

1976

AUSTRALIA



DECORATED
BAOBAB NUT



DECORATED
BARK BASKET



Aboriginal
Life's pretty shitty
without a ...



DECORATED WEAPONS

PAINTED LOG COFFINS

DECORATED WEAPONS

KJ

A Soft Touch

Soraya Abidin

Anney Bounpraseuth

Andrew Chan

Paula do Prado

Mehwish Iqbal

Kait James

Yasbelle Kerkow

Haneen Mahmood Martin

Ema Shin

Siying Zhou

1 July - 13 August 2023



**4A Centre for
Contemporary
Asian Art**

List of works

Soraya Abidin, *Guardians of Wellbeing*, 2020, mixed Asian silks, Peranakan glass beads, vintage hemp, raffia, and Swiss straw, 39 x 80 cm. Courtesy the artist.

Anney Bounpraseuth, *The Garden of Life and Living*, 2023, donated and salvaged fabrics, fabric markers, cotton and polyester thread, rhinestones, plastic, and fringing, 300 cm x 427 cm. Commissioned by 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

Andrew Chan, *It's you, Miss 花 (Hua)*, 2023, mohair, alpaca, acrylic and polyester, 150 x 120 cm. Courtesy the artist.

Paula do Prado, *Lenge*, 2023, mixed media and fibre, 150 x 180 cm. Commissioned by 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art.

Mehwish Iqbal, *Sultanate*, 2022, etching, collagraph, silk screen, 24-karat silver leaf hand embroidery on paper, 220 x 125 cm. Courtesy the artist and Yavuz Gallery, Sydney.

Kait James, *Invaders, Game Over*, 2019, wool, cotton and acrylic paint on printed cotton, 46 x 73cm. Courtesy the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne.

Kait James, *Life's pretty shitty without a Treaty*, 2020, wool and cotton on printed cotton, 46 x 73cm. Courtesy the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne.

Kait James, *Lucky Country*, 2021, wool, cotton and felt on printed cotton, 46 x 73cm. Courtesy the artist and Neon Parc, Melbourne.

Yasbelle Kerkow, *Our inheritance*, 2019, voivoi (pandanus), 60 x 150cm. Courtesy the artist. This work was originally commissioned by Campbelltown Arts Centre for the Marama Dina exhibition on behalf of the Veiqia Project and was a finalist in the 2020 Churchie Emerging Art Prize.

Haneen Mahmood Martin, *1920s*, 2020/2023, inkjet print on fine art paper, 23.39 x 16.54cm. Courtesy the artist.

Haneen Mahmood Martin, *"Your English is So Good"*, 2020/2023, inkjet print on fine art paper, 23.39 x 16.54cm. Courtesy the artist.

Haneen Mahmood Martin, *Agar-agar*, 2020/2023, inkjet print on fine art paper, 23.39 x 16.54cm. Courtesy the artist.

Ema Shin, *Hearts of Absent Women*, 2021, cotton, linen, wool, glass, steel and embroidery, 62.5 x 42 x 15cm. Courtesy the artist.

Ema Shin, *Hearts of Absent Women #7*, 2021, cotton, linen, wool, glass, steel and embroidery, 22 x 15 x 15cm. Courtesy the artist.

Siying Zhou, *Untitled (Cheongsam-fly I)*, 2021, fabric, plaster, golden foil, fringe and MDF board, 25 x 19.5 x 0.9cm. Courtesy the artist.

Siying Zhou, *Untitled (Cheong-san flies II)*, found fabric, beads, golden foil, plaster, synthetic hair, 53 x 19.5 x 0.9cm. courtesy the artist.

Siying Zhou, *Untitled (a double sided flag)*, 2020, mixed fabric, horse hair, golden chain and sequins, 291.5 x 97cm. Courtesy the artist.

Patches

When I was a child, my mother used to sew us dresses from matching floral fabrics. In the photographs developed at this time, we stand together with our poses mirroring each other: her and her mini-me. My family left China in 1995, and I don't know what happened to these clothes and all the handmade shoes and garments my mother made for me. I like to imagine that they were passed along to another mother and child who, hand in hand, are wearing them now.

I am in a shopping mall, and I point out a dress in the shop window to my mother. It is a dress adorned with pleats, and visually striking in a way that my younger self adored. I had a strong sense of style even back then, as photos from this period prove. My mother tells me what she always says when I ask her: "I'll make you one at home." She never does though. Life gets too busy.

I started knitting in 2013 when I was living alone, and wanted a distraction from university. My mother had tried to teach me many times previously, unsuccessfully, how to knit and purl, but she soon grew frustrated with my dropped stitches. Anticipating snow that winter, I watched YouTube videos until the movements made sense. My first completed scarf I finished that winter was made in thick unspun wool in a shocking pink. It never snowed that year.

I'm due to fly home, and my mother messages me on WhatsApp asking for yarn in her favourite colour, green. It's not that she can't get her own crafting materials, it's that she prefers I provide it for her. In the 33 years I've been her daughter, she has always been my crafting hero. People tell me that I am an impressive knitter, but I pale in comparison to her. Whereas I prefer to meticulously follow patterns, never straying too far from instructions, my mother is an adventurous maker – with the ability to turn ideas in her head into a soft dimensional form. She often remarks to me that I'm the 'artistic' one in my family, but I wonder if this is not a title that belongs to her instead.

A Soft Touch is an exhibition that has been guided by my deep appreciation for textile practice and labour, and the way that artists use thread, fabric, yarn, and repurposed materials to create new meanings. What I love about textiles is how closely connected it is to our everyday life and experience, while also reflecting shared histories and cultures. By piecing together disparate stories within the context of this exhibition, I wanted to bring together a group of artists whose works challenge Eurocentric art historical narratives and traditions of textiles – a space where this work is often underappreciated or undervalued.

A Soft Touch is curated by Sophia Cai.

4a.com.au/exhibitions/a-soft-touch