

# Handle With Care



Kathy Allam  
Lisa Dymond  
Angela McHarrie  
Karen Millar  
Pascal Proteau  
Helen Seiver  
Sarah Wilkinson

**Heathcote Museum & Gallery**  
**22 August to 27 September 2015**

# Handle With Care

The binary opposition, fragility and strength is at the heart of the exhibition, Handle with Care. Through various mediums and approaches, seven artists explore the complex nature of existence.

Fragility is an interesting notion in both life and art. It can communicate delicacy of being or structure, lightness and subtlety. At the other end of the scale, strength can be seen as the power of control, sturdiness and tenacity in the face of adversity. Fragility and strength are not, however, absolute unto themselves. There is that which may appear delicate, but which has an inner unseen strength and that with an unyielding exterior which protects a brittle centre.

Using both robust and delicate materials, the artists in this exhibition examine the notion and intersection of fragility and strength. In doing so, they provide a thought provoking and engaging meditation on the contradictory essence of being.

Karen Millar's installation, comprised of delicate porcelain forms, references the seventy six patients who resided at the Point Heathcote Reception Home in the 1920's. It represents a communal existence and yet each object is contained within another form, expressing a sense of isolation, solitude and separation. This use of oppositions is also evident in Karen's small sculptures using porcelain and found materials, which illustrate the dichotomy between fragile and strong.

A similar approach is taken by Angela McHarrie who explores the notion of containment through both sculptures and drawings. Her examination of boundaries and the intersection of interior and exterior, results in forms which are pierced by linear constructs that are open, but produce boundaries of their own.

Linearity features strongly in the work of Helen Seiver who uses steel and transforms it into seemingly delicate works, which take their inspiration from the native Western Australian Banksia trees. This combination of form and materiality provokes the viewer to consider the inherent strength and tenacity of the Banksia in the face of urban sprawl and disease.

Transformation is also at the centre of Kathy Allam's works, which push the artistic and material limits of plastic drink bottles, as she repurposes and revalues them as objects of art. The material's lightness and translucency, but inherent strength, inspires her material investigations and results in works which transform detritus from the mundane into the extraordinary.

Lisa Dymond's work speaks of the fragility of the ageing human body, its form and its contributions. Her installation "Fading" uses metronomes as a metaphor for the aging body. As decades pass, the form slowly wastes and collapses, the central rhythm becomes shallow and rapid, and energy levels fade until frailty and failure become its final destination. A similar concern with the effects of aging is also evident in "The Gift" where paper boxes reference the human gift of "service to others". With advancing age, this gift transitions from voluminous and strong to small and feeble, until finally human contribution collapses and this gift resembles something we might choose to discard.

The instability of the human condition also influences Pascal Proteau whose works present symbols of mental and emotional health. As in life, the strength of an object can be weakened to the point of breaking when it is exposed to an uncondusive environment or subjected to external forces.

Sarah Wilkinson focuses on the planet and how we, the current human custodians, are responding to the extreme climate changes taking place across the world. She adapts and explores theatrical illusion techniques in her works to raise the question, "Will rain only be a memory to future generations passed on through stories and machines?"

Along with all the artists in this exhibition Sarah draws attention to the vulnerability of being. Fragility and strength are extremes of existence; the ultimate paradox, but while opposites in concept, they remain perfectly interlocked with each other and fundamentally require us to Handle with Care.

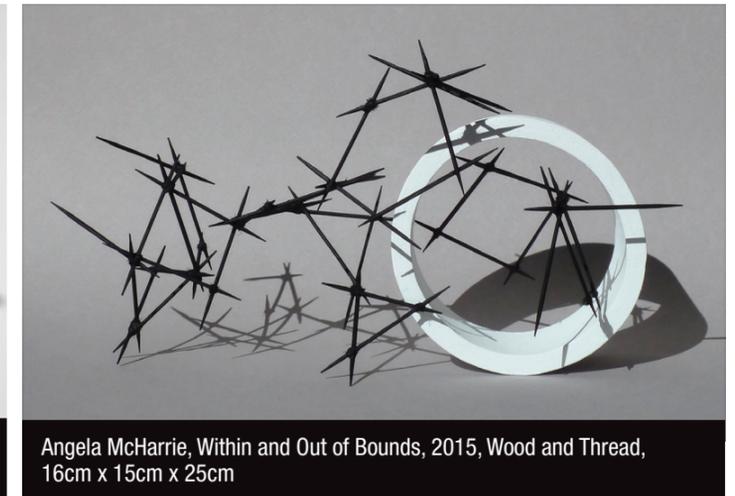
**Starting Points:** Join the artists in a workshop and conversation sharing their creative approaches to starting new works. The workshops will use materials, ideas and techniques to transform new concepts into objects. Friday, 4 September, 11am to 2pm. Bring your materials and treasured fragments.

ISBN: 978-0-9925632-8-8

Front image: Karen Miller, *Fragility*, Porcelain on Rusted Metal Surface, 20cm x 20cm x 20cm. Photo: Pascal Proteau.



Pascal Proteau, *Untitled*, 2015, Charred Jarrah and Found Object, 8cm x 9cm x 17cm



Angela McHarrie, *Within and Out of Bounds*, 2015, Wood and Thread, 16cm x 15cm x 25cm



Lisa Dymond, *Fading*, 2015, Plywood, aluminium, electric components, 50cm H x 24cmW x 28cm



Kathy Allam, *Untitled*, 2014, Plastic, 30cm x 60cm x 40cm



Sarah Wilkinson, *Future Rains Take Action*, 2015, Kinetic Sound Sculpture, 55cm x 30cm x 35cm



Karen Miller, *The Insiders*, 2015, Porcelain, Installation Size Variable



Helen Seiver, *Inflorescence III*, 2015, Steel and Epoxy Paint, 170cm x 75cm x 75cm