



Tanya MacNaughton

Mother Nature wreaks her revenge

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Corey Khan considers his artistic practice as a platform for him to tell stories about the things he cares about, growing organically over the years in various formats as he acquires a range of skill sets.

Born and raised in Donnybrook, Khan, a proud Noongar Yamatji man, is a director at WA's first Aboriginal-owned architectural practice, Tjuart Architects, grounded on the principle of Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds coming together for the love of design and, even more so, exploring what the combination of those two worlds looks like as direct design translations.

"We are particularly passionate about exploring the reimagining of traditional infrastructure built by our ancient people to give them modern applications," Khan says from his home in the South West.

"This includes our own interpretations and to support other First Nations people and groups to bring their original structures back to life.

"For example, we are currently in the process of building a prototype of our MiaPod, which is a reimagined version of the traditional Noongar hut, the mia mia."

The multidisciplinary designer's environmentally minded philosophy at Tjuart is to consider nature and culture as the foundations of pretty much everything they do, so it seems only fitting that Form approached Khan to consider being involved in its latest exhibition, Storm the Gods and Shake the Universe.

Taking as its title a quotation from the classic revenge tragedy Medea, the group exhibition of newly commissioned works by local and international multidisciplinary artists explores the theme of nature's revenge, responding to the ecological crisis facing WA's South West region.

"The theme kind of aligns with my perspective on our current



Corey Khan.

systems that govern us," Khan shares. "I'm not going to go down the climate change track here as it's such a huge topic, but overall I believe we are totally out of alignment with the natural systems of the world with our artificial ones and ultimately that imbalance is leading to that theme of Mother Nature just having enough of us and our delusions around control.

"An exhibition with a theme like this creates a platform for artists to share what this concept means to them. Mother Nature taking revenge, revenge for what? The theme insinuates that we as humans have failed in one way or another."

Using the theme as their starting point, artists have created a variety of multimedia, performance, music, sculpture, drawing, printmaking and installation pieces, including Khan's series of digital works and animations that imagine a future where humans are subservient to nature.

Titled Systems, Khan's narrative is of a young girl, Nala, who

traverses various dystopian futuristic landscapes, with a third-person narration describing her contemplations about the breakdown of capitalistic societies, the way things were and ultimately Mother Nature returning to power.

"I question our purpose as humans a lot and with my deep connection to my heritage and the facts surrounding ancient systems, I like to contemplate the concept of balance that the ancient people clearly maintained for a long period of time," Khan explains.

"I get the feeling that our purpose is essentially to be caretakers. To live in alignment with the natural systems of the world. It doesn't mean let's all go and live in the bush and hunt for food etc. It's looking at the natural world closer, deeper, and understanding how do we fit into this in a more respectful and aligned way."

Storm the Gods and Shake the Universe is at Form Gallery and Cafe, formerly The Goods Shed, Claremont, until July 15.

SHAKING THE UNIVERSE | PERFORMANCE-INFORMED ART, FREE EVENT, 6-7.30PM, JUNE 22

Perth-based sculptor Susan Flavell and emerging composer Moses Kington-Walberg are also among the exhibition's artists considering the repercussions should nature decide to take its revenge.

A rendition of their 2022 performance piece Children of the Drifting Weather has been reimagined as a new cross-disciplinary work, Atlas, and will be premiered as a free event in collaboration with local actors and musicians, under the direction of dramaturg Sian Murphy.

It imagines two nature goddesses confronting climate change, set to an experimental score by Kington-Walberg.

The performance will be followed by an artist talk with Flavell and fellow exhibiting artist Kate Alida Mullen discussing performative engagement with landscape and ecologically informed practice.

More information at form.net.au/gallery-cafe.

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