



# MOMENTUM | Collection

**TITLE OF WORK:** Paradise Falls I

**ARTIST:** Kate McMillan

**YEAR PRODUCED:** 2011/12

**MEDIUM:** HD Digital Film

**DURATION:** 2 min 49 sec

**EDITIONS:** 1/3

*Paradise Falls* is the philosophical culmination of the time McMillan spent in Switzerland in 2011 as well as her ongoing PhD project into the forgetting of the history of Wadjemup/Rottneest Island, Western Australia. This significant body of work highlights a shift in her practice, evidenced by a dark and moody palette and the combination of figurative and abstract works that set up an interplay between landscape, memory, forgetting and history. Working across a diverse range of mediums including painting, collage, photography, film and sculpture, this exhibition examines the complex and sustaining residue of these overarching themes. The works cover a range of specific landscapes including Wadjemup/Rottneest Island, the Black Forest in Germany and the winter landscapes of Switzerland. With a focus on island sites and places that exist in isolation, the works attempt to draw parallels between physical landscapes and the psychological landscapes of the artist's own memories, broader cultural histories and stories. In more abstract works, including large-scale paintings on Belgian linen, the island becomes a void space, dark and abyss-like. The island is clearly something bigger and deeper than merely a geographical location. These spaces are often things we try to forget, things we carry around inside us; memories and holes for things that are lost. The paper collage works entitled *Holes* further evidence this idea. In fact these works mark a pivotal moment in McMillan's practice whereby the islands become a kind of absence rather than a geographical presence. By demarcating this empty place, the artworks pay homage to a kind of un-forgetting. The painted works respond psychologically and aesthetically to the photographic series' included in the exhibition. Mountaintops fade away behind heavy fog and forests emerge from the tops of clouds. They are both beautiful and disturbing, and it is often this interplay that makes McMillan's work so compelling. We are seduced by these landscapes, temporarily overlooking what these dark atmospheres might conceal. The veiled sculptures, mirroring themselves, provide yet another layer through which to view the work. Titled *Shadows*, these works are comprised of a highly complex fabric which is literally used as the undergarment in Nun's habits. The translucency of the material in these poetic sculptures allows the possibility of viewing them together with other works. The beauty and burden of European history is never far away in McMillan's re-understanding of contemporary Australian culture. In figurative pieces such as the two films entitled *Paradise Falls I* and *Paradise Falls II*, the



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conceptual references draw from specific histories of place. *Paradise Falls I* traces a ghost-like woman as she appears and disappears around the shoreline of a glacial lake in the Black Forest. The film responds to local mythology of a beautiful but evil siren that lures men into the forest and kills them.

**TITLE OF WORK:** Paradise Falls II

**ARTIST:** Kate McMillan

**YEAR PRODUCED:** 2011/12

**MEDIUM:** HD Digital Film

**DURATION:** 3 min 28 sec

**EDITIONS:** 1/3

*Paradise Falls II* follows a man as he rows towards the silhouette of a craggy island off the coast of Wadjemup/Rottnest. He too appears and disappears from sight, finally lost to the inky black of the ocean. These characters are stand-ins for fractured and partial histories that disappear from focus, yet continue in our collective psyche as dark and haunting traumas. The films are like moving paintings, heavily referencing the romantic tradition of Germanic landscape painting. Unsurprisingly then the work of artists such as Arnold Böcklin (1827-1901) and Casper David Friedrich (1774-1840) become distant cousins to McMillan's oeuvre. The artist acknowledges and even embraces these quotations but she also holds them in a critical eye as part of an enlightenment ideology that has helped us to forget. Through engaging with the viewing process we participate in a re-remembering, acknowledging the shady edges of things, but also baring witness to the beauty of sadness that is contrary to the horrors of forgetting history. Whilst the history of Wadjemup/Rottnest Island is a core component of what drives this body of work, it can also be viewed more broadly as a reading on landscape and memory. Together, the work in *Paradise Falls* become part of a sunny disquiet that is so central to McMillan's ongoing thesis.

## **ARTIST'S CV**

Kate McMillan has exhibited throughout Australia and overseas since 1997. In 2013 she relocated to London from Australia, where she has spent much of her life, to undertake a number of projects, which include the filming of four ambitious new works funded in part by one of two Creative Development Fellowships awarded annually across all artforms by the Department for Culture and the Arts, Western Australia. The work will be presented by Performance Space, Australia in Sydney, Tasmania and the United Kingdom in 2014 and will include a major monograph on McMillan's practice.

In February-May 2014 she will undertake a residency awarded by the Australia Council at the renowned London ACME studios.

