

**Michael's Colourful
& Bold Art World**

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Curating Collections / 06

An Art et al. publication

Curated by Philomena Heinel in
collaboration with Dr. Michael Schwarz

Cover: Detail of Eden Menta and Janelle Low
Eden and The Gorge (Edition of 5) 2019

photograph
100 × 80 cm

**Michael's Colourful
& Bold Art World**



Installation photograph from inside Michael's house

In late 2023, early 2024, Philomena Heinel connected with Dr. Michael Schwarz over Zoom, with a shared interest in animals and nature. It often seemed like the art took a back seat as we heard about the adventures of each person, most notably Michael's trip to Antarctica and the many penguins he encountered along the way! Alongside delving into Michael's extensive collection at home of mainly Australian and New Zealand based artists, they shared their interests and family life, to help create a wonderful bond. He shared that really, he doesn't collect art, he collects artists and their bodies of work. And that he buys at least one artwork a week! We also learnt that the name Philomena means lover of strength – what a fascinating description.

By the end of the second session, it was decided Michael would go away and search out artworks that fell into three main themes, and that Aboriginal art was not something that was of interest to Philomena for this project. Philomena agreed she would get to work making an artwork in each of those themes too, but by the end had created many more. The themes were:

1. Animals, but not dead animals. This was based on some taxidermy that was initially shown that Philomena was not so keen on.
2. Flowers, including those in vases.
3. Things that are a bit scary with dark colours, but nothing too sinister! Ghosts are fine.

It was clear that Philomena selected works based on things she likes, but also things that reminded her of her own artworks. She was very clear in her likes and dislikes, sharing opinions of each image seen. In-between sessions, she wrote little stories/descriptions about those she connected with the most, that were shared at the next session. These have been included in this catalogue, to give you more of an insight into Philomena's world. Enjoy reading and seeing her 13 selected works, alongside seeing her own art, and Michael's art collection journey.

Foreword

JENNIFER GILBERT
Co-founder Art et al.

Philomena Heinel (b. 1995) is at the beginning of her career and is full of creative drive. She has only been attending Atelier Rohling in Switzerland for six months. Her current interest is the coexistence of humans and nature. Her pictures, some of which have a schematic structure and are created in series, illustrate complex relationships between living beings.

Atelier Rohling is a non-profit studio and laboratory in Bern, Switzerland, for artistic productions and interactions. It has been supporting artists with disabilities since 2012. It demands and promotes a contemporary and equal concept of art.

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atelierrohling.ch



Philomena Heinel

Philomena out in nature,
where she feels happy

Dr. Michael Schwarz is a retired Adolescent and Family Psychiatrist living in Melbourne, Australia. During his 35-year working life, Michael was impressed with the creativity, enthusiasm and passion of young people and he actively supported patients in their creative endeavours – including purchasing artworks from them.

On his retirement in 2016, Michael was able to pursue a 'post-retirement career' in arts philanthropy. Having amassed a substantial collection of artworks over a 25-year period, Michael became aware that he not only collected art, he collected artists. Michael and his partner David have now 'adopted' around 20 artists, provide gallery spaces for two not-for-profit local arts organisations, award an annual month-long residency opportunity in rural France, and are actively involved in the long term support of metropolitan and regional arts organisations in the state of Victoria. In a more direct way, Michael is also a volunteer guide at the National Gallery of Victoria and a volunteer and past board member of the supported studio Arts Project Australia.



Dr. Michael Schwarz

Michael with a sculpture by
Greatest Hits (a collaborative
group of three Melbourne
artists who were awarded the
French residency in 2022).

I have a recurring dream. I am at a meeting where a dozen or so people are seated in a circle. It is my first time there and I am asked to introduce myself. I can feel my heart race as I shakily say: 'Hello. My name is Michael, and I was a doctor before I retired. I am here because I have a problem. I am an art-addicted collector.' The group nods sympathetically and the convenor says: 'Welcome to Collector's Anonymous, Michael.'

