

27 May 2020

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## ***Gallery reopens Ready to reinstall, reignite, reconnect***

Northern Rivers Community Gallery reopens Wednesday 3 June 2020, offering the community a second chance to see the work of Matthew Purves, Mark Stapelfeldt and Helen Halliday, whose exhibitions were abruptly deinstalled only days after launching in March due to COVID-19.

“Matthew Purves exhibition ‘Proprietary Variables and the Modal Illusion of Happiness’, aptly timed to show during our post -COVID emergence is a study on economics, globalisation, brand value and the effects this has on society and the way we live our lives” explains Acting Gallery Coordinator, Melitta Firth.

Helen Halliday’s ‘Marks of Time’ mixed media work explores ancient landscapes reflecting on the interconnected histories of people and place.

Mark Stapelfeldt’s ‘By the Flesh’ is an impressive 35mm photographic series which takes an abstract look at lust, sensuality, life, death and the fading role of Christianity in our modern society.

“While the gallery doors have been closed, we have made sure NRCG’s creative programs continued online” explains acting Gallery Coordinator Melitta Firth. “12 young people are currently completing a free four week photography course with photographer Natalie Grono and the results are incredible. 15 community members are completing NRCG’s self-directed at home ‘Introduction to Abstraction’ course, developed by NRCG’s creative facilitator Imbi Davidson. We have also been sharing free weekly creative resources for parents, teachers and aged care providers to encourage everyone to explore creativity at home or within aged care services. As restrictions lift we look forward to restarting our onsite creative programs, supporting the whole community from 5 to 100 years of age “

Northern Rivers Community Gallery invited community sharing and creative responses to the experience of social distancing through the online project Ap[art] on Instagram and Facebook. Conversations Ap[art] featured local artists making art at home. Local artists Jenny Sayer shared her advice for rediscovering creativity at home “Embrace your dormant mad scientist, use all the materials around you and be adventurous!” Artist Matt Purves (pictured) whose exhibition was disrupted headed back to the studio over the last few weeks - his art-making routine has hardly changed through physical distancing “Being somewhat of a recluse, it is business as usual here!”

Photographer and NRCG facilitator Natalie Grono created a new body of work 'Welcome Home'. "This is a series I have been photographing since the Covid-19 isolation period began. It is somewhat of a gratitude diary shared amongst friends and family". She explains "The idea behind the series came from my act of surrendering to the situation and slowing down with life, taking the time to spend time with my family, accepting this time as a gift. I turned my lens onto my friends and family to capture the positive moments they were sharing and living at home."

Teacher and Artist Karen Rantissi used the time to transform her garden by creating literary-themed installations full of whimsy and magic. “I have made a conscious effort to make my art installations from recycled materials and treasured toys, most of which were found in the depths of my garage”. Her creations included a Doctor Who terrarium in a vintage Television, a set of Harry Potter’s baggage complete with owl just in time for heading back Hogwarts, and other incredible creations from Charlotte’s Web, Fantastic Mr Fox and many others.

The Gallery has recently secured infrastructure upgrade funding demonstrating NSW government recognition and support of the importance of these creative programs”.

The Northern Rivers Community Gallery operating days and hours from Wednesday 3 June 2020 will be Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 10.00 a.m to 4.00 p.m. The facility will temporarily be closed on weekends as part of the re-opening transition back to full operations. For more information please contact the Gallery staff at **nrcgballina.com.au** or phone 02 6681 0530.

<b>Authorised By</b>	Kelly Brown Director Corporate Community Division	<b>Media Spokesperson</b>	Melitta Firth (Acting) Gallery Coordinator 1300 864 444
<b>Distribution</b>	Local Media		

