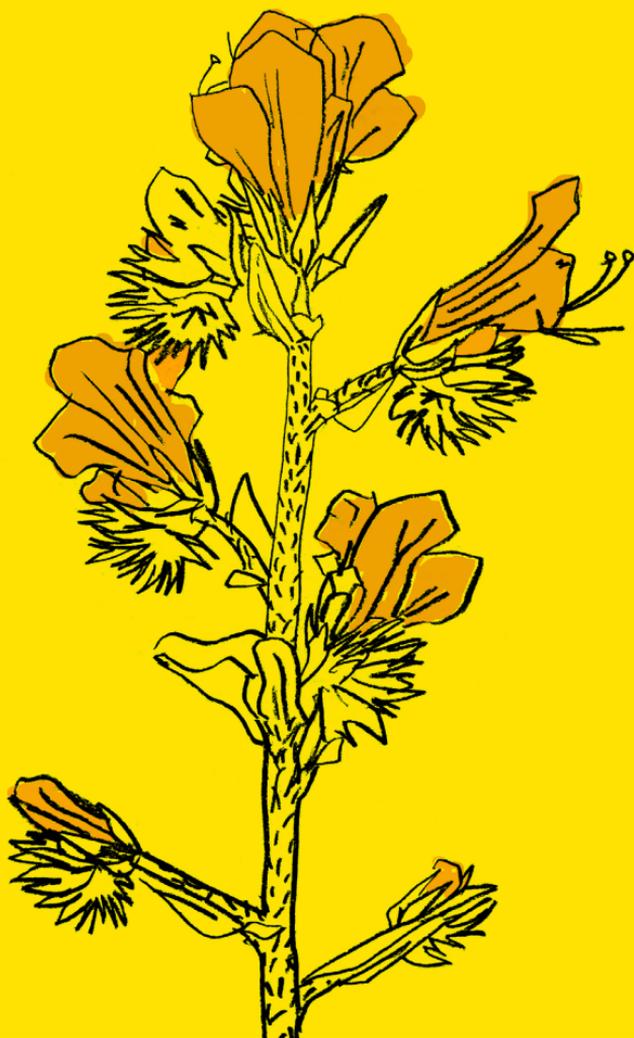


A treasured
private notebook





A treasured
private notebook

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An enchantment with distance
that cannot be bridged*

Rosie Funder

- * The title is taken from a quote in Jennifer Jones' 'Nostalgia: an auto-history'. The quote is taken from Jennifer Kitson and Kevin McHugh, "Historic Enchantments - Materializing Nostalgia," *Cultural Geographies* 22, no. 3 (2015), 487.

As children we know our parents only as far as our small horizon allows. At some point in childhood or early adolescence the image we have built of them — as infallible, as virtuous, as nearing-saintly — corrupts. Discovering for the first time your mother's secret desires and regrets — the thoughts she deems suitable only for the privacy of a notebook — can sting. There is the shock of sudden estrangement; it registers in the body like betrayal. As adults of course we no longer expect our parents to be so monastic in their desires. We have in our sights a new target: we hope to understand them. The work in *A treasured private notebook* is a testament to this doomed aspiration. Both pieces are, in a way, intimate conversations made public. Both reveal the ways in which our mothers defy our expectations and resist our full understanding. These works shy away from judgment, preferring instead to listen.

Thea's work seems to hang in that moment when understanding falters and only empathy can take its place. The large curtain-like fabric resurrects a materiality and a domesticity that Thea's mother mourns the loss of in her writing. The work could even be viewed as a literal reupholstering of the gallery space. Along the fabric Thea has hand-embroidered a phrase taken from her mother's essay. The chosen text memorialises her great-uncles — 'this cove of honey-coloured uncles' — but it does so through

a medium traditionally viewed as belonging to the domestic sphere. The work of women on farms, too-often sidelined in farm family canon, is newly elevated. While the work speaks to the full complexity of her mother's nostalgia, it also cedes space to an interrogation of it. The image of Paterson's Curse, an invasive weed introduced to Australia in the mid-nineteenth century, ultimately disrupts the flow of text, casting suspicion on the neatness of nostalgia.

