

CAIRNS ART GALLERY

19 SEP –
28 NOV 2026

BARBARA DOVER
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THE PARADOX OF THINGS

ARTWORK LABELS



DOUBLE R
ARTS FOUNDATION

The Paradox of Things is supported through the Double R Arts Foundation

Barbara Dover

Almost safe

2026

found objects, blanket, doilies

courtesy of the artist

Almost safe is a response to the plight of animals who are caught up in zones of conflict around the world.

Controlled chaos

2026

found objects, porcelain

courtesy of the artist

Controlled chaos reflects those experiences when it feels like situations are hinged on opposing forces which are just being held in a precarious balance.

Found missing

2026

found objects, concrete

courtesy of the artist

Found missing refers to the intransigence of discord and its unintended consequences.

Random order

2026

found objects, feathers

courtesy of the artist

Random order suggests contrast and contradiction, order and disorder.

Barbara Dover

Soft power

2026

found objects, doilies

courtesy of the artist

Soft power alludes to stereotyping and unconscious bias.

The house of tears

2026

found objects, perspex, horse hair

courtesy of the artist

The House of tears refers to a troubled world.

Upward fall

2026

found objects

courtesy of the artist

Upward fall implies instability and anticipation that something might happen.

Does a seemingly secure base make it stable?

Julie Poulsen

Fiend Angelical

2026

timber wire reel, small trolley, irrigation pipe wrapped with torn glue soaked sheet, flower shaped pottery bat with ceramic figure

courtesy of the artist

Beauty with unease. At first the work appears graceful, but something about it presents as unsettling.

Burning the midnight oil

2026

timber stool, reconstructed lamp, reconstructed book

courtesy of the artist

Books fuel the mind as the lamp burns low. Here the contradiction lies in the fact the mind is being fueled enabled by the lamp which is being depleted.

Eulogies perfect the Imperfections

2026

upended timber drawing 'horse', reconstructed book, found materials

courtesy of the artist

Eulogies perfect the imperfections, a spoken monument to an inaccurate biography. The contradiction lies in the idea that a eulogy is meant to honor truthfully, yet often becomes an idealised version of a person's life

Julie Poulsen

Impossible solution

2025

timber easel, disassembled, kitchen-cupboard door, old framed work for the floor base, constructed objects from paper, glue, wrapped cords. Anything available to hand in studio

courtesy of the artist

Alone together

2025

garden stand, potters bat, reconstructed silver teapot, glue soaked fabric wrapping, irrigation pipe, crushed paper plaster and glue, lawn-mower-manipulated child's toy cow

courtesy of the artist

Extinct life

2025

irrigation pipe, found metal stand, papier-mâché construction, wire reel, paint tin, mattress coil, manipulated silver sugar bowl

courtesy of the artist

Three early works made in 2025. The materials guided the process, an approach central to my 3-dimensional practice. Once completed, each work was titled using oxymorons: compressed two word contradictions such as *Impossible Solution*, *Extinct Life*, and *Alone Together*.

- Julie Poulsen, 2026

The studio rule book

2026

mixed-media objects, paintings, handmade clay and paper objects

courtesy of the artist

My studio rule book permits and encourages the breaking of rules. Traditional rules processes and procedures are a starting point but never strictly adhered to.

Julie Poulsen

Secure in camouflage stripes, the zebra dawdles into the traffic

2026

striped yellow and cream painting, pot stand, potters batt, existing yellow cabinet reconstructed, a bush bee discarded constructed hive, portions of horse timber sculpture

courtesy of the artist

The contradiction here lies in the false sense of security that camouflage or zebra crossings provide. They suggest protection and safety, but the opposite can occur, and dawdling blindly with confidence can lead into danger, poor judgement and vulnerability.

Tethered, the Trojan Horse enters

2026

timber horse, small metal child's chair, wheels welded to chair legs, timber platform

courtesy of the artist

The horse enters, but is tethered it has successfully crossed the threshold, yet remains restrained.

