Raafat Ishak

Born 1967 Cairo, Egypt, migrated to Australia in 1982
Lives and works in Melbourne, Victoria.

Education / Academic

2019–Current	Head of Painting / Senior Lecturer, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne
2014	PhD in Fine Arts, Monash University, Melbourne
2004	Graduate Diploma, Architecture (History and Conservation Practice), University of Melbourne
1990	Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting) Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne

Selected Solo Exhibitions

2026	*Art Wall: Raafat Ishak*, Shepparton Art Museum, Shepparton
2025	*Sore Sun*, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2024	*Two Point Nine Billion Kilometres from the Sun*, Conners Conners, Melbourne
2023	*Eye Looking at Large Glass Broken,* Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
2021	*Eye Looking at Large Glass Broken Two,* Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2018	*Chicken River,* Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne
	Withdrawal Courtesies, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2017	*1977,* Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
	Hebdomeros, with Damiano Bertoli, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2016	*Bushrangers,* Platform Hero Billboard, Melbourne
2015	*Apnea*, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
	Collaborations, 2003-2015, TCB, Melbourne
2014	*PhD exhibition,* Monash University Gallery, Melbourne
2012	*Nomination for the presidency of the new Egypt*, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
	Proposition for a banner march and a black cube hot air balloon, with Tom Nicholson, Shepparton Art Museum, Victoria
2011	*Art Dubai*, with Sutton Gallery, United Arab Emirates
	Congratulatory Notes on Ubiquity and Debacle, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2010	*Raafat Ishak: Work in Progress,* Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne
2009	*Responses to an Immigration Request From One Hundred And Ninety Four Governments*, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2007	*Raafat Ishak*, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
	Isle of the dead paintings from 1985 to 1995, Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne
2006	*Raafat Ishak*, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2005	*Home Ground*, Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne
	V, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney
2004	*Paintings and wall works*, Kaliman Gallery, Sydney
2003	*Organisation for Future Good Steps*, Conical Gallery, Melbourne
2002	*River problem*, Townhouse Gallery, Cairo, Egypt
1999	*Gone Good Government*, First Floor, Melbourne

	Correction, Lovers Gallery, Melbourne
1997	*On Work,* Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide
1995	*Government*, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne

Selected Group Exhibitions

2026	*Time Moves Through These Walls: 40 Years of Linden New Art*, Linden New Art, Melbourne
2025	*A Fictional Retrospective: Gertrude's First Decade 1985-1995*, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne
	Bernhard Sachs: After History, Linden New Art, Melbourne
2024	*Sutton Gallery at Sydney Contemporary 2024*, Carriageworks, Sydney
	duran duran, Mejia, Melbourne
	Splitting Hairs, Green Floor Gallery, Melbourne
2023	*It's not you, it's me*, Fiona and Sydney Myer Gallery, University of Melbourne, Melbourne
	The Night of Counting the Tears, Islamic Museum of Australia, Melbourne
2022	*Box Hill*, Five Walls, Melbourne
	a do ocean, KINGS Artist-Run, Melbourne
	XXX Celebrating 30 Years of Sutton Gallery, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
	Raafat Ishak and Lane Cormick, *Dean Barry,* Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2021	*Surreal Landscapes*, Mornington Peninsular Art Gallery, Mornington
	The Space We Live, the Air We Breathe, Counihan Gallery, curated by Jan Duffy and Matthew Perkins, Melbourne
2020	*TOWARDS REGROWTH*, Art Aid for Fire Relief, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
	12 Months, Rear 72 Smith Street, curated by Christopher L G Hill
	#001, Niche Fetisch inaugural exhibition, Carlton
2019	*portico*, Conners Conners, Melbourne
2018	*Overdrawn*, Nanyang Academy of Arts, Singapore and Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne
	Monochromes, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne
2017	*Westspace fundraiser*, Melbourne
	Untitled, Mornington Peninsula Regional Gallery, Mornington Peninsula
	Untitled, Museum of the living west, Melbourne
	World Backwards, Sutton Project Space, Melbourne
	A decolonial geographic, Devonport Regional Gallery, Devonport
	BOO, Blindside, Melbourne
	Call of the Avant-Garde: Constructivism and Australian Art, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
	100 Masterpieces of Modern and Contemporary Arab Art, The Barjeel Collection, Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris
2016	*Borders Barriers Walls*, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne
	Painting, More Painting, ACCA, Melbourne
2015	*Home Ground*, Agha Khan Museum, Toronto

