

Transformation is at the essence of the art of Shoufay Derz.

Her works allude as much to what has been - as to that which is now seen. Whether the subject is landscape, lives or language, an echo of the past pervades in the present.

Poets use words to describe what is often beyond word. Images and objects, frequently vested in the poetic, are conceptual and physical vehicles for continuing themes of the ineffable, of absence and erasure in her art.

Along with aspects of her personal Taiwanese and German heritage and histories, and facets of art history, the artist works in a range of media, to mine the poetic from sources as diverse as the Biblical text *Genesis*, Rumi, the 13th-century Persian Sunni Muslim mystic together with contemporary poets, for her own visual forms of 'concrete poetry' that are expressive of transition, of absence, of coming and unbecoming...

Fragile landscapes, images of eroded sites, disappearing cliffs, are for the artist wordless poems and material representations of absence; terrains of emptiness that retain traces of geological scar, forms that are no longer there, subjects of periods of drought and flooding. Hence the title: *In Memory of Water...* 

The panoramic USA Badlands landscape series *Via Negative* is named for a philosophical mode of alluding to, or describing 'what is not'. Derz seeks terrains both physical and psychological – internal landscapes that are at the intersection of memory and triggered by traces and inescapable transcriptions of the past in the present.

The concept of 'legacy' is implicit too in the **To Descend** series of images photographed on Rügen an island in the Baltic Sea with Germany opposite one shoreline, Denmark on the other. The photographs are overlaid with veils of chalk taken from the site. It is sold as an art material in German art stores and, as told to her by her German art restorer cousin, is also used typically to paint frescoes as it is reversible – ephemeral - it can be washed off.

"To Descend" the artist notes, "can refer to the movement down to the sea edge when visiting these steep eroded cliffs, but also to link back and descend from the past. It poses questions of how our inheritance, by bloodline, culture, and language contribute to the shape of our present circumstance. How are we indebted positively or negatively, to the past in recognising what we are today? In what way can this be erased rewritten and reconfigured?"

Retrospective reference is also made to the art-historical legacy of German Romanticist, Casper David Friedrich (1774 – 1840) who famously painted the majestic Rügen cliffs in Derz's significant choice of site and in making the dimensions of her images to be the same size as his paintings. The reference is not nostalgic but is intended by the artist to be a critical look at the mythologies of history or more personally the mythologies of family which we understand through stories to form our identity: "Rather than point out towards the void of the sea in the style of Casper David Friedrich, my lens focused towards the material of the chalk cliffs with chalk paradoxically as a whitewash to further void the already worn shoreline. Yes, you can see hints of the horizon, but the main substance is the chalk -a material of writing, and a material I associate with the formation of ideas. And although ephemeral in that it can

be wiped off chalk is a material representing language in a primary state and embodies the essence of transformation; thought to word, hand to paper, word to material."

Birth and creation is a subtext of this exhibition and the subject of **Born**, a bronze casting of the word in the German language (geboren) in the artist's grandfather's handwriting taken from her father's migration papers from Germany to Australia.

Legacy through language and the materiality of writing again surfaces with the Creation story from the *Book of Genesis* with its first line about the ephemeral moment of transformation:

Now the earth was without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep And the spirit moved upon the face of the waters

It finds repetition in *Reversing the Spell I* embroidered in black on black dyed silk in a ghosted facsimile of Derz's father's handwriting splayed with black feathered quills, a form of quasi portrait; and in *Reversing the Spell II* a Chinese language version written in Derz's cousin's calligraphy with the blank, negative emptiness of the calligraphic characters cut out from the robust white hand-made paper.

The artist acknowledges in these works the poem "Reading the Bible Backwards" by Eleanor Wilnor from her collection *Reversing the Spell* (1998) that envisions the reversing of the Creation story told in Genesis by describing the sea's slow inundation of the earth that would reverse the spell of sins

against nature and human history's disasters and legacies.

無 *Mu III* (not have; without) a cast brass sculpture of a disembodied tongue presented on a chalk stick bed was cast during an artist residency in Berlin. With its connotation of a mute state, it speaks of the impotency felt from absence of knowledge of languages on both a universal and personal familial level for the artist:

"What has been passed down to me are stories assembled into a kind of myth made of broken pieces, memories, viewpoints shared by various people and material remnants.

My interest in the 'unknown' is not concerned with the romantic, the mystical. I'm driven by a fierce curiosity in the way poetry speaks the unspoken and how this can positively contribute to new forms of visual arts practice.

