

## Audio Description Transcript for *The Interior* by Natalya Hughes

### 1. Audio description – introduction

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which this exhibition is showing, and pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Welcome to this solo exhibition, titled, *The Interior*, by the artist Natalya Hughes and curated by Tulleah Pearce, Assistant Director, Institute of Modern Art (IMA).

*The Interior* is an installation with 20 individual artworks on the wall, on a shelf, the floor and freestanding in the gallery. Hughes completed this work in 2022. Three large sculptural chairs, each surrounded by two or three floor mats, are positioned throughout. A curtain is suspended to create one side of the room. A hand painted mural runs across two walls. At one of the mural's ends there is a floating white shelf with 8 small statues. The overall configuration adapts to different sized spaces as this exhibition tours to different venues. The individual artworks and groupings remain the same. Each component corresponds to a number on the floorplan in the roomsheet.

The full roomsheet text is adapted for each showing of this work and is accessible using a screen reader. You can access and listen to all the audio descriptions and the roomsheet on your own device via a QR code with braille at the exhibition entry or on the gallery website. A cane detectable indicator will alert you to the QR code directly above. Select the audio description from the numbered list.

*The Interior* invites audiences into an exaggerated consultation room playfully furnished for psychoanalysis. The myriad motifs and details in *The Interior* are drawn from Sigmund Freud's life and work. In her practice Hughes adopts a repeating methodology of mining the images, objects, and ideas of male modernists as her reference material to gain insight into their motivations and legacies.

Natalya Hughes's multidisciplinary practice is concerned with decorative and ornamental traditions and their associations with the feminine, the body and excess. She was awarded the 2022 Michaela and Adrian Fini Fellowship by the Sheila Foundation, which has supported her in creating a body of new work for this solo exhibition *The Interior* at the Institute of Modern Art (IMA), Brisbane and national tour. Natalya Hughes is represented by Milani Gallery, Brisbane and Sullivan + Strumpf, Sydney.

We invite you to remove your shoes to interact with the mats and chairs as you enter *The Interior*.

## 2. Audio description 1 – ‘Curtain’

The title of this piece is *Curtain*, listed as number 1 on the roomsheet. The artist is Natalya Hughes. It is blue fabric in a custom print, sewn into a tab top curtain. Tab tops are exposed loops, or tabs, that loop around a pole. The fabric hangs loosely with folds along a thin fabricated steel frame. The work is suspended from the ceiling with four purple rock-climbing ropes, tied on at even intervals to the frame. It was made in 2022. The work is 480 centimetres wide by 290 centimetres high – slightly higher than an average door.

The mottled blue fabric has one image repeated in straight columns and rows. The image is a white diamond shaped eye with a pale blue circle for the iris and black pupil dotted in the centre. Small dark blue dots line the edges of the eye. A white line extends up and down from the centre edge of the eye then splits into two breast like curves with nipples. The same two curves are repeated on the sides to form an unconnected clover-shaped outline. Inside this shape, smaller versions of these curved lines repeat in dark blue, positioned parallel to the blue dotted lines beside the eye. The image is repeated six and a half times from top to bottom. The fabric hangs in folds with two sheets back-to-back, making the pattern clear on both sides and the fabric almost opaque. The curtain just brushes against the floor.

The steel frame the fabric is gathered along consists of two thin poles running parallel to each other. It is connected at either end by an outward facing curved breast shape with a central nipple. The steel is brass in colour with a semi-gloss hammered paint finish – giving the effect of a shiny surface with small divots made by the pounding of a hammer. The curtain obscures the view of the installation from the entry of the gallery, and on its other side, becomes the final ‘wall’ of the room, enclosing the other artworks.

### 3. Audio description 2 to 4 – ‘Chair 1’, ‘The Burning House’ and ‘Baubo’

The title of this piece is *Chair 1*, listed as number 2 on the roomsheet and it is surrounded by two mats titled *The Burning House*, number 3 on the roomsheet and *Baubo*, number 4 on the roomsheet. The artist is Natalya Hughes.

*Chair 1* is a sculpture made of fabricated steel with custom designed patterned fabric upholstery, made in 2022. We invite you to remove your shoes and interact with the chair sculpture. It is 114 centimetres high, by 270 centimetres wide, and 80 centimetres deep.

