

*Wish You Were Here*  
Kellie O'Dempsey

3 - 28 October 2023





Artwork: Kellie O'Dempsey, *Wish You Were Here (Black)*, 2023, animated video, Edition 1 of 5.

## Kellie O'Dempsey | *Wish You Were Here*

*Wish You Were Here* transforms the quiet and contemplative white cube into a glowing, moving, soundtracked landscape. Entering its space is an invitation to move through a world of psychedelia: to be bathed in dynamic neon, buoyed by its beat, and caught within its projections. In this uncanny dreamscape mash, schools of surreal eye-fish swim above land. Our gaze meets theirs: surveilling, unblinking. Collages layer together gestural marks, human snippets, and deftly-excised forms, conjuring figures both here and not here. Soft pastel materialities, nondescript hues, a generosity of white space, and ripped edges heightens their connotations of absence and erasure. Amongst it all is the artist's immediately-recognisable silhouette (*that* hair, *that* cut-of-her-cloth).

In this body of work, O'Dempsey draws together new and diverse conceptions of time and space. Conceived during the height of the pandemic, the work formally mimics the past two years' distorted temporality and sense of entrapment. This is clearest in the artists' figure, which despite her persistent movement, like a hamster on its wheel gains no ground. Remnants from the artist's archive of past live drawing performances and found fragments from mass media—the sports section of the newspaper, music billposters, and fashion magazines—speak to other times and places. The magazines and collected billboard posters, in particular, are saved from travels to and from New York, Berlin, and Brisbane. They act as memory vessels and imaginings of elsewhere. In turn, references from William Kentridge to Pink Floyd, Dan Flavin, Hannah Hoch, Raoul Hasmann, and Max Ernst make a hundred year history of this show and draw further geographical lines to Johannesburg, London, and Paris. Even the work's titular refrain—*Wish You Were Here*—holds a peculiar temporal oxymoron of the future/past. "Wish" casts the imagination forward just as "were" looks back.

As O'Dempsey continued making throughout the pandemic, she also moved psychologically and physically into the role of primary care-giver for her ailing father. In turn, the elements in her work of stasis, isolation, and endurance took on new meaning, tinged now with the gendering of care labour and home. The appearance of a racing horse and dozing elderly man cements this component of the work. Notably the two (racehorse and sleeping father) appear above a head: positioning them as thoughts and the indeterminate yet nevertheless thinking/remembering/feeling female mannequin as the artist herself. In this context, the artist's projected outlines, which multiply, repeat, and gently loop, can be interpreted as visualizations of her shattered sense of subjectivity. The work is both literally and pictorially an attempt by O'Dempsey to maintain an artistic identity while also filling the shifting roles of daughter, nurse, sibling, administrator.

As a post-structural protagonist in this work, O'Dempsey is decentred and incomplete while longing for Cartesian stability. Within her lamentation, I imagine her wishing for many things. *Wish You Were Here*: desiring her lover by her side. *Wish You Were Here*: a call for help. *Wish You Were Here*: conjuring her latent selves into being. *Wish You Were Here*: an ode to parents lost.



***Dynamic Poster Surfer***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,  
300gsm acid free rag matte paper  
101.5 x 65cm (framed)

\$2,700



***Double Balance***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,  
300gsm acid free rag matte paper  
101.5 x 67cm (framed)