My interest in this richly complex area of study is largely engendered by my mixed Chinese and German heritage, and the experience of not being raised to speak the languages of my parentage. This lack of access and understanding nurtures a sensitivity towards the unknown that is both formative, familiar and yet paradoxically also the basis for much disconnect. In a broader cultural context my work is about cultivating the creative potential of the negative, as mirror to how one's identity is shaped by unknown and unspoken potencies."

Barbara Dowse Curator



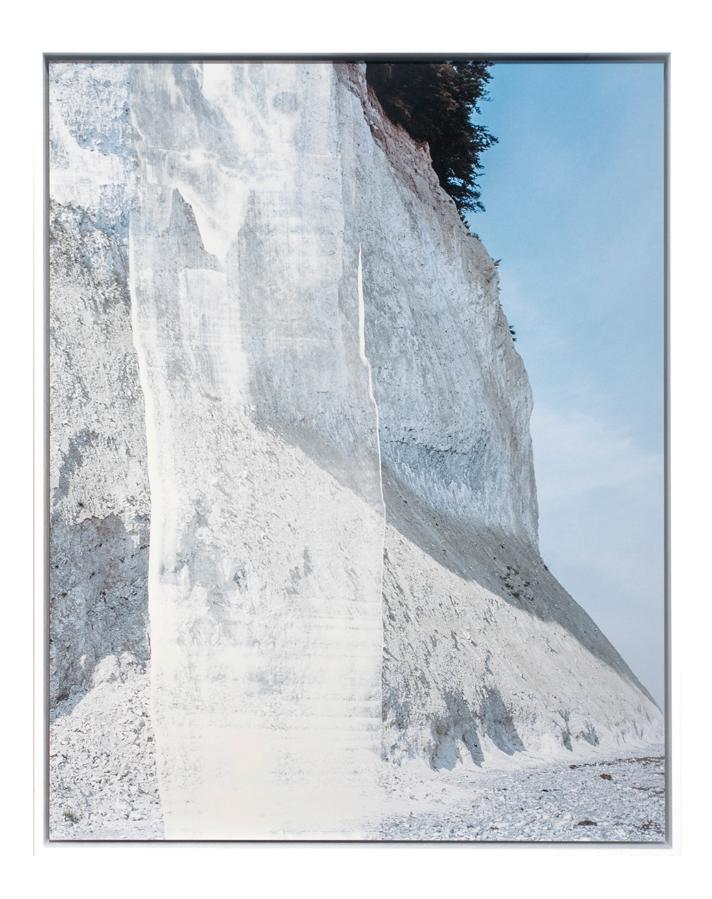


























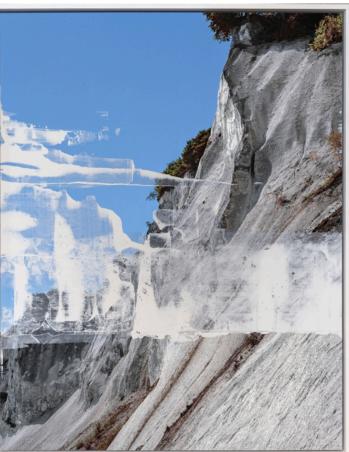


## Mu II
2018\_Bronze tongue, chalk sticks\_ Edition of 5\_Dimensions variable
\$4,400 (bronze only) / chalk installation P.O.A.











Reversing the Spell I
2018\_Eucalyptus and rust dyed black silk thread, turkey pen quills\_ 260 x 260cm\_\$4,500











# SHOUFAY DERZ ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Shoufay Derz is a Sydney-based artist and educator of both German and Taiwanese heritages.

Shoufay has been the recipient of numerous awards, residencies and grants. She has won the prestigious 52nd Blake Prize for Religious Art (2003), the Judges Special Mention Prize in the Churchie Emerging Art Prize (2008), and been a finalist in the Hazelhurst Art on Paper Award (2017; 2015; 2013), the Alice Prize (2016; 2014; 2012; 2007), the Bowness Photography Prize (2014; 2013), and the Fishers Ghost Award (2016; 2015; 2014; 2013; 2012; 2011).

She has exhibited her works widely, both throughout Australia and abroad, and her work has been included in major group exhibitions at The Museum of Modern Art (Shanghai), OCTA Museum of Contemporary Art (Shenzhen), and The Esplanade (Singapore). In 2018 her work was presented as part of *Endless Days*, an exhibition curated by Simone Douglas for the Pingyao International Photography Festival.

