

# ANGELICA MESITI RELAY LEAGUE

Angelica Mesiti Education Resource



EDUCATION  
RESOURCE

## INTRODUCTION

This Education Resource has been produced by Artspace, Sydney, in conjunction with Museums & Galleries of NSW to support the touring exhibition *Relay League* by Angelica Mesiti.

It is intended to assist school students and teachers of a primary and secondary education level. We also encourage community groups, as well as gallery staff to use the information and activities in this resource. This resource offers:

- Insight into the practice of Angelica Mesiti
- A glossary of terms
- Worksheets and back-in-the-classroom activities for primary and secondary school students
- Creative activity suggestions for galleries

**Cover image:** Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League* [video still], 2017.  
Courtesy the artist, Anna Schwartz Gallery, Melbourne and Galerie Allen, Paris.

## HOW TO USE THIS EDUCATION KIT

### FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

The information in this resource is designed to provide enrichment and promote deeper understanding of key learning areas including Visual Arts, English, History, Society and Culture, Drama, Music and Film Studies. There is scope to build this resource into existing programs or develop as a stand-alone program. The resource includes an introduction to the exhibition, key concepts and points of discussion. We have also included some suggestions for pre-visit preparation and post-visit activities.

### FOR GALLERY STAFF, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

This resource can be used to assist or enhance a self directed visit to *Relay League*. You can build on your experience by enjoying creative activities inside the gallery or back in your community setting. We have provided suggested materials and activities.

# About Artspace

## Mission

Artspace is Australia's leading institution for the production and presentation of contemporary art in all forms. Through exhibitions, performances, artist residencies and public programs, Artspace is where artists of all generations present work, test new ideas and shape public conversation. Committed to experimentation, collaboration and advocacy, Artspace's mission is to enhance our culture through a deeper engagement with contemporary art.

## History

Artspace was established in 1983 as a gallery run by artists, dedicated to the presentation of contemporary and experimental art in a critical context. The function of Artspace was clearly defined at this time in its history as an alternative exhibition space to venues such as the Art Gallery of NSW and commercial galleries, which were less focused on working with and representing emerging artists.

In response to ever-increasing demand for space by artists, Artspace relocated in 1992 to the Gunnery, Woolloomooloo – a multi-story warehouse, which in the 1970s was used as a squat by artists and as a space for studios, performances and exhibitions. To facilitate this relocation, the NSW state government together with Franco Belgiorno-Nettis raised \$1.5 million in a ground-breaking collaboration to fund the redevelopment of the Gunnery into a centre for experimentation, innovation and collaboration in the visual arts. For the past 20 years, artists have continued to occupy the building through Artspace's ongoing commitment to supporting artists and their practices. Artspace has played a significant role in transforming the Gunnery from a disused warehouse to a premier cultural landmark.

Artspace has played an important role in the development of many Australian and international artists' careers with major presentations and new commissions by Christian Boltanski, Mikala Dwyer, Annette Messager (1985), Simryn Gill and Callum Morton (1996), Patricia Piccinini (2000), Marco Fusinato (2000/2013), Mike Parr (2002), Shaun Gladwell (2007), Vernon Ah Kee, Brook Andrew (2011) Chicks on Speed (2013), Richard Bell (2013), Khadim Ali, Justene Williams (2014), Nicholas Mangan (2015), Tracey Moffatt (2016) and Angelica Mesiti (2017).



## Programs

Artspace has a multi-faceted approach to programming. Not only does Artspace present art exhibitions, but also organises artist residencies, workshops, performances, public talks and film screenings. Artspace's vision is to promote investment in living artists across generations, working in expanded and experimental forms, so that Australian artists, writers, curators and producers can be programmed in direct dialogue with national audiences and international peers. Artspace's program enables ideas to germinate and grow, extending the definition of what art is and what it can become.

Artspace supports living artists in a number of ways: through exhibitions, by providing free studio space for local and international artist and through making connections between Australian artists and the rest of the world.

[artspace.org.au](http://artspace.org.au)

Follow us on social media

Instagram and Twitter: @ArtspaceSydney

Facebook: Facebook.com/ArtspaceSydney

## About Museums & Galleries of NSW

Museums & Galleries of NSW [M&G NSW] helps museums, galleries and Aboriginal cultural centres of NSW create exciting and inspiring experiences for visitors and strong, thriving local communities. We develop their skills, connect them with others in the industry, provide funding, point visitors their way, and give them access to ground-breaking exhibitions.

Our focus is the 500+ organisations in NSW that have the passion to inspire their communities and visitors through art, artefacts, stories and ideas but do not always have the means to realise their potential. And with 66% of museums, galleries and cultural centres located outside of metro areas, we also want to help more people discover the many cultural gems NSW has to offer.

M&G NSW runs the largest regional touring program in NSW, delivering the very best contemporary Australian art to regional, remote and metropolitan audiences through the comprehensive network of public galleries Australia wide. We partner with artists, curators, regional galleries, contemporary art spaces, university galleries and other producing organisations to develop innovative exhibitions for tour nationally. We work directly with artists and commission new work for the benefit of Australian regional audiences. Our exhibitions and associated programs balance the programming needs of regional galleries and support their staff, facilitate skill sharing and professional development, foster collaboration and build connections, capacity and networks for artists, curators and arts workers across distance.

