THE FREEDMAN FOUNDATION
The Freedman Foundation is a private philanthropic organisation, which donates funding to the visual arts, music, medicine and science. Each year, several emerging Australian artists are supported by the Freedman Foundation to travel overseas and gain inspiration and guidance in the development of their art practice.

Since the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship’s inception in 2000, this generous program has contributed $360,000 to 74 artists to aid in their professional career development through travel.

NAVA
The National Association for the Visual Arts (NAVA) is the national peak body for the visual and media arts, craft and design sector working through advocacy and service provision, to achieve a flourishing Australian visual arts sector and a more vibrant, distinctive and ethical cultural environment. NAVA manages the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship on behalf of the Foundation.

EXHIBITION
17-31 October 2015

UNSW Galleries
Paddington campus
Cnr Oxford St and Greens Rd
Paddington, NSW, 2021 Australia

COVER IMAGE
Catherine or Kate
I hate the way I don’t hate you, 2014
Courtesy the artists
Collaborative outfit Catherine or Kate (Catherine Sagin and Kate Woodcroft) explore the tensions, emotions and competiveness that are an undercurrent of their collaborative process. Their performance-focused practice has led to work presented in video, live performance, photography and sculpture. As co-recipients of the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship, Catherine or Kate travelled to The Second City School of Comedy in Chicago. It was here, studying comedy, that the artists ushered in a more personal dimension to their collaborative practice. Motivated by the emotional sacrifice that stand-up comics endure for laughs, Catherine or Kate mine the intimate doubts and anxieties of themselves and each other, and invite an audience to sit at this threshold of public and private divulgence.

Drawing on her identity as an Australian Muslim woman with Turkish heritage, artist Cigdem Aydemir’s practice investigates possibilities for intersubjective and transcultural communication. The veil, as both garment and culturally constructed site, is presented as an avenue for investigating post-colonial and feminist issues. The artist recently presented a solo exhibition titled ‘Plastic Histories’ at Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery in South Africa. ‘Plastic Histories’ is a multifaceted project which saw the artist cover, in pink shrink-wrapping, two monuments on the University of the Free State (UFS) main campus, as well as busts from the UFS permanent art collection, while also overseeing the development of an app which facilitated users to virtually cover four other monuments in the city of Bloemfontein.
Alice Lang

Alice Lang was born in Byron Bay, Australia and is currently based in Los Angeles. As a recipient of the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship the artist undertook a Masters of Fine Arts at CalArts in Los Angeles. The intimate, public, and virtual self and the emotion we imbue in material objects are key concepts explored through the artist’s cross-disciplinary art practice. The artist’s work often draws your gaze to confront you with uncomfortable truths about our own attitudes and behaviors. It is because of this that Lang’s often visually vibrant work rests at the intersection of alluring and gruesome.

Elizabeth Willing

Are you on a diet? Meat free? Is it local and organic? How processed are your snacks? Elizabeth Willing is an artist reprocessing foods in absurd and humorous ways to unpack contemporary food anxieties. The artist often exhibits food in gallery spaces, drawing on the experience and aesthetics of Modernist cuisine, processed snack foods and home cooking. Her work not only presents food mutating into a sensorial kerfuffle, but it also examines the gendered roles of foods and cooking throughout history. In 2014 Willing spent the year in Berlin with a residency at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, while also working with artist Thomas Rentmeister, a key influence on her practice.

2015 INCUMBENT SCHOLARS

Jorgen Doyle

In August 2015, Tasmania-based artist Jorgen Doyle travelled to Yogyakarta, Indonesia to live and work in the informal settlement of Kampung Ratmakan. Drawing inspiration from the post-WWII ‘junk playground’ movement – which are playgrounds largely built by children from waste materials – Doyle has established a playground based on similar principles. He is interested in children’s geographies and architectures of childhood as a means of envisioning more just, and more vibrant forms of city life.

