SOPHIE GANNON GALLERY

MONICA ROHAN

GO WHERE IT GOES

17 September - 5 October 2024

Go where it goes

Over the past decade, painter Monica Rohan has developed a singular, yet evolving oeuvre, comprising portraits of female figures hiding in, or collapsing under, the weight of layers of richly patterned fabrics. The faces of their subjects are rarely, if ever, revealed.

Go where it goes extends Rohan's ongoing exploration of concealed figures, richly patterned fabrics, and lush foliage, this time incorporating different bodies of water. The twelve works in the exhibition depict aqueous sites of significance for the artist, be it Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania or New Zealand's pristine South Island.

Rohan composes the foreground of her images by resolutely analogue means, draping blankets, rugs and towels over a hills hoist clothesline in her backyard. The artist photographs these setups, transposing them (in paint) onto coastal, creek and riverine landscapes. In this way, Rohan's paintings reflect the role of technology in how images are consumed and produced in the 21st century; the ability for the artist to envision her compositions hovering above an unspoilt, natural wilderness is only possible through digital photography and editing processes. Similarly, the audience's visual comprehension of such imagery reflects the pervasiveness of these technologies.

Fabric and water are arguably two of the hardest subjects to capture in paint; they are fluid, light sensitive and shapeshifting. The exhibition's titular painting features bold floral textiles in a subdued palette, featuring not one, but two, visible hands; one resting at the side, and the other peering out through the middle of the fabric curtain. As with other works in the exhibition, these appendages are not attached to a body. go where it goes is also notable for its close framing of verdant foliage and water rushing down a rocky stream.

It is interesting to consider Rohan's subject matter in relation to the environmental impact of the global textiles industry. In 2017, the Ellen McCarthur Foundation estimated that the production of textiles (including cotton farming) used around 93 billion cubic metres of water annually, representing 4% of global freshwater withdrawal, with that figure expected to increase tenfold over the following decade (1).

Rohan's collaging of patterned textiles onto unspoilt bodies of water and surrounding environments are highly theatrical (the foregrounding of curtains of fabric is a literal framing of "the stage") but deliberate. Rohan wants us to see the inherent contradiction, absurdity even, of the juxtaposition. In a 1993 lecture and related series of text paintings, the late Australian conceptual artist Ian Burn posited that "a landscape is not something you look at but something you look through". (2) In making these paintings, Rohan asks the viewer to step into the liminal space between the foreground and landscape, to reflect on their individual connections to place, and their agency in the cycle of consumption and its impact on the most precious and finite of resources.

Excerpt of exhibition essay by Hamish Sawyer, 2024.

1. A New Textiles Economy: Redesigning Fashion's Future, Ellen Macarthur Foundation, United Kingdom, 2017, p.38.

2. Ian Burn, "A landscape is not something you look at but something you look through", Lecture, 1993, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia.

MONICA ROHAN
Girraween Study, 2024
Oil on board
40 x 30 cm
$4,600 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN
Arrowtown Study, 2024
Oil on board
40 x 30 cm
$4,600 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN

In Monica Rohan's artworks, floating transcendence and fixed realism are just as important. Inspired by rural pastoral in southeastern Queensland and her admiration of 19th-century novels, Rohan looks back on her autobiographical genre through a mysterious self-depiction.

Rohan drives her imagination and portrays her various emotional roles and physical characters. Her feminine motif uses space as an impressive medium for painting, putting herself in an adventurous environment: floating, falling, climbing, laying, and hunting endlessly. Or hiding.

Rohan's sensitivity is evident in her carefully constructed work, which reveals her love for patterns, lights and colours. The colours maintain a clear quality, and the decorative possibilities of textiles and lush foliage serve as an off-the-shelf symbol of the bright world.