Our program reflects the capacity and diversity of the sector with a focus on access and engagement. We present the full spectrum of contemporary art practice by leading artists, both emerging and established including Richard Bell, Shaun Gladwell, Claire Healy & Sean Cordeiro, Joyce Hinterding, Angelica Mesiti, Deborah Kelly, Jason Wing, Fiona Hall, Ken + Julia Yonetani. Each of our exhibitions engage diverse audiences through a range of public and educational programs, interpretative material, digital resources and scholarly publications



Image: Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League* [installation view], 2017.  
Photo: Zan Wimberley

written by curators, academics and experts. In the last five years, we have reached over 875,000 visitors nationwide through 24 exhibitions of contemporary art and craft that toured to 131 galleries, art centres, museums and contemporary art organisations across six states and territories. With all our exhibitions, we provide quality publications, interpretation, educational material, public program opportunities and activities.

The touring exhibitions team offer a comprehensive service, providing support and best practice advice on exhibition development and delivery, itinerary development and programming, freight and logistics management, insurance, conservation and condition reporting, program development, marketing, promotion and risk assessment.

[mgnsw.org.au](http://mgnsw.org.au)

Follow us on social media @mgnsw

Instagram and Twitter: @mgnsw

Facebook: Facebook.com/mgnsw

## About the Artist

Angelica Mesiti was born in Sydney in 1976 and is currently based in Paris. She holds a Master of Fine Arts from the College of Fine Arts (now UNSW Art & Design) at the University of New South Wales. Mesiti works primarily with video and installation, incorporating performance, dance and music to explore ideas of community, cultural tradition and spirituality. She is interested in performed cultural traditions in a state of transformation or at risk of extinction due to complex social, economic or cultural shifts.

Mesiti has exhibited internationally in biennales and institutions including: 19th Biennale of Sydney, curated by Juliana Engberg (2014); 13th Istanbul Biennial, curated by Fulya Erdemci, (2013); 2nd Aichi Triennale, curated by Taro Igarashi (2013); 5th Auckland Triennial, curated by Hou Hanru (2013); 11th Sharjah Biennale, curated by Yuko Hasegawa (2013); 1st Kochin-Mizuris Biennial (2012); She has exhibited at major international institutions including The Barbican, London and Carriageworks, Sydney (2015); The Jewish Museum, New York (2014); Institut d'art contemporain, Villeurbanne/Rhône-Alpes Lyon France and Queensland Art Gallery | Gallery of Modern Art Brisbane (2013); Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne and Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney (2012); 17th Videobrasil, Sao Paulo, Kunstmuseum Bonn and Tokyo Metropolitan Museum of Photography (2011); Centre Pompidou, Paris, Reina Sofia National Museum, Madrid, Tate Modern, London and Loop Gallery, Seoul (2010).

Solo projects include: Walter Phillips Gallery, The Banff Centre (2015); Lilith Performance Centre, Malmo (2015), Anna Schwartz Gallery, Sydney (2015), Galerie Allen, Paris (2015), Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal (2014), Williams College Museum of Art, Massachusetts (2014).

Awards, grants and commissions: Inaugural Ian Potter Moving Image Commission (2013); Anne Landa Award for Video and New Media Arts (2013); Australian Film Television and Radio School Creative Fellowship (2011); Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney C3West commission (2011); 58th Blake Prize for spiritual and religious art (2009).

Mesiti is also a member of the collaborative group The Kingpins [with Técha Noble, Emma Price and Katie Price]. They have exhibited and performed in museums nationally and overseas including: The Musée d'Art Modern de la Ville de Paris (2007); Liverpool Biennial, UK; The Palais de Tokyo and Nuit Blanche-Paris (2006); Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania, and Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw (2006); Transmodern Age Festival, Maryland, Baltimore, USA (2006); Gwangju Biennale, South Korea, Taipei Biennale, Taipei Fine Arts Museum, and SuperDeluxe, Tokyo (2004).



Image: Angelica Mesiti. Photo: Zan Wimberley

## About the Exhibition

*Relay League* by Angelica Mesiti presents a newly commissioned three-channel video installation and accompanying sound sculpture (not touring to every venue). The work takes as its departure point a Morse code message transmitted by the French navy on 31 January 1997 to signal the imminent demise of this communication method: 'Calling all. This is our last cry before our eternal silence'. Morse code, which entailed a system of dot and dash radio signals and was often utilized as a language of distress at sea, was phased out after 130 years in favour of new digital communications. Inspired by this final poetic phrase, here Mesiti interprets its original dots and dashes through music, choreography, non-verbal communication and sculpture.

The first video features the musician-composer Uriel Barthélémi translating the Morse code message into a percussive score that permeates throughout the entire installation. The second shows a unique form of dialogue and exchange between two dancers, Sindri Runudde, who is partially sighted and Emilia Wibron Vesterlund. Together the pair has developed an intimate and corporeal language of communicating movement as Emilia helps Sindri to 'watch' dance through the touch and feel of their movements together to interpret and understand the choreography through the touch and feel of her body against his. The third depicts the dancer Filipe Lourenço interpreting Barthélémi's percussive sounds in a new choreography that directly references silence and vision through gestures loosely drawn from the vernacular of folk dance. This final video reveals that a dialogue is playing out between each of the performers, and the dots and dashes transmitted throughout the galleries produce a subtle dissonance so that the work continually slips back and forth between cohesion and dissolution. *Relay League* leaves a sensory impression of a language that has been transformed into code, which in turn iterates as a score, a performance, a haptic exchange and an instrument, enabling multiple acts of translation across time and space.

*Relay League* draws on the artist's ongoing interest in non-verbal communication, cross-cultural exchange and adapted methods of expression. A defining feature of Mesiti's practice that will be integral to these new works is her investment in collaboration with a variety of performers – both professionally trained and self-taught, hailing from metropolitan centres to small, remote communities. The works are conceptually linked by their exploration of perception, translation, communication, loss, silence and reinvention via the language of performance. They consider notions of limitation not with pity but with respect for its difference, resilience and innovation, highlighting how transformation emerges from loss and decay.



