

Media Release

8 April 2022



***Breathe On* – Michael Morgan’s Solo Exhibition with Friends brings together elements and worlds at the Queenscliff Lifeboat Shed 12-20 April**

Art speaks to the unspeakable. A unique art exhibition, titled ***Breathe On***, is taking this expression to a new level with the activation of the Queenscliff Lifeboat Shed at the South Pier amidst the powerful elements of the bay. Managed by Parks Victoria, the Shed has seen recent upgrade. An art exhibition program over April initiated by curator **Marita Batna** aims to re-energize the rustic icon with a motto ‘Revealed to Inspire.’

Breathe On is the culmination of Batesford artist **Michael Morgan’s** thought-provoking work engaging with the ocean over the last eight years: exploring sculpture, video and audio installations. In the Lifeboat Shed, the depth of Morgan’s work forms relationships with the contributions and collaborations from his friends – fellow artists of the *Creative Occupation* collective.

Michael Morgan is fascinated with the archaeological view of society, drawing links in the present between history, nature, and a future: “You can dig back through time shifting layers of sand on the seabed, uncovering the layers.” Much of his work is inspired by Port Phillip Bay, and he recalls diving as a teenager through the dangerous underwater worlds around Queenscliff’s Rip and surrounding channels. “It was not for the fainthearted,” he admits, “and a lot of artefacts were found and brought out.”

More than forty years later, Michael is creating objects, placing them into the ocean to sit for a time in nature’s environment and then recovering – to inquire as to what artefacts from a future might or might not be like. One work is styled as chess pieces for an underwater match, performed and filmed at the Dell in Corio Bay, however, the central objects in ***Breathe On*** – artist-made dive helmets – are vessels to sustain life and allow underwater breath with constructed layers and a veneer that emotionally and physically separates the wearer from others, nature, and the outside world.

In ***Breathe On***, the artist contemplates the in-between, the world above and below. He also becomes a facilitator of connection with friends’ artwork that link water to air. A Michael Morgan artefact from **Ingrid Petterson’s** opening ceremony performance becomes cargo in **Jessica Laraine Williams’** work documenting her self-piloted flight performance, via virtual space, to a reunion with overseas family. **Jennifer McElwee** brings to ***Breathe On*** a kinetic sculpture, hand-created from marine debris. Performance films by **Laine Hogarty** and **Scott Welsh** will be projected on water on closing night. Morgan’s good friend **Craig Elstone** supports him throughout the project with diving and logistics.

Curator **Marita Batna** says: “The ***Breathe On*** project fits very well in this moment of the post-pandemic and war time because it is important to underline the vital experience of being interconnected and the practice of connectedness – this is the key for survival of our human species.”

TIMES AND PROGRAM

This multidisciplinary art exhibition is held every day during the Easter holidays, 12-20 April 2022, except Good Friday, with opening hours 11:00 to 17:00. All are welcome to see the exhibition as well as witness the Opening Ceremony’s performance on Thursday 14 April at sunset (18:00) and the Closing Ceremony with projections on Wednesday 20 April from dusk (18:00).

For updates and info contact curator **Marita Batna**, marita.batna@gmail.com, tel. 0425 326 728.

With deep respect we acknowledge the Wadawurrung People as the traditional owners of lands, waters, and skies where we create and hold this exhibition. We pay our respects to their Elders – past, present, and future.

Featured image: Michael Morgan, *Breath*, 2022 (sculpture, video).