The work consists of two open ‘u’ shaped steel frames joined together side-by-side like a small ‘w’. Each frame has a single long cushion lining it. Fabric covered buttons pull the cushion into five head pillow sized segments. The cushion is curved at the outside ends and straight along the base where the two sides join, following the shape of the frame. The frame has a grid-shaped mesh on the outside made from maroon seatbelt like fabric. Purple rock-climbing rope zig-zags along the entire perimeter of the frame and attaches the cushions. The side profiles of the work is of two curved downward breasts with nipples in the centre of the curves.

The steel frame is sturdy but thin, with a narrower inner frame and short curved legs supported by straight cross beams. It is brass in colour with a semi-gloss hammered paint finish – giving the effect of a shiny surface with small divots made by the pounding of a hammer.

The fabric is a detailed dark-coloured pattern with light edges. The pattern inside each of the five segments repeats throughout. Filling the centre of the segment is a purple octagon. Inside are the side profiles of six blue green rats, positioned like a windmill, their tails curled against a central white dot. Behind them is a diamond grid of white and maroon coloured sewing needles with large eyelets. A maroon-coloured rectangle without corners sits behind. Small swirling snakes in black and blue sit on this background amongst small blue circles that contain white flowers with a maroon centre.

On either side of the maroon shape is a blue stripe with a column of mirror imaged pink sphinxes. This is lined with a narrow dark blue stripe with long sewing needles in white and maroon with white equal signs between. Lastly the outside edge of the pillow is cream coloured with a repeated row of diamond eye shapes in different colours. The eyes are vertical, with different colours used for the whites, pupils and irises including blue, orange, pink, yellow and green. Small green dots line each side of the eye. Central lines in the colour of the eye whites connect the eyes together.

The overall geometric construction resembles a Persian rug. It uses motifs drawn from Freud’s case studies of psychoanalysis patients. The colours are mottled in places

and soft, the artist painted the imagery in watercolour before scanning them to create the repeating patterns using digital tools.

In front of the sculptural chair are two floor mats. On your left-hand side is the mat titled *The Burning House*. It is a tufted rug made of cotton and wool yarn, backing cloths and adhesive, made in 2022. It is 127 centimetres long by 72.5 centimetres wide. It features a three storey Victorian terrace building that is on fire. The building almost fills the mat and is against a pale blue background. The terrace is dark blue with white outlines around the door and large rectangular windows. The roof is black with a black chimney to your right-hand side. The door is black with a maroon arch on the bottom right. The fire is a red orange on the outside and yellow on the inside. It flickers along the base, behind each window and engulfs the roof. Grey smoke plumes out of the second storey window on your left-hand side and the chimney. The smoke sits higher than the rest of the yarn on the mat, giving a tactile impression.

Beside this mat on your right-hand side is the mat titled *Baubo*. It is a tufted rug made of cotton and wool yarn, backing cloths and adhesive, made in 2022. It is 157 centimetres long by 121 centimetres wide. It features the character of Baubo from Ancient Greece, the goddess of mirth, who was sexually liberated and wise. She is lifting her skirt, revealing a smiling face on her body and genitals. Baubo is depicted in thick white outlines in the centre, against a dark blue geometric shape on a maroon rectangle. She is standing upright when viewed from a portrait perspective. The border of the mat is cream with rows of diamond shaped eyes. The eyes are horizontal to the image of Baubo, with black pupils and different colours used for the whites and irises: blue, pink, green, yellow, orange, maroon and pale red.

#### 4. Audio description 5 to 8 – ‘Chair 2’, ‘Involuntary Movement of the Eye’, ‘Sphinx Phantasy’ and ‘Black Snake!’

The title of this piece is *Chair 2*, listed as number 5 on the roomsheet and it is surrounded by three mats titled *Involuntary Movement of the Eye*, number 6 on the roomsheet, *Sphinx Phantasy*, spelt ‘P.h.a.n.t.a.s.y’ and number 7 on the roomsheet, and *Black Snake!*, with an exclamation mark, number 8 on the roomsheet. The artist is Natalya Hughes.

*Chair 2* is a sculpture made of fabricated steel with custom designed patterned fabric upholstery, made in 2022. We invite you to remove your shoes and interact with the chair sculpture. It is 172 centimetres high, by 273 centimetres wide, and 80 centimetres deep.