	Unintended Refrains, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne, Parkville
	Maria, with Lisa Radford, Incidents Above a Bar, The Alderman, Brunswick
2014	*Nahrain*, Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Sydney
2013	*My Avant-Garde is Bigger than Yours*, Kings ARI, Melbourne
	Safar/Voyage: Contemporary Works by Arab, Iranian and Turkish Artists, Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada
	Terms & Conditions, Singapore Art Museum, Singapore
	Art Dubai, with Sutton Gallery, United Arab Emirates
2012	*Shifting Geometries*, Embassy of Australia, Washington DC, USA
	Art Dubai, with Sutton Gallery, United Arab Emirates
	The Other's Other, Artspace, Sydney
	On Collaboration, Beenspace, Sydney
	Ocular Lab Inc, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne
	Alienation, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
	Drawing Folio Pt.2, Block Projects, Melbourne
2011	*The Future of a Promise*, Venice Biennale, Italy
	The Rest is Silence, curated by Elvis Richardson and Claire Lambe, Death Be Kind, Melbourne
	Forever Young, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
2010	*NEW010,* Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
	Pulp, Sutton Gallery, Melbourne
2009	*Cubism and Australian Art,* Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne
	Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane
	The West Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, various venues, Melbourne
	Drawing Folio, curated by John Nixon, Block Projects, Melbourne
	Castlemaine State Festival, Castlemaine
	The Shilo Project, curated by Chris McAuliffe, Ian Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne and Wangaratta Art Gallery, Victoria
2008	*Premonitions: Monash University Collection from 1961 – 2007*, McClelland Gallery, Melbourne
	The Monobrow Show, Hell Gallery, Melbourne
	Drawing the Line, curated by Damian Smith, Maroondah Art Gallery, Melbourne
	Primary Views, Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne
2007-2009	*The World in Painting,* curated by Zara Stanhope, an Asialink and Heide Museum of Modern Art exhibition touring to: Chiang Mai University Gallery, Thailand; The Art Centre, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand; Yuchengco Museum, Makati City, Philippines; Newcastle Region Art Gallery, New South Wales; Latrobe Regional Gallery, Victoria; and Warrnambool Art Gallery, Victoria
2007	*Black Box Project*, Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne
	Sutton Projects, Melbourne, including collaborations with Damian Bertoli, Sandra Bridie, Sean Loughrey, Tom Nicholson and Alex Rizkala
	Ocular Notes, George Paton Gallery, University of Melbourne
	Funeral Songs, curated by Daniel Mudie Cunningham, MOP Projects, Sydney

	ap.ro.pos – human rights in art, curated by Romy Sedman, Bus Gallery, Melbourne
2006	*21st Century Modern,* 2006 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art, Art Gallery of South Australia
	Parallel Lives: *Australian Painting Today*, TarraWarra Biennial, curated by Victoria Lynn, Yarra Valley, Victoria
	Single Currency, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne
2005	*Ocular Lab: 12*, Spacement, Melbourne
	Slave, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne
2004	*A pink idea*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
	Multiple Miscellaneous Alliances, curated by Bianca Hester, Clubs Projects, Melbourne
	Octopus5, curated by Nicholas Chambers, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne
	Australian Art Now, with Tom Nicholson, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
	Decadence of the nude, Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne
2003	*Labrador,* Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne
	The future in every direction, curated by Kelly Gellatly, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
	Home and Away, curated by Linda Michael, a Monash University travelling exhibition
	Organisations, Parasite, Hong Kong, and West Space, Melbourne
	Fieldwork, curated by Jason Smith and Charles Green, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
	Compost, Sutton Projects, Melbourne, with Alex Rizkalla and Jason Workman
	Melbourne Now, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
2002	*It's a beautiful day*, curated by Bala Starr, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne, and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney
2001	*Office of Utopic Procedures*, West Space, Melbourne
	Fan Flag, a collaborative project with Sean Loughrey, Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne
	Mary Mary fire walk with me, a collaborative project with Jonathan Nichols, West Space, Melbourne
2000	*Blink*, in collaboration with Sean Loughrey, as part of Next Wave Festival, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne
2000	*Microcosm*, PB Gallery, Swinburne University, Melbourne
1997	*Feeling Machines*, curated by Jonathan Nichols, Stripp Gallery, Melbourne
1996	*Monash Acquisitive Art Prize*, Monash University Gallery, Melbourne
	Travelogue, curated by Rachel Kent, Ian Potter Gallery, University of Melbourne
1995	*Decadence*, 200 Gertrude Street, Melbourne

Selected Bibliography

Barikin, Amelia	'Proposition for a banner march and a black cube hot air balloon', ex. cat., Shepparton Art Museum, Victoria, 2012
Bertoli, Damiano	'Good Secret', ex. cat., Melbourne Art Fair, 2002
Blakston, Angela	'Around the world ...' , *The Age*, 24 July, 2004
Boscutti, Stefano	'Gone Good Government', ex. cat., First Floor, Melbourne, 1999