Within Australia, Derz has also held solo exhibitions at Bathurst Regional Art Gallery, the Queensland Centre for Photography and Sherman Galleries. Her work can be found in a number of significant public and private collections including the Balnaves collection, the Art Gallery of South Australia and the Bresic Whitney art collection. In 2014, Derz's video work *Depart without return* was acquired by the Art Gallery of South Australia and featured in the 2014 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Dark Heart curated by Nick Mitzevich.

In 2015 Derz was selected to exhibit work as part of *The Fate of Image*, The Forth International New Media forum, curated by Wang Chunchen, Chongqing, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, China (2015) and also showed as part of Video Platform at Art Stage Singapore (2015). More recently, in 2016, Derz was invited to exhibit as part of the Auckland Festival of Photography, curated by Simone Douglas and New Media Now as part of the Samrye International Media Arts Festival at VN Museum, Korea. In the same year she was also a finalist in the Grace Cossington-Smith Art Prize, the Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award, the Blake Prize and the Alice Prize.

Derz is currently undertaking a PhD at Sydney College of Arts, University of Sydney and holds a Masters of Fine Arts by research (Media Arts) at the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales.

# **SHOUFAY DERZ**

## CV

Lives and works in Sydney, Australia

#### **EDUCATION**

2011	Master of Fine Arts by Research, Media Arts, The University of New South Wales
2003	Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours), The University of New South Wales
1998	Diploma of Fine Arts with Distinction, Photography and Printmaking, TAFE

#### **SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS**

2018	<i>In Memory of Water</i> , Artereal Gallery, Sydney
	<i>In Memory of Water</i> , Manly Art Gallery and Museum, Sydney
2016	Shoufay Derz, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery
2015	The Wish, Artereal Gallery
2013	Shoufay Derz, Artereal Gallery
2012	Negatives, Queensland Centre for Photography
2011	Depart Without Return, COFA Space, Sydney
2007	Shoufay Derz, Delmar Gallery, Sydney
	Transportation Love Songs: Inseparable, M1 Singapore Fringe Festival
	Radii Heart, AWE space
	Entanglement, project collaboration w/ Owen Leong, Westspace, Melbourne
2006	Break-up curated by David Teh and Jasper Knight, Half dozen festival, China town public art
	project, Asia-Australia Arts Centre, Gallery 4a, Sydney
2004	Radii Heart, Sherman Galleries Artbox, Sydney

SELECTED G	ROUP EXHIBITIONS
2018	Endless days, curated by Simone Douglas, The 18th China Pingyao International Photography
	Festival, China.
	Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2018, Caloundra Regional Gallery
	Lucky?, Bundoora Homestead Art Centre, Melbourne
2017	Contemporary Female Photo Artists, Artereal Gallery, Sydney
	Artereal Gallery + Media X Mumm curated video sector ART CENTRAL HONG KONG
	2017 Hazelhurst Art on Paper Award, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery
	64th Blake Prize, Kinross Arts Centre, Melbourne, Delmar Gallery, Sydney
	The Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2017, Caloundra Regional Gallery
2016	Seasons of Birth, McGlade Gallery, Australian Catholic University, Sydney
	X/II, Artereal Gallery, Sydney
	Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award, Gold Coast City Gallery, Gold
	Coast Arts Centre, Surfers Paradise
	Home, Auckland, Festival of Photography, Curated by Simone Douglas

Alice Prize, Araluen Art Centre, Alice Springs Sydney Contemporary Video Art Exhibition, Sydney Film Festival Hub

