

For immediate release  
25 January 2019

## Rethink documentary photography with *Exchange Value* Opening Friday 15 February at QUT Art Museum

Join QUT Art Museum for the poignant and illuminating photography exhibition *Exchange Value*, opening Friday 15 February.

*Exchange Value* brings together the works of 11 Australian and international photographers in an exhibition that offers rich and challenging insights into the world of documentary photography. The exhibition explores close-up accounts of those on society's fringes – skinhead subculture in 1970s London, poor Egyptian neighbourhoods during the Arab Spring, the sterile confines of a mental institution – as well as the photographers documenting them. As the relationship between photographer and subject becomes visible, so does the potential for greater possibilities in image making.

*Exchange Value* opens on Friday 15 February from 6pm-8pm. The momentum continues on Saturday 16 February with an *Artist Exchange* featuring Gavin Watson (UK) and Kim Guthrie (AUS) in-conversation with Brisbane music icon John Wilsteed from the Go-Betweens for a musical journey into the artists' photographic practice. Watson and Guthrie will share selected songs of significance to them, from *Crime and the City Solution* to *Madness*, immersing the audience into the social history of the time, and sharing the stories behind their photographs.



Atong ATEM. Makour, Syracuse series 2018. Courtesy of the artist

"Collectively these works raise some interesting questions about the process of documenting a subculture," said Kevin Wilson, Curator at QUT Art Museum. "*Exchange Value* allows us to step behind the lens and observe the creative process of documentary photography, it questions our own relationship to those in the camera's gaze and makes us think about the ways we impart our own stories onto photographs."

In addition to the wide range of Australian photographers, *Exchange Value* showcases UK artist Gavin Watson, who started photographing skinhead culture in 1970s south west London at age 14; Belgian artist Bieke Depoorter, who spent many months living with and documenting a community in Egypt during the Arab Spring, leading her to share her creative process and final artwork with those she photographed; and UK-based artist, Simon Terrill who photographs large crowds in public spaces, exploring what happens when participants can return the camera's gaze in a manner of their choosing.



Bieke DEPOORTER 2017. Egypt. Cairo. June 2012. Courtesy of the artist.

The exhibition also deconstructs white colonial archival narratives, documents the dark club world of the 1990s in Brisbane, follows one female artist's solo caravan journey into the unknown in the 1970s, and provides exhaustive photographic essays on the fractious relationships between women and men, transgenerational trauma and homelessness and marginalization. All in all, *Exchange Value* packs a punch.

*In Focus: Blind Photography*, an exhibition on tour from Canada will be presented alongside *Exchange Value*. Curated by Megan Strickfaden and Janice Rieger, the show features 10 international blind and partially sighted photographers depicting compelling narratives about inhabiting, negotiating and interpreting the built environment.

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Gavin WATSON. *Neville and Gary up the local park*, 1980. Black and white photograph on gloss paper. Courtesy of the artist.

***Exchange Value* opening night details**

Friday 15 February

6pm-8pm (light canapes and refreshments provided)

**Free special events**

[Exchange with Gavin Watson, Kim Guthrie and](#)

[John Wilsteed](#) | 16 February | 2pm-3pm

Exchange with Simon Terrill | 23 February | 2-3pm

QUT Art Museum

2 George Street, Brisbane

[www.artmuseum.qut.edu.au](http://www.artmuseum.qut.edu.au)

[artmuseum@qut.edu.au](mailto:artmuseum@qut.edu.au) | 03 3138 5370

Tues-Fri 10am-5pm, Sat-Sun 12pm-4pm | FREE

**Artists**

Micky Allan, Atong Atem, Bieke Depoorter, Kim Guthrie, Leah King-Smith, Kallena Kucers, Patrick Pound, Mick Richards, Raphaela Rosella, Simon Terrill, and Gavin Watson.

For media interviews with the artists or QUT Art Museum Curator, Kevin Wilson, or for high-res images, please contact Amanda Maslin, Senior Marketing Officer, 3138 3380 or [amanda.maslin@qut.edu.au](mailto:amanda.maslin@qut.edu.au).