

CHELSEA LEHMANN

PAINTER · ARTIST CV + BIO · 2026

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ARTIST BIO

Chelsea Lehmann is a Sydney-based painter whose work explores the body as a mutable physical and social form. Working primarily in oil, she uses shifts in viscosity, erasure and layered accumulation to make figures surface, fracture and dissolve within unstable pictorial environments. Recent paintings consider the body as a site where personal experience intersects with broader social, cultural and environmental forces. Historical gestures recur in displaced or partial form, treated as material to be tested, disrupted and reconfigured.

Lehmann describes this approach as para-history painting: drawing on the scale, rhetoric and bodily drama of history painting while refusing its claims to coherence and authority. Recent research extends these concerns into the Australian Gothic and para-pastoral, where landscape, myth, cultural memory and the figure become sites of projection and unease. Her work has been exhibited in Australia and internationally for more than two decades. In late 2026 she will undertake the Onslow Storrier Residency at La Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris. She holds a PhD from UNSW Art & Design (2019).

EDUCATION

- 2019** Doctor of Philosophy, UNSW Art & Design
2004–07 Master of Fine Arts (Research), College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales
1995–98 Bachelor of Visual Art (Honours), Adelaide Central School of Art, South Australia

SELECTED SOLO & TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

- 2021** *Counter Histories*, with Chris Aerfeldt, Praxis Artspace, Adelaide, SA
2020 *Corporealities*, Home@735, Sydney, NSW
2020 *Persona*, Flinders Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2018 *The Articulate Surface*, UNSW Galleries, Sydney, NSW
2016 *Archive*, MOP Projects, Sydney, NSW
2016 *Efface*, with Luke Thurgate, Strange Neighbour, Melbourne, VIC
2015 *The Original of Laura*, Interlude Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2014 *Contested Surfaces*, SAS Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2011 *Mise en Scène*, Greenaway Gallery, Adelaide, SA
2011 *La Chasse*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2010 *Time is Then*, Adelaide Central Gallery, Adelaide, SA
2007 *Nabokov's Garden*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2006 *Sample Locations*, Arthouse Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2003 *Lehmann/Graham*, with Damien Graham, Adelaide Central Gallery, Adelaide, SA
2002 *Shadow*, Depot Gallery, Sydney, NSW

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2026** *The Skin of Things*, Stanley Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW — forthcoming November
2026 *New Old School*, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Maitland, NSW
2026 *The Beast in Me*, Curatorial+Co, Sydney, NSW
2025 *Horny Jail II*, Nasha Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2024 *Group Work (if the zoo bans me for hollering at the animals I will face god and walk backwards into hell)*, Oigall Projects, Melbourne, VIC
2024 *Handling*, National Art School Drawing Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2023 *Not Fair*, Melbourne, VIC — selected
2023 *Gesture*, Stanley Street Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2023 *Horny Jail*, Nasha Gallery, Sydney, NSW
2023 *A Female Gaze*, MARS Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2022 *Jacaranda Acquisitive Drawing Award*, Grafton Regional Gallery, NSW — finalist
2022 *Substratum*, Woollahra Gallery at Redleaf, Sydney, NSW
2019 *June*, MARS Gallery, Melbourne, VIC
2018 *The Drawing Exchange*, Rayner Hoff Gallery, National Art School, Sydney, NSW
2018 *Invitational*, Home@735, Sydney, NSW
2017 *FRAN Fest*, BMG Gallery, Adelaide, SA
2016 *Painting Twice*, Praxis Artspace, Adelaide, SA
2016 *Kennedy Art Prize Exhibition*, Adelaide, SA — finalist
2015 *Drawing Now*, AD Space, UNSW Art & Design, Sydney, NSW
2014 *Telling*, Adelaide Central Gallery, Adelaide, SA
2013 *Green-growth International Art Exhibition*, Incheon Art and Culture Centre, Incheon, Korea
2013 *Portia Geach Memorial Award*, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW — finalist
2012 *Portia Geach Memorial Award*, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW — finalist
2011 *Lethbridge Small Painting Prize*, Lethbridge Gallery, QLD — finalist
2007 *Portia Geach Memorial Award*, SH Ervin Gallery, Sydney, NSW — finalist
2006 *Westpac Redlands Art Prize*, Mosman Art Gallery, Sydney, NSW — selected
2003 *Kedumba Drawing Award Exhibition*, Wentworth Falls, NSW — finalist
2003 *Group Exhibition*, Kendalls Fine Art, Chelsea Gallery, London, UK
1998 *Ruth Tuck Scholarship Award Exhibition*, Greenhill Galleries, Adelaide, SA — winner