There is a similar back and forth at play in *80 Ways*, as mother and daughter collaborate to shoot a sex scene of Ella's mother's imagining. We watch Ella watch her mother, her expression flickering in and out of cringing, blushing, and giggling. Hand covering her mouth, she coaxes herself back to seriousness. The piece builds its tension not from the choreographed kisses, but from the moments of silence between shooting and what goes unsaid between mother and daughter. At one point Ella's mother checks her phone and a half-smile spreads across her face. She seems almost adolescent in this moment she reserves all for herself. Later, she announces to the room that she should check that her daughter is okay.

Are you alright, darling?

Yeah.

Are you sure?

Yeah - are you enjoying this?

Yeah, it's wonderful. Are you enjoying it?

Very much.

The moment is rushed and acquires a self-consciousness in front of the camera. It's a sideways nod to the situation, but offers no easy release. There is no climax to this piece, no confrontation or debrief at its close. It begins to feel like a game of chicken. How much of this can you tolerate? When will your empathy short-circuit? Watching the footage of the final sex scene together, mother and daughter skirt the edges of the divide between them:

Gosh.

What?

Nothing.

† Mary, Holy Mary †

Diego Ramirexxx

Warning:

This story features sexually explicit content.

Dark thoughts have a will of their own. When I was 4 years old I used to fall asleep by fantasising about a purplish corpse hidden under my bed, which I used to 'play' with. In another (unbearably Freudian) reverie, I would undress my mother. The latter is an uncomfortable childhood memory because my mother happens to be beautiful.

When I was 19, this memory returned and I began to experience what is known as 'unwanted thoughts'. One of the peculiarities of this phenomenon is that like an evil spell, denial makes it grow stronger. My unwanted thought began with the fear of experiencing an erection with my mother, and once I sought to suppress that image, it became disturbingly recurrent.

In dreams, where morality is null, it is common for me to have sex with my family. According to the Internet, incestuous dreams stand for a desire for self-expression in the context of family life. This resonates with my circumstances, as I come from one of those families where 'we do not speak about things'. It is worth noting that my favourite dream was with my brother rather than my mother, while the most disturbing one was with my sister (I did not care much for my father). I must have a strong desire for self-expression.

When I was a child we had a dog that gave birth to puppies, we gave six away but we kept

one male. One year later the dog-mum had sex with her offspring and I found them tied by a swollen phallus, which was releasing semen inside the female. We separated them and gave the dog-mum away.

I have never had a partner that resembles my mother, neither in character or physical appearance, and I have never called anyone ‘mummy’ (please do not call me ‘daddy’). However, there is always a (first) time and a (secluded) place; my Australian number is [REDACTED].

When I was a teenager, I used to have a fantasy where one of my mum’s friends arrives home while I am alone and I welcome her to the living room; as we wait for my mother to return, she seduces me and we have sex. We do not use a condom but she tells me it is O.K. because she had her fallopian tubes blocked after her third child.

My Mexican mother is a devout Catholic and she has always expressed an affinity for the Virgin Mary—particularly ‘La Virgen de Guadalupe’. This image, which is the syncretism of a pre-Hispanic deity with the mother of Jesus, emerges from the beyond via a cavity that resembles a vagina dentate. I want to make a film where a boy falls in love with his mum and as they engage in incest, the latter morphs into the Virgin Mary and devours the former. The working title is *Forbidden Cuddles*.

My mum used to find me masturbating often (however, she never saw me). Once, when I was 13, she told me out of the blur that masturbating was healthy—I did not reply. That same year they took me to a museum and I masturbated in the bathroom. In retrospect, she found me masturbating so often because I was doing it compulsively. I was glad when my ex-partner caught me for the first time and my brain created a new association.

Nostalgia: an auto-history

Jennifer Jones

Years after my mother Shirley married and moved across the district to 'Roseleigh', her husband's family farm, she continued to refer to the property where she was raised as "home". Nestled quietly near the crest of a gentle Southern Riverina hill, this farm 'Tulli Allan', took in extensive views of The Rock hill to the south and across the western plains.

