



Catherine O'Donnell:

FIBRO MAJESTIC



We pay our respects to the Dharawal people who are the traditional custodians of the land, whose deepening connection to culture and customs have cared for this country for over 60,000 years. We acknowledge Elders past, present and future for their immense spiritual connection to place which was never ceded.

Dharawal land has always been recognised as a meeting place for people from other lands, and in this spirit we respectfully continue this tradition through the bringing together of our communities through arts and culture.

This Always Was and Always will be Aboriginal land.

Catherine O'Donnell, Fibro Majestic 2022. Installation view, Beyond the Shadows, Orange Regional Gallery 2022.

Photo: John Daly. Courtesy the artist and Dominik Mersch Gallery | Sydney.

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FIBRO MAJESTIC

Exhibition: 8 July – 13 August 2023

'Catherine O'Donnell: Fibro Majestic' presents a body of work by O'Donnell that considers the historical and social context of fibro and social housing in Western Sydney and across Australia. O'Donnell grew up in a fibro home in Green Valley, Western Sydney, which at the time was the largest public housing estate in Sydney. The shape and form of the fibro house has long since informed her practice as she explores architecture, social history and the notions of home and memory.

O'Donnell states that the fibro houses and floorplans that she references are "taken from fibro dwellings developed by the NSW Housing Commission around the middle of the 20th Century. At this time, Sydney was experiencing a housing shortage and in response, the newly developed Commission New South Wales Housing Commission began a mass building programme to overcome this housing shortage. The Housing Commission purchased land south west of Sydney in Green Valley which became the largest public housing estate in the Sydney basin. The new dwellings for this estate had to go up quickly and cheaply.

They were compact, mass-produced, box-like structures and the suburban streets quickly filled with the repetition of their design in single or multi-storied dwelling form. There was a small range of house styles with a limited range of floor plans. Walking into one house was like walking into any other."

At the centre of the exhibition is O'Donnell's major sculptural installation 'Fibro Majestic', 2022, a 75%-to-scale replica of a fibro house originally created for the artist's survey exhibition, 'Beyond the Shadow', an Orange Regional Gallery exhibition in partnership with Grafton Regional Gallery, curated by Lucy Stranger, 2022. Accompanying the installation is a selection of sculptural works and drawings, which, more intimate in scale, are evocative of the lives lived within these homes.

"The fibro house, the architecture of my childhood, has a rich history extending back to the mid-1900s, with their roots in international social theory. 'Fibro Majestic' is an everywhere-everyman example of mid-century developments across Australia. It is synonymous with Australian identity."

Flawed Plans, 2023

Complementing O'Donnell's exhibition, 'Fibro Majestic', Campbelltown Arts Centre has commissioned a site-specific installation on the stairs and front wall of Campbelltown Arts Centre's amphitheatre titled 'Flawed Plans', 2023. Fibro homes were the NSW Housing Commissions answer to the housing crisis of the mid 20th Century, 'Estate of Tomorrow'. Yet their quick, cheap, box like designs are seen by many as an urban planning disaster.

'Flawed Plans' playfully highlights the duplicity of the fibro home. Perceptions shift and skew as the viewer climbs, descends or orbits the work.

Catherine O'Donnell has held solo exhibitions at Carriageworks; Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre; Grafton Regional Gallery; Blacktown Arts Centre; Murray Art Museum Albury; Penrith Regional Gallery; Shoalhaven Regional Gallery; and the National Art School. She also held a solo exhibition at the Pataka Museum in New Zealand as a part of the NZ International Arts Festival (2010). O'Donnell has been awarded the Gosford Art Prize (2020), Waverley Art Prize (2020), Terrence and Lynette Fern Cité Internationale des Arts Residency Fellowship (2017), Hazelhurst Art on

Paper (2015), City of Hobart Art Prize (2011), and the Albury Art Prize (2009) where she was awarded First Prize International Art Residency.

O'Donnell's works are held in many private and public collections in Australia and New Zealand, including: the Art Gallery of New South Wales; Parliament House Art Collection; Artbank; Penrith Regional Gallery; Grafton Regional Gallery; Murray Art Museum Albury; Kedumba Collection of Contemporary Drawings; Blacktown City Council; Mosman Art Gallery; Museum of Brisbane; and Pataka Art + Museum, New Zealand.

