

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

*Finnigan Edwards, Gabriella
Bartolo-Kanellopoulos, Jack
Sam, Joanna Pham, Maiténa
Etchebarne, Mandeep Singh
& Shayna Dahya
Curated by Gabriella Bartolo-
Kanellopoulos*

PITH AND SEED

AUGUST

23.07.26–16.08.26

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
12 - 4pm, Saturday - Sunday
69 Capel Street,
West Melbourne VIC 3003

GALLERY ONE

*Finnigan Edwards, Gabriella Bartolo-Kanellopoulos,
Jack Sam, Joanna Pham, Maiténa Etchebarne,
Mandeep Singh & Shayna Dahya
Curated by Gabriella Bartolo-Kanellopoulos*

Pith and Seed

Pith and Seed explores the degree to which creative practitioners incorporate their inherited cultural traditions in their process. This exhibition features responsive artworks which incorporate foodstuffs and ephemeral materials, reflecting on nourishment as a core quality of all human traditions, and the transient and moveable nature of such. The featured artists occupy manifold perspectives on a supposed scale of “neutral” – “traditional”, finding themselves directly, subtly, inadvertently, or negligibly incorporating this quality. *Pith and Seed* thus dances with the complexities of self-identification through artistic practice and cultural reproduction more broadly.

Artwork details, clockwise from door:

Joanna Pham, *the smoke knows no width, this place is found without bound*, 2026, oil on canvas, rice paper on bamboo, dimensions variable.

Gabriella Bartolo-Kanellopoulos, *Not created, not destroyed*, 2026, wheat husk, aluminium, sesame, flour, currants, coffee, cinnamon, pomegranate, gum resin, dimensions variable.

Shayna Dahya, *My Prefrontal Cortex*, 2026, cyanotype, turmeric, tea, rust, oil paint, coffee, on paper, 42 x 42 cm.

Finnigan Edwards, *Kaav Lugat*, 2026, single channel video, 4K 60fps, 14:00. Audio co-produced with bbsanii.

This work employs numerology as a tool to document history expressed by a mundane act.

Grounded on red-brown fabric (Kaav Lugat), representing the red soil of the Konkan Coast.

Food preserves history.

Maïténa Etchebarne, *From the fruit of labour, I will return to dust. The name of my house will remain.*, 2026, mixed media on canvas, red cabbage dye, lemon, vinegar, watercolour pencil, graphite, tracing paper, 76.2 x 76.2 cm; mixed media on canvas, red cabbage dye, gouache, graphite, led lights, print. 20 x 20 cm.

Jack Sam, *Wandering Voices*, 2026, Softcover thread-bound zine, 11 x 20cm, \$20.

Mandeep Singh, *Points of Contact*, 2026, Ghee, cotton, timber, 118 x 820 cm.

Curatorial Essay

Written by Gabriella Bartolo-Kanellopoulos, with the collaboration of the artists.

Some would consider the matter of inherited tradition a tired subject, in this contemporary world characterised by phenomena such as globalisation and technological acceleration. For young artists in the settler-colonial Australian context, is a reflection on inherited tradition a naïve attachment to identity politics? This idea seems to be more regularly accessed by certain demographics, and considered to be irrelevant by others. This often manifests in a schism between the behaviours of neutrally-identifying 'Western' artists and distinctly 'ethnic' artists (which of course, appears as a spectrum itself). So, we ask, what are the benefits and hindrances to attributing artistic production to a broader cultural universe, or to individual artistic genius, or to the art form as an independent organism? Is a decentralisation of the artistic self truly a radical aim, or another form of homogenisation? What are the patterns in how and to whom we attribute these qualities of 'traditional', 'conceptual', 'abstract'? With these questions in mind, *Pith and Seed* presents new responsive works, interpreting the presence of inherited tradition in artistic praxis, through the unifying qualities of ephemeral and food-based media. Across cultures, food is a means for reproducing tradition, while also being perishable and moveable, as are the traditions themselves.

