# MAPh

# ZAHALKAWORLD

# AN ARTIST'S ARCHIVE

# LEARNING RESOURCE

# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

This education resource is intended to support teachers and students before, during and after a visit to the exhibition, in conjunction with information provided within the exhibition, on the website and in the accompanying exhibition publication.

It contains an introduction to the exhibition, a focus on selected works within each of the central themes along with critical thinking prompts. It includes information about preparing and presenting works of art for exhibition including curatorial, exhibition design and conservation considerations.

Use this resource to assist in developing class content, discussions, and activities regarding the exhibition and its themes.

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Anne Zahalka is an established Australian photographer with a career spanning over forty years. *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive* surveys her practice with more than 290 artworks and artefacts displayed across three gallery spaces at the Museum of Australian Photography (MAPh). The exhibition presents significant series such as *The Landscape Represented* (1983–95), *The Landscape Revisited* (2017), *Wildlife* (2006/2017), *Lost Landscapes* (2020), *Bondi: Playground of the Pacific* (1989/2013), *Gesture* (1993), *Details* (1991), *Resemblance* (1987), *Leisureland* (1999), *Open House* (1995), *Hotel Suite* (2008) and *The Fate of Things* (2019). It includes a re-creation of the artist's studio and a selection of material from her archive showing the extensive research and documentation that supports her projects.

The exhibition has been curated by Anouska Phizacklea, MAPh Director, in collaboration with the artist. The exhibition is curated around six central themes – memory, gesture, people, places, nature and archive.

A note from the artist:

> I began to look at all the material that informed and shaped my art-making. I wanted to take the audience on a thematic journey through the different periods and genres of my practice — so they could see how I work. A journey that included things like deconstructing familiar landscapes and reimagining natural history habitats; showing the way I stage portraits and documentary photographic tableaux in my studios and in situ; revisiting some of my photographic sites like theme parks, sporting arenas, gaming venues, hotels and wax museums; looking at the reproductions of artworks I'd referenced. But most importantly, bringing the artefacts and heirlooms of my cultural heritage into context with my better known work to show the materials that lie behind its making.

> I decided to recreate my house-studio-space as a 1:1 photographic trompe l'oeil model in the middle of the museum. It would be part photographic illusion, but with physical walls and real furniture, archival material and objects. It would replicate the place I work in an emblematic and engaging way. All the contents on display within this space — objects, project folders, postcards, works-in-progress, photographic lights, still-lifes, suitcases, cameras — would be available to look at, touch and even (in some cases) take away. The house-studio-archive, set between interconnecting galleries, will draw visitors into 'Zahalka's world' to witness the minutiae (and mess) of life within it.

# ABOUT THE ARTIST



**Anne Zahalka, Newtown studio,** 2023 Photo: Joy M Lai

Anne Zahalka was born in Sydney in 1957 to an Austrian Jewish mother and a Czech Catholic father, who migrated to Australia in the 1950s in the wake of the Second World War. The family first settled in Bondi and Kings Cross and later in Neutral Bay. Anne Zahalka studied at East Sydney Technical College and Sydney College of the Arts, later completing a Master of Fine Arts with the University of NSW in 1994.

After completing her Bachelor of (Visual) Arts in 1979, Zahalka travelled to the United States and Europe, engaging with both historical art works and the work of emerging international practitioners that challenged modernist narratives and traditional styles.  In Australia, approaching the 1988 bicentennial, blockbuster exhibitions such as *Golden Summers: Heidelberg and Beyond* (held at the National Gallery of Victoria in 1985), celebrated Australia's early artistic heritage. Questioning the increasingly nationalistic representations of Australia's cultural identity Zahalka's early works reworked the iconic imagery of the Australian Impressionists to accommodate alternate perspectives. Her ongoing work has continued the practice of referencing familiar imagery and revisiting previous themes, interrogating topics including Australian identity, the environment, art history, Australian society and her own personal and family stories.

Zahalka's works are held in major national and international collections including the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Museum of Australian Photography, Parliament House, Canberra, and in numerous other galleries, universities and private collections.

Anne Zahalka lives and works in Newtown, Sydney.

Find out more: www.zahalkaworld.com

## THEMES: NATURE

The landscape is a recurring feature throughout Anne Zahalka's work. In early work, images depicting the Australian landscape are used to question metanarratives about national identity. In more recent work, landscapes are used to reflect a concern about our human impact on the environment.



**The Immigrants**, 1983

Zahalka recognised that the landscape, often portrayed through a colonial European lens, was a significant factor in the formation of Australia's sense of self. She wrote,

*This early school of painters known as the Heidelberg School sought to promote the landscape as the principal determinant of an Australian national identity. Their idealising and romanticising of the 'bush' produced a host of representations that celebrate and mythologise its characters and legends. The landscape, as depicted, with its 'heroic' pioneers, the bushmen and new settlers entrenched itself in the national discourse and now remains inextricably woven into Australian mythology.* [1]

In the series *The Landscape Re-presented* (1983–95) Zahalka used collage and photomontage to insert images hand-cut from contemporary magazines and photographs into iconic Australian landscape paintings, questioning and rewriting the tropes used by celebrated nineteenth-century Australian artists. These collages were then photographed using large format film and reprinted.

In 'The Immigrants' (1983), images related to Zahalka's own family life, including her mother, father and sister with young Anne in her pram, the smash repair business where her father worked, and the Zahalka family grave in Czechoslovakia are montaged into 'The Pioneer' (1904) by Frederick McCubbin (1855–1917). Replacing the pioneering settler family with her own, Zahalka introduces a new narrative, representing the wave of migration in the wake of World War II and the experience of refugees finding their place in Anglocentric Australia.

---

[1] Anne Zahalka, Artist statement, Southern Crossing, Empty Land, Camerawork Gallery, London, 1991. (Cited in *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive*, MAPh 2023 p 128)

**MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY**



Zahalka's early photomontages and collages on display in the exhibition



**The Immigrants #2** 1983

- Which aspects of Zahalka's own experience are evident in 'The Immigrants' (1983)?

- Explain how the reference to Frederick McCubbin's 'The Pioneer' (1904) adds to the meaning of Zahalka's work.

- How does the technique (collage and photomontage) used by the artist add to the meaning she is trying to convey?

- Compare the relationship between the figures and the landscape in 'The Immigrants' (1983)  and 'The Immigrants #2' *1883* and in McCubbin's 'The Pioneer' (1904).

- Appropriation is the intentional borrowing, reusing or altering of an artwork or image. It is a technique often used by postmodern artists to prompt an audience to reconsider well recognised works from a new standpoint. Zahalka has appropriated the work of earlier Australian artists to reframe their meaning. What are the issues and ethics around the use of appropriation in artworks? Discuss the importance of originality and authorship in art.

- Visit the Australian Copyright Council to find out more about photography and copyright: https://www.copyright.org.au/browse/book/ACC-Photography-&-Copyright-INFO011/

- Zahalka's original photomontage works are on display in an open case in the exhibition. Consider why the decision was taken to display these works – vulnerable to dust, temperature, humidity and light – in this way.

**A Summer Morning Tiff** 2017

In 2017, Zahalka reviewed the *Landscape Re-presented* series with *The Landscape Revisited*, restaging a number of well-known Heidelberg School paintings in the landscape of Beechworth. In 'A Summer Morning Tiff' (2017) inspired by Tom Roberts' 1886 work of the same name, Zahalka replaced the female figure in a white dress with a woman wearing a *haik* — a robe worn by the Muslim women of North Africa, highlighting the continuous waves of migration to Australia and the increasing diversity of Australian stories.

- Find an image of Tom Roberts' 'A Summer Morning Tiff' *(*1886)

- Compare 'A Summer Morning Tiff' *(*2017) and *A Summer Morning Tiff (*1886). What parallels and contrasts might be drawn in terms of composition and content?

- These images are made 131 years apart. What might 'A Summer Morning Tiff' (2148) look like?

Series such as *Wild Life* (first exhibited in 2006 and revisited in 2017) and *Lost Landscapes* (2020) critique our human colonisation of the natural world for leisure, living and exploitation of resources.