When I think of Tulli Allan, I envisage how our large extended family dwelt there, particularly in the kitchen, which was the hub of the house and the farm. This was where we gathered for routine hot lunches around the table, listening later to 'Blue Hills' over another nice cup of tea. After lunch, we relaxed in the big back room. The formal lounge room in the front of the house, with stern ancestors on the walls and the glass-fronted buffet full of delicate treasures, seemed to be Gran's. The kitchen was also Gran's, of course, but the back room, and the rest of the farm, belonged to Pop.

Work boots and dirty trousers were allowed in the back room. Pop would ease the strain on his maroon stripped braces and draw his chair up to the battered old table for a round of cards and for the fat lamingtons or cream puffs that emerged from the kitchen. Here afternoons were coloured red as "hearts are trumps" and partnerships failed or triumphed. After cards, Pop retired to his deep-seated cream-coloured armchair, often with a grandchild on his knee.

My young sister Becky, however, wouldn't have a bar of Pop. She preferred the benign predictability of women's work in the kitchen, above the raucous uncertainties of the back room.

One night in 1978, we made an unexpected visit to Tulliallan. The lights of the family Cortina shone up through the tunnel of the ghost gums to reveal cars parked impatiently near the shed. This was a joyless arrival, we children walked bug-eyed through the darkened lounge room and through the empty kitchen. People were gathered in the back room, waiting. They all seemed to understand what was happening. Pop was in the corner, sitting in his big armchair, but propped-up this time by assorted pillows. He seemed shrunken and lopsided. He made ineffective gestures with his left hand when we drew near. Then Mum gathered us together and asked us to say goodbye to Pop. "Why Mum? Where is he going?" we asked. Pop seemed particularly un-prepared for a journey.

Three-year-old Becky scanned the drawn faces in the room and absorbed the circulating information. She gathered up her wits and her blue teddy and traversed the vacant space between herself and Pop's chair. No effective help came from Pop's big hands, so she struggled onto his unfamiliar lap unaided. She turned, raised her small face to his, and caressed his whiskers with her pudgy hand. He blinked in recognition of a final domestic victory.

Becky sat firmly on Pop's lap with her hands stretched out wide across his body to grasp the arms of that chair. The ambulance crew signalled 'time', but the late-found heir to Pop's kingdom now reigned with him upon his throne. She stared down these strange men invading her dominion, and she would not yield.

Rebecca was amongst the youngest of twenty-two grandchildren who grieved for Stan Knight of 'Tulliallan'. He and Ida had seven children, five boys and two girls. All of my uncles (Lindsay, Clarrie, Ken, Bruce, and Ray) followed their father's example by becoming farmers, and Auntie Joyce and my mother both married farmers. We believed in the family farming model, but didn't yet understand our place in its trajectory of decline.¹ Family farms are assets and units of production, but they also perform social functions, fostering identities and attachments to place, landscapes and activities. When my Knight Uncles were forced to sell Tulliallan, joining the 5% of farmers who make an exit from agriculture annually, we all experienced the bereavement. This was in 1993, when Rebecca, now a young woman, thought she might aspire to a farming life.

Rebecca was indignant at the turn of events that brought her back to Tulliallan to watch her heritage go under the hammer. Armed with a small wad of cash and a bidding number, she aimed to repatriate a few select

treasures. She eyed off the competition. Was that an antiques dealer sifting through the bric-a-brac? The stranger paused briefly at Pop's old armchair, stifled a yawn, and waited for the farm machinery to finish.

Rebecca did not remember much about Pop, except a warm feeling she associated with the creak of protruding springs on that battered armchair and the smell of the cracked vinyl. She harboured dreams of re-upholstery in rich tan leather and was determined to have it. Ire, however, is no competition for cash. Soon the bidding wasn't going her way, "Can you give me ten, ten dollars. Can you give me 15? 20...25... 30 dollars". The price threatened to rise above Rebecca's small kitty, and her disappointment was obvious. Glances were exchanged amongst the locals, "Poor thing, anyone could see she had her heart set on that dirty old chair". This outsider was poised to transgress one of the unwritten rules of rural culture; you do not bid against 'a member of the Family' at a farm clearing-sale. Observing the polite hostility of neighbours and district notables, the man reassessed his need. The auctioneer continued, "Any more bids? Forty dollars, am I bid 40. Forty here. Any more? All done at 40. All done at \$40 dollars. Sold! Congratulations to the young lass".

