

Marian Tubbs

I don't sleep I just dream:
unrefined in high definition



*outta mai hair into a swim (dolphin sex)
local waters mostly* 2020
sublimation print on brushed gloss
aluminium
102 x 72 cm

Lismore Regional Gallery



11 Rural Street
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Open hours
Wednesday to Sunday, 10am – 4pm
Thursdays until 6pm
Closed on public holidays

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Lismore Regional Gallery is a creative initiative of the Lismore City Council supported by the New South Wales Government through Create NSW and the Friends of the Gallery. The Gallery acknowledges the Widjabul Wia-bal people of the Bundjalung Nation as the traditional owners of the land upon which the gallery stands. We pay respects to elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all First Nations cultures and their contributing connection to land, waters, community and the arts.

8 MAY –
9 AUGUST 2026

musings on the surface

Entering a gallery full of Marian Tubbs' work, one floats. Gravity, it seems, has left the building. This lack of gravity harks to space above and oceans below, anywhere but here. Tubbs' assemblages abound with heterarchical protagonists – coral, octopus, civic infrastructure, CGI forms, rubbish, vegetables, skeletal architectures – that dance or swim in manufactured landscapes and oscillate between a waterborne or airborne existence. These worlds within worlds straddle materialities from ephemeral silk to lenticular prints to video to paintings, defying a simple categorisation of practice. Tubbs' compositional weightlessness mimics the virtual world where nothing is tethered but rather exists primarily as an infinite series of abstract codes. Taking a macro view, Tubbs recalls that all existence is untethered, that we're floating on a ball with liquid at its core in a universe that has no end.

The surface as a boundary or a layer is muse for Tubbs. Far from accepting known limits, instead she looks for ways to transcend. Consider the relationship between the works *nervous systems* (video) and *Colour of the year* (oil on linen). Bridged by a portrayal of contemporary culture's obsession with fashion and jewellery, tangled with scenes of naïve resource extraction, the conflicted role of coral as an industrially robust material and highly sought after luxury good is revealed across the dimensions and textures of these two works. Or *suprasubliminal* (sculpture) and *subrasubliminals* (video), synced by a bronze CGI form turned bronze cast, materialising from the screen into the physical. Then there is Tubbs' 2020 monograph, which, like a flipbook, includes glossy page upon page of video stills that could each singularly imposter as one of her 2D assemblages. Dimensions are superfluous to Tubbs who flagrantly disregards conservative boundaries of different realms while challenging the limits of each: the virtual reveals as sculptural, videos are flattened in print, and collages become portals into mysterious worlds that breach the brick and mortar of wall substrates. The lenticular image, cheekily, unwaveringly, subverts the certainty of sight.

Tubbs is a forager. The environment, politics, culture; her broad range of interests coalesce in a practice that foregrounds the slipperiness between the real and the virtual. The title of this exhibition, *I don't sleep I just dream: unrefined in high definition*, is partly inspired by a line from the series *True Detective*, a crime show that mixes surrealist philosophical writing with gothic themes. Proudly made-up words mis-match language like a crude tetris stitched together by Tubbs in a process of meaning-making, a forensic dissection and reassembling to understand the whole.

That the ocean is a key trope in Tubbs' practice makes perfect sense: concealer of submarine fibre-optic, carrier of commodity, holder of ancestry and story, the ocean is mythical creator and a conduit for capitalist ruin. The opening stanza of Tubbs' favourite poem by Emily Dickinson provides an insight to this salty fascination –

I started Early – Took my Dog –

And visited the Sea –

The Mermaids in the Basement

Came out to look at me –

Tubbs also invites mermaids from dreams to the shores of consciousness, in doing so creating space to imagine endless sequences of life's molecules. In gifting this untethering, Tubbs liberates us all through her playfully discerning practice.

Ineke Dane, Curator

3
'Form is a weapon, it's something you can't argue with. / The thing can never be translated into knowledge of the thing. It is not words. / We fill pre-existing forms as when we fill them we change them and are changed. / Eyesores are oppositional, rather than a nice alternative. / Philosophy today is a super-workout for communicative energies capable of finding points of contact throughout the entire world. / Art materials have no spirit, and they cost money. / The savages of Cuba regarded gold as a fetish of the Spaniards. They celebrated a feast in its honour, sang in a circle around it, and then threw it into the sea. / You can't buy me. That is the whole point. To buy is to buy oneself off. You can't buy yourself off from me. You can buy me only with the whole sky in yourself. The whole sky in which, perhaps, there is no place for me. / [To] make the transition from the mass media era to the post-media age, in which the media will be re-appropriated by a multitude of groups capable of directing its **resingularisation**. Despite the seeming impossibility of such an eventuality, the current unparalleled level of media-related alienation is in no way an inherent necessity. / With emotional chaos by reinventing sculpture through aesthetic insubordination, playing with worthless material amid the industrial ruins of a defeated nation that, only two decades earlier, would have murdered her without a second thought. / I don't want to be aware of my body. / There is therefore no return to "things in themselves," but rather to the in-itself seen as indifferent to what is given to us, because indifferent to our opening-the-world. / The unpretentious thing evades thought most stubbornly. / If you're in poverty and enjoy it and can laugh at it, then you have no allegiance to anything and you're pretty much free. / Money leads to money, or a taste for it. Easy money leads to a taste for easy money. Big money to a taste for big money. Old money gets in your bones as old money. / She didn't have friends, children, sex, religion, marriage, success, a salary or a fear of death. She worked.'