In *Wild Life,* Zahalka visited natural history museums across the world to photograph dioramas displaying animals in recreations of their natural habitats. These displays of taxidermied animals in idealised landscapes were intended to feel like an encounter with nature, in order to educate visitors about places they might never visit. Zahalka's images capture their beauty, inserting an uncomfortable human presence.



**Brown bears** 2007



**Polar bear, grizzly bear and grolar bear** 2017

**A colony of boffins** 2020 from *Lost Landscapes*

As part of the ongoing *Wildlife* series Zahalka worked with Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston in 2019 to revive some of their original dioramas and contrast them with new ones. In the series *Lost Landscapes* (2020) natural environments are spoilt by rubbish, the effects of climate change and other human intrusions, emphasising our problematic impact on the natural world.

 In *ZAHALAKWORLD: an artist's archive*, visitors can see the steps to recreating the dioramas – from the original black and white photograph, to a hand coloured image and the final digitally manipulated colour image. The process is also shown in the exhibition publication.



Pages from the exhibition publication illustrating the process for recreating dioramas from black and white images

**Rising tide** 2006



**Rising tide** 2016

· Compare the works from the *Wildlife* series: 'Rising Tide' (2006), 'Rising Tide' (2016) and 'Rising Tide' (2022). How does the artist's practice of revisting previous works add to the impact or message of the work?

· What comment do each of the pictured works make about our human relationship with the natural world?

· How does Zahalka's use of art elements and principles in her composition emphasise her message?

· Zahalka manipulates the depictions of the landscape from museum dioramas. What might be the reason for this choice? How might the meaning of the works be different if she captured real life landscapes or scenes?

· Visit the exhibition or view the virtual tour of the exhibition to see how these works are presented. Describe the choices that have been made by the artist and the curator and discuss the reasons for why they might have been made.



**Rising tide** 2022



A covered case displays the body of a bird found on Lord Howe Island killed by the ocean plastic it had eaten

Gallery 1 view to *Wildlife* series, including the display showing publications featuring Zahalka's work



Gallery 1  wide view from exhibition entrance

## THEMES: PLACE

Complementing her exploration of our relationship the natural environment, Zahalka has also explored human activity within constructed spaces, from the way we congregate for leisure and entertainment, to how built spaces shape or form a backdrop to various human stories.



**Room 3621 (Dora)** 2008

In 2008, Zahalka undertook a residency at Sofitel Melbourne on Collins. As part of her residency, Zahalka explored the activities of the guests, the back-of-house staff of the hotel and the spaces outside the public gaze. The resulting *Hotel Suite* photos are posed scenarios that capture the emotional landscape of the hotel room and the guests, juxtaposed with spectacular views of the Melbourne cityscape. She said of the work:

> "*I wanted to reflect the psychological space we enter when we stay in a hotel. People use it as a place of rest and sanctuary but it's also a place for transgressions and to escape. It's both familiar and alien, it's comfortable but it's not home. I was interested in the reflective moments people have in hotel rooms, and the sense of loneliness, longing and displacement that they can engender.*"[1]

Many of the rooms contain works of art or props alluding to an alternative narrative or echoing the character of the subject. In 'Room 3621, Dora' (2008) a housekeeper sits to glance through a book left behind on a bedside table. The book, 'Les Miserables' (1862) is a novel by Victor Hugo, which examines the inequalities and injustices of French politics and society in the nineteenth century. The scene quietly directs us to consider the inequalities of our own systems.

1         https://www.afr.com/life-and-luxury/arts-and-culture/hotel-resident-20080710-jcn12 accessed Wed Jul 5 5:58 pm

**Room 4117 (with artwork by John Brack)** 2008

In 'Room 4117 (with artwork by John Brack)' (2008), a man (Zahalka's husband) sits with his head in his hands and his shoes off, with his briefcase on a stool and wallet open on the table. On the wall is a print of John Brack's 'Collins St., 5pm' (1955), a painting depicting Melbourne in the 1950s.

*"'Collins St., 5pm' is full of lean faces of businessmen going about their day. The hotel is on Collins Street and this businessman is the modern version of them," [Zahalka] says. "He's feeling the strain."*

- Describe the use of colour, setting and character in 'Room 4117 (with artwork by John Brack)' (2008).
- Consider how you might use setting and character to create a narrative scene.
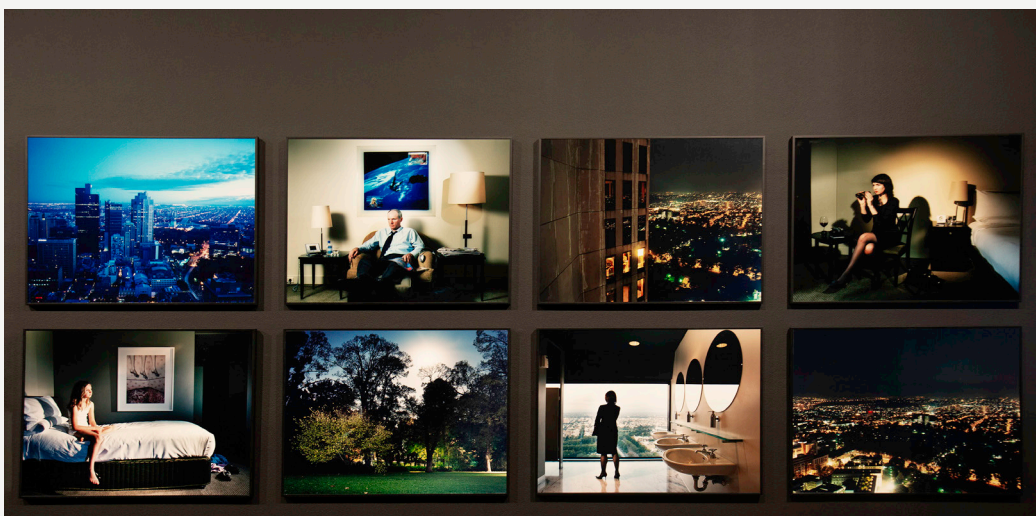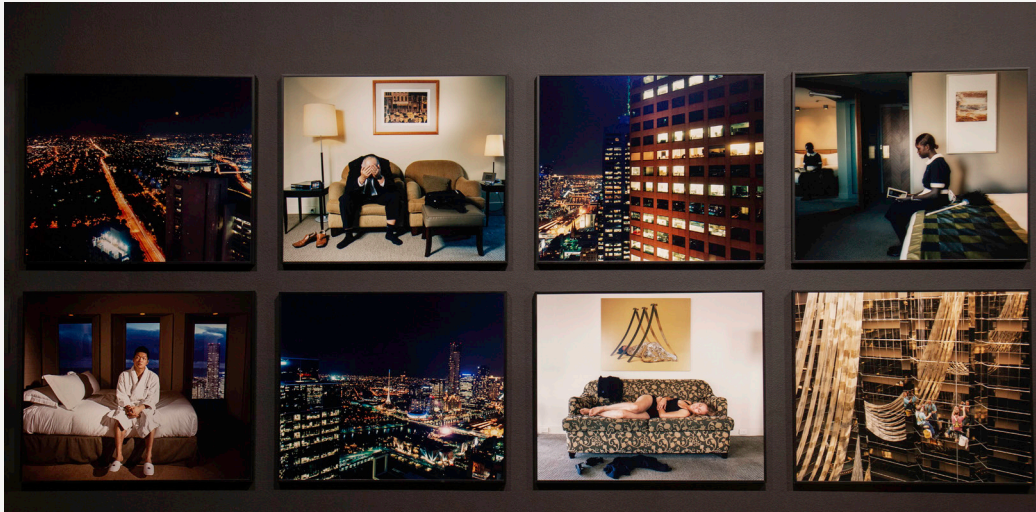
Installation views  *Hotel Suite* 2008

The *Leisureland* series (1998–2001) focuses on the places we go for leisure and what we do when we're there.  Beginning in Sydney and later extending to include regional New South Wales and the Gold Coast, the series captures attractions such as theme parks, casinos, cinemas, gaming rooms, museums, aquariums and sporting centres as well as festivals and events, such as the Jacaranda Festival in Grafton and the Wagga Wagga Show.



