

Leila Jeffreys

Leila Jeffreys is a renowned contemporary artist working across photography, moving image and installation. She is best known for images of birds, photographed at human scale, that explore and subvert the conventions of portraiture. Jeffreys, who lives and works in Sydney with her husband and son, sees her avian subjects as living beings, part of a practice that expands viewer's hearts by drawing attention to interdependence between species. Jeffreys' work is a result of years-long periods of research and exploration. In the tradition of artist-activists, she conducts fieldwork, collaborates with conservationists, ornithologists and sanctuaries and champions programs to protect and restore endangered habitats.

Jeffreys has exhibited in Australia and around the world for fifteen years, everywhere from Sydney and Melbourne to Paris, Brussels and Los Angeles. In 2023, her work was curated into *The Best in Show* at Fotografiska in New York, as part of an exhibition dedicated to animals in contemporary photography that toured Tallinn and Stockholm. She featured alongside the world's most

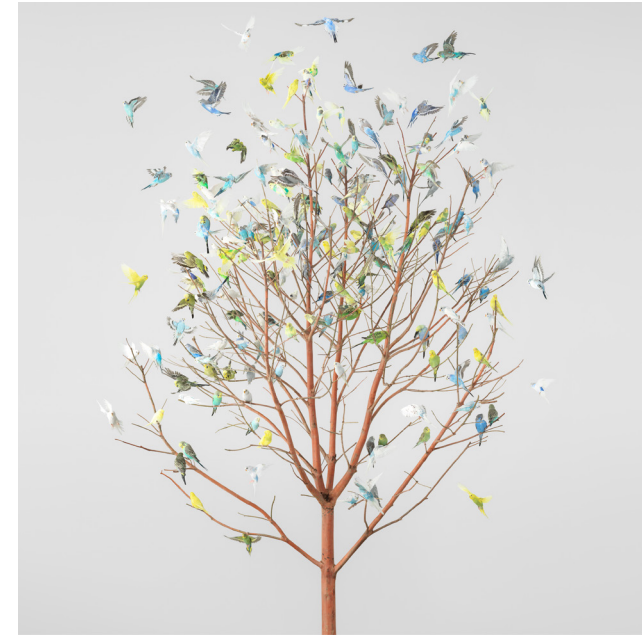




'Neville' Major Mitchell's cockatoo
Biolela - Wild Cockatoos
2012



'River and Cloudy'
High Society
2019



'Revival'
High Society
2019

respected photographers as part of *Civilisation: The Way We Live Now*, a landmark 2023 exhibition at London's Saatchi Gallery.

Jeffreys is the author of three acclaimed books including *Birdland*, released through Hachette in Australia and New Zealand, Abrams in North America and *Des Oiseaux* published by France-based Atelier EXB / Éditions Xavier Barral in 2020. Her work is held in Australian and international collections including Parliament House Canberra, Artbank Sydney, the Macquarie Bank Group Collection, the Hermès Collections of Contemporary Photographs, the Western Australia Museum and the Museum of Photography in South Korea.

Jeffreys' artworks have captured the Australian imagination, inspiring *Bird Nerd*, a documentary by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). In 2022, Australia Post released a set of stamps of her iconic images from her *High Society* series, a love letter to the budgerigar that first showed in 2019 at Sydney's Olsen Gallery.

Her practice has evolved beyond portraiture into the realm of large-scale conceptual work alongside video and installation art created with collaborator Melvin J. Montalban. The artist couples a deep moral vision with a commitment to innovation. She uses advanced cameras to capture her subjects in exquisite detail, inviting her audience into a

Leila Jeffreys: Artist Profile

relationship with birds that revolves around a greater depth of perception and startling emotional intimacy.

In a culture that is increasingly disconnected, Jeffreys' art creates spaces for contemplation and wonder while asking urgent questions about the connections between humans and the natural world.



Temple
Video Still
2022



Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.
Video still
2019



Temple (Installation view)
VIVID Sydney
2022



Bergdorf Goodman window installation
New York City
2017



Bird Love
Monograph
2015



Australia Post
Stamps
2022



Branch No. 1
2022



Clockwise from top left: *Biolela Wild Cocakoos* installation view Olsen Gallery, Sydney; Leila on location; *Muse* at Taronga Zoo, Sydney featuring 'Noisy Pitta'



Ornithurae installation view
Olsen Gruin Gallery, New York
2017



'Cyril'
Moluccan cockatoo
Ornithurae
2017

"The Sydney artist Leila Jeffreys wants you to look at these creatures... she captures these birds in intimate moments of pride, and amusement."