It was near dark when they heaved the old chair onto the back of the ute and Rebecca climbed up to adjust the ropes. Satisfied, she

turned her back on Tulliallan's old sheds and shady verandahs and slumped into the deep and lumpy seat. She held the arms firmly.

Acts of keeping make the awareness of loss more pronounced, as objects offer opportunity to encounter the past again and again, through texture and scent.

So we lost Tulliallan, but we still had each other. The large love of my maternal extended family provided a mode of collective belonging that seemed as dexterous and reliable as their work-hardened hands. These hands were more accustomed to action than repose. Aunt Joyce turned out delicacies in pastry and in thread, even after she lost part of her thumb moving farm machinery across a creek late one night. Mum's hands were also well employed. The Knight women worked as hard as any man, but did not identify as 'farmers' until it became advantageous to do so for tax purposes. Australian rural culture is notably masculine, with women's on-farm work long marginalised as 'helping out' and patrilineal generational farm succession the culturally preferred (if now disappearing) mode of property transfer.² The capable farming hands of my grandfather and five uncles were as large as dinner plates, but freckled and covered with ginger hair, their hands were rendered mottled and snowy soft. Unlike those of his brothers, Uncle Ray's right hand was small, twisted and glossy at the wrist.

He was born with a neuromuscular, genetic disorder that gave him a crooked walk and contractures affecting his right arm. His left hand was strong and broad and even bigger than the hands of his four brothers. This was the last of their hands that I held.

Last year I attended six funerals and a wedding, including Uncle Ken's (in June), Uncle Lindsay's, (in October) and Uncle Ray's (in December). This copse of honey-coloured uncles, who seemed to be as firm and certain as the cyprus pine growing thicker on the hillside year by year, is now razed.

This is a melancholy recollection of our loss, of vanished landholders and hand holders. Such existential nostalgia has been valued in the European tradition as evidence of a heightened and sympathetic awareness of human reality, providing catharsis for grief through nostalgic reverie.³ The construction of the term 'Nostalgia' "from the Greek *nostos* (home) and *algos* (pain)", Patricia Lorcin suggests, evokes former selves that are disassociated from the present.⁴ My recollections of Tulliallan and these Knight farmers links nostalgia to pastoral themes or agrarian sentiment, reconstructing a golden age of rural family unity.⁵

The trope of the lost farm is a staple of nostalgia, occurring in the art and literature of nearly all settler societies.⁶ Our pique over the loss of the family farm assumes a morally

rightful affection that draws attention to interiorised expressions of colonial power. Any relationship with Australian broad-acre farming, and ongoing maintenance of a farming lifestyle, presumes the outcomes of imperialism.⁷ My great grandfather George Knight endowed the soft Riverina hills that he acquired with a new name, 'Tulliallan', reconceptualising a captured Wiradjuri landscape according to British ways of belonging. Wiradjuri stories, songs, and rituals that describe and embody relationships and responsibilities to this land were thus eclipsed by other knowledge.⁸ As Graeme Davison argues, "making bush into countryside was what colonial Australians aspired to do".⁹ This process of transformation tested the tenacity of the white men and women who lived, worked, suffered and died in the bush, providing a foundational story for the new nation, the highly serviceable 'bush myth', which venerates the unique fittedness of settlers to their newly acquired land.¹⁰

If the loss of farms and the family farming projects provokes a desire for repatriation, then for us, this yearning was further exacerbated when the new owners took possession of Tulliallan. Unaware of, or indifferent to our collective identification with the place, they promptly bulldozed the farmhouse. Nostalgic recollection of Tulliallan can now only be "an enchantment with distance that cannot be

bridged”.¹¹ The shock of vanished materiality, however, might serve as a jolt that changes our critical lens, particularly when estrangement is combined with empathy.¹²