My interest in collecting art began decades ago. After a brief attempt at surgery, which demonstrated a complete lack of fine motor skills, I opted for a career in psychiatry. During my working life I was constantly impressed at how my patients formed a world view and made sense of themselves and their existence. As I was incapable of creating things, I was particularly in awe of, and drawn to, people who use their creativity to make things. This led to me collecting art and, more particularly, collecting artists. I rarely buy an artwork without getting to know and becoming friends with its creator.

When I retired, I decided to deal with my 'art addiction' through various philanthropic and volunteer activities. I am now involved with many not-for-profit organisations including Arts Project Australia (APA) in Melbourne, Victoria, which provides mentored art experiences to over 150 artists who have a range of disabilities. It was through APA and its connection with Art et al., that I met Philomena who was interested in exploring my art collection.

Michael's Thoughts

DR. MICHAEL SCHWARZ

In the 1960s John Canaday, the New York Times art critic, whimsically devised a list of the different types of art collectors which is still relevant today. According to Canaday's 'categories of art collectors', I would hope to be *The Art Lover/Informal Philosopher* – a person who collects for the wonder of the object. However, I suspect I am *The Pack Rat* – a collector who will collect just about anything. My collection, accumulated over the past 25 years, is quite large with over 900 objects including paintings, drawings, photography, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, and videos. My 'arty' friends describe my collecting style as 'eclectic'; the general public has referred to my art and artefacts as 'interesting knick knacks.'

Despite being surrounded by art – as I write this, I can see at least 50 objects in my study – I don't have much interest in sharing my collection with others. My collection is part of my personal journey and each object has a place in my history and memory. As a result, I wondered what Philomena would gravitate towards. She told me she was interested in animals, flowers, and scary things.

As I looked around my collection, I was struck by the large number of paintings which are either abstract, figurative, or text-based, and the plethora of 3D works which relate to cross-cultural spirituality. Many of the works are unnerving but neither animals nor flowers feature significantly.

Installation photograph from inside Michael's house



At our first Zoom meeting I showed Philomena ten works which I thought matched her criteria. She looked thoughtfully at the 'vanitas-style' paintings by Melbourne-based painter Sam Leach and the recreation of Dutch still-life photographs featuring Australian roadkill by Brisbane photographer Marian Drew and was not so taken. Dead animals were not her thing. However, Philomena really liked the large monochromatic oil painting *The Lure of Paris* by local artist Stephen Bush. The dramatic rocky seascape in which three Babar elephants struggle against the elements as they work collectively to achieve safety prompted her first poem, which she shared at the next online session.

Philomena's interest in finding the human emotional elements in animals helped me to look for other anthropomorphic themes and works in my collection. Dane Lovett's painting of his dog *Tallulah* as a loyal vessel, David Noonan's bronze, all-knowing *Owl*, Scott Redford's endangered *Blue Polar Bear*, Gregor Kregar's simple but valuable sheep – all called *Matthew* and referencing verse 12:12 in the Gospel – and Linde Ivimey's avatar as a rabbit struggling with the effects of a serious illness, remind us that intense personal experiences can often be most effectively conveyed through animals as metaphors.

Using works from my collections as a stimulus to create her own art and poetic reflections, Philomena has added new, poignant and important perspectives to the objects in my world. I was particularly pleased when she chose Eden Menta's photograph depicting the joy of experiencing the world in an uncensored and spontaneous way, and the 12th century Chance ceramic *Star Gazer* figure which speaks of the possibilities of the universe. Having Philomena 'drop into' my world reminded me that art shouldn't just be collected but shared and discussed and appreciated. Our meetings ignited 'the wonder of the object.'



Installation photograph from inside Michael's house

Philomena Heinel
A bee on a rose 2023
Mixed media on paper
30 × 42 cm



WHY DO I LIKE THE PICTURES

Because they are exciting, and because I've never seen anything like them before... such different materials. Also, that the pictures are not simply beautiful or beautiful in their own way, even though some are also made of bones. Every artist sees the world differently, and so every picture is a reflection of the world in its own way, from a different perspective.

WHY I CHOSE THESE WORKS

Painting and art are important to me. I really like Michael's collection, it's very varied and I like figures and animals. I also like the old objects. Some of them don't look their age at all. For example, the *Stargazer* is 1,200 years old. I didn't know that art could be that old. It could also be by a contemporary artist. I also really like the plastic vase because it is art made from waste. Art has no age.