Bridie, Sandra	'Isle of the dead and paintings from 1985 to 1995', ex. cat., Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne, December, 2007
Burns, Karen	'Return of the nude', *Decadence of the nude*, ex. cat., Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne, 2004
Chambers, Nicholas	'Octopus5', ex. cat., Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, 2004
Chapman, Christopher	'Respect', *Broadsheet,* vol.26, no.1, Autumn, 1997
Clabburn, Anna	'Hybrids all, let us rejoice', *The Australian*, 12 July, 2002
Clemens, Justin	'Trinity Nine: Ocular Lab Artists at Trinity College', ex. cat. Trinity College, The University of Melbourne, 2006
Coslovitch, Gabriella	'Home is Where the Art Is', *The Age*, 23 November, 2009
Crawford, Ashley	'Raafat Ishak', *Australian Art Collector*, issue 35, p.220, Jan-Mar, 2006
	'Raafat Ishak', *The Age*, 5 March, 2006
	'Raafat Ishak', *Australian Art Collector*, issue 31, Jan-Mar, 2005
	'In the eye of the beholder', *The Age*, 6 September, 2003
Daftari, Fereshteh	'Safar voyage', ex. cat., Museum of Anthropology, University of British Colombia, Vancouver, Canada , 2013
Delany, Max	'Trinity Nine: Ocular Lab Artists at Trinity College', ex. cat. Trinity College, The University of Melbourne, 2006
Devery, Jane	'Melbourne Now', ex. cat., National Gallery of Australia, 2013
Do Compo, Fernando	'A decolonial geographic', ex. cat., Davenport Regional Gallery, 2017
Feary, Mark	'The Other's Other', *Column 10*, Artspace, Sydney, 2012
Gaynor, Andrew	'Decadence of the nude', *Un Magazine*, issue 1, 2004
Goad, Philip	'The Mirror is ourselves', *Art + Events + Ideas*, The Ian Potter Museum of Art, Volume 10, January, 2011
Grishin, Sasha	*Art Monthly,* Issue 227, March, 2010
	'Melbourne Now reflects the super state of the state's arts', *SMH,* 30 November, 2013
Harding, Leslie and Cramer, Sue	'Cubism and Australian Art', *The Miegunyah Press*, Melbourne, 2009
Hill, Kendall	*The Australian,* 25 July, 2009
Hill, Wes	'The merging of politics, materials and metaphysics', *Frieze*, no 163, May, 2014
Huppatz, D.J.	'Good ship', ex. cat., PB Gallery, Melbourne, 2000
	'Personal Archive', *Art/Text*, no.67, Nov 1999 - Jan, 2000
	'Government', ex. cat., 20 Gertrude Street, Melbourne, March, 1995
Ishak, Raafat	'Retrospectives: Sandra Bridie', ex. cat, Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne, 2007
	'Good dog good dog', *Country Side: Sean Loughrey*, ex. cat., 1999
	'On Work', ex. cat., Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, Adelaide, 1997
	'Retrospectives: Sally Manall', ex. cat., Ocular Lab inc, Melbourne, 2008
	'Exodus shows strength in adversity', *The Age*, 6 January 2021
Kent, Rachel	'Travelogue', ex. cat., Ian Potter Gallery, University of Melbourne, May, 1996
King, Natalie	'APT: That's entertainment', *Flash Art*, vol.43, no.271, Mar-Apr, 2010

Lacy, Danny — ‘Proposition for a banner march and a black cube hot air balloon’, ex. cat., Shepparton Art Museum, Victoria, 2012

Lynn, Victoria — ‘TarraWarra Biennial 2006 – Parallel Lives: Australian Painting Today’, ex.cat., TarraWarra, Victoria, 2006

MacDonald, Anna — ‘NEW010’, ex. cat., Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, 2010

Makin, Jeff — *Herald Sun*, 29 October, 2007

McAuliffe, Chris — ‘Foreword’, *Raafat Ishak: Work in Progress*, ex. cat., The Ian Potter Museum of Art, The University of Melbourne, 2010

McKenzie, Robyn — ‘Painting into Electronic Age’, *The Age*, 26 April, 1995

McSpedden, Shelley — ‘An interview with Raafat Ishak and Tom Nicholson’, *Discipline, no.1*, Winter, 2011

Merzaban, Mandy — ‘Interview with Raafat Ishak’, *Alienation*, ex. cat., Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, 2012

Merzaban, Mandy — ‘Exhibition Terms and Conditions’, ex. cat., Singapore Art Museum, Singapore, 2013

Michael, Linda — ‘Home and Away’, ex. cat., Monash University, Melbourne, 2003

Money, Lawrence — *The Age*, 16 March, 2007

Myson, Amille — ‘Chicken River, a review’, *Right Now*, rightnow.org.au, September 12, 2018

