

# A

Artlink

Fashion.  
Performance.  
Industry.

# R

CONTEMPORARY ART  
OF AUSTRALIA & ASIA-PACIFIC  
Issue 4:1:1 | April 2021  
AUS \$20

ISSN 0727-1234  
9 770727 123009  
01



# T

# Artlink



Cover image:

**Alba Stephen and Rachel Buckeridge**

*Circumnavigate Kandos* "Fried Egg Dress", 2019

Model: David Ryan. Photo: Ian Hobbs. Image courtesy of Rachel Buckeridge. Disclaimer: The cover image for this issue of Artlink was selected by the magazine. Guest editor, author and Kandos host of *From the Clothes Rack to the Wearer: Circumnavigate Kandos*, Ann Finegan did not take part in this decision.

Artlink is a themed magazine on contemporary art and culture from Australia and the Asia-Pacific. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or publisher. Artlink has peer review status as an independent journal for critical writing on the contemporary visual arts in compliance with the Australian Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC) specifications and is listed on the Australian Research Council ERA 2012 journal list.

© No part of this publication may be reprinted or electronically reproduced without permission.

Artlink Australia is a non-profit company limited by guarantee.  
ABN 490 632 261 39  
ISSN: 0727-1239

**Fashion. Performance. Industry. 41:1 | April 2021**

**Guest Editor** Ann Finegan

**General Manager** Megan Rainey

**Advertising & Communications** Matthew Hill

**Bookkeeper** Amanda Macri

**Creative Director (Pro Bono)** Marita Leuver, Leuver Design

**Designer** Kimberley Baker, Flux Visual Communication

**Copyeditor** Barry Patton

**Image sourcing & support** Lisa Slade and Art Gallery of South Australia team

**Website development** Isaac Foreman and Tom Crisp, Triplezero

**Printing & Prepress** Newstyle Printing, Adelaide



**Artlink Australia**

PO Box 182, Fullarton SA 5063

Phone: +61 (0)8 8271 6228

artlink.com.au

info@artlink.com.au

advertising@artlink.com.au

subscriptions@artlink.com.au

**Board of Directors**

Lisa Slade (Chair), Ali Gumillya Baker, Marc Bowyer, Jessica Coppe, Bill Morrow, Jackie Wurm

Artlink acknowledges the law, customs and culture of Kurna People, the traditional owners of Tarndanyangga Adelaide, and extends this respect to all First Nations peoples.

For sales, stockist or subscription enquiries, phone 08 8271 6228 or email [subscriptions@artlink.com.au](mailto:subscriptions@artlink.com.au).

Distribution through newsagents via Ovato Retail Distribution Australia and to galleries and museum bookstores by Artlink Australia.

All reasonable endeavour has been made to locate the owners of copyright material appearing in Artlink's print and digital editions. Should anyone become aware that Artlink has used material without permission, please contact us.

Artlink is generously supported by the Visual Arts and Craft Strategy, an initiative of the Australian, State and Territory Governments. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body; the Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund – an Australian Government initiative, and the Government of South Australia.

Artlink is also supported by Creative Partnerships Australia through Plus1. Thank you to our BIG FOUR O + 1 donors.

Three issue per annum  
delivered to your door  
April, August, December  
from \$55.

Sign up to our newsletter to  
receive call-outs for future  
issues, the latest reviews and  
featured content online.

[artlink.com.au](http://artlink.com.au)



creative  
partnerships  
australia

# Issue 41:1\_\_April 2021\_\_

## Fashion. Performance. Industry.



08\_\_ Editorial

12\_\_ What is Transorientalism?

**Adam Geczy**

24\_\_ Walkabout style:

Dreams and visions of Indigenous fashion

**Tristen Harwood**

30\_\_ #IMadeMyClothes:

The Ethics and Practices of

Home Dressmaking

**Madeleine C. Seys**

34\_\_ Green Plastics – Blue Ocean:

The future of biopolymer plastics and textiles

**Niki Sperou**

40\_\_ The Mangkaja x Gorman Collection:

A new wave of Indigenous art and

fashion collaboration

**Belinda Cook**

48\_\_ Melanie Jame Wolf's Pop-Cultural Drag:

The Chronopolitics of Labour,

Libido and Image

**Daniel Mudie Cunningham**

56\_\_ Sarah Rodigari:

Redressing the vernacular

**Abigail Moncrieff**

62\_\_ From the clothes rack to the body of the wearer:

Circumnavigate Kandos in our clothes

**Ann Finegan**

68\_\_ On art, fashion, purpose and more

**Peggy Griffiths-Madij and Jan Griffiths**

**in conversation with Alana Hunt**

74\_\_ Cigdem Aydemir: Like a Prayer

**Sumaiya Muyeen**

80\_\_ Michaela Stark: On Control and Beauty

**Alison Kubler**

84\_\_ Apprehending the Multiverse:

A Costumed Allegory for Four Percussionists

Michaela Gleave's Cosmic Time

**Ann Finegan**

91\_\_ **Reviews**



More reviews and  
online archive at  
[artlink.com.au](http://artlink.com.au)

# Apprehending the Multiverse: A Costumed Allegory for Four Percussionists Michaela Gleave's Cosmic Time

Ann Finegan

Opposite:  
**Michaela Gleave**  
*Cosmic Time*, 2021  
Costumes by Katy B Plummer  
Photo: Silversalt Photography

Across multiple media, including billboard proclamations aimed at the stars, Michaela Gleave has been communicating with the cosmos for more than a decade. Something of a weather god in her earlier projects, she traded in atmospheric phenomena of rain, snow and clouds. For *Cloud Field* (2007), she appeared to have conjured clouds from the sky and enclosed them in the gallery so that visitors could walk among them. Using ultrasonic misting units and harvested rainfall, she had made real cloud. A drift of snow appeared on the harbourside lawns of the MCA when snow fell for six hours at Circular Quay in *Snowfield* (2009). The caption read: dimensions variable, cinematic snow, snow machines, plywood and wind. Notice the agency of the wind—a natural collaborator.

It's just a whiff of the breeze, but already you catch the scent of the decentring of the human within the complex systems that maintain and perpetuate the conditions of life on the planet. And, in this, a hint of the galactic and cosmic scales of the projects that were to follow.

Taken collectively, these early works are a prelude—like a series of building blocks towards deeper understandings. Technically accomplished in their simulations of natural phenomena, they inspire a contradictory poetical awe. Like the scene at the father's house in Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, she creates the wonder of interior rain (*Raining Room*, MCA 2009) all the while making sure her captions reveal the trick—no secrets here.

Running in parallel, another set of projects more specifically engages with conceptions of the universe.

These include messaging the stars through choral performance (*A Galaxy of Suns*, 2016), illuminated billboards (*We Are Made of Stardust*, 2016–18) and firework bursts into the night sky (*I Will Bring You the Stars*, 2010; *It Was Never meant To Last [BIG TIME LOVE]*, 2011). Incoming stellar data form the basis of multiple versions of *The World Arrives By Night*, 2014. In 2015 she wall-mounted two large star graphs,  $1961.04.12\ 45.9650^{\circ}N, 63.3050^{\circ}E$  (*Gagarin*) and  $1977.09.05\ 28.2920^{\circ}N, 80.3440W^{\circ}$  (*Voyager 1*), which accurately correlated the positions of the stars with the exact sites and departure times on earth when Yuri Gagarin launched to become the first human to enter outer space and when Voyager 1 the first human-made object to leave the solar system. Her caption described these events as “two moments in history that changed humanity's relationship to our surroundings forever”.<sup>1</sup>

By far the grandest and most ambitious in conception, yet paradoxically the smallest in visual scale, was *Model for the End of the Universe (1–4)*, 2012, in which a modest series of diagrams condensed four “End of the Universe” scenarios—Circular motion/Big Crunch, Big Freeze/Heat Death, Multiverse/False Vacuum and Singularity/Big Rip—to the dimension of four abstract A3 framed prints. In inverse ratio, the more the conceptual frame expanded, the further the work shrank visually. However, in actuality the diagrams were “scores” that, when activated by composer Vicky Hallett, radically expanded the scale of the work. How far does music travel? Music as an unbounded medium extends as far as its sound waves will



**Michaela Gleave**

*A Galaxy of Suns*, 2018

Created in collaboration with Amanda Cole and Warren Armstrong

36-part choral performance, smart phone app, lighting program

Presented as part of ANAT SPECTRA Art + Science 2018

Photo: Sia Duff

[agalaxyofsuns.net](http://agalaxyofsuns.net)



reach. The caption could equally read as a set of descriptors of sound signatures: “Reduced to a series of four diagrams the universe loops in on itself, implodes, reaches stasis, or bursts into multiples that spiral off into eternity.”

*Cosmic Time* is Gleave’s most recent project. Created for TarraWarra Biennial 2021: *Slow Moving Waters*, this performance for four costumed percussionists represents the culmination of a decade of reflection on the cosmos from multiple perspectives. Billed as a sonic journey “into the depths of existence at the scale of cosmological time”, *Cosmic Time* is breathtaking in its imaginary scale, promising the audience a journey into the history of matter and time. Her website offers a series of prompts of what to expect: a performance of overlapping musical scores, based on different modalities of time, as performed by a cast of musicians dressed as spirits of the multiverse. “Playing metallic percussion instruments, the performers evoke sensations and rhythms scaling from the fall-out of the big bang; the endless circling of planetary forms; the fluttering heartbeats of desert mice; and the dissolve of consciousness into the astral plane.”

