

CHRISTOPHER LANGTON

AFTERGLOW

Inspired by John Wyndham's 1951 sci-fi classic, *The Day of the Triffids*, *Afterglow* is an installation of strange and seductive figures, who appear to metamorphose before our eyes.

Some more than two metres high, the curious creatures are comprised of a renewable biomass material that was 3D-printed on a machine Langton designed and built himself.

He then spray-painted them in a spectrum of hues evoking the sugar-rush colours of Hubba Bubba, Slushies and Rainbow Paddle Pops before sealing them in a clear gloss coat.

"This new body of work continues my exploration of magnifying things to the point of monstrosity," says the Melbourne-based pop sculptor and installation artist. "Their bulbous forms are inspired by my earlier inflatable works."

"But here, the sculptures are no longer monsters in the traditional sense.

"Instead, they are among us, arrayed as a gathering of ambiguous flowering bodies with giant sexual reproduction organs like ovules, pistils and stamens.

Langton has a longtime interest in biology and botany, especially flowers.

"Flowers have evolved vivid colours to attract pollinators and seed dispersers that aid the plant's reproductive success," he explains.

"So, the works here are colourful and playful. And yet they look otherworldly and unknown. I am thinking about adaptation to an unknown future given today's context," he says.

These magnificent mutations embody graft and resilience – they are enduring. Some of them even seem to be reproducing, or trying to.

Always experimental and ahead of the curve, Langton explored synergies between micro and macro ecologies in his previous three exhibitions.

Hot on the heels of a global pandemic, *Bad Biology* at Melbourne Art Fair in 2022 proved highly infectious and inspired many to ponder: "Is that an asteroid or an amoeba?"

Presented at Hazelhurst Arts Centre in Sydney in 2021, *Colonies* gave immersive expression to anxieties around alien invasion, environmental destruction and bodily disease in a museum-sized installation that was part outer space, part under the microscope.

And 2019's *Colony* at Tolarno Galleries was an earlier iteration that situated two cyborg astronauts among a galaxy of enigmatic forms. The entirety of the exhibition was sold to a single buyer and is now in a private collection in China.

Now Langton has created a garden of sexy, freaking delights, a space in which to ponder the miracle of organic life and the way plants grow in the direction of the sun.

"*Afterglow* implies a lasting effect, a continuation of some kind of light, positive energy, or pleasant feeling after the triggering event or initial stimulus has passed," says Langton.

"Here, the event has ended, and the species that survived are settling down and settling in," he says.

— Tony Magnusson, 2024