Mesiti's practice has consistently demonstrated an interest in how the body is used in expression and communication. This has been explored via music and dance as a form of cultural remembrance in widely-seen works including *Citizens Band* (2012), *In the Ear of the Tyrant* (2014) and *Nakh Removed* (2015). She has investigated adapted methods of communication in the face of adversity in *The Calling* (2013–14), which depicts the intricacies of whistling languages in three remote communities, and in *The Colour of Saying* (2015), for which she worked with a sign language choir and elderly ballet dancers to consider the paradox of 'ability'.

The work was filmed during Mesiti's residency at the Centre National de la Danse in Paris.

Image: Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League* [installation view], 2017.  
Photo: Zan Wimberley

# For Teachers

This education kit offers a unique teaching resource that will enable teachers and students to develop a deeper engagement with the artistic practice of Angelica Mesiti. Stimulating engaging programs within the exhibition space and activities have been designed for the classroom to inspire creative and abstract thinking techniques.

## Connecting to the Curriculum

This program is aimed at students of all ages and abilities. The primary program supports the use of creative arts and interdisciplinary learning strategies. In particular, this resource engages with Visual Arts, English, History, Communication and Thinking Processes.

As part of a national touring program, this education kit includes activities and discussion points with a broad focus, covering the framework of EXPLORE, DISCUSS & CREATE in order to offer maximum adaptability to specific state-based and the national curriculums. The activities have a broad primary and secondary school focus.

Students will gain skills to critically and historically interpret the landscape of contemporary video and installation art through artistic practice and conceptual frameworks. Investigation of the exhibition will examine the roles and relationships between concepts of the artist, artwork, world and audience through analytical and historical investigations of the exhibition. They will also respond to the works through sensory experiences and subjective responses to form their own ideas and interpretations of the artworks.

Students will learn about the role of the artist, the role and value of the audience and the way the moving image offers new forms of expression and interpretation that are critical to the way we share stories and perspectives.

This kit provides teachers and students with information and activities to allow a meaningful and significant visit to *Relay League* that is continued afterwards in the classroom through discussion and activities.

## VIDEO ART | A short introduction

Video art began as an emerging experimental art medium in the mid 1960's, as the production of portable video technology became accessible to artists. Korean born, German based artist Nam June Paik, is attributed as the pioneer of video art originated as a profoundly political movement away from the dominant modernist aesthetic that valued painting and sculpture above any other art form. Avant-garde art forms including video art, performance and the body became intrinsically linked as Paik and artists like Wolf Vostell, Charlotte Moorman and Vito Acconci displayed their videos as assemblages of television sets that often played out performances or experimental moving images.

Alongside cinema, video art has transformed as new technologies have been developed. Today, video art can take many forms. The advent of digital editing has meant that artists like Kerry Tribe have experimented in creating fractured, non-linear narratives in extending or compressing time like Bill Viola and Pipilotti Rist. Some video artists like Matthew Barney adopt the glossy aesthetic of advertising while others, such as Daniel Crooks, completely alter the experience of watching film through digital manipulation. Video art can be displayed on mounted televisions, in cinematic-style darkened gallery spaces, in immersive installations, on the internet or projected directly onto the wall, floor or ceiling with multiple-channel exhibitions.

Video art has become a prevalent and mainstream art practice, as artists use the format to engage with contemporary times and reflect their audience. Today video work is multifaceted and complex, exploring the relationship of reality and fiction and human form and expression. Angelica Mesiti draws from artists and filmmakers alike for inspiration, listing Anri Sala, Philip Parreno, Taryn Simon, Chantal Ackerman, Jane Campion, Claire Denis and Ivan Sen as influences. She also highlights of a wide range of composers, sound artists and dancers as inspiration. From John Cage, Pauline Oliveiros, Alvin Lucier, Steve Reich, Janet Cardiff and Yvonne Rainer to Pina Bausch, Boris Charmatz and Jerome Bell. Mesiti employs cinematic conventions and performance traditions in her video work as a means of exploring human experience, expression and history.

## Interview with the artist

*Relay League takes its starting point from the final Morse code message sent from the French Navy, 'Calling all. This is our last cry before our eternal silence'. Why did this interest you particularly?*

I have been living in France for over 7 years now. I began to have the idea for this work in the summer of 2015 and I think it is important to acknowledge the political environment at that time. It was the height of the refugee crisis in Europe we were all, across the globe, being confronted with a huge amount of media imagery about the loss of life at sea and some of these images were very powerful politically. So within that, I began thinking about distress signals, in particular distress signals at sea and methods of communication in a crisis situation. Alongside that in 2015 we also experienced terrorist attacks in January and November in France. From this, the government enforced a state of emergency that was only intended for three months and is still in place now. That sense of a state of crisis was a very present feeling that I was aware of. Formally this is a work that looks at translation and adapted methods of communication and survival of communication but, as with most of my work, that interest is there on the surface layer but there is usually politics involved.

So, when I came across this phrase in my reading of the final message by the French Navy in 1997 before they decommissioned Morse code, it really hit me because it felt like it spoke across a lot of things that interested me. This is a language that has been constructed specifically for moments of distress, for crisis, for rescue. Here, the poetic nature of the phrase itself felt very unexpected and the other thing that struck me was the fact that this message, rather than signal the distress of a victim at sea it was actually signalling its own imminent expiration, so in a way that final signal was the first time that the language had ever spoken in its own voice about itself. I felt that it was an interesting phrase to use as a starting off point for a work. I was interested in the vulnerable body and that impotent, mute feeling many have in the current political climate. So, this coded, defunct language sending a distress signal that no-one receives and no-one responds to felt metaphorical apt.