The work consists of two open and curved shaped steel frames joined together side-by-side. One is a small ‘u’ shape on high legs like an umpire chair and the other is like the curve of a ‘j’, scooping away down to the ground.

The frame and cushions are constructed the same way as in *Chair 1* and *Chair 3*.

The fabric is a detailed dark-coloured pattern. The pattern inside each of the segments repeats throughout and connects. In the centre is a burning Victorian terrace building on a maroon-coloured background. A cream rectangle border with multi-coloured eyes tightly frames the building. On either side is a symmetrical pattern. There is a six-point windmill of light blue rats on a dark blue background within a diamond formed by white and maroon sewing needles. A thin patterned maroon line crops the dark blue background into a column of connected half octagon shapes. On the other side of this is a mottled blue background. There is a white diamond shaped eye, a pale blue circle for the iris and black pupil dotted in the centre. Small dark blue dots line the edges of the eye. A white line extends up and down from the centre edge of the eye then splits into two breast like curves with nipples. The same two curves are repeated on the sides to form an unconnected clover-shaped outline. Inside this shape, smaller versions of these curved lines repeat in dark blue, positioned parallel to the blue dotted lines beside the eye. A narrow green vertical banner with alternating small and large white flowers in pink and dark blue circles runs alongside. On the edge of this is a vertical black line with horizontal letters reading “herr k” “frau k” – which is German for Mr K, Mrs K. The outside edges are black snakes entwined with white flowers and purple butterflies on a maroon background.

The overall geometric construction, motifs, colours and watercolour technique the artist used to create the images are the same as in *Chair 1* and *Chair 3*.

Beside the chair sculpture are three mats. Next to the side of the chair on your left-hand side, is the mat titled *Involuntary Movement of the Eye*. It is a tufted rug made of

cotton and wool yarn, backing cloths and adhesive, made in 2021. It is 127 centimetres long by 85 centimetres wide. It features a grid of multicoloured diamond shaped eyes on a cream background with a horizontal maroon band at both short ends. A green line extends up and down from the centre edge of the eye, connecting all the eyes together in columns. Small dark blue dots line the edges of the eye. Different colours are used for the pupils, whites, and irises: blue, pink, green, yellow, orange, maroon and pale red.

The second mat in the centre front of the chair is titled *Sphinx Phantasy*. It is a tufted rug made of cotton and wool yarn, backing cloths and adhesive, made in 2021. It is 165 centimetres long by 120 centimetres wide. It features the side profile of four cream and orange Sphinxes on a red background. They are in each quarter of the mat, facing inwards, a mirror image of each other. In Ancient Greece, the Sphinx was a creature with the head and torso of a woman, haunches of a lion, and wings of a bird.

The third mat on your right-hand side in front of the chair is titled *Black Snake!*. It is a tufted rug made of cotton and wool yarn, backing cloths and adhesive, made in 2021 to 2022. It is 130 centimetres long by 80 centimetres wide. It features the silhouettes of two figures in purple, standing in animated poses against a cream background. They fill almost the full height of the mat. The figure on your left has their arms bent up at the elbows, with one hand touching the brim of their hat. They are wearing a long skirt. The figure on your right is leaning slightly forwards towards the centre, pointing downwards, wearing trousers and perhaps a long apron. Between them is a coiled rearing black snake. The edges of the mat are black with a maroon and cream checked band at both short ends of the mat, with a row of white diamond shaped eyes with blue irises and black pupils in front.

## 5. Audio description 9 to 11 – ‘Chair 3’, ‘Wolves, Watching’, and ‘Rat Man’.

The title of this piece is *Chair 3*, listed as number 9 on the roomsheet, and it is surrounded by two mats titled *Wolves, Watching*, number 10 on the roomsheet, and *Rat Man*, number 11 on the roomsheet. The artist is Natalya Hughes.

*Chair 3* is a sculpture made of fabricated steel with custom designed patterned fabric upholstery and a leather harness. We invite you to remove your shoes and interact with the chair sculpture. It is 170 centimetres high, by 160 centimetres wide, and 113 centimetres deep.

The work consists of two parts connected at the base on an A-frame stand. At the open end of the base is a round, shallow nest chair. At the other end of the base is a narrow rectangular frame with three horizontal beams and a curved shape with a nipple at the top. It is side-on to the chair. A maroon-coloured chest harness is attached near the top beam of the standing frame by purple rock-climbing rope. The harness supports the wearer to lean over the chair in front while standing on a metal platform.

