

# Yhonnie Scarce, 'Night Blindness' at The Dowse Art Museum, Wellington, New Zealand on 8 Nov 2024–9 Mar 2025

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This exhibition at The Dowse Art Museum is the first solo show in New Zealand for leading contemporary artist Yhonnie Scarce (b. 1973, Kokatha and Nukunu peoples). Scarce's practice encompasses large-scale glass installations borne from research, fieldwork and imbued with her own personal connection to the histories her works speak to.

Missile Park (2021) looms large in the space, consisting of three scaled-down sheds referencing the military base in Woomera, South Australia. A place now deemed unliveable due to the excessive radiation still being emitted from the soil from the nuclear testing by the Australian government in the 1950s and 60s.

The sheds are constructed from found galvanised Zinalume that Scarce has painted with bitumen. These tomb-like structures operate as both a monument to the Aboriginal lives lost during that period of nuclear testing – and a place where visitors can experience what it's like being inside the structures themselves, the darkness that envelopes you. Each shed houses twenty hand-blown glass bush plums; standing in for people, as well as metaphorical timebombs waiting to blow.

Bush tucker plays an important role in Scarce's work. Food is a link between people and the land; sustaining people for thousands of years. She notes: "Every single bush banana, bush plum and long yam is a loving memorial through breath and body and remembrance. These fruits are fragile, resistant and ever-present." Blown in glass, they are a vessel for Scarce's own mauri (life force), carrying her whakapapa (ancestors) in every breath.

Press release courtesy The Dowse Art Museum.