WHAT I WAS THINKING WHEN I CHOSE THESE WORKS

The woman in the skirt (Eden Menta and Janelle Low, *Eden and The Gorge*) stands there confidently. Art gives energy. The 3-legged woman (Renee So, *Woman II*) stands firmly and stably on the ground: Here I am. Being in nature, a love for animals. Art is different in every way. Through this project I got to know different ways of creating art, such as drawing a dark picture with a pencil. Even though I don't really like the dark, the art allows you to come out of yourself and beyond yourself and learn. And that also takes courage. I really enjoy these pictures. They showed me that you can learn so much more in art and that everyone sees pictures differently. Suddenly someone comes along and finds a picture beautiful, or it can take years and nothing happens.

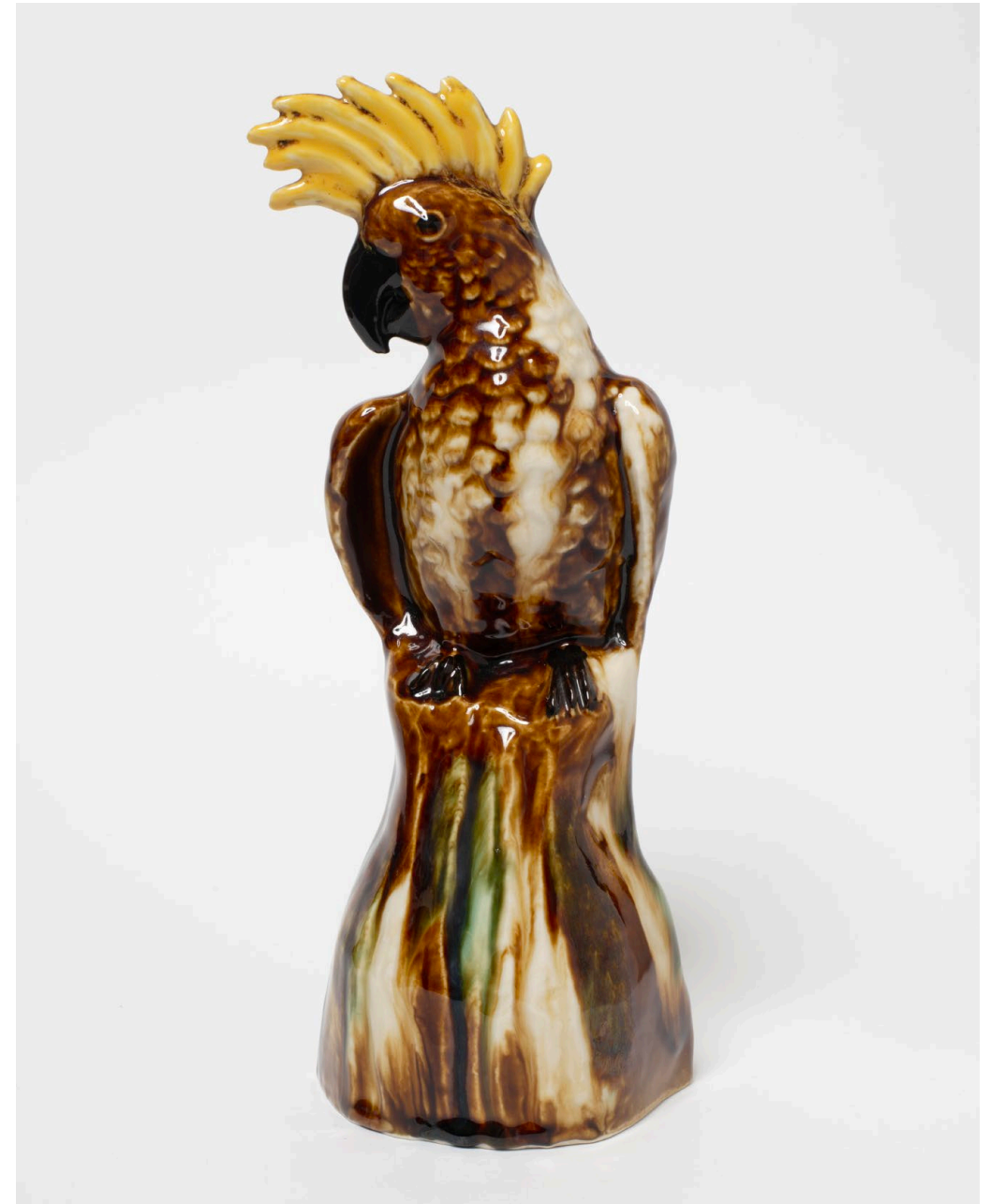
The stargazer has become very old.
It is a figure to put up and to look at.
Oh dear, you are a very old work of art.
Yes, I am, but look I still look the same.
But why can you get so old?
It's because we're put up and are not used, that's why we get so old.
That's cool!
Yeah, that's cool.
But I never want to get that old.
Why not?
We humans can't get as old as you characters.
Oh. I think my age is cool because that's how I became famous.