Joanna Pham takes this question as an invitation to immerse herself in the Buddhist practices of her family and ancestors, which has been shaped by their movement and displacement across place and time. She approaches painting in a manner evocative of how she has been taught to pray, I sit before it, I stand before it, I gaze at it with respect, intention, compassion and silent prayer. The composition of *the smoke knows no width, this place is found without bound* forms a shrine or altar, bàn thờ, each element reflective of a ritual process in which she imbues utmost care. She frames the painting in rice paper, embracing its frugality, flexibility, and utilitarian hardiness. She questions, how is this foodstuff used once the people have survived? Chinese and Vietnamese rice papers are subtly layered, to demonstrate the

breadth of this material as a cultural mainstay, and her own fragmented access to culture and family. Within the picture plane, she incorporates objects of worship with a palimpsest-like quality, the water vessels are fragile offerings to deities, the incense alight, *thắp nhang*. Consider its smoke, which yields prayers and words and pain, but ones I only hope can carry thanks and gratitude to the people I no longer know. It manifests in the sculptural rice paper formations, elusive and translucent, and in the sheen and delicacy of the fluid painterly strokes. Joanna's work actively embraces inherited tradition, with a hunger to connect and commune with ancestors, using food-based materiality to evoke the immaterial.

Mandeep Singh also utilises a durable ingredient to elicit worship and create an altar, however, in a less literal sense. *Points of Contact* encapsulates the fleeting touch points of her body in a bowing stance. Her material self and process of motion act as vehicles for honouring and communicating with her ancestors. She casts seven points of bodily contact with the ghee, and accelerates its process of transformation by melting and reshaping it into itself. Complementing this process is the thick and homey aroma of ghee, accentuated when alight and melting. In this, the senses are manipulated to create the ideal conditions for accessing the spiritual satisfaction of enacting tradition and ritual, as is key within places of worship. We are left with only the traces of movement and presence, and the uncanny tension of witnessing Mandeep's body parts momentarily immobilised, reminiscent of a doll in a wax museum. Only once our brains become comfortable with that association, are we then forced to confront the softness of the ghee, the way it melts, unlike wax, into oil, liquid like the body itself that came and went. And, just as one accepts the gravity of the body bowing, Mandeep's anatomy appears disjointed, unnatural, as her extremities emerge from opposing angles. This installation illustrates how tradition is held and carried on through the body. While reified in artefacts, material culture, language; the body is the vehicle for enacting this reproductive cycle.

As Mandeep's body consumes and is consumed by the ghee, Gabriella Bartolo-Kanellopoulos' *Not created, not destroyed* also demonstrates the function of consumption in prayer and emotional processing. This installation is a literal interpretation of the Eastern Orthodox mourning

tradition of koliva (the name of which shifts between languages). Here the tradition is dissected into its anatomical parts, creating a centrepiece of the large-scale pictorial surface of which the innards are invisible, framed by fragments made from the inner mixture. This internal mixture is usually consumed after the mourning service, but here it is immobilised in a tree gum resin, producing a preserved and glass-like effect. With this immersion, combined with the aluminium pieces on the surface, this koliva cannot be consumed. Nowadays koliva is often made in uniform styles by sweet shops, which disrupts the ritualistic journey from creation to consumption, and the repetitious work of preparation. Tradition in this work is bastardised, as the artist aims to concretise something which is designed to disappear through consumption.