Kate undertook a six month residency in Basel, Switzerland as a guest of the Christoph Merian Stiftung from July 2011 until December 2011. In June 2012 she presented a major solo exhibition with Venn Gallery in Perth that showcased work from her Residency in Switzerland including two important film works.

Notable exhibitions include a major commission for the 2010 Biennale of Sydney, curated by David Elliott. She has also just completed a significant photographic commission for KPMG. In May 2011 McMillan installed a major Public Artwork for the City of Joondalup at Seacrest Community Sporting Facility. Over this time she also undertook an IASKA Spaced Residency Program in Leonora, Western Australia from March until July 2011, which included working with Asylum Seekers at the Leonora Detention Centre and a photographic project that documented lonely graves scattered throughout the desert. This work was presented at the Fremantle Arts Centre in January 2012 as part of the Perth International Arts Festival and is now part of an Australian National Touring exhibition until 2014.

McMillan is a Phd candidate at Curtin University under the supervision of Dr Anna Haebich (author of Broken Circles: Fragmenting Indigenous Families 1800-2000). She has been funded by an Australian Postgraduate Award to complete her Phd which examines the forgetting of the history of Wadjemup/Rottnest Island. She currently holds an Academic Post with Open University, Australia.

Previous solo exhibitions include Lost at the John Curtin Gallery in 2008, Broken Ground in 2006 at Margaret Moore Contemporary Art and Disaster Narratives at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts for the 2004 Perth International Arts Festival. She has been included in various group exhibitions over the last few years including at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Gertrude Street Contemporary Art in Melbourne, Govett Brewster Art Gallery in New Zealand and the Australian Centre for Photography in Sydney.



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Since 2002 she has undertaken residencies in Tokyo, Switzerland, Berlin, Sydney, China and Hong Kong. McMillan has been the recipient of numerous grants including more recently a 2011 New Work Grant from the Australia Council, which she also received in 2009. In 2008 she was awarded a Mid-Career Fellowship from the Western Australian Department of Culture and the Arts. She has resided on the Board of the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA), National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) based in Sydney and has worked as a Peer and an Advisor for the Australia Council for the Arts. Her work is held in the collections of Art Gallery of Western Australia, City of Perth, Curtin University, City of Joondalup, Wesfarmers, KPMG, Christoph Merian Foundation, Australian Capital Equity and the University of Western Australia as well as various National and International private collections.

She is represented by Venn Gallery, Perth.

## EDUCATION

- 2011 Phd Candidate,**  
Curtin University, Perth, supervised by Dr Anna Haebich
- 1999 Masters in Creative Arts (by research),**  
Curtin University, Perth
- 1997 Honours (First Class) Fine Arts,**  
Curtin University, Perth
- 1994 Bachelor of Arts, Fine Arts,**  
Curtin University, Perth

## UPCOMING

- 2014 The Moment of Disappearance** (solo exhibition),  
Performance Space, Sydney
- Australia Council Studio at ACME Studios** (residency)  
East London, United Kingdom
- The Moment of Disappearance** (commission)  
Performance Space, Sydney



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## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

**2013 In The Shadow Of The Past, This World Knots Tight**

Venn Gallery, Perth

**2012 Paradise Falls**

Venn Gallery, Perth

**2008 lost**

John Curtin Gallery, Perth

**2005 Broken Ground**

Margaret Moore Contemporary Art, Perth

**2004 New Work**

Frontstore Gallery, Basel, Switzerland

**Disaster Narratives**

presented as part of Perth International Arts Festival,  
Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA), Perth

**2001 Undercover**

Fremantle Arts Centre, Fremantle

**Sacrificial Economy**

Verge Gallery, Perth

**2000 Hedge**

Rubyayre Gallery, Sydney

**Ambiguous Objectives**

Perth Institute of Contemporary Art (PICA), Perth

**1999 New Work**

Verge Gallery, Perth

**1998 New Work**

Verge Gallery, Perth

**1997 New Work**

Arthouse Gallery, Perth



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## SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

**2013 A heap of broken images (Arts Proper)**

Assemblage, Sydney

**2012 Joondalup Invitation Art Award (winner)**

Lakeside Joondalup Shopping Centre, Perth

**2011 Sixth Sense: Contemporary Photography in Western Australia**

presented as part of Fotofreo, Gallery Central, Perth

**Spaced: Art Out of Place**

presented by IASKA, Fremantle Arts Centre,  
Perth International Arts Festival (currently touring Nationally)

**2010 Biennale of Sydney**

curated by David Elliott, Sydney

**2009-10 Built**

curated by Jenepher Duncan,  
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