Ed Ayres
Australian Broadcasting Corporation



Blue Blossoms 2
High Society
2019



'Tani No. 1' Masked owl
Prey
2014

“Through a unique combination of technical skill, ingenuity, patience and empathy, Leila creates objects of art that are luxurious visual pleasures in themselves. By abstracting her subjects from their accustomed context, she demands focus on form, composition, and colour. Stark and warm, objective and celebratory at the same time, her photographs not only enhance our personal surroundings by their own decorative presence, but expand our joyous understanding of the world we inhabit, yet customarily see so incompletely in the short time allotted to us.”

Dr Sarah Engledow
Historian and curator
National Portrait Gallery, Australia



Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.
Installation view at Manly Art Gallery & Museum
2021



Nature is not a place to visit. It is home.
Peel Street Park Projection Project for Yarra City Arts
2020

“Upon watching Leila Jeffreys’ video *Nature is not a place to visit. It is home* I am reminded of exquisite 16th to 17th century Japanese folding screens known as Byōbu. The term ‘byōbu’ means ‘protection from wind’ and was used to allow interior spaces of Japanese palaces, temples, shrines to open onto adjoining gardens.

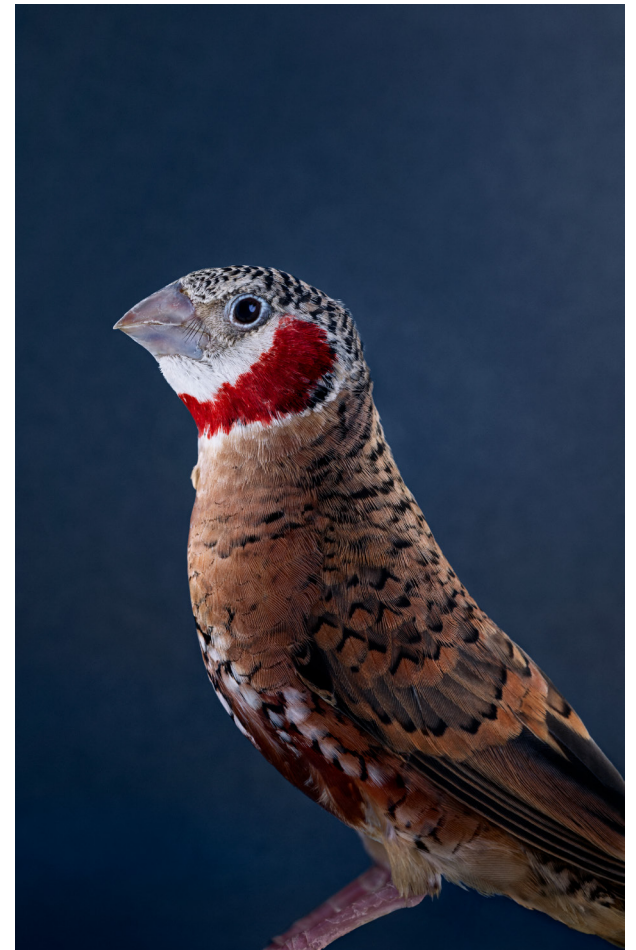
Within this video one senses a similar goal of both protection and connection to nature and wind. Basic elements are shared by both such as the tree as a sanctuary for the birds, the gust of air created by fluttering wings, the golden sense of time slowed down like an interstitial space between seasons.

Jeffreys’ normal photographic artistic practice is transformed to a large-scale video format, in which time has slowed to allow us to follow her observations and empathy with the birds she loves.”