**Sea World, Bermuda Triangle** 2001



**Bingo** 1998

For *Leisureland*, Zahalka took inspiration from a catalogue of 1950s and 1960s postcard photography by English photographer John Hinde (1916–1997), showing people enjoying themselves in UK holiday spots. Zahalka drew on Hinde's aesthetic of heightened colour and imagery manipulated to appear 'picture perfect'. In 'Sea World, Bermuda Triangle' (2001) for instance, visitors sit happily in a rollercoaster carriage as it tracks over the water towards a flaming volcano, beneath a vivid blue sky.

Other works capture a more prosaic aesthetic. In 'Bingo' (1998), women sit at rows of tables playing bingo under converging lines of fluorescent lighting, with plastic shopping bags tucked under their chairs.

In the publication accompanying the exhibition MAPh curator Stella Loftus-Hills writes:

> *Zahalka printed her final images onto mural-size photographic paper, creating large, immersive photographs in a scale traditionally associated with other art forms, such as painting and advertising. This format was partly inspired by the German photographer Andreas Gursky (1955– ) who is known for his large- scale colour photographs of the contemporary world. Like Gursky, Zahalka often worked with a raised and distanced viewpoint to make highly detailed formal images of crowds and spaces with deep fields of focus so that no part of the picture plane is favoured over another. This approach is particularly evident in some of Zahalka's interiors, such as Star City Casino (after Breugel), 1998, which looks down on a hive of gambling activity. Creating a homage to the Dutch and Flemish Renaissance painter, Pieter Breughel (c. 1525–1569), Zahalka draws parallels in this work between contemporary life in the casino and Breughel's scenes of folly, licentiousness and greed painted from elevated perspectives.*

While these images were designed to be viewed at a large scale, Zahalka also printed the *Leisureland* series on a smaller scale so it could be shown in its entirety. A large grouping of these smaller prints is displayed in *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive.*

**Star City Casino (after Bruegel)** 1998

- Find an image of a painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, such as 'Proverbs' (1559) or 'The Fight Between Carnival and Lent' (1559)

- Drawing on Stella Loftus-Hill's commentary, compare the content and composition of 'Zahalka's Star City Casino (after Bruegel)' (1998) and Bruegel's work.

- What other approaches might Zahalka have taken to photographing this space (Star City Casino) and how might that change the impact and meaning of the work?

- Find an example of Andreas Gursky's work that illustrate 'a raised and distanced viewpoint to make highly detailed formal images of crowds and spaces with deep fields of focus.' Describe the impact of this aesthetic decision.

- What insights does the *Leisureland* series give into Australian culture?

- Visit the exhibition or view the virtual tour of the exhibition to see how these works are presented. How might the scale and presentation of the *Leisureland* works affect their impact ?

## THEMES: PEOPLE

Staged portraits and posed images using models to interrogate art, culture and identity are a recurring element of Zahalka's work. Models – often friends, family or Zahalka herself – make multiple appearances across different bodies of work.

*Resemblance* (1987) was the result of a year-long residency at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin, Germany in (1986–87). In this series, Zahalka drew on the aesthetic conventions of Italian Renaissance and Baroque Dutch and German painting to create photographic portraits of contemporary subjects.



**The Cleaner (Marianne Redpath/performance artist)** 1987

'The Cleaner (Marianne Redpath/performance artist)' (1987) is a portrait of a New Zealand artist who was working as a cleaner in Berlin. She sits at table draped with a heavy cloth. A basket of richly coloured fruit and vegetables is arranged in the folds of fabric with a lemon,  peel curling down to the floor. The peeled lemon was a common feature of Dutch still life paintings of the seventeenth century. It symbolised wealth, but also deceptive appearances — beautiful to look at but sour to taste. A kiwi fruit carefully placed on the table is a nod to the sitter's nationality. Her posture echoes that of the figure in the image in the background — a reproduction of a painting by the sixteenth-century Flemish painter Hans Holbein the Younger. The chequerboard floor is constructed from sheets of MDF board painted with a faux marble finish.

- List the objects/elements in 'The Cleaner (Marianne Redpath/performance artist)' (1987).  What role does each element serve in the composition? For example: the drapes frame the image and reveal that we are viewing a staged scene.

- Identify the elements that draw on art history and those that make contemporary references.

- Identify where Zahalka uses repetition of visual elements and where she uses opposites or contrasts.

**Marriage of Convenience (Graham Budgett and Jane Mulfinger/artists)** 1987

'Marriage of Convenience (Graham Budgett and Jane Mulfinger/artists)' (1987) draws on the fifteenth-century painting 'The Arnolfini Portrait' (1434) by Jan van Eyck (c. 1390–1441). Zahalka's portrait blends the historical with the contemporary, like van Eyck, layering imagery to suggest meaning.

The subjects of the image are artists who were living in Berlin at the time. Their passports in the foreground indicate that he is British and she is American. The word *Vernunftehe* seen above the mirror translates in German to 'marriage of convenience', in this case made to enable the woman to work in Germany. Like Jan van Eyck, who was reflected in the mirror in his painting, Zahalka is reflected in the mirrored dome as a witness to the scene.



*Resemblance* installation view

**The Card Player** 1989

Zahalka revisited this series after returning to Australia. In her next series *Resemblance II* (1989) she took her staged portraits in Australian interiors recording herself and her own social circle. In 'The Card Player' (1989), Zahalka's mother Hedy sits in a modest European-style interior. She is surrounded by objects of significance: a catalogue documenting her daughter's series *The Landscape Re-presented* (1983) is on the table; a Persian carpet from her personal collection is on display; a single word 'shalom' on the letter-holder alludes to her Jewish background.



**The Bathers** 1989

**The New Bathers** 2013

*Bondi: Playground of the Pacific* (1989), produced for a residency at Bondi Pavilion, is one of Zahalka's most known series. Zahalka utilised the iconic location to challenge representations of national identity, deconstructing ideas around beach culture and the stereotype of the bronzed Aussie. She staged her photographs in a studio against a painted backdrop with imported sand, using friends and visitors to Bondi. She referenced famous images of the Australian beach, such as Max Dupain's 'Sunbaker' (c.1937) and Charles Meere's 'Australian Beach Pattern' (c. 1940) suggesting a more diverse and complex view of the Australian population. Zahalka recreated 'The Bathers' in 2013, with a new composition that also drew on work by Freda Robertshaw, a contemporary of Charles Meere. In 'The New Bathers' (2013) a woman in a burkini is seated on a deckchair reading a copy of *The Monthly* magazine (December 2011) that has a reproduction of the original 'The Bathers' from 1989 on its cover.

- Compare 'The Bathers' (1989) and 'The New Bathers' (2013). Find images of the original 'Australian Beach Pattern' by Charles Meere and 'Australian Beach Scene' (1944) by Freda Robertshaw.

- How do Zahalka's compositions compare with the 1940s paintings?

- Describe the values and ideas evident in these earlier paintings. How do they differ from those of Zahalka's Bathers?

In the series *Open House* Zahalka depicted her friends in their own houses – their lives and domestic interiors on open display. MAPh Senior curator Angela Connor writes:

Open House *centres around kitchens and living rooms with the actors (Zahalka's friends) performing the banalities of everyday life for her camera: watching television, reading the newspaper, sitting on the couch knitting.*

*The work, 'Saturday, 2.48pm' (1995) portrays flatmates, Wendy and Lloyd in their kitchen in Bondi. Lloyd sits at the table reading The Sydney Morning Herald, while Wendy is standing, caught in her own internal thoughts. Zahalka has captured them together, but alone, detached from each other. On the back benchtop is a vase of tulips – a reference to Dutch {still-life painting}....On the wall is a calendar with architectural images by Austrian artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser, marking the date the portrait was made. Postcards adorn the fridge door and act as a precursor to Zahalka's series Leisureland which explores how postcard imagery commodifies ideas about place. Outside the window, a pitched ceramic tiled roof indicates the claustrophobia of neighbouring houses in this suburban setting. Together, these visual clues denote the subjects' interests and their relationship to the things in the environment they inhabit.*



**Saturday, 2.48pm** 1995

Zahalka presented the *Open House* works as a series of lightboxes, illuminating the domestic settings with richly saturated colours. She said, 'I wanted to use this commercial advertising product that promotes ideals of beauty, power and glamour to represent normal people going about their daily lives in a real way'.