In *Kaav Lugat*, Finnigan Edwards also presents food and tradition as something formed by repetition and transmutation over time. Employing numerology as a documentary tool, this sound and video work encapsulates history in the mundane act of food preparation, illuminating the tendency for severe and inhumane phenomena to be reduced to statistics as the years pass. Interpreting select recipes rooted in their grandfather's Konkani heritage, the preparation of the meat is linked with rhythm, in the repetitive action of rubbing, and in the time signature of the accompanying sound composition. Finnigan prepares the popular dish of Vindaloo, developed during Portuguese occupation, in which imported preservation techniques were adapted into a localised style. He rubs a cut of pork with a head of garlic 451 times, representing each year of occupation, with momentary interruptions to pour it with wine, to represent revolts. Simultaneously, the sound piece employs a 7/4 time signature, each of the seven hits evoking a layer on the iconic Goan Bebinca cake, which pays homage to seven mountains in the surrounding region. The video ends with Finnigan rubbing the pork with a combination of spices, to represent independence, in such a brief climax that the count of years preceding it appear truly massive. Employing video and sound as secondary mediums for record making, we are confronted with the transience of food rituals, as processes completely in motion, from their preparation to consumption, and reproduction, and adaptation. The same dish can never be exactly replicated, and sound and video will never reproduce the sensory experience of the food-based ritual, the ephemeral quality of which renders it a precious thing to inherit.

In the zine presented by Jack Sam, he also plays with rhythm and consumption in a series of texts, collectively *Wandering Voices*. In this, he illustrates the moveable and incomplete 'self', and in the atmosphere of his writing, an elemental storm propels the characters forward against their will, mirroring the accelerationist nature of contemporary culture. This quality persists throughout, while the stories, dialogues, and thoughts emerge and pass. Inspired by Walter Benjamin's essay *On the Concept of History*, in which he describes an *Angel of History* (*Angelus Novus*) who witnesses the entire history of humanity as a single catastrophe, unable to save the past, the collection aims to dissect the history of the individual as a vehicle for understanding a macro culture. Through a fragmented and reflexive poem, a chaotic dialogue between friends in a Yum Cha restaurant, and a vignette of grief and childhood, we are carried through a sensory and cerebral exploration of the 'self'. In this, the interior desire or hunger to feel secure in autonomous and individual selfhood, is disrupted by the motion of the exterior world.

The detritus which remains following the scramble to reproduce tradition in this rapid world is a texture which Maïténa Etchebarne explores in *From the fruit of labour, I will return to dust. The name of my house will remain*. She restages family photos, featuring her paternal grandmother, as mascots of the domestic labour so often tied to care and food preparation. The behaviours she witnessed and inherited across generations are explored as relics of the household, and they exist parallel to other ethnically-shaped traditions. Maïténa, living between cultures, nations, and languages across her life, frames the contemporary understanding of cultural inheritance as often reductively tied to nationhood. While, at her dinner table, she is left with the traumas rooted both within and outside the household. So, maybe the traditions I inherited are resilience, adaptability, secrecy, and not fitting in. Compounding on the literal elements of these restaged photos, is a participatory element, where the audience is invited to spray water onto the canvas surface, activate the dyes, and disintegrate the photos. This incriminates the audience as they observe and perpetuate common silences which occur in the kitchen; hidden labour, food-based anxieties, and beyond. The way these patterns emerge around gendered roles is perhaps one of the most taken-for-granted traditions across global contexts, so much so that it graduates 'tradition' to take the form of a 'norm'. She implores, give me my kitchen back, attempting to reclaim

tradition, as something borne by people, rather than something systemically enforced.

With a similar spirit, Shayna Dahya uses her hand to resist any attachment to any tradition, in the wearing away of materials. Leaning into the experimental potential of photography by colliding it with other media, she draws the artistic process back into something fundamental. Shayna pushes the conventions of photography and the documentation of subject matter, using cyanotype with a painterly texture, and casting rusted objects in a manner resembling early photographic methods. *My Prefrontal Cortex* leans into abstraction with absolute candidness. Foodstuffs are used in a melange of commercial, industrial, and household materials, unifying these forms into a fluid universe. This work demonstrates a complete cycle in our artists' exploration of tradition in the artistic process. Here, attaching this work to a tradition is yes, possible, but this is also actively evaded by the artist, highlighting once more how such classifications could be limiting, depending on who is inscribing them, and upon whom they are inscribed.