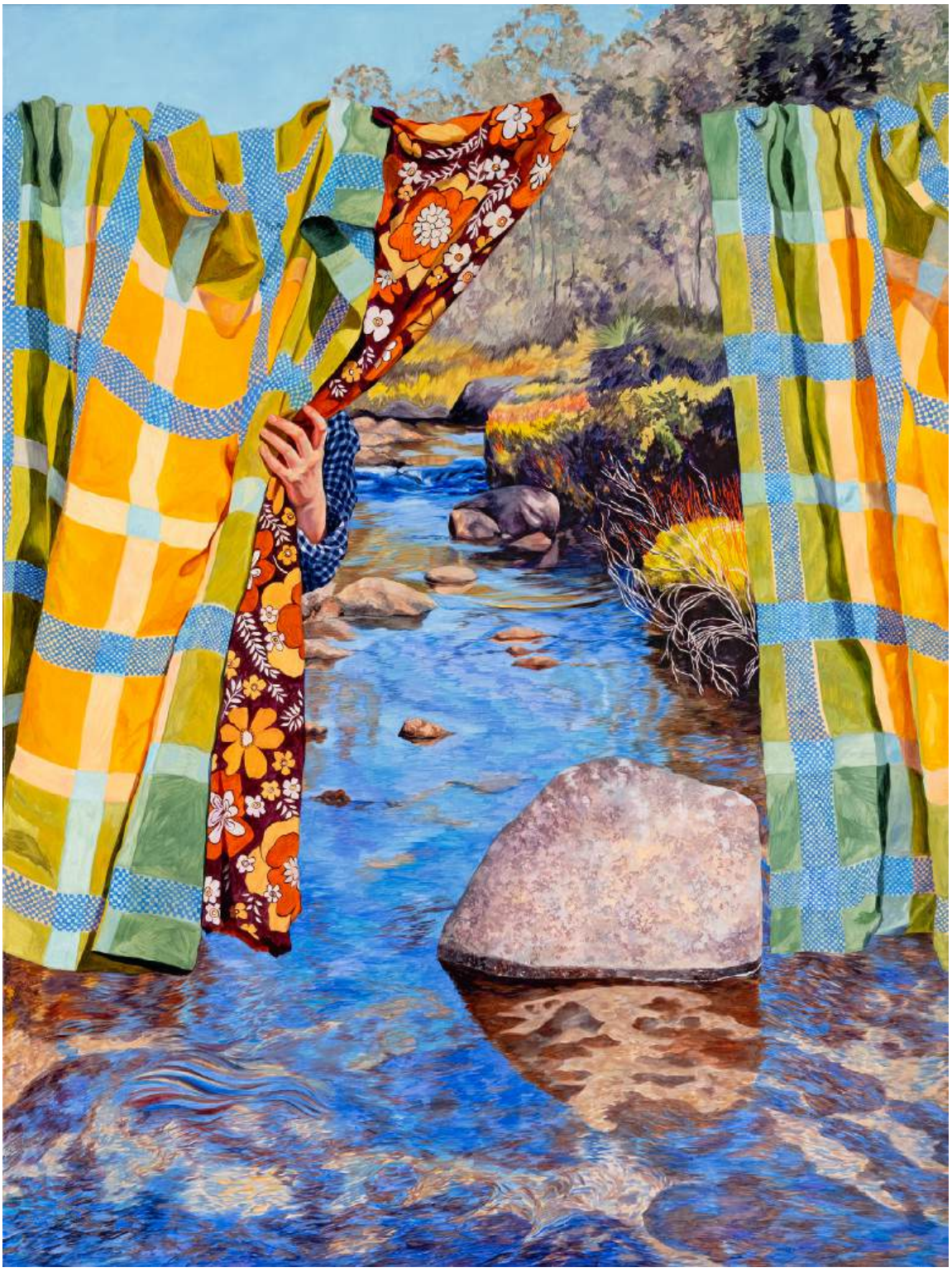
'Go where it goes' expands on my familiar imagery of patterned textiles, foliage and concealed figures, with each work portraying a different body of water. Whether ocean waves, river rapids or reflective lakes and rock-pools I was drawn to the challenge of painting the complex interplay of light across and through water.

The colours, patterns and rhythms of these surfaces as they reflect and distort the surrounding landscape are echoed in both the materiality and abstract designs of the textiles that hang in the foreground. These visual relationships speak to the strange ways our domestic lives are intertwined with natural ecosystems. When incongruous traces of human presence can be found in even the most pristine wilderness these works imagine a gentler, more harmonious interaction with the landscape.