Anonymous
Star Gazer circa 1200 CE
Chancay region, Northern Peru
34 x 20 x 10 cm



The parrot is made of porcelain and looks good and stands there.
 He unfortunately can't fly because he's made of porcelain,
 but he's beautiful.
 But what does he want to do all day if he can't fly?
 Just standing there.
Maybe I can fly after all?
To try. Yes, I can.
Yes, I can fly Hurrah. Hurrah. It works
Here in the air, up in the sky, you can watch the people...
what they are doing.
But what is sad is that there is garbage everywhere, and
people do not throw it in the garbage.
No, they throw it on the ground, and we animals do not enjoy it at all.
Wow, now it looks very clean from up there.
Hurrah, flying is fun again.

Anonymous Bendigo Pottery
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
 Australian early 20th century
 Glazed ceramic
 34 × 16 × 12 cm



Why you don't you tell me that you love me?
Everyone has feelings but sometimes you don't dare to say
it to someone.

Oh you, I'm just a bit shy and that's why I can't tell you.
So, the other says to him, I know that everyone is different.
Some people are more confident than others, so everyone
is different.

Everyone is good in their own way.

Stephen Bush
The Lure of Paris #25 2005
Oil on linen
183.5 × 183.5 cm



Looks like a mummy that is dangerous and shows the courage and power he has.

Here I am, he shows.

Here I come the minotaur.

I know I look dangerous, but I'm not really dangerous.

Why do you all think that? Just because I look like that doesn't mean I'm dangerous. People always think the worst of me.

I'm proud that I look like this with my style.

Michael Camakaris
Minotaur 2023
Glazed ceramic
14 × 12 × 34 cm



A woman walks through the streets collecting plastic bottles.
People are already asking what she is doing with that much plastic.
Because I make art with plastic.
I paint them all.
That looks wonderful.
This is extremely fun.
Then it is reassuring that you can save the waste from the earth.
This is why I have already painted many plastics.
That makes me strong and courageous.
*Every plastic has a different shape, and that makes everything
even more interesting.*

Sarah Goffman
Vase 2023
Recycled plastic, and
permanent marker
10 × 8 × 20 cm



The picture is all made of different bones.
The foot is made of bone.
The picture looks a bit scary and dangerous,
but that is part of this picture.

Linde Ivimey
Anima Fractus, Invidia Nervus 2010
Steel, acrylic resin, cotton,
string, organic fibre, rabbit fur,
cast and natural sheep, turkey
and bird bones
62 × 31 × 43.5 cm



The sheep sleeps all day long and the other sheep is standing still. Also they can't walk as they have no feet, which is boring for this creature. But it's nice to look at and watch.

Gregor Kregar
Matthew 12.12 Portrait 2006
Glazed earthenware
36 × 26 × 10 cm each



She stands there in a beautiful landscape and lifts up her skirt.
She just feels happy.
Oh, the world is beautiful and colourful.

