

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

Indi Jennings
ENTER TUSSOCK

OCTOBER / NOVEMBER
10.10.24-10.11.24

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

Indi Jennings Enter Tussock

I'm standing in a triangular field of native grasses in the inner-west, a stones throw south from train tracks where freight meets the metro-line. Wurundjeri country meets Bunurong country here. I'm standing next to the last remnant population of *Diuris fragrantissima* on earth.

Diuris meaning double-tailed and *fragrantissima*, most fragrant. It is 1 of 1700 species of orchid native to the continent. Sometimes that number – 1700, goes up when we give western names to previously undescribed species. Sometimes it goes down, when we lose them.

The triangle is small – and sits under the shadow of a decommissioned industrial monolith, the words “Free Palestine” and “Free West Papua” painted on its face. 60-odd years ago this was a working-class thoroughfare where *D.frag* was so prolific that a commuter on foot might scoop its flowers up in a bouquet on their walk home from work, or from the pub. 200 years ago its tubers were a reliable seasonal vegetable.

When the English invaders starved the Irish population by bringing agricultural disease and then exporting more than half their remaining crops, the Irish later called it An Gorta Mór – “The Great Hunger,” watered down by colonialist educational scriptures to “The Potato Famine.” It parallels here just the same. While the tubers of native herbaceous plants weren't shipped overseas – they were sacrificed almost entirely to sheep farming or land clearing. It's worth giving pause to the fact that there isn't a name in local language for the elimination of native vegetables here, likely means there were much worse things occurring at the time.

Now confined to a small patch of 21 remnant plants and 200 or so more grown in laboratories and planted alongside them, a small group of volunteers take up the Sisyphean task of keeping the march of invasive weeds and slugs at bay. Bolstering populations of other disappearing local plants and scratching their heads at how to fix the missing symbioses of small burrowing mammals, bugs, macropods and the mycorrhizal relationship between the *Diuris* and a fungi in the *Tulasnellaceae* family.

Responding materially to the local fragmented ecology, this installation presents *D.frag* flowers forged from glass, speaking to the scattered shards of broken bottles left behind from when the site was previously used as a municipal dump.

Enter Tussock is a project that pays homage to the decades-long recovery effort of reviving the Sunshine *Diuris* population, examining fractured landscapes and the tender relationships that emerge from caring for a species on the brink of extinction.

— matthew kneller.

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

List of works:

Indi Jennings,
caring for you, caring for me
2024,

Glass, Indigenous plants of the western basalt plains, train yard rubble, garden soil, sawdust (river red gum), glass fragments from the 1920's collected from the reference site

Indi Jennings,
D.frag,
2024

Glass, railway sleepers (river red gum)

Indi Jennings,
GALL SIGHT,
2023

Steel scaffold, steel, springs, transducer, *Themeda triandra*, *Dianella longifolia*, *Eryngium ovinum*, *Linum marginale*, basalt, field recordings of Ngarrert (Woi Wurrung: frog) taken on Wurundjeri country

INDI JENNINGS is a self taught botanist and sound artist living and working on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin nations. Responding to the material and sonic ecologies of place, their research is primarily field based, rooted in relationships of reciprocity. Engaging in community projects focused on the rehabilitation of local grasslands, they help run Basalt Buddies Pirate Nursery with Billie, Matt and Sam -- slowly growing 52 grassland species indigenous to the grassland ecosystems of Braybrook, Tottenham and Sunshine in the western suburbs of Naarm. Over the last few years they have been a part of the Sunshine *Diuris* recovery team, participating in field work rehabilitation of the site.

Indi Jennings is the recipient of the KINGS VCA Graduate Award, 2023.



LITTLE BRUNSWICK WINE CO.