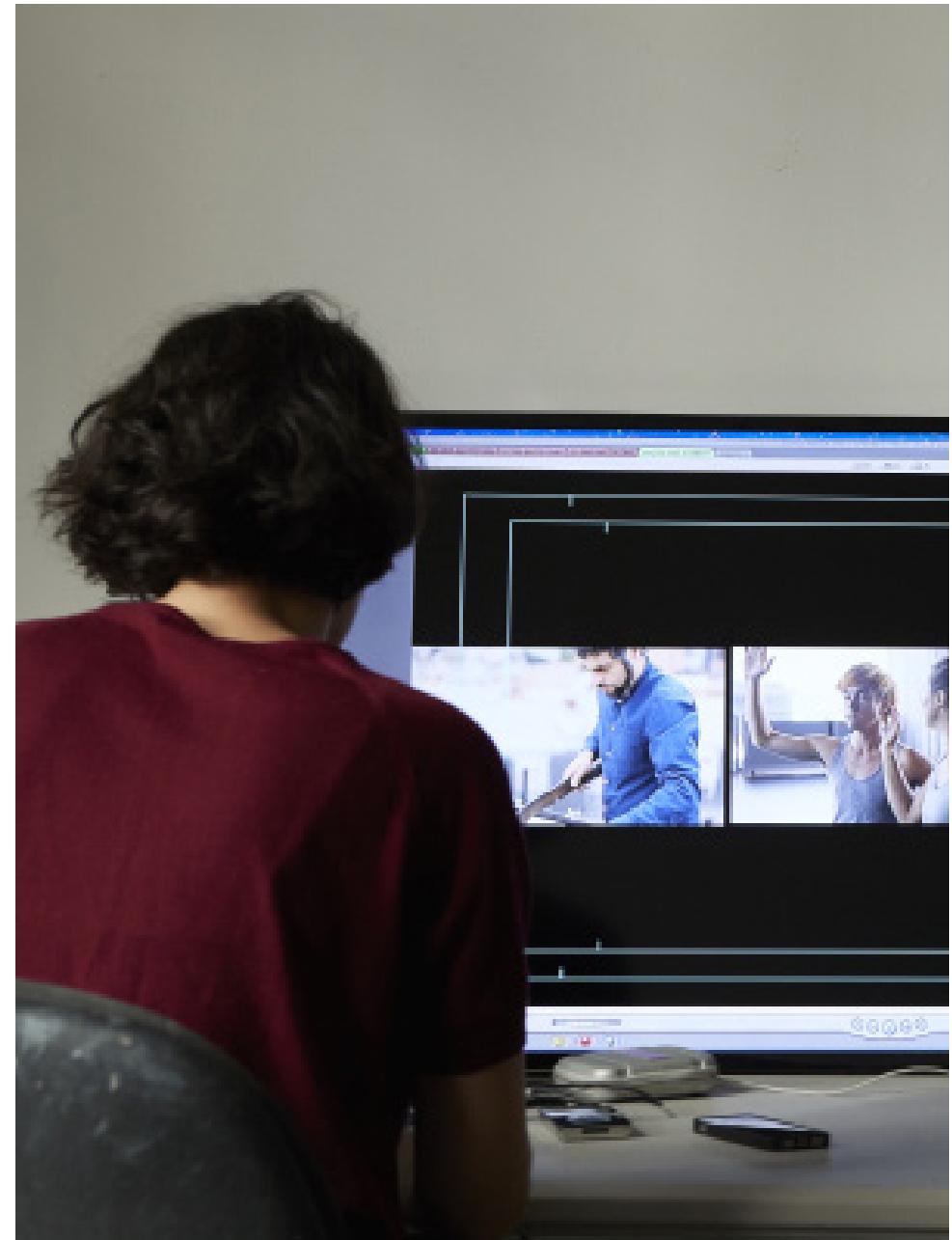


Image: Angelica Mesiti working in her Artspace studio.  
Photo: Zan Wimberley

*An integral feature of this work, as with much of your practice is your collaboration with a variety of professional and non-professional figures. Can you speak about your relationships with the performers in Relay League?*

I thought it could be interesting if I worked with a percussionist for the work. I was thinking about the nature of Morse code, it is a rudimentary little machine that taps, there is a percussive quality to it. I was introduced to Uriel Barthelemy and we began a conversation. He is a sound artist and an incredibly accomplished conservatorium trained jazz drummer and one of the first things he said about this idea was 'well you know this is like the talking drums of Africa'. I was to later find more information that made a connection between the talking drums and Morse code. So, we were clearly on the same page and feeling that the collaboration would be possible.

With regards to the second video, when I was presenting 'The Colour of Saying' in Malmö there were two people that entered the audience that were Sindri and Emilia. Sindri was clearly sight impaired, and he had a cane with him. As they watched the dance performance, I noticed that Emilia was manipulating Sindri's body and kind of demonstrating to him the piece that he was witnessing. I was struck by the intimacy and empathetic affection between them, the very tactile method of them being together. I had just been working with a sign language choir and I felt like what I was seeing was a bespoke translation method that these two individuals had developed on their own in order for Sindri to have some kind of experience when he went to see dance performances. So I formed a relationship with them and found out they were both dancers and talking to them they were such beautiful people, really excited and open and interested in working with an artist so we started a conversation. For me what they are doing sits within dance, it is gestures that are choreographic. It feels to me like improvised movement.

