

Project

The Art of Ritual

Georgia Saxelby

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Georgia Saxelby's multidisciplinary art practice is concerned with the artistic reinterpretation of ritual traditions and sacred spaces. Through interactive installations, she creates ephemeral, shared experiences in which audience members must collaboratively negotiate between symbolic objects and each other. Investigating art in relation to broader socio-cultural issues, Georgia's research interweaves architecture, anthropology and mythology, drawing upon the sacred sites and traditions of ancient and living cultures. Working across disciplines, her work seeks to create new modes of exchange value and facilitate moments of collectivity in which the conventional language of art is reimagined.

Georgia will discuss how artists' explorations into notions of ritual and spirituality are significant in revealing a culture's collective values, anxieties and hopes for the future. She will present two of her interactive installations, both finalists in the 2016 Blake Prize - a prominent Australian art prize with the theme of spirituality and religion. Part ceramic installation, part audience-driven performance, *BREAK* draws from an ancient Indian rite and explores the ceremonial cathartic act of the creation and destruction of totemic objects. *Ritual Gathering (Marking Time)* reinterprets the modern birthday celebration into a powerful symbolic event, born from an investigation into the spiritual and cultural implications of our contemporary ceremonies. Offering no instructions, both works highlight the audience's intuitive, triggered responses to deeply ingrained ritual processes and embody the tension between the sacred and the profane. Ultimately, Georgia will present the notion that through a reactivated relationship to ritual and spirituality, art today can be used to punctuate and poeticize life, react to its mysteries, and give form to shared values.



BREAK, 2016, mixed media ceramic interactive installation, installation view at the 64th Blake Prize, Sydney



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Ritual Gathering (Marking Time), 2016, mixed media with edible cake made in collaboration with patissier Adriano Zumbo, installation view at the 64th Blake Prize, Sydney



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