

# Brett Leigh Dicks

Social commentator who takes an archaeological approach to photography



## About the Artist

Brett Leigh Dicks is an American/Australian photographer currently based in Fremantle, Western Australia. He is a social commentator who takes an archaeological approach to photography, primarily exploring the relationship between society and the environment.

Using the landscape as a marker of societal change, Dicks' work typically explores how themes such as dispossession, repression, exploitation, and retribution play out over time. Framed within the ethos and aesthetic of the New Topographic movement he presents his subject matter in its topographical state, providing a direct conduit between his subject matter and the viewer.

Dicks' work has been featured in numerous solo and group exhibitions throughout Australia, Europe, and North America. Recently, his work was featured in the Figge Art Museum's, 'Magnetic West', Prix de la Photographie's 'State of the World', and the Sony International Photography Awards exhibitions. In Australia Dicks' work has been featured at both the Head On Photo Festival and Ballarat International Foto Biennale. His photography has been published in journals, newspapers, and periodicals, including The New York Times, Griffith Review, and VICE.



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Rockingham Arts Centre  
11 Kent Street,  
Rockingham

**Gallery opening times:**  
Wednesday – Sunday  
10am – 4pm

**Contact:**  
9527 0734  
artscentre@rockingham.wa.gov.au  
rockingham.wa.gov.au/exhibitions



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## Acknowledgement of Country

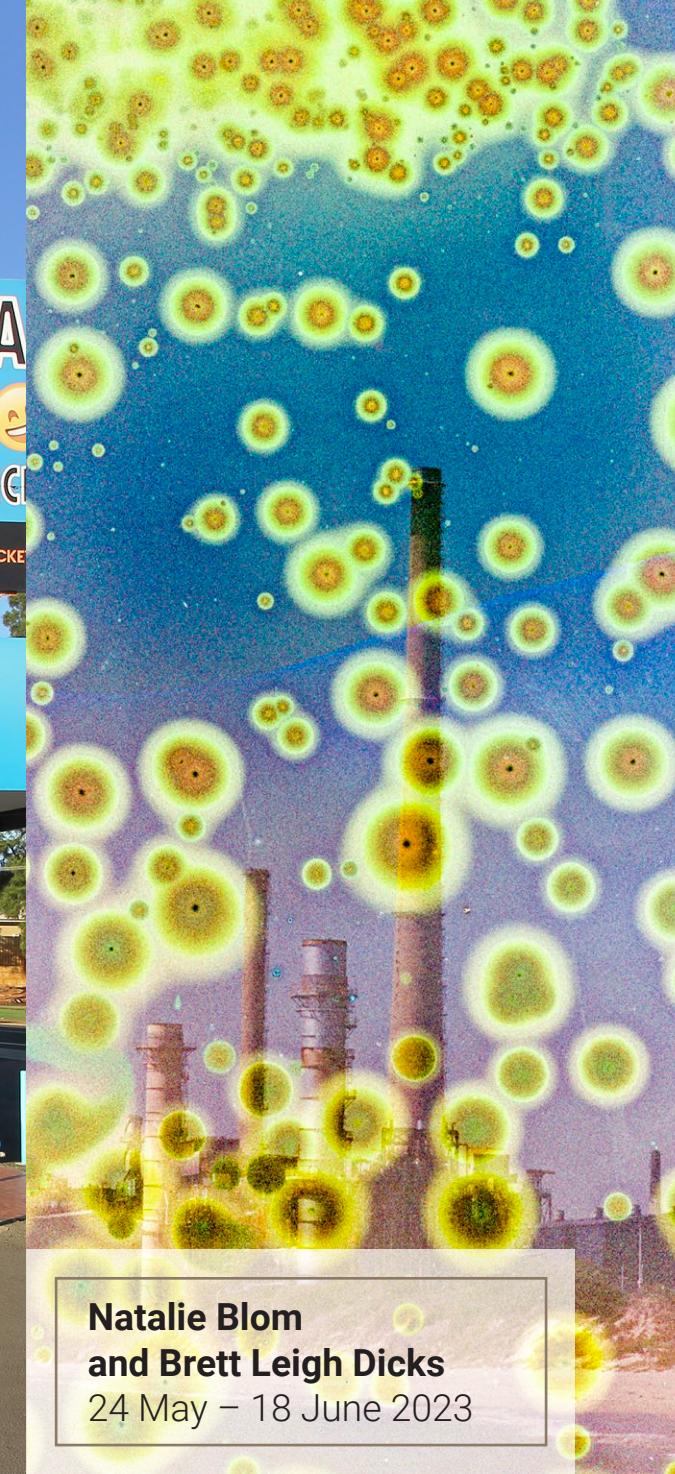
The City of Rockingham acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, the Binjareb and Whadjuk, Nyoongar peoples and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of Aboriginal communities and their cultures; and to Elders past and present.

