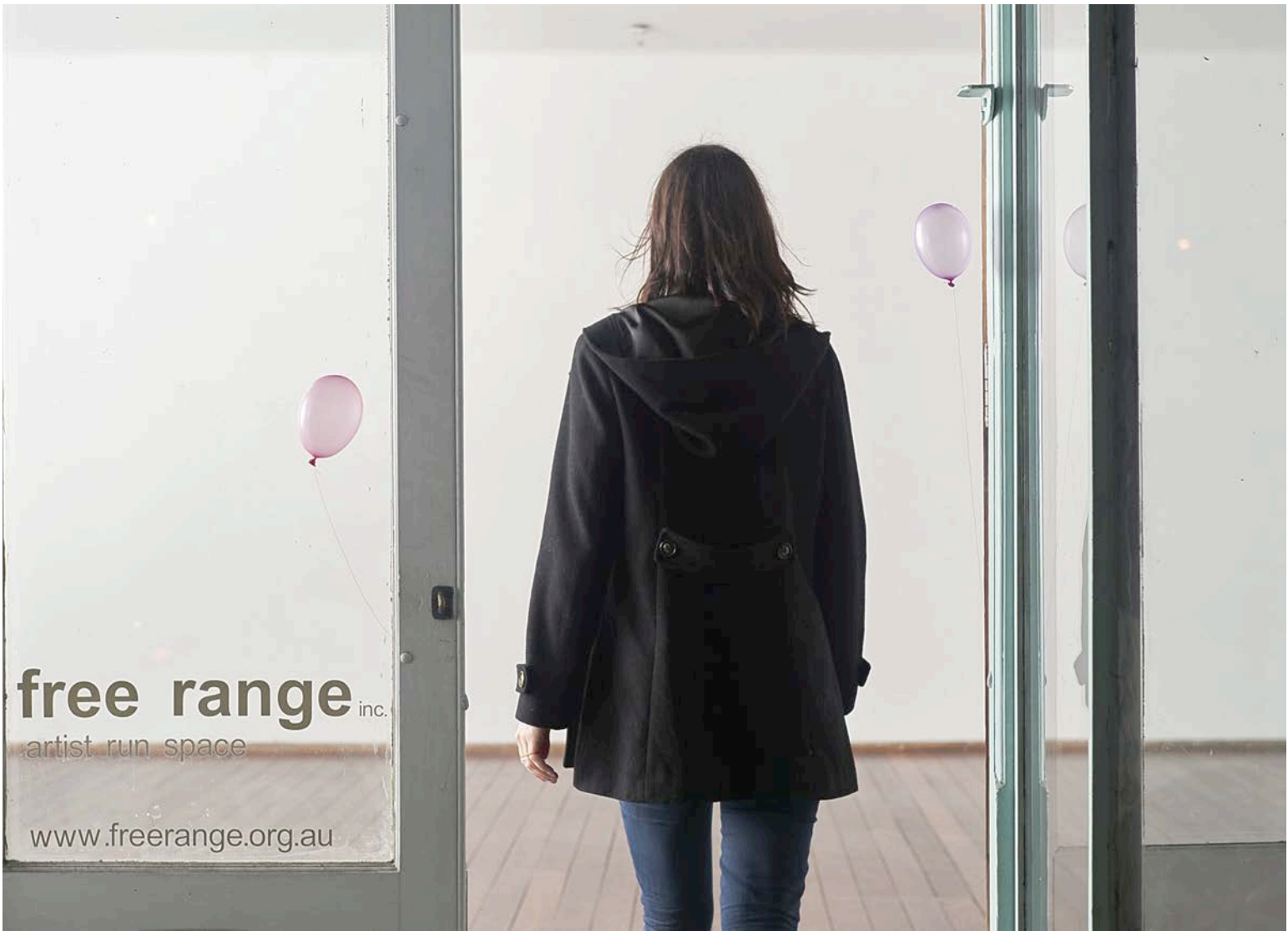


# Already

Already was an exhibition held at free range gallery in Perth, in July of 2015. Concerned with presenting an alternative approach to the use of the readymade than that which is well recorded historically, the exhibition brought together the works of David Attwood, Alira Callaghan and Nicole Breedon.

“Whilst historically the introduction of the readymade art object into the institution was a way to collapse the practice of art into the practice of everyday life, breaking down hierarchies and demystifying the art object, these works evidence an alternative approach to the readymade. The agenda is not to demystify, but is actually the opposite: Evidencing little to no physical alteration, objects are presented as they are, encouraging mystical, metaphorical and allegorical readings. Objects become instruments for constructing elaborate fictions, contemplating cosmic forces, and addressing current affairs. Ultimately the common, familiar and banal are presented and contextualised in such a way to encourage a questioning of the value and meanings of objects beyond their immediate connotative functions and histories.”