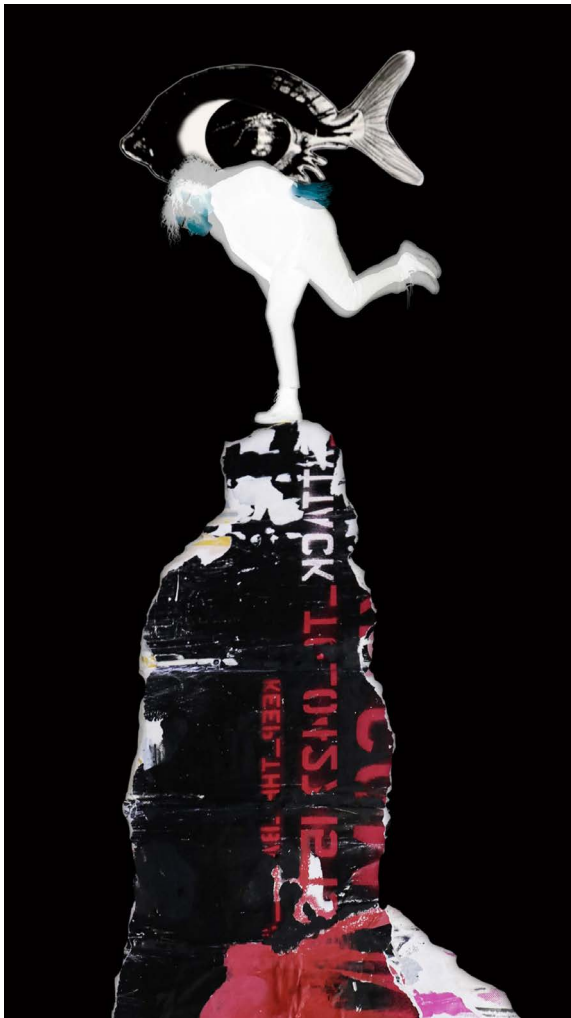
\$2,700



***Balance on Blue***  
2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,  
300gsm acid free rag matte paper  
88.5 x 57cm (unframed)

\$950



***Wish You Were Here (Black)***

2023

Animated video

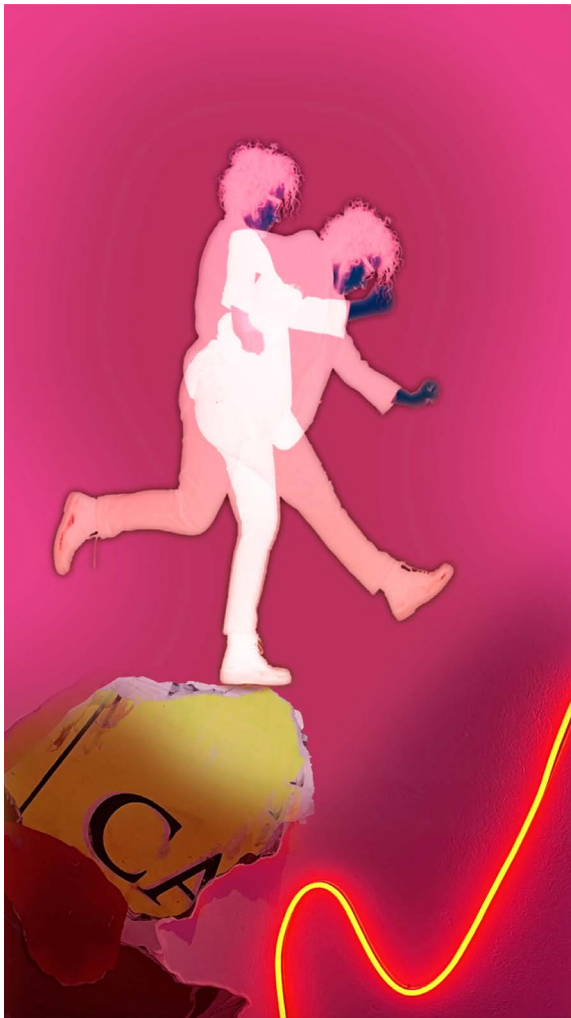
Duration: 2min loop

Edition 1/5

Unframed: \$4,900

Framed: \$6,300

Framed in Samsung 4K UHD 24/7 500 Nit Commercial Display, 96.5 x 55.5cm



***Wish You Were Here (Pink)***

2023

Animated video

Duration: 2min loop

Edition 1/5

Unframed: \$4,900

Framed: \$6,300

Framed in Samsung 4K UHD 24/7 500 Nit Commercial Display, 96.5 x 55.5cm





***Wish You Were Here (Yellow)***

2023

Animated video

Duration: 2min loop

Edition 1/5

Unframed: \$4,900

Framed: \$6,300

Framed in Samsung 4K UHD 24/7 500 Nit Commercial Display, 55.5 x 96.5cm



***You're my No.1***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,

300gsm acid free rag matte paper

41.5 x 33cm (framed)

\$1,200



***Ghost***  
2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,  
300gsm acid free rag matte paper  
41.5 x 33cm (framed)

\$1,200



***Hanging on***  
2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,  
300gsm acid free rag matte paper  
41.5 x 33cm (framed)

\$1,200



***Catch me***  
2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,  
300gsm acid free rag matte paper  
41.5 x 33cm (framed)

