‘Creativity is at the core of both the arts and scientific research,’ writes Ian Turner in his catalogue essay for the ‘Manly Dam Project’. The Professor and Director of the Water Research Laboratory in the University of New South Wales’s School of Civil and Environmental Engineering has worked alongside Manly Art Gallery & Museum Senior Curator Katherine Roberts to develop an exhibition rooted in an arts-science partnership. The Manly Dam area is a confluence of rich natural biodiversity and human intervention. Once the source of northern Sydney’s drinking water, the area now houses an international research hub where the exhibition’s eight participating artists were brought together with eight engineers, sparking unique creative investigations. Nicole Welch’s infrared time-lapse film Yarrahapinni (2019) celebrates the rebuilding of fragile ecosystems, while Blak Douglas’s painting Dam nation (2019) is a strident representation of the catastrophic impact of the dam on the land and waterways and their original custodians. The Sydney exhibition is on show at Manly Art Gallery & Museum from 6 December to 23 February 2020.

Cosmopolis is an exhibition platform launched by the Centre Pompidou in Paris to focus on research-based, collaborative and interdisciplinary art practice. Following her inclusion in 2018’s ‘Cosmopolis #1.5: Enlarged Intelligence’ in Chengdu, Sydney artist Yasmin Smith is exhibiting a major new ceramic installation in Paris as part of ‘Cosmopolis #2: rethinking the human’, which is curated by Kathryn Weir and continues until 23 December. Smith spent four months in the French capital researching its waterways and collaborating with local community organisations, ecologists and arborists in order to realise her project. The resulting installation Seine River Basin (2019) comprises Limoges stoneware replicas of wood species collected from in and around the city’s river system, with glazes made from the ashes of the original pieces of wood. The ceramic works are presented in vertical mirrored pairs, conjuring an imagined reflection of trees onto the river’s surface. Smith’s work combines aesthetics and science to create an alternative record and understanding of place – in this case Paris’s watery heart.