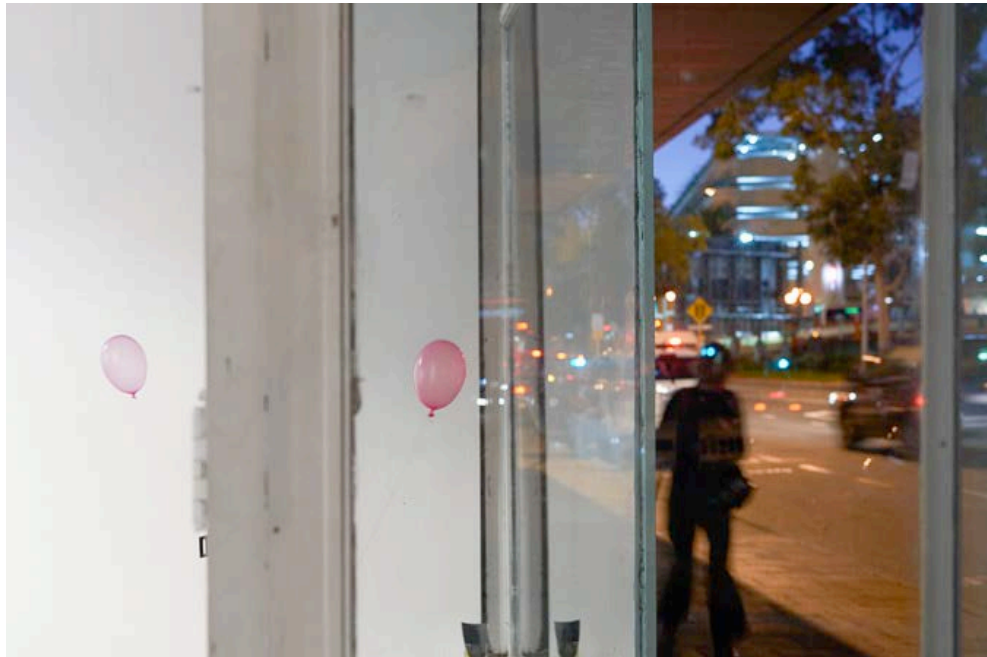
David Attwood



**free range** inc.

artist run space

[www.freerange.org.au](http://www.freerange.org.au)