The Pity Party

2026

wheelbarrow tyre, ink, glue-soaked fabric wrapping, irrigation pipe, crushed paper plaster and glue, found discarded tools

courtesy of the artist

Within the framework of the *Paradox of Things* the viewers are asked to reconcile two incompatible emotional states: pity and party. What appears discarded can regain a renewed significance, through art. The work invites viewers to smile at something that also speaks of loss, ageing and decline.

Julie Poulsen

Wings and horses

2026

reassembled horse sculpture sitting on a potters bat, reassembled timber angel sculpture, ink, glue-wrapped plumbers pipe on a potters turntable

courtesy of the artist

A sculptural interpretation of Pegasus the flying horse, he cannot fly but takes flight in our imagination.

Jennifer Valmadre

Brother

2026

sculpture glazes, ceramics, Brother sewing machine, clay wedging table

courtesy of the artist

Brother takes a broken sewing machine and disguises it, encasing the machine in ceramic test pieces originally made to develop a sculptural glaze. Both materials have fulfilled their practical purpose and are now freed to play together in a new way.

The discarded machine and experimental ceramic fragments become a visual feast, where function gives way to texture, colour, form and the unexpected pleasure of looking.

Jennifer Valmadre

Discarded #1

2026

assembled re-fired ceramics and found objects

Discarded #2

2026

assembled ceramics and found objects

Discarded #3

2026

assembled re-fired ceramics and found objects

Discarded #4

2026

assembled re-fired ceramics and found objects

Discarded #5

2026

assembled re-fired ceramics and found objects

courtesy of the artist

The *Discarded* series gives new life to broken and recovered ceramic materials, transforming fragments once considered unusable into new forms. The works explore the beauty and potential held within what has been broken, overlooked or cast aside.

- Jennifer Valmadre, 2026

Jennifer Valmadre

Dispossessed

2026

found objects, fabric, cardboard, sealing wax and twine

courtesy of the artist

Dispossessed is a collection of objects that have been deprived of a home. Removed from their original contexts, they become displaced, searching for new relationships, meanings and places to belong.

High Tea

2026

Nicorette gum wrappers, found objects

courtesy of the artist

High Tea, explores the experience of replacing one addiction with another. The cups become markers of time, quietly recording the waiting period as the substitute addiction begins to fade.

The mat beneath *High Tea* is constructed from recycled Nicorette gum wrappers, stitched together to function as a plinth for the work. The material introduces a deliberate dichotomy to the refined aesthetic traditionally associated with high tea, juxtaposing notions of elegance, ceremony, and indulgence with the remnants of addiction and consumption.

Jennifer Valmadre

Potting Bench

2026

found objects, wire, paper, thread tape

courtesy of the artist

Potting bench brings the hidden roots of weeds up to eye level, shifting our attention from the familiar surface of the garden to the usually unseen world beneath it. By presenting these roots as something to be examined, the work gives value and presence to what is normally overlooked or discarded.

Small people wait too

2026

found objects

courtesy of the artist

Souvenirs

2026

ceramic beads, found objects

courtesy of the artist

The *Souvenirs* crown junk totems made from the bric-a-brac of my cupboards: odd pieces of plastic, furniture fragments, saw blades and other discarded remnants. They sit atop a tower anchored by an intriguing roll of wrapping paper which became the starting point for the work. I was interested in how the paper could function as a plinth while still allowing its own aesthetic qualities to remain visible. The tower and totems transform overlooked materials into something ceremonial.

Barbara Dover, Julie Poulsen, Jennifer Valmadre

The Waiting Room

2026

Installation

courtesy of the artist

The Waiting Room is a collaborative work by Dover, Poulsen and Valmadre where each artist has constructed chair forms which exhibit the artist's distinctive artistic qualities and, in this discrete gallery space, unify as one work.

Similarly to most waiting rooms, the chairs in *Waiting Room* suggest that comfort is merely a secondary consideration and the passing of time is unimportant.