In *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive,* only one work from the *Open House* series is shown as a lightbox, the remainder of the images are represented in a slide show projected onto a wall.

- Look closely at the image 'Saturday, 2.48pm' (1995) to find the elements Connor has identified. What other elements or details can you notice in the space and what might they indicate about the subjects?

- Consider Zahalka's comment about using an advertising medium to present normal people. In what other ways do you think the lightbox format adds to the work?

## THEMES: GESTURE / DETAILS

Continuing to explore art historical traditions and conventions, Zahalka focused on the language of gesture and on the details of work to examine how they communicate, separated from their original context.

*Details* (1991) is a body of work made during a period when digital manipulation was emerging as a new technology for artists. Zahalka exploited its potential by cloning and erasing elements of artworks. Unlike the manual process of photomontage, digital technology allowed her to remove and to clone parts of the image seamlessly. She was particularly inspired by Walter Benjamin's 1935 essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* that explored ideas of authenticity, originality and value in art.



**Detail (from 'The Cook')** 1991



**Detail (from 'The Dutch Painter')** 1991



**The Gentleman** 1993



**Gesture IV  (from Jusepe de Ribera, A Philosopher, 1637)** 1993

· Consider the works pictured. How do the details and gestures communicate meaning?

**MUSEUM OF
AUSTRALIAN
PHOTOGRAPHY**

## THEMES: MEMORY

Zahalka's own story is evident in her work, including deeply personal explorations of family history.  In her series *Displaced Persons* 2003, made in collaboration with artist Sue Saxon, Zahalka comments on her parents' exile, displacement and migration to Australia.

Saxon and Zahalka layered photographs and personal documents from their family archives. Images of travel and immigration documents, anti-Semitic and Communist propaganda and nostalgic photos of Hungary (Saxon) and Czechoslovakia (Zahalka) were tranferred onto handkerchiefs and embroidered with words.

*Displaced Persons* was made in the wake of what became known as the Tampa Affair – an incident in which the Howard government refused entry to Australian waters to the MV Tampa – a ship carrying refugees seeking asylum. This incident heralded the start of what became known as the 'Pacific Solution' in which refugees arriving by boat would be refused entry and held instead in off-shore detention.



*Displaced Persons* 2003

**Identity/displaced** 2003 from *Displaced Persons*



**Homeland/homesick** 2003 from *Displaced Persons*

Installation view showing *Displaced Persons*

- Consider the many elements of *Displaced Persons* such as the use handkerchiefs, the embroidered words, the objects, the photographic elements. How does each element add to the meaning of the work?

- Compare this work to that of another artist who has worked on a related theme. Hoda Afshar (born 1983) is a Melbourne based Iranian documentary photographer known for her 2018 prize-winning portrait of Kurdish-Iranian refugee Behrouz Boochani, who suffered a long imprisonment in the Manus Island detention centre run by the Australian government.

  https://maph.org.au/artworks/1329/

- Which elements and ideas are similar/different?



Installation view *The Fate of Things*

In *The Fate of Things: Memory, Objects and Art* (2018) and *The Fate of Things* (2019), Zahalka explored her family history through the photographs, documents, books and other treasures discovered amongst her mother's possessions after she had passed away. These included locks of Zahalka's own hair from her childhood and letters from her maternal grandmother, Margarete sent to Zahalka's mother Hedy and aunt Lore in England. They had escaped there on Kindertransport – a program initiated in 1938-1939 to rescue the children of Jewish parents from Nazi controlled territories.  Unable to leave herself, Margarete's situation became increasingly difficult as the persecution of Jews increased. She was eventually sent to the Łødz Ghetto – a Jewish labour camp in Poland – and in 1941 the letters to her children stopped.



Installation view showing works grouped under the theme of Memory with **A thousand kisses across the sea** 2019 in the foreground

In 'A thousand kisses across the sea' (2019) an empty wooden chair sits on a carpet covered with letters handwritten in delicate script on lined paper. These – the letters from Zahalka's grandmother Margarete to her children – have been arranged carefully to lined up with the edges of a Persian rug.

- What does the work 'A thousand kisses across the sea' (2019) reveal about the artist's personal family life and experience? How does it resonate with your life and experience? How does the work illuminate the impact of past historical events and how does it relate to contemporary culture?

- How do the visual elements contribute to the effect and the meaning of the work? Find out more about this work here: https://www.sbs.com.au/margarete/

## THEMES: ARCHIVE
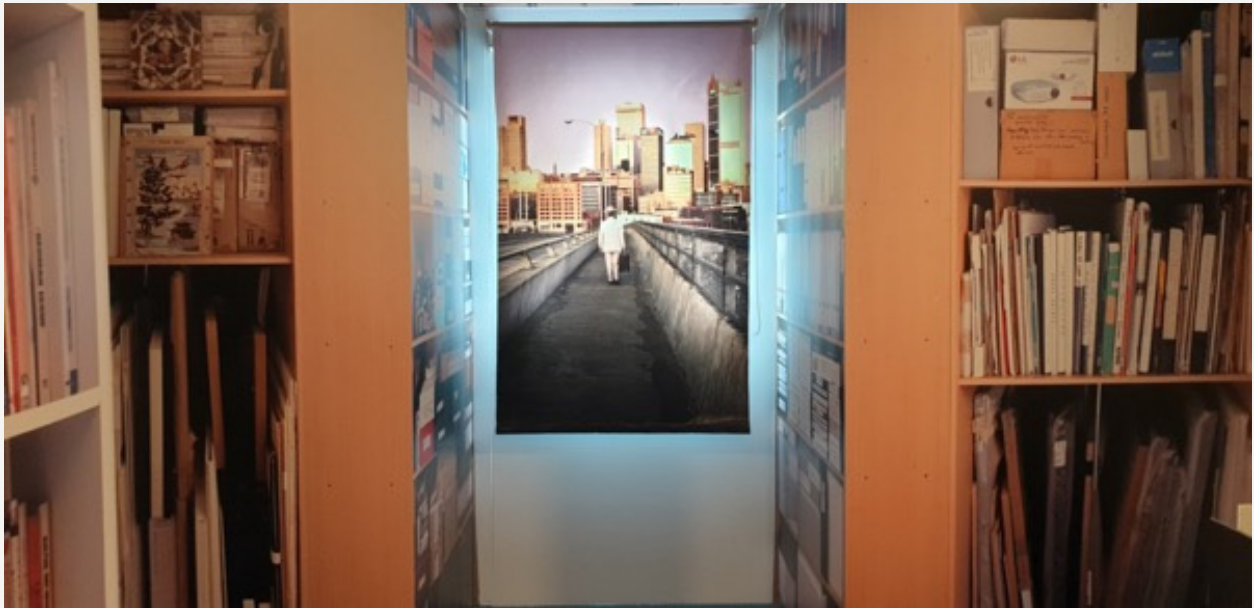


The blind in the exhibition comes from a window in Zahalka's studio that looks out to the street. A light is used to illuminate the image on the blind and create the illusion of daylight

The centrepiece of the exhibition is a reproduction of the artist's Newtown studio-archive. The archive combines a physical recreation of the space with images to create the illusion of the space – *trompe l'oeil* (a French expression meaning 'fool the eye') – such as book shelves and a blind illuminated to indicate a window. The installation includes personal and professional objects from the artist's archive as well as project folders, preparatory sketches and mock-ups created for the exhibition.

This immersive space provides the visitor with an opportunity to gain an appreciation of an artist's working life including the conceptual material underpinning her work, insights into her techniques and methods, and the practical aspects of art making and exhibiting.