**Brett Leigh Dicks, *Le's Café & Lunch Bar*, Bayswater Western Australia, 2021, Digital photography. Photo courtesy of the artist**

**Natalie Blom, *Kwinana Alumina*, 2022, Analogue photography, giclee lustre print. Photo courtesy of the artist**



## Lunch Bars and Everyday Alchemy



**Natalie Blom and Brett Leigh Dicks**  
24 May – 18 June 2023

# Natalie Blom

Western Australian photomedia artist living in Melbourne



## About the Artist

Natalie Blom is a Western Australian photomedia artist currently residing in Naarm/Melbourne, Victoria. Blom completed an Advanced Diploma of Photography at Central Institute of Technology in Perth in 2010. Since graduating, her work has been exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally. Blom's practice investigates personal histories through connection with place, utilising analogue photographic processes, and experimental means of production. Blom's recent focus is in self-published zines as a mode of communicating her images and concepts.

Forthcoming projects include a series of mixed media works exploring her own absence of cultural understanding of her family's immigrant history, and how an investigation of traditional folk-art can create personal connection. Blom has recently been invited to submit selected works for inclusion in the State Library of Western Australia's Pictorial Collection.



# Everyday Alchemy

by Natalie Blom

Everyday Alchemy is a solo exhibition by Western Australian born photomedia artist, Natalie Blom. The title of the show plays on the idea of alchemy: the transmutation of elements. Like alchemy, the film soak method used by the artist is largely experimental and perhaps also hints at the mystical.

Film soaks are an alternative analogue photographic technique which involves submerging exposed photographic film into various liquids, resulting in changes to the chemistry on the surface of the film. The artist returned to this process during the COVID19 pandemic as a playful way to utilise materials found within her home, and to escape from the monotony of looking at the same limited locations around her during lockdowns.

The body of work has expanded to include still images, video work and installation. Being led by her practice, the artist has most recently introduced portraits inspired by a request made during the first showing of this body of work.

Natalie Blom, *Everyday Alchemy x Diuris Amplissima*, 2022, Analogue photography, giclee lustre print. Photo courtesy of the artist



# Lunch Bars

by Brett Leigh Dicks

Typically tucked away in the city's suburban, industrial, and commercial areas, lunch bars have been sustaining the work force with an array of no-frills fast food since the 1950s. For the past two years, Brett Leigh Dicks has been tracking down examples of this quirky and vibrant slice of Western Australia with the results being exhibited in June.

Lunch Bars was subject matter that echoed cultural similarities to that of California, where the American/Australian photographer lived and worked for the past two decades. It was the parallels between the hole-in-the-wall taquerias - eateries offering Mexican street food - and lunch bars here in the west that inspired the series.

"Western Australia's lunch bars are probably as far away geographically from California's taquerias as you can get," the photographer observed. "But workers would pour into their local taqueria at lunchtime just like they do with lunch bars here, emerging with something fast, filling, and hot."

The Fremantle-based photographer also saw an opportunity to bring a unique perspective to his lunch bar expose.

"The New Topographic photographic movement is very popular in the States and has informed the way I work," he said. "Photographers like Stephen Shore, Lewis Baltz, and Grant Mudford inspire me greatly and lunch bars are precisely the type of urban landscape with a societal quirk they would cast an ironic eye upon."

Guided by the movement's ethos, Brett approached his subjects with a stark yet poetic austerity. That approach allowed the character of each lunch bar to come shining through, unveiling a collection of dystopian eateries buried within the industrial parks of Perth, all brimming with character, flavour, and Western Australian flair.

Brett Leigh Dicks, *Checkers Lunch Bar*, Rockingham, Western Australia, 2021, Digital photography. Photo courtesy of the artist