

## < > : Exploring the reductive and expansive languages of abstraction

*This exhibition explores creative reduction and expansion in abstraction by playfully presenting art that can be approached intellectually and experientially.*

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Exploring the reductive and expansive languages of abstraction

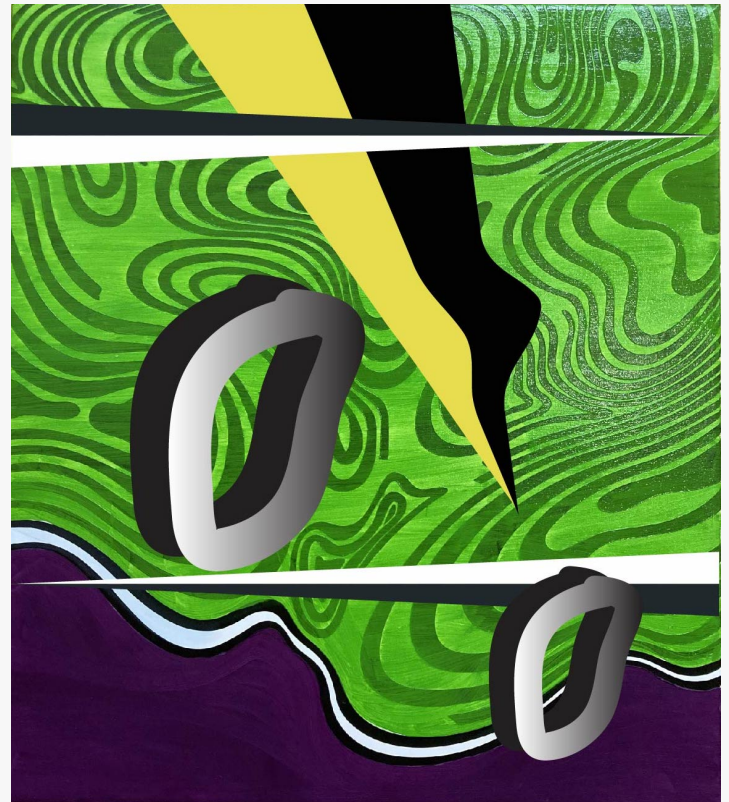
22 April – 27 May 2023

Opening: 21 April 2023, 6–8 pm

Performance: 19 May, 6–8 pm

Exhibition featuring: Kjell Bjørgeengen, Irina Danilovah, Rachael Daisy Dodd, Jessie French, Elizabeth Gower, Ripley Kavara (aka Lakatoi), Carol Cheng Mastroianni, Salvatore Panatteri, Phebe Parisia, Layla Vardo, Oscar Yanez and Alan Zhao.

Curated by Cūrā8.

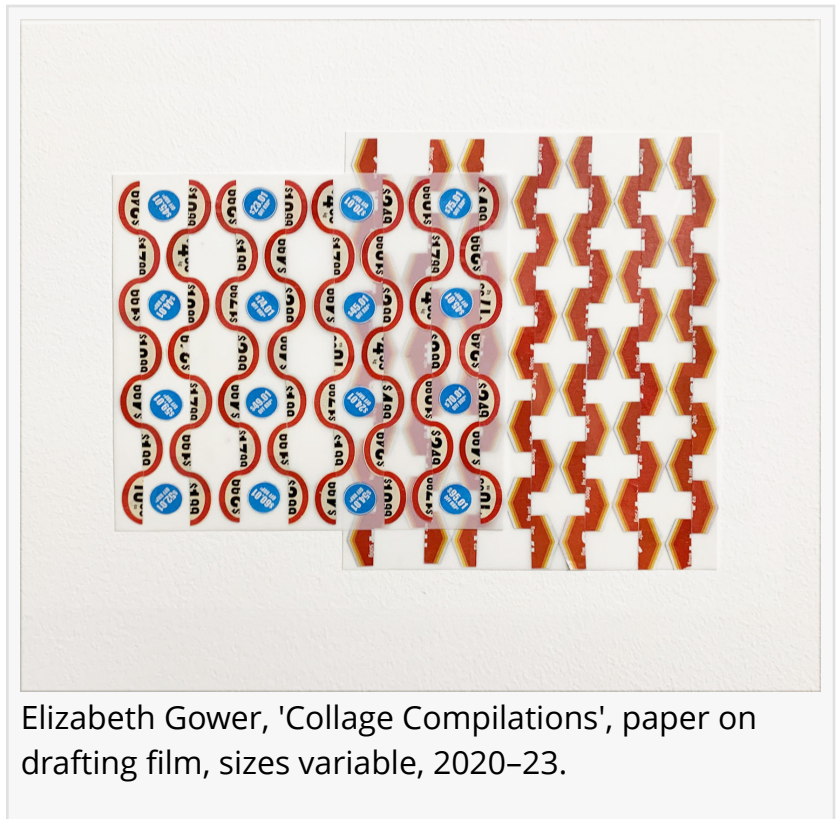


Oscar Yanez, 'Primal Scream', 2023, oil on canvas, 45.7 x 40.5cm

Project8 Gallery presents < >. This exhibition explores the limits of creative reduction and expansion in abstraction by playfully presenting examples of art that can be approached at once intellectually as idea and experientially as form.