Nostalgia can invite a reflection on the ethics of remembering. Instead of enchantment or romantic mourning for a grand project, for unbroken generations of farmers resting in Pop’s back room, contemplation of ruin can offer a site for the production of new meanings. Sensing that the love of land somehow lost is a shared experience might foster an ethical disposition towards Traditional Owners. Nostalgia, as a mode of sensing, recognises that “bodies, objects and things [...] have capacities to affect and to be affected”.¹³ History might thus become “a habitat for everyday practices”.¹⁴

It was after Uncle Lindsay’s funeral that I had opportunity to develop this recognition, in a small way, towards an embodied ethics of nostalgic practice. I noticed a familiar looking armchair outside an old-wares shop in a Wodonga side street. A closer look confirmed that it was the same as Pop’s chair, but green. “We don’t need more furniture”, I counselled myself. After Uncle Ray’s funeral, I went back to buy the chair, but it was gone. I enquired about it anyway, had it been sold? The proprietor remembered the old chair, but it was in storage with restricted access. I returned on the appointed day, but he said the key had been

misplaced. I phoned and he didn’t return my call. I persisted.

Now I sit on my back verandah in that old green armchair, overlooking different Wiradjuri hills. The seat is just as deep as I recall, but the Edwardian scrolled upholstery and turned legs have a pleasing elegance that childhood memory did not capture. A cat has made deep scarifications across the back of the chair. These marks tell a story of past possession, but I did not bother to enquire about the provenance. I plan to erase this history. Like my sister, I dream of re-upholstery in rich tan leather.

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Around the world in 80 ways

Chapter two —
The boy from Bombay

Sandy Mayflower

Warning:
This story features sexually explicit content.

I am Claudia, a senior engineer working on a global irrigation and water management project based in Beijing. It's day three of our global meeting of the minds in relation to the world's water resource problems. It's a very stimulating and thought provoking topic and I feel honoured to be part of what may be a solution for many parts of our planet. As usual, I am the only woman around the board room table. The presentation is stimulating but my mind is distracted. I look around the room. We have representatives on our project from across the globe. Sitting opposite me is an elegant gentleman from Ghana, to his right, our Australian representative, to his left a young man from the Indian sub-continent. China, South America, Saudi Arabia and of course the good old US of A amongst others are seated around the table and I have caught most of them at some stage casting a furtive glance in my direction. My mind is wandering and turning as usual, when not fully engaged, to thoughts that I would never share with my mother. I am beginning to imagine what it would be like and how long it would take to have sex with a man from every country in the world — would that be possible?

The person that is intriguing me the most at this point in time is a young man called Yash, from the Indian Sub-Continent. He looks to be the youngest in my team, and certainly a few years younger than me. He is yet to make eye

contact with me but I have caught him checking out my legs on several occasions. In true Claudia style, I am making the most of my attributes and making sure that I cross my legs at just the right angle for him to glimpse way up the back of my thigh. The company is hosting a dinner this evening for the project group and I will be sure to seat myself next to him if I can, in the hope that he will be the first of my sexual adventures around the world or at least around this table.

I arrive for pre-dinner drinks in the hotel lounge bar and spot my colleagues easily. The Australian guy looks like he is on his third beer at least and has his arm collegially around the South African as if they are old mates. As I approach, the story being told comes to an end amidst a lot of laughing and back slapping by the Australian. “G’day Claudia”, the Aussie smiles and winks at me. I have to admit, he is very infectious; “Champagne?”.

They are standing at the bar, I suspect for easy ordering of drinks, my Indian friend is there also. “Good evening Ms Furette” he says softly, still not looking at me directly. He then finds a bar stool nearby and brings it for me. “Thank you Yash, please call me Claudia”. “OK Claudiam’am”. I smile, he is very sweet. I hop onto the bar stool aided by Aussie and cross my legs. Yash has taken a good look at them from under his dark lashes.

We proceed to dinner and yes, I am able to manipulate myself to be seated next to Yash. He is truly surprising as he pulls my seat back for me to be seated. When I leave the table to visit the powder room he stands; when I return he is on his feet again as he waits for me to sit. He is making me feel like a princess and I’m beginning to like it. The evening proceeds pleasantly, oysters, sea food and a light panna cotta are my choices all accompanied by a very pleasing Champagne. As the evening winds to an end, and we’re leaving the dining room I am wondering how I’ll make the move on Yash—I think he is enjoying my company but he is such a gentleman. Surprisingly and unknowingly Aussie comes to my aid; “fancy a night-cap Claudia?” he asks with a bit of a drunken slur and a glance up and down my body.

