



**Chelsea Farquhar**

# **Fluttertongue**

The Guildhouse Collections Project with  
Adelaide Symphony Orchestra presented in  
partnership with Adelaide Festival Centre

1 - 31 August 2022



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The Guildhouse Collections Project extends a rich tradition of inviting contemporary artists into important State collecting institutions to afford the opportunity for study and research, collaboration and creation. Guildhouse's Collections Project celebrates more than a decade of artist engagement in art, anthropologic and natural science collections. The goal of the project is not just research, it is the contemporary lens the artist brings to the Collection itself. In each iteration, we the audience, and the Institution, benefit from the opportunity to connect with familiar objects, stories and experiences, anew.

This important iteration of The Collections Project, with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (ASO), and presented in partnership with Adelaide Festival Centr, reimagines the traditional notion of a collection. This collaboration was inspired by a statement made by ASO Managing Director Vincent Ciccarello during a public panel talk. Vince spoke of the orchestra as a living collection, something vital to

enshrining and ensuring the State's engagement with music – past, present and future. Celebrating Adelaide's designation as a UNESCO City of Music, this project highlights Adelaide's creative strengths – our artistic vitality, willingness to act, and to collaborate.

With a reputation for vitality and versatility, the ASO has provided South Australian and international audiences with access to Australia's leading orchestral musicians for 85 years. Reaching more than 100,000 concertgoers each season, the ASO demonstrates its commitment to audiences through regular broadcasts on ABC Classic, regional tours and programming for families, children and communities. The ASO brings powerful ephemeral art to life with every performance – an experience only made possible through all facets of the organism working in harmony.

Farquhar researched the ASO as a living collection, comprising sheet music, performance brochures and posters, instruments, architecture and the musicians

**Image left**  
Chelsea Farquhar, Fluttertongue, 2022, polaroid, image courtesy the artist.



themselves. Utilising sculpture, performance and video, Farquhar has created a new body of work presented as part of SALA 2022, to be displayed on the Adelaide Festival Centre external screen on King William Road and wearable objects to be shown within the Adelaide Festival Centre.

Adelaide Festival Centre, South Australia's principal performing arts venue and presenter, is one of the ASO's primary performance venues. Adelaide Festival Centre was Australia's first capital city arts centre and its expansive riverbank site hosts more than one million people annually. Adelaide Festival Centre's support for this project has enabled Chelsea's evocative new work to reach audiences in the hundreds of thousands through screening on the large format screens on the façade of the Centre.

This significant iteration of The Guildhouse Collections Project shares knowledge, stories and ideas, and in doing so, harnesses the cultural vitality of our city, celebrates our artists and supports the richness of our community.

Guildhouse works with visual artists, craftspeople and designers, government and industry to build skills and knowledge. For 55 years we have defined ourselves through a commitment to partnerships, adaptation and responsiveness to the changing conditions facing artists and makers. Together with our partners, we create opportunities for meaningful, sustainable careers in the creative sector.

The Collections Project is a result of true partnership and demonstrates the value of creating new and ambitious environments for artists, collections, spaces and audiences to coalesce. We extend our thanks to each partner for their unique contribution, and congratulate Cheslea Farquhar on the bold and playful body of work she has created in response to her research with Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

**Emma Fey**

Chief Executive Officer, Guildhouse

**Vincent Ciccarello**

Managing Director, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra

**Douglas Gautier AM**

Chief Executive Officer and Artistic Director, Adelaide Festival Centre

Image right

Chelsea Farquhar, Fluttertongue (still), 2022, digital video, image courtesy the artist.



How do we deal with history

Mish Grigor

What is the act of creation?

Peggy Phelan, the American feminist scholar, said that all performances disappear.

Where do you get your ideas from? Artists hear this a lot - asked by regional radio stations, by the public at Q and As, even from Auntie Pauline between mains and dessert.

Of course the answer is that there is no beginning for artists. There is only the next outcome, which has its tendrils and trails in a thousand projects before, in studio experiments and sketches, in nightmares and conversations, in memories and ideas, via originality and appropriation, via randomness and play. The roots grow long and deep and across time zones... now I am in conversation with an artist from a hundred years ago who has inspired me, now I am borrowing a feeling from a conversation I witnessed on a long haul flight, now I am using the colour of a pebble I saw in Iceland, now I am smudging paint based on eyeliner styled on Kim Kardashian, now I am diving into David Hockney's swimming pool.

Sometimes the threads are pulled tight enough for keen-eyed others to see the connections (I spy Helen Frankenthaler's red! That chord progression sounds like the Neighbours theme song! That's the same kind of car Margaret Dodd would use!) Other times it is more opaque.

With Fluttersong, Chelsea Farquhar is in the ASO archives.

There are ideas to be found in there, but everything has been reimagined with a dream logic. We see horses ordained with ruffs, heads floating in space, curtains that perform for us.