To help visualise which elements would be constructed, which would be replicated as photographic elements and which would be transported as physical objects the artist first created a maquette. The maquette, and plans and elevations of the studio are included in the studio display. A shelf of real books sits atop a *trompe l'oeil* bookcase filled with folders.



The initial maquette visualising a recreation of the studio

Visitors are invited to look through the folders documenting the artist's projects



Anne Zahalka reworking a maquette of her studio
at MAPh

- What do these images reveal of the artist's working processes?

- Why might the artist want audiences to share her working space and processes?

- How does an experience of the artist's archive augment the audience experience of the exhibition?

The second part of Zahalka's re-created studio space captures more private elements of her life. Flowing red drapes frame a trestle table with a dense still life arrangement of significant objects including a nest of blonde hair, a Czech folk costume, a magnifying glass, letters, notes, photos and books. A vitrine containing cameras inherited from family members, a Persian rug on the floor, and a table with stacked with vintage cases make the space feel intimate and personal. Illuminated by warm lighting reflected from the autumnal wallpaper, the space gives pause for reflection before the exhibition continues in Gallery 3.



Objects are arranged on open display with labels to discourage visitors from touching





The rich, dark palette, careful staging of objects and spot lighting create a theatrical display

## EXHIBITION DESIGN AND PLANNING

**MAPh EXHIBITION PLANNING**

MAPh hosts approximately ten exhibitions a year across its different display spaces, which consist of the main galleries and the Atrium Gallery. The exhibition schedule is planned by the curatorial team in consultation with the Committee of Management. The schedule aims to showcase a range of emerging, mid-career and established artists, to balance exhibitions around an idea or theme with exhibitions highlighting individual artists' practice and to celebrate collection works alongside works borrowed from other collections. Planning for an exhibition begins months ahead of it being presented to the public. MAPh Curators work with the Director and relevant stakeholders to develop exhibition concepts. Once concepts are developed the curatorial team works in collaboration with the Registrar to determine whether works will be sourced from our collection, commissioned, or loaned from other institutions. Once the curatorial concept and a list of artworks are decided, a checklist of artwork information is made. If any artworks are to be borrowed from another collection, a loan agreement is made between the two institutions (or private lenders), and planning for the safe movement, display and return of the works is undertaken.

**MAPh EXHIBITION DESIGN**

Exhibition design and planning, including the layout of the artwork, is done by the curatorial team in consultation with the Exhibitions Coordinator and Registrar. When designing an exhibition Curators consider many variables. These include:

- The overall concept of the exhibition and how it can be represented
- Accurately representing work aligning with the intention of the artist
- How different artworks might create narratives when placed together
- How different artworks visually sit together
- The visitor experience
- How artworks respond to different lighting scenarios
- How artworks logistically fit within the gallery space
- If works will be framed, unframed or installed in an alternative way
- The safety of the artwork within the exhibition (conservation and public interaction)
- The safety of exhibition viewers

Exhibition design begins many months in advance of exhibition installation. Curators utilise floor plans, elevations and digital renders of the gallery and artworks to mock up the exhibition layout to scale. These mock-ups are later used as instructions to the installation team. The curators work in close consultation with MAPh's external design partner, Pidgeon Ward, to design a distinctive look for both the space and for all of the exhibition collateral including:

- Title wall
- Wall didactics
- Logos
- Fonts
- Colour palettes
- Flyers
- Digital branding

# DESIGNING ZAHALKAWORLD: AN ARTIST'S ARCHIVE

*ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive* is a survey exhibition – an exhibition to showcase the career of an established artist. MAPh Director Anouska Phizacklea worked closely with Anne Zahalka over many months to develop the exhibition concept. A key feature of the exhibition was a desire to highlight the evolution of Zahalka's ideas, processes and work practices and to showcase her extensive archive of projects and supporting material.

*ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive* is arranged thematically, with works grouped according to common ideas that connect different bodies of work over time. This highlights the artist's practice of revisiting work to introduce new perspectives and the way her ideas and processes have evolved.



Title wall at the exhibition entrance
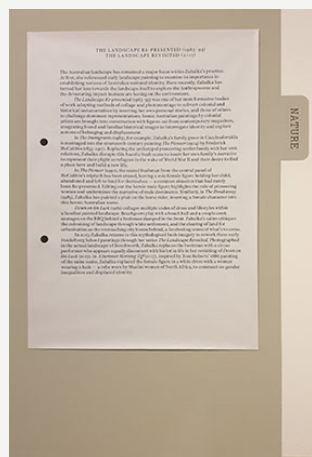


## VISUAL IDENTITY

Each MAPh exhibition is given a distinctive visual identity which is consistent across publications, marketing materials, email footers, banners and signage. At the entrance to *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive*, the title wall displaying the name of the exhibition utilises tabs, like folder dividers, to highlight the exhibition curators and supporters. The didactic panels introducing the different spaces throughout the exhibition use the same visual language, resembling pages taken from archival folders, complete with ring binder holes.

Didactic panels resembling pages from an archival folder introduce exhibition themes
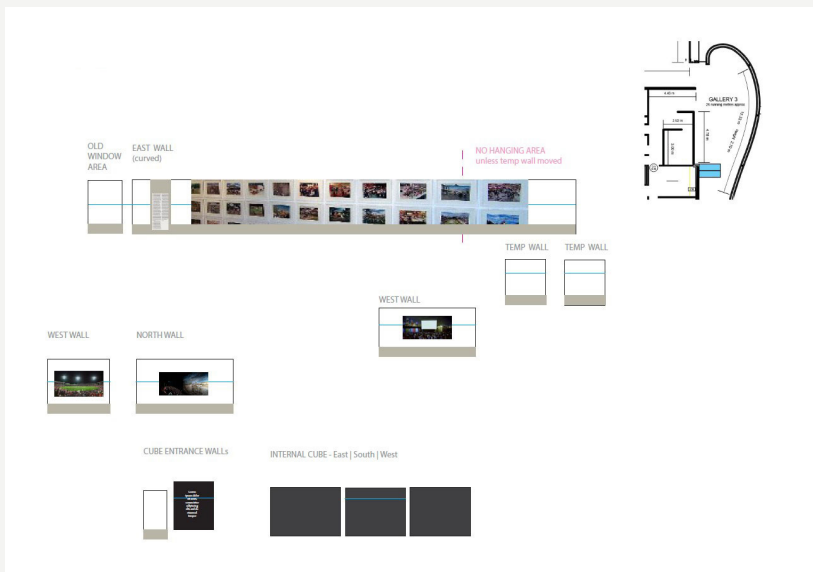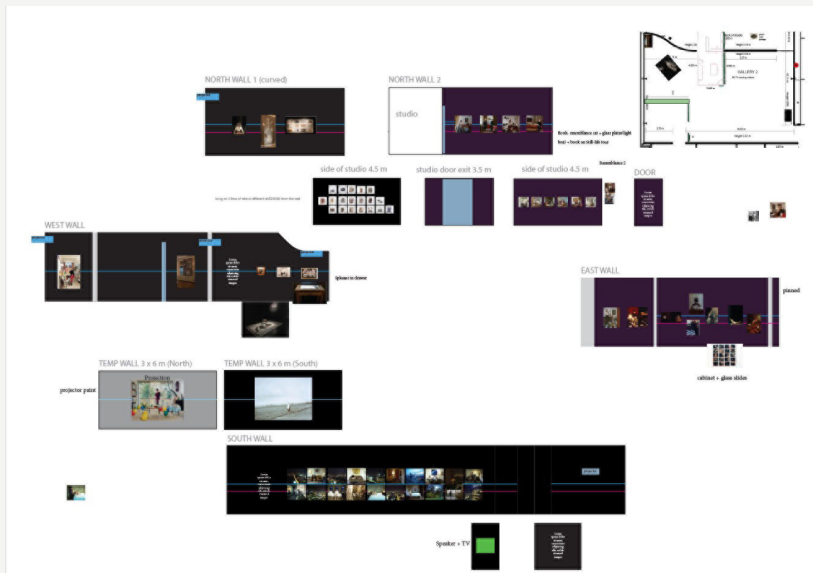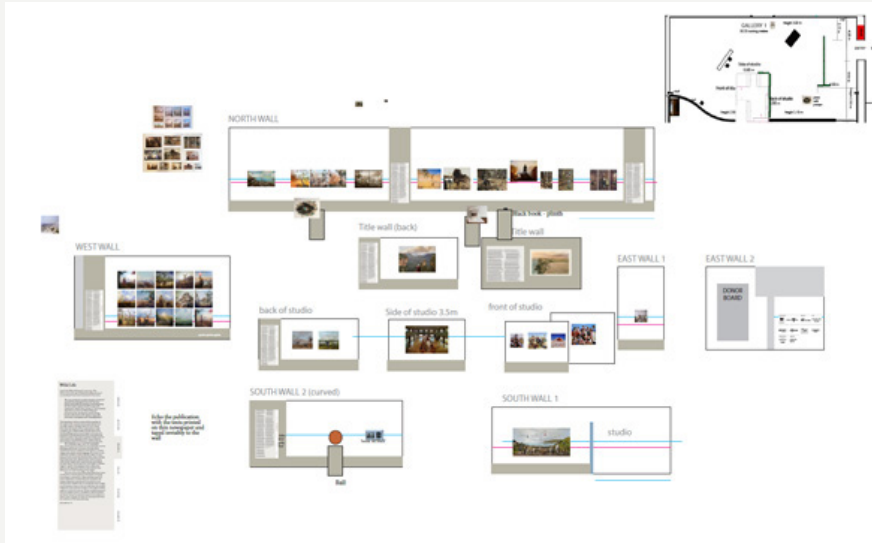
Plans and elevations are used to determine and communicate the layout of the exhibition and  placement of works