Monica Rohan graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Art with Honours from Queensland College of Art in 2011. She has since exhibited in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. In 2016, Rohan was selected as a finalist in the prestigious Archibald Prize in her first attempt.

Her work is held in private and public collections in Australia, including Artbank, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art, the University of Queensland Art Museum, Mater Children’s Hospital and the Griffith University Collection.

MONICA ROHAN
Weave, 2024
Oil on canvas
122 x 91.5 cm
$13,500 incl. GST



MONICA ROHAN
Downstream, 2024
Oil on canvas
122 x 91.5 cm
$13,500 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN
Arrow, 2024
Oil on canvas
122 x 91.5 cm
$13,500 incl. GST

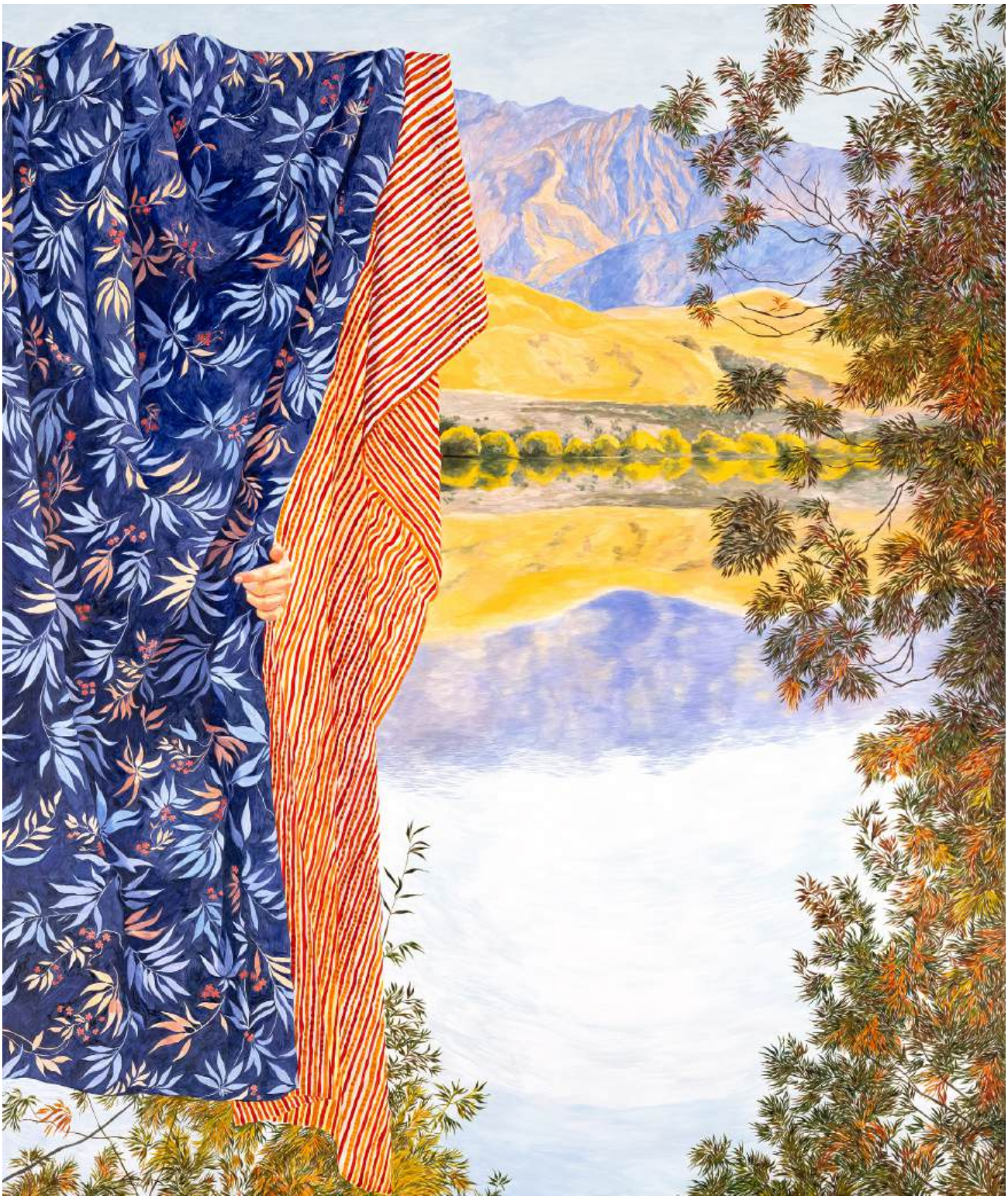
MONICA ROHAN
Echo, 2024
Oil on canvas
122 x 91.5 cm
$13,500 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN
All of these things, 2024
Oil on canvas
122 x 91.5 cm
$13,500 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN
Downstream, 2024
Oil on canvas
122 x 183 cm
$24,000 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN
Appearing as dreams, 2024
Oil on canvas
183 x 152.5 cm
$26,000 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN
Falls, 2024
Oil on canvas
183 x 152.5 cm
$26,000 incl. GST