The Blake Prize, Casula Powerhouse Art Centre, Sydney

	Sydney Film Festival, Curated by Barry Keldoulis
	Perspectives, Vivid Sydney, The Galleries, Sydney
2015	New Media Now, Samrye International Media Arts Festival, VN Museum Korea
	The Fate of Image, The Forth International New Media forum, curated by
	Wang Chunchen, Chongqing, Sichuan Fine Arts Institute, China
	Festival of Fisher's Ghost Art Award, Campbelltown Arts Centre
	VIDEO CONTEMPORARY, presented by Samsung curated by Australian Centre
	for Moving Image, Sydney
	Sydney Contemporary 15, Artereal Gallery
	Video Platform, Art Stage Singapore, curated by Paul Greenaway of GAG Projects
	Stations of the Cross curated by Dr Doug Purnell, McGlade Gallery, Strathfield
	#YOLO, curated by Rhianna Walcott, Artereal Gallery
	Hazelhurst Art on Paper 2015, Hazelhurst Regional Gallery and Arts Centre, Sydney
	Figure and Ground, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs
2014	Bowness Photography Prize, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne
	Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: DARK HEART, curated by Nick Mitzevich, Art Gallery of South
	Australia
	Wondermountain: Landscapes of Artifice and the Imagination, curated by Joanna Bayndrian,
	Penrith Regional Gallery
	New Contemporaries, curated by Nick Tsoutis, SCA Galleries
	Models for the Afterlife (with Stevie Fieldsend, Trent Parke and Marketa Luskacova), curated by
	Catherine Benz, Delmar Gallery
	Conquest of Space, curated by Andrew Frost, COFA Galleries
	The 38th Alice Prize, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs
	Is this Art?, curated dLux Media Arts, Artereal Gallery
	Unveiled, curated by Emma Benichou, Gallery Smith Project Space
2013	Phantom Limb (with Owen Leong & Cyrus Tang), UTS Gallery
	Pigeon Auction, curated by Toni Bailey, Casula Power House Art Center
	Hazelhurst Art on Paper Art Award, Hazelhurst Regional Art Gallery
	2013 Bowness Photography Prize, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne
	61st Blake Prize Tour, Australian Jewish Museum, Melbourne
	Depart Without Return, Taipei Artist Village Winter festival, Taiwan.
2012	Light Sensitive, works from the Verghis collection, Touring to Moree Plains Gallery, Goulburn
	Regional Art Gallery, Hawkesbury Regional Art Gallery, The Glasshouse Regional Gallery, Tamworth
	Regional Gallery, Grafton Regional Gallery, Shoalhaven City Arts Centre.
	61st Blake Prize for Religious Art, S.H. Ervin Gallery, Sydney
	Shelf Life, 2012 curated by Catherine Benz, Delmar Gallery, Sydney
	The 37th Alice Prize Exhibition, Araluen Galleries, Alice Springs
2011	Shelf Life 2011, curated by Catherine Benz, Delmar Gallery, Sydney
	Annual members show 2011, Asia-Australia Arts centre, Gallery 4a, Sydney
2010	An Insight, Trinity Grammar School Art Collection (with Lloyd Rees, Desiderius Orban, Earle Backen
	and Guy Warren, et al), curated by Catherine Benz, Delmar Gallery
	Annual members show 2010, Asia-Australia Arts centre, Gallery 4a, Sydney
	Shelf Life 2010, Delmar Gallery

The Spirit Within: Australian Contemporary Art, Parliament of World Religions (with Euan Macleod, 2009 Michael Riley, Arthur Boyd, Claudia Terstappen, et al) curated by Rosemary Crumlin, Isobel Crombie, Helen Light, Melbourne Convention Centre *Light Sensitive*, works from the Verghis collection (with Newell Harry, Petrina Hicks, Hossein Valamanesh, et al), curated by Richard Perran, Bathurst Regional Art Gallery The Liverpool City Art Prize, Casula Power Arts House, Casula Life of Staff, See Street Gallery, Sydney Asian Traffic, selected works on tour (with Renee So, Susan Victor, Wang Zhiyuan, et al), 2008 Today Art Museum, Beijing; "Magnetism - Suspension", Zendai Museum of Modern Art, Shanghai; OCTA Museum of Contemporary Art, Shenzhen; Hong Kong Arts Centre, Hong Kong Annual members show 2008, Asia-Australia Arts centre, Gallery 4a, Sydney Churchie National Emerging Art Award, Anglican Church Grammar School, Brisbane The 34th Alice Prize Exhibition, Araluen Galleries, Alice Springs 2007 One of, Curated by Anthony Whelan and Amanda Henry (with Jackie Redgate, Shaun Gladwell, Mel O'Callaghan, Deborah Paauwe, Lynne Roberts-Goodwin, Todd Robinson, & John Young, et al), Sherman galleries, Sydney Transportation Love Song: Inseparable, Art and disability, M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, Singapore Asian Traffic: Phase 6, Official Parallel Event of the Biennale of Sydney (with Yoko Kajio, Yu Peng and Sun Yuan, Michael Shaowanasai, et al), curated by Binghui Huangfu, Asia-Australia Arts Centre, Sydney 2003 52rd Blake Prize for Religious Art, Touring Blake Exhibition selected works, Grafton Regional Gallery, Stanthorpe Regional Art gallery, Australian Catholic University (ACU) National Sydney and Melbourne *Ulterior* (with Sam Smith & David Westerman) Firstdraft Gallery, Sydney Helen Lemprière Traveling Art Scholarship Award Exhibition, Artspace 51st Blake Prize for Religious Art, The Touring Blake Exhibition selected works: Tamworth 2002 Regional Gallery, Devonport Regional Gallery, Coffs Harbor Regional Gallery, ACU National, Strathfield NSW and Melbourne Vic *Under the Sun.* EPS Gallery, University of New South Wales, Sydney **AWARDS** 2018 Finalist, Josephine Ulrick & Win Schubert Photography Award, HOTA, Gold Coast Finalist, Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2018, Caloundra Regional Gallery 2017 Grant Recipient, Australia Council for the Arts (Skills and development grants) Dame Joan Sutherland Fund — American Australian Association Create NSW — Artist Support Grant Finalist, Josephine Ulrick and Win Schubert Photography Award 2017, Gold Coast