James McGrath
Artist



Left: 'Light enters' Red-cheeked
Cordon-bleu bonsai, 2022.
Below: 'Light enters' Cut-throat,
2022



Leila Jeffreys: Bio Links

Website & Instagram

www.leilajeffreys.com

[@leilajeffreys](https://www.instagram.com/leilajeffreys) 40.9K Instagram followers

Media

[Sydney Morning Herald Feature](#)

[Australian Geographic Podcast](#)

[ABC iView: Bird Nerd: The Art Of Leila Jeffreys](#)

Other media: www.leilajeffreys.com/in-the-press

Portfolio link

<https://www.leilajeffreys.com/works>

Video Art Behind The Scenes

[Making of Nature Is Not A Place To Visit. It Is Home.](#)

[Making of Shake the dust off your wings.](#)

Video Art

Nature Is Not A Place To Visit. It Is Home. ([Online preview](#))

Temple collaboration with Melvin J. Montalban for Vivid Sydney ([Installation view](#))

Other projects

Australia Post Budgerigar Stamps - featuring artworks from High Society. ([details here](#))

Other behind the scenes links

[Working out of a wildlife carers home](#)

[Kaarakin Black Cockatoo Rescue Centre](#)

[Opening night to High Society exhibition at Olsen Gallery](#)

Personal Conservation Project

[Wellington Dam Living Legacy Forest feature in The Plant Hunter](#)



Temple (Installation view)
VIVID Sydney
2022

Leila Jeffreys: CV

Solo Exhibitions

2024

Nature Is Not A Place To Visit. It Is Home. Art Gallery of Ballarat, VIC, Australia

2023

The wound is the place where the light enters, MARS Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

The wound is the place where the light enters, Purdy Hicks Gallery, London, UK

2022

The wound is the place where the light enters solo exhibition, Olsen Gallery, Sydney, Australia, 12 - 29 October

2021

Leila Jeffreys: *Flock*, Western Plains Cultural Centre Gallery, Dubbo, Australia

High Society, Purdy Hicks Gallery, London, UK

Leila Jeffreys: Birdland Manly Art Gallery & Museum, Sydney, Australia

Shake The Dust Off Your Wings, Leila Jeffreys and Melvin J. Montalban, Artists In Residence, The Galleries x City of Sydney, Australia

2020

Nature is not a place to visit. It is home. Peel Street Park Projection Program, Yarra City Arts, Melbourne, Australia

2019

High Society, Olsen Gruin Gallery, New York, NY, USA

High Society, Olsen Gallery, Woollahra, Australia

2018

Ornithurae, Purdy Hicks Gallery, London, UK,

Garden Party Loft, Bergdorf Goodman, New York City, NY, USA

Linda Fargo's Shop, Bergdorf Goodman, New York City, NY, USA

Private Exhibition, The Hamptons, NY, USA

Muse, Taronga Zoo, Sydney, Australia

2017

Ornithurae, Olsen Gruin Gallery, New York City, USA

Australians in Film, Black Tie Dinner, Los Angeles, USA

Private Exhibition, Los Angeles, USA

2016

Bird Love, Purdy Hicks Gallery, London, UK

Bird Love Book Launch, Purdy Hicks Gallery, London, UK

2015

Wild Cockatoos, Purdy Hicks Gallery, London, UK

2014

Prey, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2012

Biolela Wild Cockatoos, Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2011

Portrait of a Budgerigar, Jonathan Adler, Soho, New York City, USA

Portrait of a Budgerigar, Jonathan Adler, Sloane Ave, London, UK

2010

Portrait of a Budgerigar, Iain Dawson Gallery, Paddington, Sydney, Australia

Book Titles

2020

Des Oiseaux (Atelier EXB) published in English and French, and also as a limited edition boxed set with print

2015

Birdland (Hachette Australia), **Shortlisted** for Australian Book Design Awards 'Best Designed Fully Illustrated' award, **Highly Commended** in Photobook Melbourne's 'Australian Photobook of the Year', 2016.

Bird Love (Abrams USA & UK), **Winner of an 'Award for Excellence' at the 57th Communication Arts Photography Annual.**

2013

Interview With A Cockatoo (or Two) (Independent), **Winner of the 'People's Choice Award'** for the 2013 Head On Moment Photobook Awards.



