

Anarchive Gutfeeling, Performance by Jingwei Bu, *Sipping Peice*, 2026, Adelaide Contemporary Experimental. Photography by Lana Adams.

Anarchive: Gut-feeling

Exhibition Kit

This exhibition kit has been developed by ACE Education to support student learning and engagement with the ACE exhibition *Anarchive: Gut-feeling*. Inside, you'll find a curatorial overview, background information on the artist, and insights into selected artworks.

The kit includes discussion prompts to encourage critical thinking, along with a flexible activity designed for use in the classroom or gallery setting. Educators can adapt the content to suit primary or secondary students, integrating it into broader visual arts, history, or cultural studies learning.

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About the Exhibition

Anarchive: Gut-feeling is an exhibition that celebrates the powerful, experimental, and often overlooked contributions of women artists in South Australia. Bringing together artworks from the 1970s and 1980s alongside new commissions by contemporary artists, the exhibition explores how art can carry memories, emotions, stories, and resistance across generations.

The title *Anarchive* combines the ideas of an "archive" and "anarchy." While an archive usually collects and preserves history, *Anarchive: Gut-feeling* asks important questions about whose stories are remembered and whose are forgotten. Many women artists working in experimental art have been left out of museums, collections, and history books. This exhibition responds to those gaps by revisiting, reimagining, and sharing these important artistic histories.

Rather than focusing only on paintings or sculptures, many of the artworks in *Anarchive: Gut-feeling* use unusual materials and forms, including performance, video, sound, food, conversation, movement, and participation. Some artworks existed only for a short moment in time, such as a live performance, a communal meal, or a protest action, leaving behind photographs, memories, or recordings as traces of what happened. The exhibition asks audiences to think about how we remember these fleeting experiences and why they matter.

The exhibition is deeply connected to the body and the senses. Visitors move through gallery spaces painted in colours inspired by the inside of the human body and encounter artworks about eating, speaking, listening, touch, care, memory, pleasure, protest, and survival. Through humour, discomfort, vulnerability, and experimentation, the artists explore big ideas about identity, gender, politics, community, care, and social change.

Many of the works reflect important moments in Adelaide's history, including the Women's Art Movement, experimental art collectives, Aboriginal land rights activism, and movements for gender equality and LGBTQIA+ rights. These artists challenged dominant ideas about who art was for, what art could look like, and whose voices deserved to be heard.

At its heart, *Anarchive: Gut-feeling* reminds us that history is never fixed or complete. Like memory itself, it is messy, emotional, and always changing. The exhibition encourages visitors to trust their "gut feeling," ask questions, and think about the stories we carry, share, and sometimes forget.



Anarchive: Gut-feeling installation view, 2026, Adelaide Contemporary Experimental. Photography by Sam Roberts.

Selected Artworks



Shenshen Zheng, *The Air Will Change* 时空 · 滋味, installation view, 2026, Adelaide Contemporary Experimental. Photography by Sam Roberts.

Shenshen Zheng is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores cultural identity, family traditions, and our relationship with the natural environment. Through sculpture, performance, and community participation, Zheng reflects on how cultural knowledge is passed between generations and how everyday experiences, such as food and making, can connect people across time and place. Her practice often highlights ideas of care, coexistence, and the unseen labour of mothers and grandmothers.

In her work, Zheng transforms the gallery into a space of memory and shared experience. At the centre of the installation is a large handmade ceramic vessel traditionally used for fermenting suan cai (pickled cabbage), inspired by food traditions from Northeast China and memories of childhood. Made from clay mixed with paper pulp, flax fibre, and corn husks, the vessel reflects on the hidden labour often carried out by women, particularly caregivers, whose work quietly sustains families and communities.

The artwork slowly changed throughout the exhibition. On opening night, Zheng and her mother filled the vessel with cabbage and salt brine to ferment in the gallery, while later audiences were invited to help make dumplings using the pickled cabbage, sharing recipes and stories together. Through touch, scent, food, and participation, Zheng encourages visitors to think about how culture and memory are preserved through everyday acts of care and connection.



Shenshen Zheng, *The Air Will Change* 时空 · 滋味, installation view, 2026, Adelaide Contemporary Experimental. Photography by Sam Roberts.

Discussion

- *The Air Will Change* 时空 · 滋味 changes over time through fermentation, smell, and participation. How does this artwork challenge ideas about art needing to stay permanent or unchanged?