Allegory is a new element of her practice. Dressing her musicians as spirits of the multiverse (a hypothetical group of parallel universes that comprises everything that exists: the entirety of space, time, matter, energy, information, and the physical laws and constants that describe them) is a bold mode of contemporary performance, with deep cultural resonance to the Renaissance masques that were also set to music.

For *Cosmic Time*, Gleave has developed her own unique set of allegorical figures—“the spirits of the multiverse”—in collaboration with artist and costume designer Katy B. Plummer. Effectively, they replace the scientific charts of star graphs and diagrams, according to a very specific rationale: “decentralising the hierarchy of knowledge away from Western science and logic, the project explores alternate forms of understanding, including cosmological, geological, biological, historical and cultural.”

Each allegorical figure was planned<sup>2</sup> as the visual equivalent of the musical ideas that were created during a residency at the Powerhouse Museum: “COSMIC TIME is informed by historic scientific and musical concepts such as orbital resonance and harmonic sequencing, and involves alternate, opposing, and intersecting rhythmic and metric schemas, skirting the peripheries of art, science, music and esotericism.” From this careful musical mapping, I understand that each of the eight scores in the performance will be distinguishable through an inimitable time signature developed from this research—a series of cosmic refrains that correspond to allegorical figures representative of various concepts of time; the exploded matter of the big bang condenses down through the planets, biology, and finally through to consciousness.

Within the restraint of a minimalist palette, each spirit wears a monochrome costume signalling a unified block of space-time. In this schematic, the linear time of big bang is expressed through a shiny explosion of silver foil. The costume representing the planetary is constructed from

papery Hazmat suiting, evoking the sound of swirling, cloud-like dreamscapes and non-linear time. For the cyclical time mode of the biological, black feathers cut from builders' plastic will be bulked on the shoulders and the rustling of their movements may possibly sound like little birds – or, as suggested on Gleave's website, the heartbeats of mice. Bird-like in its appearance, this costume signifies the emergence of life. The fourth costume, of floating loops of cream chiffon, is expressive of the time quality of "foaming" and evocative of the subatomic quantum scale.

What to expect from these anticipations of *Cosmic Time*? In her only other performance for costumed players, Gleave delivered the spectacular visuals of *A Galaxy of Suns*. Premiering outdoors under dark and brooding skies at Dark MoFo (2016), a 36-strong choir, draped in full-length silver Darth Vader capes, sung to a score based on mapping of the exact lines of contact between human beings on earth and the constellations overhead. Earth to star body. An ancient Druid power was evoked, largely through the timbres of the human voice. With performers spatially mapped across the venue to represent star locations across the galaxy, a specifically created app delivered microtonal sonic cues directly to the individual parts. Computer-calibrated to the location and "pitch" of each individual star, the slower-burning cooler red stars corresponded to the bass notes, while the faster-burning hot blue stars corresponded to the upper registers. With the star colours coded into the lighting system tracking the choristers as they sang their way across the sky, the use of costume was decisive

here. In the vastness of the work, inside the silver hooded capes of their mediating role, the humans disappeared into vibrating blocks of sonorous coloured matter. Thus eclipsed, the communication passed from earth to the stars.

Only one image is as yet available of the costumes that will clothe Gleave's multiverse in *Cosmic Time*. In silhouette against a fading sunset sky, two magnificently caped and feathered forms seemingly flex for flight as if preparing to soar.

1 All citations are from Michaela Gleave website, <https://michaelagleave.com/> 2 From a conversation with the artist, 4 February 2021.



**Ann Finegan is a writer and educator living in Sydney. From 1978 to 1980 she worked for Zandra Rhodes, London. She is a co-founder of Cementa Contemporary Art Festival.**

**Cosmic Time is scheduled for performance on 24 April 2021 at TarraWarra Biennial 2021: Slow Moving Waters, curated by Nina Mial. 27 March – 11 July 2021. Also included in the exhibition, Michaela Gleave, The World Arrives By Night (Star Printer).**



**Michaela Gleave**

*A Galaxy of Suns*, 2016

Created in collaboration with Amanda Cole and Warren Armstrong  
36-part choral performance, smart phone app, staging, lighting  
program and sound design

Presented as part of DARK MOFO 2016

Choir: The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Chorus

Photo: Lucy Parakhina, Geoff Gleave, Michaela Gleave  
agalaxyofsuns.net