## COLOUR

Colour is used to define thematic areas and alter the mood throughout the space. Beginning with the themes of Place and then Nature in Gallery 1, the colour Zahalka Grey (green/gray)  reflective of the Australian landscape – is used to border the walls. In Gallery 2 the more introspective colours of Eggplant Delight (purple) and Intrigue (black) highlight the themes of Memory, People and Place and provide a suitable dark space to show multimedia works. Gallery 3 is painted Iris White to illuminate the *Leisureland* series, which is displayed in white frames (the artist's own).
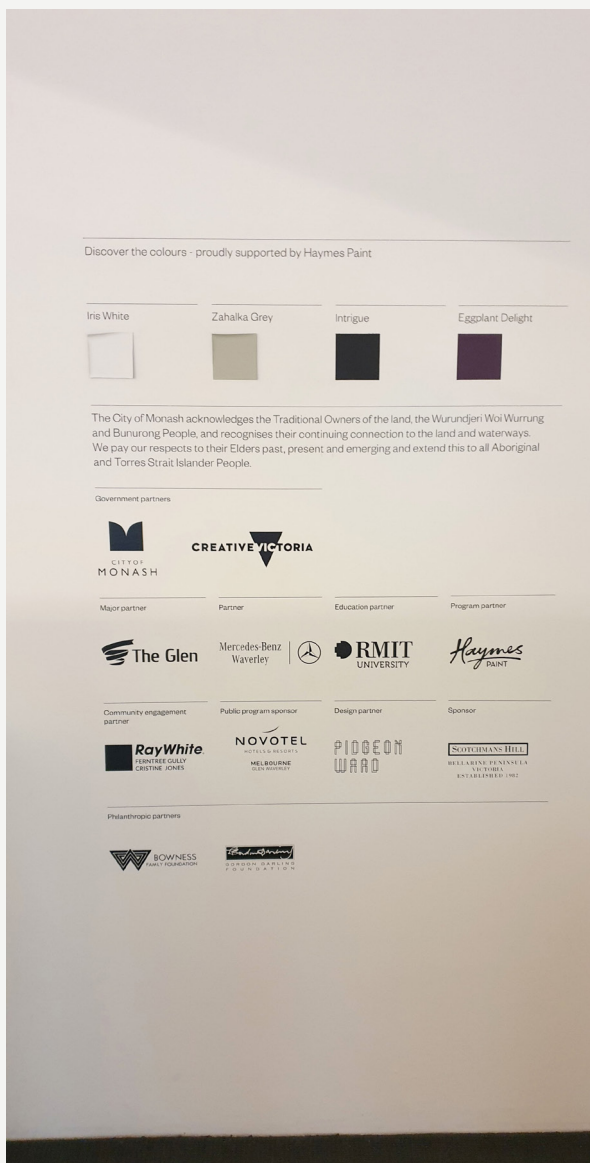


The sponsor wall shows the exhibition supporters. The paint colours, supplied by Haymes Paint are highlighted. Custom made colours  such as Zahalka Grey are named for the exhibition
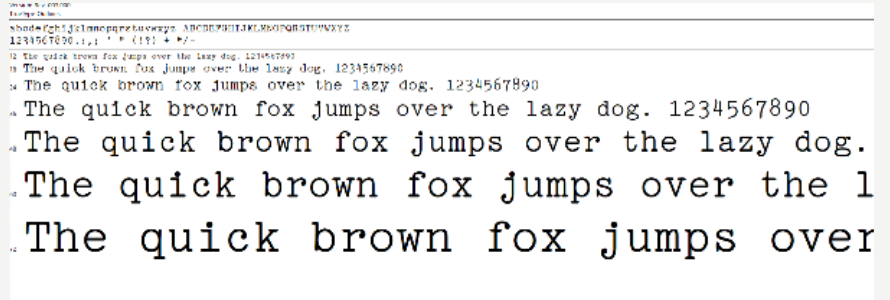
- Visit the exhibition or take the virtual tour to observe the layout of the exhibition.

- Describe the way colour impacts the visitor experience throughout the exhibition.

- Describe how the design of the space and the layout of the artworks impacts the visitor experience throughout the exhibition

- What other techniques are used to create a journey through the space?

- What other considerations might have impacted the exhibition design (consider the number and type of objects on display)?

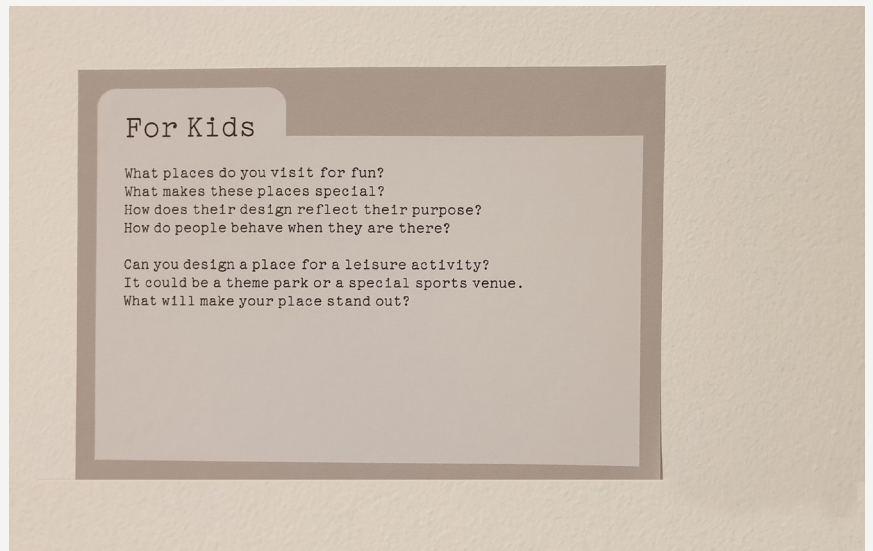- How is sound featured in the exhibition?