A round cushion made from detailed patterned fabric upholstery rests inside the chair.

The chair's steel frame is sturdy but thin with the same brass colour and finish as *Chair 1* and *Chair 2*.

The fabric pattern radiates out from the centre. The middle is a circle of mottled blue fabric with a white diamond shaped eye. In the centre of the eye is a fabric covered button with the Sphinx's head. Small dark blue dots line the edges of the eye. A white line extends up and down from the centre edge of the eye then splits into two breast like curves with nipples. The same two curves are repeated on the sides to form an unconnected clover-shaped outline. Inside this shape, smaller versions of these curved lines repeat in dark blue, positioned parallel to the blue dotted lines beside the eye. A larger maroon-coloured circle surrounds the centre. The same eye image repeats in a grid pattern. This time the eye has a blue iris and black pupil, and the smaller curved lines are a darker maroon. Fabric covered buttons with parts of the Sphinx give shape to the cushion, creating a hexagon around the blue centre and gathering the fabric. A purple band with white and maroon sewing needles surrounds the maroon circle. A wide band of blue fabric with pink Sphinxes covers the outer curve. A patterned maroon line is between the Sphinx fabric and the purple band. Squares with maroon-coloured frames radiate and repeat from the line on top of the Sphinx fabric. The images contain a writhing black snake, a white flower with a maroon centre within a blue circle and the front profile of a seated white wolf.

The overall geometric construction, motifs, colours and watercolour technique the artist used to create the images are the same as in *Chair 1* and *Chair 2*.

Beside the chair sculpture are two mats. The title of the mat to your left-hand side of the chair is *Wolves, Watching*. It was made in 2021 to 2022. It is a tufted rug made of cotton and wool yarn, backing cloth and adhesive. It is 155 centimetres long by 126 centimetres wide. It features a dark brown and red tree trunk in the centre, with the wispy shapes of five white wolves sitting along its extended branches. The background is grey blue, the ground is cream suggesting snow. There are some mounds of different shades of green and mounds of different shades of purple and red along the ground, suggesting earth emerging through melted drifts. Tulip shaped flower buds within circles and some leaves in maroon, cream, yellow and purple are at the end of the branches. Yellow flowers are growing at the base of the tree.

The second mat on the other side of the chair is titled *Rat Man*. It is a tufted rug made of cotton and wool yarn, backing cloths and adhesive. It is 135 centimetres long by 73 centimetres wide. It features a six-point windmill of light blue rats on a dark blue background within a diamond shaped octagon. The octagon is outlined thinly in white and then thickly in maroon. It is against a purple background with a light blue frame on the outside of the mat. This pattern featuring the rats repeats three times, in a connected column down the centre of the work.



## 6. Audio description 12 – ‘Mural’

The title of this work is *Mural*, it is listed as number 12 on the roomsheet. The artist is Natalya Hughes. It is hand painted in acrylic paint across a corner, extending onto two walls. It features two parallel maroon banners running horizontally along the walls, 150 centimetres high. The negative space of the white wall within these lines is shaped like narrow and evenly sized octagons, joined at the side like a paper chain.

Within the banner borders on one wall there are the overlapping and animated silhouettes of seven figures arching in all directions. This painting is 300 centimetres wide. The figures are painted in black, grey and light blue with some pink areas and the wall behind showing through. The figures have no hair or clothing and are feminine in shape. Most have circles where their breasts would be. Hughes has used Rummo’s images of hysteria to construct the figures in the mural. These figures reference the postures and convulsions captured on film as part of the diagnostic process.

## 7. Audio description 13 – On shelf

This component of *The Interior* artwork installation consists of eight statues on a floating white shelf, listed as number 13 on the roomsheet. The artist is Natalya Hughes. All objects were made in 2022 and are 3D printed and painted except for the last, which is papier mache and paint. All but the two upright vessel shaped sculptures are on a square or rectangular black pedestal base.

The first on the far left is titled *Falcon-headed figure*. It is 30 centimetres tall. It is a narrow human figure with dark brown skin, a bare chest and feet, and an ankle length wrapped white skirt. Extending from over the shoulders and arching over to almost the ground is an elongated green neck, ending in a downward facing falcon's head. This sculpture is a replica of a 19<sup>th</sup> century forgery of an Egyptian antiquity that bears resemblance to the vulture headed mother-goddess Mut.

