

[MARS]

Sydney Contemporary 2026: MARS Gallery (Booth D05)

Radical Joy

Duro Jovicic, 2026

The works of The Huxleys, Kenny Pittock, Chun Yin Rainbow Chan and Kohl Tyler are united by a shared embrace of "radical joy"—one that celebrates moments of euphoria while acknowledging the complexities that accompany them.

Experiencing The Huxleys is like a child tasting popping candy for the first time. Beyond the initial burst of sequins, glamour and spectacle lies a practice that places queer identity unapologetically at its centre. As they explain, "joy is not a luxury, but a force." Their work proposes that to exist joyfully, openly, and defiantly is itself a radical act.

This philosophy is vividly realised in *Moth to a Flame*. Clad entirely in shimmering gold, with whimsical pom-poms covering their eyes, genitals and nipples, the artists stand in front of an undulating gold frame reminiscent of Ettore Sottsass's Ultrafragola mirror. Presented in illuminated light boxes, the work reinforces their belief that queer and trans bodies are luminous, and that joy can be both visible and transformative. In *Nocturnal Bloom*, oversized flowers become playful double entendres. One figure beams confidently while the other appears contemplative, suggesting that joy and vulnerability often coexist.

Kenny Pittock similarly balances humour with social commentary. Known for his meticulous clay sculptures, Pittock has mastered another material—bronze—to deliver his signature satirical wordplay. His yellow caution sign, *Throw Caution to the Wind*, depicting a figure mid-fall, transforms a familiar warning into a meditation on risk and ambivalence.

Meanwhile, *Maxibronze* immortalises the fleeting pleasure of a Maxibon ice cream in bronze, prompting viewers to question the value we assign to everyday objects and material possessions.

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In *Opening the Mouth*, Chun Yin Rainbow Chan preserves and reinterprets the endangered bridal lament traditions of the Weitou people. A double portrait, with the artist's mouth opened wide at each end of a habotai silk canvas, presents the mouth as a vessel for both song and cultural memory. Embellished with freshwater pearls—symbols of resilience, wisdom and adaptability—and set against the light of dawn, the work evokes renewal and hope while reclaiming identity, agency and ancestral voice.

Kohl Tyler's sculptural practice offers another expression of radical joy. Her oversized flower and vessel-like forms are twisted, frilled and richly textured, evoking both wonder and quiet unease. The *Dawning Life* series appears almost organically formed, as though emerging directly from nature. Tyler's works celebrate beauty while acknowledging its unpredictability.

Although materially and aesthetically distinct, these artists share a commitment to joy as an act of resistance. Rather than offering escapism, their works encourage us to see beauty, humour, and hope as powerful responses to uncertainty and division. Together, they demonstrate that joy is not passive or frivolous, but an active, transformative force capable of reshaping how we experience both art and the world around us.