Catherine O'Donnell is represented by Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney.



Catherine O'Donnell, *Fibro Majestic* 2022.
Installation view, *Beyond the Shadows*, Orange Regional Gallery 2022.
Photo: John Daly. Courtesy the artist and Dominik Mersch Gallery | Sydney.

ARTWORK LIST

No. ARTWORK DETAILS

C1 *'Fibro Majestic', 2022*
Mixed media, common household construction materials, 587 x 587 x 220cm
Collection of the artist. Fibro Majestic was commissioned by Orange Regional Gallery for Catherine O'Donnell's survey exhibition Beyond the Shadow (2022). Funded by Orange Regional Gallery and Create NSW

C2 *'Another Dawn', 2021*
Charcoal on paper, 88 x 53.5cm framed
Private Collection, Sydney

C3 *'Beyond the curtain beats a loving heart', 2020*
Charcoal on paper diptych, 107 x 50cm framed each
Collection of the artist

C4 *'Gold leafed house 1', 2022*
Stereolithographic model and gold leaf 13 x 26 x 33cm
Collection of the artist

C5 *'Gold leafed house 2', 2022*
Stereolithographic model and gold leaf, 13 x 26 x 30cm
Collection of the artist

C6 *'Gold leafed house 3', 2022*
stereolithographic model and gold leaf, 14 x 25 x 20cm
Collection of the artist

C7 *'Sydney Fibro Series 4', 2017*
Pencil on paper, 35 x 66cm framed
Collection of the artist

C8 *'Sydney Fibro Series 2', 2017*
Pencil on paper, 35 x 66cm framed
Grafton Regional Gallery Collection. Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Catherine O'Donnell

C9 *'Sydney Fibro Series 6', 2017*
Pencil on paper, 35 x 66cm framed
Collection of the artist

C10 *'Sydney Fibro Series 3', 2017*
Pencil on paper, 35 x 66cm framed
Grafton Regional Gallery Collection
Donated through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program by Catherine O'Donnell

C11 *'Urban Dwellings Series #9', 2016*
Pencil on paper, 35 x 66cm framed
Grafton Regional Gallery Collection

C12 *'Somerset Window', 2021*
Charcoal on paper, 86 x 57cm framed
Collection of the artist

C13 *'Gold leafed house 4', 2022*
Stereolithographic model and gold leaf, 14 x 25 x 20cm
Collection of the artist

C14 *'Gold leafed house 6', 2022*
Stereolithographic model and gold leaf, 13 x 36 x 20cm
Collection of the artist

C15 *'Flawed Plans', 2023 (Campbelltown Arts Centre ampitheatre)*
Vinyl, dimensions variable
Commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre

PROJECT TEAM

Curators:	Emily Rolfe Isabelle Morgan
Assistant Curators:	Hannah James and Anne-Marie Brockenhuus-Schack
Head of Curatorial:	Adam Porter
Production Lead:	Brenden Van Hek
Collections Officer:	Sam Spragg
Production, Fibro Majestic House:	John Daly, Orange Regional Gallery
Public Art Commission Curator:	Timothy George
Education and Creative Learning:	Timothy George Julia Quinn Samantha Relihan
Media and Communications:	Ella Beer
Design and Marketing:	Donna Vo
Gallery Technicians:	Nicci Bedson Corrigan Fairbairn Paul Greedy David Langosch James Lesjak-Atton Jack Poppert Willa Pratt Thomas Sandberg Brendan Van Hek Jamie Manweiler
Conservation:	Tegan Anthes



Campbelltown Arts Centre
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Open daily, 10am - 4pm
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C-A-C.com.au



PACKER FAMILY
FOUNDATION



Located on Dharawal land, Campbelltown Arts Centre is proudly owned by the people of Campbelltown and is a cultural facility of Campbelltown City Council. Campbelltown Arts Centre is assisted by the NSW Government through Create NSW and also receives support from the Packer Family Foundation and the Neilson Foundation.