

KINGS Artist Run acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate. We offer our respect to Elders both past and present and extend this offer to all First Nations people.

KINGS

Chelle Destefano
I WILL TELL YOU
LATER

SEPTEMBER
29.08.24-29.09.24

Artist Run

Established in 2003, KINGS Artist-Run provides a location for contemporary art practice, supporting distinctive experimental projects by artists at all stages of their careers.

Open 12-5pm Thursday,
Friday, Saturday, Sunday
69 Capel Street,
West Melbourne VIC 3003

GALLERY ONE

Chelle Destefano I Will Tell You Later

I began unpacking my experiences as a Deaf person during covid lockdown four years ago and I realised what had been happening with me was a common occurrence for many Deaf too. To be told “I will tell you later” and then ask what that was about later, just to be told “sorry I have forgotten” is often an audist experience and exclusionary. It has happened often to me in family gatherings and social hearing groups and I had often just accepted it, defeatedly albeit disappointed.

When I began unpacking these things, especially while studying my Masters in Contemporary Art at Melbourne Uni and undertaking a collaboration with my friend and fellow classmate Claire Bridge, who has become one of my closest friends, I realised it was not ok to accept audist attitudes, but rather change these attitudes. There has been Deaf rage happening in more recent years in regard to audist attitudes but what we like to do is speak out not only gently, loudly, assertively but also through art. While working with Claire, she became my strongest hearing ally and supported me when I was unpacking realisations and I went through the emotions of shock, anger, sadness and then will to fight and stand up for my Deaf experiences and Deaf Culture. This was a pivotal turning point in my life and in my arts, and I created works relating to those experiences which received strong responses, all positive and many good questions and I appreciated it.

I decided to take a closer look at one of my experiences, which is this one about being told I will tell you later, and I ruminated on this, practiced moves in dance as I have been inspired by seeing Deaf dancers, and one of them I worked with, Elvin Lam, encouraged me to delve into it. I realised I could express my story through movement and lead an ambiguous trail to bring viewers to ponder, think (even critically maybe) and ask questions about this experience. So far, as I have developed the work, people who I have spoken with have been keen and interested to learn more about this and try to make changes in regard to including Deaf people in conversations. As I worked through creating sculpture pieces to work with in performance, I drew them in placements of how I remembered social spaces, and how I felt like a rolling ball with a voice that was not heard by others. I would often retreat to a quiet corner or to my room to read which I enjoyed. I did a printmaking residency and etched some of my performances that informed my experience onto drypoint plastic sheets and transformed them to ink prints, which was an exciting process as I realised during that, the tall cones could twitch towards each other as though whispering, talking among each other and I would have no idea what was being said. There is still a lot to unpack, no doubt but this is just the start and I hope this exhibition brings ideas and ways of approaching Deaf people without feeling scared or nervous.

LITTLE BRUNSWICK WINE CO.



KINGS Artist-Run is generously supported by City of Melbourne through the Arts and Creative Partnerships Program, and Burnley Brewing, Heaps Normal, Foreigner Brewing Co. and Little Brunswick Wine Co. through their ongoing drinks sponsorship.



Chelle's practice as a multidisciplinary artist, born in 1979 and currently working in Boonwurrung (south-central Kulin) aka Wonthaggi, and travelling between Wonthaggi and Naarm (Melbourne) regularly, involves drawing, printmaking, textiles and sculpture, installation, performance and poetry and she often combines some of these disciplines into one body to inform her practice. She focuses on current issues conflating with her identity and style of works that create discussions and questions. As a Deaf artist, she uses her identity to communicate her thoughts and concerns including her personal experiences with being Deaf, and outside issues that affect her and those around her. She is working towards larger scale works on paper and sculptural works that discuss those personal experiences, as well as creating performances in gestural Auslan and using poetic dance moves to inform her experiences, all in her identity and language.

Previous works that involve soft sculpture work, works on paper and performance have talked about her experiences as a Deaf person living in a hearing-dominant world and how she has navigated this and those works informed her practice on these experiences.

Chelle was a winner of the Lake Art Prize (2020) for her multidisciplinary textile and performance work and has been a finalist in a number of art prizes including the Muswellbrooke Art Prize (2023), Footscray Art Award (2021, 2023), Wyndham Art Prize (2022), Banyule Art Award for Works on Paper (2019 and 2021), the Lyn McCrea Memorable Drawing Prize (2019), Fisher's Ghost Art Award (2020, 2022), the Noel Counihan Commemorative Art Award (2019, 2020, 2022), the Midsummer Post Art Award (2020), and The Incinerator Art Award (2020). She was the winner of a Creative Victoria's Creative Workers' grant that enabled her to create this work that is being shown here at Kings.

