Mountains City Art Gallery. A selection of the photographs taken will be printed life-sized and will incorporate a thread running through each photo linking the subjects together. Daniel Kojta engages with the body and is creating a wrestling space where visitors are invited to wrestle with a life-sized dummy on a mat in front of a mirror.

Honi Ryan also references the body and personal relationships. One way Ryan does this is through a set of instructions for the viewer to take and perform outside of the gallery space. Astra Howard has been out in the streets of the Blue Mountains engaging locals in conversations surrounding the idea of place. Howard is creating a text based work of collected stories, fragments of poetry and impressions of place from these encounters.

Anne Graham has created portraits of the four other artists – these are not traditional portraits – they are installations that represent the subject. Graham gets to know her subjects and intuitively selects objects to represent elements that stand out.

Strange Embrace will unfold before your eyes in the weeks leading up to the exhibition.

Please continue reading for further information about the exhibition and artist statements. See attached for high resolution copies of the images.

MEDIA RELEASE



YOU ARE INVITED

The Blue Mountains Cultural Centre is please to invite you to the opening of *Strange Embrace* on

Friday 29 May 2015

6:00-8:00pm.

Media who wish to interview the artists will be able to do so before the opening on Friday 29 May. To RSVP please email rstibbard@bmcc.nsw.gov.au.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Strange Embrace panel discussion

Thursday June 11

5:30-7:30pm

Join us for an evening of conversation with Blue Mountains Cultural Centre's curator Rilka Oakley, exhibiting artists Cath Barcan and Anne Graham, Sydney College of the Arts lecturer Nicholas Tsoutas and Artist Director, Big Ci Rae Bolotin.

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In association with Bilpin international ground for Creative initiatives



MEDIA CONTACT

Media Contact: Rose Stibbard
Phone: (02) 4780 5523.
Email: rstibbard@bmcc.nsw.gov.au

BLUE MOUNTAINS CULTURAL CENTRE

Address: 30 Parke Street, Katoomba NSW 2780
Telephone: 02 4780 5410
Website: www.bluemountainculturalcentre.com.au
Hours: 10am – 5pm Monday – Friday, 10am – 4pm Saturday – Sunday
10am – 2pm Public Holidays (closed Good Friday, Christmas Day)
Admission: \$5 adults / \$3 concession. Members & under 16 free