Selected Artworks



V Barratt & Grace Marlow, *The teeth of time (crown)*, 2026, performance & traces, Adelaide Contemporary Experimental. Photography by Lana Adams.

V Barratt and Grace Marlow work together through shared making, performance, and ongoing conversation. Their collaborative practice explores ideas of memory, identity, power, and connection, often using voice, movement, and found materials to think about how people relate to one another and the systems around them. Together, they are interested in stories that are difficult to neatly organise or explain, instead embracing messiness, emotion, and lived experience.

In *The teeth of time*, Barratt and Marlow explore how memories of performance and creative practice can be carried across generations. The work draws from materials Barratt has collected over decades of artmaking, including costumes, objects, and fragments sometimes described as "art waste." Rather than presenting history as fixed or complete, the artists create a work that feels layered, unfinished, and constantly shifting, asking visitors to think about what gets remembered, forgotten, or passed between people over time.

The work was activated through live performance on opening night, when Barratt, Marlow, and Andrea Illés transformed the gallery space through movement and spoken word. Barratt dragged themself across the floor weighed down by old paper costumes, while Marlow's spoken performance accompanied an action involving a gold axe. The axe referenced a moment from Barratt's earlier performance history, turning a past injury into a shared act of remembering. Through performance, sound, and material traces, *The teeth of time* invites audiences to reflect on memory not as something still or complete, but as something alive, carried through bodies, stories, and relationships.

Discussion

- Barratt and Marlow work together through performance and shared experiences. How can collaboration change the way stories are told or remembered?

Gallery Discussion

- Many works in Anarchive: Gut-feeling are activated through performance, sound, food, and touch. How does this change the way we experience art compared to traditional "look only" artworks?
- Several artists revisit past events, archives, and personal memories. Why is it important to revisit and "re-activate" history rather than simply record it?
- Works by Shenshen Zheng, V Barratt, and Grace Marlow highlight ideas of care, labour, and shared experience. How do these artists show that art can be something collective rather than individual?
- The exhibition explores the body in many ways—through eating, speaking, movement, and sensation. What new ideas about the body and everyday actions do the artworks make you think about?

Classroom Activity

- As a class, brainstorm a list of everyday actions that involve the body (for example: eating, speaking, listening, cleaning, resting, remembering). Discuss how these actions could also be seen as "artistic" or meaningful.
- Choose one everyday action and create a small artwork or performance response that transforms it into something expressive. You might use drawing, writing, sound, movement, photography, or simple materials found in the classroom. Think about how you can show feeling, memory, or connection through this action.
- Bring all responses together as a class "living archive" of everyday actions. Walk through the collection and reflect: How do simple, repeated actions tell bigger stories about care, culture, identity, or community?

Further Reources

- Editorial - Experimental Art: Rattling the Archive, Artlink, article
- Digesting Experimental Art Histories, Artlink, article
- Anarchive: knowledge follows form, FUMA, sister exhibition
- The Experimental Art Anarchive, Sasha Grbich, The Barefoot Review, article

Curriculum Links

Australian Curriculum / Visual Art /
Years 11–12 SACE Objectives

- Implement ideas and representations
- Apply literacy skills
- Analyse and interpret visual language, expression and meaning in art
- Evaluate art practices, traditions, cultures, and theories
- Experiment in response to stimulus
- Create meaning through the knowledge and understanding of art materials, techniques, technologies, and processes
- Realise responses to communicate meaning

Australian Curriculum / Visual Arts /
Years F-10

- Use materials, techniques and processes to explore visual conventions when making artworks (AC9AVAFD01 - AC9AVA10D01) (AC9AVAFC02 - AC9AVA10C02)
- Explore ideas and artworks from different cultures and times, including works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists, to use as inspiration for their own representations (AC9AVAFE01 - AC9AVA10E01) (AC9AVAFE02 - AC9AVA10E02)
- Respond to art works and consider where and why people make them, including visual art works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (AC9AVAFE01 - AC9AVA10E01) (AC9AVAFE02 - AC9AVA10E02)
- Develop ways to enhance their intentions as artists through exploration of how they use materials, techniques, technologies, and processes (AC9AVA10D01) (AC9AVA10D02)
- Practice techniques and processes to enhance representation of ideas in their art making (AC9AVAFD01 - AC9AVA10D01) (AC9AVAFC02 - AC9AVA10C02)

Visit Us

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Tours

We welcome visits from education groups, primary through to tertiary, and encourage self-guided visits to our exhibitions. For more information about how to book, visit our website or email us.

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