“Ms Furette and I have agreed to go over some statistics for tomorrow’s discussion before we retire”; to my surprise it was Yash who spoke; “so thank you but we have work to attend to”. For the first time he looked me directly in the eye. I stumbled a bit before finding my voice, “thanks Aussie, another time”.

We were both giggling when we reached the lift, “thank you so much Yash, that was a close call but brilliant thinking on your part”. “You’re welcome” he responded. In the close proximity of the lift I could feel him breathing, our giggling had subsided and the mood had

become more sombre. He had brushed the skin on my arm as he leant over to press button number 16 for my floor and an electric shock had surged through me, I wondered if he felt it too. We were a bit awkward and silent as the lift ascended—I am usually far more confident and relaxed around men but his almost old fashioned ways had me a little off guard. Ping—the lift announced as the doors opened on the 16th floor—I had to do something. I was halfway through the lift door when I turned to him; “let me fix you a good night drink to say thank you for saving me” I offered, “Ok” he said simply and followed me out.

It was a glorious moon lit night as we stood at the window sipping whisky and looking out over the city lights of Beijing. I thanked him once again for saving me from the amorous Aussie and started to probe a little about him. He had one older brother who lived in the USA. He had been born and brought up in Bombay—strangely he still called his home town Bombay—“that’s what my parents call it he said—so we’ve never got used to calling it Mumbai”.

He was relaxing but just a little. Feeling brave, I took his hand and caressed the back of it with the palm of mine and immediately felt him start to quiver. Nerves or passion or perhaps both I thought, and took a risk by turning directly to face him. His eyes were still

downcast but he hadn’t pulled away. I kissed him gently and tentatively on the lips and the quivering returned, I felt his breathing quicken. “Claudia, I can’t do this without” he stopped mid-sentence; “without what?” I enquired. He removed the elegant scarf he was wearing from around his neck; “without you wearing this” he stated and began to gently put it across my eyes “I need you to wear this over your eyes”.

I gulped as I realised what he was requesting. He wanted me or needed me to be blindfolded—wow that was something new for me. The thought sent shivers of excitement and fear through my body. I let him cover my eyes with his scarf and immediately felt strangely at ease. Perhaps because I sensed him relax. As soon as my eyes were covered he touched me continuously, never leaving my side. It was reassuring in my now dark world. “Finish your drink” he said and I did what was requested. He took the glass from my hand and I heard both my glass and his being set down.

I felt him move closer my entire senses alert from my enforced dark world, I could hear him breathe and feel his breath on my cheek as he brushed his lips against my face and then claimed my mouth in a lingering passion filled kiss—his tongue invaded my mouth and entwined with mine, I could taste the whisky still lingering in his mouth and I could smell

him. He smelt divine, soap and citrusy after-shave. He pressed his body into mine and I could feel his penis hard against my belly pushing into me.

He continued to kiss me as I felt him locate the zipper of my dress and pull it down agonisingly slowly. I felt him fiddle with his clothes as shirt and tie were removed and then I heard his zipper. Returning to me I felt him totally naked. I reached and touched his silky skin, rubbing my hands over his chest, pecs and shoulders, around his back and down to his buttocks—he felt glorious, hard and muscular. I moved my hands south to get a feel of the hard penis I had felt sticking into my belly earlier. It greeted my touch with a violent jerk as Yash’s hand came around to pull mine away. “You can’t touch me” he rasped, “I’m ready to cum already”. Taking heed, I steered clear of the pulsating rod sticking into me—I really wanted to touch but understood I needed to wait.

Yash leant me back over the table so that I was propped up by my elbows and seemed to pull back from me a bit. “Your legs” he said “they are so beautiful, I could look at them all night”. He picked a leg up removed my shoe and proceeded to glide his hands up and down “so silky, so smooth” he whispered. His mouth travelled the path of his hands planting soft kisses along the length. My other leg got the same attention and then Yash was between

them. He had spread me wide, my snatch in his face—he tortured me with licks on my inner thighs teasing me getting closer and closer to my pussy. I was already nearly screaming, the anticipation of his touch to my pussy was agonising and I had no idea what he would use, his fingers, his tongue, his penis, then I got the first feel of something on my pussy lips; his hair, tickling me.

