

DESTINY

NGV Australia | 27 March – 9 August 2020 | Free entry



Destiny Deacon, one of Australia's boldest and most acclaimed contemporary artists, will be celebrated in her largest retrospective to date opening at the National Gallery of Victoria in March 2020.

DESTINY will mark Deacon's first solo show in over 15 years, featuring more than 100 multi-disciplinary works made over a 30-year period, and including the premiere of newly-commissioned works created with the artist and her long-term collaborator Virginia Fraser. The exhibition will also feature a number of early video works created with the late Wiradjuri/Kamilaroi photographer Michael Riley and West Australian performance artist Erin Hefferon.

A descendant of the Kuku and Erub/Mer people from Far North Queensland and Torres Strait, Deacon is internationally known for a body of work depicting her darkly comic, idiosyncratic world view. Offering a nuanced, thoughtful and, at times, intensely funny snapshot of contemporary Australian life, Deacon reminds us that art can have both pathos and humour.

Melbourne-based, Deacon works across photography, video, sculpture and installation to explore dichotomies such as childhood and adulthood, comedy and tragedy, and theft and reclamation. Her chaotic worlds, where disgraced dolls play out sinister scenes for audience amusement, subvert cultural phenomena to reflect and parody the environments around us.

Featuring early videos which mock negative stereotypes of Aboriginal Australians - *Home video* 1987, *Welcome to my Koori world* 1992, *I don't wanna be a bludger* 1999 - the exhibition will also feature an installation of a lounge room housing Deacon's own collection of 'Koori kitsch'. Deacon and Fraser's highly acclaimed installation *Colourblinded* 2005 will also be on display. A powerful combination of photographs, sculptures, and video projections, this interactive work leaves the viewer both literally and metaphorically 'colourblinded'.

"Featuring new NGV commissions and some of the highlights of Deacon's 30-year career, the retrospective *DESTINY* pays tribute to an artist who has been challenging audiences for more than 30 years," said Tony Ellwood AM, Director, National Gallery of Victoria.

"Destiny Deacon has never shied away from confronting our country's difficult history and her work continues to make a vital contribution to Australian cultural discourse," said Ellwood.

Featured in numerous group presentations, Deacon's work has been included in major international exhibitions such as Documenta 11 and Kassell, 2002. In 2004, the major survey *Destiny Deacon: Walk and don't Look blak* was presented by the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, before touring Australia, Japan, New Caledonia and New Zealand.



MEDIA RELEASE

NATIONAL GALLERY OF VICTORIA

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Born in Maryborough, Queensland, Deacon studied politics and education before going on to work as a teacher and then a staff trainer for Aboriginal activist Dr Charles Perkins AO. Compelled by her desire to express herself and her political beliefs, Deacon turned to photography in her 30s and began making videos featuring a number of well-known people from the Melbourne Koori community.

An exhibition catalogue featuring contributions by all-Indigenous authors, including Hetti Perkins, Claire G Coleman, Brenda L Croft, Brook Andrew, Tony Albert, Richard Bell, and more, will be published by the NGV to coincide with the opening of *DESTINY*.

The exhibition will also feature as part of the inaugural PHOTO 2020 festival.

DESTINY will be on display at NGV Australia from 27 March – 9 August 2020. Admission to the exhibition is free. Further information is available via the NGV website

<https://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/exhibition/destiny/>

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IMAGE CAPTION

Destiny Deacon

Kuku/Erub/Mer born 1957

Smile 2017, printed 2019 Melbourne

lightjet photograph from Polaroid photograph

80.0 × 100.0 cm (image)

Courtesy of the artist

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