

BY A WINDOW

EXHIBITION OPENS ON AUGUST 4 AND CONTINUES TO AUGUST 27

- + Curatorial intro pre-exhibition opening :: Thursday August 4, 5:30pm-6pm
 - + Afternoon tea social :: Saturday August 6, 1pm-3pm
 - + The Settlement Walking Tour :: Saturday August 13, 12pm-3:30pm
 - + ACP photographic tour with Marco Bok :: Saturday August 20, 2pm-5pm
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By a window is an exhibition about two photographs, the people who made them and the stories they reveal. This exhibition is also an invitation to explore the history of the areas surrounding the University of Sydney and a platform to highlight some people and organisations that have had the passion and drive to create change locally, nationally and internationally.

When Verge Gallery and the Australian Centre for Photography decided to develop a collaborative project in 2015, the initial idea was to investigate the photographic collection of the University of Sydney Union art collection and find new ways to think and present key works. Integral to the project was the development of a curatorial mentoring program that would benefit two students currently enrolled at the University of Sydney.

Amongst the vast collection, two photographs were simply unavoidable, two portraits from the larger series *Portraits by a window* shot by renowned artist Michael Riley (1960-2004) in 1990. Following the rules of classic photographic portraiture, the series has deeply marked the history of Australian photography and contributed to challenge long-established representational modes.

As Michael Riley said *I was interested in representing Aboriginal people in a different light, in a different way to the negative images in the paper and media. I'd decided to do an exhibition of portraits called Portraits by a window of young urban Aboriginal people in the '80s who were doing their own thing, mixing into society, trying to, I suppose, break the stereotype of what Aboriginal people are. It's a collection of portraits of young Aboriginal people who were striving to do things in their own fields differently. I suppose you could call them 'movers and shakers' – people who get out and do things, want to change things, change themselves, want to move on, sort of break away from the stereotype.*

These two incredibly arresting and powerful portraits of Dorothy (Tudley) Delany and Charles and Adams Perkins would become the starting point of months of research and discussion. *By a window* is our attempt to present some of the many overlapping and interweaving threads, timelines and stories that exist between the artist, the subject of the photographs as well as key sites and movements that have not only significantly shaped the local communities of Chippendale, Darlington and Redfern but also our shared cultural and social identity.

Starting at the University of Sydney from which Charles Perkins graduated in 1966, where The Settlement Neighbourhood Centre was first conceived by the Sydney University Social Services Society and where Michael Riley took his first photography class, on campus at Tin Sheds. The exhibition then follows the traces of Perkins and the 1965 Student Action Plan for Aborigines Freedom Ride.

By a window also recognises Boomalli Aboriginal Artist Cooperative in Chippendale, founded by Riley and significant peers, where he shot his *Portraits by a window* series; this is also where Dorothy Delaney worked before working at The Settlement, a community centre in Redfern established in 1925 by the Sydney University Women Society that was formed by Jane Foss in 1891. In a phone conversation with Dorothy she explained The Settlement as "the settling of differences between white and black".

You will also encounter key artists such as Tracey Moffatt, Avril Quail and Fiona Foley, all of whom were founding members of Boomalli thirty years ago and participated in significant community projects such as The Settlement Mural Project in 1985 or The South Sydney Visual History Project, organised by Geoffrey Weary in collaboration with Tin Sheds in 1983.

The stories in *By a window* are also deeply linked to our two institutions, whilst Verge Gallery is located on the Jane Foss Plaza, on the previous site of the old Tin Sheds workshops, the Australian Centre for Photography supported Michael Riley's practice through exhibitions and darkroom access.

As you watch, read and unpack the many pieces of archival material and documentation available to browse, please accept our invitation to contribute your own memories and histories on the timeline in the exhibition space. It is our hope that the people, places and histories represented in this exhibition provide an opportunity to learn and be inspired the possibilities that can be reached through passion and community.

Exhibition curated by Sian McIntyre (Verge) and Claire Monneraye (ACP)
 Assisted by Ana Perez and Martin Cordoba.

This project would not have been possible without the generous help and knowledge of: The Estate of Michael Riley / The Commercial, Sydney (Amanda Rowell, Sofia Freeman), The University of Sydney Archives (Nyree Morrison and the team), The University of Sydney Art and Museums team (Maree Clutterbuck, Christopher Jones, Katrina Liberiou, Julie Taylor), Dorothy Delaney for the long phone conversation, The Settlement (Kristina Touma and her team), John Patterson from AUSCO, Lola Pinder from Artspace, Lola Alexander from Aurora, Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Cooperative (Bronwyn Bancroft, Laura Jones and the team), The Power Institute (Pr. Mark Ledbury) and Geoff Weary, Margaret Olah, Sandy Edwards, Bruce Hart, Brenda L. Croft, Hetti Perkins, Donna Ingram, Caroline Marin-Edwards, Laura Minchella, Vivien Clyne, Verge Gallery and ACP's Staff and Board Members.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this exhibition contains images, voices and names of people who have passed away.

The Estate of Michael Riley is represented by The Commercial Gallery, Sydney in association with the Michael Riley Foundation - Anthony (Ace) Bourke, Linda Burney MP and Hetti Perkins.

