

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Robyn Stacey breathes life into the inanimate and mundane

In an alluring and evocative travelling exhibition brought to Adelaide by Flinders University Museum of Art (FUMA), audiences can experience the tantalising still life photographs of one of Australia’s leading contemporary artists, Robyn Stacey. Curated by Anouska Phizacklea, director of Monash Gallery of Art (MGA), *Robyn Stacey: as still as life*, comprises ten spectacular works which contemplate colonial collections and their meanings.

Works in the exhibition are drawn from projects undertaken by the artist [2005–2010] that have documented and explored scientifically and historically significant collections throughout Australia, including the Macleay Collection held at The University of Sydney and the collection of the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney. Elaborate in their composition, each photograph asks what the objects reveal about their collectors and the colonial experience in Australia more broadly.

The still life genre flourished in western Europe, particularly among Dutch and Flemish painters during the Baroque and Renaissance. A tradition full of lavish, exotic and sometimes dark arrangements, works from the period are laden with symbolic depth and meaning. The art form reflected, responded to and shaped the 17<sup>th</sup> century when it reached its peak in popularity, re-emerging in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when its formal and aesthetic conventions were adopted in photography.

Robyn Stacey comments, “characterised by meticulous realism, dynamic compositions, powerful forms and evocative lighting, still life is one of the most enduring and significant genres in Western art. The still life qualities of rendering detail lovingly and creating a powerful *mise-en-scene* through lighting, lend themselves brilliantly to photographic interpretation.”

“Underpinning the compositions, whether simple or complex is the search for order and meaning. Every element is there to educate and elucidate, and the image is incomplete unless the viewer participates in this decoding, inviting an investment in the image by both the maker and the viewer.”

For its presentation at FUMA, *Robyn Stacey: as still as life* is augmented by an elaborate still life installation created from the personal collections of FUMA staff and specimens on loan from the University’s anatomy collection. Carefully arranged skulls and rotting fruit represent the inevitability of death, wilting flowers allude to the changing of seasons, and broken glassware reflects the transitory nature of human experience.

Stacey (1952–) is a Sydney-based photographer who over the course of her career has employed the medium of photography to reinvigorate visual information. She has been the recipient of major awards including the Samstag Scholarship (1994) which enabled her to study at School of Visual Arts in New York. Stacey has exhibited nationally and internationally since the mid-1980s and was most recently included in the National Gallery of Australia’s exhibition *Know My Name - Australian Women Artists 1900 to Now* (2020). Her work is held in distinguished public collections such as the National Portrait Gallery, Canberra; Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; and Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. Country Arts SA are currently touring her exhibition *Robyn Stacey: Ray of Light* to fourteen venues across regional South Australia. Further details and locations can be found [here](#).

## **Robyn Stacey: as still as life**

**12 October 2020 – 5 February 2021**

*Closed 24 December 2020 - 3 January 2021*

### **Flinders University Museum of Art**

Flinders University | Sturt Road | Bedford Park SA 5042

Located ground floor Social Sciences North building, Humanities Road adjacent carpark 5

Please note that accordance with Government advice physical distancing and hygiene measures will be in place.

### **Online exhibition resources**

<https://www.flinders.edu.au/museum-of-art/exhibitions/robyn-stacey-as-still-as-life>

### **Visit Flinders University Museum of Art**

Flinders University | Sturt Road | Bedford Park

Located ground floor Social Sciences North building

Humanities Road adjacent carpark 5

**Monday to Friday** | 10am - 5pm or by appointment

**Thursdays** | Until 7pm

**Closed weekends and public holidays**

### **Further info:**

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