

1 Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (*Memories of Things Past*) first published 1919, republished as *In Search of Lost Time*, Penguin, Allen Lane, 2002

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humming . . . Debra Porch
16 March – 30 April 2006
QUT Art Museum, Gardens Point, Brisbane

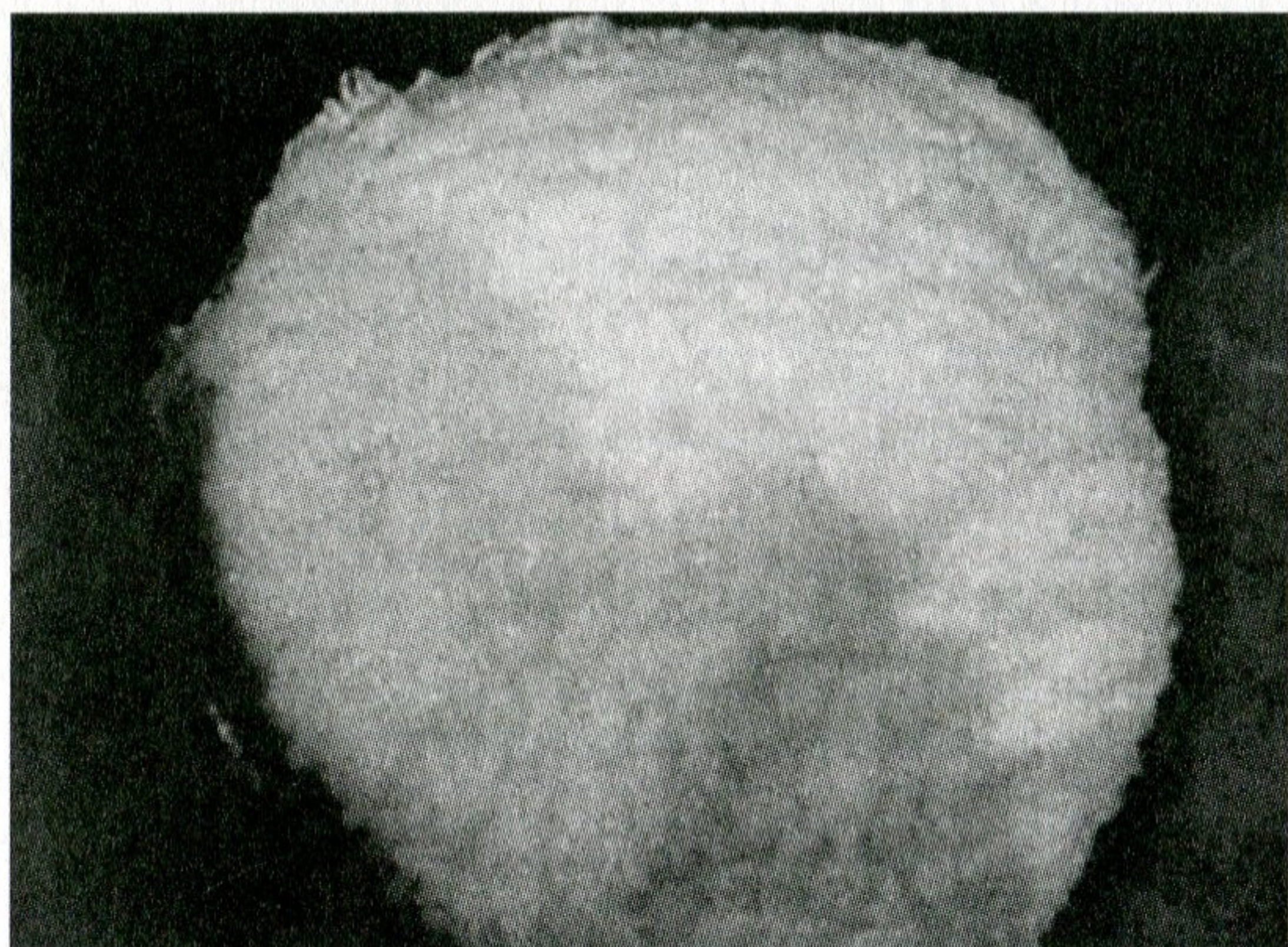
Acknowledgements

The artist wishes to thank and acknowledge: Donal Fitzpatrick, Mark Pennings, Queensland University of Technology and the Creative Industries Research Centre, Matt Fletcher, Robyn Daw, Linda van Nunen, Ian Copson, José Da Silva, Pine Rivers Electroplating, Mick Holland & Acrylic Display Equipment, Gordon Craig and the QUT Art Museum staff and Ian & Felix Were.

Design: Christopher Starr

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'EYES', SCREEN STILL FROM *HUMMING*, 2006.
'SNOWBALL', SCREEN STILL FROM *HUMMING*, 2006.



'CAKE', SCREEN STILL FROM *HUMMING*, 2006.
'FEET', SCREEN STILL FROM *QUIVERING*, 2004.



Humming . . . is a curious exhibition title, referring as it does to melodies retrieved and uttered almost absent mindedly, but without words attached. You know the tune, but can't quite recall the sentiment. Or perhaps even the tune is a little discordant, necessitating some improvisation to fill the gaps where memory fails. What is the visual equivalent of such wobbly recall, of the space where the distant past and its tangible present collide? This is the territory that Debra Porch explores.

Humming . . . investigates the juncture of memory and imagination through encounters with spaces, objects and images. Everyday objects are recognised, but transformed, isolated fragments are rendered with obsessive detail but still remain unclear, and familiar materials seen out of context call to mind another time or place. A series of black and white images remind us how temporary are youth and vitality, and that mortality flickers constantly at the edge of experience. Each fragment provides a key around which stories float and experiences are evoked.

In *Memories of Things Past*, Marcel Proust wrote of powerful memories revealing themselves unannounced, triggered by an incident — such as the taste of a Madeleine cake dipped in linden tea — alongside waves of grief or loss, or through the intentional recollection of a specific event captured in a photograph, a millisecond frozen in time.¹ Less 'important', but equally valuable memories repeatedly slip in and out of our consciousness. Sensory fragments of smells, sounds, tastes, images and the touch of objects create our sense of self and weave the fabric which we cloak around ourselves to understand our place in the world. These memories link into other people's stories, are mutable in their interpretation, shifting and changing according to circumstance, each time retold and reinvented, with details added or subtracted, revealing some but not all of the truth.

In *Humming* . . . Porch presents this intangible, subjective past as manifest and substantial, not as a perfect recreation of a linear story through time, but fragmented, incomplete and circular. The experience of memory is played out, the gaps and schisms that separate frozen moments disinterred from some distant past are shown to be as important as the interventions of time and imagination required of us to complete the story. Family, relations, experiences, personal stories of the artist's past are retold; fiction jostles with defined moments that are agreed on as fact, creating energy and argument, and space to endlessly recreate memory and imagination in the present. ROBYN DAW