



**Katy B Plummer**  
MARGARET AND THE GREY MARE

Exhibition kit

Casula Powerhouse  
Arts Centre

## About the artist

Katy B Plummer makes work about the phenomenology of resistance and the politics of ghosts. She juxtaposes cinematic storytelling with anachronistic domestic textile practices and the camp aesthetics of high school theatre. Through performance, video, and large-scale textiles, her work announces that history is a haunted house, and that horror and witchcraft are legitimate political strategies.

*This work is a fable, a myth that tells the story of the spiritual vacuum at the heart of whiteness, and the damage this vacuum continues to wreak. I want to put myself in a healthy, sane relationship with a spirit world that is mine to inhabit, even though I don't have a map for it. Part of this, for me, means being accountable to, and for, my own ancestors.*

Katy B Plummer



## About the exhibition

MARGARET AND THE GREY MARE is an opera, a fever dream about an opera and an immersive video installation. The project takes place in a nameless forest at the height of the European witch-trials, and explores the possibilities of artificial intelligence (AI) as oracle, witchcraft as a feminist framework, and the troubling gifts passed down through lineage.

The project is anchored by a sprawling hour-long video opera, which came together through a collaboration of many people, including composer Sally Whitwell, along with opera singers mezzo soprano Margaret Plummer (the artist's sister) and baritone Michael Honeyman. The video was filmed at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre and produced in collaboration with filmmaker and video artist Kuba Dorabialski.

The libretto was generated by the artist in collaboration with a specially trained chatbot designed to simulate conversation with The Grey Mare, and was trained to speak in symbolic, oracular verse. In this way, AI is treated not as a neutral technological gimmick, but as a mystical link to the collective unconscious.





Installation view of Katy B Plummer, *Margaret and the Grey Mare*, 2023, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. Photography by Document Photography.

## Look closer:

### Elements

Take a moment to be present with the artwork and to notice the entrance of the artwork, as well as the interior space.

Notice all of the different elements that come together to create this artwork. How would you describe them? What role do they play in telling the story?

### Intersections

Create a list of the elements and aspects that make up this artwork. Include things that you recognise or are curious about. What do you associate with them, based on your own memory, knowledge and experiences?

What connections can you make with broader historical and contemporary events, movements or cultural practices?



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# Artwork engagement:

*AI: analogue intelligence*

## What you need for this activity:

a novel, photocopier, scissors, a container, paper, pen.

## Talking points

**Collaboration** Creating a project / artwork with many people who have specific roles and create / tend to different aspects of the project.

**Storytelling** Historical, factual, fictional, transcendental, AI, supernatural, intuitive, lessons, Theatre and performance, Technology / multi art forms as a way of communicating a message / story / narrative

**Intersections** Cultures, events, cultural practices over time. Specific places, pagan traditions, feminist, how these things come together to create a new narrative.

1. Photocopy 10 pages from a novel. Cut the text into lines and phrases and put them into a container.
2. In groups of 3–4 students, randomly select one phrase or line from the container. Use it as the starting point to develop a short narrative text.
3. Draw from your own experiences, knowledge and cultural practices to inform this writing.
4. Once finished, share your short narrative with the whole group.
5. What objects, colours, sounds, smells and images emerge from your narrative? Record and share your visual, aural, olfactory and tactile responses to your text.

## In the studio:

1. Revisit your short narrative. What objects, sounds, visual material, textures, colours or olfactory (scents) elements could you create to support a presentation of this story?
2. Choose 2–3 elements to further develop with your group. These may include visual, audio, performance, music etc.
3. Work collaboratively to realise and create these elements. Consider what can be achieved with the time and resources available to you.
4. Once complete, invite an audience to experience your collaborative creations.



## Reflection:

What impact has collaboration had on your process and the realisation of this project?

What influence has your own knowledge, experience and cultural practices brought to the collaboration and the realisation of this project?







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- Why won't you let me...

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## Curriculum connections

**General capabilities:** Literacy, Critical and Creative Thinking, Personal and Social Capability, Ethical Understanding, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability, Personal and social capability

**Cross Curricular priorities:** Work and enterprise, Diversity and difference

### NSW Curriculum

**Syllabus:** Design and Technology, Computing Technology, Enterprise Computing, English, Visual Art, Photographic and Digital Media, Drama, Music

### Australian Curriculum:

English, Visual Art, Drama, Music, Design and Technologies, Digital Technologies

**Key Learning Areas:** Technological and Applied Studies, STEM Education, Creative arts, English

**Curriculum connections:** English, Drama, Music, History, Technology, Visual Arts

Thank you for engaging with the

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