Nelson, Robert — ‘Attempts at touching the void’, *The Age*, 30 June, 2010

The Age, 30 August, 2007

Nichols, Jonathan — ‘Raafat Ishak’s decadence’, Stamm, June 2012: http://www.stamm.com.au/2012/06/

Nicholson, Tom — ‘Interview with Raafat Ishak’, Art Territories, April 2002: http://www.artterritories.net/

‘Raafat Ishak’, *21st Century Modern: 2006 Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art*, ex. cat., Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, 2006

O’Brien, Kerrie — ‘Meet you under the colour-field: bold art coming to a station near you’, *WAtoday,* August 2, 2022

O’Connell, Stephen — ‘Feeling Machines’, ex. cat., Stripp Gallery, Melbourne, 1997

Palmer, Daniel — ‘Australian Culture Now’, *Art & Australia*, vol.42, no.2 Summer, 2004

Papastergiadis, Nikos — ‘Foreword, Proposition for a banner march and a black cube hot air balloon’, ex. cat., Shepparton Art Museum, Victoria, 2012

Parker, Francis — ‘Borders, Barriers, Walls’, ex. cat. Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne, 2016

Raymond, Katrina — ‘Voice’, The University of Melbourne, vol.6, no.6

Richards, Bree — ‘Around the world in 80 shades: Raafat Ishak’s pilgrimage in paint’, *Art Monthly,* issue 236, December, 2010

‘Pathways in Paint: 6th Asia Pacific Triennial’, ex. cat., Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane, 2009

‘In Conversation with Raafat Ishak’, *Artlines*, no.4, 2009

Richardson, Penelope — ‘Octopus 5’, *Art Link*, vol.24, no. 3, 2004

Scott, Hanna — ‘Voices of Revolution’, *Surface Asia*, no.3, 2011

Sedman, Romy — ‘ap.ro.pos – human rights in art’, ex. cat., Bus Gallery, Melbourne, November, 2007

Short, Linda — ‘Forever Young: The Heide Collection’, ex. cat., Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, 2011

Stanhope, Zara — ‘Hostings: Ocular Lab 2003-10’, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, 2012

	'The World in Painting', ex. cat., Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne, October, 2007
Starr, Bala	'Interview with Raafat Ishak', *Raafat Ishak: Work in Progress*, ex. cat., The Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne, 2010
	'It's a beautiful day', ex. cat., Ian Potter Museum, University of Melbourne, and Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, 2002
Stephens, Andrew	*The Age*, 23 January, 2010
Smith, Damian	'Drawing the Line', ex. cat., Maroondah Art Gallery, Melbourne, January, 2008
Takesh, Suheyla	'Al Seef', ex. cat., Contemporary Art Platform, Kuwait City, 2015
Travis, Lara	'Raafat Ishak: Trans-contextual tendencies', *Field Work: Australian Contemporary Art 1968-2002*, ex. cat., The Ian Potter Centre: National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2003
Tu, Andrea	'Give me a home...', *And the Program*, ex. cat., June, 1996
Tutton, Sarah	'Raafat Ishak's Passage to Safe Harbour', *Eyeline*, no.67, 2009
Watts, Rachael	'Compartmentalised Beauty', *Broadsheet*, vol.38, 2009
Weber, Eleanor Ivory	'On collaboration', *Frieze online*, p.20, February, 2013
Wise, Kit	*Frieze*, January, 2008
Zagala, Stephen	'Where is contemporary art?', *Hostings: Ocular Lab,* 2003-10, Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne, 2012

Collections

Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Michael Buxton Collection, Melbourne

Monash University Museum of Art, Melbourne

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

National Gallery of Australia

Queensland Art Gallery / Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane

RACV, Melbourne

SBS Radio, Melbourne

State Government of Victoria

The Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne

Art Gallery of New South Wales

Art Gallery of Western Australia

Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney

City of Melbourne

Shepparton Art Museum

Horsham Regional Art Gallery

UQ Art Museum / The University of Queensland

Heide Museum of Art

Artbank Australia

Private collections

Commissions

Metro Tunnel Public Art Commission, Anzac Station, 2025

Un Magazine front cover and artist's pages, 2016

City of Melbourne, Laneway Commissions, 2008

Victoria Golf Club, 2005

Christian Brothers, 2004

SBS Radio, Federation Square, 2003

Grants

2016	Australia Council New Work Grant
2012	Australia Council, Cite Internationale Des Arts Studio, Paris
2007	Australia Council New Work Grant
2004	Arts Victoria Creative Grant
2001	Australia Council Development Grant

Raafat Ishak is a founding member of Ocular Lab Inc. and is represented in Australia by Sutton Gallery, Melbourne.