

PUBLIC CURATORS
BUILDING

10 Oct 2026
– 14 Mar 2027

ZHANG XU ZHAN

Compound eyes of tropical

Zhang Xu Zhan's *Compound eyes of tropical* is a dizzying stop-motion animation evoking myth, folklore and fantastical worlds. The creatures that inhabit these worlds—crocodiles, foxes, crabs, frogs, rabbits, and others—are made using a Taiwanese papermaking technique, bringing an energy and vitality to the video and sculptures on level three at Cairns Art Gallery. Zhang Xu works across various media, including video art, stop motion animation, sculpture, and installation. He was born into a family that for many generations has specialised in crafting joss paper effigies to be burnt during funerals and religious ceremonies. His practice is deeply connected to this tradition, often exploring themes of ritual and death and using papier-mâché as a key material.

The animation is inspired by Taiwan's Yi zhen folk dance, where dancers wear animal costumes and perform in temple celebrations; and the Southeast Asian folk tale *Mouse Deer and Crocodile*.

PUBLIC CURATORS
BUILDING

17 Oct 2026
– 21 Mar 2027

MARINE DREAMS

Collection in Focus

Marine Dreams is an exhibition that looks at the pull of the deep on the human imagination. Cairns Art Gallery is situated metres from the Trinity Inlet, an oceanic inlet that connects directly to the Coral Sea, and from there out to the vast oceans of the earth. The Gallery's Collection is rich with significant art works inspired by ocean realms that can be flashpoints of contemporary debate, and are producers of multiple meanings for Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists.

The exhibition highlights artists from Far North Queensland, Cape York, the Torres Strait Islands and around Australia. The works on view range from an uncanny human-sea creature sculpture; to an expansive print symbolizing the sacred space between land, sea and sky; to carefully observed drawings of marine life; to an examination of classical Western archetypes of beauty and domination through the depiction of Poseidon, Greek god of the sea; to the vitality and beauty of beizam (hammer-head shark) totemic dance machines.

COURT HOUSE & MULGRAVE BUILDINGS

Mon to Fri 9.30am – 5pm
Sat 10am – 5pm
Sun Closed

PUBLIC CURATORS BUILDING

Mon to Fri 9am – 5pm
Sat 10am – 5pm
Sun 10am – 2pm

MULGRAVE
BUILDING

19 Sep
– 28 Nov 2026

THE PARADOX OF THINGS

Barbara Dover, Julie Poulsen, Jennifer Valmadre

The Paradox of Things features assemblage and mixed media works by three Cairns artists, Barbara Dover, Julie Poulsen and Jennifer Valmadre. This exhibition delves into the idea of paradox where a seemingly absurd proposition or thing combines contradictory or self-contradictory qualities. A paradox also can contain truths and be well-founded.

Drawing on found objects, unexpected materials and inventive processes, and ideas of contradiction and inconsistency, these artists create ambiguous and impossible physical structures. They invite our attention to the materiality of puzzling spatial forms, and reveal different and distinctive interpretations of the nature of materials and objects.

COURT HOUSE
BUILDING

4 Sep 2026
– 16 Jan 2027

CRAIG & KARL

Double Vision

Craig & Karl: Double Vision pays homage to one of Queensland's most internationally successful creative exports, and a shared creative vision that has existed for almost 30 years. The exhibition charts key motifs and moments in the development of Craig & Karl's idiosyncratic art and design practice, with a large timeline of previous projects and a display of selected merchandise from their extensive archive of collaborations, alongside installations and sculptural elements that feature recurring themes of community, identity, imagination, and love.

The project was first commissioned by Griffith University Art Museum to coincide with Griffith University's 50th anniversary celebrations in 2025, for which Craig & Karl also designed a new iteration of their iconic inflatable *Mateys*, which made their debut across the University's campuses and partner sites for Brisbane City Council, Brisbane Festival, and Fish Lane Arts Precinct, before popping up at Cairns Art Gallery.

CAIRNS ART GALLERY

Sep–Nov
2026

What's On



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