The second is titled *Eros*. It is 38 centimetres tall. It is a curvaceous naked figure with male genitals and three sets of breasts on either side of its chest and stomach. Small wings extend from its back. It is standing in a dynamic pose on one foot with the other extended behind. It is painted to mimic orange sandstone colouring. In mythology Eros is the Greek god of love, passion and desire.

The third statue is titled *Double ended Demeter*. It is 42 centimetres high. It is a narrow grey cylindrical form that narrows towards the middle. Near the top on your right a face juts out slightly from the side. It has closed eyes and pursed lips. A row of circles runs across the forehead. Around the top edge of the sculpture is a row of squashed circles with little finger-like shapes from the knuckles up extending above, like a crown. At the base of the work on the opposite side and upside down is a less distinct replica of the same face. There is also the beginning of a less distinct ring of circles but it is cut off and rests on a square black base. Demeter is a Greek goddess representing birth, harvest, agriculture and abundance.

The fourth work is titled *Baubo*, it is 28 centimetres tall. It is a naked female form from the ankles to the shoulders, grey stone-like in colour. The design is almost perfectly symmetrical. The legs are together and there is a face on the body, with the vulva under the chin. The eyes are closed, nose rounded and lips together and slightly puckered. The wavy hair, which also resembles arms, frames either side of the face. Two curved shapes sit on top of the statue in the centre, pressed against each other. Baubo is a character from Ancient Greece, the goddess of mirth, who was sexually liberated and wise. She is lifting her skirt, revealing a smiling face on her body and genitals.

The fifth work is titled '*Mistress of Animals*' *Alabastron*. It is 34 centimetres tall. This work is shaped like an alabastron, which is a vessel or flask that originated from Ancient Egypt and Greece. It is a bulbous form with a smaller neck and round splayed

mouth. The body is solid maroon in colour, with two rounded breast shapes two thirds down and a rounded belly shaped base below. The neck is a classical 'Greek key' pattern against a cream background. There is a narrow band separating the body from the neck. The band is outlined in black with three rows of maroon and black dots between. Above this band are lines with rounded ends, alternating between maroon and black. Around the narrow edge on the lip of the mouth is a single row of black stretched zig-zag shapes.

The sixth work is titled *Sphinx*. It is 40 centimetres high by 34.2 centimetres wide, and 21 centimetres deep. It features the side profile of an orange sandstone coloured Sphinx. She is facing to your left. She is seated back on her haunches. Following the Greek tradition, this statue has the head and torso of a woman, haunches of a lion, and wings of a bird. Her head is upright and on top of her wavy locks is a flat platform. She has two large and exaggerated breasts that poke forwards. Her wings are narrow and extend from her shoulders to the end of her back, curving upwards.

The second last work is titled *Lekythos*. It is 32 centimetres tall. It is a long cylindrical cream-coloured vessel standing upright, with two rounded breast shapes in the centre. Lekythos is the name of an oil flask in Ancient Greek pottery. This work has a narrow neck with an egg cup shaped mouth and tapers to a small domed base. The mouth and top of the base are black. Around both ends of the base are horizontal terracotta orange-coloured lines – thick on the bottom and thin at the top. Around the top of the vessel's body before it narrows, and around the base of the neck, are two sets of thin parallel orange lines. A thin cream line on black separates the neck and the mouth.

The final statue is titled *F Figure*. It is 31 centimetres tall. It is a flattened female figure with no feet or arms. It is highly stylised and symmetrical in design. The colour is like sand at the beach - light brown with dark and light specks. The legs are together depicted by a slight groove in the middle. Above the legs is a large and flat rounded form, pinching at the waist. On this belly shape, in the centre of the legs, is a round and deep indentation with a raised circle edge. The inside of this indentation is painted black. There are two flattened breasts on the torso and pointed triangles at the shoulders. A raised and textured 'v' shaped collar sits at the base of the neck. On the oval shaped head there are two eyes that are smaller versions of the prominent indentation on the abdomen and pelvis region. Subtle indentations in the centre of the face suggest a nose and small mouth. There is a wavy hair shape on the forehead and either side of the face, mimicking a softer version of the pointed triangles below. An irregular shaped hole goes through the hair on either side of the face. In the centre of the forehead there is a small round indentation.