My snatch was pulsating, I was leaving a trail of juices from my pussy to pool on the desk, his hair was soon replaced by his tongue as he expertly located my clit and started the slow circling movement I loved. I could feel the tension building in my groin as my internal muscles clenched and my clit engorged. “I’m close” I groaned to give some warning of the impending seismic activity of my orgasm. “Good” I heard as he pulled his face away from me, leaving me hanging but only for a while as he slowly placed my right leg up and propped my foot on his shoulder. Then placed my left leg up and propped that foot on his other shoulder. Reaching for my arms he pulled me towards him and placed them around his neck for leverage and stability. “When I first saw your legs, I knew this is what I wanted to do with them” with that he pulled me right to the edge of the desk, his penis finally finding its way into my wet and very welcoming tunnel. With his hands on my lower back he was thrusting

upwards, the position meant that I was massaged between his penis inside me and his body on the outside. The sensation was mind blowing. It wasn't long before the pace picked up and Yash was shaking, the adrenalin cursing through his veins as he thrust fully and held as he released his load into me. As he stilled my orgasm clamped him inside me as I spasmed against him in my own release.

As my breathing recovered and I regained my senses, I couldn't help but wonder how a shy boy from Bombay had been so sexually knowledgeable — had he spent his youth studying the Karma Sutra? “Position 43” Yash said with a giggle as if reading my thoughts!

About the exhibition and artists

This publication was produced for the exhibition of *A treasured private notebook* by Ella Sowinska and Thea Jones at Metro Arts, from the 27th Feb to 16th March 2019.

A treasured private notebook responds to the artists' shared childhood experience of discovering the secret writing practices of their mothers.

Both Sowinska and Jones actively engage with their mother's creative practices for this exhibition. Sowinska's film, *80 Ways*, is an observational video work documenting the on-set collaboration between the artist and her mother as they work together to dramatise a chapter of Sowinska's mother's erotic novel, written under the pseudonym Sandy Mayflower. Jones' work *Jane's Salvation (Paterson's Curse)* is a large-scale textile installation responding to an essay written by her mother.

In 2017, Jones approached her mother to write an essay to accompany a work exploring nostalgia as a coping mechanism for trauma. Hoping for a scathing review of family farm dynamics and conservative racist rural politics, she instead received a touching story about death, loss, and the function of nostalgia. This new work is hand embroidered with an excerpt of text from her mother's essay, as well as the motif of the Paterson's Curse invasive

weed. Paterson's Curse covers the landscape surrounding Thea's mother's childhood home with a blanket of purple flowers. It has been an ongoing theme in Jones's recent works as a representational motif for European colonisation, and a subsequent critical investigation and deconstruction of her own role in this as a white woman.

Ella Sowinska is an artist and filmmaker whose work is guided by the theoretical discourses of documentary and reality television. Working predominately in video, installation and occasionally, live performance, Ella addresses the impact that the constructed situation has upon these social relationships. Ella's work explores the power dynamics between director or artist and actor, participant or contestant by drawing attention to the often-constructed situation. Recent projects have been concerned with the representation of intimacy and desire in non-fiction screen based works from a queer perspective.

Thea Jones is an artist with a background in philosophy. She is broadly interested in post-structuralism and theories of language, particularly through a feminist lens. She often utilises textiles and traditional craft techniques to explore these themes. Recent projects have responded to folklore and amateur rural histories surrounding the region in NSW where her maternal family has lived for over 100 years,

with a focus on deconstructing feelings of belonging and place as a white woman living on stolen land with a violent history.

Ella and Thea live and work in Naarm Melbourne on the unceded sovereign land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation.

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— Ella and Thea.

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Ella Sowinska and Thea Jones

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Ella Sowinska
Thea Jones

Rosie Funder
Diego Ramirexxx
Jennifer Jones
Sandy Mayflower