This selection of 12 international and local artists continue in the century-long tradition of contesting assumptions that art need be restricted to rectangular pictorial planes, placed flat against the wall, featuring recognisable references to the known world. Indeed, the edges of a work are no longer a boundary but rather something continuous with the world, both materially and imaginatively. Hypothetically, infinite spaces exist behind and beyond the material surfaces presented in this exhibition.

From algae-based bioplastics to white noise, painting, photography, architectural intervention and quilting, the artists in < > embrace an ever-expanding network of references and influences. Here, questions of form and process inhabit ever more distributed contexts for presentation and experiential interpretation. Drawing from a broad range of media and disciplinary configurations both within and beyond art and visual cultures, the exhibited works filter vastly divergent lines of questioning through the reductive and expansive historical languages of abstraction. As is the broader nature of twenty-first century art, these mixed methodologies engage histories, conventions, and emerging critical debates on increasingly diverse ground.



Elizabeth Gower, 'Collage Compilations', paper on drafting film, sizes variable, 2020–23.

Ripley Kavara (aka Lakatoi) will perform a two-hour DJ set in the exhibition from 6–8pm on May 19 in which the experience of “sweet anticipation” — the moment in which a DJ typically builds excitement before the beat drops — is stretched out indefinitely!

Art constitutes a complex and mutually informing entanglement of the abstract and concrete. Just as concepts abstracted from experience are empty, experiences without context defy comprehension. Contemporary artistic interrogations of form, space, and formlessness offer vastly different means for exploring the limits of creative reduction and expansion. Given that it is no longer possible to believe in a universal language of forms, it becomes more important to ask what kind of relational models might accommodate the co-mingling of existing differences.

This exhibition illustrates how abstraction and representation have effectively merged as possible artistic languages in post-conceptual art, and that art is now fertilised by hypothetically infinite forms and activities.

## Artists

Kjell Bjørgeengen (Oslo) and Salvatore Panatteri (Sydney) have collaborated since 2004 on projects that employ the video signal. Bjørgeengen has a long association with the Experimental Television Center (New York) and video pioneer David Jones. Panatteri has a long-standing interest in ways that non- representational art evokes sensations of space/time or infinitude.

Irina Danilovah is a New York-based Ukrainian born intermedia artist, performer, curator and educator who has exhibited extensively internationally through her longstanding conceptually driven initiative Project 59, which uses a random number as a tool for artistic exploration.

Rachael Daisy Dodd has featured in numerous quilt shows, exhibitions, prizes and publications both nationally and internationally. She is highly regarded for her use of folded fabric, gathering techniques and mixes of fabrics.

Jessie French is an artist and experimental designer based in Narrm (Melbourne) who explores consumption, symbiosis, ecology, science and technology in the context of human experience and behaviour amidst the climate crisis.

Elizabeth Gower is a Melbourne-based artist best known for abstracted coloured collages constructed from urban detritus and printed ephemera. She has exhibited extensively throughout Australia and internationally since the late 1970s, and is represented by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne and Milani Gallery, Brisbane.

Ripley Kavara (aka Lakatoi) is a DJ, musician, artist and event producer based in Narrm (Melbourne) who sees music as a conduit for black, queer spirituality. For < >, he will build bittersweet anticipation for a beat that never drops.

Carol Cheng Mastroianni is a Melbourne-based / Chinese born artist who draws upon Western and Chinese approaches to brushless painting to produce richly labyrinthian abstractions.

Phebe Parisia creates works and assemblages that explore relationships between materiality, mark-making, time and affect. She considers her practice as a singular ongoing work utilising a range of materials and techniques.

Layla Vardo works across found-footage filmmaking and video installation. Her practice integrates sampling, collection and collage of media fragments drawn from television, cinema and the internet.

Oscar Yanez was born in Lima, Peru and moved to Australia in 1982. His practice is grounded in modernist painting.

Alan Zhao is a Melbourne-based / Chinese born photographer who draws inspiration from Zen Buddhism, abstraction, minimalism, and surrealism to produce aerial landscapes and nightscapes.

## About Project8

Project8 is a contemporary art space in Melbourne's CBD dedicated to promoting speculative

poetic and material innovation through exhibitions and related events. It utilises the multimodal aesthetic languages of contemporary art to experientially deemphasise differences and contestations grounded in language, politics and culture. Project8 is committed to the promotion and development of discursive exchange, collaboration and partnerships between Australian, Chinese and international artists, researchers and communities actively engaging with contemporary art.

#### CONTACT

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