CURATORIAL PROJECTS

- 2026 *New Old School*, co-curator, Maitland Regional Art Gallery, Maitland, NSW
- 2025 *MOTHER*, DRAW Space, Sydney, NSW
- 2023 *Painting Desires*, Schmick Contemporary, Sydney, NSW
- 2018 *Bad Mannerism*, Galerie pompom, Sydney, NSW
- 2015 *Iconoclasts*, Airspace Projects, Sydney, NSW
- 2014 *Telling*, Adelaide Central Gallery, Adelaide, SA

AWARDS, GRANTS & RESIDENCIES

- 2026 Onslow Storrier Residency, La Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris, France; National Art School
- 2025 Professional Practice Grant, National Art School
- 2021 Professional Practice Grant, National Art School
- 2018 Art and Design Grant, Arc UNSW
- 2016 Research funding, Ide Advanced Imaging Lab, Kyoto University, Japan
- 2015 NSW Artists Grant, NSW
- 2015 Research funding, Ide Advanced Imaging Lab, Kyoto University, Japan
- 2014–17 Australian Postgraduate Award, UNSW
- 2010 Résidence copiste, Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature, Paris, France
- 2010 Independent Makers and Presenters Project Grant, Arts SA
- 2010 Project Grant, Helpmann Academy, SA
- 2008 50 Most Collectable Artists, Australian Art Collector
- 2007 Artist in Residence, Naracoorte Regional Gallery, SA
- 2007 NAVA Marketing Grant, National Association for the Visual Arts
- 2005 Sanskriti Kendra Residency, Helpmann Academy, New Delhi, India
- 1998 Ruth Tuck Scholarship Award, Glasgow School of Art

SELECTED WRITING & RESEARCH

- 2025 *Aftermath (Performing Remains)*, exhibition catalogue essay on Mike Parr, Syrup Contemporary, Sydney
- 2025 *Lantana*, exhibition catalogue essay on Bridget Stehli, Nasha Gallery, Sydney
- 2025 *MOTHER*, exhibition catalogue essay, DRAW Space, Sydney
- 2023 *Materiality*, exhibition catalogue essay, DRAW Space, Sydney
- 2023 *Painting as Witness*, exhibition catalogue essay on Robert Cleworth, Straitjacket Gallery, Newcastle
- 2022 *Mother Loaded: The Corrective Agency of New Visualisations of Motherhood*, exhibition catalogue essay on Zoe Freney, Adelaide Central Gallery
- 2019 *The Articulate Surface: Painting and the Latent Image*, PhD dissertation, UNSW Art & Design
- 2018 *Bad Mannerism*, exhibition catalogue essay, Galerie pompom, Sydney
- 2017 *Painting and the Australian Gothic*, exhibition catalogue essay on Peta Dzubiel
- 2015 *The Painted Surface as a Live Field of Data*, presentation, Kyoto University, Japan

SELECTED REVIEWS & PRESS

- 2023 Sally Gearon, "The women painters looking through the female gaze", Art Guide Australia, March/April
- 2021 "Chris Aerfeldt and Chelsea Lehmann: Counter Histories", Australian Art Collector, November
- 2020 Andrew Frost, "Chelsea Lehmann: Persona", Art Collector, April–June
- 2018 "Bad Mannerism", Sydney Morning Herald, The Shortlist, 4 May
- 2016 Rosa Stella McDonald, "Raining on the inside", catalogue text for Archive, MOP Projects