Ornithurae opening night
Olsen Gruin Gallery, New York
2017

Select Group Exhibitions

2024

2024, *New Acquisitions from the Mosman Art Collection*, Sydney, Australia

Feathered, Erin Cluley Gallery, Dallas, Texas, USA 2024, Purdy Hicks Gallery at London Art Fair

30 Year Celebration at Olsen Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2023

30 Year Celebration at Olsen Gallery, Sydney, Australia

Terre de Plumes, in parallel with L'Événement Photographique #2, Jardin botanique Jean-Marie Pelt de Villers-les-Nancy, France

2023, *Civilization: The Way We Live Now*, Saatchi Gallery, London, UK

2023, *Birds, Picture This Gallery*, Stockholm, Sweden

2023, *Birds - through the lens of international photographers*, Breda Photo Festival, Grote Kerk Breda, The Netherlands

2023, *Best in Show - Pets in Contemporary Photography*, Fotografiska New York, NY, USA

Des Oiseaux, Landskrona Foto, Landskrona, Sweden
Summer 2023, Erin Cluley Gallery, Dallas, Texas, USA

2022

Fragile Earth, Gippsland Art Gallery, Sale, Victoria, Australia

Des Oiseaux, travelling group exhibition, Hangar, Brussels, Belgium

Des Oiseaux, travelling group exhibition, Château d'Eau, Toulouse, France

Critical Limit, Climarte Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

Temple, Vivid Sydney 2022, Australia (collaboration with Melvin J. Montalban)

The Pet Show, Fotografiska, Tallinn, Estonia

Couleurs Australie - Un Voyage Chromatique, Le BHV Marais, Paris, France

2021

The Pet Show, Fotografiska, Stockholm, Sweden

2021, *Clean Slate*, domicile (n.), Los Angeles, USA

2021, *Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize*,

Ravenswood School for Girls, Sydney, Australia May 15-30 - **People's Choice & Highly Commended for 'The Wound Is The Place Where The Light Enters - Bleeding Heart Dove'**.

2020

William and Winifred Bowness Photography Prize, (Finalist) Monash Gallery of Art, Melbourne, Australia

This is now, Grainger Gallery, Canberra, Australia

Ravenswood Australian Women's Art Prize, Ravenswood School for Girls, Sydney, Australia

The Sound of Blue, Sturt Gallery, Mittagong, NSW, Australia

Summer Group Show at the Olsen Gallery, Sydney, Australia

"In Sight", Group Exhibition, at Olsen Gruin Gallery, NYC, US

London Art Fair, London, UK as part of Purdy Hicks Gallery stand.

2019

Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Carriageworks, Sydney, Australia

Wild Thing, Lion Gate Lodge, Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney, Australia

Art for the Wilderness group exhibition and charity auction, Queen Street Galleries, Woollahra, Sydney, Australia

Creatures, Olsen Gruin Gallery, New York, NY, USA

Fisher's Ghost Art Award, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, Australia - Finalist for 'Charcoal and Ash'

Ravenswood Art Prize (Highly Commended), Ravenswood School For Girls, Sydney, Australia

Agender, Sun Studios, Sydney, Australia

Antumbra, Olsen Gallery Sydney, Australia

2018

Watermill Benefit, *Time Bomb*, NY, USA

Photo London, London, UK

2 x 2, Olsen Gallery, Woollahra, Sydney, Australia

2017

Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Carriageworks, Sydney, Australia

Birds - Flight Paths, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, VIC, Australia

2016

London Art Fair, London, UK

Artist Open House, Fremantle, WA, Australia

Pulse Contemporary Art Fair, Miami, Florida, USA

Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London, UK

Transfer, Australian Centre for Photography, Paddington, Sydney, Australia

2015

A Summer Group Exhibition, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

A Summer Group Exhibition, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney, Australia

Birdland Book Launch, National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Australia

Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Carriage Works, Sydney, Australia

Feathered, Touchstones, Rochdale, UK

Gallery Artist Group Show, Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne, Australia

Important Works on Paper and Sculpture, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney, Australia

Australian and International Contemporary Photography, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Sydney, Australia

2014

Melbourne Art Fair, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Royal exhibition Building, Melbourne, Australia

2013

Sydney Contemporary Art Fair, Olsen Irwin Gallery, Carriage Works, Sydney, Australia

On a Wing and a Prayer, Mars Gallery, Port Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

2012

Wild Australia, Gallery Reis, Orchard Road, Singapore
Melbourne Art Fair, Carlton Pavilion, Australia

2011

Summer Collection, Studio at the B, Ally's Beach, Florida, USA

Wattle, *Contemporary Australian Art*, The Cat Street Gallery, Hong Kong

Summer Feast, Iain Dawson Gallery, Paddington, Sydney, Australia

2010

Head On Photo Festival, Iain Dawson Gallery, Paddington, Sydney, Australia



Des Oiseaux : Leila Jeffreys
Monograph
2020

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