



# openbook

KATHERINE SONNEKUS OF THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET IN MAROUBRA. PHOTO BY DANIEL BOUD

## Media Release



### **Openbook's autumn edition showcases diverse talents of Australia's creative community**

**6/3/2024**

The autumn issue of *Openbook* — the State Library of NSW's quarterly culture and literature magazine — is brimming with beautiful words, photography and artwork by some of Australia's best writers and creatives, featured alongside fascinating discoveries made by our librarians and curators.

According to *Openbook* editor Phillipa McGuinness: "In this stellar issue we reveal the extraordinary life and work of talented Sydney artist Michael Kelly and the story of how his most precious possessions, 65 personal sketchbooks, came into the Library's collection — as told from the perspectives of a librarian, a life-changing friend and the artist himself."

Michael, who has not had secure housing for most of his adult life, writes: "My sketchbook was like my studio when I didn't have a studio. I'd always be thinking of things to paint, things I could make pictures out of."

He started keeping sketchbooks in 1985, in his second year of art school. The 66-year-old artist recently became concerned his treasured collection of jottings, poems, sketches, watercolours, drawing experiments and memories could end up in a dumpster, so he offered his priceless sketchbooks to the Library.

What makes the sketchbooks extra special, says specialist librarian Mathilde de Hauteclocque, "is the accompanying intimate writings where he records his life experiences, dreams and vulnerabilities alongside his art practice."

"Michael's sketchbooks give a rare insight into the daily life and creative processes of a living artist over a continuous 30-year period," says Mathilde, who has curated a selection of his sketchbooks for public display in the Library's Amaze Gallery, from 16 March to 15 September 2024.

The autumn issue also shines the spotlight on performance — dancers in particular, through the stunning photographic work of Daniel Boud. His breathtaking cover features the Australian Ballet's Katherine Sonnekus striking an elegant pose on a cliff near Maroubra.

"I am thrilled even more readers will get to know about the State Library's extraordinary Multicultural Bulk Loan Service which has been delivering books in community languages — last count was 43 with Tibetan material added in 2023 — to NSW public library members for 50 years now, when they read librarian Abby Dawson's special feature in this issue," says NSW State Librarian Dr Caroline Butler-Bowdon.



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### Inside the pages you'll also find:

- A surprising and delightful self-portrait by writer and zine creator Max Easton
- Profile of Australian writer Lauren Aimee Curtis, named one of *Granta's* Best Young British Novelists in 2023
- A starry poem by Erin Shiel and a new short story by Eleanor Limprecht
- Critic and poet Thuy On talks to authors who find themselves on a public stage, and explores what happens if a writer doesn't want to become their own brand
- Leading historian Kate Fullagar reflects on the process of writing a joint biography of Phillip and Bennelong, and having it published in the year of the Voice referendum
- Michael O'Shea writes about the theatrical posters of the Nimrod Theatre that are held in the Library's collection, many designed and produced by artist Martin Sharp.

There are also all the regular favourites — book reviews, quiz, Library collection spotlights and The Library That Made Me, this time by Lee Kofman.

### SPECIAL EVENT, TUESDAY 19 MARCH, 6–7 PM, LIBRARY BAR

Join us for a lively panel discussion with the autumn issue's poet (Erin Shiel), cover photographer (Daniel Boud), author of Self-portrait (Max Easton) and the subject of the profile (Lauren Aimee Curtis).

Hosted by *Openbook* editor Phillipa McGuinness  
Book here: [sl.nsw.gov.au/whats-on](https://sl.nsw.gov.au/whats-on)

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