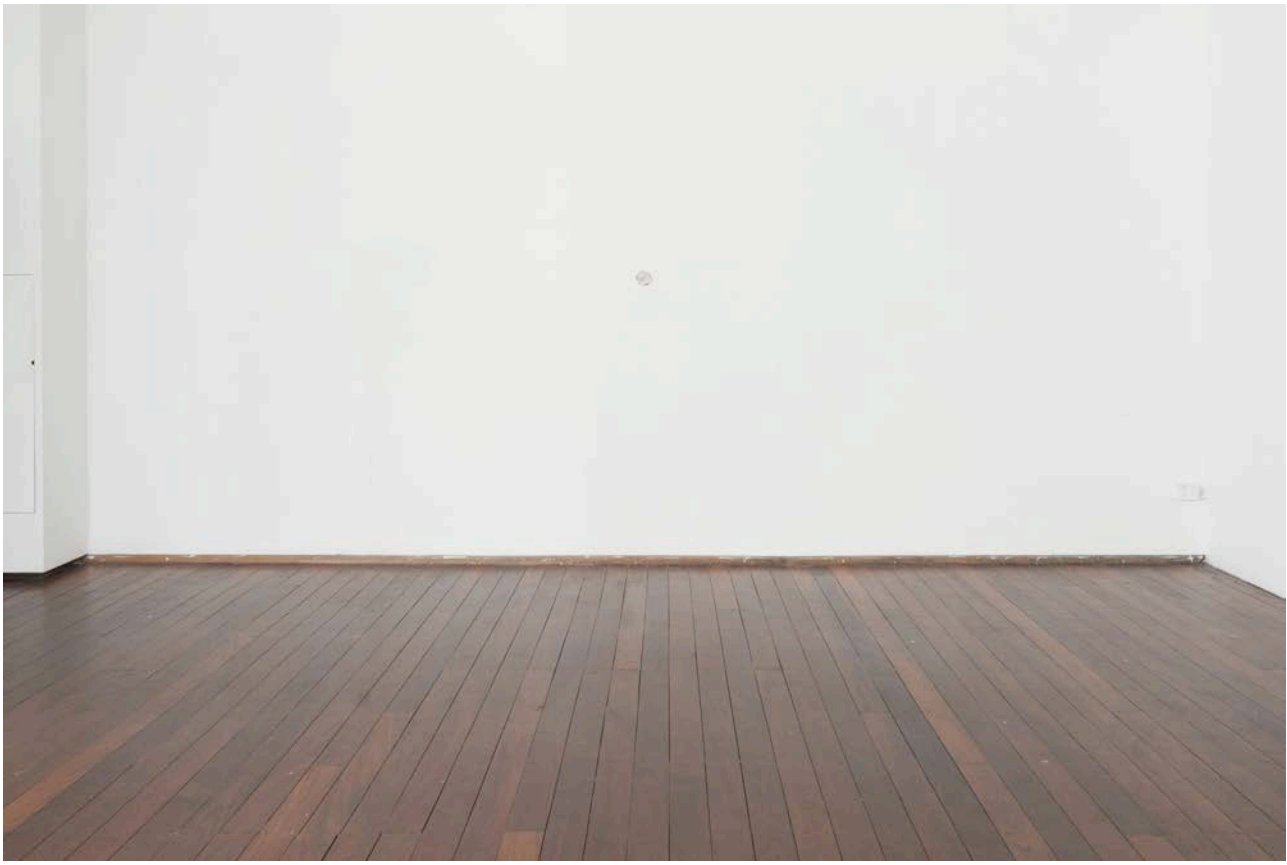
















A century on from *Fountain* (1917), you'd be forgiven for wondering why the readymade is still finding itself in a gallery in 2015. Duchamp's revolutionary gesture doesn't lend itself well to mindless repetition, it would seem. Here, though, the readymade isn't just another Dada-esque middle finger to the art object's status, because that middle finger was raised long ago, and indeed embraced long ago, in its rather ironic canonisation. At its worst, today's readymade might seem a bit lazy, both in its apparent effortlessness and in its return to what has been done before. *Already* dodges this bullet - with grace and with boldness, depending on where you look. But just looking, of course, will only get you so far; the imagined potential of these objects, or what they suggest, and what they signify, is key.

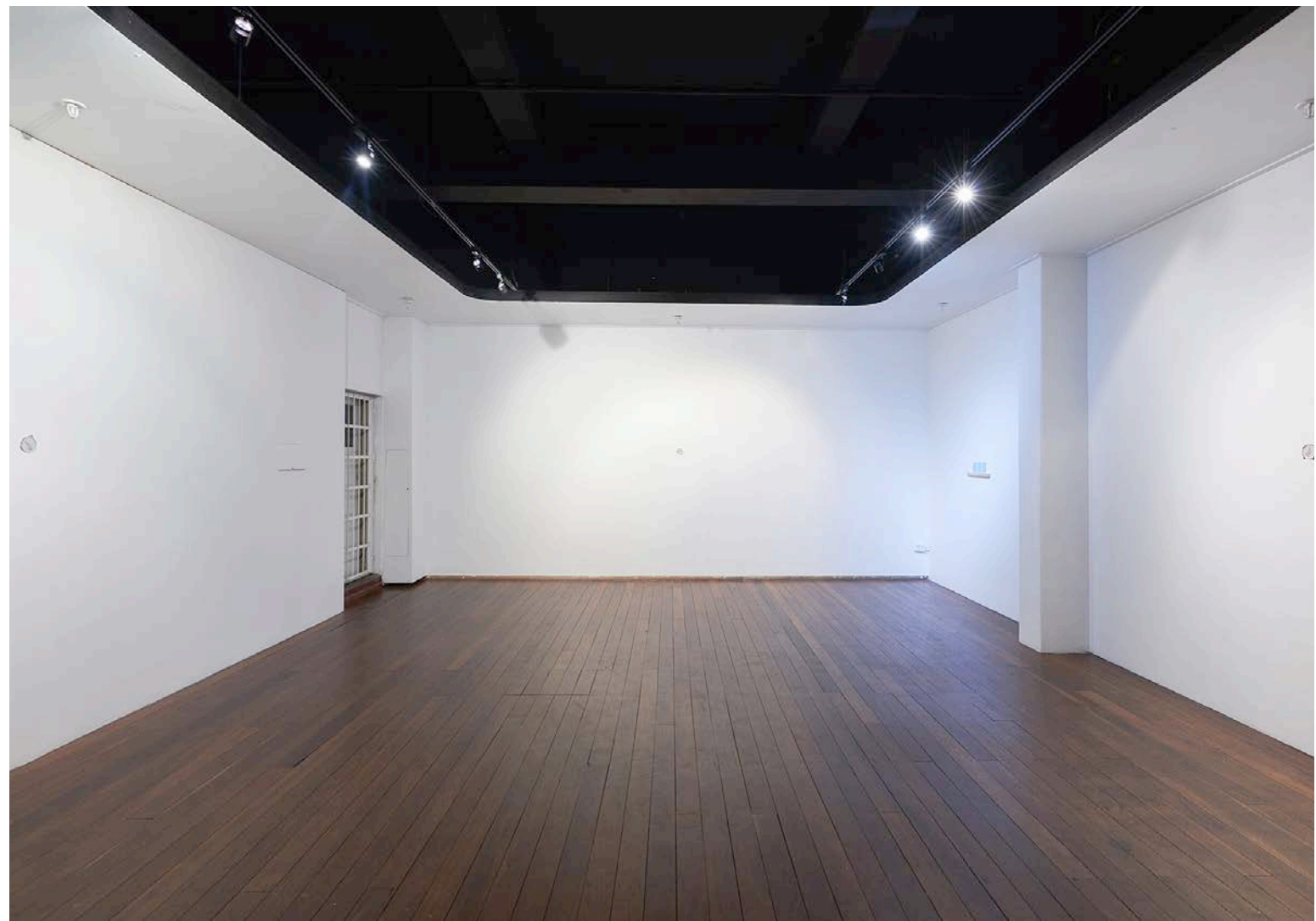
Alira Callaghan's helium balloons greet us at the entrance, a more gentle version of Marina and Ulay's *Imponderabilia* (1977) that appears quite happy to move for us. In responding to our movement, they reveal a certain anthropomorphic quality: they're rather sweet when they politely drift away. Helium itself is a noble gas - it doesn't react with any other elements - so you can't help but feel that they're a little bit lonely in that respect. Throughout the night they'll deflate, a symbolic death that reads as a rather sad testament to their failure as fixed objects.

