

I Spy, All Shapes and Sizes

A Farrago Collective *exhibition project by Anna Cherkasova & André Lawrence*

Blue Heart Gallery, Women & Children's Hospital, Adelaide SA

After a successful exhibition that delighted audiences and participants during Adelaide Fringe 2018, Farrago artist-curator duo Anna Cherkasova and André Lawrence return, sharing their part-interactive drawing project to audiences at the Women and Children's Hospital for Adelaide Fringe 2019. Like a giant colouring-in trail, this playful exhibition; *I Spy, all shapes and sizes* displays illustrative line drawings coloured in by Adelaide audiences. Musing on notions of cultural and personal diversity, difference, harmony, participation and inclusivity, *I Spy, all shapes and sizes* celebrates the uniqueness that each and all of us bring to the world and the power to create beautiful things that happens when we come together.

Keep your eyes peeled for more Farrago magic emerging around the hospital.

This exhibition is part of the WCHN 2019 Cultural Diversity Month, which aims to promote and celebrate diversity in our community, as well as raise awareness amongst our staff about culturally appropriate practices.

*I spy
With my little eye
Two birds
Four butterflies
A star in the sky
A ladybug and a bee
A desert pea
What else can you see?*

The Adelaide Fringe is truly a time for South Australia to rejoice in an abundance of diverse creativeness, where artists from all over the world converge on Adelaide to entertain and delight. Our 'mad March' is truly an inspiration, and we are privileged to be able to witness such an assortment of creative talent and wonder. The brightly coloured and intricate panels in *I Spy* are the outcome of a serendipitous convergence of creative energies and opportunity that brought many hands together in celebration of cultural and individual diversity during the Adelaide Fringe in 2018.

The original mural artwork was commissioned by and created at Nexus Arts for the *Farrago (A confused variety of miscellaneous things)* exhibition. The *Farrago* exhibition was generously supported by Nexus Arts, a South Australian pillar and advocate for culturally diverse art, artists and arts practice, who commissioned André as an independent curator to produce a very short notice exhibition for Fringe 2018. André approached Anna, a talented illustrator, ceramicist and friend. Anna was born in Russia and came to Australia in 2008, studying Visual Arts at the University of South Australia. Anna and André had met at the School of Art, Architecture & Design, when André was studying Curatorship, managing an

international/migrant student support club called ARTCIRCLE, and was employed by the University as Curatorial Intern handling a vibrant inaugural student art space, West Bar Student Gallery.

During his studies, André had become particularly aware of the challenging experiences and lack of meaningful or sustained support that recent migrant and international students experienced within the art school: experiencing a lack of assistance, opportunity, access to peer and friend networks, creative and critical exchange and often harbouring feelings of isolation. It was with this kind of awareness that connected André to Nexus Arts, an organisation with an emphasis on providing nurturing opportunities for artists that are from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Farrago, became an opportunity to try to metaphorically promote the beauty in positive individual diversity that each and every one of us can bring to the tapestry of society through positive and aspirational participation and inclusion. In the 2018 exhibition Anna was commissioned to draw on the walls of the gallery and through allowing audiences to interact with her drawings by colouring them in, the project aspired, in soliciting participation from visitors, to bring many hands together towards the creation of one large artistic outcome: a multiplicity of voices, hands and contributions towards a grand mural.

Together they hoped to achieve something eclectic, a menagerie of many separate things brought together under a simple picture: a landscape of sorts. Anna's rich drawing practice in which she layers ever more detail into her compositions, creates dense, harmonious and intricate creatures, plants and other characters. A veritable Noah's Arc of creatures and characters all marching in the same direction and brought to life by the hands of everyone that came to interact with it in the *Farrago* exhibition. Anna provided a true feat of endurance for the *Farrago* exhibition, drawing several times a week for hours on end over a period of 6 weeks.

Supported by the City of Adelaide, Anna and André conducted a series of workshops with schools and community groups, involving over 200 participants in artist talks and hands-on colouring-in of Anna's wall drawings. These activities, as well as the general public's participation, were a delight for everyone involved and the feedback was immensely positive.

Most of the *Farrago* mural was drawn directly onto the gallery walls and was painted over at the end of the exhibition. Fortunately, in designing the exhibition, a last-minute decision to produce some of the mural on a fake, removable wall in the gallery space has allowed for Anna's drawings to be displayed again in the Blue Heart Gallery at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

For people, mark-making on vertical and other surfaces seems to strike a joyous (and sometimes unruly) chord, an activity which in a sense has been part of human expression for millennia, across all cultures of the world. Anna and André have sought to build on their experiences with *Farrago* and to share some of that joy and its message of inclusivity, participation and bringing people together in *I Spy* exhibition.

For the artists, the artwork panels and their content seem most pertinent within a Hospital environment, one which they imagine can be both a challenging and joyous place to live, work and heal. *Filled with such a bustling array of activity, of people and diversity, catering for the healing and well-being of women and children, we hope that this artwork can bring joy and wonder to the people that might perchance enjoy, assist them in their healing and their positive experience while at the Hospital.*