In Archive Fever, French philosopher Jacques Derrida articulates the etymology of archive to the Greek word *arkhē*, which, he explains, means both commencement and commandment . A beginning is ordered by a government, an institution, an official. However, in a Derridian pirouette, he goes on to state that the first archives were held in an *arkheion*, a place where they were stored and ordered. And of course, that ordering happened by someone - some one who was making decisions about what was remembered, and how.

Before an archive is begun there must be a pile of as-yet-unarchived material which an administrative body decides to archive, what has been left out? What has been included? And how will it all be accessed in a logical manner?

When Derrida first gave that lecture, I was at school, getting my first email address - *mish\_grig@hotmail.com*. I still have it, and occasionally I pop back, sign in. Although membership to Hotmail is an embarrassing admission, I hold onto it so I can reread my first ever emails - lengthy exchanges of a school camp, notes to crushes whose existence I can only just conjure up, endless pages of playground gossip.

I wasn't quite ready for French philosophy, but I was creating an archive the same way that Derrida described. Some email entries deleted, some stored forever (or for as long as Outlook.com lets me sign in!). I have instant access to these annals of my life through my constant attachment to my phone. From the Hotmail years I can jump straight to Apple Photo storage, onto my old Myspace, roll around in ancient text messages, and endlessly replay primordial voice memos. In the mishmash of these artefacts there are stories of nights out, tales of friendships, moments clumsily articulated to family members.

In official archives, there tends to be a more rigid system of organising histories. In archiving, an institution is throwing around its weight. Making a narrative. Creating a story. The ASO is bending the rules already - it calls itself a living archive: the musicians that play are part of it, and their existence in everyday life means there is a blurriness - where do these records start and end? How are they filed?

Taking this unorthodox approach as an emancipatory challenge, Chelsea approaches. She is not clarifying the archive for us - showing us hidden truths. She is not asking whether the archive contains an authoritative reality. In fact the work does not feel extractive - we cannot see the original in her creations. Instead, her output is that of the romantic, the fantasist, one who connects dots across distances, who makes assumptions, who leaps at flights of fancy. She has

stirred up a beautiful dust from the ground, thick as a fog, and in it we can find new connections, associations, and narratives.

We see a dance with archives - a riff, a jig. She allows us to see the textures, creates frottage with her imaginings, and dreams images from her impressions. Shadows of history emerge, wearing cloaks of the present. Via a cast of characters that allure us with their relationship to the camera, costumes that come to life, and colours that sparkle, she makes us feel that we have access to something private - a glimpse behind the scenes of her visions.

She shows how the work of creation is different to the work of research. The archives are not here to play any function except to spin her into magic playfulness. Through the theatricality of a revealed leg, the romance of a billowing skirt, the performances of the ASO are danced alive, not allowed to disappear. And we get to benefit from their ceaselessness.

Mish Grigor  
2022

Phelan, Peggy. Unmarked: The Politics of Performance. p. 220.

Derrida, Jacques, and Eric Prenowitz. 'Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression'. Diacritics, vol. 25, no. 2, 1995, p. 9. DOI.org (Crossref), <https://doi.org/10.2307/465144>.







**Chelsea Farquhar** is a South Australian based emerging artist who utilises sculptural and performative outcomes to highlight moments of exchange and collaboration.

Farquhar graduated with first class honours from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2020 where she received the West Space Window Exhibition award to exhibit in 2021. In 2017 Farquhar graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Adelaide Central School of Art and in 2018 received a Carclew Fellowship to undertake travel to the Scottish Sculpture Workshop and to New York, USA for a residency and mentorship opportunity. Chelsea is currently a studio artist at Adelaide Contemporary Experimental (ACE) and in April of 2022 undertook a residency at Watch This Space gallery in Alice Springs NT.

As a performer Farquhar has worked for various collectives including APHIDS during Howl at the Art Gallery of South Australia for the 2020 Adelaide Biennial Monster Theatres. Farquhar undertook the 2018 Queer Development Program: Stephen Cummins Workshop Intensive at Performance Space in association with PACT Centre for Emerging Artists, NSW and has performed for 110% collective during the 2018 LiveWorks Festival at Carriage works NSW. In 2021 Farquhar undertook a Clowning mentorship with clown and actress Britt Plummer at Rumpus theatre funded by Adelaide Central School of Art.



**Image previous**

Chelsea Farquhar, Fluttertongue (still), 2022, digital video, image courtesy the artist.

**Image right**

Chelsea Farquhar, Fluttertongue (still), 2022, digital video, image courtesy the artist.



Chelsea Farquhar

### *Fluttertongue*

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Theatre, the artists and authors.

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Guildhouse, Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Adelaide Festival  
Theatre acknowledge that they operate on the lands of the Kaurna  
nation and recognise the continued relationship to their lands by  
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Chelsea Farquhar, Fluttertongue (stills), 2022, digital video, images courtesy the artist.



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