This group of chairs transforms the idea of a chair into audacious furniture which reveals a sense of fun, quirkiness and, for several chairs, the artist's own stories.

Barbara Dover

The Waiting Room - Emergency use only

2026

found objects

courtesy of the artist

A generic chair style with safety cones which suggests for use in emergency. The only catch is that it is likely to collapse. Is there a possible misreading of the cones?

The Waiting Room - House plan

2026

found objects, embroidery thread

courtesy of the artist

This chair dust cover is an old worn blanket with a house plan of my parents old home embroidered with grey thread. 'Home' seems set forever in my unconscious mind.

Barbara Dover

The Waiting Room - Settling in

2026

found objects

courtesy of the artist

Do we make furniture fit into how we want to live? A deconstructed chair is reconstructed with items such as a metal frame, an old family box and an old blanket.

The Waiting Room - The road out

2026

found objects, embroidery thread

courtesy of the artist

The blanket suggests a dust cover for furniture. Embroidered in red thread is a map of my home town with the main road out of town leading to Melbourne - a more exciting place I wished to go to as a teenager.

Julie Poulsen

Tomato can chair

2026

upended and reassembled chair, with original and found fabric, studio objects

courtesy of the artist

Always my chair on the verandah. When the seat sagged beyond comfort, the chair transitioned into a sculpture. Upended and stripped of its delicate, threadbare fabric, it revealed a graceful curve of raw timber braces and a crosshatching of straps.

I reattached the fabric, with its dainty rust marks, slightly askew. The small legs are tomato tins wrapped in glue-soaked fabric; a false and fragile support.

The teapot is a symbol of time spent pleasurably evoking the quiet rituals and memories held within the chair.

Julie Poulsen

Informal Elegance

2026

original rocking chair, antique bobbins, trolley

courtesy of the artist

My grandmother's rocking chair has made an authentic transition from its former formal elegance. The wooden bobbins, taken from her sewing drawer, add another layer of memory and use. For many years, the chair has rested on a trolley, bringing together two contradictory actions: one rocks, the other rolls.

The Smuggler's chair

2026

reassembled wheelbarrow, found objects

courtesy of the artist

The paradox of the obvious lies in what is overlooked.

Each day, a labourer pushes a wheelbarrow across the border, carrying what appears to be nothing more than sawdust. The security guard diligently sifts through the sawdust, searching for something concealed, but finds nothing.

Years later the guard finally asks "*I know you were smuggling something. What was it?*"

The man replies "*Wheelbarrows.*"

The paradox is that the human mind instinctively searches inside the vessel for the hidden secret becoming so focused on what might be concealed that it fails to recognise the obvious: the vessel itself is the secret."

Jennifer Valmadre

Abide

2026

dismantled rocking chair, fabric

Courtesy of the artist

Abide is a chair that has worked hard, served well, and has been put to rest in white bindings. It is a little like life: we work, we serve, we endure, we abide.

Awaiting

2026

garden chair, encaustic, paper bag, found objects

courtesy of the artist

Awaiting plays with the idea of the throne. Thrones always look uncomfortable, privileging form over function. They are places where power waits—mirroring how we are made to wait for those in power to see us.

Pending

2026

garden chair, inner tubes, baking paper, found objects

courtesy of the artist

Pending is an impossible chair. It is already occupied by a buoy—not floating, but tied down with spent bicycle inner tubes. Speckled across it are little spots of hope, taking the form of paper: small promises of the release of something pending, as we wait away our time.

Barbara Dover, Julie Poulsen, Jennifer Valmadre

Board Room

2026

builder plank, plaster, paper

courtesy of the artist

Board Room engages with the disassociation and dissonance of materials and place.

An unassuming builder's plank takes the place of a polished imposing boardroom table. Instead of expected boardroom IT paraphernalia, stark white plaster forms shaped like discarded crushed paper, assemble in a line on the plank, as if frozen from bygone times.

This work occupies the former Mulgrave Council boardroom, a space where corporate wants and ratepayers' needs were balanced.