MONICA ROHAN
Glass, 2024
Oil on canvas
183 x 152.5 cm
$26,000 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN
Go where it goes, 2024
Oil on canvas
183 x 152.5 cm
$26,000 incl. GST

MONICA ROHAN

BIOGRAPHY

1990 Born in Beaudesert, Queensland

EDUCATION

2011 Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours (First Class), Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Brisbane

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023 Disappearing Act, jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2022 Backdrops, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2021 Mind how you go, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2020 Hesitate, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2019 Wobble, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2018 Nowhere Near, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2017 Look Down at the World, Jan Murphy Gallery
2016 Funny Peculiar, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
2015 Topsy-turvy, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
In the Detail, Tweed Regional Gallery, Murwillumbah, NSW
2014 Predicament, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2012 Inside Out, Spiro Grace Art Rooms, Brisbane
2011 Get a Grip, Diagram ARI, Ryan Renshaw Window Space, Brisbane

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2023 Sydney Ctontemprary, Jan Murphy Gallery & Sophie Gannon Gallery
Re-arrange: Art of the Flower, Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane
Girra: Fraser Coast National Art Prize, Hervey Bay Regional Gallery
Mosman Art Prize, Mosman, Sydney
2022 WrestleMANIA, Rcokhampton Museum of Art, Queensland
2021 Group show, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
Brisbane Portrait Prize, Powerhouse, Brisbane
Sunshine Coast Art Prize, Caloundra Regional Gallery, QLD
2020 Sunny Side Up, Brisbane City Outdoor Gallery, Brisbane
Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, sydney
Inspired: Margaret Olley in the Margaret Olley Art Centre, Tweed Regional Gallery, NSW
Elaine Bermingham National Watercolour Prize, Grey Street Gallery Queensland College of Art, Brisbane
Redland Art Awards: Works Acquired 2006-2018, Redland Art Gallery, QLD
2019 Jan Murphy Gallery, Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Sydney
New Woman, Museum of Brisbane, Brisbane Dobell Drawing Prize 2019, National Art School, Sydney
The Gold Award, Rockhampton Art Gallery, qld Three decades, Tweed Regional Gallery, NSW
2018 A Painter's House, Tweed Regional Gallery, QLD
2017 Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Sydney
Dog Days, Jan Murphy Gallery
Imagine, Gippsland Regional Art Gallery, Sale, VIC
Go Figure: Works from the Collection, Tweed Regional Gallery, Murwillumbah, NSW
2016 Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
Gold Award, Rockhampton Art Gallery, Rockhampton, QLD

MONICA ROHAN

2015	GOMA Q: Contemporary Queensland Art, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane
	Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Sydney
2014	Melbourne Art Fair, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne
	15 Artists, Redcliffe City Art Gallery, Redcliffe, QLD
2013	Field, The Hold Artspace, Brisbane
	Figuration, Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane
2012	Rift, White Canvas Gallery, Brisbane
	Churchie National Emerging Art Exhibition, Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane
	rgbcmyk, Bleeding Heart Gallery, Brisbane
	James Kiwi Watercolour Prize, Wollongong City Gallery, Wollongong, NSW
	Addition 1, Addition Gallery, Brisbane
2011	GAS Graduate Art Show, Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane
	With Bated Breath (Queensland College of Art Honours Graduate Exhibition), Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane
	Pinkification, The Tidy Gallery, Brisbane
	On Short Notice, White Box, Brisbane
	Rotary Art Spectacular, Riverside Centre, Brisbane
	Honours Work in Progress, Project Gallery, Brisbane
	Colour and Form, SGAR, Brisbane
2010	Wake up with Your Head (Queensland College of Art Graduate Exhibition), Griffith University Art Gallery, Brisbane
2008	Minister of Education Awards for Excellence in Art, Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane

AWARDS AND RESIDENCIES

2023	Winner, Elaine Bermingham National Watercolour Prize for Landscape Painting
	Finalist, The Lester Prize for Portraiture, Art Gallery Weatern Australia, Perth
	Finalist, Girra: Fraser Coast National Art Prize, Hervey Bay
2022	Finalist, Mosman Art Prize, Powerhouse, Brisbane
2021	Finalist, Sunshine Coast Art Prize, Caloundra Regional Gallery, QLD
	Highly Commended, Brisbane Portrait Prize, Powerhouse, Brisbane
2020	Finalist, Archibald Prize, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
	Finalist, Elaine Bermingham National Watercolour Prize, Grey Street Gallery - QLD College of Art, Brisbane
2019	Dobell Drawing Prize (finalist)
2018	Glover Prize (finalist)
	Sunshine Coast Art Prize (finalist)
	Brett Whiteley Travelling Art Scholarship (highly commended)
2017	Sulman Prize (finalist)
2016	Archibald Prize (finalist)
	Gold Award (finalist)
	Elaine Bermingham National Watercolour Prize (finalist)
2014	Nancy Fairfax Artist in Residence Studio, Tweed Regional Gallery
	Redland Art Prize (finalist)
	Moreton Bay Art Prize (finalist)
2012	Churchie National Emerging Art Prize (finalist)
	James Kiwi Watercolour Prize (finalist)

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PUBLICATIONS

Louise Martin-Chew, Into an abyss, Issue 100, 2022
Sallyanne Atkinson, Paul Spiro, Renai Grace, Louise Martin-Chew, Miranda Hine, 2022
Exhibition catalogue for New Woman, 2021
Kim Crowie, Monica Rohan, Beautiful Bizarre Magazine, Issue 28, 2021
Phil Brown, Ups and Downs, Brisbane News Magazine, 2019
Phil Brown, Master Strokes Pay Off, The Courier Mail, 2018
Grant Edwards, BMW pair transformed into mobile artworks, Sunshine Coast Daily, 2018 Jane O'Sullivan, #14 Monica Rohan, Art Collector, 2018
Fiona Purdon, Living the Dream, The Sunday Mail, 2017
John Honeywill, Visiting Artist: Monica Rohan, Connections, Somerville House, 2017
Pip Coates, 'Monica Rohan', Australian Financial Review, 19 April 2016
Victoria Hynes, 'What next: Monica Rohan', Art Collector, 2016
frankie, cover, issue 69, January/February 2016
Lucy Stranger, 'Monica Rohan', Artist Profile, issue 33, 2015
Phil Brown, 'Material girl: Art world's next big thing brings fabric to life', Brisbane News, 27 May 2015
Louise Martin-Chew, 'Monica Rohan', Art Guide, 20 May 2014
Phil Brown, 'Anguish in the line of beauty', Courier Mail, 17 May 2014
Field, online catalogue, 2013
Churchie National Emerging Art Exhibition, online catalogue, 2012
Addition 1, exhibition catalogue, 2012
eFEMeral Zine, issue 1, 2011
GAS Graduate Art Show, online catalogue, 2010
Wake Up With Your Head, exhibition catalogue, 2010
There is No There There, exhibition catalogue, 2010

COLLECTIONS

Rockhampton Museum of Art
Artbank
Redland Art Gallery
Tweed Regional Gallery
Griffith University Art Collection, Brisbane
Mater Children's Hospital, Brisbane
Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art (QAGOMA), Brisbane
University of Queensland Art Museum, Brisbane
Private collections in Australia and international

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