**Image 1:**

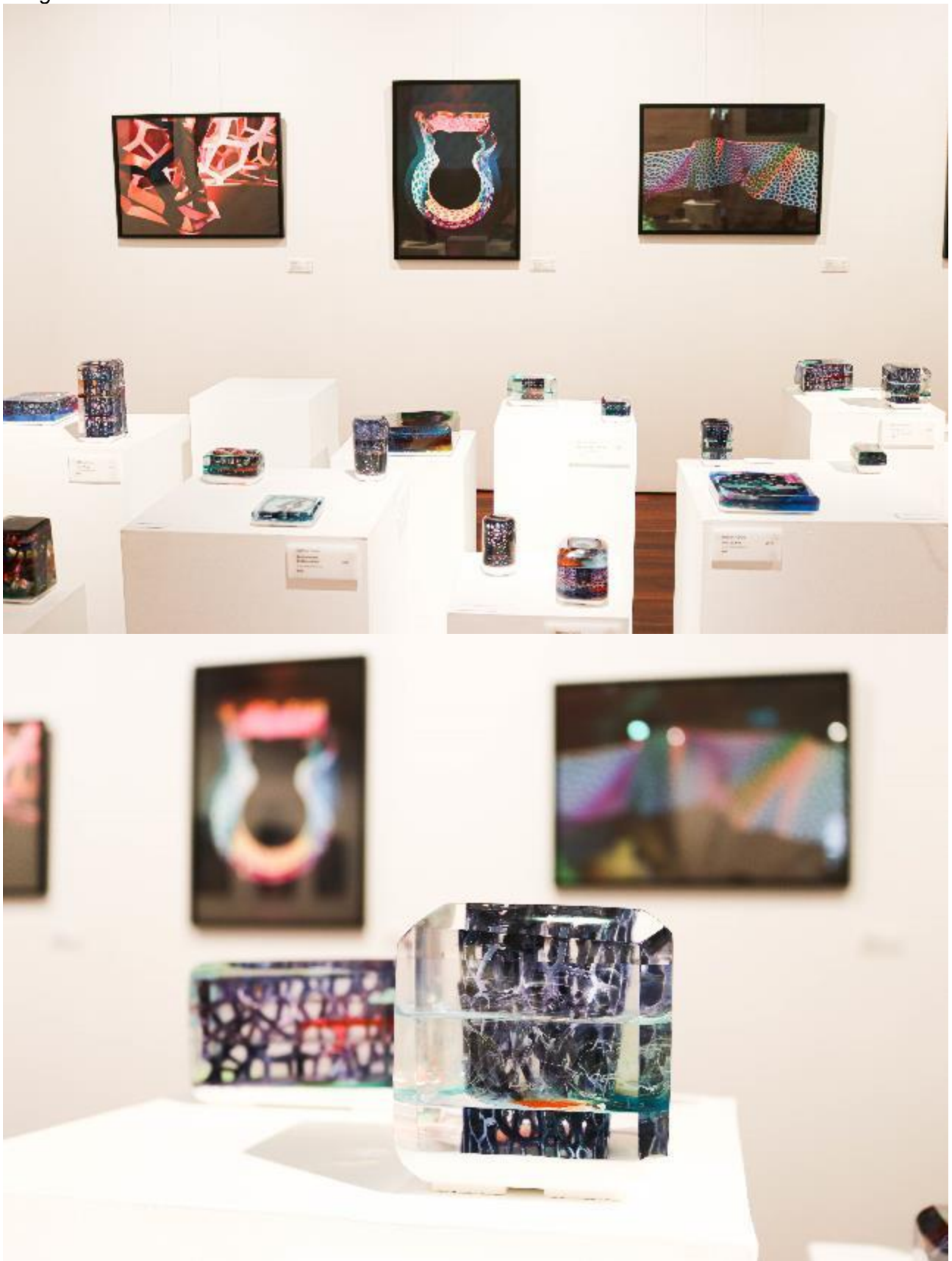
Artists Matt Purves in his studio after his exhibition was shutdown Matt headed back to the Studio:  
Photo: Brittany Purves



**Image 2:** Mayor opening March Exhibitions with Artists Matt Purves, Helen Halliday, Rae Saheli and Mark Stapelfeldt



*Image 3 & 4: Matt Purves Exhibition. Photo Imbi Davidson*





**Image 5:** Gallery Staff reinstall Exhibitions. Photo Jaka Adamic



**Image 6 and 7:** Photographic Self Portraits by Community Members. Completed during Abstract Photography online with Natalie Gron



