

Fernando do Campo

Siblings



1 March - 22 June 2025

Siblings | Fernando do Campo

Since 2017, when Fernando do Campo first learnt of the curious story about house sparrows being released off Ararat's Bull & Mouth Hotel balcony in 1867 (alongside Melbourne, Ararat is the first place where this colonial introduction occurred in Australia), the settler-colonial history of this region and its relationship to animals has entered Fernando's practice. Through the history of the Ararat Gallery TAMA Collection, textiles also entered Fernando's practice as one of his many artforms when he last presented work here.

This solo exhibition continues Fernando's exploration of archival research, fieldwork, and studio experimentation to ask what role the non-human companion plays in the formation of colonialism and nationalism. *Siblings* pairs together two previously exhibited bodies of work in a new installation; an archival object and a colour-rule response first installed at the Ararat Library in 2017, are exhibited alongside a recent collection of textile artworks that use a colour-rule system to weave together migrant history, localisms, personal narratives and family collaborations.

The six significant artworks *Escarapelas Capricornianas* (2024), a series of textile portraits of Fernando's five siblings accompanied by a self-portrait, are being shown in Victoria for the first time. Fernando's practice is informed by the knotted histories of humans and animals; critically narrating the role that sparrows have played in the Australian imagination has been a focus for over a decade.

Image: *Escarapela Capricorniana (Mercedes)* (detail), acrylic on canvas, school uniforms and Surf Live Saving uniforms, lanyards, metal medals, thread, plywood, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney. Photography: Shan Turner-Carroll





Image: Installation shot, *Capricornian Minotaurs and Where To Find Them*, Rockhampton Museum of Art, Queensland, 2024. Photography: Fernando do Campo

Fernando do Campo (b. Mar del Plata, Argentina 1987) is an artist and academic based between Brisbane and Sydney. He is Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at UNSW Art & Design, Sydney. Since 2015, he has also produced work as the HSSH (House Sparrow Society for Humans). Fernando's practice engages the histories of animals and plants via anthropomorphism, speculative fiction and archival research to produce multi-disciplinary exhibitions and projects. The global south and the legacies of colonialism and modernism that hold these narratives are a focus for both his research and his material studio explorations.

Fernando has presented solo exhibitions in Australia and the USA, and group exhibitions internationally. He is a Sir General John Monash Foundation Scholar, the first artist to ever receive this prestigious award for emerging Australian leaders to study abroad, which he used towards completing an MFA at Parsons School of Design, New York. He completed his PhD at MADA, Monash University in 2022 and was Artist-in-Residence at the State Library of NSW 2021-22. In 2025 Fernando will be presenting at the Melbourne Art Fair, with the Barnett Newman Foundation in New York, and undertaking a Thinker-in-Residence at the Taronga Conservation Society Australia (affectionately known as Taronga Zoo). Fernando is represented by Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney.

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Sparrows.

The interest taken by the inhabitants of Ararat in the arrival of a consignment of English sparrows is thus described by the *Advertiser* :—" On Tuesday morning last a cage of English sparrows arrived at Ararat by coach, forwarded by the secretary of the Acclimatisation Society. Fifteen had been despatched, but one of the birds died during the passage, so that only fourteen were turned out. They were given their liberty on their arrival, in accordance with the instructions forwarded by Mr. Sprigg. The cage door was opened on the verandah of the Bull and Mouth Hotel, and the little strangers immediately made for the eaves of the houses, where they alighted for a short time. Numbers of the burgesses had assembled to get a sight of their 'towneys,' as they called them, and for hours afterwards wherever one or two could be seen knots of persons gathered to watch their movements. The interest, and we might add anxiety, taken in their safety by every person is really astonishing, and for some time to come the cats are likely to have a bad time of it. We are happy to state that twelve of the birds have grown strong on the wing, and are now thoroughly domesticated to the place."

Image: *Sparrows*, Australasia, 12 October, 1867.



Image: *Escarpela Capricorniana (Hilario)*, acrylic on canvas, school uniforms and Surf Live Saving uniforms, lanyards, metal medals, thread, plywood, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney. Photography: Shan Turner-Carroll

Cover image: *Escarpela Capricorniana (Amparo)*, acrylic on canvas, school uniforms and Surf Live Saving uniforms, lanyards, metal medals, thread, plywood, 2024. Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Sally Dan-Cuthbert, Sydney. Photography: Shan Turner-Carroll

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Ararat Rural City

Ararat Gallery TAMA is a cultural
facility of Ararat Rural City Council

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