George Egerton-Warburton

George Egerton-Warburton is an artist who often makes lists of contriving parameters that must be negotiated for his artworks to be created. His works range across video, sculpture, painting, performance, events and installation. With the support of the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship the Western Australian-born artist travels to Center of Contemporary Art in Tbilisi, Georgia, to undertake a residency. During the period abroad the artist will continue his self-directed thesis research, and will develop new work.
Claudia Nicholson

Through a multi-disciplinary practice Claudia Nicholson explores Latin American folklore, pre-Columbian artefacts and Chola culture. This research is an avenue for understanding her position amongst Australian, Latino and Amerindian cultures. The Freedman Travelling Scholarship will assist the artist to undertake a three-month research trip across South and Central America, where she will attend various religious and secular cultural festivals, as well as conduct first-hand research into pre-Columbian ceramics.

Jason Phu

In September 2015 Jason Phu travelled to China to participate in a residency at Organhaus Chongqing, where he is focusing on skill development in Chinese calligraphy and painting. The artist will also undertake mentorships with Yang Shu of Sichuan Fine Arts Institute and Li Jin of Tianjin Academy of Fine Arts. Phu will then travel to Chongqing where he intends to establish a collaborative residency program for Australian and international artists.
CURATORIAL ESSAY

The Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship for Emerging Artists asks of its scholars something very simple: where would you like to take inspiration from?

The Scholarship is founded on the idea that young emerging artists should be able to undertake self-initiated study and mentorship, both formal and informal, at destinations away from their regular places of work. The Freedman Foundation has provided scholarships to emerging artists working in a diversity of practice and research interests. Established in 2000, the Scholarship has so far provided an opportunity for 74 scholars to expand their studio practice abroad.

One of the great advantages of the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship is its openness. As a scholarship, it is process-orientated rather than outcome-oriented. Scholars simply propose a research trip. Yes, the desire is that this experience will impact on an artist’s understanding of both their practice and the world they occupy. However, for the artist, without being able to predict the future, it is hard to foresee the outcome of a proposal for time and space dedicated to reconsidering one’s practice. In this exhibition, the 2013 and 2015 scholars are at opposite ends of this future. So then why exhibit them together? Why show them on equal footing? This exhibition is a snapshot of the experience and impact this scholarship provides. You, the audience, are invited to observe from this crossroads, to bear witness to two beginnings: the artists with an inkling of what a place-motivated shift can mean; and those re-negotiating their practice as a result of having made that geographic shift.

My curatorial rationale is an interrogation of the connections between experience, art practice and work. I hesitate to posit that there is one central concept being teased out across this exhibition, though there are ideas that do recur across different artists’ practice. For instance, autobiography is a particularly prevalent theme in the works here: the artists’ cultural heritage and navigation of the facades, veils, and imaginary walls that influence how we negotiate each other and wider contemporary cultures are interests explored in different ways within the exhibition. However, for me, attempting to unify these works through an arbitrary theme that can easily just fall away was never really the point of this exhibition. Instead, selecting work came about through dialogue, through curator and artist conversations. In the end, if there is any curatorial framing that I am imposing, it is parameters: these are artists at opposite ends of the Freedman Foundation Travelling Scholarship journey.

Luke Letourneau is an emerging writer and curator working in Sydney. In 2014-15 he was a gallery coordinator of the artist-run initiative ARCHIVE_. He has curated exhibitions at Firstdraft, ARCHIVE_, 107 Projects and Kudos Gallery. In 2015 he curated an exhibition at Seventh Gallery, Melbourne, as part of the Emerging Curator Program supported by the Yarra City Council. Letourneau is the inaugural recipient of the Freedman Foundation Curatorial Scholarship under the UNSW Art & Design Master of Curating and Cultural Leadership program.
Jason Phu, *This is the worst houseparty I have ever been to*, 2013.
Ink on Chinese paper 200 x 97 cm. Courtesy the artist and The Hughes Gallery.