PUBLIC CURATORS BUILDING

Until 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. 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.*

– Curated by Katie Dyer, Consultant Senior Curator

PUBLIC CURATORS BUILDING

Until 21 Feb 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.

– Curated by Katie Dyer, Consultant Senior Curator

PUBLIC CURATORS BUILDING

12 Dec 2026 – 14 Feb 2027

AWAKENING HISTORIES

Awakening Histories traces the enduring and centuries old connections between First Nations Peoples across the north of this continent and the Maskassan seafarers of South Sulawesi, Indonesia and celebrates the deep intercultural connections that remain prominent in art, language, and material culture.

These art works share stories of migration, trade, and cultural exchange, highlighting the role of trepang or sea cucumber, trochus, and turtle shells, tamarind trees, palm wine, seafaring technology, metal tools, and textiles.

Developed by a curatorium of researchers and curators based in Australia and Indonesia, *Awakening Histories* brings together artists' commissions and key works from major collections. It centres the storytelling of art and artists, following trade routes and cultural exchange to recast history.

PUBLIC CURATORS BUILDING

28 Nov 2026 – 21 Feb 2027

VIPOO SRIVILASA
re/JOY

Ceramic artist Vipoo Srivilasa's solo exhibition *re/JOY* represents his most significant and largest body of work to date. The exhibition is a playful and hopeful project—a rich tapestry of humanity.

For this collaborative community project Vipoo has taken seven precious, yet broken, ceramic objects donated by strangers, each with their own story of migration to different parts of Australia. These objects were acquired following a public call-out. From the responses Vipoo chose seven pieces and stories that resonated with him to create striking new 1.5-metre-tall ceramic sculptures. These included a teapot made in Korea, a terracotta tile from India, and a clay sculpture from Mexico, all damaged in some way yet still precious. Vipoo has also made an eighth sculpture referencing his own experiences moving from Thailand to Australia, based around a button from his grandmother that holds strong family connections.

– Curated by Lisa Cahill, Australian Design Centre

COURT HOUSE & MULGRAVE BUILDINGS
Mon to Sat 10am – 5pm
Sun Closed

PUBLIC CURATORS BUILDING
Mon to Sat 10am – 5pm
Sun 10am – 2pm

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Cairns Art Gallery is proudly supported by Cairns Regional Council

CAIRNS ART GALLERY

Dec 2026 – Feb 2027

What's On



COURT HOUSE BUILDING

Until 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.

MULGRAVE BUILDING

4 Dec 2026 –28 Feb 2027

CORAL FUTURES

Coral Futures brings together new and recent projects by First Nations and other contemporary Australian artists, considering coral's importance to the survival of vital marine ecosystems like the Great Barrier Reef, as well as its implications for broader cultural, economic, and environmental systems.

The artworks and practices brought together in this exhibition demonstrate a plurality of approaches and a sustained engagement with the subject. Together, they offer multiple, considered perspectives, acknowledging coral's deep cultural significance for First Nations people, its economic and social value to coastal communities, and its vulnerability to rising sea temperatures and shifting weather patterns. *Coral Futures* speaks to these and many other connections that render this species vital to the health, or decline, of our planet.

– Curated by Hamish Sawyer, Linden New Art

PUBLIC CURATORS BUILDING

30 Jan 2027 – 6 Mar 2027

CAIRNS ART SOCIETY
79th Annual Art Exhibition

In 2027, Cairns Art Society celebrates its *79th Annual Art Exhibition*, a showcase that highlights the diverse talents of its member artists. This event has long been part of the local arts calendar, welcoming audiences from across the region who come to enjoy the creativity and innovation of the community's visual artists.











IMAGES (clockwise from far left)

Jimmy John THAIDAY, Florence GUTCHEN, Nancy NAAWI, Lavinia KETCHELL
Home Reef (detail) 2025
ghost net
Courtesy of the artists and Erub Arts, Darnley Island.
Photograph: Simon Strong
EXHIBITION – *CORAL FUTURES*

Dhambit MUNUŊGURR
Gunyaŋara Makassans 2025
earth pigments and acrylic on stringybark
223 x 87cm
Monash University Collection, Naarm/Melbourne
Image courtesy of Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Gadigal/Sydney
Photograph: David Suyasa
EXHIBITION – *AWAKENING HISTORIES*

Dr Ken THAIDAY Snr
Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait), Meriam Mer (Erub)
b.1950, Erub (Darnley) Island
Jason CHRISTOPHER
Clamshell with hammerhead shark 2013
aluminium, perspex and mechanical gearing
Cairns Art Gallery Collection
Commissioned and purchased Cairns Art Gallery, 2013
EXHIBITION – *MARINE DREAMS: COLLECTION IN FOCUS*

Zhang Xu ZHAN
Compound eyes of tropical (still) 2022
single channel video, colour, sound
Courtesy and © Zhang Xu Zhan and Zhan Zhan Xi Qi Studio
EXHIBITION – *ZHANG ZU ZHAN: COMPOUND EYES OF TROPICAL*

Craig & Karl: Double Vision
installation at Cairns At Gallery, October 2026
Photograph: Michael Marzik
EXHIBITION – *CRAIG & KARL: DOUBLE VISION*

COVER IMAGE
Vipoo SRIVILASA
From Courgettes to Zucchinis (detail) 2024
Photograph: Simon Strong
EXHIBITION – *VIPOO SRIVILASA: RE/JOY*

re/JOY is an Australian Design Centre exhibition, curated by Lisa Cahill toured nationally by ADC on Tour with additional support from NETS Victoria. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government's Visions of Australia program and Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body.

Awakening Histories is presented in partnership with Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), Naarm/Melbourne and Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts (PICA), Boorloo/Perth

Awakening Histories has been informed by Monash University's ARC Laureate project Global Encounters & First Nations Peoples: 1000 Years of Australian History. The exhibition was originally presented at MUMA, 4 October – 6 December 2025, and PICA, 6 February – 29 March 2026.

Craig & Karl: Double Vision is a Griffith University Art Museum touring exhibition, co-curated by Angela Goddard and Carrie McCarthy.

Coral Futures is presented in partnership with Linden New Art, Melbourne, and University of the Sunshine Coast Art Gallery, Queensland.