

Conquest of Space: Science Fiction & Contemporary Art

Posted by [Sharne Wolff](#) • May 23, 2014 • [Printer-friendly](#)

From **Sharne Wolff**...

Prepare for the invasion! *Conquest of Space* is not just an exhibition of contemporary art – it's the launch vehicle for a multifaceted project that aligns with a screening of cinematic science fiction (at the Art Gallery of NSW) and a soon-to-be-aired ABC Television documentary. Curated by **Andrew Frost** and featuring work from around thirty artists in a range of different media, the exhibition investigates the often-overlooked relationship between Australian art and science fiction. Operating within the context of three lines of inquiry – the sublime, the uncanny, and the exploration of time and space – a surprising range of works are unmasked for their links to sci fi themes. Commencing with John Glover's *Launceston on the River Tamar* 1832, Frost's journey takes us across shifting sands and distant mountains, through ocean storms and frozen seascapes. Alien-like souls appear in works from James Gleeson's surreal *Across the Threshold* painted in 1958 to Laith McGregor's extraordinary *Drifter* while Adam Norton's appropriated *Conquest of Space* poster bookends the show.

Possibly the most intriguing aspect of this exhibition is the potential for its far-reaching effect. Having unlocked the possibilities for looking at Australian art through a sci fi lens, it's hard to avoid seeing references everywhere you look. Put simply, Frost says – "In essence, contemporary art *is* science fiction."

Artists included in the exhibition are: **Giles Alexander, Rick Amor, Lionel Bawden, Nicholas Chevalier, Shoufay Derz, John A Douglas, Hayden Fowler, James Gleeson, Michaela Gleave, John Glover, Tristan Jalleh, Phil James, Biljana Jancic, Shalini Jardin, Megan Jenkinson, Madeleine Kelly, Robert Klippel, Sam Leach, Tony Lloyd, Laith McGregor, Callum Morton, Nova Milne, Adam Norton, Joel Rea, Sandra Selig, Kate Shaw, Sam Smith, Jeffrey Smart, Eugene Von Guerard.**



Edge of the World, 100x100cm, oil on canvas by Joel Rea, 2013.