

MEDIA RELEASE

HEIDE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
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Museum of Modern Art

Heide

TEMPTATION TO CO-EXIST: JANET BURCHILL AND JENNIFER McCAMLEY

Heide Museum of Modern Art presents an extensive survey of Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley's work, celebrating their thirty-five year collaboration.

6 April –14 July 2019



Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley, *Pre-paradise sorry now (neon)* 2001, neon light, waferweld, electrical cord, 2 panels, each 35cm x 180cm x 12mm, courtesy of the artists and Neon Parc, Melbourne

Artists Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley's visually stunning artworks, incorporating their ever-expanding repertoire of mediums—from painting and sculpture, photography and printmaking, to neon light and textile works—will go on show at Heide Museum of Modern Art from 6 April.

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Drawing broadly on the histories of art and design, film and literature, feminism and cultural theory, Burchill and McCamley's art is vitally engaged with the issues of our time. Their collaborative practice, sustained now for thirty five years, reveals to us a wide range of responses to making art now.

This survey exhibition brings together works from the 1980s to the present. Visitors will see paintings using words as concrete visual elements, and sculptures that take the form of pieces of furniture—modernist chairs, a table and car seats. There is an array of sculptural shields embellished with emblems and insignia, and sculptures containing casts of natural forms—birds' nests, fungi and cacti.

Featured too are ten of Burchill and McCamley's neon light works, more than have been previously brought together in a single display. The medium of neon is described by the artists as 'very beautiful, often poetic and most definitely fragile', and the works' softly flowing linear forms give them the appearance of drawings in light.

Many works explore the legacies of modernism, and blur the boundaries of art and design. Certain pieces bring to the fore the social and political critique that simmers beneath Burchill and McCamley's elegant forms. These range in tone from the apparent light-heartedness of *Bricks and Buttercups*, 2016—a neon based on the gender-bending Krazy Kat cartoons of the early twentieth century—to the deadly seriousness of *AK47*, 2003, a mesmerising emblem of our anxious times.

Situated today at the forefront of contemporary practice, Burchill and McCamley's working partnership began in Sydney in 1983, during the heyday of Postmodernism. Burchill's training was in sculpture and film, while McCamley studied film, semiotics and philosophy. Their earliest joint exhibitions were an amalgamation of their film and art concerns, and film remains a continuing source of inspiration for them.

Curator, Sue Cramer says: 'In 2019, Burchill and McCamley have firmly secured their place as leading artists of their generation. After thirty-five years of practice, their work remains critically current and relevant to our times, and it has a wonderful capacity to engage and inspire younger generations of artists. In short, it deserves to be better known and in greater depth by audiences'.

This exhibition will be accompanied by a richly illustrated publication containing several essays on the artists' work.

Artists Janet Burchill and Jennifer McCamley and Curator Sue Cramer are available for interview.

-ENDS-

Curator: Sue Cramer

Media Contact

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Museum opening hours

Tuesday–Sunday, 10am–5pm. Closed Mondays

Admission fees apply: Members free | Adult \$20 | Concession \$15 | Children (16 and under) free



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@heidemoma #janetburchillandjennifermccamley

Note to Editors:

JANET BURCHILL AND JENNIFER McCAMLEY

Janet Burchill was born in 1955 in Melbourne, Victoria and graduated from Sydney College of Arts in 1983.

Jennifer McCamley was born in 1957 in Brisbane, Queensland and graduated from the Institute of Technology (now the University of Technology), Sydney, 1981. In 2002 she received an Honours qualification in Conservation Ecology at Deakin University, Melbourne.

The artists have worked collaboratively since 1983 and currently live and work in Melbourne.

In 1991, Burchill and McCamley were awarded the Australia Council's Kunstlerhaus Bethanien Residency and Scholarship and the duo lived and worked in Berlin until 1997. During this period, they were jointly awarded the Berlin Senate Art Scholarship in 1995.

In 2001, a survey of the artists' collaborative works, *Tip of the Iceberg: Selected works 1985–2001*, was developed by the University Art Museum, University of Queensland, travelling to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne. Other solo exhibitions have included *NEON: Janet Burchill/Jennifer McCamley* at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney in 2005 and *10 Green Bottles* at the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne in 1991.

Burchill and McCamley participated in *Australian Perspecta*, Sydney in 1989, and the *Colombo Art Biennale*, Sri Lanka in 2012. Other significant group exhibitions have included *Interesting Times, Focus on Contemporary Art*, Museum of Contemporary Art Australia, Sydney in 2005; *A Different Temporality: Aspects of Australian Feminist Art Practice 1975–1985* at

Monash University Museum of Art (MUMA), Melbourne in 2011; *Melbourne Now*, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne in 2013; *Tarrawarra Biennial: Endless Circulation*, Tarrawarra Museum of Art, Healesville, Melbourne in 2016; and numerous group exhibitions at most major state and national public galleries in Australia. They have also exhibited widely in Europe and the United States.

Burchill and McCamley were the recipients of a NAVA Fellowship in 2018.

Burchill and McCamley have been involved in several projects at Heide Museum of Modern Art, significantly a site-specific exhibition in Heide II *Combine: Janet Burchill, Jennifer McCamley and Melinda Harper* in 2007, and various group shows including *Future Primitive* in 2013, *Louise Bourgeois and Australian Artists* in 2012, *Less is More: Minimal and Post Minimal Art in Australia* in 2012 and *Forever Young: 30 Years of the Heide Collection* in 2011. In 2000, Janet Burchill completed a major sculptural commission for Heide's Sculpture Park, *Stein Path*.

HEIDE

Heide Museum of Modern Art is one of Australia's most important cultural institutions. Here John and Sunday Reed, who in 1934 bought the weatherboard farmhouse that is now 'Heide I,' fostered the talent of the artists with whom they surrounded themselves, in this way shaping the creation of a new and progressive cultural landscape.

Today Heide holds an important collection of over 3400 works. The site comprises a series of spaces



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including Heide I, Heide II (the modernist 'gallery to be lived in' designed in the 1960s), the purpose-built galleries – Heide III and IV. In addition, there are six hectares of land encompassing a sculpture park and plaza, the Heide II kitchen garden designed by Sunday Reed in the 1960s, a working garden supplying Café Heide, the 'Heart Garden' (planted by Sunday Reed as a symbol of her love for artist Sidney Nolan), an indigenous remnant garden at the edge of the Yarra River, and various garden installations.

In response to John and Sunday Reed's legacy, Heide works to inspire creative talent, collaborating with emerging and mid-career artists as well as celebrating those who have made major contributions as contemporary artists.

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