\$1,200



***Horse head***

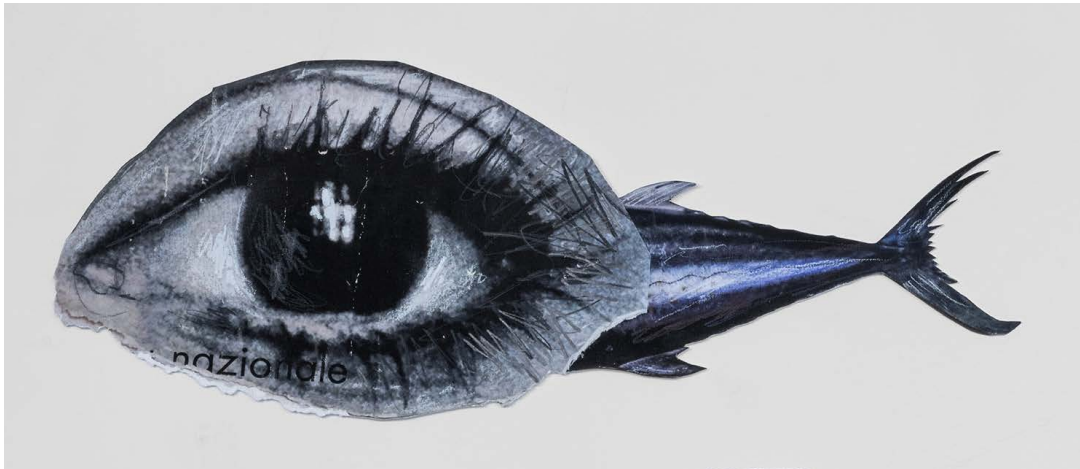
2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,

300gsm acid free rag matte paper

41.5 x 33cm (framed)

\$1,200



***Solo Eye Fish***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,  
300gsm acid free rag matte paper

26.5 x 60cm (framed)

Edition 1/2

\$900



***Two Eye Fish***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,

300gsm acid free rag matte paper

48 x 79cm (framed)

\$1,600





***Eye Fish***

2023

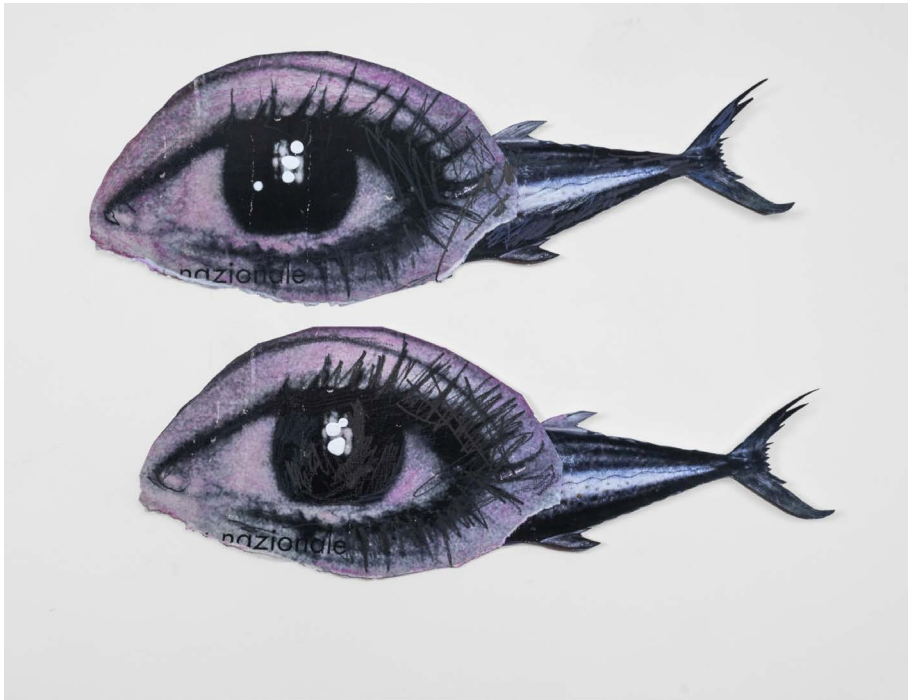
Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,

300gsm acid free rag matte paper

15 x 40cm (unframed)