Installation view of the *Resemblance II* series showing walls painted in Eggplant Delight

A font named Pica is utilised throughout the exhibition



Installing an exhibition banner at the entrance to the MAPh building



Kids labels are written in simple language with questions and prompts intended to engage young people with looking closely, thinking and discussing the artworks. They have the same tabbed divider design used throughout the exhibition and are placed at a child friendly height
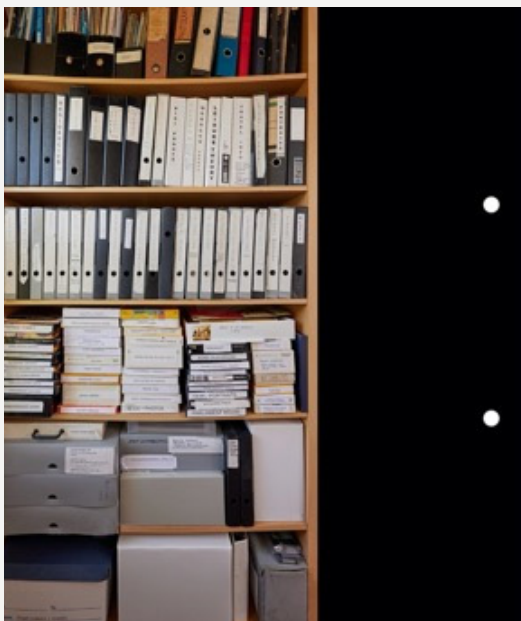


A publication accompanies the exhibition

## PREPARING AND PRESENTING ARTWORKS

*ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist's archive* includes a number of artworks from MAPh's collection, numerous artworks and objects from the artist's own collection and a small number of works borrowed from other institutions (Art Gallery of Ballarat, Geelong Gallery, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Tasmania) To secure these loans, the institutions were approached with the premise and scope of the exhibition and a wish list of desired works. Once the works to be loaned were agreed, a loan agreement was drawn up. Loan works were examined on location and their condition documented with a condition report. The works were packed prior to the exhibition installation and were transported to MAPh by a specialised art courier. The art works travelled in customised crates specially designed to support works of art and protect them from knocks, light, dust and drastic changes in temperature. When the crates arrived at the museum, they were allowed to acclimatise before being unpacked. The works were checked against the accompanying condition reports by the Registrar.


Artwork crates and exhibition furniture in the gallery space


Customised solutions are devised for displaying each work safely. A bound book of Zahalka's early series *The Landscape Re-presented* is displayed in its own acrylic case, on a special stand to support the spine, with pages held open by a loop of clear polyester film

Works from MAPh's Collection are located in our collection storage areas. When artworks are required for exhibition, the Registrar, who is responsible for maintaining the Collection, retrieves them from storage ready for assessment.

Preventative conservation measures are maintained at MAPh by storing and displaying all the artworks in climate controlled environments and following industry standards for mounting and framing. The artworks are examined and, in collaboration with the Framer, are prepared for exhibition. This sometimes includes cleaning, re-mounting or inserting works into MAPh stock frames. The Framer uses archival quality materials and reversible techniques, ensuring the works can be returned to storage in the same condition in which they were retrieved.

A period of two weeks was allowed to de-install the previous exhibition, rebuild and repaint the galleries and install the new exhibition. The design for *ZAHALKAWORLD: an artist archive* included many complex elements, including construction of the new studio space within the gallery; custom made display solutions to showcase books and publications and to highlight early works; numerous multimedia works; large quantities of ephemera, and lightbox installations requiring electrical work. The installation schedule was planned and coordinated by the Exhibitions and Operations Coordinator. A crew of specialist installers and technicians was employed for the installation period.



Once the new walls and spaces were built, the walls were repainted and time was allowed for off-gassing – the dispersal of any fumes or emissions from the paint



Art installers hanging the *Leisureland* series in a grid arrangement in Gallery 3. They utilise laser levels to ensure works are aligned correctly on the curved wall

The artist was present to assist with the installation process



After hanging the works, the track lighting is adjusted. LED lighting is used throughout MAPh's galleries to minimise UVA and heat. Light levels on the works are kept below 50 lux



Installation view *Leisureland*

# PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUE SPOTLIGHT

**Chromogenic print / C-type print**

Chromogenic prints are chemically developed photographic prints. They can be printed directly from colour negative film, or more recently, printed from digital photographic files. Chromogenic prints are almost always on a resin coated paper and are distinct in the increased saturation of colour in prints. Commonly known as c-type prints, chromogenic processing was developed in the 1940s and widely used for colour printing, including for domestic snapshots. While recent years have seen this process accompanied by ink-jet and digital printing technologies, chromogenic printing still remains widely in use. C-type paper has at least three emulsion layers containing invisible dyes and silver salts. Each emulsion layer is sensitive to a different primary colour of light (red, green or blue). It must be kept in absolute darkness until after final development and fixing of the image. An inverted (negative) image is enlarged (projected) with light onto the paper in either a darkroom or specialised machine, then developed in an RA-4 chemical process. The development process converts the hidden dyes to visible colour depending on the amount of light it was exposed to. The process can also be used to print black-and-white images, giving softer grain and less contrast than gelatin silver prints.

**Dye sublimation transfer**

Dye sublimation is a method of printing that transfers an image onto a polyester or polyester coated fabric using heat. Using a wide-format inkjet printer, inks are printed on a special transfer paper. The ink is transferred from the paper onto a fabric using a heat press. The ink changes from a solid to a gas (hence the term "sublimation") and enters the polyester fibres. The polymers in the polyester bond when heated allowing the graphics to quickly become permanently embedded into the fabric instead of sitting on the surface. The light boxes for the series *Lost landscapes* 2020 utilise a sublimation transfer on fabric.

**Gelatin silver print**

Gelatin silver prints are black-and-white photographic prints that have been developed in a darkroom from a black-and-white negative. Negatives can be on either acetate film or more traditionally glass plates. 22 This technique was first introduced in the 1870s and is still used today. Most twentieth-century black-andwhite photographs are gelatin silver prints. They are known for being highly detailed and sharply defined prints with a distinguishable smooth, even image surface. Gelatin silver prints can either be enlarged from their original negative size, or printed directly on top of the paper in a process called contact printing that results in a print the same size as the original negative. Prints are created using papers coated with an emulsion of gelatin and light-sensitive silver salts. Paper must be kept in darkness until it has been completely developed and fixed. Prints are created in a darkroom with a red light. Photographic negatives are enlarged (projected) onto the paper with light then chemically developed, fixed and washed.

**Pigment ink-jet print**

Also known as Giclee prints or bubble-jet prints, pigment ink-jet prints are generated by computer printers from digital or scanned files using dye-based or pigment-based inks. A series of nozzles spray tiny droplets of ink onto the paper surface in a precise pattern that corresponds to the digital image file. In dye-based prints the ink soaks into the paper, whereas in pigment-based prints the ink rests and dries on top of the paper surface. Whilst the term is broad, pigment ink-jet prints have come to be associated with prints produced on fine art papers. They are the most versatile and archival method of printing available to photographers today. A wide variety of material on which an image can be printed with such inks are available, including various textures and finishes such as matte photo paper, watercolour paper, cotton canvas or pre-coated canvas.

**Silver dye bleach print**

A silver dye bleach print is a subtractive positive-to-positive colour photographic process used for the reproduction of colour film transparencies on photographic paper. The prints are made using a triacetate, polyester or resin coated paper support coated with layers of azo (synthetic) dyes mixed with light sensitive silver gelatin emulsion, which are selectively bleached out during the development process. Silver dye bleach prints are characterised by their image clarity, colour saturation and stability. The most commercially successful silver dye bleach product was Ilfochrome (which was also commonly known as Cibachrome).

# ABOUT MAPH – MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN PHOTOGRAPHY



MAPh, previously called the Monash Gallery of Art, is the City of Monash's public art gallery. Public galleries and museums are run with the intention of collecting and conserving artworks, educating the public about artworks, and presenting and promoting art and artists. MAPh is a not-for-profit museum and is reliant on support from the City of Monash and private philanthropic donations. MAPh has a specialised collection of Australian photographs and is the only dedicated public collection of photography in Australia.

## KEY STAFF

MAPh has a relatively small number of key staff who collectively manage the activities of the museum from mounting exhibitions to delivering visitor services, developing programs, staffing the shop and accounting. Every job at MAPh is important and plays a role in our day-to-day operations. MAPh is governed by a Committee of Management, which oversees the museum's affairs. MAPh additionally employs casual staff to help run front-of-house operations and assist with delivering events and public programming, and contractors to assist with professional installation of exhibitions.

## POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

### Director

Is responsible for leading the museum and its staff, developing the museum's strategic goals and pursuing them. Oversees all areas of museum management and works with the Committee of Management and the City of Monash to ensure operations are consistent with stakeholder expectations.

### Senior Curator

Is responsible for developing and managing the MAPh Collection which includes its restoration, conservation, storage and general care. Manages acquisitions and donations from patrons, artists and galleries/gallerists. Is responsible for delivering on MAPh's robust exhibition strategy to ensure exciting temporary exhibitions, and exhibitions drawn from the MAPh Collection including the travelling exhibition program.

### Curator

Works alongside the Senior Curator to deliver on exhibition and Collection development. Works closely with MAPh's Collection through research and interpretation while also preparing for Collection exhibitions and new acquisitions. Works on developing exhibitions, providing research and interpretation of artworks to contextualise them for audiences. Is integral in developing the design components of the show, alongside the MAPh Senior Curator and MAPh's external design partner.

### Registrar

Coordinates the storage, care and registration of the MAPh Collection as well as managing artwork loans, both inward and outward. Catalogues new acquisitions and maintains the collection management database. Coordinates MAPh's travelling exhibition program. Develops and maintains disaster planning and response procedures to ensure MAPh practices meet international museum standards. Provides registration support for incoming temporary exhibition loans including condition reporting and assistance during installation. Oversees and documents artwork movements.

### Exhibitions and Operations Coordinator

Coordinates and facilitates the installation and de-installation of exhibitions at MAPh including planning, scheduling and implementing exhibition installations with both internal staff and external contractors. Coordinates shipping of works and administering artist and contractor agreements. Also monitors and administers exhibition, marketing, design, and facility expenditure.

### Visitor Services and Commercial Operations Coordinator

Looks after the daily management of visitors, staff, communications and revenue streams. Assists visitors in their various needs in person, online and over the phone. Ensures visitor satisfaction and reports on visitor needs to the Director and Committee of Management. Coordinates volunteers, casual staff and permanent staff members. Manages membership programs and other income streams including the gift shop and venue hire.

### Development & Sponsorship Coordinator

Manages relationships with key stakeholders and corporate sponsors. Is responsible for coordinating patrons' programs, stewarding donors and creating a community of like-minded lovers of photography and photographic collections.

### Education & Public Engagement Coordinator

Develops strategies to facilitate positive visitor experiences. Develops, coordinates and delivers the museum's program of on-site and online engagement activities, ensuring museum programs are accessible, inclusive and welcoming to a broad audience. Consults and works alongside all staff to develop, implement and evaluate audience and community engagement programs and activities. These might include exhibition tours, workshops, panel discussions and performances relevant to the exhibition.

### Framer

Facilitates the maintenance and presentation of MAPh's Collection and exhibition material. Responsibilities include: providing conservation, mount cutting and framing support for the MAPh Collection material and other artworks, as required for exhibition; providing installation support and artwork handling guidance and advice on the conservation and maintenance of artworks.

# ARTWORK CAPTIONS

**The Immigrants** 1983
from the series *The Landscape Represented*
hand-coloured gelatin silver prints on off-set print (or on art reproduction)
32.0 x 41.0 cm
collection of the artist

**The Immigrants #2** 1983–87
from the series *The Landscape Represented*
chromogenic prints; brown paper; plywood; balsa wood
99.0 x 35.2 x 3.3 cm; 100.2 x 53.7 x 3.3 cm; 99.9 x 34.9 x 3.3 cm
Geelong Gallery Collection
John Norman Mann Bequest Fund, 2022
2022.4.1–3

**A summer morning tiff** 2017
from the series *The Landscape Represented*
pigment ink-jet print
sheet: 76.0 x 51.2cm frame: 78.5 x 54.0 x 3.8cm
Art Gallery of Ballarat Collection
purchased with funds from the Joe White Bequest, 2020
2020.17

**Brown bears** 2006
from the series *Wild Life* 2006–17
chromogenic print
80.0 x 80.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Polar bear, grizzly bear and grolar bear** 2016
from the series *Wild Life* 2006–17
chromogenic print
80.0 x 80.0 cm
collection of the artist

**A colony of boffins** 2020
from the series *Lost landscapes*
dye sublimation transfer on fabric in light box
130.0 x 265.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Rising tide** 2006
from the series *Wild Life* 2006
chromogenic print
80.0 x 80.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Rising tide** 2016
from the series *Wild Life* 2006/2017
chromogenic print
80.0 x 80.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Rising tide** 2022
from the series *Wild Life*
chromogenic print
regurgitated plastics
80.0 x 80.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Room 3621 (Dora)** 2008

from the series *Hotel Suite*
chromogenic print
75.0 x 92.5 cm
collection of the artist

**Room 4212 view to Treasury Gardens** (left panel) 2008
from the series *Hotel Suite*
chromogenic print
75.0 x 92.5 cm
collection of the artist

**Room 4117 (with artwork by John Brack)** 2008
from the series *Hotel Suite*
chromogenic print
75.0 x 92.5 cm
collection of the artist

**Sea World, Bermuda Triangle** 2001
from the series *Lesiureland*
chromogenic print
collection of the artist

**Bingo** 1998
from the series *Lesiureland*
chromogenic print
collection of the artist

**Star City Casino (Oasis)** 1998
from the series *Lesiureland*
chromogenic print
collection of the artist

**The Cleaner (Maryanne Redpath/performance artist)** 1987
from the series *Resemblance*
silver dye bleach print
80.0 x 80.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Marriage of Convenience (Graham Budgett and Jane Mulfinger/Artists)** 1987
from the series *Resemblance*
silver dye bleach print
80.0 x 80.0 cm
collection of the artist

**The Card Player** 1989
from the series *Resemblance II*
silver dye bleach print
50.0 x 50.0 cm
collection of the artist

**The Bathers** 1989
from the series *Bondi: playground of the Pacific*
chromogenic print
95.0 x 112.0 cm
Museum of Australian Photography, City of Monash Collection
donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by the Bowness Family 2010
MAPh 2010.022

**The New Bathers** 2013
from the series *Bondi: playground of the Pacific*
chromogenic print

74.0 x 90.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Saturday 2:48 pm** 1995
from the series *Open House*
duratran, light box
176.0 x 125.0 x 25.0 cm
Monash University Collection
purchased 1996
1996.4

**Detail (from 'The Dutch Painter')** 1991
from the series *Details*
silver dye bleach print
74.0 x 60.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Detail (from 'The Cook')** 1991
from the series *Details*
silver dye bleach print
78.3 x 64 cm
collection of the artist

**The Gentleman** 1993
from the series *Gesture*
silver dye bleach print
91.0 x 69.0 cm
collection of the artist

**Gesture IV (from Jusepe de Ribera, A Philosopher, 1637)** 1993
from the series *Gesture*
silver dye bleach print
91.0 x 69.0 cm
collection of the artist

**The Card Player** 1989
from the series *Resemblance II*
silver dye bleach print
50.0 x 50.0 cm
collection of the artist

Sue SAXON and Anne ZAHALKA
**refuge / refugee** 2003
**enemy / alien** 2003
**home / homeless** 2003
**possess / dispossessed** 2003
**hate / hope** 2003
**vermin / jew** 2003
**szasz / saxon** 2003
**tokaj / bondi** 2003
**homeland / homesick** 2003
**vaclav / paul** 2003
**strange / stranger** 2003
**identity / displaced** 2003
**countryside / genocide** 2003
**occupied / outcast** 2003
**antipodes / exile** 2003
**place / displace** 2003
**arrive / survive** 2003
**berth / land** 2003
**foreign / foreigner** 2003
**native / citizen** 2003
from the series *Displaced persons*
textile with embroidery and image transfer / linen handkerchief with archival ink transfers and embroidery
39.0 x 39.0 cm (each)
collection of the artist