List of works, left to right:

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|---|--|---|
| 1. <i>Concept 1</i> , gouache on paper | 13. <i>Stuck For a Word</i> , ball, textiles, thread, pins | 22. <i>I'm On The Ground As So To Speak</i> , dry point etching ink on paper |
| 2. <i>Concept 2</i> , gouache on paper | | |
| 3. <i>I Have Forgotten Now Sorry</i> ; dry point etching ink on paper | 14. <i>I Escaped To My Own World So Yeah!</i> , ball, textiles, thread, pins | 23. <i>Trying To Be Involved</i> , dry point etching ink on paper |
| 4. <i>Left To Read 1</i> , gouache on paper | 15. <i>Silence</i> , ball, textiles, thread, mesh, pins | 24. <i>I Will Tell You Later Dance Expression Performance</i> , Performance video |
| 5. <i>I Want To Talk</i> , gouache on paper | | |
| 6. <i>A Bright Spot</i> gouache on paper | 16. <i>Get A Look In My World</i> , ball, textile, metal, plastic, thread, pins | |
| 7. <i>Exclusive Unfortunately</i> , gouache on paper | 17. <i>A Person Social 1 – orange blue</i> , textile, wire, foam | |
| 8. <i>I Will Tell You Later 1</i> , dry point etching ink on paper | 18. <i>A Person Social 2 – frilly pink in yellow</i> , textile, wire, foam | |
| 9. <i>I Will Tell You Later Pink Dynamic</i> , dry point etching ink on paper | 19. <i>A Person Social 3 – Blue with Purple foot</i> , textile, wire, foam | |
| 10. <i>I Will Tell You Later – green proof 1</i> , dry point etching ink on paper | 20. <i>Left To Read Alone 2</i> , monoprint etching on paper | |
| 11. <i>I Will Tell You Later Green Glow</i> , dry point etching ink on paper | | |
| 12. <i>Me 1 – Ready To Think</i> , ball, textiles, thread, pins | 21. <i>Stuck In Glass And Seen But Not Heard</i> , monoprint etching on paper behind perspex | |

I Will Tell You Later exhibition catalogue

1. *Concept 1*; gouache on paper; \$150
2. *Concept 2*; gouache on paper; \$150
3. *I Have Forgotten Now Sorry*; dry point etching ink on paper; \$250
4. *Left To Read 1*; gouache on paper; \$200
5. *I Want To Talk*; gouache on paper; \$200
6. *A Bright Spot*; gouache on paper; \$200
7. *Exclusive Unfortunately*; gouache on paper; \$300
8. *I Will Tell You Later 1*; dry point etching ink on paper; \$400
9. *I Will Tell You Later Pink Dynamic*; dry point etching ink on paper; \$500
10. *I Will Tell You Later – green proof 1*, dry point etching ink on paper; \$300
11. *I Will Tell You Later Green Glow*; dry point etching ink on paper; \$500
12. *Me 1 – Ready To Think*; ball, textiles, thread, pins; \$350
13. *Stuck For a Word*; ball, textiles, thread, pins; \$350
14. *I Escaped To My Own World So Yeah!*; ball, textiles, thread, pins; \$350
15. *Silence*; ball, textiles, thread, mesh, pins; \$350
16. *Get A Look In My World*; ball, textile, metal, plastic, thread, pins; \$350
17. *A Person Social 1 – orange blue*; textile, wire, foam; POA, enquire within
18. *A Person Social 2 – frilly pink in yellow*; textile, wire, foam; POA, enquire within
19. *A Person Social 3 – Blue with Purple foot*; textile, wire, foam; POA, enquire within
20. *Left To Read Alone 2*; Monoprint etching on paper; \$650
21. *Stuck In Glass And Seen But Not Heard*; Monoprint etching on paper behind Perspex; POA
22. *I'm On The Ground As So To Speak*; dry point etching ink on paper; \$650
23. *Trying To Be Involved*; dry point etching ink on paper; \$650
24. *I Will Tell You Later Dance Expression Performance*; Performance video; POA



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