Eden Menta and Janelle Low
Eden and The Gorge
(Edition of 5) 2019
Photograph
100 × 80 cm



Sits on the tree and thinks why am I here? What am I doing here?
*I'm made of metal gold. I don't have to be in the forest on the tree,
but in an apartment in a beautiful place, where I can come into my
own and be amazed by the other owls... like I'm another owl, and
they think it looks completely different from us.*

That's exciting.

Suddenly everyone looks like that.

Huh, how did that happen?

Why do we all look like you now?

I don't know why either!

Maybe a spell has been broken.

Yay, now we all look like you!

David Noonan
Owl 2006
Bronze
31 × 21 × 18 cm
Courtesy of the artist and
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney



You look so sad. What have you got?
I am sad because I was painted like this.
Who painted you?, Vixi asked.
Yes, what do you think?
Wow, that's difficult – I think it's a mouse.
Drops said, *no, for God's sake, it's an animal and not a person.*
That was a human, yes exactly a very famous artist.
Oh, but why did he paint you so sad?
Maybe because the artist was sad too.
*And when you paint, you can express your sadness and
then the artist feels better again.*
Yes, you're right Drops, or maybe he was scared and that's
why he painted it.
That's how it is, but I have become a very beautiful picture.

Tom Polo
Why Don't You Love Me? 2008
Acrylic on board
91.5 × 122 cm



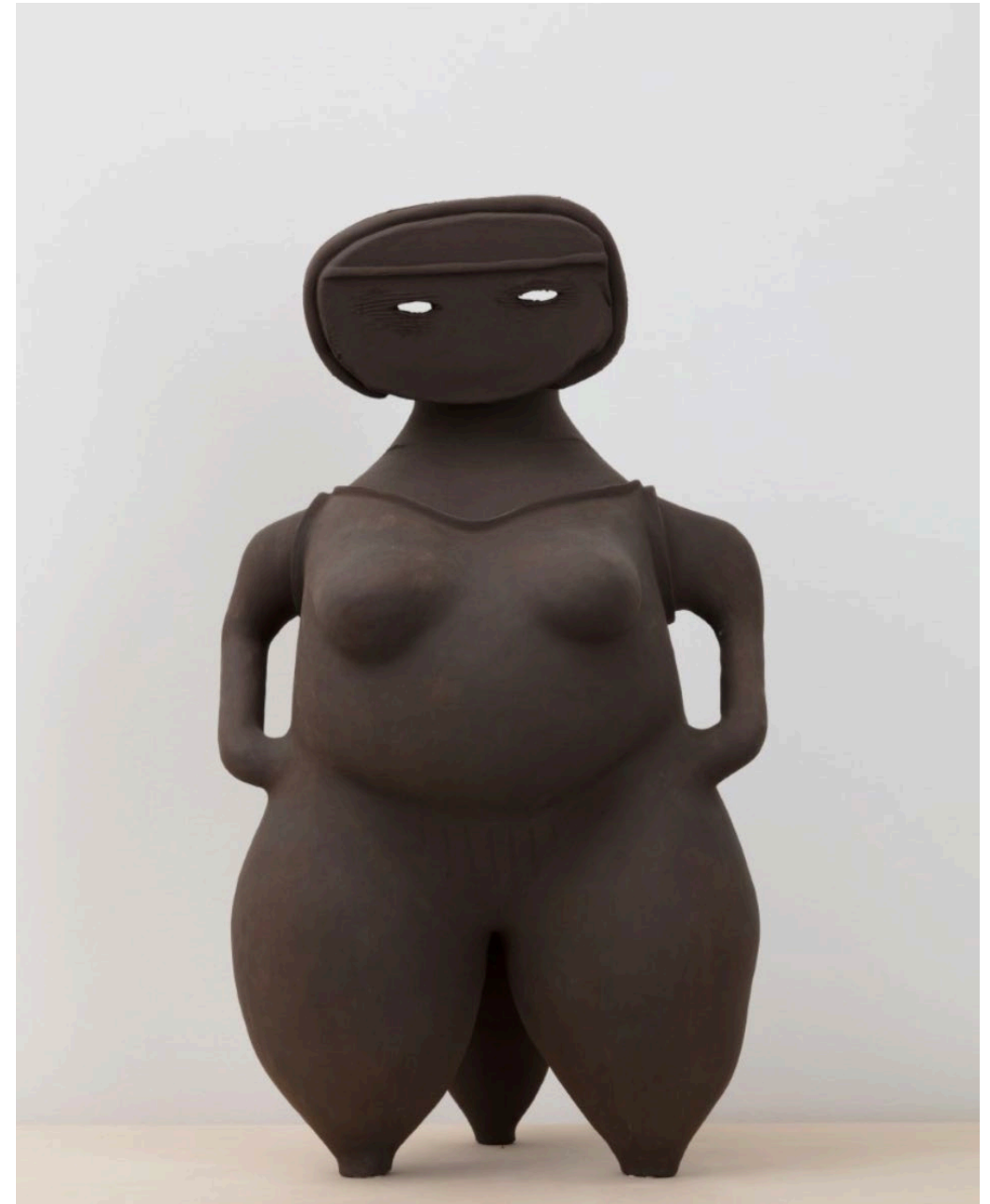
He looks beautiful, is made of blue porcelain and is happy.
He has warm fur, but the porcelain polar bear just stands there.
And can't walk, so must just stand there.