Once the piece of music was produced, I wanted to create a situation where we could observe Sindri and Emilia observing dance and translating dance. I was introduced to Filipe Lourenco who has a really interested dance practice, he has performed with Boris Charmatz and Christian Rizzo and he also has his own dance training in Flamenco and Andalusian as well as other European folk styles of dance. I described the phrase and the relationships between the pieces within the show and I asked him if he would produce a choreography in response to that, this what you see in the third video work. There are certain moments in the video where you can see the gestures he has used he is directly referencing silence and vision. He also uses certain movements that relate to European folk dance and here they have been stripped back.



*When you were working with each performer, how much direction do you give?*

With Uriel, I knew from his work that I had seen that he was an extraordinary sound artist and I was interested in hearing how he would respond. I passed him the message in its Morse code form, in dots and dashes and asked him to read it as a musical score. He would go away and play around with it and then he came back with questions. We then spent a couple of days workshopping and rehearsing together and then refined it into the piece you hear. Uriel begins with a jazz brush, he makes a hit and a drag so you can really directly hear the dot dash. He repeats the phrase several times as he moves across the instruments in the drum kit. It gets more elaborate and more frenzied. Then with Filipe, I gave him the piece of music, explaining where the work is coming from and I asked him to interpret it using choreography. I left it with him and then we had a day or two of rehearsing together before the shoot. For the work with Sindri and Emilia, basically I just asked them to do what they do and we will film it. Usually I do not heavily direct people, usually I have approached them because they are already doing something that I am interested in.

*This exhibition is immersive and interactive. How do you see the role of the audience within this work?*

I see the show as a geography of experience. I have been working with multi screen video installation for some time and I am particularly interested in the viewers experience in a kind of participatory relationship to the video onscreen so, from the outset I was thinking very much, there is a French word that I like to use 'parcours', of a kind of a pathway or tour or some kind of journey or experience through the work. Relay league is the term for a telegraphic system of transmission, from one transmission point to a receiver and from that to another receiver. This is how I have tried to construct this installation, so there is a journey of this message as it passes through. It also adapts and changes as it moves through different forms, in relation to the body.

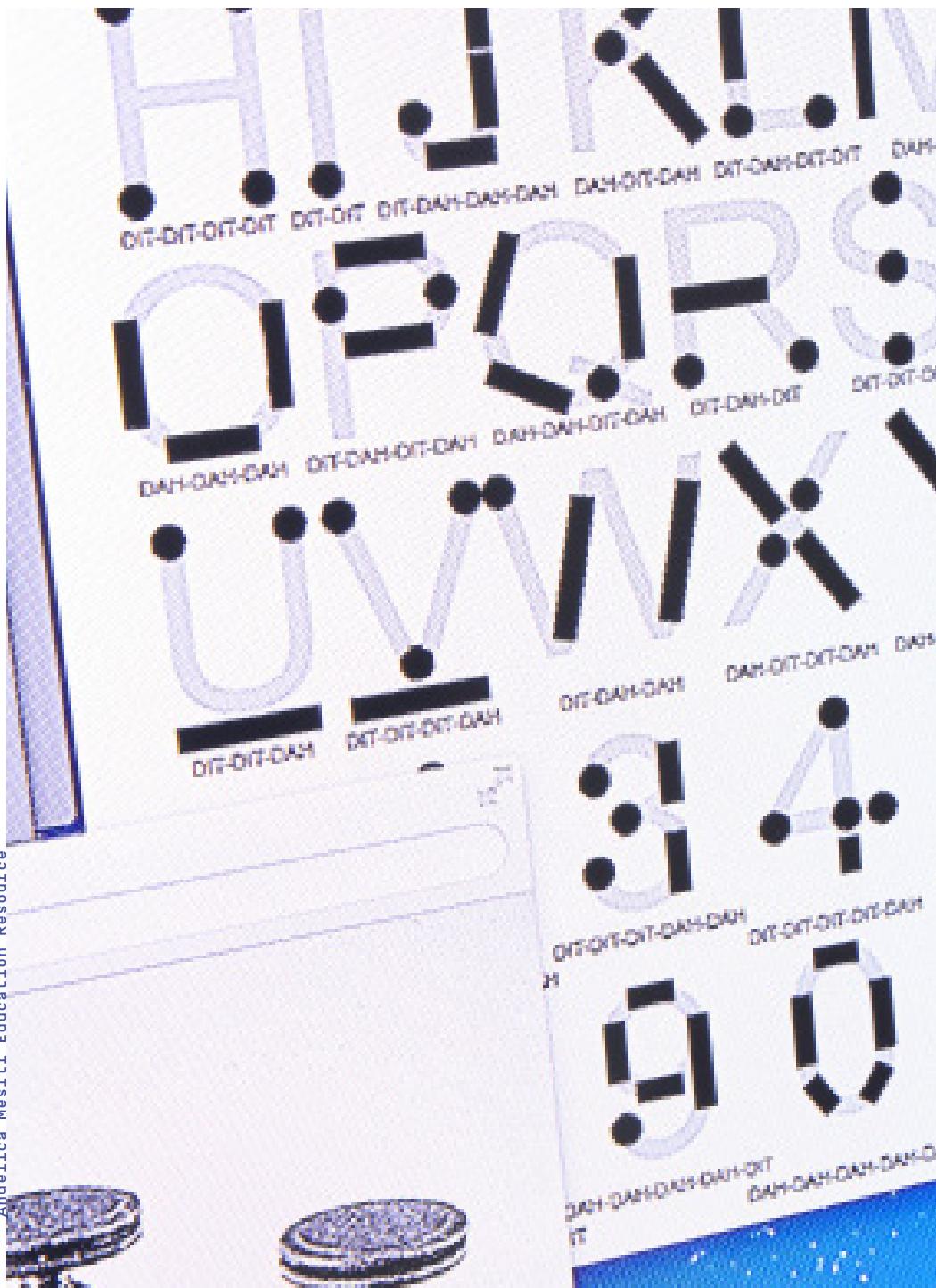
You begin with the sound sculpture that is a direct physical translation of the Morse, so each line in the sculpture is a word in the phrase. I was interested in the possibility of transforming the coded text into a three dimensional form. The sculpture sounds at random as an audience member interacts with it, which produces another layer to the overall soundscape. This turns the code into an instrument that generates an aural or audio interpretation of the phrase. Then you see the three videos unfold in the space. Each moment within the show is a further translation or abstraction or dissection of the source phrase from Morse code.