Gabriella Bartolo-Kanellopoulos

Gabriella is an artist, curator, and writer based in Naarm (Melbourne). Her practice involves oil painting, fibre arts, and sculpture. She facilitates art workshops and is on the managerial team at Unassigned Gallery, and endeavours to establish collaborative and community driven creative outcomes in all her organisational work. Within her creative practice, she consciously reinterpreted her inherited traditions and conditioning. Her present focus both artistically and curatorially is extended from her minor thesis research outcomes, which focus on critical decolonial frameworks for making and presenting diasporic art forms in Naarm.

Shayna Monique Dahya

Shayna is a Naarm/Melbourne based artist with a strong developing photographic practice. She moved from Aotearoa NZ in 2025 to study photography and evolve as an artist.

Finnigan Edwards

Finnigan is a Naarm based visual and sound artist specialising in painting, sculpture and soundscape. His work draws from diasporic and queer personal frameworks and the human in the digital-industrial age.

Maïténa Etchebarne

Maïténa is a French visual artist and early childhood educator based in Naarm (Melbourne). Living across Belgium, Congo, the Basque Country, France, and Portugal in her lifetime, she graduated with a BA in Painting from the University of Lisbon in 2025. Her work has been exhibited in Portugal and Australia through solo and group exhibitions, and she was a finalist for the second edition of the Paula Rego prize (2017), and recently presented a solo exhibition *The Secrets Women Hold*(2025), at the Queen Victoria Women's Centre.

Working across photography, family archives, print transfer, drawing, and participatory installation, Maïténa explores memory, identity, womanhood, intergenerational trauma, secrecy, and the intimacy of everyday family life. Using layered and often destructive processes, she investigates what remains after images are altered, questioning memory, and im/permanence. By reworking family photographs through transfer, erasure, colour, and fragmentation, she creates a personal iconography that brings inherited stories and emotional histories to the surface. Her participatory works allow personal archives to become collective ones, creating spaces where individual experiences intersect with shared memory, vulnerability, and community. Alongside her artistic practice, her work as an early childhood educator continues to influence her belief that creativity, play, and curiosity should remain lifelong acts of making and connection.

Joanna Pham

Joanna is a practicing contemporary artist and art educator within secondary education in Naarm. A second-generation Vietnamese-Australian artist, her practice is grounded in a deep sensitivity to the emotional and psychological layers of the migrant experience, intergenerational trauma, and the search for inner harmony. Drawing on Buddhist philosophies and spiritual practices, her work contemplates impermanence, suffering, and the cyclical nature of healing. Imagery of the gestating body echoes ideas of rebirth and ancestral memory, an embodied transference from one life to the next. Through turbulent surfaces and intuitive mark-making, Joanna hopes to offer gestures of compassion to the community. Her practice seeks to create quiet, reflective spaces where personal and collective histories can soften, dissolve, and transform together.

Jack Sam

Jack is a Naarm-based writer working across poetry, short-fiction, and non-fiction essays. Drawing inspiration from avant-garde literature and psychoanalysis, Jack's works are unified by themes of apocalypse and reparation. His practice involves local publication of zines and experimental distribution methods. Jack's collaborative work, *Reading Matter* (2025), was exhibited at Gertrude Contemporary and George Paton Gallery.

Mandeep Singh

Mandeep is a South Asian artist living, learning and working on unceded Wurundjeri land. Employing experimental photography and sculpture to explore themes of cultural and personal memory, Singh's practice allows her to relearn her Sikh identity from a diasporic positionality. A major interest for Mandeep is collaboration, letting go of ego and allowing art to be made by multiple hands. This can elevate work and create a space for artists and materials to speak with one another. Singh reinvents the past and present through diverse materials, often working with natural and found objects.



CREATIVE
VICTORIA

LITTLE BRUNSWICK WINE CO.

HEAPS
NORMAL