Scott Redford
*My Beautiful Polar
Bear, Blue* 2003
Glazed ceramic
24 x 48 x 18 cm



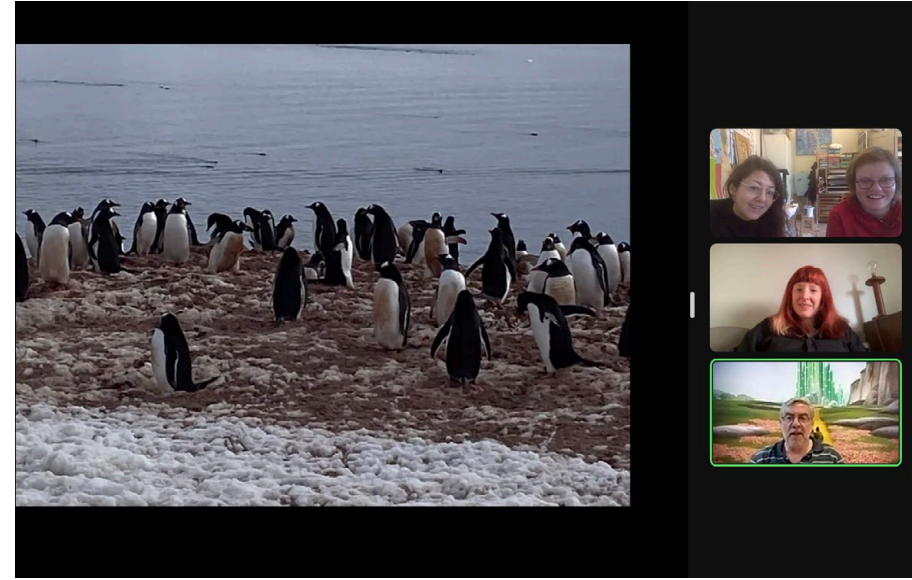
The 3-legged woman stands strong.
She knows what she wants.
*I want to be strong for the flowers that come in the vase.
I give the flowers strength, so that they can grow and become
colourful and always grow bigger.
I stand here with 3 legs, but I am strong and courageous.
I can help the flowers to grow and get bigger.
That is my task.
That gives me pleasure and courage.
I am me.*

Renee So
Woman II 2017
Stoneware
46 × 29 × 20 cm
Courtesy of the artist and
Roslyn Oxley9 Gallery, Sydney





Philomena Heinel *The Penguin on the beach* 2023, Mixed media on paper, 42 × 30 cm



A zoom session where we saw Michael's adventures and all the penguins he saw.
Top to bottom: Sophie and Philomena, Jennifer, Michael.

Acknowledgments

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ART ET AL.
Art et al. is an inclusive, curated international art platform that commissions and presents collaborations between artists from supported studios, artist peers, and arts professionals. We elevate diverse voices and creative practices.

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JENNIFER LAUREN GALLERY

Rohling





Philomena Heinel
The dog 2024
Pencil and coloured
pencil on wood
50 × 40 cm