The architectural space has been constructed in a way to encourage bleed from the soundtrack and illumination of the videos. The first and the last video have the exact same soundtrack and they play in sync so, you start at one end of the gallery and you walk to the other and as you are walking that sound will diminish but as you approach the next screen will increase in volume.

The dividing walls are made of a plastic translucent film, which means that you can see light and shade through them. I wanted to create this porous membrane where you're separated by things but you can perceive what is beyond and that sort of leads you through the experience. Also, the way that Sindri sees is in light and shade, in contrast and blurred images, the way that you will see things on the other side of the screen. So it is kind of like a gesture towards this way of seeing.



Image: Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League* [installation view], 2017.  
Photo: Zan Wimberley



*Your work has a great sensitivity to individuals and groups who may be seen as outsiders, those who are silenced in some way but have found ways to be heard. What interests you about this sort of subject matter?*

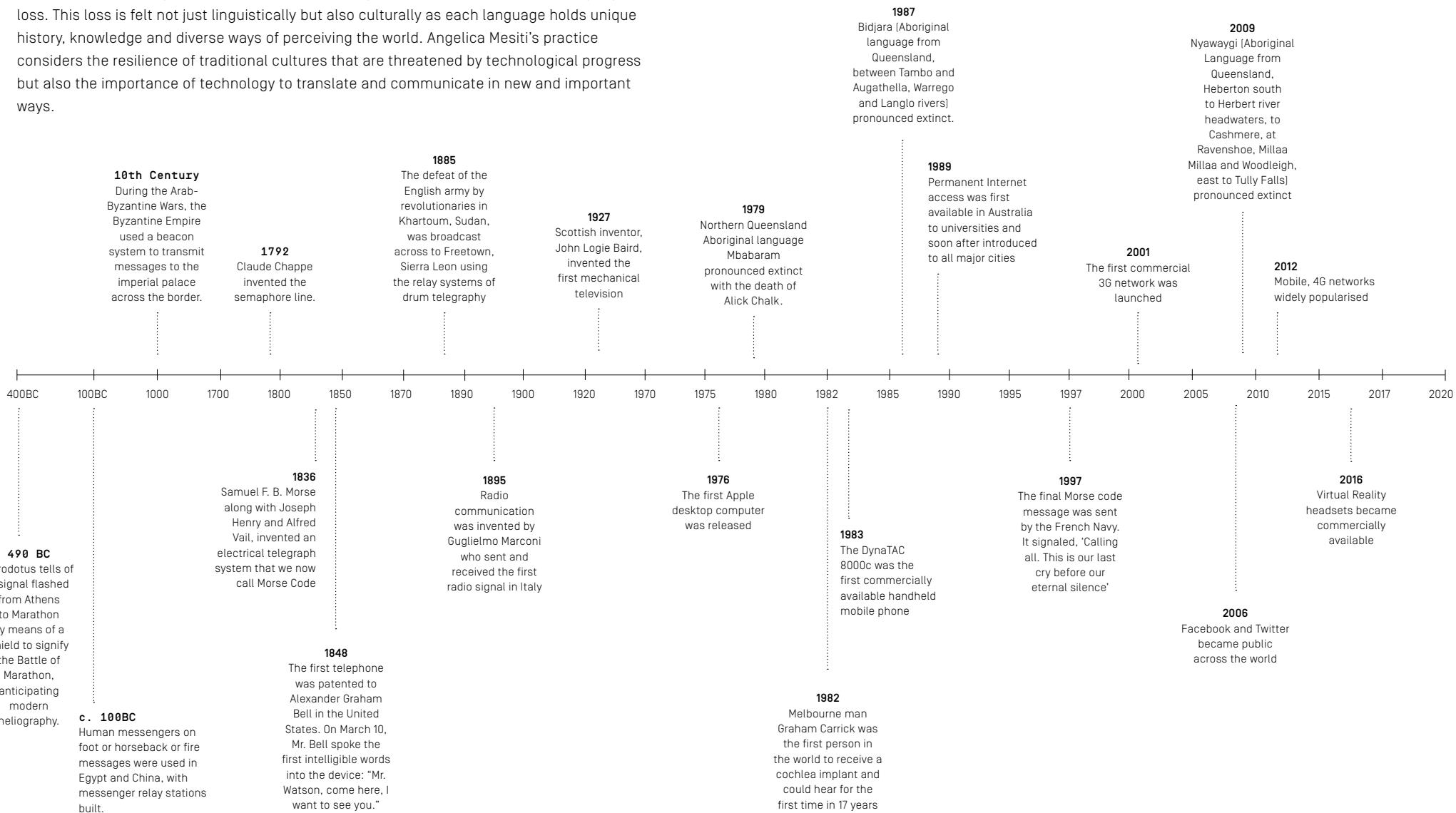
I think, with the Kingpins, we were really interested in representing gender and women in a way that we did not see being represented in the mainstream and I feel like, growing up I also felt that I didn't see people in the mainstream media that represented me. There were places like SBS and ABC that were reflecting diversity. At least there were some people that we could identify with a little bit more. Perhaps I am just naturally inclined to be more interested in representing people that are harder to see represented on screen.