Finalist, The Sunshine Coast Art Prize 2017, Caloundra Regional Gallery 2016 Finalist, The 2016 Fisher's Ghost Award, Campbelltown Arts Centre Finalist, The 39th Alice Prize, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs Winner of Carstairs Residency Prize, Bundanon Trust, NAVA Finalist, 64th Blake Prize for Religious Art. Casula Powerhouse Arts Center

Postgraduate Research Support Scheme Grant, Sydney University

2015	Grant Recipient, Australia Council for the Arts Project for Individuals New South Wales Artists' Grant, National Association of Visual Arts
2014	Finalist, Hazelhurst Art on Paper Finalist, The 38th Alice Prize, Araluen Arts Centre, Alice Springs Finalist, 2014 Bowness Photography Prize, Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne Finalist, The 2014 Fisher's Ghost Award, Campbelltown Arts Centre
2013	NAVA Sainsbury Sculpture Grant
	Arts NSW Travel Grant
	Finalist, William and Winifred Bowness Photography Prize
	Australian Postgraduate Award to undertake PhD, University of Sydney
	Recipient, AIR Taipei International Artist Residence Fellowship NAVA NSW Artist' Grant
	Finalist, Hazelhurst Art on Paper Art Award
	Finalist Fisher's Ghost Award, 2013, Campbelltown Arts Centre
2012	Highly Commended, 61 <sup>st</sup> Blake Prize for Religious Art
	Felicity Fenner and Hossein Valamanesh
	Highly commended, The 37th Alice Prize.
	NAVA, Arts NSW Artists Grant
	Finalist, 50th Fishers Ghost Art Award, Campbelltown Arts Centre
	Finalist, Muswellbrook Photographic Award, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre
2011	Semi Finalist, Moran Contemporary Photographic prize
2011	Australia Council ArtStart Grant
	Finalist, Fishers Ghost Art Award 2011, Campbelltown Arts Centre
2008	Finalist, The Substation Contemporary Art Prize, The Substation, Melbourne The Viktoria Marinov Award in Art Postgraduate Scholarship
2006	Winner: Churchie National Emerging Art Award, Judges Special Mention Prize
2007	Australia Council New Work Grant
2007	Janet Holmes a Court Artists Grant and Visual and Craft Artists Grant
	Finalist, Lomograpix07, Blender Gallery, Sydney
	Finalist, The 34th Alice Prize
2003	Winner, The 52 <sup>nd</sup> Blake Prize for Religious Art
	Finalist, Helen Lempriere Traveling Art Scholarship, Artspace
2002	Recipient, Apple Scholarship, University of New South Wales
	Finalist, 51st Blake Prize for Religious Art, Casula Power Arts House
RESIDENCIES	
2017	Artist Residency, Parsons, The New School, New York

2017	Artist Residency, Parsons, The New School, New York
	Artist Residency, Phasmid Studios, Greenaway Art Projects, Berlin
2015	Hill End Artist in Residence Program
2013	AIR Taipei International Artist Residence, Taipei Artist Village, Taiwan
2012	Taklamakan desert, China, self-initiated residency
2011	Ambrym, Vanuatu, self-initiated residency
2007	Artist in Residence, Trinity Grammar School, Sydney

### **COLLECTIONS**

Art Gallery of South Australia
Macquarie Group Collection
BresicWhitney Art Collection
The Balnaves Foundation
Alice Spring Art Foundation Art Collection
Society of the Arts, Trinity Grammar School Art Collection, Delmar Gallery
University of Sydney Union Art Collection, Sydney, Australia
Represented in private collections, Sydney, Australia and internationally

# ARTEREAL

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