1 Bernadette Corporation

2 Quentin Meillassoux

3 Frank Bidart

4 Gayatri Spivak

5 Peter Sloterdijk

6 David Hammons

7 Karl Marx

8 Marina Tsvetaeva

9 Félix Guattari

10 Arthur C. Danto on Eva Hesse

11 Rachel Harrison

12 Quentin Meillassoux

13 Martin Heidegger

14 David Hammons

15 Bernadette Corporation

16 Thea Djordjadze (Installation detail)

Assembled by Marian Tubbs in 2012 for 'Surfers Paradise' a Post-Internet Art Residency and Conference.

Marian Tubbs' is an artist practicing on Bundjalung and Kabi Kabi Country. Her assemblage-focused practice explores research interests including digital and vision technologies, materiality, text and ecology. Tubbs conflates material juxtapositions between body and object, high and low culture, physical and virtual, natural and artificial, to transform the everyday into a space of interrogation. Her works incorporate a variety of media, including video, lenticular photography, sculpture and installation. Often constructed from the physical and digital detritus of contemporary life her works position objects, images and text in new or unexpected combinations to challenge cultural systems of value.

While often humorous and surreal, the works also carry political resonances, resisting dominant narratives of technological progress and ecological decay. Tubbs blends visuals of both natural and synthetic forms, drawing from encounters both global and local.

Recent group exhibitions include 'a velvet ant, a flower and a bird', Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne (2026), 'Coral futures', Linden New Art, Melbourne (2025), 'Built Photography', Museum of Australian Photography, Melbourne (2024), 'Backwash', ANU Drill Hall Gallery, Canberra (2023), and 'Know my Name: Australian Female Artists', National Gallery of Australia, ACT (2022). An early-career survey of Tubbs' practice was held at the UniSC Art Gallery in 2020, accompanied by the artist's first monograph. In 2019 Tubbs was selected for the 12 month studio at Artspace, Sydney, and in 2017 she was the recipient of the Marten Bequest Scholarship for sculpture. Tubbs' work is held in the collections of the National Gallery of Australia, National Gallery of Victoria, Museum of Contemporary Art, Australian National University, and the University of New South Wales, Ballarat and Caloundra Regional Galleries. Tubbs holds a PhD from UNSW Art & Design and is a senior lecturer of Art & Design at Southern Cross University, Lismore. Tubbs' is commercially represented by STATION.

Marian Tubbs
born 1983 Baulkham Hills, Sydney
lives Lismore/works on
Bundjalung and Kabi Labi land

list of works

**outta mai hair into a swim
(dolphin sex) local waters mostly**
2020

sublimation print on brushed gloss
aluminium
102 x 72 cm

a touch of herb and pure water
2019

oil on linen
207 x 95 cm

anagram **2017**

fiberglass, aqua-resin, orchid moss,
ice balls, hair dye, pigment, silicone
53.5 x 33 x 5 cm

*and then plants are confused with
stones. rocks look like brains,
stalactites like breasts, veins of
iron like tapestries adorned with
figures #1 (Magenta series I)* **2025**

lenticular photograph
76 x 61 cm

*and then plants are confused with
stones. rocks look like brains,
stalactites like breasts, veins of
iron like tapestries adorned with
figures #2 (Magenta series II)*
2025

lenticular photograph
76 x 61 cm

*and then plants are confused with
stones. rocks look like brains,
stalactites like breasts, veins of
iron like tapestries adorned with
figures #3 (Magenta series III)*
2025

lenticular photograph
76 x 61 cm

argot **2019**

oil on linen
207 x 95 cm

blueberry brutalist waterslide
2025

lenticular photograph
91.5 x 61 cm framed

Colour of the year **2019**

oil on linen
81 x 61 cm

dream paintings **2026**

watercolour on raw linen
diptych, each panel 147.5 x 98 cm

i am series of chemical changes
2017

pigment print on silk
100 x 70 cm

*have we built our own resorts (the
architectural body)* **2023**

collage, cardboard, laser digital
print on Hahnemühle paper
165 x 138 cm framed

Jupiter 2 **2020**

sublimation print on brushed gloss
aluminium
102 x 72 cm framed

lazy river **2022**

digital print on lustre
155.5 x 115 cm framed

meeting **2017**

pigment print on silk
110 x 60 cm

nervous systems **2019**

edition of 3 + 2AP digital video with
sound
11 min 1 sec

*Nymphoides Indica Hexactinellida
free float* **2026**

lenticular photograph
200 x 120 cm
courtesy of MECCA Collection
Naarm/Melbourne

pregnant boyfriend **2024**

watercolour on hot press 300 gsm
paper
83 x 64 cm framed

reversible destiny 2480 **2023**

digital video with sound
5 min 7 sec

Simone de Beauvoir **2012**

pigment print on silk
72 x 95 cm

steeper than legal **2020**

sublimation print on brushed gloss
aluminium
102 x 72 cm framed

suprasubliminal **2019**

bronze
53 x 46 x 40 cm

suprasubliminals **2018**

digital video with sound
3 min 51 sec

The lotus eaters (wellness) **2025**

lenticular photograph
76 x 61 cm

*the organism is sympathetic to
multiple applications* **2018**

fusion print on aluminium, custom
machine cut
150 x 100 cm

this book flows like water **2024**

watercolour on hot press 300 gsm
paper
83 x 64 cm framed

velocity myth **2020**

sublimation print on brushed gloss
aluminium
102 x 72 cm framed

*we say funny things hoping
something romantic will happen*
2017

pigment print on silk
100 x 75 cm

all works courtesy the artist and
STATION