*Relay League explores ways of communicating outside of spoken language. What is your interest in alternative forms of expression?*

It's one of those things where one thing leads to another. Sometimes I wonder if coming from a background where multiple languages were spoken in the home and I didn't have full comprehension or fluency in Italian means that you pick up on different cues to form understanding. I think that is probably a commonly held experience. Also, I trained as a dancer, which is a way of working with your body a lot more. Also, as an artist, I have had to learn to write and communicate verbally about my work but a lot of being an artist is doing things because you don't know how to put it into words, otherwise we would be writers. So, I feel it is pretty intrinsically linked to the forms of expression I am already engaged with; dance, music, visual art, they are all non-verbal methods. Also, coming out of making 'The Colour of Saying' there was a lot of thinking about translation and different methods of non-verbal communication, which has been a concern for a while.

# How We Communicate

New technologies and inventions have radically transformed language and the way we communicate in the contemporary world. Today, we can instantly contact friends and family across the world using the internet. Yet, we are living in a time of unprecedented language loss. This loss is felt not just linguistically but also culturally as each language holds unique history, knowledge and diverse ways of perceiving the world. Angelica Mesiti's practice considers the resilience of traditional cultures that are threatened by technological progress but also the importance of technology to translate and communicate in new and important ways.



## Key Concepts

TRANSLATION | LANGUAGE | COMMUNICATION | SILENCE | TRANSFORMATION  
 TRANSMISSION | CHOREOGRAPHY | EXPRESSION | INTERPRETATION  
 PERFORMANCE | ADAPTION | COMMUNICATION | REPRESENTATION

## Glossary

### *Body Language*

The gestures, facial expressions and postures that convey a person's physical, mental or emotional state.

### *Choreography*

The process and design of arranging and organising bodily movements in a space.

### *Composition*

The arrangement of the individual elements within a work of art so as to form a unified whole; also, used to refer to a work of art, music, or literature, or its structure or organisation.

### *Collaboration*

To work together with an individual or group to produce an idea or artwork.

### *Communication*

The exchange of information by speaking, writing, signing or using any other medium. Relay League looks at Mesiti's interest in the possibilities of non-verbal communication and adapted methods of human expression.

### *Choreography*

The process and design of arranging and organising bodily movements in a space. Justene's interest in dance runs throughout her work. She uses choreography in many different ways – as virtuosic display, as gesture, as sculpture and as a social collective movement.

### *Expression*

The technique and resulting work of art in which fragments of paper and other materials are arranged and glued to a supporting surface. Justene Williams often uses digital collage, cutting and pasting moving images and visual motifs together on a screen.

### *Gesture*

A category of artistic practice having a particular form, content or technique.

### *Installation*

A form of art that involves the creation of site-specific objects or sensory experiments, often inviting audiences to directly interact in the artwork.

### *Performance Art*

In performance art, the artist's medium is the body, and the live actions he or she or the audience performs are the work of art. Performance art usually consists of four elements: time, space, the body and a relationship between audience and performer. Although performance art takes the form of live action, it has reached a large public audience through photographic and video documentation.

### *Relay League*

A relay league is a chain of message forwarding stations in a system of optical telegraphs, radio telegraph stations and riding couriers.

### *Score*

Musical notation, a written or printed representation of a musical piece.

### *Syntax*

The arrangement of works or phrases to create a statement

### *Sound Art*

Sound art uses sound and listening as the subject matter and/or material of their artwork. Angelica Mesiti uses song and music to engage all our senses.

### *Time-based practice*

Typical examples of this type of work are video and sound works, film or photographic installations, technology or digital-based art and installations. These works incorporate duration as a dimension, like a painting used length, height and width.

### *Video Art*

Video art came about in the mid 1960's when artists were interested in experimenting with new technologies to transform the way art is produced and experienced.



Image: Angelica Mesiti, *Relay League* [installation view], 2017.

Photo: Zan Wimberley

## Primary Students

This primary program encourages cross curriculum connections and experimental art making. Activities have been designed to involve students in creative thinking, appreciation of visual art concepts and artists, as well as art making.

### EXPLORE & DISCUSS

**Describe** what you see

Choose one video. Can you describe what the performers are doing? Do you think they are telling a story? If so, what kind of story is it?

---

---

---

**List** all of the ways you communicate with your friends. This can include speaking or waving, playing, laughing, dancing, crying.

---

---

---

One at a time you are invited to **carefully play** with the sound sculpture. You are now part of the artwork! Why do you think the artist decided to let the audience touch this artwork?

---

---

---

A mood is a feeling that can be created by an artwork. **Close your eyes and listen** to the beating sound in the gallery. How does this sound make you feel?

---

---

---

# Primary Students

## Back in the Classroom

### CREATE

#### Activity 1

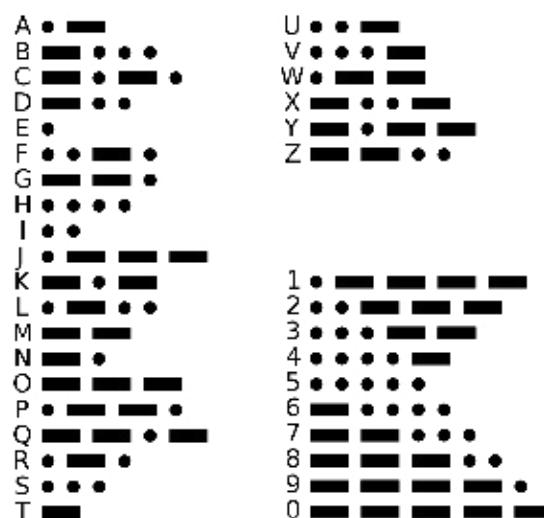
Play a game of Telephone using the Morse code phrase from the exhibition;

'Calling all, this is our final cry before our eternal silence'.

