



THE VISITORS

Franca Barraclough

Darwin, June 2022

Moree, August 2022

Collie, December 2022

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The Visitors

Created over three years, this powerfully evocative exhibition grapples with the conundrum that living in the desert throws into high relief, but that is also in play across the nation, referred to by artist Franca Barraclough as the "dancing duality" of living on Country.

"There is a push and pull of feeling deeply connected to a place, but knowing that you are also a visitor", Barraclough explains as to how this daily lived friction sparked her thought provoking body of work.

In a series of billboard style photographs and multimedia installations, Barraclough draws upon discarded domestic objects, characters from counter cultures and environmental warriors to visually interpret the impact and influence of settler culture on contemporary desert life.

In works such as *The Biggest Buffel Bust Ever!* for example, she examines the destruction caused by invasive species, both plants and feral animals, to the rich deserts' ecosystem. Her urgent message is not without a sense of humour and loving nod to the creative arts community of her home town, Alice Springs, however. For the Audio Visual piece titled *Go Feral*, Franca motivated a collective of free spirited individuals to don masks of the feral animal species currently listed in Central Australia and pose on a desert dune in the blazing sun.

For *The Domestic Universe* Barraclough arranges non-biodegradable waste, from pepper shakers to whitegoods, in a spiral formation, and despite the aesthetic beauty of the piece, we can't look past the jarring relationship between land, and landfill.

Each photograph in the exhibition is a 'happening', and the resulting body of work fuelled by deep collaboration and support from the greater Alice Springs/Mparntwe community.

"Heartfelt and honest, The Visitors is at once an inventory of intrusion and a visual ode to Country, says Shay Vigona, CEO of Artback NT "Artback NT's vision is to expand the Australian narrative by sharing Northern Territory stories with a wide audience, and through this magnificent series of works, Franca manages to relay a deeply personal experience that is universally understood. I am thrilled that Artback NT is able to present Franca Barraclough's work to a national audience."

The Visitors national tour officially launches on Thursday 9 June, at 6pm at The Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (NCCA) who are *"honoured to be hosting Franca Barraclough's premier Darwin solo exhibition."* Says NCCA Director Petrit Abazi, *"Barraclough has a sharp eye, a witty sense of humour and a unique and sensitive aesthetic approach that deals with important environmental, political and social dilemmas. A true multi-disciplinary artist, the exhibition demonstrates Barraclough's fluency in large-scale photography, collage, performance and sculpture. It's going to be an absolute delight".*

The Visitors Itinerary

Opening Night | 9 June, 6pm | Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (NCCA), Darwin

10 June – 23 July | Northern Centre for Contemporary Art (NCCA), Darwin NT

20 August – 8 October | Bank Art Museum in Moree, NSW

17 December – 22 January 2023 | Collie Art Gallery in WA

“Reflective of specific places and experiences the exhibition has struck a deep social chord that resonates but its thought-provoking perspective operates on an equally universal level. 'The Visitors' is about taking stock of the social and environmental impacts of settlement and, hopefully, about becoming more accountable. This has a local, regional and national relevance while also speaking to global environmental and cultural issues”. Kieran Finnane, journalist and art critic

About the artist

Franca Barraclough has been actively and influentially engaged with the local arts community of Alice Springs for over twenty years. Her practice is marked by its diversity, with memorable achievements in performance, installation and photography, each medium overlapping the other, and drawing on the strength of previous explorations.

In recent years Barraclough has turned her hand to creating photographic imagery engaging, choreographing and co-opting a diverse range of local community members and fellow creatives, drawing participants into her collaborative projects with a sense of purpose amongst the joy of art making. While her work is often tinged with humour she is an artist that works with serious intent to comment on the world around, highlighting the idiosyncrasies, absurdities and profundities of human relationships to each other and to the environment.

Images

1. Franca Barraclough, Go Feral, 2019, audio visual, dimensions variable
2. Franca Barraclough, The Domestic Universe - Ground, 2018, digital print on archival paper

Contact

Media Enquiries | Anisha Angelroth | Communications Manager |
communications@artbacknt.com.au | +61 (0) 8 8941 1444 | 0439 948 717

