

# SOON IT WOULD BE TOO HOT

TRACEY CLEMENT



MARSDEN GALLERY  
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## SOON IT WOULD BE TOO HOT

*Soon it would be too hot* is the first line of JG Ballard's novel *The Drowned World*. Written in 1962, during the perpetual slow-burning crisis of the Cold War, it reads like a prescient vision of our current climate crisis.

And here in Australia it is already too hot. Way too hot.

In the catastrophic bushfires of 2019-2020 climate change was made manifest: terrifying, deadly and spectacular. In fact the devastation was so lethal, so massive, such a spectacle, that the global media actually took notice. For a brief moment Australia was the unlucky country; a place where the reality of anthropogenic climate change could be observed wreaking havoc in real time.

It should have been a wake-up call. But then, still reeling from the bushfires, the coronavirus pandemic hit and the climate emergency fell out of the news cycle. But, of course, that doesn't mean it has gone away. The climate crisis is still bubbling away, heating up, threatening all life on earth.

In *Soon it would be too hot*, multiple versions of the Eiffel Tower, Sydney (Centrepoin) Tower, the Empire State Building, Petronas Towers, and Big Ben melt over the course of the exhibition. As these five iconic towers succumb to relentless man-made heat they are a bold graphic reminder that climate change didn't just happen – we made this crisis.

And if the upward thrusting towers in *Soon it would be too hot* represent the anthropocentric, arrogant, individualistic, patriarchal culture which led to the climate crisis – characterised by the attitude that big is always better, too much is never enough and the natural world is a resource to be exploited for human gratification – then beeswax, the material they are made from, symbolises an alternative: a matriarchal, nonhuman and collective social structure.

As temperatures in Australia continue to rise summer has become an increasingly dangerous season – when we aren't literally burning we are metaphorically melting. *Soon it would be too hot* seeks to keep anthropogenic climate change front and centre in the public consciousness, not to point the finger, but to spark action and kindle hope. Yes, we are all culpable, but we are also the only ones that can address this crisis. And we can do this together, working collectively.

### Words by Tracey Clement

## TRACEY CLEMENT

Tracey Clement is a professional artist and arts writer who currently lives in Sydney, Australia. As an artist Clement is known for creating artworks that meticulously utilise labour intensive techniques for their conceptual resonance. She has been making mini-metropolises since 2014. These sculptures tap into the aspirational qualities of architectural models; some picture the present as the past of the ruined future, others offer a more utopian vision.

Clement has a diploma in jewellery design, an undergraduate degree in art history-theory, a MFA in sculpture and a PhD in contemporary art. She has exhibited widely, both nationally and internationally and has undertaken several international residencies including at the Australia Council studio in New York and the AGNSW studio at the Cité in Paris. Her solo show, *Soon it would be too hot*, is the result of winning the 2018 Blake Prize Established Artist Residency.

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COVER IMAGE: Tracey Clement, 'Soon it would be too hot...' (detail, work in progress), 2020, beeswax, heat lamps, microwave plates. Installation dimensions variable, model building height approx. 70cm each. Model Empire State Building melting. Photo: T Clement.



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