As a class discuss how this game might relate to the exhibition.

#### Activity 2

##### International Morse Code



Write your name using the international Morse code above. For example, Angelica spelt in Morse code is:

• - - - . . - - - . -  
A N G E L I C A



#### Activity 3

Now that you can spell your name in Morse code can you play it? Using any instrument, clapping, humming perform your name to the class.

You can decide how you want to interpret the sound of Morse code but traditionally the • is a short, staccato sound and the - is an elongated sound.

## Secondary Students

The secondary activities are designed to develop and broaden students' understanding and ability to critically interpret art concepts, the artist and their practices, as well as design and make artworks using different techniques.

### **DISCUSS**

As you move through the exhibition space, between the video works, consider the lighting and sound in the installation. Are you more or less aware of your body and movements in the gallery space? Expand on the importance of the body in the exhibition.

---

---

---

**Consider** the design of the installation and the exhibition title. How does the placement of works and design of the space relate this to a relay league.

---

---

---

What impact does the rhythmic beat have in the gallery space? **Describe** how important sound and vibration is to this exhibition. How different would this exhibition feel if you were watching the videos in silence?

---

---

---

Spoken languages are the primary source of communication in our society. **Consider** two forms of non-verbal communication. What do these adapted methods of interaction reveal about human experience?

---

---

---

# Secondary Students

## Back in the Classroom

### EXPLORE & DISCUSS

How has Angelica used filmic techniques in these works? What effect does this create?

---

---

---

**Discuss** the role of the artist and collaboration in conceptual art with relation to this exhibition.

---

---

---

How Angelica Mesiti expressed ideas of transmission and translation in her practice.

**Consider** the structural, cultural and subjective frames in your response.

---

---

---



### CREATE

In small groups, assign yourselves roles as either writers or performers.

Create a performance that responds to a current event. Together consider how to create movements that will physically represent the event. Consider facial expression, posture, gestures, gaze and use of space.

Writers are to take notes documenting the performance and reporting on the event. Performers and writers then collectively present their work to the class.

Reflect on your process with the group. How did you translate the event into a choreography and discuss any difficulties you had trying to communicate using your body.

## Further Information

[angelicamesiti.com](http://angelicamesiti.com)

[scanlines.net/person/angelica-mesiti](http://scanlines.net/person/angelica-mesiti)

[annaschwartzgallery.com](http://annaschwartzgallery.com)

[biennaleofsydney.com.au/19bos/artists/mesiti/](http://biennaleofsydney.com.au/19bos/artists/mesiti/)

[artgallery.nsw.gov.au/channel/clip/480/](http://artgallery.nsw.gov.au/channel/clip/480/)

[youtube.com/watch?v=oZCESnLdr1c](http://youtube.com/watch?v=oZCESnLdr1c)

[vimeo.com/43226180](http://vimeo.com/43226180)

[artguide.com.au/angelica-mesiti-communicates-via-multiple-senses-in-relay-league](http://artguide.com.au/angelica-mesiti-communicates-via-multiple-senses-in-relay-league)

[realtimearts.net/article/issue138/12604](http://realtimearts.net/article/issue138/12604)

[www.artforum.com/index.php?pn=picks&id=68885&view=print](http://www.artforum.com/index.php?pn=picks&id=68885&view=print)

Gleick, James, *The Information: A History, A Theory, A Flood*, HarperCollins, 2011.

### FULL ARTWORK DETAILS

*Relay League*, 2017

Three-channel video, 8 minutes

Commissioned by Artspace, Sydney

Drummer: Uriel Barthélémi

Dancers: Sindri Runudde, Emilia Vibron Vesterlund, Filipe Lourenço

Writer/director/editor: Angelica Mesiti

Producer: Anne Becker / PLATÔ

Cinematographer: Pierre Jouvion

B Camera operators: Antoine Laurens, Jules Boudon-Chambre

Sound recordists: Marc Parazon, Jonathan Pons

Grip: Benjamin Masset, Benoît Morvan, Mathieu Andrieux

Location: CN D Centre national de la danse Paris

Sound designer and mixer: Liam Egan

Colourist: Billy Wychgel

Managed by Museums & Galleries of NSW, *Relay League* will tour nationally between 2017-2019 to the following galleries and art centres:

The Lock-Up, Newcastle	NSW	12 AUG – 17 SEP 2017
Griffith University Art Gallery	QLD	30 NOV 2017 – 24 FEB 2018
Geraldton Regional Gallery	WA	10 AUG – 6 OCT 2018
Orange Regional Gallery	NSW	30 MARCH – 12 MAY 2019
The Glasshouse Port Macquarie	NSW	18 MAY – 21 JULY 2019
Bank Art Museum Moree	NSW	2 AUG – 28 SEP 2019
Cairns Art Gallery	QLD	18 OCT – 1 DEC 2019
Benalla Art Gallery	VIC	13 DEC 2018 – 23 FEB 2020

Curated and developed by Artspace, Sydney and touring nationally in partnership with Museums & Galleries of NSW. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body. The development and presentation of *Relay League* is supported by Commissioning Partner the Keir Foundation. *Relay League* was produced with the support of CN D National de la Danse, Paris and University of New South Wales Art & Design. *Relay League* will be accompanied by a book published by Schwartz City and designed by Formist.