Edition 1/7

\$450



***Pink Eye***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,

300gsm acid free rag matte paper

15 x 40cm (unframed)

Edition 1/2

\$450



***Cake Fish***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,

300gsm acid free rag matte paper

18 x 40cm (unframed)

Edition 1/5

\$450



***Custard Fish***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,

300gsm acid free rag matte paper

20 x 40cm (unframed)

Edition 1/5

\$450



***Butterfly Split***

2023

Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage,

300gsm acid free rag matte paper

24 x 30cm (unframed)

Edition 1/5

\$450



***Eye Fish Head***

2023

Mixed media drawing & collage on 300gsm acid

free rag matte paper

136.5 x 103.5cm (unframed)

\$1,500



***Balance Balancing 1***

2023

Video, collage, neon rope

Dimensions variable

POA



***Balance Balancing 2***

2023

Video, collage, neon rope

Dimensions variable

POA





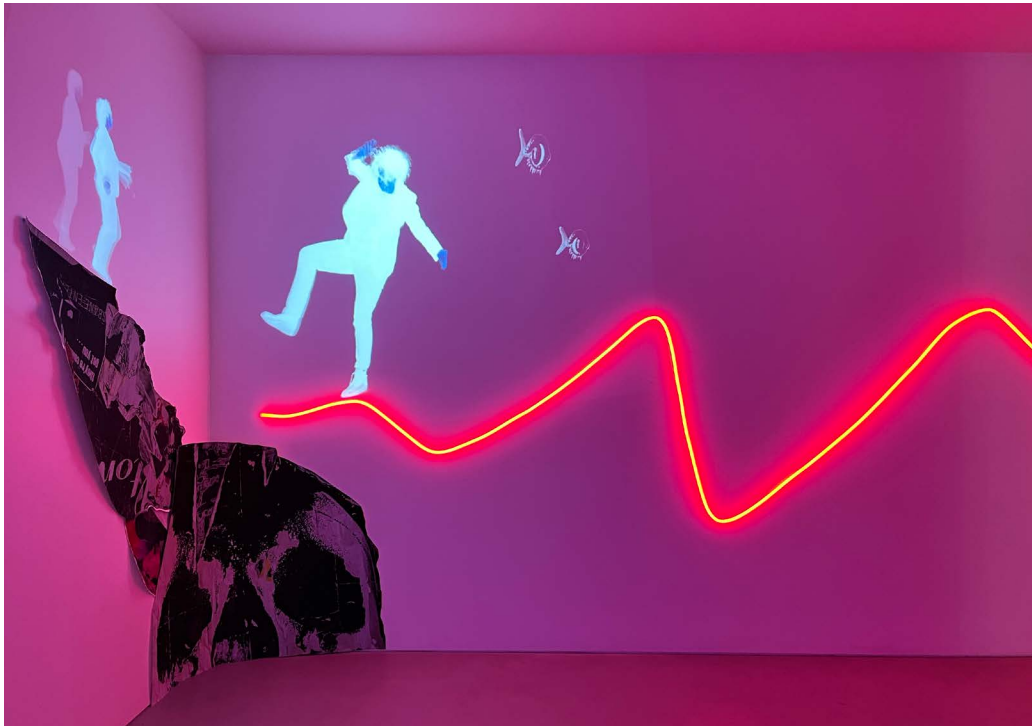
***Balance Balancing 3***

2023

Video, collage, neon rope

Dimensions variable

POA



***Balance Balancing 4***

2023

Video, collage, neon rope

Dimensions variable

POA



nazionale



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**Jan Manton Gallery**

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Front cover: *Eye Fish Head*, 2023, Mixed media drawing & collage on 300gsm acid free rag matte paper, 136.5 x 103.5cm.

Inside cover: *Wish You Were Here (Black)*, 2023, Animated video, 2min loop.

Back cover: *Eye Fish*, 2023, Collage and mixed media drawing on 300gsm acid free rag matte paper, 40cm x 15cm.

*Butterfly Split*, 2023, Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage, 300gsm acid free rag matte paper, 20 x 40cm.

*Custard Fish*, 2023, Mixed media drawing on archival digital collage, 300gsm acid free rag matte paper, 20 x 40cm.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a soundtrack composed by Mick Dick.

Gallery Director  
Jan Manton

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Embie Tan Aren

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