

State Library of South Australia

Media Release



Image: *Australia under attack* ©Alexandra L McOrist

If walls could talk: A photographic exhibition by Alexandra McOrist 8 September 2022

Discover life in rural South Australia through a series of thought-provoking photos of two farmhouses, in a new exhibition, *If walls could talk*, opening at the State Library of South Australia on Friday 9 September. Each photo entices you to look closer for a story woven within from a newspaper or magazine from the past.

Built in the 1850s, these farmhouses were home to generations of the same settler families for over 160 years. Today they lie empty. While few personal belongings remain and nature is beginning to reclaim the buildings, you can still see aspects of personal domestic life.

This new exhibition is by Scotland-based photographer **Alexandra McOrist**, who says “I’m excited to finally see this exhibition open, after such a long delay due to the global pandemic”. Alexandra is an Associate of the Royal Photographic Society and has attained an Excellence distinction with the International Federation of Artistic Photographers.

The combination of contemporary photographs and newspaper articles from the 1850s through to the 1950s aims to transport people to times past and provide stepping stones to imagine domestic life through good times and bad. McOrist says, "By capturing the domestic life and focusing on daily joys and trials for hard-working pioneers of agricultural settlements in South Australia, I feel strongly this exhibition will resonate with the South Australian public."

To breathe life back into the farmhouses, cuttings from newspapers and magazines are woven into each photo. Sourced from regional and state-wide newspapers in the archives of the State Library of South Australia, they cover subjects relating to the families. McOrist says, "The newspaper archives of the State Library of South Australia hold great value to this exhibition and to the community. Also, [Trove](#) online research facility was vital for me as I identified relevant local and international newspaper articles and advertisements."

Geoff Stempel, Director State Library of South Australia says, "We are pleased to finally host this exhibition at the Library. It is a perfect example of how the State Library's heritage collections can be used by researchers to provide an insight into a piece of South Australia's history and share it with later generations."

"We are proud to be a part of and contribute to Trove which connects people to digital collections from across Australia, including libraries, museums, galleries, the media, government and community organisations and more," says Stempel.

For more information on the exhibition visit the [State Library's website](#).

Details:

On display from Friday 9 September 2022 to Sunday 29 January 2023

Open: Monday to Tuesday: 8am to 7pm

Wednesday to Friday: 8am to 5pm

Saturday and Sunday: 12 to 5pm

(closed public holidays)

State Library Gallery

State Library of South Australia

Corner North Terrace and Kintore Avenue

Free entry

Media enquiries:

Mark Gilbert

Exhibitions, Media & Marketing Librarian

State Library of South Australia

Mobile 0403 934 678

mark.gilbert@sa.gov.au