**2008 Silver: 25 years of Artrage**

PICA, Perth

**2006 If you leave me can I come too?**

curated by Bec Dean, Australian Centre for Photography, Sydney

**2005 I have seen some strange places**

Gertrude Contemporary Art Space, curated by Jeff Khan, Melbourne

**2004 Regionale 5**

Kunsthaus Baselland, curated by Sabine Schaschl, Basel, Switzerland

**2003 Mixtape**

curated by Dr Robert Cook and Jenepher Duncan,  
Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth

**Wild Frontier**

Downtown, Adelaide



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## **Flux: Uncertain States**

curated by John Barrett-Lennard, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Perth

## **2002 Neo Geo**

curated by Suellyn Lockett, John Curtin Gallery, Perth

## **Moving Collection**

curated by Roger McDonald, Govett Brewster Gallery, New Zealand  
& AIT Tokyo, Japan

## **Urban Anxiety**

Artrage Festival, Perth, touring to 1aspace, Hong Kong

## **2001 Loop**

Moore's Building, curated by Michelle Siciliano, Fremantle, Australia

## **do it**

curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Sophie O'Brien and Dr Robert Cook,  
presented as part of Perth International Arts Festival,  
Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery, Perth

## **Sacrificial economy**

Fremantle Arts Centre, Perth

## **2000 Nightswimming**

curated by Dr Robert Cook,  
presented as part of Perth International Arts Festival, Craftwest, Perth

## **1999 Re:body**

Fremantle Arts Centre, Perth

## **RESIDENCIES**

### **2011 Artsource/Christoph Merian Stiftung**

six-month residency, Basel, Switzerland

### **IASKA, Spaced residency**

Leonora, WA

### **2010 Marrickville Council residency**

Sydney



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**2003 One-month self funded research**

Berlin, Germany

**Red Gate Gallery Studio**

Beijing, China

**2002 Australia Council Studio**

Tokyo, Japan

## COMMISSIONS

**2011 Kambarang**

Seacrest Public Art Commission, City of Joondalup

**2010 Ver non simper viret**

KMPG

**2009 Whispering Hills**

Private Commission, Perth

## BOARD APPOINTMENTS

**2000-08 Industry Advisor/ Peer Assessor**

for Australia Council for the Arts and NAVA

**2005-08 Director on the Board**

National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA)

**2000-05 Director on the Board**

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts

**1997-11 Chair, Verge Inc**

Artist Run Initiative

## SELECTED AWARDS & GRANTS

**2013 Creative Development Fellowship**

Department for Culture and the Arts





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- 2012 Overall Acquisitive Award**  
Joondalup Invitation Art Award
- 2011 Australian Postgraduate Award**  
with Stipends (to undertake Phd)
- 2009-11 Established Artist New Work Grant**  
Australia Council for the Arts
- 2010 Project Grant**  
Department for Culture and the Arts
- 2008 Mid-Career Creative Development Fellowship**  
Department for Culture and the Arts
- 1998 Australian Postgraduate**  
Award with Stipends (to undertake Masters Degree)

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sheridan Coleman,  
**In the shadow of the past, this world knots tight,**  
Artlink Vol 33 no 2 2013

Darren Jorgensen,  
**Paradise Falls,**  
The West Australian, June 2012

Nicola Harvey,  
**Spaced: Art out of place,**  
Frieze, Issue 147, May 2012

Sarah Miller,  
**The Artist-in-residence: beyond just being there,**  
Realtime 108, April 2012

Melissa Ratliff,  
**Islands of Incarceration,**  
catalogue essay for 2010 Biennale of Sydney, 2010



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Adam Fulton and Caris Bizzaca,  
**WA artist shows wares in Sydney,**  
The West Australian, May 2010

David Elliott,  
**catalogue essay for 2010 Biennale of Sydney,** 2010

Geraldine Barlow,  
**catalogue essay for lost,** 2008

Ric Spencer,  
**Images of lost meaning,**  
The West of Australian, November 2008

Bec Dean,  
**catalogue essay for Broken Ground,** 2005

Les Walking,  
**The craft of photography in the age of digital reproduction,**  
Artlink, Vol 25 no 1, 2005

Dr Ian McLean,  
**catalogue essay for Disaster Narratives,** 2004

Simon Blond,  
**Hopeful disasters,**  
The West Australian, February 2004

Dr Robert Cook,  
**catalogue essay for Mixtape,** 2003

Nyanda Smith,  
**Wilder shores of fancy,**  
The West Australian, August 2003

## SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Art Gallery of Western Australia  
University of Western Australia  
Christoph Merian Foundation, Basel



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City of Joondalup

City of Perth

Curtin University Art Collection

Kerry Stokes Collection

KPMG

Murdoch University Art Collection

Wesfarmers

Momentum, Berlin