



UNIVERSITY  
OF WOLLONGONG  
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong  
**Research Online**

---

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts - Papers

Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts

---

2015

# Spectra of Birds, 2014–15

Madeleine T. Kelly

*University of Wollongong*, [mkelly@uow.edu.au](mailto:mkelly@uow.edu.au)

---

## Publication Details

Kelly, M. T. *Spectra of Birds, 2014–15*. Gallery of Modern Art. 11 July - 11 October. Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 2015.

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library:  
[research-pubs@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-pubs@uow.edu.au)

---

# Spectra of Birds, 2014–15

## **Abstract**

In 'Spectra of Birds' abstract images of birds spotted in West Wollongong are squeezed or trapped into the rectilinear architecture of empty Tetra Paks. The resulting expressionist distortions – angular in shape as determined by the cartons – are half bird, half cultural object suggesting the continual commodification of nature, a world gradually destroying itself, and the transformation of rubbish. In capitulating to the cartons' open spouts, the birds embody the phantasmatic property of everyday materials replete with associative meanings of myth and consumerism. Two modes of identity birds/cartons and art/consumer material are sustained simultaneously in a single object. From an art-historical perspective, the planes of colour recall the work of colour field painter Ellsworth Kelly who attributes his minimal colour abstractions and the titles of his works to bird watching as a young boy with his grandmother. Yet in contrast to the restraint of formalist colour field painting, these birds might be said to return abstraction to its counterpart in nature, producing affects whereby the different permutations of colour and combinations of form embrace diversity, visual analogy and the aesthetic quality of these remarkable animals. The category depends on the intersection of birds that are seen and are therefore made, but their squashed states also suggest a crisis – those endangered, betrayed or disappeared.

## **Keywords**

q, goma, qagoma

## **Disciplines**

Arts and Humanities | Law

## **Publication Details**

Kelly, M. T. Spectra of Birds, 2014–15. Gallery of Modern Art. 11 July - 11 October. Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 2015.

CONTEMPORARY QUEENSLAND CAPTURED

FRIDAY 10 JULY 2015 SHARE



Michael Zavros, Australia b.1974 / *Homework* 2014 / Giclee print on cotton rag paper, ed. of 8 / Courtesy and ©: The artist

GOMA will play host to a vibrant snapshot of contemporary art from across the state when ‘GOMA Q: Contemporary Queensland Art’ opens from 11 July to 11 October 2015.

The exhibition includes new and recent works from 31 artists giving audiences a taste of current art being made across Queensland.

‘GOMA Q’ has been curated by Peter McKay, Curator, Contemporary Australian Art, Bruce McLean, Curator, Indigenous Australian Art, and Director Chris Saines, CNZM.

‘Realised through extensive research and studio visits, ‘GOMA Q’ captures a moment in time from our local art landscape. It is a chance for us to focus our attention on the art being created right across Queensland and refresh our relationships with local artists,’ said Mr Saines.

As part of the opening weekend schedule of events, 11 and 12 July, collaborative duo Clark Beaumont (Sarah Clark and Nicole Beaumont) will present their live participatory performance, *Joy Ride* from 10.00am on Saturday 11 July. Examining intimacy and different relationship perspectives, the performance involves one member of the duo standing on a rotating, lavender platform inviting members of the public to step up and join them in an embrace for one rotation.

GOMA Talks, the popular after-hours evening discussion program, returns during ‘GOMA Q’ for discussion on Queensland’s past, present and future. Across two evenings, 20 and 27 August, the Gallery will partner with ABC Radio National for the free events hosted by Sarah Kanowski (*Books and Arts*) and Paul Barclay (*Big Ideas*).

Speakers include author Benjamin Law; Lindy Hume, Artistic Director of Opera Queensland; and Brisbane-based artists Michael Zavros and Richard Bell.

The GOMA Talks experience is complemented by a bar and DJ set before each session, with the option to purchase a ‘Food for Thought’ package, including a glass of wine, light bite, and curatorial tour after the session.

The Gallery has published a 96-page illustrated catalogue in conjunction with the exhibition. The publication profiles the latest innovations and achievements of the 31 artists featured in the exhibition and includes a roundtable discussion with some of the state’s leading arts minds.

Participating Artists: Vernon Ah Kee; Davida Allen; Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan; Paul Bai; Clark Beaumont; Antoinette J Citizen; Sam Cranstoun; Julie Fragar; Chantal Fraser; Ian Friend; Kim Guthrie; Dale Harding; Jennifer Herd; Naomi Hobson; Pat Hoffie; Anita Holtsclaw; Madeleine Kelly; Moe Louanjli; Ross Manning; Mavis Ngallametta; Liam O'Brien; Lawrence Omeenyo; Brian Robinson; Monica Rohan; Teho Ropeyarn; Gordon Shepherdson; Grant Stevens; Tyza Stewart; David M Thomas; Tim Woodward; Michael Zavros.

Share your visit #GOMAQ #GOMATALKS @QAGOMA

Author: Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA) | Two vibrant galleries that connect art and people

Categories: Collection, Exhibitions

Tags: Anita Holtsclaw, Antoinette J Citizen, Australian Art, Brian Robinson, Chantal Fraser, Clark Beaumont, Contemporary Australian Art, Dale Harding, David M Thomas, Davida Allen, GOMA Q, Gordon Shepherdson, Grant Stevens, Ian Friend, Isabel Aquilizan, Jennifer Herd, Julie Fragar, Kim Guthrie, Lawrence Omeenyo, Liam O'Brien, **Madeleine Kelly**, Mavis Ngallametta, Media Release, Michael Zavros, Moe Louanjli, Monica Rohan, Naomi Hobson, NEWS, Pat Hoffie, Paul Bai, Ross Manning, Sam Cranstoun, Teho Ropeyarn, Tim Woodward, Tyza Stewart, Vernon Ah Kee