In *Wet & Dry*, sandpaper, water and glass are presented in a similarly slow process of change. As functional objects, we understand them as having different purposes, behaviours and textures; as matter, though, they are variations of carbon, silicon, oxygen and hydrogen, suggesting a mysterious relationship that exists well beyond the limits of our vision. Carbon in particular is known as the building block of life; it's found in every living organism, including us. In other words, both of Callaghan's works portray everyday objects not as things to be used, but as characters with human behaviours and limited lifespans - which ultimately makes us reconsider how we relate to them.

Dave Attwood's *YoGo Caps*, on the other hand, embodies the irreverence of the readymade in a small act of vandalism. It alludes to *Yogurt Caps* (1994) - a work by Gabriel Orozco shown in his first commercial exhibition in New York, which strived to disappoint in featuring four yogurt lids on the walls of the Marian Goodman Gallery. It championed the ability of the readymade to be modest in presence yet audacious in gesture. In frustrating certain expectations, Orozco revealed them: such an anticipated show was meant to have something more prominent in the space, something more remarkable and spectacular, or anything showing a bit of skill and finesse; to not do so seemed a bit arrogant, even unappreciative. *YoGo Caps* revisits these ideas, but differs in its attachment to a specific sense of place and identity: Brownes is an iconic WA company, a battler in the topical "milk wars", and YoGos are a familiar lunchbox staple. The act of slapping the used lid on any given surface is more childishly naughty than truly destructive, but like its predecessor, its irreverence lies in its context - in its lack of appreciation for the pristine walls of the gallery, and its dismissal of art as a skilled endeavour; a proposed alternative that becomes especially pertinent (and brave) when compared to the labour-intensive practices of many of Perth's most respected artists.

Nicole Breedon's *Orinoco Flow* takes us to the generously evocative realm of paint swatch titles, drawing attention to how certain names can summon pleasurable images of far away places, beauty and natural phenomena, or as Breedon has seen to, that weird Enya song that everyone knows. Such names can seem like a bit of a stretch from the actual form and function of paint - a sort of tinned chemical soup, more or less, bought from Bunnings and ready to be smeared on the walls of your home - but it ultimately represents a harmless and enjoyable transformation of the everyday into fantasy, with a New Age soundtrack to boot.

And that seems to be the common thread in *Already* - a surprisingly genuine approach to the readymade as an instigator for finding the imaginative potential in ordinary things. In transcending an object's definition by its everyday function, and replacing it with the imagined, the fanciful, the inspired, it becomes something greater: the readymade, enriched.



# Already

Alira Callaghan

Untitled

2015

Helium, balloons, cotton thread, blutak

Alira Callaghan

Wet & Dry

2015

Glass, tap water, 180 grit wet and dry sandpaper

David Attwood

YoGo Caps

2015

Yogurt lids, YoGo

Nicole Breedon

Orinoco Flow

2015

Colour swatches

All photography by Henry Whitehead

free range

July 9, 2015

Perth, Western Australia

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